



Executive Recruitment and Development

Executive Director Search
Online Parent Feedback Survey
Final Report

Jefferson Academy
Charter Schools
Westminster, Colorado

Submitted by:
Dr. Walt Cooper

December 2025

Parent Survey Summary Report

This report summarizes parent feedback in the Jefferson Academy Charter Schools Executive Director Search from 164 online survey submissions gathered between December 5 and December 12, 2025.

Parents were presented with the opportunity to respond to a combination of multiple choice, rating scale, and constructed response questions. The cumulative results (all respondent groups combined) of answers to these questions are included in this executive summary. Responses disaggregated by specific respondent groups are provided for respondent groups with at least 25 responses ($n > 25$).

When asked to identify the school(s) that represented each respondent's connection to Jefferson Academy Charter Schools, the largest group self-identified as parents of students at Jefferson Academy Secondary School (49%). This group was followed by parents of students at Jefferson Academy Elementary School (48%), parents of students at Summit Westminster (12%), parents of students at Jefferson Academy Coal Creek (3%), and parents of students at Summit South (3%).

1. Respondents were next asked, “What one word best describes how you feel about Jefferson Academy Charter Schools?” Presented here is a word cloud that visually represents the most frequently submitted responses:



2. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to answer the question, “What are three strengths of the school that executive director candidates should know?” The most common themes emerging from these responses (in rank order) included:

- **Academics and college preparation:** Many comments center on strong academics, academic rigor, high academic expectations, and college prep opportunities including concurrent enrollment and advanced coursework. Parents see the school as offering a rigorous, content-rich curriculum that prepares students for college and life, with small class sizes and solid support when students struggle.
- **Community and culture:** Parents repeatedly mention strong community, close community, family feel, small school feel, and a tight-knit or small-town atmosphere. They describe a safe, kind, noncontroversial culture where students are known, expectations are high, and the school focuses on core knowledge rather than ideological trends.
- **Family engagement and communication:** High levels of parental involvement and partnership are a strength: comments highlight parent involvement, committed parents, parent-led, volunteering, fundraising, and families taking an active role in governance and feedback. Parents also praise strong communication, transparency, leaders who are visible and responsive, and systems that welcome input.
- **Teachers, staff, and leadership:** Parents emphasize great teachers, strong faculty, teacher longevity, and staff who are caring, communicative, and invested in students’ success. Leadership is seen as a strength: organized, fiscally responsible, experienced in education, and able to uphold the mission while collaborating with parents.
- **Mission, values, and options for students:** Comments stress the unique charter structure, focus on core academics over politics, support for homeschooling families, and protection of parents’ rights in educational decisions. Parents also value the range of opportunities—sports, arts, clubs, concurrent enrollment, and other extracurriculars—that let students thrive beyond academics.

3. The next question asked for perceptions (4.0 rating scale) about several operational facets of Jefferson Academy Charter Schools. These included (a) Student Achievement, (b) Communications, (c) Preparing Students for College and Career, (d) Relationships with Families, (e) Transparency, (f) Relationships with Staff Members, and (g) Financial Management. The chart below represents the collective ratings of each item:

<u>Operational Facet</u>	<u>Weighted Average</u>
Student Achievement	3.26
Relationships with Families	3.10
Communications	3.08
Preparing Students for College and Career	2.94

Relationships with Staff Members	2.93
Transparency	2.76
Financial Management	2.39

4. Respondents were asked to select the three areas from a list of 13 frequently identified issues in school districts that the net executive director should make a priority. The ranking of these critical issues (from most important to least important) indicated:

Teacher Quality	59.15%
College and Career Readiness	35.37%
School Safety and Security	33.54%
Staff Recruitment and Retention	32.32%
Family and Community Relations	29.27%
Academic Outcomes	26.22%
Communication	17.68%
Diversity and Engagement	13.41%
Financial Management	13.41%
Mental Health Services	12.80%
Facilities and Grounds	9.15%
Special Education Services	8.54%
Social Emotional Learning	7.93%

5. As a follow-up question, respondents were asked to identify any additional areas the next executive director should make a priority. Four themes emerged as additional critical issues. They were:

- **Student support:** Expand advanced options and remove barriers to accessing them. Revisit homework loads. Expand counseling, mental-health support, and services for IEP/504, and students in the middle.
- **School climate:** Tighten discipline for bullying and disruptive behavior; raise expectations for conduct. Clarify stance on political/ideological content; keep classrooms academically focused and age-appropriate. Improve food service, lunch length, and overall whole-child wellness.
- **Technology, AI, and cell phone use:** Create clear, enforceable policies for student cell-phone use and one-to-one devices. Develop a robust AI policy that supports learning while addressing cheating and misuse. Balance tech with pencil-and-paper and traditional research/writing to protect achievement.
- **Engagement:** Improve transparency and timeliness of communication with families on key decisions and changes. Strengthen cross-campus cohesion. Increase authentic community engagement: parent voice in decisions, visibility of leaders, and consistent feedback loops.

6. Respondents were asked to select the five most important characteristics the next executive director should have from a list of 23 leadership characteristics. The ranking of these characteristics (from most important to least important) was:

Demonstrates high integrity and ethics and leads by example	55.49%
Values charter school and home school autonomy	35.98%
Places the needs of students above anything else	35.37%
Values educating the whole child	34.15%
Communicates effectively	31.71%
Promotes safety and security across the district	26.22%
Resolves conflicts with dignity and grace	24.39%
Takes responsibility and is accountable for their actions	23.17%
Promotes student participation in the arts, athletics, and extracurricular activities	23.17%
Engages and listens to stakeholders	18.90%
Builds strong community relationships	17.68%
Uses data to make informed and transparent decisions	17.07%
Thinks and acts strategically	16.46%
Fosters creativity, risk taking, and innovation	16.46%
Delivers improved student outcomes	15.24%
Builds strong and diverse teams	14.02%
Stands firm behind decisions that may not be popular	14.02%
Is committed to equitable access to learning for all students	13.41%
Possesses a background in public education	13.41%
Maintains a vision focused on the future	10.37%
Adapts effectively to changing circumstances	10.37%
Previous executive leadership experience	10.37%
Fundraising and resource development	5.49%

7. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to identify any additional characteristics the next executive director should have. Four themes emerged from these comments. They included:

- **Integrity, ethics, and mission alignment:** Comments repeatedly emphasize impeccable character, honesty, and high morals, including transparency, fiscal responsibility, and keeping politics “at bay” while defending the charter mission. Parents want someone who follows JA’s founding vision, prioritizes student safety and learning, and resists pressure to dilute core values.
- **Relational, visible, and community-oriented:** Parents stress a leader who is approachable, warm, and present on campus, engaging casually with students and families and showing up at events. They highlight strong communication with

parents and staff (updates, office hours), genuine compassion, and the ability to build trust across JA, Summit, and homeschool communities.

- **Strategic, experienced, and team-focused:** Families want a proven K-12 executive with experience in charter and traditional public settings, financial and grant expertise, and comfort with AI and changing educational ecosystems. Using data for transparent decisions, building and holding high-performing teams accountable, and improving student outcomes while supporting teachers are seen as essential capabilities.
- **Courageous, student-centered, and innovative:** Responses call for “thick skin” and courage to stand up to entrenched interests, address behavior issues, and make hard or unpopular calls in service of students. Parents also value a servant-hearted, fun, and innovative leader who educates the whole child, encourages critical thinking and curiosity, and promotes participation in arts, athletics, and extracurriculars for all learners.

8. Respondents were next asked to identify three things that might encourage a candidate to relocate to the area. The most frequent responses included:

- Outdoor lifestyle and natural beauty
- Community, safety, and family friendliness
- Metro access, amenities, and economy
- Schools, charter environment, and JA specifically

9. Finally, respondents were asked if there were additional things they thought the Search Committee or Board of Directors should consider during this search process. The most common themes arising from these comments included:

- **Mission, values, and fit:** Emphasize selecting a leader whose character, ethics, and worldview align with JA’s mission, history, and charter identity, including respect for traditional values and school choice. Seek someone who protects classrooms from partisan agendas, focuses on core academics and whole-child development, and is a good cultural fit for both JA and the broader community.
- **Educational expertise and results orientation:** Require a strong education background (K-12 and charter), experience running schools, and the ability to manage multiple campuses with different needs. Prioritize candidates with a track record of academic results, college-prep strength, data-informed improvement, support for special education, and attention to athletics, arts, and extracurriculars.
- **Stability, continuity, and respect for JA’s history:** Many comments ask for someone who will build on Mr. Matlick’s work rather than reinvent the wheel, honoring JA’s founders, culture, and homeschool programs. Parents want long-term commitment, strategic, not reactive, change, and sensitivity to JA’s reputation, enrollment, and competitive position among area schools.
- **Communication, relationships, and community engagement:** Parents call for excellent communication with regular updates, opportunities to “meet the candidates,” visibility on campuses, and genuine listening to parent and

homeschool voices. They stress kindness, compassion, and the ability to support principals, teachers, and families while maintaining high standards and clear boundaries.

- **Governance, finance, and strategic growth:** The board is urged to choose on merit rather than politics or connections, vet for red flags, and ensure fiscal responsibility and transparent budgeting. Parents question the size and structure of the executive team, ask for clarity on future growth vs. focus on existing students, and want strategic decisions about facilities, programs, and college-prep offerings grounded in JA's long-term vision.

**Respondent Group: Parents of Jefferson Academy Secondary Students
81 Responses**

This section summarizes feedback in the Jefferson Academy Charter Schools Executive Director Search from 81 respondents who identified themselves as parents of students at Jefferson Academy Secondary School. **Note:** 24 respondents indicated students at both JA Secondary and JA Elementary Schools.

1. Respondents were asked, "What one word best describes how you feel about Jefferson Academy Charter Schools?" Presented here is a word cloud that visually represents the most frequently submitted responses:



2. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to answer the question, “What are three strengths of the school that executive director candidates should know?” The most common themes emerging from these responses (in rank order) included:

- **Academics and college preparation:** Parents repeatedly highlight academic rigor, high expectations, strong curriculum, and college-prep focus as defining strengths, including access to advanced or concurrent enrollment and a track record of high performance. They value small classes, practical approaches to learning, and an emphasis on core subjects (reading, writing, math, science) over trends or politics.
- **Community, culture, and family engagement:** A tight-knit, family-like community, strong parent involvement, and a sense of “community first” appear throughout the comments. Parents see cross-campus connection, long-term relationships, and a welcoming, inclusive culture as essential strengths that candidates must preserve and deepen.
- **Teachers, leadership, and governance:** Parents frequently name dedicated, caring, high-caliber teachers, along with strong, visible leadership that is

mission-driven, collaborative, and communicative, as core assets. They also reference confidence in the board's governance and want a leader who is seasoned, organized, student-centered, and able to unify campuses while holding high standards.

- **Communication, consistency:** Effective, transparent communication with parents and students is called out as a major strength and expectation for future leaders.
- **Values, safety, and whole-child opportunities:** Many comments emphasize character development, integrity, respect for parental rights, and keeping academics above politics, along with a safe, orderly environment. Parents also see diverse extracurriculars, athletics, arts, and clubs as important complements to academics that keep students engaged and develop well-rounded graduates.

3. The next question asked for perceptions (4.0 rating scale) about several operational facets of Jefferson Academy Charter Schools. These included (a) Student Achievement, (b) Communications, (c) Preparing Students for College and Career, (d) Relationships with Families, (e) Transparency, (f) Relationships with Staff Members, and (g) Financial Management. The chart below represents the collective ratings of each item:

<u>Operational Facet</u>	<u>Weighted Average</u>
Preparing Students for College and Career	3.35
Student Achievement	3.26
Communications	3.02
Relationships with Families	2.98
Relationships with Staff Members	2.77
Transparency	2.67
Financial Management	2.47

4. Respondents were asked to select the three areas from a list of 13 frequently identified issues in school districts that the net executive director should make a priority. The ranking of these critical issues (from most important to least important) indicated:

Teacher Quality	65.43%
College and Career Readiness	44.44%
School Safety and Security	35.80%
Staff Recruitment and Retention	32.10%
Family and Community Relations	28.40%
Academic Outcomes	23.46%
Communication	16.05%
Diversity and Engagement	13.58%
Mental Health Services	12.35%
Financial Management	11.11%
Special Education Services	8.64%
Facilities and Grounds	7.41%
Social Emotional Learning	1.23%

5. As a follow-up question, respondents were asked to identify any additional areas the next executive director should make a priority. Three themes emerged as additional critical issues. They were:

- **Teaching, learning, and academic rigor:** Parents call for continued or increased academic rigor, clear grading practices, less busywork homework, more advanced/college-credit options, better scheduling for motivated students. They also want curriculum alignment K-12 so students experience one coherent program, with academics prioritized over politics or trends.
- **Technology, behavior, and school climate:** Multiple comments press for stricter, consistently enforced cell-phone and tech-use policies, more pencil-and-paper learning, and attention to AI with clear guardrails. Families also emphasize student behavior, discipline, and a respectful, inclusive climate where disruptions are addressed, and 504/IEP students receive better support. Families stress physical and emotional safety, including threats, bathrooms/locker rooms, food quality, and transportation-adjacent issues.
- **Leadership and governance:** Visible presence of leaders at events are major themes. Parents also raise concerns about administrative team size, clarity of roles on the executive team.

6. Respondents were asked to select the five most important characteristics the next executive director should have from a list of 23 leadership characteristics. The ranking of these characteristics (from most important to least important) was:

Demonstrates high integrity and ethics and leads by example	61.73%
Communicates effectively	38.27%
Values charter school and home school autonomy	32.10%
Places the needs of students above anything else	29.63%
Takes responsibility and is accountable for their actions	25.93%
Values educating the whole child	25.93%
Resolves conflicts with dignity and grace	23.46%
Promotes student participation in the arts, athletics, and extracurricular activities	23.46%
Thinks and acts strategically	22.22%
Promotes safety and security across the district	22.22%
Previous executive leadership experience	18.52%
Fosters creativity, risk taking, and innovation	17.28%
Builds strong community relationships	17.28%
Uses data to make informed and transparent decisions	17.28%
Builds strong and diverse teams	14.81%
Delivers improved student outcomes	14.81%
Engages and listens to stakeholders	14.81%
Possesses a background in public education	14.81%
Adapts effectively to changing circumstances	13.58%

Stands firm behind decisions that may not be popular	13.58%
Maintains a vision focused on the future	12.35%
Is committed to equitable access to learning for all students	12.35%
Fundraising and resource development	3.70%

7. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to identify any additional characteristics the next executive director should have. Five themes emerged from these comments. They included:

- **Integrity, ethics, and mission alignment:** Parents consistently emphasize impeccable character, honesty, and high ethical standards, including transparency, fairness, and keeping politics out of classrooms while defending the charter mission. They want someone who acts as a role model, does “what’s right for students,” and aligns decisions with core values and the school’s college-prep purpose.
- **People leadership and relationships:** Comments stress being “a leader of people” who is warm, approachable, visible at events, and able to build trust with students, staff, parents, and the broader community. Parents want a collaborative team builder who manages conflict well, welcomes diverse viewpoints, and creates strong, united staff teams across elementary and secondary.
- **Communication, transparency, and engagement:** Parents call for an excellent communicator who provides regular updates, holds office hours, listens to teacher and parent feedback, and clearly explains decisions and the role of the executive director team. They value leaders who use data to make and communicate decisions and who are accessible for casual, informal conversations as well as formal meetings.
- **Strategic, experienced, and student-centered:** A recurring theme is strategic thinking and prior K-12 leadership experience, ideally including both charter and traditional public school contexts. Parents want a visionary who can balance big-picture planning (AI, safety, long-term academic competitiveness) with day-to-day focus on student success, whole-child education, and equitable access to strong academics and activities.
- **Courage, steadiness, and resilience:** Families highlight the need for someone with “thick skin” who is not afraid of hard conversations, maintains high standards, and resists outside agendas that dilute quality. They expect the executive director to back effective teachers, enforce behavior expectations, and make tough calls that protect school culture and safety while keeping relationships intact.

8. Respondents were next asked to identify three things that might encourage a candidate to relocate to the area. The most frequent responses included:

- Location, nature, and climate
- Access to city amenities
- Strong schools and charter environment
- Community, family life, and safety

9. Finally, respondents were asked if there were additional things they thought the Search Committee or Board of Directors should consider during this search process. The most common themes arising from these comments included:

- **Preserve mission, culture, and stability:** Many responses emphasize finding a “good fit” who will honor JA’s history, not “reinvent the wheel,” and continue the steady, values-driven approach associated with Mr. Matlick. Parents want someone who protects the school from district-level controversies and keeps academics and character, not politics, at the center.
- **Character, ethics, and qualifications:** Parents repeatedly mention ethics, integrity, clean background checks, strong reputation, and education/charter experience (including knowledge of Colorado charter law, finance, and multi-campus leadership) as non-negotiables. They stress choosing qualifications and ask that current strong internal candidates receive serious consideration.
- **Academic excellence, college prep, and whole-child focus:** Families want the next ED to strengthen academic rigor and college-prep outcomes relative to peer schools, while also expanding athletics, extracurriculars, internships, and mental-health supports. Several point to enrollment and reputation slippage and expect a leader who uses data to improve student achievement, retention, and readiness for life after graduation.
- **Community engagement and transparent process:** Parents ask for visible, approachable leadership, including “meet the candidates” opportunities and regular communication about goals and decisions. They also highlight the importance of listening to families, understanding special-education needs, and maintaining a collaborative, positive culture across JA’s campuses.

Respondent Group: Parents of Jefferson Academy Elementary Students 78 Responses

This section summarizes feedback in the Jefferson Academy Charter Schools Executive Director Search from 78 respondents who identified themselves as parents of students at Jefferson Academy Elementary School. **Note:** 24 respondents indicated students at both JA Elementary and JA Secondary Schools.

1. Respondents were asked, “What one word best describes how you feel about Jefferson Academy Charter Schools?” Presented here is a word cloud that visually represents the most frequently submitted responses:



2. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to answer the question, “What are three strengths of the school that executive director candidates should know?” The most common themes emerging from these responses (in rank order) included:

- **Academic excellence and rigor:** Parents repeatedly point to high academic expectations, rigorous curriculum across core subjects, and consistently strong performance as defining features of the school. Many note that the program is content-rich, college-prep oriented, and balanced with robust arts, music, and extracurricular options, so academics are a clear hallmark but not the only strength.
- **Community, culture, and family engagement:** A strong, family-like community with high levels of parent involvement and volunteering is described as central to the school’s success. Parents value the school’s safe, welcoming, “small town” feel, shared values, and culture of character development and student leadership that spans campuses.

- **Teachers, leadership, and support:** Comments highlight dedicated, long-tenured teachers, supportive staff, and approachable leaders who communicate well and know students and families personally. Parents stress that educators go the extra mile, maintain high standards, and are backed by a functional board and stable finances that allow the school to focus on students.
- **Communication, partnership, and responsiveness:** Parents identify strong two-way communication with teachers and leadership, including accessibility, openness to feedback, and visible presence, as key strengths. They see the school as responsive to family needs, supportive of student well-being, and willing to collaborate with parents to solve problems.
- **Mission, values, and charter advantages:** Many responses underscore the charter mission: independence from district swings, emphasis on core knowledge over politics, and the ability to “march to the beat of our own drum” while protecting parental rights. Parents also cite a clear, longstanding mission, fiscal responsibility, and a close alignment between school values and family expectations as strengths the next executive should protect and build on.

3. The next question asked for perceptions (4.0 rating scale) about several operational facets of Jefferson Academy Charter Schools. These included (a) Student Achievement, (b) Communications, (c) Preparing Students for College and Career, (d) Relationships with Families, (e) Transparency, (f) Relationships with Staff Members, and (g) Financial Management. The chart below represents the collective ratings of each item:

<u>Operational Facet</u>	<u>Weighted Average</u>
Student Achievement	3.36
Communications	3.15
Relationships with Families	3.09
Relationships with Staff Members	2.96
Transparency	2.79
Preparing Students for College and Career	2.69
Financial Management	2.47

4. Respondents were asked to select the three areas from a list of 13 frequently identified issues in school districts that the net executive director should make a priority. The ranking of these critical issues (from most important to least important) indicated:

Teacher Quality	55.13%
Staff Recruitment and Retention	33.33%
School Safety and Security	32.05%
Academic Outcomes	30.77%
Family and Community Relations	29.49%
College and Career Readiness	28.21%
Communication	17.95%
Financial Management	16.67%

Diversity and Engagement	15.38%
Facilities and Grounds	12.82%
Mental Health Services	12.82%
Social Emotional Learning	10.26%
Special Education Services	5.13%

5. As a follow-up question, respondents were asked to identify any additional areas the next executive director should make a priority. Five themes emerged as additional critical issues. They were:

- **Safety, behavior, and school climate:** Parents raise concerns about bullying, inconsistent discipline, and overall safety, including school shootings and bathroom/locker-room privacy. They ask for clear standards, real consequences, and support for students' mental health and social-emotional needs to create a respectful, safe learning environment.
- **Academics, college prep, and curriculum:** There is emphasis on maintaining and raising academic standards, improving college and career counseling, aligning K–12 curriculum, and adding more world languages and real-world/life-skills instruction. Families want fundamentals taught well, homework to be purposeful, and instruction to stay focused on fact-based academics rather than politics or ideological trends.
- **Technology, phones, and instructional balance:** Parents frequently mention cell phones being "out of control," concern about one-to-one laptops, and the need for clear policies on AI and digital tools. They favor more paper-and-pencil learning, thoughtful integration of technology as a tool, and limits on devices that distract from instruction.
- **Staffing, retention, and teacher quality:** Improving teacher pay, retention, and appreciation, while avoiding burnout and ensuring enough support staff for higher-needs students, is a theme. Parents want consistently strong teachers and coaches across programs and expect leadership to protect effective staff and address low performance.
- **Cohesion, communication, and community engagement:** Families ask for better alignment and branding between elementary and secondary, smoother transitions, and a unified, student-centered approach across campuses. They also seek more transparency, two-way communication, and meaningful avenues for parent involvement and feedback, including attention to diversity of staff and family engagement efforts.

6. Respondents were asked to select the five most important characteristics the next executive director should have from a list of 23 leadership characteristics. The ranking of these characteristics (from most important to least important) was:

Demonstrates high integrity and ethics and leads by example	51.28%
Values educating the whole child	41.03%

Places the needs of students above anything else	37.18%
Communicates effectively	30.77%
Promotes student participation in the arts, athletics, and extracurricular activities	30.77%
Promotes safety and security across the district	28.21%
Values charter school and home school autonomy	24.36%
Engages and listens to stakeholders	23.08%
Resolves conflicts with dignity and grace	21.79%
Takes responsibility and is accountable for their actions	20.51%
Builds strong community relationships	20.51%
Stands firm behind decisions that may not be popular	17.95%
Possesses a background in public education	16.67%
Uses data to make informed and transparent decisions	16.67%
Thinks and acts strategically	15.38%
Delivers improved student outcomes	15.38%
Builds strong and diverse teams	12.82%
Adapts effectively to changing circumstances	12.82%
Is committed to equitable access to learning for all students	11.54%
Fosters creativity, risk taking, and innovation	8.97%
Maintains a vision focused on the future	7.69%
Previous executive leadership experience	7.69%
Fundraising and resource development	5.13%

7. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to identify any additional characteristics the next executive director should have. Four themes emerged from these comments. They included:

- **Integrity, ethics, and mission alignment:** Comments consistently stress impeccable character, honesty, and ethical decision making, including resisting political pressure, “keeping woke out of JA,” and putting students’ best interests ahead of outside agendas. Parents want someone who follows JA’s founding vision, defends the charter mission, and keeps politics from overshadowing academics and character development.
- **Relational, visible, and community-oriented:** Parents emphasize a leader who is approachable, kind, present on campus, and engaged with students, staff, and families in everyday ways. They value strong communication with parents, openness to input, and the ability to build community relationships and retain high-quality staff through support and collaboration.
- **Strategic, data-informed, and team-focused:** Families want an executive director with proven K-12 leadership experience who can use data to drive decisions, be fiscally responsible, and deliver improved student outcomes. Building and holding high-performing teams accountable, delegating effectively, and leading with a clear, student-centered vision are seen as critical characteristics.

- **Courage, steadiness, and student focus:** Many responses highlight the need for someone with “thick skin” who can make hard or unpopular decisions, uphold behavior expectations, and protect school culture while remaining compassionate and fair. Parents also stress a servant-hearted, fun, and empathetic leader who prioritizes educating the whole child, encourages critical thinking, and supports teachers and parents as partners in learning.

8. Respondents were next asked to identify three things that might encourage a candidate to relocate to the area. The most frequent responses included:

- Location, outdoors, and climate
- Quality of life and family-friendly environment
- Strong schools and educational culture
- Community, safety, and professional appeal

9. Finally, respondents were asked if there were additional things they thought the Search Committee or Board of Directors should consider during this search process. The most common themes arising from these comments included:

- **Preserve mission, culture, and stability:** Many comments stress finding a “good fit” who will not “reinvent the wheel,” but will build on what already works at JA and mirror the whole-child, people-centered leadership parents want for students. Parents want a leader aligned with JA’s charter foundation, traditional values, and expectations around keeping partisan politics and extreme ideological agendas out of classrooms.
- **Character, experience, and qualifications:** Parents frequently emphasize impeccable ethics, clean background checks, and substantial K-12 leadership experience, including knowledge of child development, charter law, finance, and multi-campus operations. They ask the board to select on merit and track record—backbone, high standards, ability to raise achievement and retain students—rather than DEI targets or candidates seen as politically driven.
- **Commitment, fit, and continuity:** Families urge the board to consider candidates’ intent to stay, their willingness to observe and learn JA before making big changes, and their capacity to honor what current staff and families have built. Several also suggest looking seriously at strong internal candidates and, where appropriate, clarifying whether JA needs a broader executive team (finance, curriculum, student services) to sustain long-term success.
- **Communication, safety, and parent partnership:** Parents want a leader who will communicate clearly and compassionately in crises (especially school safety incidents), maintain transparent two-way communication with families, and treat parents as partners rather than adversaries. They also highlight the importance of someone established enough in the community to focus quickly on student and teacher needs, including attention to JA Elementary’s reputation, whole-child experiences, and support for all learners.