



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT/THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY, NY 12234

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Dear New York Mills Union Free School District Community,

As you may already be aware, Dr. Joanne Shelmidine has announced her intention to retire, and the New York Mills Union Free School District has initiated the process of hiring a new Superintendent of Schools. As the search consultant, I will be facilitating this process on behalf of the New York Mills UFSD Board of Education. On behalf of the Board, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself, explain my role in the search process and share next steps with you.

As District Superintendent of the Sole Supervisory District of Oneida-Herkimer-Madison Counties and BOCES, I serve as the field representative of the New York State Commissioner of Education and as the Executive Officer of the OHM BOCES. In my role as the Commissioner's representative, I act as a consultant for individual districts and as a liaison between districts and the State Education Department. Upon request, I can also be appointed by a Board of Education to act as a consultant in the Board's selection of a Superintendent of Schools.

SEARCH CONSULTANT

After careful consideration, the New York Mills UFSD Board of Education passed a resolution appointing me as the search consultant for the Superintendent of Schools position at their March 23, 2022 meeting. As the search consultant, my duty is to assist the Board over the next few months in recruiting, screening and evaluating candidates for the Superintendent position. This includes helping to develop selection criteria, coordinating and facilitating meetings with stakeholder groups, developing materials describing the position, placing advertisements, screening applicants and assisting the Board throughout the interview process. In addition to this, I also serve as the single point of contact for the superintendent search. **All communications or inquiries from stakeholders or applicants regarding the search should be addressed to my attention.**

Although I serve as the search consultant, the final decision of selecting and appointing a new Superintendent of Schools rests solely with the New York Mills UFSD Board of Education. While community and stakeholder input is valued and will be relied upon throughout the search process, the Board of Education, consisting of members having been elected by the New York Mills community, ultimately holds the sole authority to appoint a Superintendent of Schools and enter into an employment contract with the successful candidate.

SEARCH OPTIONS

During my presentation to the Board on March 23, I reviewed the two most common types of searches -- open and confidential. During an open search, candidate names are disclosed and stakeholders often have the opportunity to meet candidates prior to a Board appointment, usually once the Board has selected finalists. During a confidential search, all candidate names remain confidential for the entire process, up to and through a Board appointment.

CONFIDENTIAL SEARCH

Following my presentations and the Board's thoughtful discussion and careful deliberation, I strongly recommended to the Board that they conduct a **confidential search** for the next Superintendent of Schools. With the Board's support, I am initiating such a search.

Confidential searches are used in an effort to attract experienced administrators who maintain positive collaborative relationships with their communities and Boards of Education. The nature of a confidential search allows candidates to participate in the process while mitigating the risk to their current circumstance, a consideration that often inhibits leaders from applying for other positions through open search processes. Currently, the Superintendent Search process in New York state is highly competitive, with a significant number of positions available across the state. A confidential search places the New York Mills UFSD in the best position to attract highly qualified applicants.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

At the beginning of a confidential search, the Board will seek stakeholder input with regard to the characteristics and qualifications sought for the next Superintendent, key strengths and attributes of the District, and potential areas for growth and improvement. For the New York Mills UFSD, this input will be gathered through surveys and stakeholder focus groups. The feedback gained from stakeholders will be used to develop interview questions and to continuously gauge each applicant's fit with the District throughout the search process.

Unlike an open search, where stakeholders would meet the finalist(s) before a Board appointment, a confidential search does not disclose the finalist(s) name(s) at any time, and the Board will appoint the candidate directly.

THOUGHTEXCHANGE

As we begin the search for the next superintendent of schools, the New York Mills Board of Education is seeking your feedback on the District's strengths and assets, as well as opportunities for growth. To gather your feedback, we are using a tool called ThoughtExchange. The ThoughtExchange results will be used to help develop questions for the candidate interviews and to determine the fit of candidates with the New York Mills UFSD community. This data will also be made available to the new superintendent, in order to best support their transition into the New York Mills school community.

The voices of the District and community matter, so your participation is crucial and valued. To participate, please visit: www.newyorkmills.org/thoughtexchange by 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, May 4, 2022.

You'll be asked to respond to an open-ended question, consider and rate some ideas shared by others, and learn what's important to the group in a confidential manner. You can come back as often as you'd like to participate and, in fact, we ask that you do come back to star some of the new ideas shared since you first participated. The ratings will help inform the New York Mills Board of Education during the superintendent search process and how we communicate with you moving forward. When thinking about these topics, please reflect on the District's operation both pre-pandemic as well as during COVID-19.

STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS

On behalf of the Board, I will also continue to seek input from students, caregivers, district staff and the community regarding the desired qualifications, skills and experiences of the next superintendent. Stakeholder focus groups will be held for these individual groups to discuss and share input specific to their needs. This information will also be used to develop interview questions and to gauge each applicant's fit for the position. Additional information on how to participate in the stakeholder focus groups will be shared in the near future, along with updates on the progress of the search and additional opportunities to share your valued input.

I look forward to assisting the Board of Education in any way that I can throughout this time of transition!

Sincerely,



Patricia N. Kilburn, Ed.D.
District Superintendent
Search Consultant, New York Mills Union Free School District