



## Northwood-Kensett, St. Ansgar School Boards Name Finalists for Next Shared Superintendent

January 13, 2025

NORTHWOOD, IA — The Northwood-Kensett Community School District and St. Ansgar School District School Boards recently met with [Grundmeyer Leader Services](#) to review the candidate pool and have announced three finalists in their search for a shared superintendent. The finalists are Blake Henley, Tony Hiatt, and Trevor Urich.

Currently serving as principal of Austin Public Schools in Minnesota, Henley leads a K-4 elementary school and acts as chief negotiator for collective bargaining agreements. Through collaborative strategic planning, he successfully implemented a building improvement plan and enhanced safety and security within the school. Additionally, he established a shareholder communication plan to encourage open dialogue and partnered with the Parent-Teacher Association to promote student success and community engagement.

Henley holds a master's degree in educational leadership from Southwest Minnesota State University and a graduate certificate in superintendency from Saint Mary's University. In his previous role, he served as intermediate assistant principal for APS. He has more than a decade of experience in K-12 leadership and instruction.

As director of elementary education at Pleasant Valley CSD, Hiatt oversees preK-12 programming for a district of approximately 6,000 students. He has led initiatives that earned all six elementary schools "Exceptional" or "High-Performing" ratings on the Iowa School Performance Profiles, and spearheaded efforts to expand the district's Teacher Leadership System.

Hiatt holds a master's degree in educational administration and principalship and an advanced studies certificate in superintendency from the University of Northern Iowa. He also anticipates earning a Doctor of Education in 2027. With more than 25 years of experience in education, Hiatt most recently served as a regional administrator at the Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency.

In his current role as principal of St. Ansgar Middle and High Schools, Urich has driven instructional quality through the "4Cs" framework—creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration—and a curriculum review and adoption process. In addition, he has leveraged community donations to facilitate improvements to the mental health delivery system.

Previously, he developed a Career Education Program through partnerships with 45 local businesses while serving as elementary principal at Denison CSD.

Urich holds a master's degree in PK-12 School Counseling from Buena Vista University and specialist degrees in principalship and superintendency from the University of South Dakota. He has over 15 years of K-12 experience, 11 of which have been in an administrative capacity.

- As a next step, the board and stakeholder interview teams will conduct final interviews with each finalist on January 20, 2025. The board then plans to discuss the candidates and reach a final decision soon after the formal interviews.

The next superintendent will begin leading the Northwood-Kensett and St. Ansgar Community School Districts effective July 1, 2025.

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