

Executive Leadership Recruitment, Retention & Accountability

A proposed framework for stable, qualified, transparent and student-centered district leadership.

Prepared by: Maicol Rivera Torres, Candidate for Pontiac School District Board of Education (6-year term)

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Campaign principle: Students First. Pontiac First.

Status: Candidate governance proposal for public discussion. It has not been adopted by the Pontiac School District Board of Education and is not an official district policy. Implementation requires review of current board policies, labor agreements, budget, applicable law and action by the authorized decision-makers.

1. Purpose and commitments

Strengthen the district's ability to recruit and retain effective leaders, preserve continuity in critical operations, protect student services, and rebuild public confidence through lawful board oversight and measurable expectations.

- Students and families come first; leadership stability is a means to better educational outcomes.
- Recruitment is merit-based, inclusive, competitive and appropriately transparent.
- The Board governs through collective decisions and evaluations; administrators manage day-to-day operations within legally authorized authority.
- Confidential student and employee information remains protected; public reporting uses aggregated or appropriately redacted information.

2. Scope and allocation of authority

The framework addresses superintendent, assistant superintendent, human resources director, special education director, and other critical positions designated by the Board after legal and policy review.

Superintendent: The full Board is responsible for employing and evaluating the superintendent under applicable Michigan law. A trustee acting alone cannot appoint or direct a superintendent.

Other administrators: Michigan law authorizes the board to employ specified administrators by written contract; actual recommendations, selection procedures, approvals and supervisory authority must follow applicable law, bargaining obligations, current board policy and delegated administrative responsibilities. The proposal does not assume every personnel decision belongs exclusively to either the superintendent or an individual trustee.

3. Vacancy verification and workforce baseline

Before announcing that a particular position is vacant, direct an authorized administrative review to confirm each role's current status: filled, acting/interim, vacant, advertised, under recruitment or pending Board action. Do not publish unverified claims about named employees or individual job status.

- Create a confidential position-control inventory with authorized owner, reporting line, contract end date and interim coverage.
- Present a public, privacy-preserving quarterly staffing summary with role categories, time-to-fill and critical service continuity measures.
- Assess salary comparability, qualified applicant pools, leadership turnover, exit themes and hard-to-fill specialties.

4. Recruitment and selection standards

For the superintendent, recommend a documented search process approved by the full Board. Use clear job criteria, legally appropriate public engagement, consistent scoring, credential verification, references and a conflict-of-interest disclosure process. Board members must comply with open-meeting rules and personnel confidentiality.

- Define the leadership profile: instructional results, ethics, fiscal stewardship, special education competence, culture and family engagement.
- Advertise appropriately and recruit regionally or nationally when justified by the position, timeline and available resources.
- Use structured interviews, job-related assessment criteria, and consistent documentation; apply equal employment opportunity requirements.
- Identify interim coverage before departure where practicable, without bypassing legitimate hiring and contracting requirements.

5. Retention and leadership support

- Conduct a documented compensation and benefits review using comparable Michigan districts and approved budget assumptions.
- Implement onboarding milestones at 30, 90 and 180 days, with position-specific success criteria and leadership mentoring where applicable.
- Offer lawful professional development, meaningful feedback, adequate support staff and clearly defined authority.
- Conduct confidential stay interviews and departure analysis; report trends to the Board without exposing protected employee information.
- Build succession and knowledge-transfer plans for mission-critical functions, including HR, special education, finance and operations.

6. Special education leadership safeguards

Treat the special education leadership role as a continuity-critical position. Establish qualifications appropriate to the role, experience with IDEA and Michigan requirements, student-centered service delivery, staff support, family communication and response to complaints. A gap in executive staffing must not interrupt legally required services.

- Maintain a written continuity plan for IEP administration, timelines, transportation coordination, evaluations and required notices.
- Review aggregate service-delivery and compliance indicators, including overdue evaluations, unfilled specialist roles, corrective actions and complaint resolution patterns.

- Create accessible family communication channels and timely escalation routes that protect confidentiality and due-process rights.
- Use improvement actions and legally appropriate independent reviews when persistent patterns of noncompliance emerge.

7. Evaluation and accountability

Use legally compliant evaluation tools and schedules. The Board evaluates the superintendent; eligible administrators are evaluated by the legally designated evaluator. Michigan's administrator evaluation statute contains requirements for evaluation measures, ratings, written feedback, professional support and public posting of evaluation-system information. Any adopted policy must conform to the law and applicable bargaining agreements.

Proposed outcome measures (final targets set only after baseline review):

- Time-to-fill for designated critical jobs; vacancies requiring temporary coverage; and retention at 12 and 24 months.
- Delivery of board-adopted strategic goals, budget stewardship and timely reporting.
- Family feedback and employee climate trends, using representative and privacy-conscious methods.
- Special education compliance and service continuity, reported in aggregate without student identifiers.
- Completion rates for assigned corrective actions and board directives.

8. Community transparency and public involvement

- Hold legally compliant listening opportunities to help define superintendent leadership priorities.
- Publish the search process, selection criteria, major milestones and Board decisions to the extent legally permissible.
- Provide accessible notices, multiple feedback formats and translation or interpretation where reasonably needed.
- Publish a quarterly high-level dashboard and an annual governance review while preserving closed-session and personnel protections.

9. Implementation roadmap (proposed)

Period	Recommended actions
First 30 days after Board authorization	Legal/policy review; confidential vacancy inventory; interim coverage risk review; public baseline design.
Days 31-60	Approve search protocols and recruitment criteria where needed; review compensation benchmarks and continuity plans.
Days 61-90	Launch authorized recruitment actions; adopt evaluation calendar and first public dashboard specification.
Quarterly thereafter	Review workforce, service continuity and improvement trends; refine targets; publicly report permissible aggregates.

10. Governance checks and safeguards

- Require full Board action wherever law or policy assigns decisions to the Board; prohibit unilateral trustee instructions to staff.
- Review contracts, fiscal feasibility, procurement/search costs, applicable labor agreements and equal opportunity obligations before adoption.
- Use lawful meeting procedures and records retention; safeguard personnel, student education and attorney-client privileged information.
- Require annual review and modification of this framework based on the district's actual needs and current law.

11. Proposed Board action

That the Board direct the superintendent and appropriate legal/policy advisers to conduct a leadership staffing and retention assessment; provide a lawful recruitment, succession and evaluation framework for Board consideration; and recommend a public dashboard using aggregate data. This is a proposed direction for discussion, not a representation of an adopted resolution.

12. Questions requiring verification

- Which specified leadership positions are actually vacant or staffed on an interim basis as of the review date?
- Which Pontiac Board policies currently govern administrative recruitment, approval and delegation?
- Which searches, contracts, evaluation tools and retention measures already exist?
- What is the impact of state law, collective bargaining, available funding and pending board decisions?

Legal and research references

Michigan Revised School Code, MCL 380.1229 (employment of superintendent and administrators)

<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=mcl-380-1229>

MCL 380.1246 (administrator qualifications)

<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=mcl-380-1246>

MCL 380.1249b (administrator evaluation)

<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=mcl-380-1249b>

Pontiac School District Board of Education - links to board policies and records

<https://www.pontiac.k12.mi.us/about-us/board-of-education>

US Department of Education, IDEA Parents and Families

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/parents-families/>

Disclaimer: This document is a candidate-authored proposal for public discussion, not legal advice or a claim that any leadership position is currently vacant. Verify the latest law, district procedures and vacancy status before official action or publication of factual staffing assertions.