



## Superintendent Search

### Superintendent Search Questions By Area of Focus

#### General

1. Please give us a thumbnail sketch of your professional experiences, your pivotal belief on public education and why you are interested in being our superintendent.
2. Tell us about your background as an educator.
3. What do you see as the role of the superintendent as it relates to employee groups, students and the community?
4. What's the biggest challenge you expect to face in the first year as our superintendent?
5. What is the most important part of the superintendent's job and why?
6. Describe an accomplishment you are most proud of in your educational career.
7. What is your greatest professional disappointment and what did you learn from it?
8. We have several quality finalists for this position. Why should the board select you?
9. Tell us about a time you identified a need within your district and met the need through community partnership. Tell me the process you went through and what the outcome was?
10. As we select a new superintendent, what are the top 3 strengths/attributes you believe you bring that our district could benefit from and how would you put them to work for us?
11. Based on your knowledge of our system, what do you believe should be two top priorities for our school system?
12. As superintendent, what would you consider to be the greatest opportunities this district offers? What steps would you take to leverage these opportunities?
13. How would you go about giving this district a national reputation?
14. What are the first three things that you are going to do if you are hired as the superintendent?





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15. Based on what you know about our school system, what do you view is the greatest potential for improvement?
16. Is there any additional information that you would like to share with the Board?
17. Do you have any questions for the Board members?
18. A superintendent handles a variety of responsibilities. Which do you feel most qualified to handle? Why?



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### **Instructional Leadership**

19. What are your expectations for student achievement? Do you believe all children can learn at high levels and how do you instill this in all staff?
20. Eliminating the achievement gap is a must. What approaches would you pursue? What leadership and guidance would you provide to ensure that these approaches are properly evaluated and adjusted over time to meet changing student needs?
21. How have you improved student achievement in your current school district and what would you do to improve student achievement in our school system?
22. We are committed to closing achievement gaps and dramatically increasing our graduation rate. Please describe successes you have had in these areas and how you would accomplish these goals here.
23. Where do you think this school system should be academically in five years and what do you see as the greatest barriers to getting us there?
24. Based on what you know of our school system, what do you think is the greatest potential for improvement? Where are our greatest opportunities?
25. How have you held staff members accountable for student achievement while balancing the demands put on teachers?
26. What obstacles have you faced in increasing student achievement in a school site or across a district and how have you worked to overcome them?
27. What measures have you used that are outside of test scores (if needed) to measure student achievement and why do you use these alternate measures?
28. Tell us a time you have worked through others or used an out-of-the-box approach to help your district achieve academic success?
29. Specifically, how can you help us improve student achievement for all students?
30. How has your district made support services an integral part of student achievement? Describe your role in this.
31. How will you ensure all students achieve at high levels in every school?

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32. Describe your experience in developing, implementing and evaluating curriculum and instructional programs to raise student achievement.
33. How would you evaluate the instructional program and how would you make changes to the instructional program?
34. How do you balance the needs of special populations such as ESE students, ELL students and students traditionally referred to as gifted and talented? What have you done to address the diverse needs of student populations in your district?
35. What are your specific past experiences in curriculum development and approach to implementing and maintaining curriculum at each level and across all levels?
36. Specifically, what role have you played in turning around under performing schools?
37. What do you think the role of extracurricular activities should be in the school system?
38. What is the role of career-technical education and how have you expanded this role in any of your previous positions?
39. Give examples of your previous efforts and involvement with career and technical education, dual enrollment programs, and other choice programs. What have you initiated to improve/expand these programs?
40. What types of programs have you found to be the most effective in improving student learning? What makes them effective? How do you evaluate effectiveness? How do you communicate effectiveness to stakeholders?
41. Discuss STEM efforts, career-related opportunities, and specific strategies to integrate the two into all areas of a school.
42. What have you done in the past and what will you do to make sure that challenged students receive rigorous instruction and are prepared for college and careers?
43. Detail what you have done in the past and what you would do to facilitate reading proficiency among students with learning disabilities, English Language Learners and economically disadvantaged students?
44. What is your instructional vision? How would this vision become a reality for in this district?

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### **Business and Finance**

45. Describe a time when you led the implementation of new technology in your district.
  - a) What was the technology being implemented?
  - b) How did you learn about the technology?
  - c) What challenges or obstacles did you encounter? How did you handle those?
  - d) How did you measure the success of the new technology?
  - e) What impact did the technology have on student or teacher results?
46. Give us your opinion on the role of technology in the classroom. How will you engage staff/teachers and get their buy in?
47. What are the most important current issues facing school level administrators? What is the district's role in addressing these issues?
48. Should you become the next superintendent, what measures will you take to ensure that all existing students and students of the future will be exposed to a system that is dedicated to excellence and equity?
49. How would you address the issues of safety and security?
50. What role have you played in expanding mental health services to students?
51. How would you insure that schools located in under-resourced areas receive the attention and resources they need?
52. How do you monitor appropriate use of district monies?
53. What is your experience in facilities management and/or construction? Of planning for growth?
54. Explain what types of contracts you have negotiated for a district and your role in the negotiations.
55. What is your experience in working with charter schools, magnet schools, and private schools?
56. What have you or your district done to respond to the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, etc. by students?

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57. Describe a situation where you were clearly instrumental in facilitating a change in the way something was done in your district. How was the change meaningful and or successful? What measures were used to determine the success of the change initiative?
58. From a district perspective, explain how student performance standards affect planning and prioritizing of facilities, fiscal, technological and human resource projects.
59. Describe your ability to cultivate a disciplined, safe and orderly school environment.
60. In our system, the superintendent handles the operations of a variety of programs and duties due to the size of the system. Explain your experiences with dealing different programs like special education, federal programs, career tech, at-risk programs, etc.
61. How have you been involved in budget development and ongoing fiscal management in the past?
62. What strengths do you have in the area of financial management?
63. How would you prioritize additions or cuts to the budget?
64. How would you approach the budget process to ensure success during financially challenging times?
65. Tell us about the last large critical budgetary decision you made.
  - a) What was the situation?
  - b) What decision did you make and who did you involve?
  - c) What analysis or information did you gather to support your decision - making process?
  - d) What was the impact of your decision?
66. Share with us an example of when you were especially innovative in addressing a funding gap.

What was the situation?

  - a) What challenges or obstacles did you encounter? How did you handle those?
  - b) What were the risk involved?
  - c) What was the outcome of your decision/approach?



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67. Share with us your plans for the district's budget development process. What level of involvement will principals, directors, and other administrative staff have?
68. Our funding/budget concerns are paramount to the continuing success of this district. Please describe the process you have used when budget cuts have been necessary, and please expand on your position related to budget reserve dollars.
69. What role do you see for the board in the development of the budget and how will that process be facilitated?
70. How do budget priorities tie to strategic planning?
71. What process do you use to ensure budget equity across the district?



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### **Board, Staff, and Community Relationships**

72. Describe a situation where you have worked with people who were hostile or had strong differences of opinions. What did you do to bring about a resolution?
73. When a new superintendent is hired, you want to make the transition as smooth as possible for everyone. How would you help both the educational community and the community at-large adjust to the new governing style that would come with a new superintendent?
74. Presenting information in a highly charged situation and to a variety of groups is a part of a superintendent's job. Give an example of how you have encountered opposition and how you dealt with the resulting situation.
75. What should be done at the district level to notify, recruit and involve parents and interested community members in district activities? (Program planning, goal/standards setting and alignment, assessing priorities/needs).
76. This is a diverse community. How would you work to ensure all groups are fully engaged with schools and the system as a whole?
77. What methods of communicating with parents have you found most effective and how would you encourage and leverage parental involvement?
78. In your role as superintendent how would you ensure all stakeholder groups are fully engaged with schools? Why is diversity important to you and how do you ensure it?
79. What are your ideas about engaging families who are inexperienced with participating or have negative experiences with education? How would you support your staff to successfully and respectfully reach out to such families?
80. How do you plan to communicate with the public on matters of school concern?
81. Describe specific strategies you would use to promote public support for school activities, budget and instructional programs.
82. Describe how you would deal with a parent who is upset over their child's grades, punishment, or has an athletic problem?
83. Tell us about a time where you recognized an internal communication gap within the staff of your district.



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- a) What did you do to address the gap and what was the outcome?
  - b) Explain the methods of communication you used and how you measured the outcome.
84. Tell us about the most difficult parent situation you have had to deal with that required strong communication skills. Tell us how you addressed the situation.
  85. Please define the "customer" public schools serve and how can the highest degree of customer satisfaction be achieved.
  86. What role or roles do you see parents playing in public schools, and specifically describe the community involvement program that you believe has worked most successfully.
  87. How important is it, and what specific roles have you played personally in dealing with your legislature, congressional delegation, county and city officials?
  88. Describe what you believe to be the ideal working relationship with a School Board, and when you have an adversarial situation with a School Board member, how would you resolve it?
  89. Considering the many decisions that face any superintendent, how and what input do you currently obtain from your students, teachers, parents, staff, school administrators and the business community who are directly affected by those decisions?
  90. How would you provide fair and equitable access so that parents can voice their opinions, needs, concerns and questions without bias?
  91. What has been your role and experience in working with your legislative delegation? What should the role of the superintendent be in this relationship?
  92. How would you develop an understanding of the complexities of our school system by the public?
  93. How would you ensure the School Board be informed on important matters?
  94. How would you ensure that the public be informed on important matters?
  95. How would you ensure that the staff be informed on important matters?



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96. How do you approach and build cooperative partnerships among business, civic, and ethnic groups?
97. Describe a time when you collaborated and cooperated with private and public entities including institutions of higher learning, other governmental entities, community, business, and professional leaders on an educational issue.
98. How have you engaged the community of your district? How have you increased visibility of a school/system and its needs?
99. Describe a time when you have had to choose between driving a plan forward or pausing to listen and learn.
100. With funding tight, teachers, administrators and support staff have taken on more and more responsibilities. What would you do and say to keep them encouraged and their morale up?
101. What steps would you take to create a culture of learning among the employees in our school system?
102. Discuss the most difficult personnel problem you have ever dealt with and how you resolved it.
103. How would you characterize your relationships with employee groups in your current position? How would the union(s) in your current and previous district(s) describe them?
104. Describe how professional development programs should impact the knowledge, skill and practices of educators. Give an example.
105. What will your teachers' organization/union tell us about you? Your support staff union?
106. What is your plan for boosting and keeping morale among employees high?
107. Assuming your employees are part of collective bargaining units, we can assume that those units have filed grievances, and/or have taken job actions against the district(s) while you were area superintendent, assistant superintendent, or superintendent. What were the general issues grieved and what factors gave rise to those grievances? What role, if any, did you plan in this process?





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108. How do you define, what are your feelings, and can you relate an experience that you have had pertaining to the collaborative approach to decision making in public education?
109. Please give an example of how you have either collectively or collaboratively bargained an employee contract. What is your philosophy on bargaining?
110. What has your district done to develop and maintain a collaborative relationship with employee associations? Include issues of morale, communication, and team building. Describe your role in this.
111. What are your views on the privatization of some school services? What has been your role on this issue in your previous positions?
112. Give some specific examples of your experience with labor negotiations and employee relations where creative approaches were used to bring people together toward a common goal.
113. How can a district actively recruit minority employees? What part have you played in the improvement of minority recruitment and retention of employees in your previous roles?
114. Besides salary increases, what rewards can you offer employees that would help them feel respected, valued, and needed?
115. Under what conditions, if any, should employees be re-employed after completion of DROP?
116. Describe the process you use to build leadership skills throughout the district, thus assisting principals to lead in a standards-based environment.
117. Describe how the professional development programs/initiatives you support will impact the knowledge, skills and practices of educators. Be specific.



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### **Performance Accountability**

118. High performance by students and accountability are priorities for us. How would you assess the current student performance levels in our school system? How would you assess the effectiveness of our teachers and programs?
119. Describe your experience with strategic planning.
120. What steps would you take to create a culture of high expectations for our employees?
121. Describe the process you would prefer for the development of a strategic plan for this system.
122. What is your experience advocating for or against legislative issues that impact school districts? What are your thoughts on the Florida Accountability System? How do we follow the mandates while doing what is best for students?
123. High stakes testing of students has been both praised and vilified. What are your thoughts and why? What other measures do you look to when determining the success or failure of programs in a district? How should assessment results be used?
124. What makes an effective school? How do you evaluate effectiveness? How do you communicate effectiveness to stakeholders?
125. What strategies would you introduce to raise the test scores and reading levels of the lower quartile of the high school student population? Middle school students? Elementary?
126. What do you feel is the single most important piece of data that will drive our district forward?
127. What is your vision for financial reporting, transparency, and maintaining the public trust of the financial affairs of our county?
128. What are your views on state and national accountability programs? What is the role and value of assessment instruments in school systems today? What types of assessments are most effective? Why?
129. How do you set goals for yourself? Your staff? How do you hold yourself and your staff accountable?

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130. As the new superintendent of this school system, what would be your actions for the first month, the first few months and the first six months of your time in office?

Follow up: How would you gauge your success at the end of your first year?

131. Discuss the process you would use to assure that school learning plans are progressing, monitored, adjusted, and result in positive trends in meeting student performance standards.

132. How do you ensure climate assessment results are used in school improvement planning across the district?

133. How have you measured the staff's performance that has resulted in improved performance?

134. What steps would you take to create a culture of high expectations for your employees?

135. Suppose you identified an administrator who needs improvement. What process would you use to improve the competence of that person and what corrective action would you take?

136. Describe your management style and the methods you have found to be most effective in supervision and building rapport with administrators and employees.

137. To what degree do you believe responsibilities can and should be delegated to principals? How would you hold them accountable for accomplishing those responsibilities?

138. Describe how you have handled a situation where an employee was failing to perform at expected levels.

139. How do you go about delegating responsibilities to subordinates? How do you hold them responsible?



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### **POTENTIAL Q FOR SEMIFINALISTS:**

Give us a glimpse into your onboarding. How will you

- Educate staff on your style/
- Evaluate financials/
- Get to know staff and programs/
- Integrate into the community/
- Run a staff meeting/show leadership style/
- Deliver your day one message? Plan for your first big group meeting?

Please share anything else you view as critical in terms of how to onboard you as our new superintendent.

Selected question on communication, strategic planning (based on these being perceived priorities)

