

## Kevin Case

### Morgan County School District RE-3, Fort Morgan, CO - Superintendent (86)

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## COVER LETTER

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### Cover Letter

Please type your personalized cover letter here.

*Cover Letter*

**Morgan County School District Board of Education January 21, 2021**

**As I have considered the next step in my professional journey, Jodi and I visited the Fort Morgan community last week and have further researched your district, I believe that my personal and professional skill set aligns with the leadership qualities necessary to help the Morgan County School District continue to grow, develop, and prosper in the future. Please consider me an applicant for the Superintendent's position.**

**I have spent a great deal of time thinking, researching, and reflecting about my interest in this position. I have asked myself numerous times, "What does Kevin Case have to offer the Morgan County School District?" The answer that continues to surface is LEADERSHIP. As I reflect on my career and plan for transition, I continue to come back to two phrases that have been foundational to me over time: "Tone at the Top" and "#LeadershipMatters". Both of these statements highlight the importance of leadership, especially the importance of it as it relates to the board and superintendent. You can be knowledgeable about curriculum, develop and implement a perfect budget, endure a pandemic, and support the passage of a bond issue, (all of which are vitally important to the success of the district), BUT Leadership is the foundational principle that has the greatest potential to have an exponential impact on an organization. Impactful leaders: USE a variety of strategies to paint a colorful picture of what it is the organization is trying to accomplish and clearly define the overall direction that the organization is heading. Many times one catalyst for developing vision can be engaging all stakeholders in a strategic planning process to help ensure that district priorities are clear, well defined, and widely known to all stakeholders. ARE prepared to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves to move the organization forward, regardless of when those opportunities arise, even if those events seem unimportant in the moment. While the events of the past year have been beyond challenging, they provide us with one time opportunities to determine what we need to discard from our current system and what new and promising practices we want to begin to "bake" into our future system. BUILD and develop those around them in a holistic manner, healthier individuals equate to stronger and more productive teams. I'm a firm believer in building capacity within an organization, whether it be specific leadership training, coaching, integrating adaptive schools concepts, or supporting community initiatives. Developing the collective leadership capacity of all stakeholders is critical. DEVELOP collaborative and trusting partnerships with all aspects of the school community. Strong partnerships with district stakeholders promote collaborative relationships. All interactions are important, whether it be collaborating with a local community college, attending a community meeting, having open and honest dialogue with staff, serving on a local or state school related board, or talking with district stakeholders. Every interaction counts and helps to develop and build healthy, lasting partnerships. ULTIMATELY, #LeadershipMatters.**

**I am excited about the possibility of being the next superintendent of the Morgan County School District. I look forward to spending time in your district, getting to know more about the district, gaining an understanding of your leadership needs, and discussing the potential of establishing a long term professional relationship. I look forward to hearing from you.**

**Kevin Case**

## **MORGAN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-3, CO - CRITERIA**

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### **Morgan County School District RE-3, CO - Criteria**

*Please describe your strengths and abilities as it relates to the listed criteria.*

*The Morgan County School District RE-3, Fort Morgan, Colorado, Board of Education, is seeking a highly qualified and fully certified Superintendent with the following desired characteristics:*

- Leader - A strong innovative, collaborative leader who possesses the skills to bring staff together while listening, supporting and motivating them, encouraging success and succession while having the ability to problem solve and make difficult decisions. A leader who can develop and maintain a school budget and understands the Colorado School Finance laws.*
- Visionary - An individual who can provide vision for our district enhancing and embracing the current strategic plan.*
- Communicator - A strong communicator who can partner with all stakeholders providing for a strong flow of information between buildings, staff, board, community and state.*
- Visible - A highly visible advocate for our school, community and state, who will actively involve themselves in school, community and professional organizations.*

• *Diversity - An individual who will embrace our community with understanding and acceptance of our cultural and academic diversity and believes meeting the varied needs of all students is a top priority.*

**As my wife Jodi and I have discussed relocating and serving in a school leadership role in a community, two major factors have weighed in to our decision making process. First and foremost, we want to ensure that there is a strong match between the characteristics the board expects from their new superintendent and my natural personal and professional skill set. After reviewing your desired characteristics, I am confident that my skill set matches well with your expectations. In order for our professional board/superintendent relationship to be strong, we must be aligned in what we want to accomplish, and how we want to accomplish it. Secondly, Jodi and I need to be able to see ourselves being a part of a viable community and school system where we can both contribute to the betterment of both the district and community. Last week we visited Fort Morgan and spent some time touring the community, driving by facilities, and talking with a few individuals about the community. Given these two key pieces of information, I feel confident applying for the position.**

**LEADER - I believe that leadership is my strongest skill set. A school superintendent's major role is not only to provide leadership for the district, but more importantly, to develop collective leadership capacity within the organization. Continuing to refine, develop, and grow my leadership skill set is extremely important to me. During the past five years I have focused my development around gaining an awareness of understanding of the different strategies and processes that are necessary to solve both technical and adaptive challenges, knowing that they both require similar yet different skill sets to solve. Secondly, I am a strong believer in the importance of the power of leveraging the collective wisdom in the room to solve problems. When you involve those who are closest to the problem in creating solutions, the chances are greater that the solution will be successfully implemented long term. My leadership skill set has been greatly enhanced with recent and ongoing training from the Kansas Leadership Center and deepening my knowledge of Adaptive Schools concepts. These two concepts compliment each other very well and provide a strong foundation for collaborative processes. A number of key staff and some community members have joined me in this training. I have been a superintendent in Kansas for 20 plus years. During that time, I have developed, navigated, and provided leadership relating to school budgets. During the first 16 years, I was solely responsible for all aspects of the budget. The past five years, I had an Assistant Superintendent who was in charge of the budget. So I have both in depth knowledge of the budget and also understand how to provide oversight into the process. While I am not currently a student of the Colorado school finance system, I am confident that I can connect with local, regional, and state resources to gain an understanding of Colorado budgeting processes.**

**VISIONARY - Throughout my career, I have had the ability to help buildings and districts develop a vision for the future. I like the way you have framed this characteristic . . .enhancing and embracing the current strategic plan, it is respectful to the work that has been done and infers it can and will be improved in the future. It says you have a direction but you want to make it better and more clear. I believe that taking time early on in the transition of leadership to revisit the district's vision and strategic plan will help pave the way for future success. I believe engaging a wide range of stakeholders in the process is extremely beneficial. One strategy to utilize to help gather input and "crowdsource" some of the data collection is through the use of thoughtexchange. Thoughtexchange is an online platform that allows everyone's ideas to be brought into the mix and also allows everyone's thinking to be exposed (thoughtexchange = a robust survey tool on steroids). It also allows themes with specific local data to be quickly organized and developed. The tool allows you to work with small groups, large groups, virtual groups, and/or any combination of stakeholder input that meets your needs. Another skill set that I bring to the table is my ability to effectively facilitate groups. Skillful and intentional facilitation of groups helps to ensure that all voices are brought to the forefront and that everyone feels heard. Developing and enhancing vision is not about one person's voice, it is about a collective voice. Below are a few accomplishments that connect with vision. During my time at Inman, we became one of the first iPad 1-1 school districts and eventually became an Apple Distinguished Program. Successfully accomplishing both of those feats, were a result of continuing to talk about, develop, and make progress toward a vision that we wanted for the district. Developing vision requires a multifaceted approach to get from developing, to supporting, to doing. Secondly, while at Emporia, we were able to develop district priorities or goals, pass a \$78 million bond issue, build an early learning center with an additional \$6 million donation from a private foundation, and have transitioned five buildings into the Kansas Can School Redesign process. While all buildings will eventually join the process, we laid out a vision with the board, community, and buildings that allowed them to enter that process on their timeline, knowing that the vision was to join that process.**

**COMMUNICATOR - No matter how well you communicate, it will always be something that stakeholders will say you can do better. While there are many perceived challenges with communication today, there are also many opportunities to connect with stakeholders. I have been extremely pleased with many communication avenues that we have put in place at USD 253. Many of the concepts that I have implemented were not in place five years ago. We have attempted to use a wide range of communication techniques and delivery methods to support overall stakeholder engagement. Some examples are listed below:**

**LEVERAGED** social media, print media, and articles from the superintendent as a way to keep stakeholders informed;  
**CREATED** the #EmporiaProud for branding purposes and to encourage staff and student recognition;  
**ENCOURAGED** district wide use of #EmporiaProud note cards that allowed all staff to write personal notes of appreciation and highlight successes;  
**ESTABLISHED** #EmporiaShowcase, a monthly radio show that aired on KVOE that was sponsored by the Educational Employees Credit Union, to spotlight district wide programs and accomplishments;  
**DEVELOPED** the concept of #FacesOfEmporiaSchools, a mechanism to highlight staff, boost morale, and support staff recognition & retention;  
**PROVIDED** staff members and stakeholders the opportunity to connect with the superintendent by establishing virtual superintendent chats, live virtual updates, and Q and A sessions during the past year;  
**UTILIZED** thoughtexchange, an online, interactive, crowdsourcing platform, to gather information about what matters most to our stakeholders and assist us with gaining authentic data, feedback, and support for decision making.

**VISIBLE** - I believe it is important that the superintendent be "the face of the district". That can be accomplished in a variety of ways and requires a delicate balance of being involved, but not being too involved. Visibility is important and during my time as a school leader, I have continually worked to be active in all aspects of the school community. My wife and I have been involved in public education since the late 1980's, it has been our life, we continue to advocate for the importance of students receiving the best education possible. Two topics that are easy to advocate for that encompasses all students are kindergarten readiness and post secondary success. The two topics are on both ends of the school experience and help provide stakeholders with an opportunity to see the entire education picture of the prek - 12 experience.  
**BUILDING VISIBILITY** - I enjoy visiting buildings and classrooms and attending a variety of school activities.  
**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT** - I have been active in a variety of community organizations. I am a member of Rotary, this gives me an opportunity to connect with other leaders in our community. I have also been active with the Emporia Chamber of Commerce and am a member of the chamber board. The president of Emporia State University, myself, and the president of Flint Hills Technical College meet monthly to discuss our ongoing partnership and how we can continue to collaborate and support each other.  
**PROFESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT** - I believe that being involved in my professional organizations helps keep me connected with other school leaders and keeps me up to date on the latest information that is happening. I am an active member of the Kansas School Superintendents Association, United School Administrators, and The Commissioner's Advisory Council (20 Superintendent's who meet with KSDE Commissioner Randy Watson quarterly).  
**DIVERSITY** - One of the things that I truly appreciate about Emporia is the diversity that exists in our school and community. A majority of my prior work and life experience was in a setting that was much less diverse. With this week being the presidential inauguration combined with the unrest that we are seeing across the country, paired with the ongoing impact of the pandemic, it brings the challenges we are facing as individuals, school systems, communities, and the nation to the forefront. Over the past few years, I have tried to focus on the concept of how can I, as an individual and how can we, as an organization, be more inclusive in our thinking, practices, and actions? As a school leader, having an inclusive mindset is a must have skill set, this mindset helps to set the tone and expectation for the organization (My colleagues at Modern Teacher have coined the term "Tone At The Top") and how it will navigate the ongoing need to continue to be more inclusive. In today's society, we seem to be divided on a multitude of topics. Our role as an inclusive leader of a school system is to find ways to help stakeholders find common ground, find what unites us. Emporia has a student population that is 47% hispanic, 60% of our students are on free and reduced lunch, and 30% of our students are ESOL. This creates a wide variety of diverse student, staff, and community needs. We have implemented a variety of programs including Literacy First, AVID, and JAG (Jobs For America's Graduates) to name a few, to provide academic support to meet student needs. We have also worked tirelessly to ensure that we have a caring, student centered, highly qualified staff member in every classroom. Our most recent focus has been on meeting the social emotional needs of our population. We have a robust partnership with Crosswinds Mental Health to support the social emotional needs of our staff and students. Social emotional health is one of our district priorities. We have also developed a relationship with Tyson and other local businesses to provide on site learning opportunities for their employees to either complete their high school diploma or gain citizenship. One of the most rewarding experiences each year is being a witness to adults gaining their high school diploma (a close second is watching both a parent and their son or daughter jointly receive their diploma). I am confident that my background working with a diverse staff, student, and community will be beneficial to the Fort Morgan School District and community.

# Kevin Edward Case

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## EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION:

1993	Fort Hays State University Hays, Kansas	Superintendent Certification
1989	Kansas State University Manhattan, Kansas	Masters of Science Degree in Educational Administration
1987	Kansas State University Manhattan, Kansas	Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Education Minor: Computer Studies
1982	Little River High School Little River, Kansas	High School Diploma

## EMPLOYMENT:

2016 - 11/2020	USD No. 253 Emporia Emporia, Kansas	Superintendent of Schools
1999 - 2016	USD No. 448 Inman Inman, Kansas	Superintendent of Schools
2011 - 2016	CaseByCaseSolutions Inman, Kansas	Consulting Services
2009-2016	Kevin's Clicks Inman, Kansas	Amateur Sports & Outdoor Photographer
1996-99	Smoky Valley High School Lindsborg, Kansas	9-12 Building Principal

## SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS & QUALIFICATIONS

- ❑ **Bond Issue:** Provided ongoing leadership, guidance, and vision to develop a plan that allowed USD 253 patrons to approve a \$78 million bond election to provide renovations, additions, and new construction to all nine pre-k - 12 attendance centers. The bond issue passed in November of 2019 with a 66% voter approval while maintaining a nearly flat overall mil levy.
- ❑ **Early Learning and Grant Funding:** Secured an additional \$6 million dollars in funding to provide significant additions to the construction of a flagship early learning center. The budget included in the bond election was \$7.6 million in funding to build a new early learning center. Through a collaborative relationship with The Jones Trust, I obtained a multi-year donation totaling \$6 million to add additional: infrastructure, common spaces, classrooms for expanded early learning services, and space to house collaborative community partners.
- ❑ **Communication:** Developed, established, and enhanced a variety of communication strategies to keep stakeholders engaged with the district. A wide range of communication techniques and delivery methods were utilized to support engagement.
  - ❑ Leveraged social media, print media, and articles from the superintendent as a way to keep stakeholders informed;
  - ❑ Created the #EmporiaProud for branding purposes and to encourage staff and student recognition;
  - ❑ Encouraged district wide use of #EmporiaProud note cards that allowed all staff to write personal notes of appreciation and highlight successes;
  - ❑ Established #EmporiaShowcase, a monthly radio show that aired on KVOE that was sponsored by the Educational Employees Credit Union, to spotlight district wide programs and accomplishments;
  - ❑ Developed the concept of #FacesOfEmporiaSchools, a mechanism to highlight staff, boost morale, and support staff recognition & retention;

- ❑ Provided staff members and stakeholders the opportunity to connect with the superintendent by establishing virtual superintendent chats, live virtual updates, and Q and A sessions during the past year.
- ❑ **Kindergarten Readiness:** Supported the ongoing efforts of Mobilizing Literacy, a tri-county collaborative effort, to engage, support, and further develop collaborative community efforts to embrace kindergarten readiness at both private and public early learning sites. All early learning stakeholders have been invited to be involved in this initiative. The grant supports modeling best practice, family engagement, professional development, and has provided unified early learning resources and assessments to all entities.
- ❑ **Strategic Planning:** Developed USD 253 District Priorities by gathering input from a large stakeholder group including community members, district staff, parents, and board members. Those priorities helped to provide focus and vision for board members and stakeholders during the decision making process.
- ❑ **Partnership Development:** Further developed ongoing relationships with both Flint Hills Technical College and Emporia State University to provide increased opportunities for students to achieve post secondary success and for staff to seek advanced degrees and certifications (ESOL certification, advanced degrees, and supporting pre-service teachers throughout the district).
- ❑ **Academic Achievement:** Increased the focus on the importance of improving our high school graduation rate. During my tenure as superintendent, the district saw a significant improvement in the 5 year cohort graduation rate (from 80.4% to 92.9%).
- ❑ **Change:** Supported and encouraged individual buildings to enter the Kansas Can School Redesign process as building staff and administration embraced the concept. This process focused on the premise that building staff needed to drive the change which in turn will help ensure the success of the change.
- ❑ **Leadership:** Secured ongoing, multi year transformation grants from the Kansas Leadership Center to further develop leadership capacity at all levels of our organization and with members of the community. KLC provides multiple day professional development to support leaders at all levels in successfully addressing both technical and adaptive challenges. The grant supported professional development for approximately 125 staff members during the past five years.
- ❑ **Collaborative Processes:** Provided district and building leadership with ongoing Adaptive Schools© training to support collective identity and capacity within the system and encourage common language.
- ❑ **Recruitment:** Worked collaboratively with the Human Relations Department to expedite hiring processes of certified staff members to ensure that USD 253 was able to hire the most qualified employees possible. The plan included a second semester internship program for December graduates and filling an allotted number of anticipated openings for the upcoming year as qualified applicants became available.
- ❑ **Academic Achievement:** Supported a variety of initiatives that allowed Timmerman Elementary School to be named a National Blue Ribbon School in the Fall of 2020.
- ❑ **Innovation/Technology:** Provided ongoing leadership that allowed Inman Schools to be named an Apple Distinguished Program. This program recognizes districts for their innovation, leadership, and educational excellence; as well as demonstrating a clear vision of exemplary learning environments.

#### **PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:**

- ❑ American Association of School Administrators - Member
- ❑ Jobs For America's Graduates (JAG-K) - Kansas Board of Directors Vice Chair
- ❑ Kansas School Superintendent's Association - Member and Former Board Member
- ❑ KSDE Commissioner's Advisory Council - Member
- ❑ United School Administrators - Member
- ❑ Emporia Chamber of Commerce - Board Member
- ❑ Emporia Joint Economic Development Advisory Council - Member
- ❑ Emporia Rotary Club - Member
- ❑ Ignite Emporia Advisory Council - Member
- ❑ National Teacher Hall Of Fame - Board Member
- ❑ United Way of The Flint Hills - Board Member

**USD 253 AT A GLANCE:**

Most Recent Assignment	Superintendent, USD 253, Emporia
<u>Student Quick Facts:</u>	
Enrollment	4,608
Ethnicity	47% Hispanic and 45% White
Poverty:	58% Free and Reduced Lunch
ESOL	25% Students Qualified For ESOL Services
<u>Staff Quick Facts:</u>	
Certified Staff	456 Certified Staff
Classified Staff	338 Classified Staff
Administrative Leadership Team	29 District and Building Level Leadership
<u>Budget Quick Facts:</u>	
General Fund Budget	\$32,339,000
Local Option Budget	\$10,115,000
Bond & Interest Budget	\$3,091,000
Special Education Coop Budget	\$13,621,000
Bond Debt	\$82,270,000
Attendance Centers	1 Pre-K Building; 6 Elementary Schools; 1 Middle School, 1 High School, 1 18-21 year old special education transition program, and 1 adult learning Center

**PERSONAL DATA:**

Date of Birth:	September 7, 1963
Family Status:	Married (30 + years) with three children.
Jodi Lynn Case	Currently a Mobilizing Literacy Liaison for USD 253. Former experiences include Pre-school Teacher, Kindergarten Teacher, Library Media Specialist, and Early Childhood Specialist with ESSDACK.
Bryce Dwight Case	Age 28 – May 2015 Graduate of PSU in Construction Management Superintendent, Conco Construction, Wichita, Ks
Savanah Elizabeth Case	Age 26 – Labor and Delivery Nurse, Olathe; Accepted to begin Physician Assistant program at Wichita State University in June of 2021
Keaton Edward Case	Age 22 – Senior at Kansas State University; Employed June 2021 with Cortevia Commercial Sales with Cortevia Agriscience.

**PERSONAL INTERESTS:**

I enjoy spending time with my family, photography, cooking, watching movies, creating, building, tackling challenges, and a variety of outdoor activities.