



2023

WHAT MAKES A SUPERINTENDENT GREAT?

CUDDY & McCARTHY, LLP.

PRESENTED BY: JACQUELYN ARCHULETA-STAEHLIN
PATRICIA SALAZAR IVES, M. KAREN KILGORE

AT LEAST 5 KEY ATTRIBUTES

TO **BEING** A GREAT
SUPERINTENDENT

- . Visionary
- . Multi-Skilled
- . Communicative
- . Ambitious
- . Committed

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a light-colored shirt, is smiling and talking on a black mobile phone. The background is blurred, suggesting an office or professional setting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple and blue gradient.

**SOME CONTENTION THAT
COMMUNICATION COMES FIRST OR
THAT BEING A VISIONARY IS MOST
IMPORTANT**

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Communicator

- An effective superintendent is both attentive and articulate. During meetings, he listens intently, giving thoughtful consideration to others' viewpoints. With a strong command of the language, he's clear and concise when conveying information. When counseling school leaders and teachers, the superintendent is discreet and respectful. When under the scrutiny of the public eye, he remains poised, whether presiding over school events, conferences, or media briefings. Before speaking, he weighs his words carefully, projecting how they'll be received.

Visionary

- A key consideration of school superintendent characteristics is practical idealism. This entails having a vision of academic excellence, along with plans to achieve it. The superintendent sets the gold standard, with input from the school board. To ensure contemporary education, he periodically evaluates school curricula and staff performance, making changes in line with his vision. The overall goal is to equip students to succeed in our high-tech world. According to Forbes, a successful school leader targets the improvement of teaching skills through professional development for all staff.

Finding a Great Superintendent

Communicator

- An effective superintendent is both attentive and articulate. During meetings, he listens intently, giving thoughtful consideration to others' viewpoints. With a strong command of the language, he's clear and concise when conveying information. When counseling school leaders and teachers, the superintendent is discreet and respectful. When under ~~the~~ scrutiny of the public eye, he remains poised, whether presiding over school events, conferences, or media briefings. Before speaking, he weighs his words carefully, projecting how they'll be received.
- The superintendent upholds a favorable image for the school district. Both his oral and written presentations are polished. Frank and diplomatic, he discusses issues in ways that elicit cooperation. By building trust, he sustains positive working relationships. He also forges a strong rapport with community interest groups.

Visionary

- As an administrator, your subordinates count on you to lead them to success. To accomplish this, you need to know what direction you plan to take your school district in. That's why great superintendents create a grand vision outlining ~~where~~ where the district will be in 5, 10, 15, or even 20 years. This allows your stakeholders to rally around a cause, which makes the arduous grind of teaching and leading more bearable. If you can accomplish this, you will be able to take your district to new heights of success and productivity.

Be Transparent in Communications

Communication

- When it comes to running a school district, sometimes it feels like anything can go wrong, and it always happens at the worst possible moment. When it comes to scandals, budget shortfalls, or radical reforms, keeping things secret will only make your constituents question your trustworthiness. That's why school superintendents and school boards must always be transparent. Let the district's stakeholders know about problems and issues as soon as possible and allow them to be part of the solution.

Visionary

- An average superintendent might set goals that are either vague or easily achieved but a great superintendent would not be afraid to boldly set goals, such as “The majority of third graders will be able to read by the end of the school year,” and then put the programs and resources in place to achieve those goals.

Superintendent continued

Multi-Skilled

A school superintendent wears many hats. As the district's hiring official, he employs principals, administrative staff, and the chief financial officer. Thinking strategically, he averts emergencies and crises. A good superintendent is a skillful negotiator, mediating controversies. He also handles parent complaints with sensitivity.

With so many schools to oversee, a superintendent must be highly organized. Multitasking is necessary. While an adept CEO is goal-driven, he's also realistic and flexible, adapting well to change. With a firm grasp of finance, the superintendent implements the district budget and financial aid programs for families. He's also tasked with maintaining school facilities and grounds. Despite numerous duties, the experienced superintendent stays cool under pressure. While having authority, his management style is collaborative, inviting shared decision-making.

Multiskilled

Multi-skilled

A great superintendent is an instructional leader. He or she knows that the most important job of the school district is to make sure students are learning and achieving at high levels. He or she is knowledgeable of the best practices for maximizing student achievement and is supportive of teachers in the district.

A great superintendent is not afraid to take risks or make a commitment. An average superintendent might set goals that are either vague or easily achieved but a great superintendent would not be afraid to boldly set goals, such as “The majority of third graders will be able to read by the end of the school year,” and then put the programs and resources in place to achieve those goals.

Ambitious

Encourage high achievement from all involved.

Also high on the list of school superintendent attributes is a passion for helping students fulfill their potential. The inspired CEO wants kids to mature on all levels: cognitively, socially, physically, and emotionally. Additionally, the zealous superintendent seeks to impart a thirst for learning. He keenly wants kids to enjoy attending school. A spirited superintendent also takes pleasure in motivating fellow educators. The superintendent prioritizes school security. He endeavors to keep facilities safe, clean, comfortable, and well-maintained. The best superintendents urge educators to be supportive and caring with their students, teaching them empathy and respect for others.

A great superintendent makes every effort to figure out the needs of your community and school district. However, the superintendent must be willing to listen to their constituents and put their needs in front of you're the superintendent's own. They will help identify exactly what's broken and give some insight into what can be done to fix it. The superintendent should not get seduced by the sound of their own ideas and silence the voices of those in the trenches.

A Great Superintendent

What to consider

A great superintendent has to have a real passion for the job. The superintendent is the one who sets the tone. Whatever the superintendent neglects, that sends a message that it's not a priority. The superintendent has to be the conscience of the district. The superintendent has to be willing to make tough decisions and work with the diverse political forces – parent groups, unions, the community, and make them all work to be part of the solution.

The key to success is setting the focus and staying true to it. Put into place data systems that help to analyze performance based on facts rather than opinions, and adjust the resources based on where the needs are. It's not rocket science, but it is hard work.

Characteristics of a Great Superintendent

Commitment

The hiring of a superintendent to oversee the operations and future of a school district should not be considered the hiring of a migrant worker. (Even if they are the highest paid migrant workers in the State of New Mexico)

Dedication is essential among school superintendent characteristics. The CEO must make tough decisions on a regular basis. A staunch superintendent never wavers from choosing what's best for students. Bold and determined, the superintendent remains undaunted when met with opposition. Despite always working on several issues simultaneously, a devoted CEO doesn't mind. Having integrity, the superintendent follows through on promises. With transparency, he upgrades school operations, always aiming for excellence. Steadfast in morals and ethics, the superintendent's a golden role model for educators, parents, students, and the community at large.

Top school superintendent attributes are being visionary, multi-skilled, communicative, ambitious, and committed. Behind every flourishing school, there's a smiling district CEO, shaping the future of this nation.

Signs of an Ineffective Superintendent

What to look out for -

- *An ineffective superintendent gets mired in the details of running the district.* He or she is always busy but doesn't seem to have a clear agenda and direction for the district.
- *An ineffective superintendent is unavailable.* He or she does not respond to phone calls or answer questions from constituents or the media. He or she is not often seen visiting school campuses or attending school meetings other than school board meetings.
- *An ineffective superintendent is always making excuses.* If he or she begins most sentences with “Well, we can't do that for a variety of reasons,” or “That is not something we have control of,” your district is not going to move forward. Effective superintendents create solutions, not excuses.
- *An ineffective superintendent agrees with everyone and never takes a stand.* It's an impossible job in a school district to keep everyone happy all the time. An effective superintendent must take a stand and do what is the best for all students, even if that means offending the teachers union or a group of parents, or any other constituency, on a particular issue.

2023

QUESTIONS/COMMENT S

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INTEREST