

Sunflower County Consolidated School District Superintendent Search Stakeholder Survey Summary

The stakeholder survey revealed key expectations, concerns, and priorities for selecting the next Superintendent of Education. Across all groups—administrators, business leaders, community members, parents, and teachers/staff—there was a strong emphasis on **transparent leadership, teacher support, student success, and community engagement** to sustain district progress.

Strengths of the District

Stakeholders highlighted the district's **strong leadership, data-driven decision-making, academic success, and dedicated educators**. Administrators and teachers praised **instructional alignment and central office support**, while community members and parents recognized **the district's reputation and commitment to student achievement**.

Challenges & Areas for Improvement

Despite academic success, stakeholders identified pressing concerns:

- **Leadership Transparency & Trust** – Concerns about perceived favoritism and lack of openness in decision-making.
- **Teacher & Staff Morale** – Issues with **low salaries, heavy workloads, and favoritism in hiring and promotions**.
- **School Safety & Discipline** – Calls for **clearer policies, stronger security measures, and better behavioral interventions**.
- **Overemphasis on Testing** – Desire for a **more holistic approach to education beyond standardized scores**.
- **Financial Transparency** – Need for **better communication on budget allocation and resource equity**.
- **Community Engagement** – **Stronger collaboration with parents and stakeholders in district decisions**.

Top Priorities for the Next Superintendent

Stakeholders expect the new leader to focus on:

- **Retaining and supporting teachers** through fair pay and professional development.
- **Enhancing student achievement** by balancing academic rigor with broader learning opportunities.
- **Improving school safety and discipline** to create a secure learning environment.
- **Strengthening community relationships** through open communication and trust-building.
- **Ensuring fiscal responsibility** with transparent and equitable budgeting.

Defining Success in Year One

Stakeholders defined success as:

- **Maintaining or improving district performance** while fostering a **positive, student-centered culture**.
- **Building trust through active engagement** with teachers, staff, parents, and the community.
- **Addressing staff concerns** on pay, workload, and morale.
- **Implementing measurable improvements** in school safety and discipline policies.
- **Demonstrating sound financial management** and ensuring equitable use of resources.

Conclusion

Stakeholders seek a **strong, principled leader** who will **unite the district, uphold fairness, and lead with integrity**. The next superintendent must be **decisive yet approachable**, ensuring **transparent decision-making and equitable leadership**. A leader with **high moral character, accountability, and a commitment to excellence** will be critical in earning trust and driving positive change.

Stakeholders feel that to move the district forward, the board must **prioritize leadership qualities that foster respect, collaboration, and long-term growth** while addressing key challenges. The right superintendent will **sustain district successes while building a stronger, more engaged, and equitable future for students, educators, and the community**.

Sunflower County Consolidated School District

Summary of Superintendent Search Survey Responses

1. Strengths of the District

- **Administrators:** Data-driven decision-making, strong leadership, engaged central office, curriculum alignment, and professional development.
- **Teachers/Staff:** Supportive community, data-driven instruction, leadership, transparency, and academic focus.
- **Business Members:** Supportive principals and focus on student success.
- **Community Members:** High district rating, strong education focus, and engaged teachers.
- **Parents:** Safety, curriculum activities, communication, and strong educational values.

2. Desired Characteristics for the Next Superintendent

- **Administrators:** Strong leadership, communication, curriculum knowledge, data expertise, integrity, and ability to build relationships.
- **Teachers/Staff:** Leadership skills, empathy, problem-solving, equity, strong educational background, and experience in instructional leadership
- **Business Members:** Communication skills, care for children, and leadership experience.
- **Community Members:** Approachability, communication, fairness, strategic planning, and transparency.
- **Parents:** Effective leadership, decision-making, fairness, respect, and student-centered focus.

3. Key Considerations for Search Consultants

- **Administrators:** Background verification, social interactions, transparency in selection.
- **Teachers/Staff:** Candidates' background, transparency, leadership effectiveness, district challenges.
- **Business Members:** School safety, leadership selection.
- **Community Members:** Fair hiring practices, community engagement, past leadership successes/failures.
- **Parents:** Candidate qualifications, leadership ethics, stakeholder involvement.

4. Top Priorities for the Incoming Superintendent

- **Administrators:** Teacher shortage, salaries, student success, district growth, community partnerships.
- **Teachers/Staff:** Teacher pay, student achievement, professional development, school safety, community collaboration.
- **Business Members:** School safety, district improvements.
- **Community Members:** Fair leadership, student behavior, teacher retention, curriculum reform.
- **Parents:** Academics, accountability, school safety, teacher support, community engagement.

5. Definition of Success in the First Year

- **Administrators:** Maintain district performance, improve school ratings, retain staff, and foster positive morale.
- **Teachers/Staff:** Strong relationships, leadership transparency, student growth, and maintaining a high-performing district.
- **Business Members:** Safe and well-managed schools.
- **Community Members:** School stability, addressing student needs, and engagement.
- **Parents:** Academic growth, student and teacher well-being, district improvements.

Additional Insights from the Superintendent Survey Responses

Beyond the main themes, several additional concerns and perspectives emerged from stakeholders:

1. Leadership & Decision-Making

- Many respondents emphasized the need for a **visionary leader** who can bring strategic direction and **not just maintain the status quo**.
- Some community members and staff **questioned the transparency of the hiring process**, expressing concerns about potential favoritism or pre-selected candidates.
- Several stakeholders want a superintendent who **values and includes the voices of teachers, staff, and the community in decision-making**.

2. Superintendent's Background & Qualifications

- Many respondents stressed that the **superintendent should have experience beyond just one district**, ensuring a **diverse perspective**.
- Some expressed a **preference for hiring from within the district**, while others emphasized that **the best candidate should be selected, regardless of location**.
- Business members and parents noted the need for **financial management skills** to ensure **proper budget allocation and financial stability**.

3. Concerns About Teacher & Staff Morale

- Several administrators and teachers noted that the **treatment of teachers is a critical issue**, with some calling for:
 - **Fair pay adjustments** for teachers and administrators.
 - **Incentives for hard-working educators**.
 - **A focus on teacher retention and recruitment**, particularly in high-need areas.
- Some teachers and staff believe that **favoritism and nepotism impact hiring and promotions**, which should be addressed.

4. Accountability & Student Success

- Parents, teachers, and community members expressed concerns about:
 - **Too much focus on standardized testing**, urging a **more balanced approach** that considers whole-child development.
 - **Lack of discipline policies and teacher support for student behavior issues.**
 - The need to **address student attendance and engagement** through incentives and intervention programs.
 - Some stakeholders suggested that **student and teacher evaluations should be more holistic**, not just based on test scores.

5. Community & Stakeholder Engagement

- Several community members emphasized the need for a **superintendent who actively listens to and engages with families and the community.**
- **Parental involvement** was highlighted as an area for improvement, with some suggesting **stronger collaboration between schools and parents** to improve student outcomes.
- Respondents mentioned that the **superintendent should be present at community events and visible within the schools.**

6. School Safety & Security

- A recurring concern was **school safety**, with calls for:
 - **More school security measures.**
 - **Stronger disciplinary policies** to handle student behavior issues.
 - **Better support for teachers dealing with classroom management.**

7. Equity & Fairness

- Some stakeholders raised concerns about **district-wide equity issues**, including:
 - **Resource allocation between schools.**
 - **Ensuring all students, regardless of background, receive equal opportunities.**
 - **Addressing gaps in support for students with disabilities or behavioral challenges.**

8. Superintendent's First Year Challenges

- Stakeholders expect the **incoming superintendent to balance continuity with change**—respecting what is working while making necessary improvements.
- Many respondents **cautioned against making drastic changes too soon** without first understanding the district's dynamics.
- A strong emphasis was placed on the **need for stability**, particularly in leadership and instructional direction.