

This document contains responses from community members regarding the Superintendent Search. **Responses here have NOT been edited.** Most community members are responding to the following questions:

1. What makes your community a good place to live?
2. What makes this a good school district – for students and staff?
3. What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about as they come into the district?
4. What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need in order to be successful?

Respondent 1:

STRONG COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Questions 1 and 2)

The Superintendent should be aware that high public school participation rates are a strength of our community. This means that parents advocate for better schools and work to improve them, instead of leaving them. At times this may feel like a nuisance to a superintendent, but it creates a stronger social and educational fabric.

PROVEN EXPERIENCE IN ACADEMIC RIGOR (Question 4)

We prefer a superintendent that has experience implementing academically rigorous programs. This has been absent under Yaw's leadership. We send our kids to school first and foremost for schooling. In the latest budget requests, 1.3% of the requests had to do with academic rigor.

CONNECTIVITY TO THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE SYSTEM (Question 4)

The new superintendent needs to understand how high schools feed the national collegiate system. The past year in Vermont has shown a keen lack of understanding in this area from many superintendents. We have the best collegiate system in the world - let's help our Vermont youth take advantage of it.

STATUS OF PROFICIENCY BASED LEARNING & GRADING (Questions 3 and 4)

The new superintendent should understand the controversy around Proficiency Based Learning and Grading, and understand that the regulatory definitions promulgated by the Agency of Education over the past six years were, in fact, incorrect. Vermont does not need any more superintendents being blind advocates. As the issue affects thousands of current high school seniors and school budgets, the State Board of Education and the House Education Committee are putting the entire program under review. The superintendent should be extremely skeptical about further implementation of this unproven, expensive idea. Judgment in the area of opportunity costs and focus would be a plus.

Respondent 2:

1. What makes your community a good place to live?

Affordability makes quality of life go up by allowing people to consume more. As it stands our community is not a good place to live for our poorest and lower middle class members. School taxes must come down to make this community a good place to live for many.

2. What makes this a good school district - for students and staff?

It's not a good school district when you consider the amount spent per pupil versus the national average and the resulting scores that we are seeing in the high school. More money has not solved the problem and neither will even more money.

3. What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about as they come into the district?

School taxes have been out of control and going up at unsustainable rates.

4. What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need in order to be successful?

Budgeting—reduce our school budget so school taxes can go down.

Respondent 3:

1. What makes your community a good place to live? **Nature and the beautiful outdoors, tolerant and welcoming community, supportive community willing to devote resources to strengthen the whole area**
2. What makes this a good school district – for students and staff? **Diversity among students, strong sense of community, space for individual pursuits and interests to also shine through, opportunities for enrichment and exploration, kindness and tolerance**
3. What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about as they come into the district? **Social awareness is valued here: many families appreciated the outgoing superintendent's initiative in allowing students to miss school and join the climate strikes, his support of the BHS soccer team's equal pay campaign, etc. It is important we cultivate a sense in our students that their work matters and they can be the change they wish to see in the world**
4. What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need in order to be successful? **We hope for someone who is ambitious, kind, innovative, progressive, forward-thinking, and puts students' best interests in mind; we also hope they can appreciate that our students are growing up in a different world than previous generations and need the space and support to develop tools for thriving in a climate, technology, and otherwise rapidly changing world**

Respondent 4:

Hello,

I am dearly hoping that we will find a Superintendent who understands and supports magnet schools, such as our very fine Sustainability Academy. Anecdotaly, we know these schools (IAA and SA) have achieved a lot during their decade of existence, and we hope to be able to quantify those results in some sort of evaluation process. We may even find positive lessons to extend to the other elementary and middle schools.

Sincerely,
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Respondent 5:

1. What makes your community a good place to live? **Caring, compassionate, collaborative with a thrust toward community engagement.**
2. What makes this a good school district – for students and staff? **A diverse student pool, talented, smart faculty & staff, food service dept!, committed school board**
3. What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about as they come into the district? **Challenging capital needs!, low morale among staff & faculty, institutional racism. As small as we are - this does not always translate into systemic change. We can get very hung up on process at the expense of clear action steps and progress forward. This is not just a District issue, but impacts our City as a whole.**
4. What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need in order to be successful? **Leadership and vision, the ability to effectively communicate that vision while also listening, community relations, keen budget sense, multi-lingual would be an enormous boost and modeling for students, flexibility, sense of humor, creative problem solver, understanding of the need to collaborate with partners which serve students during out of school time.**

Respondent 6:

Burlington citizens value education, diversity, quality of life.

Unfortunately our school district is in disarray. Test scores are falling. An elementary school is under state warning for poor performance. The US Justice Dept has an agreement with the district for failure to address bullying issues at the elementary school level. The Special Ed Dept is undergoing investigation by the state. The great educational

leaders that were employed by the district have left. The district has a terrible reputation and teachers and administrators don't want to apply to work here. We used to have 100s of applications for jobs not any more. The future superintendent needs to realize what they are getting into. The current school board is working hard to improve the situation. We need educational leaders. It is a challenge.

Respondent 7:

I thought of something else for the superintendent to take into consideration. I hesitate to bring this up because it may sound elitist but the superintendent should know there are families in the community who have the means to pay for a private education and have chosen to go that route because of the budget limitations in the district (e.g., no foreign language until 7th grade, larger class sizes) in addition to the perception of a less rigorous curriculum (in some cases), and a reduced emphasis on academic excellence. I know we can't magically make more money, but the new super should know that we are competing with the private schools. Many parents with means are committed to public education, thank goodness, but they need to feel that the benefits of public education outweigh the drawbacks. Let's advertise the benefits more openly! Chief among them, for me, is the neighborhood school. Having my kids go to school with our neighbors and being able to walk is HUGE. Of course the diversity is an asset as well. Anyway, it just occurred to me yesterday that this needed to be shared, but I think the comment period is closed? if you have a way of including this in the conversation that would be great.