
SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH FOR

Sylvan Union School District

GOVERNING BOARD

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October 2019

CONFIDENTIALITY, INCLUSIVENESS, TRANSPARENCY



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TCG Leadership Development Corporation

October 25, 2019

Sylvan Union School District
Members of the Board of Education
605 Sylvan Avenue
Modesto, CA 95350

Dear Members of the Board of Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to be considered as the search firm to assist in the selection of your new superintendent. As you are keenly aware, the selection of a superintendent to lead your district is one of the most significant decisions you will make as a Board of Education. The Cosca Group's team of experts brings sound operational knowledge especially in the areas of Board/Superintendent relations and school district governance. It would be an honor to work with your district in identifying the candidates who will meet the District's goals and expectations.

The Cosca Group is composed of twenty-three partners and four associates which represent a diversity of major educational leaders with experience in a range of districts from 1,000 to 57,000 California students. We believe that we are the only firm whose members provide an extensive statewide and national recruitment base serving as a vital element of any successful search process. Because of this extensive network of colleagues, our superintendent searches attract a great number of qualified applicants within the state and on the national level. We are proud of the fact that The Cosca Group (TCG) has been successful in making lasting matching relationships between superintendents and districts in the superintendent searches that we have conducted.

A major aspect of our process includes the extensive involvement of the various board-identified stakeholders through focus groups, online surveys, phone interviews, and/or one-on-one interviews to determining the unique needs of the District. This outreach effort will make every effort to be inclusive and truly representative of the unique nature of the Sylvan Union School District community; parents, administrators, certificated and classified staff and their bargaining units' leadership, students, district committees (i.e. PTA Council, DELAC), community groups, business leaders, and the socio-economic and ethnic groups which comprise the District. It is the intent of community involvement not only to gain input, but to build support for the Board, District, and new superintendent. The Cosca Group, because of its wide variety of expertise in all phases of school district leadership, will work with the Governing Board in the selection of a new superintendent and in developing effective supportive working relationships designed to best meet the needs of students, employees, and the community. A review of our references on page 13 and past searches listed on page 15 will show our group's successful experiences with districts of similar size, populations, and grade levels as yours.

The Cosca Group believes that the selection of the new superintendent is the most critical decision you will make. Selecting the right firm to assist you in the decision is the all-important first step. What are the critical elements you should consider in selecting the firm?

- Our fee is all inclusive.
- Longevity of TCG placed superintendents is over 95%.
- Board members can count on strong TCG communications throughout the process.
- A wide breadth of qualified candidates results from TCG's extensive network of partners in the state.
- TCG does not use a "stable" of candidates. Candidates are recruited to match the specific needs and requirements of the Sylvan Union School District.
- If a suitable candidate is not selected as a result of the search, TCG will conduct a second search at no additional cost.
- TCG supports the new superintendent for one year of mentoring at no extra cost.
- TCG will provide, at no extra cost, a guided workshop with the new superintendent and the Board to assist with the early coalescence of the new governance team.
- TCG guarantees the new superintendent selection for the first year. Should a new search be warranted within that time, it would be conducted for expenses only and no additional cost.
- Once a superintendent is placed, TCG will not recruit that person for any future superintendent positions.
- All paper management, advertising, screening, reference checks, interview arrangements, and facilitation to guide the Board through selection process will be done by the search team members.
- Clerical needs will be done by the Cosca Group. The team will rely on the District staff to help contact focus group participants and arrange for meeting locations.

This preliminary proposal describes our process and commitments. We look forward to the opportunity to present our search team and more specifics to you and your Board for this most important endeavor. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. George Bloch at 949-499-9809 or email thecoscagroup@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Frank A. Cosca, Jr., Ed.D.
President
The Cosca Group



George H. Bloch, Ed.D.
Vice President
The Cosca Group

THE COSCA GROUP PROFILE

WHO WE ARE

The Cosca Group was founded in 2000 and has been involved in over 100 searches. We are composed of twenty-three partners, two emeritus and four associates who are located throughout key areas of the north, south and central areas of the state. While our focus is on superintendent searches we have been involved in other cabinet and site level leadership searches.

Who is The Cosca Group?

- Our partners successfully led geographically and culturally diverse school systems across California including small, suburban and urban school districts.
- All of our partners and associates have strong networks both within the state and on the national level.
- Many of our partners are bi-lingual in Spanish.
- Our partners and associates have held leadership roles in Association of California School Administrators (President and Executive Director), Founder of the National Association of School Superintendents, California School Boards Association, American Association of School Administrators, California Association of School Business Officials and California Coalition for Adequate School Housing, California Small Schools Association, California Association of Latino Superintendents, and California Association of Bilingual Educators.
- Many of our partners and associates teach or have taught graduate courses in Educational Leadership, School Finance and other specialties within the field of school Administration.
- Three of our partners have been California Superintendents of the Year and moved on for national recognition.
- Many of our partners and associates have received awards from educational and civic organizations; one of our partners was recognized by ACSA with the prestigious “Marcus Foster” award.
- Due to our strong performance, Boards have selected The Cosca Group for subsequent searches.
- Partners have held leadership positions in the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and chaired visitations in California, Hawaii, Pacific Islands and Asia.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED SEARCH AND SELECTION PROCESS FOR SUPERINTENDENT

The following “tentative” process will be modified as a result of discussion with and preferences of the Governing Board:

Preliminary Phase:

- ❖ Meet with the Board to adjust/modify/approve the Search and Selection Process and the accompanying proposed timeline.

Phase I:

- ❖ Meet with the Board and identify the District’s strengths and needs/critical issues. Based on those strengths and needs/critical issues, identify the characteristics desired in the new Superintendent. The Board will also identify groups and individuals representing community members, students, parents, teachers, classified employees, administrators, etc. to provide input to TCG. Discuss custom strategies to engage all representative communities within the District, including non-English-proficient constituents in the process.
- ❖ Meet and/or survey the identified groups and individuals and receive input regarding the District’s strengths and needs/critical issues. Based on that information, input will be received regarding the characteristics desired in the new Superintendent.
- ❖ Meet with the Board to examine the information obtained from group and individual meetings and surveys. The Board will reexamine and prioritize its own lists of strengths, needs/critical issues, and characteristics. Using the data, TCG will create a profile and criteria and submit an electronic brochure to the Board.
- ❖ Arrange for advertisements to be published, for example, in the EdCal newspaper, EdJoin, and other identified publications of the Board’s preference. TCG will disseminate recruitment materials and vacancy announcements, and correspond with experts in the field for nominations of potential candidates. All twenty-five TCG principal and associate members will actively recruit candidates who best characterize the ideal candidates for the District.
- ❖ Provide a status report to the Board.

Phase II:

- ❖ Maintain all applicant files and communicate with applicants regarding the status of their files.
- ❖ Continue to proactively identify and recruit outstanding candidates who have not applied.
- ❖ Screen all materials from all applicants. Extensive reference checks will be conducted through a process of telephone conversations, appraisal of materials, and preliminary references.

- ❖ Create a panel of experts in school district administration to screen and identify the most qualified applicants. Material will be developed which will describe and assess the finalists.
- ❖ TCG will provide a status report to the Board which will include a summary of qualifications of each of the candidates and those recommended for interview. The Board will approve candidates selected for interviews.

Phase III:

- ❖ Schedule interviews, to be conducted in closed session, with the agreed upon finalists and the Governing Board.
- ❖ Schedule and assist with a second set of interviews of the top candidate(s).
- ❖ A closed session with the Governing Board will be scheduled and TCG will assist, if requested, in the identification and confirmation of the finalist.

Phase IV:

- ❖ At Board request, a site visitation to the district of the top candidate will be arranged and conducted.
- ❖ In closed session, coordinate the actual selection of the successful candidate by the Governing Board.
- ❖ Assist the Board, as directed, to negotiate an employment contract based upon a current compensation study.
- ❖ If desired, the Cosca Group facilitates a free transition meeting for the new Superintendent and Board of Education.
- ❖ If so desired, assist the Board in announcing the new Superintendent of Schools for the District.

Phase V:

During the following twelve months, TCG will:

- ❖ Provide free ongoing, on-call, mentoring for twelve months from both retired and active superintendents to the newly selected superintendent
- ❖ Provide a governance workshop for the new Superintendent and the Board, focusing on goal setting, evaluations, Board-Superintendent relations, role and functions of the Superintendent and the Board, etc.

TENTATIVE TIME EXPECTATIONS FOR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TIME TO COMPLETE	ESTIMATED DATES
Phase I—Pre Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with Board to review, modify and approve recruitment/ selection process and to have Board members individually identify District strengths, issues and desired characteristics of Superintendent 	One week	TBD
Phase I—Pre Recruitment (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCG meets/surveys employee and all stakeholder groups identified by the Board to identify district strengths, issues and desired characteristics of Superintendent. A written report of these meetings will be presented to the Board 	One week	TBD
Phase I—Pre Recruitment (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCG prepares draft electronic brochure that includes a District profile, District strengths, issues and desired characteristics of Superintendent and application information and deadlines 	One week	
Phase I—Pre Recruitment (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCG presents draft electronic brochure at Special Board meeting to the Board members 	TBD	
Phase I—Pre Recruitment (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board receives an electronic brochure and application deadline at regular Board meeting 	TBD	
Phase II—Recruitment by TCG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic brochure distributed to California schools and to national organizations Ads placed in EdCal, Edjoin, CASBO, etc. TCG members actively recruit candidates Continual status reports to Board 	Five weeks	

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TIME TO COMPLETE	ESTIMATED DATES
Phase III—Selection of Applicants for Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCG screens all applicants • Initial reference checks conducted by TCG • Panel convened to identify most qualified candidates • Thorough reference checks completed on most qualified candidates • TCG prepares summary of qualifications, background material, etc. for Board review • Board identifies candidates for interviews 	Two weeks	
Phase III—Selection of Applicants for Interviews (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board reviews all application materials and background information of applicants and our recommendations for interviews • Board selects candidates for interviews at Special Board meeting • TCG completes compensation study of districts selected by the Board if requested 	TBD	TBD
Phase IV—The Interview Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview dates and process selected by Board • TCG contacts and schedules interviews of Board selected candidates • TCG develops preliminary list of questions for Board review and approval 	TBD	TBD

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	TIME TO COMPLETE	ESTIMATED DATES
Phase IV—The Interview Process (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board conducts initial interview of selected candidates in Closed Session Board selects candidates for final interview 	TBD	TBD
Phase V—Appointment of the Superintendent (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board approves District Superintendent employment agreement at regular Board meeting TCG assists with contract development with Board, candidate, and districts legal counsel 	TBD	TBD
Phase V—Post Appointment Services from TCG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going mentoring for 12 months for new Superintendent, as requested 	12 months	

COST INCLUSIONS

Sylvan Union School District Superintendent Search 2019-20

TOTAL FEE WILL BE BASED ON A SEARCH DESIGN SPECIFIC TO THE SYLVAN UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT AND IS ALL INCLUSIVE AND INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- All expenses of the consultants
- All meetings with community at all input sessions
- Provide Board with written report of all input sessions
- All meetings with the Board
- All clerical expenses
- Development of electronic brochure for the position
- All advertising in state and national sources
- Background checks of all final candidates
- Scheduling of all interviews, notifications to all candidates, and assistance with the community visit of the successful candidate
- Preparation of a list of interview questions for the Board to review and decide what questions you want to use
- Provide the Board with guidance throughout the process
- Provide for one year of mentoring for the new superintendent
- Work shop with Board and the new superintendent

REFERENCES

Quotes from Board members and recommendation letters:

“The combined experience and personalities of our Cosca Group search leaders, as well as their guarantees to conduct a transparent, open process and provide consulting services to the newly hired superintendent during the transitional year, truly made the difference for our team.”

“There was not one stone left unturned. From parents to teachers to administration to classified staff, not to mention the input of numerous community groups, everyone had their say before the brochures were designed and the postings went out.”

“We are so pleased with the services that our Cosca Group consultants provided. Here are some of the actions that impressed us:

- Very professional behavior with our stakeholders in gathering information
- Polished skill in capturing what the stakeholders and board members were saying
- Their availability and quick response time
- The comprehensive detail in which they researched the applicants”

“From the first meeting our consultants were on the go, uniting our community, all our stakeholders, as well as members of the Board into defining our superintendent’s most desirable attributes. They spent many hours of meetings as well as phone calls to obtain their information. In no time, they had a professional brochure stating our expectations. They then interviewed candidates, checked references, and sorted through all the applications. Finally, they selected their top candidates, explaining why the non-recommended were not at the standards they wanted to offer us for our new leadership.”

“We were amazed at the quality of candidates their brochure attracted.”

“They emphasized their objective of getting the right superintendent/district match for the sake of our students. They promised a winner and they delivered! The process, from beginning to end, exceeded our expectations!”

“We cannot express how thankful we are to our Cosca Group consultants for all the guidance and excellence they gave us on a tight time budget. Our Board, District, and community are thrilled with their professional work. We commend The Cosca Group for the high degree of professionalism and organizational skills demonstrated throughout this process. We recommend The Cosca Group to any district looking for a well-organized and professional firm to conduct the recruitment and hiring of a superintendent.”

“These gentlemen not only delivered what they promised in their proposal but also became our ‘eyes and ears’ throughout the process. They demonstrated their extensive experience in superintendent searches along with their strong commitment to perform the work outlined in their proposal. They came to know our board members, our staff, our community, our district, our priorities and needs with amazing depth in a relatively short period of time.”

“Since selecting our new superintendent, our consultants have continued to be available for him and for the Board. They’ve met with our superintendent to help him through the problems that he’s been confronted with as a new superintendent. They’ve also met with the board to assist in the development of a new evaluation process.”