
Appleton Area School District Superintendent Search Summary Report

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The AASD Board of Education Requested:

- School Exec Connect (SEC) conduct an on-line Survey to gather input from the school staff, parents, students and community members;
 - SEC conduct interviews, focus groups and a public forum with a wide variety of stakeholders;
 - SEC create a desired profile for the new superintendent based on our findings.
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How Will This Report Be Used?

- The consultants will use the findings to conduct interviews and screen candidates
 - The Board of Education may use this report to learn more about the thinking of the District's constituents
 - The candidates may use this report to find out more about the strengths and challenges of the District
 - The board may publish the report on the district website and/or in local media
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Summary Of Data Collection

- Online survey: 588 respondents
 - 12 group interviews with approximately 63 participants (administrators, business and community members, parents, support staff, teachers, church and non-profit representatives, students)
 - 11 individual interviews with board members, the superintendent and others
 - 1 community forum with 14 participants
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Part 1

Online Survey Data

Survey Demographics

588 Total Respondents

■ Parents	266	45%
<i>(current or within the last 4 years)</i>		
■ Staff Members	269	46%
■ Community	42	7%
■ Other	11	2%

Survey Data Summary Breakdown

- Educational Strengths
 - Education Improvements
 - Organizational Strengths
 - Organizational Improvements
 - Priorities
 - Characteristics of Superintendent
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Top Educational Strengths Of AASD

- Quality of Teaching Staff 66%
 - Emphasis on educating the whole child 42%
 - District's understanding and support of diversity 34%
 - School learning environment, safety, social-emotional security 34%
 - Preparing students to be productive citizens 28%
 - Instructional methods that engage students 25%
 - Opportunities for students outside the classroom 25%
 - Quality of administrators 24%
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Top Educational Improvements Needed In AASD

- Tailoring instruction to each student 39%
 - Instructional methods to engage students 36%
 - School learning environment, safety, social emotional security 28%
 - District's understanding and support of diversity 22%
 - Opportunities outside classroom 22%
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Top Organizational Strengths In AASD

- Community support 46%
- Communication 44%
- Image of District 39%
- Clean attractive schools 39%
- Board governance 30%



Top Organizational Improvements Needed In AASD

- Staff morale 57%
 - Student conduct and discipline 40%
 - Student safety including socially/emotionally 32%
 - Community support of education 27%
 - Communication with Parents and Community 27%
 - Continuous Process Improvement 25%
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Top Priorities for New Superintendent To Focus On

- 21st Century Skills 55%
(Collaboration, communication, creativity, literacy, and technology)
 - Student Well Being 44%
(safe, including socially/emotionally)
 - Relationships with Staff & Community 38%
 - Student Achievement 35%
 - Professional Development for Staff 34%
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Top Characteristics Needed to be a Successful Superintendent

- Engages Faculty 72%

(listens to and respects ideas, needs, and issues)

- Engages Parents 54%

(listens to and respects ideas, needs, and issues)

- Collaborative leader 53%

- Child centered 49%

- Excellent communication skills 49%

- Knowledgeable about curriculum, instruction and how students learn 47%

- Flexible and open minded 46%

- Visible in schools/community 42%

- Team builder 41%
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Survey Comments

- Survey respondents provided 121 written responses
 - The responses can be organized into **positive** themes and **challenge** themes.
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Positive Survey Themes

- Superintendent Lee Allinger is a visible and model leader for the next superintendent
 - Great history of leadership
 - AASD is a very good district that provides for different needs and families
 - Good internal leaders should be considered
 - Appreciation for the survey and a chance to participate
 - Charters are appreciated
 - Partnerships with community
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Challenge Survey Comments

- Special education and inclusion is a concern
 - Changing demographics, growing poverty and diversity
 - There is a need for more resources and increased staff in some schools
 - Challenges for public schools and continuous criticism
 - New ideas from candidates outside of Appleton are needed
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Part 2

Interview, Forum, and Focus Group Data



Interview Demographics

- 7 board member interviews
 - 4 focus group interviews for staff members
 - 5 group interviews for business/community leaders
 - 1 group interview for parents
 - 1 group interview for students
 - 1 community forum
 - 4 in-person interviews
 - 2 site visits
 - 75+ interview participants
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Interview Questions Asked:

1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?
 2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he/she accepts this responsibility?
 3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.
 4. Describe the most important characteristics and skills the new superintendent needs to possess to be successful.
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Interview and Written Comment Data Summary

- Strengths
 - Challenges
 - Areas of Focus
 - Characteristics
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District's greatest strengths and attributes

- Supportive community
- History of excellent leadership
- Community partnerships
- Charter schools
- Emphasis and appreciation of the Arts, whole child approach
- Emphasis on career education STEM, school to work, and dual credit
- Perceived as successful and attracting new families
- Collaboration and relationships
- Commitment to meet the challenge of changing demographics and see diversity as a strength
- Early childhood education commitment and the Early Learning Center
- Support of the business community
- Foundations and financial support from private donors
- Strong staff, AASD attracts and retain good teachers

District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success

- Improving communication and transparency
 - Increasing poverty, achievement and opportunity gaps (discipline, failures, advanced courses, activities)
 - Increasing diversity, achievement and opportunity gaps (discipline, failures, advance courses, activities)
 - Promoting public education in time of increased criticism and vouchers
 - Understanding and improving the distribution of resources
 - Retaining, recruiting, developing high quality and diverse staff. Teacher shortage in specific areas
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District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success

- Balancing AASD intra-district choice, charters, site and professional autonomy with equity, equal opportunity and consistency across district schools
 - Staff morale issues regarding the implementation of Act 10, compensation and evaluation
 - Growth on the State Report Card
 - Perception of failing public schools
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Most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year

- Improve achievement and prepare **all** students for career and/or college
 - Communication, engagement and transparency
 - Community involvement, partnerships and service
 - Communication and visibility with **all** staff and public in classrooms and community
 - Value the arts
 - Business and community partnerships
 - Attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining new high quality diverse staff
 - Employee Compensation
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Most Important Characteristics and Skills the New Superintendent Needs to Possess to Be Successful

- Collaborative team builder
 - Visible, active in community but humble, servant leader
 - Loves kids
 - Values teaching and learning as the top priority; classroom experience, values teachers
 - Good communication skills; good listener
 - Appreciates **all** staff and **all** students
 - Commitment to the Appleton Area
 - Student focused
 - Leader out of office and in schools
 - Prudent financial manager who can get the most from limited resources
 - Visible and supportive to diverse students and families
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Most Important Characteristics and Skills the New Superintendent Needs to Possess to Be Successful

- A visionary who can lead AASD positively forward in the future
 - Understands the impact of poverty on student learning
 - Understands and appreciates diversity and promotes culturally responsive instruction, curriculum and inclusion of **all** students
 - Acknowledges and confronts achievement and opportunity gaps for ethnic and economic diversity
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Next Steps

- Consultants conduct interviews and reference checks
- Consultants recommend candidates to the Board (April 4th)
- Board conducts first round of interviews (April 11th)
- Community interview committee conducts candidate interviews and gives input to the Board (April 18)
- Board holds second interviews (April 18th)
- Board selects finalist (April 19th)
- Board co-vetting of the finalist (April 19th - 21st)
- Board approval of Superintendent contract (April 24th)
- New Superintendent begins duties (July 1st)

Note: The Board reserves the right to adjust the timeline, if necessary.