

DESOTO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Board's Superintendent Search

Process, Choices, and Search Support

This guide explains how a superintendent search works, the decisions that belong to the Board of Trustees, and the support the Board's search team provides at every step — so the Board can shape a process that fits DeSoto ISD.

Prepared for the DeSoto ISD Board of Trustees

July 2026



A three-phase process, directed by the Board at every step.

Why This Search Matters

Under Texas law, the Superintendent is the District’s educational leader and chief executive officer, employed by — and accountable to — the Board of Trustees (*Tex. Educ. Code § 11.201*). The person the Board selects will shape teaching and learning on every campus, set the tone for employees and families, and steward the District’s budget, facilities, and operations. Choosing a Superintendent is therefore among the most consequential decisions a Board of Trustees makes.

The next Superintendent will be asked to advance DeSoto ISD’s mission — ensuring that students, without exception, learn and grow at their highest level — on behalf of the students, employees, and families of the DeSoto, Glenn Heights, and Ovilla communities. This guide is designed to help the Board direct that selection with confidence: it explains what a search involves, where the Board’s decisions sit, and how the search team carries those decisions out.

THE BOARD OWNS THIS SEARCH

This is the Board’s superintendent search. The Board owns the process, establishes the criteria, chooses the level of stakeholder involvement, selects the candidates to interview, and makes the final hiring decision. The search team serves as the Board’s instrument: it designs and administers the process, provides research and materials, recruits and vets applicants, facilitates interviews, and supports contract negotiations.

Guiding Principles

- **Board ownership.** Every substantive decision — criteria, timeline, interviewees, finalist, contract — is made by the Board.
- **A DeSoto-centered profile.** Selection criteria grow out of DeSoto ISD’s goals, data, and community — not another district’s template.
- **Fair, consistent evaluation.** Similarly situated candidates receive the same core questions, materials, and treatment.
- **Open process, protected applicants.** The process is transparent and understandable; applicant identities and materials are protected to the extent permitted by law.
- **Informed decisions.** Before each Board action, the Board receives organized, verified information — with facts clearly separated from open questions.
- **Flexibility.** Every component described in this guide is an option the Board may adopt, adapt, combine, or decline.

Board Leads — Search Team Supports

THE BOARD LEADS — AND DECIDES	THE SEARCH TEAM SUPPORTS — AND DELIVERS
Direction, priorities, and timeline	Process design, administration, and logistics
Profile, qualifications, and application	Stakeholder engagement and objective reporting
Which candidates are interviewed	Recruitment, vetting, and verification
The finalist — and the final hiring vote	Interview facilitation and Board materials
The employment contract	Compensation, contract, and transition support

The Search at a Glance



Every superintendent search moves through three phases. Each phase ends at a decision gate — a point at which the Board reviews what has been prepared, gives direction, and approves the next step. Nothing advances without Board action.

Phase	What Happens	The Board Decides	The Board Receives
1 Applicant Profile	Planning session with the Board; stakeholder input at the level the Board selects; profile, qualifications, and application drafted for Board approval; position prepared for posting.	Timeline and start date; breadth of engagement; qualifications; application requirements; recruitment publication.	Approved profile and qualifications matrix; input reports; application; candidate-facing search publication.
2 Recruitment Period	Position posted broadly; direct outreach to qualified prospects; confidential applications received; credentials verified and backgrounds researched; pool organized for Board review.	Recruitment reach; length of the application window; update cadence; whether to commission a compensation study.	Complete application files; applicant summary and matrix; vetting reports; compensation study, if selected.
3 Interview & Selection	Board reviews the pool and selects interviewees; structured first-round (and optional second-round) interviews; finalist named and statutorily noticed; contract negotiated; transition begins.	Who is interviewed; rounds, questions, rubrics, and assignments; the finalist; the contract — by vote in open session.	Interview packets and rubrics; reference and due-diligence reports; contract and compensation support; transition plan.

The pace of these phases belongs to the Board. The final page of this guide shows how the pieces assemble into a working search calendar built around the Board's preferred start date.

Phase One — Developing the Applicant Profile



Phase One defines the leader DeSoto ISD is seeking before the position is ever advertised. Its product is a Board-approved Superintendent Profile — the qualifications, experience, competencies, and priorities the Board wants in its next leader — describing the leadership the District needs, not a predetermined person.

Initial Planning with the Board

The phase opens with a Board planning session that sets the target start date and timeline, the level of community involvement, the communication protocol, and the calendar of decision points; clarifies the Board’s goals and the outcomes it expects of the next Superintendent; establishes each participant’s role; and confirms how updates flow and candidate materials are secured.

Stakeholder Input — A Menu, Not a Mandate

Stakeholder input informs the profile and selection criteria; it does not transfer the Board’s hiring authority to the community. The Board may choose any combination of the methods below, from Board-only development to comprehensive engagement. Input is reported in objective summaries of recurring themes and differing views — qualitative feedback, not a statistical poll — and no report endorses a viewpoint or a candidate.

Available Method	What It Can Accomplish
Surveys	Community, employee, parent, and student surveys — anonymous and translated as appropriate.
Town-hall meetings	Open sessions explaining the process and gathering views on leadership and District priorities.
Focus groups	Structured sessions with students, teachers, staff, or parents for deeper qualitative feedback.
Roundtables	Discussions with civic, business, faith, employee-association, and community leaders.
Listening tour	Sessions across campuses or attendance zones for geographic breadth, with site visits if desired.
Board-only development	A streamlined option — the Board builds the profile from District data and its own deliberations.

Profile, Qualifications, and the Application

The team drafts the profile from stakeholder input, Board goals, and current District data. Qualifications are organized as Board choices — for example: certification status (subject to confirmation of current law, local policy, and any District of Innovation provisions); teaching, campus, cabinet, or superintendent experience; Texas public-school experience; academic and operational leadership; a record of improvement; governance and community engagement; bilingual ability; degree level; and comparable-district experience. The confidential application typically includes a letter of interest, résumé, leadership-philosophy statement, certification information, references, employment history, Board-requested written responses, and required acknowledgments.

BOARD DECISION
Before the position posts, the Board reviews and approves the profile and qualifications, the application requirements, the recruitment publication, and the final search timeline.

WHAT THE BOARD RECEIVES IN PHASE ONE
Approved timeline and decision calendar · engagement and communications plans · survey instruments and translated materials as selected · objective input reports · approved profile and qualifications matrix · application form and instructions · a candidate-facing publication that tells DeSoto ISD’s story.

Phase Two — Recruitment Period



Phase Two moves from defining the leader to building and evaluating the applicant pool. It pairs broad publication with active, direct recruitment: every search begins with DeSoto ISD’s needs and a fresh recruitment effort, not a predetermined list of candidates.

Publication and Active Recruitment

The Board-approved position is posted on the District and search-team websites and on appropriate statewide and national education-leadership platforms, professional associations, education service centers, and targeted media, with placements confirmed at posting. Posting alone is not enough: the team also reaches out directly to qualified prospects who appear to match the Board-approved profile.

AVAILABLE OPTION — RECRUITMENT REACH

Texas-focused • statewide with targeted national outreach • broad national search. The Board sets the reach; the team recruits to it.

Application Window and Candidate Communication

The length of the posting window is a Board choice: a compressed window of about four weeks accelerates the search, while an extended window of six to seven weeks broadens recruitment and gives applicants more planning time. All applications flow through a secure, confidential portal with a single point of contact through the search team, and every candidate receives the same instructions, reminders, notices, and logistics information.

Applicant Review and Vetting

As applications arrive, the search team prepares the pool for the Board’s review:

- Screens each application for completeness against the Board-approved minimum and preferred qualifications.
- Verifies credentials and certification status; examines employment history, leadership scope, and stated accomplishments.
- Conducts lawful, job-related public-record, background, news, litigation, and online research under counsel supervision.
- Contacts references at the stage and in the manner the Board approves, with candidate consent where appropriate.
- Prepares concise summaries and a comparative matrix — flagging items needing follow-up and separating verified facts from unverified information — while preserving every complete application file for the Board.

BOARD DECISION

The Board receives the applicant pool and decides who advances. The search team analyzes, organizes, and flags; it does not substitute its judgment for the Board’s.

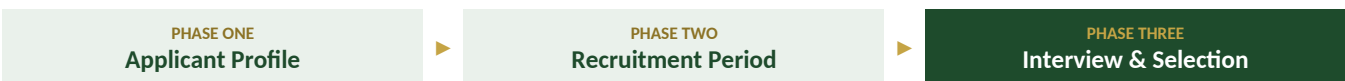
Compensation Study and Board Updates

If the Board wishes, the team prepares a current compensation study using comparable districts selected by enrollment, region, market, and complexity — covering base salary, total compensation, benefits, allowances, retirement, insurance, incentives, and contract structure, built on current, lawfully available data. Throughout the phase, the Board receives updates at its chosen cadence; public updates never disclose applicant identities.

WHAT THE BOARD RECEIVES IN PHASE TWO

Organized, secure application files • applicant summary table and qualifications matrix • vetting reports separating confirmed, pending, and privileged items • a memorandum on how to review the materials • the compensation study, if selected • a proposed first-round interview plan.

Phase Three — Interview and Selection



Phase Three lets the Board compare candidates through a consistent, rigorous process while preserving room for Board judgment and candidate-specific follow-up.

Board Review and First-Round Selection

The Board receives a formal review period with the complete application files, the summary matrix, and clear instructions on confidentiality and permissible deliberation. Then, at a properly posted meeting, the Board selects its first-round candidates and confirms the schedule, interview length, question set, scoring approach, and any candidate assignment.

Questions, Rubrics, and Board Preparation

Interview questions are developed with the Board to reflect DeSoto ISD’s approved profile, the Board’s goals, and current issues — in areas such as background and fit; academic improvement; college, career, and military readiness; staff and community relations; budget, finance, facilities, and governance; operations and safety; human resources; ethics; and Board–Superintendent relations. Every first-round candidate answers the same core questions; candidate-specific follow-up is reserved for the second round. A five-point rubric with written descriptors keeps evaluation consistent:

5 Exemplary • 4 Strong • 3 Meets expectations • 2 Partially meets • 1 Does not meet

Scores discipline the Board’s discussion; they never replace the Board’s judgment or operate as an automatic formula. Before interviews begin, the team briefs the Board on the packet, note-taking, follow-up, equal treatment, confidentiality, and logistics.

AVAILABLE OPTION — CANDIDATE ASSIGNMENTS

A 30/60/90-day or first-100-days entry plan • a plan addressing a Board goal, with measurable outcomes • a DeSoto-specific transition presentation • written responses on governance, finance, safety, or academics • a second-round case study. Assignments are identical for similarly situated candidates, reasonably scoped, with uniform instructions and deadlines.

Round One and Round Two

The first round is a structured baseline interview — typically 60 to 75 minutes — comparing candidates on the Board’s core competencies. A second round, if the Board chooses one, goes longer and deeper: a presentation or entry-plan discussion, tailored follow-up, and closer examination of leadership judgment and Board fit. The Board decides how many candidates advance, whether a second round is needed, and whether it wants additional references, site visits, or meetings before naming a finalist.

Finalist, Contract, and Transition

LEGAL MILESTONE — THE 21-DAY FINALIST NOTICE

Applicant identities are protected from public disclosure during the search. Once the Board selects a finalist or finalists, however, the name or names must be publicly noticed at least 21 days before the meeting at which the Board takes final action or votes on employment (*Tex. Gov’t Code § 552.126*). The Board may deliberate personnel matters in a properly posted closed session (*Tex. Gov’t Code § 551.074*); final action occurs by vote in open session. Agenda and legal language are reviewed by counsel before posting.

During the notice period, the team supports final due diligence, compensation analysis, contract negotiation, transition planning, and preparation of the final Board action. After selection, the Board may also choose transition support: the public announcement, entry-plan refinement, Board–Superintendent communication protocols, transition meetings, first-year performance goals, and a search recap.

The Board's Choices — A Component Menu

No single search model fits every district. The components below are options the Board may combine in whatever way best fits DeSoto ISD. There are no packages or tiers, and no component is required merely because another district has used it.

Decision Area	Choices the Board May Combine
Stakeholder engagement	Board-only profile development · targeted surveys or groups · comprehensive multilingual surveys, town halls, focus groups, roundtables, and site visits
Recruitment window	Accelerated window (about four weeks) · extended window (six to seven weeks) · custom schedule
Recruitment reach	Texas-focused · statewide with targeted national outreach · broad national search
Qualifications	Board-selected minimum and preferred criteria — weighted or presented without numerical weighting
Application materials	Standard application · written questions · leadership philosophy · work samples · entry-plan assignment
Candidate presentation	Full pool with objective summaries, qualifications matrix, and issue flags — the Board, not the team, decides who advances
Interview process	One or two rounds · uniform core questions · rubric or narrative evaluation · presentations and structured follow-up
Compensation & contract	Current salary study · compensation strategy · contract drafting and negotiation support
Transition support	Announcement · entry plan · Board–Superintendent protocols · first-year performance goals · search recap
Communication	Dedicated search webpage · public FAQ · Board updates at the chosen cadence · survey and meeting communications · finalist announcement

Who Does What

Participant	Role in the Search
Board of Trustees	Owns the search. Approves the process, timeline, profile, qualifications, and application; selects interviewees; conducts the interviews; names the finalist or finalists; approves the contract.
Search team	Designs and manages the process; facilitates stakeholder input and objective reporting; recruits; administers the confidential application process; conducts and reports vetting; prepares Board materials; facilitates interviews; supports compensation, contract, and transition work.
District administration & communications	Provides current District information and logistical support; distributes communications; arranges facilities, technology, translations, and website updates. Makes no candidate-selection decisions unless directed by the Board.
Stakeholders	Share views on District priorities and desired leadership qualities through the methods the Board selects. Stakeholder input informs the profile; stakeholders do not select the Superintendent.

THE SEARCH TEAM'S ROLE

Our role is to conduct the Board’s search on the Board’s behalf. The Board sets the direction, makes each substantive choice, and selects the Superintendent. We provide the structure, research, recruitment, due diligence, documents, logistics, and legal support needed to carry out those decisions.

Transparency for the Public — Confidentiality for Applicants

These two commitments work together, not against each other. The process itself is open and understandable: the community can know how the search works, what the phases are, when decisions will be made, and how to participate in any input the Board selects. Applicant identities and candidate materials, by contrast, are protected to the extent permitted by law — a protection that encourages strong sitting leaders to apply without placing their current positions at risk. The one legal exception is the finalist stage: the name or names of finalists must be publicly noticed at least 21 days before the Board’s final action, as described on the preceding page.

Building the Search Calendar

The search calendar is assembled around the Board's chosen target start date — working backward through contract approval, the statutory 21-day finalist notice, interviews, the application window, and profile development — and then fitted to the Board's meeting schedule and the District's academic calendar. The spans below are illustrative; every date remains subject to Board approval and modification.

Stage	Illustrative Span	Key Board Action
Search design and planning session	1–2 weeks	Board adopts the search design and timeline
Stakeholder input and profile development	3–5 weeks	Board approves profile, qualifications, and application
Position posted — application window	4–7 weeks	Board sets the window length and recruitment reach
Applicant review and first-round selection	1–2 weeks	Board selects first-round candidates
Interviews — one or two rounds	2–4 weeks	Board names a lone finalist or finalists
Statutory finalist notice	At least 21 days	Public notice under Tex. Gov't Code § 552.126
Contract approval and transition	1–3 weeks	Board takes final action by vote in open session

Depending on the choices the Board makes, a search commonly runs roughly three to six months from adoption of the search design to the new Superintendent's first day. Detailed, dated timeline scenarios will be prepared as separate exhibits for Board discussion once the Board indicates a preferred target start date.

Direction Requested from the Board

To convert this framework into a Board-approved search plan, the search team will ask for the Board's direction on:

- ☐ Target start date for the new Superintendent
- ☐ Breadth of stakeholder engagement, and which groups
- ☐ Languages and accessibility for surveys and meetings
- ☐ Minimum and preferred qualifications for the profile
- ☐ Recruitment reach and length of the application window
- ☐ One or two interview rounds
- ☐ Rubrics, candidate assignments, or presentations
- ☐ Compensation study and contract-negotiation support
- ☐ Frequency and form of Board updates
- ☐ Transition and onboarding support after selection

NEXT STEP

The Board may select any combination of the options described in this guide. Once the Board identifies its preferred timeline, level of stakeholder engagement, qualifications, recruitment approach, and interview format, the search team will convert those choices into a detailed search plan for Board approval and will administer the search on the Board's behalf.

DeSoto Independent School District

2026 Superintendent Search — Proposed Timeline

Option 1: Early November Start

New Superintendent First Day: Monday, November 2, 2026

Presented for Board of Trustees consideration — July 27, 2026

Goal	Action	Notes	Dates
Adopt Timeline and Community Input Format	Approve Timeline	Board and search team align on the search process; Board approves the timeline and the methods to gather community and staff input.	07/27/26
Develop Criteria for Application and Superintendent Qualifications	Prepare Surveys	Search team prepares the community and employee survey instruments and the distribution plan (approximately one week from timeline approval to posting).	07/28/26 – 07/31/26
	Post and Issue Community Survey	Community survey issued to gather input on the qualities and credentials sought in the next Superintendent; open for two weeks.	08/03/26 – 08/14/26
	Post and Issue Employee Survey	Employee survey issued district-wide; opens during the staff professional-development window (staff report July 27) and remains open through the first week of school.	08/03/26 – 08/14/26
	Listening and Learning Sessions	Town-hall and roundtable sessions with community, staff, student, and civic, faith, and business stakeholders; schedule includes dates after students return August 10.	08/04/26 – 08/12/26
Approve Application and Superintendent Qualifications	Approve Application and Qualifications	Board reviews survey and listening-session data and, in a work session with the search team, approves the application and the qualifications sought in a Superintendent.	08/17/26
Open Application and Application Window	Open and Post the Position	Search team posts the position and begins advertising.	08/18/26
	Recruit Applicants	Search team actively recruits applicants fitting the desired profile, with stakeholder input; four-week posting window.	08/18/26 – 09/15/26

Goal	Action	Notes	Dates
	Application Deadline	Application window closes.	09/15/26
Review and Conduct Background Checks and Vetting of Applicants	Firm Reviews Applications and Prepares Materials	Search team conducts background checks and vetting and organizes materials for Board review (two-day turnaround).	09/16/26 – 09/17/26
	Board Review Period	Board's formal review period with all applicant materials (three business days).	09/18/26 – 09/22/26
First Interviews	Selection of Candidates	Board meets to select candidates for the first round.	09/23/26
	Interviews	Board interviews first-round candidates in weekday sessions.	09/28/26 – 10/02/26
Second Round	Selection of Second-Round Candidates	Board narrows the field on the final day of first-round interviews and confirms the second-round interview format.	10/02/26
	Second-Round Interviews	Board conducts in-person, in-depth interviews with second-round candidates.	10/05/26 – 10/08/26
Selection of Lone Finalist and 21-Day Waiting Period	Select and Name Lone Finalist	Board meets to select a Lone Finalist and gives public notice of the finalist's name; concludes before Fair Day and Fall Break (October 12–16).	10/09/26
	21-Day Waiting Period	Statutory public-notice period before final action on employment (Tex. Gov't Code § 552.126); search team assists the Board with contract negotiation.	10/10/26 – 11/01/26
Board Hires New Superintendent	Approval and First Day	Board meets to approve the new Superintendent's contract; the Superintendent begins service.	11/02/26

** Superintendent Search Timeline and specific dates may be modified by the Board of Trustees.*

Planning Notes

- All search activities fall on weekdays. No Board action is scheduled on Election Day (November 3, 2026) or on a day the district is closed under the Board-approved DeSoto ISD 2026–2027 academic calendar (Labor Day, September 7; Fair Day and Fall Break, October 12–16; Thanksgiving Break, November 23–27; Winter Break, December 21 – January 5).

- The Lone Finalist public-notice period is built with a three-day margin beyond the 21-day minimum required by Texas Government Code § 552.126.
- Board action dates assume special called meetings where they do not fall on regular meeting dates.
- Community input runs approximately three weeks in total: one week of survey preparation, followed by two-week community and employee survey windows with an expanded schedule of listening and learning sessions.
- The application window runs four weeks (August 18 – September 15); second-round candidate selection is held on the final day of first-round interviews, and the Lone Finalist is named October 9, ahead of Fair Day and Fall Break (October 12–16).
- Contract approval and the Superintendent's first day (November 2) fall the day before Election Day (November 3, 2026).

DeSoto Independent School District
2026 Superintendent Search — Proposed Timeline
Option 2: Early December Start (Before Winter Break)

New Superintendent First Day: Monday, December 7, 2026

Presented for Board of Trustees consideration — July 27, 2026

Goal	Action	Notes	Dates
Adopt Timeline and Community Input Format	Approve Timeline	Board and search team align on the search process; Board approves the timeline and the methods to gather community and staff input.	07/27/26
Develop Criteria for Application and Superintendent Qualifications	Prepare Surveys	Search team prepares the community and employee survey instruments and the distribution plan; preparation begins the week students return (August 10) so the active search window remains compact.	08/10/26 – 08/14/26
	Post and Issue Community Survey	Community survey issued to gather input on the qualities and credentials sought in the next Superintendent; open for two weeks while school is in session.	08/17/26 – 08/28/26
	Post and Issue Employee Survey	Employee survey issued district-wide with all staff on duty; open for two weeks.	08/17/26 – 08/28/26
	Listening and Learning Tour	Town-hall meetings and roundtable sessions with community, staff, student, and civic, faith, and business stakeholders; expanded schedule runs into early September while school is in session.	08/18/26 – 09/02/26
Approve Application and Superintendent Qualifications	Approve Application and Qualifications	Board reviews survey and listening-tour data, synthesized by the search team September 3–4, and in a work session approves the application and the qualifications sought in a Superintendent.	09/08/26
Open Application and	Open and Post the Position	Search team posts the position and begins advertising (first business days after the Labor Day weekend).	09/09/26

Goal	Action	Notes	Dates
Application Window	Recruit Applicants	Search team actively recruits applicants fitting the desired profile, with stakeholder input; posting window of approximately four and a half weeks.	09/09/26 – 10/09/26
	Application Deadline	Application window closes.	10/09/26
Review and Conduct Background Checks and Vetting of Applicants	Firm Reviews Applications and Prepares Materials	Search team conducts background checks and vetting and organizes materials for Board review (two-day turnaround); firm-side work continues while the district is closed for Fair Day and Fall Break.	10/12/26 – 10/13/26
	Board Review Period	Board's formal review period with all applicant materials (three business days), held during Fair Day and Fall Break (October 12–16) for at-home review while the district is closed.	10/14/26 – 10/16/26
First Interviews	Selection of Candidates	Board meets to select candidates for the first round (first weekday after Fall Break); candidates receive a full week's notice before interviews.	10/19/26
	Interviews	Board interviews first-round candidates in weekday sessions.	10/26/26 – 10/30/26
Second Round	Selection of Second-Round Candidates	Board narrows the field on the final day of first-round interviews and confirms the second-round interview format.	10/30/26
	Second-Round Interviews	Board conducts in-person, in-depth interviews with second-round candidates; the week of Election Day (November 2–6) is deliberately kept clear of search activity.	11/09/26 – 11/12/26
Selection of Lone Finalist	Select and Name Lone Finalist	Board meets to select a Lone Finalist and gives public notice of the finalist's name.	11/13/26

Goal	Action	Notes	Dates
and 21-Day Waiting Period	21-Day Waiting Period	Statutory public-notice period before final action on employment (Tex. Gov't Code § 552.126); search team assists the Board with contract negotiation; the period spans Thanksgiving Break (November 23–27).	11/14/26 – 12/06/26
Board Hires New Superintendent	Approval and First Day	Board meets to approve the new Superintendent's contract; the Superintendent begins service with two full working weeks in the district before Winter Break begins December 21.	12/07/26

** Superintendent Search Timeline and specific dates may be modified by the Board of Trustees.*

Planning Notes

- All search activities fall on weekdays. No Board action is scheduled on Election Day (November 3, 2026) or on a day the district is closed under the Board-approved DeSoto ISD 2026–2027 academic calendar (Labor Day, September 7; Fair Day and Fall Break, October 12–16; Thanksgiving Break, November 23–27; Winter Break, December 21 – January 5).
- The Lone Finalist public-notice period is built with a three-day margin beyond the 21-day minimum required by Texas Government Code § 552.126.
- Board action dates assume special called meetings where they do not fall on regular meeting dates.
- The active search begins in mid-August by design: survey preparation starts the week students return (August 10), keeping the public-facing search window compact while preserving a full input phase — two-week surveys and a listening tour running into early September — and a posting window of approximately four and a half weeks (September 9 – October 9), within a five-week ceiling.
- Application review is completed during Fair Day and Fall Break (October 12–16) — firm vetting October 12–13 and trustee at-home review October 14–16 — so candidate selection occurs October 19, the first weekday after the break, with no idle days in the schedule.
- The week of Election Day (November 2–6) is kept clear of search activity; second-round interviews follow November 9–12, the Lone Finalist is named November 13, and a December 7 start gives the new Superintendent two full working weeks before Winter Break begins December 21.

DeSoto Independent School District

2026 Superintendent Search — Proposed Timeline

Option 3: Start Upon Return from Winter Break

New Superintendent First Day: Monday, January 4, 2027

Presented for Board of Trustees consideration — July 27, 2026

Goal	Action	Notes	Dates
Adopt Timeline and Community Input Format	Approve Timeline	Board and search team align on the search process; Board approves the timeline and the methods to gather community and staff input.	07/27/26
Develop Criteria for Application and Superintendent Qualifications	Prepare Surveys	Search team prepares the community and employee survey instruments and the distribution plan; the first three weeks after timeline approval are deliberately quiet so the active search window remains compact.	08/17/26 – 08/21/26
	Post and Issue Community Survey	Community survey issued to gather input on the qualities and credentials sought in the next Superintendent; open for two weeks while school is in session.	08/24/26 – 09/04/26
	Post and Issue Employee Survey	Employee survey issued district-wide with all staff on duty; open for two weeks.	08/24/26 – 09/04/26
	Listening and Learning Tour	Town-hall meetings and roundtable sessions with community, staff, student, and civic, faith, and business stakeholders; expanded schedule runs from late August into September (no sessions on Labor Day, September 7).	08/25/26 – 09/09/26
Approve Application and Superintendent Qualifications	Approve Application and Qualifications	Board reviews survey and listening-tour data, synthesized by the search team September 10–11, and in a work session approves the application and the qualifications sought in a Superintendent.	09/15/26
Open Application	Open and Post the Position	Search team posts the position and begins advertising.	09/16/26

Goal	Action	Notes	Dates
and Application Window	Recruit Applicants	Search team actively recruits applicants fitting the desired profile, with stakeholder input; full five-week posting window spanning Fair Day and Fall Break (October 12–16), with no active search events during the closure.	09/16/26 – 10/21/26
	Application Deadline	Application window closes.	10/21/26
Review and Conduct Background Checks and Vetting of Applicants	Firm Reviews Applications and Prepares Materials	Search team conducts background checks and vetting and organizes materials for Board review (two-day turnaround).	10/22/26 – 10/23/26
	Board Review Period	Board's formal review period with all applicant materials (three business days).	10/26/26 – 10/28/26
First Interviews	Selection of Candidates	Board meets to select candidates for the first round; candidates receive a full week's notice before interviews, and the week of Election Day (November 2–6) is kept clear of search activity.	10/30/26
	Interviews	Board interviews first-round candidates in weekday sessions.	11/09/26 – 11/13/26
Second Round	Selection of Second-Round Candidates	Board narrows the field on the final day of first-round interviews and confirms the second-round interview format; advancing candidates hold the following week's dates from initial scheduling.	11/13/26
	Second-Round Interviews	Board conducts in-person, in-depth interviews with second-round candidates; concludes before Thanksgiving Break (November 23–27).	11/16/26 – 11/19/26
Selection of Lone Finalist	Select and Name Lone Finalist	Board meets to select a Lone Finalist and gives public notice of the finalist's name.	11/20/26

Goal	Action	Notes	Dates
and 21-Day Waiting Period	21-Day Waiting Period	Statutory public-notice period before final action on employment (Tex. Gov't Code § 552.126); search team assists the Board with contract negotiation; the period spans Thanksgiving Break (November 23–27).	11/21/26 – 12/13/26
Board Hires New Superintendent	Contract Approval	Board meets to approve the new Superintendent's contract during the final full week before Winter Break (break begins December 21).	12/14/26
New Superintendent Begins	First Day	Superintendent begins on the district's first day back from Winter Break (staff development days January 4–5; students return January 6).	01/04/27

** Superintendent Search Timeline and specific dates may be modified by the Board of Trustees.*

Planning Notes

- All search activities fall on weekdays. No Board action is scheduled on Election Day (November 3, 2026) or on a day the district is closed under the Board-approved DeSoto ISD 2026–2027 academic calendar (Labor Day, September 7; Fair Day and Fall Break, October 12–16; Thanksgiving Break, November 23–27; Winter Break, December 21 – January 5).
- The Lone Finalist public-notice period is built with a three-day margin beyond the 21-day minimum required by Texas Government Code § 552.126.
- Board action dates assume special called meetings where they do not fall on regular meeting dates.
- The search is deliberately paced for a January start: the first three weeks after timeline approval are quiet, survey preparation begins August 17, and the input phase — two-week surveys and an expanded listening tour running from late August into September — concludes with Board approval of the application and qualifications on September 15.
- This is the only option with the full five-week posting window (September 16 – October 21); the window spans Fair Day and Fall Break with no active search events during the closure, and the week of Election Day (November 2–6) is kept clear of search activity.
- Second-round candidate selection is held November 13, the final day of first-round interviews; the Lone Finalist is named November 20, contract approval falls December 14 during the final full week before Winter Break, and the Superintendent's first day, January 4, 2027, is the district's first day back (staff development days January 4–5; students return January 6).