



Alton School Board Begins Superintendent Search - Baumgartner Announced 2024 Departure Last Year

by Submitted by Alton School Board
October 30 2023 3:12 PM

ALTON – The Alton School District Board of Education said today it will begin a national search for the next leader of the District this week. The current superintendent, Dr. Kristie Baumgartner, announced last year that the 2023-2024 school year would be her last, leading to the forthcoming vacancy and search process. June 30, 2024, will be her last day.



According to David Lauschke, Board of Education President, Baumgartner shared her intent to leave after this school year with them early last year."

"We wanted to offer Kristie a multi-year contract extension last year but she was very upfront and transparent in sharing she only planned to serve one more year as superintendent," he said.

Lauschke added that Baumgartner's service to district students, staff and families over the past two and a half decades has been impressive and appreciated.

"I don't know that you will find a more caring or hard-working leader than her and she has been that way since the day she arrived here. She's going to be incredibly hard to replace and will be greatly missed, but we are happy for her."

Baumgartner started her career in the District as a grant writer and public relations coordinator. Over her tenure, she has written and received over \$40 million in competitive grant funds for district schools. These funds resulted in programs and services for students including technology, after-school programs, mental health initiatives, construction, early childhood program expansions, curricular and instructional enhancements, teacher recruitment and retention efforts and many more. Baumgartner also served as the Title I Director and assistant superintendent for the District before being named superintendent in 2019.

During her time as superintendent, over \$24 million in construction and renovation projects have been completed with numerous facility and school upgrades. Additionally, the District's tax rate has sharply decreased from \$5.30 per \$100 of assessed valuation in 2019 to \$4.75 currently, leading to reduced costs for taxpayers specific to the District's portion of property tax bills.

The District's Financial Profile Score, issued by the Illinois State Board of Education to assess a school district's financial health, also drastically improved from "Financial Watch" status to "Financial Recognition" during her leadership.

Bobby Rickman, Alton Education Association President (the District's employee union) shared that he and Baumgartner have worked well together over the course of her time as superintendent.

"Dr. Baumgartner and I have been able to have a great working relationship. The ability to have the communication and understanding of what is best for our students, district and members have been positive for the community." Baumgartner said that leaving after this school year comes with mixed emotions. "I love our school district and communities very much. We have wonderful students and staff here and not being able to see them as often is going to be the hardest part in leaving for me."

The Board of Education selected the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) on Monday to conduct a national search process in naming Baumgartner's successor. Specific information on the search and application process will be released soon. The interview and selection process will commence in late November and run through December. The new superintendent would then begin on July 1, 2024.

The Board plans to make the interview and selection process inclusive by soliciting opinions from a wide array of individuals including students, families, staff and the community. "The Board believes in the importance of garnering input from our stakeholders as a part of this entire process and we plan to invest the time needed in analyzing the meaningful feedback received," emphasized Lauschke.

Rickman mirrored Lauschke's sentiment regarding the importance of a search process that is inclusive.

"I am confident the Board will work with our stakeholders and the union to conduct a search that will allow us to select a superintendent who will continue to move the Alton School District in the right direction for all." For Baumgartner's part, she has great confidence in the Board's ability to lead the process and choose a new superintendent. "We are very fortunate to have an outstanding board. They always place students as their first priority in any decision made. I have no doubt they will make an excellent decision in selecting the next superintendent to lead our school district," she said.