



# Superintendent Search

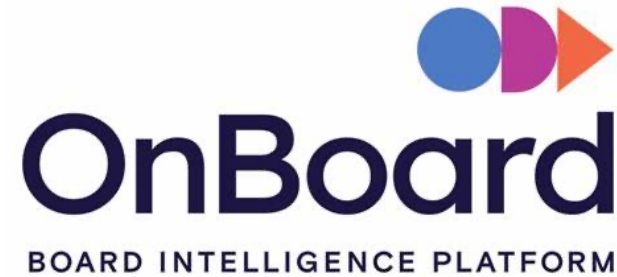
## 20 March 2025



## Administrative

### **OnBoard Board Intelligence Software**

- Account has been created for you. (Check junk folder for invitation.)
- All agenda and committee materials will be provided electronically.
- OnBoard provides public access to meeting materials.





# Outline

## **Selecting the next Superintendent**

- Selection process and timeline
- General introduction to search firms
- Firm vetting process and current status
- Things to consider
- Summary



# Selection Process

## **Immediate Steps**

- Establish Search Committee membership
- Designate administrative staffing support to the Search Committee
- Establish a timeline
- Vet and select a search firm



# Selection Process

## Post- Search Firm Selection

- Meet with relevant constituencies to gather input
  - Listening sessions/surveys with faculty, staff, cadets, alumni, and community members
- Create a Superintendent Search website and email address (e.g., [supesearch@vmi.edu](mailto:supesearch@vmi.edu)), outline process, update progress often
- Use input to establish qualifications and job ad
- Create a Superintendent Prospectus (a sort of marketing brochure)



# Search Timeline

Goal: Nominate to the Board of Visitors Candidates for Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute





## Upsides w/ Search Firms

- Helps demonstrate impartiality and a commitment to a fair and transparent search process.
- Recruiters can help build consensus when boards are split. Their diplomacy skills matter.
- A smaller firm with local knowledge and experience with similar institutions is valuable.
- Bigger firms may have a wider national reach but may lack a personal touch.



# Search Firm Proposals

- The number of search firms used by Virginia universities and colleges is extensive.
- We will choose a firm that best suits our needs and that is currently contracted with the state. Typically, this involves an initial discussion with the firm and then, if desired, a proposal request.
- We solicited four firms that have open contracts in the state. Each one has a solid reputation and relevant experience. Most have been used by Virginia colleges/universities.
  - Greenwood-Asher
  - Parker
  - Bufkin/Baker
  - MyersMcRae





# Things to Consider



# Things to Consider Candidate Selection

Average tenure of a college president is ~5 years

80% are external hires

Past experience or credentials may not be the best predictors of future success

Hiring for potential to grow and lead is a good strategy

Five interpersonal **potentials** for success:

- Determination
- Motivation
- Engagement
- Curiosity
- Insight



# Things to Consider Candidate Selection

- Determine current and future requirements of the job.
- Gather input, determine mix of essential skills and capabilities.
- Keep an open mind: battle against hidden assumptions and biases—your own and other people’s—as you home in on two or three prospects and, ultimately, a final choice.
- Don’t be unduly influenced by candidates’ celebrity or the halo effect of having worked in prestigious positions.
- Find the fit: Be prepared to reject finalists and redefine essential skills and capabilities as new information and insights arise in the process.
- Have each board member weigh in on the choice.
- Let the firm conduct background checks, but the search chair should also have direct conversations with people who know the candidate well – get a feel for the strength of their convictions.
- Plan for imperfection. Trade-offs are inevitable, strengths and weaknesses will vary. Accept them, work to fill gaps, coach as needed.

<https://hbr.org/2016/12/the-secrets-of-great-ceo-selection>



# Things to Consider Selection Process

- Avoid command and control approach, engage in broad community consultation.
- Transparency, within reason, is key. Be forthcoming as possible about the process, maintain candidate confidentiality with zealotry.
- Prepare for a barrage of input. Communications management is important, as is patience.
- Educate relevant constituencies about the process and remind them that the BOV is responsible for the appointment of the Superintendent.



# Things to Consider Selection Process

- Search committee should be workable and representative of relevant constituencies; the majority should be BOV members.
- The leadership profile (job ad) is important. Consensus among the search committee members is vital.
- Need to think ahead about internal candidates and how they will be managed.
- With finalists, evaluate them and woo them simultaneously. Balance disclosure of information and courtship.
- Again, candidate confidentiality is key. So is the perception of professionalism associated with the process.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/01/16/10-recommendations-successful-presidential-search-opinion>



# Summary

