



Ottumwa Community School District
115 N Ferry St | Ottumwa, IA 52501

Request for Proposals (RFP) Superintendent Search Services

Issue Date: October 28, 2025

Proposal Submission Deadline: November 5, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

Target Start Date for New Superintendent: July 1, 2026



OTTUMWA COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT





1. Introduction

The Ottumwa Community School District (OCSD) Board of Education invites proposals from qualified search consultants or firms to conduct a comprehensive, transparent, and inclusive search for the next Superintendent of Schools.

Ottumwa seeks a leader who will inspire academic excellence, champion innovation, and strengthen partnerships across a diverse, growing community. The Board is committed to a process that values community input and accountability in identifying a visionary superintendent who will continue advancing the district's strategic priorities.

2. District Overview

Ottumwa Community Schools serves approximately 5,000 students across 11 school buildings in southeastern Iowa. The district operates a comprehensive PK–12 program, including: Seven elementary schools, one intermediate, one junior high, one high school, and one alternative high school.

Ottumwa provides a full continuum of educational services from early childhood through grade twelve, including programs for special education, career and technical education, and concurrent/ advanced placement courses. The district also partners with Indian Hills Community College, workforce initiatives, and community organizations to expand student opportunities beyond the classroom.

Ottumwa employs more than 800 teachers, administrators, and support staff who are dedicated to ensuring that every student has access to high-quality instruction and a safe, supportive learning environment. The district is proud of its strong community partnerships, growing student diversity, and shared commitment to Be the Best by preparing all learners for postsecondary success and lifelong learning.



3. Candidate Profile & Board Priorities

The Board seeks a superintendent who:

- Takes stakeholder feedback seriously—actively listens to staff, students, families, and community members and incorporates that input into decision-making and strategic planning.
- Carries and sustains the district's positive momentum—protects and accelerates what's working, aligns initiatives to improve outcomes, and maintains a visible, steady presence during transition.
- Demonstrates proven capacity for effective system leadership, operational excellence, and clear communication with the Board and community.
- Understands Iowa superintendent licensure requirements and adheres to the highest standards of professional ethics, transparency, and fiscal stewardship.

4. Purpose of the RFP

This RFP seeks proposals from firms experienced in superintendent searches for districts of comparable size and complexity. The successful firm will provide professional guidance, communication support, and expertise to ensure a smooth and effective search process culminating with a start date of a superintendent by July 1, 2026.

5. Scope of Services

The selected firm will provide full-service superintendent search consulting, including but not limited to:

a. Planning and Process Design

- Collaborate with the Board to establish goals, calendar, and communication protocols.
- Advise on governance roles, confidentiality, and decision-making responsibilities.
- Develop and manage a detailed timeline including milestones for each phase of the search.



b. Stakeholder Engagement

- Facilitate input sessions and/or surveys with staff, students, parents, and community members.
- Prepare a Leadership Profile Report on each candidate reflecting community and stakeholder priorities.
- Provide regular progress updates to the Board and ensure transparent communication.

c. Candidate Recruitment and Screening

- Advertise the position statewide and nationally.
- Actively recruit and encourage applications from a highly qualified pool of candidates.
- Screen candidates for alignment with district priorities, professional competencies, and Iowa superintendent licensure requirements.
- The selected search firm will be responsible for conducting thorough background verifications on all finalist candidates to confirm the accuracy of their professional credentials and employment history. The firm must also ensure that all recommended candidates meet all eligibility and qualification requirements for superintendent certification in the State of Iowa.
- Present structured candidate summaries and evaluation tools to the Board.

d. Board Support and Selection Process

- Facilitate semifinalist and finalist interviews, including stakeholder involvement where appropriate.
- Conduct comprehensive background, reference, and credential checks.
- Support the Board during finalist deliberations, offer recommendations as requested, and assist with contract negotiations.



e. Transition and Onboarding

- Provide transition planning support to ensure continuity with the outgoing superintendent.
- Offer guidance for communication and community introduction of the new leader.

6. Proposal Requirements

Proposals must include:

1. **Firm Overview:** History, mission, and areas of expertise.
2. **Experience:** Record of successful superintendent searches (within the last five years), especially in Iowa or similarly sized districts.
3. **Proposed Methodology:** Description of search process, stakeholder engagement plan, confidentiality practices, and recruitment strategies.
4. **Team Composition:** Key personnel, roles, and relevant qualifications.
5. **Timeline:** High-level plan from launch through appointment.
6. **Cost Proposal:** Itemized fees for base services, travel, advertising, and optional services.
7. **References:** At least three recent superintendent search clients (2019–2025) with contact information.



7. Evaluation Criteria

Category	Description
Experience & Proven Success	Track record of superintendent search success, particularly with districts of similar size and demographics.
Process Design & Stakeholder Engagement	Depth, clarity, and quality of proposed engagement, communication, and search process.
Cost & Value	Transparency, competitiveness, and overall value of proposed fees relative to scope of services.
References & Results	Strength of references, longevity of placements, and prior client satisfaction.

8. Submission Details

Deadline: November 5, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. CST

Submission (Email preferred): John Berg, Business Manager/Board Secretary —
john.berg@ottumwaschools.com

Mailing Address (if needed):

Ottumwa Community School District
Attn: John Berg, Business Manager/Board Secretary
115 N Ferry St.
Ottumwa, IA 52501

Questions: Direct all inquiries to John Berg at john.berg@ottumwaschools.com.



9. Project Timeline

The successful firm will provide professional guidance, communication support, and expertise to ensure a smooth and effective search process culminating with a start date of a superintendent by July 1, 2026. Vendors are asked to tentatively hold Monday, November 17, 2025, for the top 3 firms' in-person presentations to the Board of Education, after which the Board will select the winning firm.

10. Reservation of Rights

OCSD reserves the right to:

- Reject any or all proposals.
- Negotiate terms, scope, and fees prior to contract execution.
- Award the contract deemed most advantageous to the district and community.