

Question 1 – How do you address issues of school or district culture?

by
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Applying for position of Superintendent of the
Lake Wales Charter Schools
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The Lake Wales Charter School system was created on the premise of giving each school their unique culture that has been woven into the foundation of this system. As the Superintendent, I believe it is key to understand that each school is uniquely different and constructed with a mindset of innovation. When addressing school or district culture, I must keep the premise of uniqueness in mind while finding the common ground between each school.

Upon examination and assessment, as Superintendent I would recognize and acknowledge that multiple cultures exist. Student culture, staff and teacher culture, and the culture of the system are a few of the many cultures that exist. We must understand vertical alignment should exist towards the overall missions of the schools. Once a diagnosis has been concluded on what caused the issues of school culture, we then can begin to reset development and formulate a solid remedy.

During my years as an educator, I have created three unique steps that help with diagnosing culture issues:

Discover the culture

A leader should always spend time immersing themselves in the culture to create a fond understanding for the foundation. There should be an intentional review and appreciation for how the schools have progressed so far.

Pursue Resolutions

Solid leadership teams who understand their school or district culture can feel the culture shifting. Leaders know when things are taking a turn with students, teachers, or the organization. We all must become proactive instead of reactive regarding issues of culture.

Be Accommodating

When you finally reach a resolution, it should be accommodating for both parties since the cultures have many distinct differences depending on where the issue evolved from. Students should have a great education, teachers and staff should have a great workplace environment, and district staff along with school leaders should feel valued.

I genuinely believe these three steps have assisted me in addressing culture issues during my many years of education. My experience includes leading multiple departments, encouraging student performance while instructing in the classroom, and navigating key community organizations through times of crisis due to an overnight shift in culture.

A leader cannot be deterred from issues that may arise. A leader should be compassionate and understanding, and step forward boldly towards finding resolutions that will create positive outcomes for all parties if school laws and policies are not being compromised or broken.

If I am selected as your next Superintendent, I can assure you that I would work closely with the leadership team to create proactive efforts to address culture and climate issues, while trying to foster a positive workplace environment where individuals feel valued and appreciated for their work.

Question 2 – How do you hold yourself and others in the district accountable?

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Courtney Lynch once said, “Leaders inspire accountability through their ability to accept responsibility before they place blame.” We must understand that the words accountability and expectations are married while being bound together, with the hopes of creating a dynamic relationship that will yield success in each of our schools. While working together through a shared governance process, we can create a synergy of understanding towards meeting the expected outcomes for our successes.

As we move toward setting expectations together, we must commemorate our small and large triumphs once goals have been achieved. The hypothesis that accountability and expectations are continually negative stands inaccurate. Through accountability, we can meet children where they are, help encourage and support teachers and staff, and maintain a philosophy and understanding that we want to embed a belief of ensuring positive successes yearly for our entire system.

In our world of education, we can manage our expectations through the success of the children who receive a quality education through our system. As your Superintendent, I will hold myself accountable by ensuring that our level one and two students are improving, exceptional students are flourishing while being supported with the proper resources, families in this community have safe schools that offer a quality education, and teachers and staff feel they are supported.

The question we should always keep at the forefront as we hold ourselves accountable should be “are all students learning under our current conditions to foster success?” This question will allow us as a system to encourage courageous conversation, review data to implement and create alignment, create stronger bridges of communication, and generate opportunities for professional development across the board. As we foster a culture of transparency, we can work together to deliver the expected outcomes we seek through clear expectations set through our Lake Wales Charter mission statement and strategic plan to increase literacy and math rates across the system.

If I were selected as your next Superintendent, accountability would mean to me ensuring that solid morale is infused throughout the organization, students at all levels are accelerating, exceptional students have the services needed for success, and teachers and staff feel valued. The focus on the district and organization through collective buy-in and shared governance will help us all understand the expectations of deliverables that we want to establish for the students across our System to receive a quality education where no child is left behind. As mentioned earlier, the marriage between accountability and expectations through a shared governance process will allow our organization to meet the needs of students, staff, and teachers across our System, accelerating us toward meeting our mission.