

New York Mills Public School Superintendent Search

Stakeholder Engagement Superintendent Search Survey

Overview: On February 8, 2024, the “New York Mills Schools Superintendent Search Survey” was made available to the public both online and in hard copy. The survey remained open for respondents until March 4, 2024, and a total of 197 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.

- 52.79% of respondents selected “Parent/Guardian”
- 23.86% of respondents selected “Staff Member”
- 15.74% of respondents selected “Community Member”
- 5.08% of respondents selected “Other”
- 2.54% of respondents selected “Business Owner/Agriculture”
- 0.00% 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
- Personnel Management
- Curriculum Development/Evaluation
- School Reform (i.e. Strategic Planning, etc.)
- 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
- Is a “people person” with proven abilities in human relations and communications
- Develops and directs an effective leadership team
- Is visible and accessible to the School Board, staff, students, parents, and community
- Delegates authority while maintaining accountability
- Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives; values teamwork

Previous Experience: Respondents were asked if previous superintendent experience is important. Based on the results, 37.43% of the respondents selected “Yes,” while 62.57% 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
- Problem solver
- Consistent
- Personable
- Transparent

Additional comments: Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions in the survey, and on average, 135 of the 197 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 New York Mills 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 New York Mills Public Schools today?

<p>New York Mills Public Schools are praised for their welcoming, family-like culture and supportive environment that fosters positive relationships and encourages student success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The culture in our school is very welcoming. Everyone feels like family and are made to feel included.</i> • <i>I like our small school where every student is important</i> • <i>The fact that you feel at home whether you are a community member, student, etc. when you walk into the building.</i> • <i>Care and compassion given to students.</i> • <i>Sense of community.</i> • <i>Low level of violence and threats. Students who want to excel are not held back from doing so.</i> • <i>Great internal collaboration and outward community connections.</i> • <i>Small town values, welcoming environment, promotion of positive connections.</i> • <i>Friendly, upbeat, everyone knows your name.</i> • <i>Positive environment, supportive.</i> • <i>Students enjoy coming to school.</i> 	<p>78 related responses</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Small school atmosphere, like a tight knit community, and a very welcoming atmosphere. I have always felt good sending my kids here.</i> • <i>Positive learning environment.</i> • <i>We have a staff/admin relationship that is strong and feels like family. I always feel supported!</i> • <i>A caring environment where all staff is working for the betterment of the students.</i> • <i>Our school has such amazing relationships between students and staff.</i> • <i>The sense of community within the school itself.</i> • <i>Small town/whole village approach to education.</i> • <i>Students seem happy and receiving the resources they need.</i> • <i>Students feel cared for and ready for challenges.</i> 	
<p>New York Mills Public Schools have caring, dedicated, and passionate teachers and staff who are approachable, value-driven, and committed to creating a safe and supportive environment that prioritizes the well-being and success of their students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teachers that care.</i> • <i>Great educators caring for and educating our students.</i> • <i>We have a dedicated, passionate staff.</i> • <i>Caring staff meeting needs of students.</i> • <i>Excellent teachers and staff.</i> • <i>Amazing teachers and staff.</i> • <i>We have a strong school staff with great morals and values. The staff provide a very safe environment for your children.</i> • <i>A good percentage of empathetic and human success focused educators rather than only student success.</i> • <i>The teachers and staff are very approachable. They are willing to provide extra help to ensure their students succeed.</i> • <i>Great teachers and coaches.</i> • <i>Teachers and administration really truly know the students.</i> • <i>Mostly AMAZING staff who still hold on to values such as honesty and respect.</i> • <i>Teachers and staff care about their students.</i> • <i>Most of the teachers are good and are family when a student is in a time of need.</i> • <i>Great staff that is well supported by our administration.</i> 	66 related responses
<p>New York Mills offers a comprehensive curriculum with practical learning experiences, including a strong reading program, hands-on classes, collaborations with businesses, and numerous extracurricular opportunities, all aimed at preparing students for life beyond school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Good reading curriculum, lots of out of school activities.</i> • <i>Getting a good education while staying "hands on" and not just heads in books.</i> • <i>Business/school collaboration, the FACS classes, and peer tutoring.</i> • <i>Computer science classes, House building class.</i> • <i>Looking at foreign language classes for younger students.</i> • <i>The diverse learning opportunities in the high school.</i> • <i>Development of elementary reading curriculum.</i> 	43 related responses



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We are preparing students for life.</i> • <i>Creating new and challenging electives for high school students.</i> • <i>Growing extracurriculars.</i> • <i>Early Elementary courses and structure and the building trades house.</i> • <i>Many opportunities for all students to choose to participate in - art, academic, athletic.</i> • <i>Lots of student involvement with a multitude of activities.</i> 	
<p>New York Mills Public Schools has strong community relationships, with extensive involvement and partnerships between the school, local businesses, and families, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Great community, everyone helps out.</i> • <i>The community helps one another in the district.</i> • <i>Community involvement.</i> • <i>So many community connections. Our businesses all sponsor a grade and increase involvement.</i> • <i>Community Involvement in the school. Recognizes the importance of family and family involvement in school.</i> • <i>Such a great partnership between the school and the community.</i> • <i>Collaboration with businesses in the community.</i> • <i>Community relationships with the school and local businesses.</i> • <i>Community collaboration.</i> • <i>The strong community relationships is one of our major strengths.</i> • <i>Lots of community involvement.</i> 	41 related responses

2. What challenges do you see for our district over the next five years?

<p>New York Mills Public Schools face challenges in accommodating a growing number of students with special needs, adapting to new federal and state mandates, aligning curriculum with community values, and innovating to meet 21st-century learning demands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is an increase in students with special needs.</i> • <i>Implementing mandates from the federal and state government.</i> • <i>Students with problems, having the knowledge and resources to help them.</i> • <i>State board of education directives.</i> • <i>The number of children that require special help.</i> • <i>New legislation that may affect schools.</i> • <i>SPED programming and offering advanced educational opportunities to students that are not in SPED.</i> • <i>Our special education needs continue to grow. We need a strong special education department that feels supported and has the necessary space to meet student needs.</i> • <i>All the new state requirements that will be implemented in the next five years.</i> 	61 related responses
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aligning curriculum throughout the grades and providing proper support to students who are struggling. There also seems to be a growing need for mental health and EBD support at our school.</i> • <i>School curriculum that reflects our community values.</i> • <i>Some of the states mandated laws and rules that don't necessarily fit with this community's morals and ethics.</i> • <i>Curriculum changes that don't align with personal morals and values.</i> • <i>Students with high needs.</i> • <i>Finding innovative ways to keep up with 21st century learning.</i> • <i>We need to offer more life skills-based classes, opportunities, and skills based on everyday life. College is not for all.</i> • <i>Providing good quality education that is reflected in testing scores.</i> • <i>How to meet the needs of special education students as required by the state.</i> • <i>Need to become more innovative like other schools.</i> • <i>Alternative education options for students and families.</i> • <i>Managing the large number of special needs students.</i> • <i>Movement to career academies.</i> 	
<p>The New York Mills community anticipates the district will see challenges with teacher shortages, difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff, and addressing staff burnout and turnover.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Teacher shortages, teachers not licensed in their area.</i> • <i>Hopefully we will continue to retain good staff. It is often difficult to hire educators and support staff, especially in rural areas.</i> • <i>Recruiting and retaining qualified teachers.</i> • <i>Staff retention.</i> • <i>Hiring quality teachers and staff from a small pool of applicants.</i> • <i>A lot of staff members leaving the school district.</i> • <i>Inadequate staff numbers.</i> • <i>Staff retention - losing staff to burnout or to other districts.</i> • <i>Maintaining good staff and support services for students in all areas not just sports. Special education staffing needs to improve.</i> • <i>Recruiting of new staff and keeping staff (not losing them to other fields due to pay, insurance etc.).</i> • <i>Staffing will and has been an issue for a few years now.</i> • <i>Losing a lot of staff members to retirement.</i> • <i>Retaining staff, staff shortages, sub shortages.</i> • <i>It's going to be very difficult to sustain the current staff numbers with the impending budget restraints.</i> • <i>Keeping staff and teachers (in education field and at NYM).</i> 	53 related responses
<p>New York Mills Public Schools faces challenges in maintaining enrollment, managing increasing class sizes, accommodating growth in student numbers with adequate space and facilities, and addressing the financial implications of expanding infrastructure to meet these needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Keeping enrollment, losing kids to online learning.</i> 	45 related responses



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Keeping pace with enrollment based around the neighboring school district.</i> • <i>Space and struggling with larger class sizes.</i> • <i>Class sizes are starting to become an issue. Having 30+ students in one section of a class is unacceptable.</i> • <i>We have an increase in overall district enrollment. Due to our current and projected enrollment I see a need for remodeling and adding onto the school to accommodate the larger class sizes.</i> • <i>Growth of the community, rising costs of education, and rising costs of operation.</i> • <i>School being big enough for the number of students.</i> • <i>Enrollment always needs to be addressed, both when strong and weak. If we don't have any kids, we have no school. If we have a lot of kids, we have to find places to put them.</i> • <i>Continuing updates to provide enough classrooms for our student body and all of their needs.</i> • <i>Adding additional building space.</i> • <i>Not having a big enough school.</i> • <i>Not enough classrooms.</i> • <i>Need for more space.</i> • <i>Growing and no space.</i> 	
<p>The New York Mills communities are concerned the district will encounter significant financial challenges, including ensuring funding keeps pace with inflation, technological advancements, the costs of services, and staff compensation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Financial concerns.</i> • <i>Funding keeping up with inflation and cost of goods and services.</i> • <i>Funding - with small class sizes will we get enough state funding to provide students with BIG LIFE opportunities.</i> • <i>Funding and growth of the school to keep up with surrounding communities.</i> • <i>Keeping the budget healthy, finding the funding to keep up with technology as it changes.</i> • <i>Finding the funding to pay staff appropriately and to provide additional services and enrichment for students.</i> • <i>Running out of money and needing a referendum.</i> • <i>Money/Finance (especially since we receive disproportionately less funding than our neighboring districts).</i> • <i>Keeping up with inflation and technology.</i> • <i>Budget/finances.</i> 	<p>31 related responses</p>



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

<p>The next superintendent needs to understand that New York Mills is a close-knit, conservative community with strong morals and values, where residents are hardworking, family-oriented, and take pride in their town's history.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New York Mills is a hardworking, help your neighbor whenever needed community. With a strong majority of Christian morals and values.</i> • <i>Most parents have traditional values.</i> • <i>It's a conservative area and many of us hope it stays that way.</i> • <i>Conservative values have been an important part of the community and have guided the direction of the school.</i> • <i>We are a community of honest hard-working individuals who value family, honesty, accountability, and trust.</i> • <i>Small town with generally conservative values.</i> • <i>Hard working, collaborative, and resourceful while sometimes being stubborn and strong willed.</i> • <i>They need to understand small town culture and values of the students they are going to lead.</i> • <i>The student base is mostly conservative families who want to keep these values in our school.</i> • <i>Need to understand what it is like growing up in a small community.</i> • <i>It is a strongly knit community that is like a family.</i> • <i>We are a small town with big hearts.</i> • <i>I think a strength of the school district is former students come back to the area to raise a family and enroll their children in NYM school district.</i> • <i>Small community that is very close.</i> • <i>This area is very conservative and we live based off our moral principles.</i> • <i>It's a small, rural school that enjoys sports and the outdoors. It's a working community filled with people who have lived in NYM their whole life.</i> • <i>Graduates leave for college and come back to settle in their hometown and raise their families in the community and school system they've enjoyed.</i> • <i>Typically, has been a hard-working community that takes pride in their athletic and other accomplishments.</i> • <i>I think they need to be aware of the strong community closeness and the values and morals of the people in the community.</i> • <i>Many of the kids in school today are kids of parents and grandparents that went to NYM. It is a school with a strong sense of family!</i> • <i>That it is a close-knit community.</i> 	<p>64 related responses</p>
<p>The next superintendent should prioritize community involvement, possess problem-solving skills, be collaborative, maintain staff morale, value stability over drastic changes, and ensure open communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It is important to come to community events.</i> • <i>We want someone that will be vested in our community.</i> 	<p>49 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The staff are a collaborative group and will work together with a collaborative leader</i> • <i>Get the community involved and you will be successful.</i> • <i>Be involved with Teachers and students. Be Available. Have common sense.</i> • <i>They need to have experience with problem solving with limited resources, have new ideas about approaching consistent problems, and be able to network with other districts to meet common needs and share resources.</i> • <i>It needs to be a powerful person who will do what's right for our students.</i> • <i>Needs to spend some time asking local folks a lot of questions in person.</i> • <i>That he/she needs to take care of staffing as well as morale of staff, seems to be at a low point.</i> • <i>We don't need someone to make a lot of change, we just need continued good leadership.</i> • <i>Being involved is important.</i> • <i>An overall knowledge of the area, students, and/or community members is a plus.</i> • <i>It's very important that the superintendent be involved in the community. And needs to understand the values, pride and tradition of the school district.</i> • <i>There needs to be open communication between school students and parents most importantly the parents.</i> 	
<p>The New York Mills community wants the next superintendent to know they are proud of and support the district. They want the next superintendent to continue to encourage the strong, positive partnership between the district and community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The school district and community have had a strong & positive partnership. It's important to continue to value & respect that relationship.</i> • <i>The school district has always had a tight bond with businesses and people in this community.</i> • <i>The majority of our parents support our school. Everyone needs to support everyone.</i> • <i>Our community is very supportive and as a school we try our best to be supportive to our community as well.</i> • <i>The connection between the community and school. We need to work together.</i> • <i>Great school district with great community support and always people willing to lend a helping hand.</i> • <i>NYM has been very supportive of the educational needs of the community and the school and staff have been well respected. We need to maintain and improve this.</i> • <i>There are a lot of families involved in the school.</i> • <i>We have a strong history of being a rural school with a supportive community.</i> • <i>That this is a very good school and the community is very proud of it.</i> • <i>We have a very supportive (and conservative) community.</i> 	<p>36 related responses</p>



4. Additional Comments:

<p>The next superintendent should be a positive, highly principled leader who can inspire students and teachers, make informed decisions, and be present, approachable, and resilient, while being open to new ideas and committed to the long-term success of the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• The leader should be someone who encourages and focuses on positivity.</i><i>• We need a person who will be able to see all aspects of every department and make decisions based on the good of the students.</i><i>• I would really hope to see a person of great character with a lot of positivity in this position who can connect with the students and inspire the teachers.</i><i>• Superintendent needs to be in charge and not try to please everyone but in a caring and knowledgeable manner.</i><i>• A superintendent needs to be present and approachable, needs to be able to multitask and have thick skin, needs to take time to process and consider all aspects before responding.</i><i>• I would really like to see a superintendent who is a good leader, holds staff accountable and puts the students interests first.</i><i>• I'd personally like to see someone who is willing to push against the "this is what we've always done" to help make something really special at New York Mills.</i><i>• Please pick a superintendent who knows education and not a business person.</i><i>• Big shoes to fill. Try hire someone that will be here for their career and not a stepping stone.</i><i>• It would be good to have someone that has new ideas and different ways to think about our obstacles.</i>	23 related responses
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