

St. Charles Public Schools Superintendent Search

Stakeholder Engagement Superintendent Search Survey

Overview: On January 8, 2024, the “St. Charles Public Schools Superintendent Search Survey” was made available to the public both online and in hard copy. The survey remained open for respondents until February 5, 2024, and a total of 201 people completed the survey.

RESULTS: Survey takers were asked to identify the role that best reflected the basis for their responses. The categories selected by the survey takers are provided below.

- 62.69% of respondents selected “Parent/Guardian”
- 23.38% of respondents selected “Staff Member”
- 5.97% of respondents selected “Community Member”
- 3.98% of respondents selected “Business Owner/Agriculture”
- 2.99% of respondents selected “Other”
- 1.00% of respondents selected “Student”

Areas of Expertise: Those who responded to the survey were also asked to identify the top six desirable areas of expertise they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted areas of expertise are listed below in order of preference.

- Budget and Finance
- Collaborative Leadership
- School Reform (i.e. Strategic Planning, etc.)
- Personnel Management
- Curriculum Development/Evaluation
- Public Relations

Specialized Skills: The top six specialized skills the new superintendent must possess were identified in the survey results as shown below.

- Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner in dealings with the School Board, staff, and community
- Experience in school finance
- Is a “people person” with proven abilities in human relations and communications
- Is visible and accessible to the School Board, staff, students, parents, and community
- Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders
- Delegates authority while maintaining accountability

Previous Experience: Respondents were asked if previous superintendent experience is important. Based on the results, 59.47% of the respondents selected “Yes,” while 40.53% of the respondents selected “No.”



Personal Characteristics: Survey takers were also asked to identify the top six personal characteristics they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted personal characteristics are listed below in order of preference.

- Honest and ethical
- Effective communicator
- Transparent
- Problem solver
- Personable
- Consistent

Additional comments: Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions in the survey, and on average, 135 of the 201 respondents provided additional commentary. These results were then reviewed by MSBA representatives, with reappearing ideas identified and grouped into themes. These themes are highlighted below for each of the questions.

The stakeholder survey asked the following four questions:

1. What are some of the good things taking place in St. Charles Public Schools today?
2. What challenges do you see for our district over the next five years?
3. What does the new superintendent need to know about the history of the education district and community to be successful?
4. Additional comments.

1. What are some of the good things taking place in St. Charles Public Schools today?

<p>St. Charles Public Schools are celebrated for their deeply caring, highly dedicated, and passionate teaching and support staff who are committed to providing the best education and wellbeing for students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The teachers care deeply for their students and their education.</i> • <i>There are some fantastic teachers.</i> • <i>The elementary school had some wonderful educators.</i> • <i>Top notch staff who work hard to give students what they need to succeed.</i> • <i>Staff genuinely care about what they do on a daily basis.</i> • <i>The teachers are actively involved in the wellbeing of their students.</i> • <i>We have some amazing educators in our community. We also have amazing support staff for the community.</i> • <i>Excellent teachers! Teachers are great at following best practices for age-appropriate curriculum while still allowing opportunities for experiential learning.</i> • <i>The majority of staff are committed to their jobs and to helping students achieve and succeed,</i> • <i>We have some of the best teachers in the state.</i> • <i>Teachers that are passionate about best practices and supporting students where they deem necessary.</i> 	<p>90 related responses</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We have great teachers that want students to be their best.</i> • <i>We have amazing teachers and students.</i> • <i>Teachers continue to pour into students and their families, thereby pouring into our community.</i> • <i>Great teachers that care about students.</i> • <i>The teachers really care for the students and families both in the school and on the community.</i> • <i>Staff of creative and hardworking people.</i> • <i>I think we have a great staff of teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel (custodians, cooks, secretaries, etc) whom all want what is best for students, and for the community/district.</i> • <i>The school staff works really, really hard to give the best education possible to students.</i> • <i>We have a great high school staff who works well together.</i> • <i>We have hardworking, dedicated teachers who treat kids with respect and compassion and challenge students to be more than they think they can be.</i> 	
<p>St. Charles Public Schools offer a wide range of academic and extracurricular opportunities that result in a high standard of education and widespread student engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lots of opportunities for students, especially compared to larger schools.</i> • <i>PSEO, CIS, ACT prep classes, trips to visit colleges, college and job fairs.</i> • <i>Athletics and other extracurricular opportunities.</i> • <i>Renewal of the trades in current curriculum.</i> • <i>The sports programs are excelling.</i> • <i>Implementing hands on classes for the kids.</i> • <i>The kids are getting the education they need.</i> • <i>The SPED program functions exceptionally.</i> • <i>Students are receiving a quality education and being offered a wide variety of extracurricular opportunities.</i> • <i>We have good test scores.</i> • <i>Student options and opportunities, sports, college courses.</i> • <i>Strong involvement in extracurricular activities</i> • <i>Seems to be a strong sports and academic program going on.</i> • <i>Lots of programs offered.</i> • <i>High standards, good curriculum.</i> • <i>Good participation in extracurricular opportunities.</i> 	39 related responses
<p>St. Charles Public Schools benefit from a strong sense of community with extensive involvement and support from families and community members who are deeply invested in the school's quality, educational, and extracurricular programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The community is one that can rally for one another, and truly loves the school, staff and students.</i> • <i>The sense of community and community involvement.</i> 	26 related responses



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community involvement, people who truly care about their children and paths we are headed as a community.</i> • <i>Community Support and parent Involvement.</i> • <i>Community support.</i> • <i>St. Charles is a great school that is backed by the community.</i> • <i>There is a lot of supportive members that care deeply about the quality of St. Charles Schools.</i> • <i>There is support for both education and extracurricular activities.</i> • <i>The parents and community are supportive and proud of our school.</i> • <i>Supportive families for academics and athletics, curriculums.</i> 	
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2. What challenges do you see for our district over the next five years?

<p>The primary challenge for St. Charles Public Schools over the next five years centers on navigating financial instability, including managing budget constraints and declining enrollment, while striving to maintain educational quality and operational effectiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No money to adequately keep up with educating our students.</i> • <i>Keeping support staff and other programs running without money and being able to purchase supplies.</i> • <i>The debt the district is in will get worse, since there's no money enrollment will decline.</i> • <i>Budgeting and finance, with decreased enrollment.</i> • <i>The financial situation we are currently in. How do you still provide support and a great school being in great financial debt.</i> • <i>Financial instability and declining enrollment.</i> • <i>Keeping up with maintenance of the school and bringing the budget in check.</i> • <i>Financials. We're in a tough situation to dig out of.</i> • <i>In the next five years I think our biggest challenge is the budget.</i> • <i>It will be challenging to balance the budget and get teachers supplies they need while keeping class sizes small.</i> • <i>Financial problems.</i> • <i>Asked to do more with less money.</i> • <i>We need an operating referendum to function.</i> • <i>Funding challenges create an inability to provide innovative, creative, and effective learning opportunities for students.</i> • <i>Money and a dip in enrollment.</i> • <i>Our financial status is very concerning and there needs to be accountability.</i> • <i>The district is in statutory operating debt. Finances are not good.</i> • <i>Budget issues, passing an operating referendum.</i> • <i>The obvious one is financial. Asking the community for ongoing support through levy, referendum.</i> • <i>Keeping education the main focus while struggling with budgeting issues after overextending ourselves.</i> • <i>Climbing out of financial debt.</i> 	102 related responses
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<p>St. Charles Public Schools face the challenge of improving staff morale, retention, and recruitment by addressing issues related to competitive compensation, benefits, and creating a supportive work environment to prevent burnout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Keeping support staff. Support staff do a lot, and we see there is a need for more, but can't offer competitive/fair wages, benefits, and enough personnel to avoid burn out.</i> • <i>Staff morale.</i> • <i>Staff satisfaction.</i> • <i>Moral is low and we need more financial support to provide what is best for your students and teachers.</i> • <i>Retaining the most effective educators.</i> • <i>Keeping the top-notch staff here at St Charles.</i> • <i>Staff culture needs to be repaired.</i> • <i>Teacher retainment and recruitment</i> • <i>Teacher retention.</i> • <i>Staff turnover.</i> • <i>We need more money for insurance and salaries as teachers.</i> • <i>Obtaining and securing good educators and supporting staff for our students to learn from due to low compensation rates.</i> • <i>Keeping veteran staff in our schools and hiring qualified staff.</i> • <i>Retention and continued recruitment of teaching staff where staff feel supported financially and feel appreciated for the work they do.</i> 	<p>79 related responses</p>
<p>One challenge for St. Charles Public Schools over the next five years is addressing and reversing the trend of declining enrollment by attracting and retaining students and families amidst increased alternative educational options.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Declining enrollment.</i> • <i>Maintaining enrollment after the changes the last few years.</i> • <i>Maintaining or increasing enrollment due to alternative options.</i> • <i>Lower enrollment.</i> • <i>Declining enrollment is one of the biggest challenges - how can we attract and maintain students and families?</i> • <i>The district has declining enrollment.</i> • <i>Maintaining/increasing enrollment.</i> • <i>Declining enrollment is looking like a tremendous challenge.</i> • <i>Enrollment numbers and projecting future class sizes.</i> 	<p>24 related responses</p>



3. What does the new superintendent need to know about the history of the school district and community to be successful?

<p>The new superintendent needs to understand that St. Charles Public Schools is a strong, close-knit, and supportive small-town community that takes pride in its schools, values family-oriented connections, and is deeply committed to the success and well-being of its students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This community is close and loves its schools.</i> • <i>To be proud of our strong, small-town community.</i> • <i>SC is a proud, tight knit community that wants to support our kids.</i> • <i>St. Charles is an amazing community that forms together to help their own.</i> • <i>We have a great and talented group of children in a set of parents and community members that are committed to the excellence of our children's education and development of becoming adults.</i> • <i>We have an incredibly supportive community.</i> • <i>We have a community that truly cares about student success.</i> • <i>We are a small town, very family-oriented community.</i> • <i>Community/parents want to be involved and understand what is going on.</i> • <i>St. Charles has a history of supporting its school system.</i> • <i>St. Charles is a strong, cohesive and loyal small community.</i> • <i>This is a great community who really does care about their school District.</i> • <i>The community is close knit and we look out for each other.</i> • <i>St. Charles is a great small town where everyone knows everyone.</i> • <i>We are a small town. We're close, we're personable.</i> • <i>Overall supportive community.</i> • <i>It is a great place to raise your kids.</i> • <i>That it is a strong community.</i> • <i>We are an engaged community who cares about our youth.</i> • <i>Our community is very diverse and strong. We all support each other no matter what.</i> 	<p>42 related responses</p>
<p>St. Charles' new superintendent should utilize open, honest, and transparent communication, possess strong leadership qualities, and actively engage with all members of the district community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>They should be knowledgeable and nonjudgmental of various groups.</i> • <i>Be open to everyone and listen to their needs.</i> • <i>Staff are in need of a strong leader who communicates honestly, consistently, and respectfully.</i> • <i>It is important for the next superintendent to have a physical presence at our schools so that youth feel comfortable talking with him/her about what is going good and what needs to change.</i> • <i>Needs to have great communication to be successful in this town.</i> • <i>It is important to have honesty among small a community.</i> • <i>We need honest and positive leadership that puts value on our students.</i> • <i>Be upfront and honest with everyone. No need to hide anything or you lose trust.</i> 	<p>38 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Need a superintendent and a school board that is more proactive and transparent in their communication.</i> • <i>We need an honest and transparent leader but in a way that is understandable.</i> • <i>Good communication with parents.</i> • <i>Listen to the community.</i> • <i>Being transparent is important.</i> • <i>Engage all stakeholders in the community; your staff, Elderly, farming/rural, business, young families, etc.</i> • <i>This school district needs a superintendent who is a good communicator, has a strong leadership personality, and is willing to work with others.</i> 	
<p>The new superintendent must understand the delicate financial state of St. Charles Public Schools, characterized by budget constraints, debt, and declining enrollment, and prioritize effective communication about financial decisions to rebuild trust and support within the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Don't lead with a perception of wanting to spend, spend, spend money. The city is on pins and needles towards the school system the way it is, if we try to spend more, it won't be a good direction.</i> • <i>We don't have enough money to do the things we need to do here. We need help with the finances and getting the voters to understand we need help.</i> • <i>We are in a big hole of debt.</i> • <i>I felt let down by what seemed to be a sudden change in financial outlook for the school district in 2023.</i> • <i>History of our financial situation that still has staff members left in the dark and confused and still seeking answers 2 years later.</i> • <i>The new superintendent needs to know the financial standing and outlook for the district.</i> • <i>The past budget problems.</i> • <i>We need someone fiscally balanced, conservative yet not too conservative where we aren't growing.</i> • <i>Financial situation and declining enrollment.</i> • <i>That there hasn't been enough transparency in the budget / expenses.</i> • <i>The current lack of financial resources.</i> • <i>Anytime cuts are made, this is an important time for communication.</i> 	<p>27 related responses</p>



4. Additional Comments:

<p>The St. Charles community wants the next superintendent to be a leader who is collaborative, transparent, approachable, and financially savvy, with a strong commitment to fostering a positive learning environment, respecting diverse opinions, and actively engaging with the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• We need a strong, transparent leader that we can rely on to keep St. Charles schools great!</i><i>• Be ready to face the community, and your entire staff with the commitment to collaborate and bring ideas to the table.</i><i>• Collaborate, be transparent, value the opinions of ALL.</i><i>• I hope that the school board and the incoming superintendent have the courage to fix the problems and provide a positive learning experience for ALL SCHS students!!!</i><i>• It would be great to have a sup who attends events, meets people, and is visible in our community.</i><i>• Teachers need a leader they can trust and respect.</i><i>• We REALLY need a leader that feels approachable and is great with finances!</i><i>• It would be nice to have someone on the administration who is a people person, able to greet parents and other visitors to the schools as well as being comfortable and confident enough to mingle with other faculty and students alike.</i><i>• Find a leader who can truly listen.</i><i>• Someone who is dedicated to intelligence, problem-solving, kindness, and excellent leadership to help us continue forward and support what is an awesome school while still valuing community standards.</i>	21 related responses
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