



Executive Recruitment and Development

Superintendent Search
Stakeholder Feedback
Final Report

Steamboat Springs
School District RE-2
Steamboat Springs, Colorado

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

- **Community and relationships:** Repeated emphasis on community support, involvement, and partnerships, including “small town feel,” “close-knit,” and strong parent engagement. Relationships among staff, students, families, and community organizations are seen as central strengths, with high levels of trust, communication, and collaboration.
- **Staff quality and commitment:** Many comments highlight dedicated, caring, hardworking, and highly qualified teachers and staff, including strong building-level leadership. Staff are described as resilient, innovative, and willing to “wear many hats,” with a culture of care for students and commitment to continuous improvement.
- **Small size and close-knit district:** The district’s relatively small size and rural/mountain context are viewed as advantages that enable meaningful connections and quick collaboration. Respondents note small class sizes, a family-like environment, and the ability to know and support each student more personally.
- **Academics, programs, and opportunities:** Strong academics, high achievement, and rigorous curriculum are cited frequently, along with high expectations for students. There is pride in diverse opportunities: CTE and concurrent enrollment with Colorado Mountain College, arts, athletics, outdoor/experiential learning, and extracurriculars that create a well-rounded education.
- **Whole child, mental health, and student support:** Many responses stress a whole-child approach that values social-emotional learning, mental health supports, and student safety alongside academics. The district’s mental health programs, behavior supports, SPED and inclusion models, and attention to student well-being are described as core strengths.
- **Equity, inclusion, and diverse community:** A recurring theme is commitment to equity, inclusion, and serving diverse and vulnerable student populations (immigrant families, multilingual learners, students facing economic or social challenges). Respondents expect leadership that advocates for all students, protects access to a broad curriculum, and works against socioeconomic divides and entitlement.
- **Voice, collaboration, and transparency:** Staff and community voice, collaborative decision-making, and strong union/association partnerships are highlighted as positives. Transparency, open communication, and trust in teachers’ expertise are seen as both existing strengths and essential expectations for superintendent leadership.

3. The next question asked for perceptions (4.0 rating scale) about several operational facets of the Steamboat Springs School District. 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	2.96
Communications	2.81
Relationships with Families	2.70
Relationships with Staff Members	2.61
Preparing Students for College and Career	2.39
Transparency	2.34
Financial Management	1.95

4. Respondents were asked to select the three most critical issues from a list of 13 frequently identified issues in school districts. The ranking of these critical issues (from most important to least important) indicated:

Staff Recruitment and Retention	57.56%
Teacher Quality	38.38%
College and Career Readiness	31.73%
Academic Outcomes	26.57%
Mental Health Services	25.46%
Diversity and Engagement	21.40%
Special Education Services	21.40%
Family and Community Relations	18.08%
School Safety and Security	17.71%
Social Emotional Learning	15.50%
Communication	9.96%
Financial Management	9.59%
Facilities and Grounds	4.80%

5. As a follow-up question, respondents were asked to identify any additional critical issues the next superintendent should make a priority. Themes that emerged included:
- **Housing, compensation, and retention:** Affordable housing for teachers and staff, along with increased, competitive salaries, is repeatedly cited as a top concern tied directly to recruitment and long-term retention. Many comments describe an emerging “retention crisis,” the high local cost of living, and the need for creative housing partnerships and sustainable compensation strategies.
 - **Staffing levels, workload, and special education:** Respondents flag ongoing shortages in special education teachers, interventionists, paraprofessionals, and mental-health-related staff, emphasizing that under-staffing harms vulnerable students and risks compliance issues. There is strong concern about staff workload, burnout, role overload (especially in SPED), and the need for

meaningful professional development, clearer expectations, and better support for paras and support staff.

- **Mental health, safety, and student well-being:** Student and staff mental health services, continuation and expansion of current programs, and confidential, high-quality counseling are named frequently as non-negotiable priorities. Physical and psychological safety issues such as bullying, substance use, vaping, school climate, and cell-phone/social-media impacts are mentioned often, with calls for stronger enforcement and prevention.
- **Academic rigor, equity, and program mix:** Many responses ask for higher academic rigor, especially in middle and high school, better preparation for college and careers, and stronger support at both ends of the spectrum (struggling learners and gifted/high-achieving students). Respondents want a better balance between CTE, dual/concurrent enrollment, arts, and “core” academics, with equity in opportunities across schools and attention to multilingual learners and other subgroups.
- **Special education quality and inclusion:** Special education appears as a stand-alone theme: families and staff call for more transparency, staffing, training, and consistent expectations and grading for students with disabilities. There is concern that inclusive practices are not consistently supported with the necessary infrastructure, planning time, and professional learning for general and special education staff.
- **Culture, communication, and transparency:** Many respondents highlight the need for transparent communication from district leadership, authentic engagement with staff and families, and follow-through on feedback rather than top-down decisions. Trust, climate, and relationships among the district office, school leaders, teachers, union/association, and community are seen as crucial; several comments urge the superintendent to “know the staff,” “know the community,” and model accountability.
- **Strategic direction and resource management:** The superintendent is expected to lead or refresh the strategic plan, align initiatives, and use data well while still focusing decisions on students rather than solely on finances. Respondents also mention financial management, preparing for possible funding shortfalls, and prioritizing student-facing positions over administrative overhead.

6. Respondents were asked to select the five most important characteristics the next superintendent 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	51.66%
Values educating the whole child	32.84%
Possesses a background in public education	32.10%
Builds strong community relationships	29.15%
Takes responsibility and is accountable for their actions	26.94%
Is committed to equitable access to learning for all students	26.57%
Places the needs of students above anything else	25.46%

Uses data to make informed and transparent decisions	24.72%
Communicates effectively	22.88%
Engages and listens to stakeholders	21.40%
Fosters creativity, risk taking, and innovation	21.03%
Thinks and acts strategically	19.19%
Resolves conflicts with dignity and grace	19.19%
Promotes safety and security across the district	17.71%
Spends time in classrooms	16.61%
Stands firm behind decisions that may not be popular	15.87%
Builds strong and diverse teams	15.50%
Delivers improved student outcomes	13.65%
Maintains a vision focused on the future	10.33%
Adapts effectively to changing circumstances	10.33%
Promotes student participation in the arts, athletics, and activities	10.33%
Previous experience as a superintendent	9.96%
Values school autonomy	7.01%

7. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to identify any additional characteristics the next superintendent should have. Frequent themes that emerged from these comments included:

- **Sense of humor:** A sense of humor is mentioned in multiple responses, signaling a desire for a human, approachable leader who connects well with students and staff.
- **Empathy:** Empathy is cited frequently, often paired with kindness and understanding of diverse student and staff needs.

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:** Year-round outdoor recreation (skiing, biking, hiking, river activities, hot springs) and easy access to trails and mountains are repeatedly described as world class and central to life in the area. Respondents emphasize a healthy, active lifestyle, clean air and water, and stunning scenery that make the region feel like “vacation land” while still being a real town.
- **Strong, supportive community that values education:** Many comments describe a close knit, engaged community with caring families, committed educators, and high levels of support for schools, including private philanthropy and a dedicated sales tax for education. Education is portrayed as a community priority, with excellent or high performing schools and staff who are deeply invested in student success.

- **High quality of life and family friendly small town:** The area is framed as a safe, family-oriented place with small town feel but access to amenities like arts, culture, restaurants, and healthcare that exceed what is typical for its size. Respondents stress that it is a great place to raise children, with abundant youth programs, recreation opportunities, and a lifestyle that supports balance and long-term leadership longevity.

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

- **Stability and longevity:** Many respondents want a superintendent who plans to stay for the long term, reduce churn in the role, and provide consistent leadership rather than treating Steamboat as a short stop before retirement or another job. People explicitly mention concern about repeated superintendent turnover in the past 15+ years and ask the Board to screen for genuine commitment to the community and small-town life.
- **Local context and housing challenges:** A major theme is that the superintendent must understand the specific realities of Steamboat as a rural/mountain resort town, including cost of living, housing scarcity, and “mountain fatigue.” Multiple comments urge the Board to be transparent with candidates about financial and lifestyle challenges, consider housing stipends, and prioritize leaders who have lived in similar communities and can help with teacher recruitment and retention under these constraints.
- **Experience and qualifications:** Respondents frequently ask for strong prior experience in education, including classroom teaching and previous superintendent or district-level leadership, ideally in similar rural or resort districts. People mention valuing both instructional leadership and management skills, the ability to work with data, strategic planning experience, and a track record of improving outcomes in areas like gifted education, special education, and multilingual learners.
- **Community fit and values alignment:** Another strong theme is finding someone whose values align with the district’s mission and broader community norms while avoiding extreme political agendas from any side. Comments stress integrity, transparency, inclusive leadership, separation of personal politics or religion from decision-making, and the ability to build trust with a diverse set of stakeholders, including parents with differing views.
- **Staff support, pay, and working conditions:** Many responses highlight urgent concerns about teacher and staff well-being, including low pay, reliance on food banks, burnout, and retention challenges. People want a superintendent who advocates for staff compensation, holds administrators accountable, spends time in schools, values teachers’ voices, and recognizes that staff morale and stability are central to student success.

- **Focus on underserved students and mental health:** Respondents emphasize better support for underserved groups—students with IEPs, multilingual learners, and other subgroups that have historically underperformed—as well as youth mental health. They call for data transparency, improved services, inclusive practices, and strategic partnerships to ensure consistent mental health and special education support across the district.
- **Leadership style and change management:** Respondents describe wanting a leader who is collaborative, a good listener, visible in schools, and able to both honor community traditions and thoughtfully challenge the status quo. There is tension between hiring from within vs. outside: some want continuity with leaders like the prior superintendent, while others explicitly ask for an external candidate who brings fresh perspectives and is not afraid to make difficult decisions or “revamp” the district.
- **Student outcomes and whole-child focus:** Finally, comments stress keeping students at the center—academic outcomes, preparation for college and careers/CTE, and school safety—while also caring about the “whole child.” People want balanced education rather than chasing scores alone, attention to real school culture (not just metrics), and clear long-term vision for where the district should be in 5–10 years.

and a wide variety of courses and advanced opportunities (including college-level classes). They note strong infrastructure and facilities that support learning and view the district as top-performing with high expectations for student success.

- **Whole child and wellbeing:** A major theme is commitment to the whole child, including social-emotional learning, mental health programming, life skills, and seeing each student as an individual. Parents value that the district works on mental health, student safety, and trauma-informed practices, and that many staff genuinely know and care about each student.
- **Small size and relationships:** Parents consistently frame the district’s small size and small-town feel as a strength that allows for close relationships, small classes, and the ability to know students and families personally. They believe this scale lets the district make a big impact on both students and the broader community and enables flexibility and innovation.
- **Programs and extracurriculars:** Many responses praise rich opportunities beyond core academics: athletics and winter sports, music, arts, outdoor learning, field trips, and other extracurriculars. Parents feel these programs are remarkably strong for a small rural district and contribute significantly to student engagement and pride.
- **Inclusion, diversity, and belonging:** Another theme is commitment to inclusion, diversity, and belonging, including support for students with disabilities, gifted and neurodivergent learners, newcomers, and varied cultural backgrounds. Parents also reference efforts toward biliteracy, equity, and ensuring students feel a sense of belonging and respect.

3. The next question asked for perceptions (4.0 rating scale) about several operational facets of the Steamboat Springs School District. 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	2.80
Communications	2.74
Relationships with Families	2.60
Relationships with Staff Members	2.39
Transparency	2.25
Preparing Students for College and Career	2.18
Financial Management	1.49

4. Respondents were asked to select the three most critical issues from a list of 13 frequently identified issues in school districts. The ranking of these critical issues (from most important to least important) indicated:

Staff Recruitment and Retention	52.82%
Teacher Quality	47.18%

College and Career Readiness	41.55%
Academic Outcomes	34.51%
Mental Health Services	23.24%
School Safety and Security	20.42%
Diversity and Engagement	16.20%
Family and Community Relations	16.20%
Social Emotional Learning	16.20%
Special Education Services	11.97%
Communication	9.86%
Financial Management	5.63%
Facilities and Grounds	3.52%

5. As a follow-up question, respondents were asked to identify any additional critical issues the next superintendent should make a priority. Frequent themes emerging as additional critical issues were:

- **Staff pay, housing, and retention:** Parents repeatedly connect high cost of living, lack of affordable housing, and comparatively low salaries to difficulty recruiting and keeping quality teachers, counselors, and paras. They call for major raises, creative housing projects or incentives, and long-term strategies to retain strong staff rather than constantly rebuilding.
- **Academic rigor, offerings, and college readiness:** Many comments say curriculum has been “dumbed down,” that it is too easy to coast, and that high-achieving and “in-the-middle” students are not adequately challenged. Parents want increased rigor (especially in math and ELA), more AP/advanced options and CTE/shop pathways, consistent expectations across schools, and stronger college and career counseling.
- **Mental health, behavior, and safety:** Student mental health—especially for teens—is a major theme, along with concern about vaping, drugs, bullying, harassment, and disruptive behavior that undermines learning. Families want adequate counselors and mental-health specialists, clearer and firmer discipline, better supervision (including bathrooms and phones), and modern safety planning and threat assessment.
- **Special education and gifted services:** Parents highlight both under-resourced special education and overlooked gifted learners, asking for more staff, training, and inclusion supports as well as robust gifted programming at all levels. They stress that students with disabilities must be safe and served appropriately, while high-performing students need consistent extension, leveled classes, and pathways that prevent boredom and disengagement.
- **Technology, phones, and AI:** Families frequently mention cell phones as a constant distraction and want stronger limits or full-day bans at secondary levels. They also call for clear, up-to-date policies on AI and educational technology that protect academic integrity while teaching students to use new tools responsibly.
- **Trust, communication, and transparency:** Comments describe mistrust of prior leadership, frustration with poor or one-way communication, and concern about

politicization in curriculum and culture debates. Parents want a visible, relationship-centered superintendent who listens, responds to emails, shares data and results, and involves families meaningfully in decisions, not just after choices are already made.

- **Equity, inclusion, and climate:** Across responses, families flag equity between schools, treatment of Spanish-speaking and CLD students, and concerns about racism, bias, or uneven enforcement of rules. They ask for fair, kind treatment of all students, welcoming school climates, and balanced approaches that keep classrooms focused on learning rather than political conflict.

6. Respondents were asked to select the five most important characteristics the next superintendent 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	52.82%
Values educating the whole child	32.39%
Takes responsibility and is accountable for their actions	28.87%
Uses data to make informed and transparent decisions	28.87%
Places the needs of students above anything else	28.17%
Thinks and acts strategically	24.65%
Builds strong community relationships	23.24%
Possesses a background in public education	21.83%
Fosters creativity, risk taking, and innovation	21.13%
Is committed to equitable access to learning for all students	21.13%
Delivers improved student outcomes	19.72%
Communicates effectively	19.01%
Promotes safety and security across the district	17.61%
Spends time in classrooms	17.61%
Builds strong and diverse teams	16.90%
Engages and listens to stakeholders	16.90%
Adapts effectively to changing circumstances	16.90%
Stands firm behind decisions that may not be popular	16.90%
Resolves conflicts with dignity and grace	16.20%
Promotes student participation in the arts, athletics, and activities	14.08%
Maintains a vision focused on the future	10.56%
Previous experience as a superintendent	9.15%
Values school autonomy	2.82%

7. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to identify any additional characteristics the next superintendent should have. Frequent themes emerging from these comments included:

- **Empathy and care for all students:** Comments explicitly call for empathy, trauma-informed leadership, care and respect for all children, and support for students with disabilities and underserved groups.

- **Courage and backbone:** Parents stress grit, willingness to stand up to loud or powerful groups, avoid giving in to pressure, and make tough, evidence-based decisions that may be unpopular but benefit students.
- **Warmth and approachability:** They want someone personable, a good collaborator, approachable, with a sense of humor, who listens first and is open-minded.
- **Knowledge of rural and mountain communities:** Responses highlight familiarity with rural Colorado, mountain-town dynamics, and Steamboat culture, along with preference for someone local or with experience in similar districts.
- **Innovation with respect for tradition:** They seek someone willing to “shake things up,” foster innovation and new programs, but who also appreciates classic education and local community values.
- **Governance and political stance:** Parents reference non-political, separation of church and state, and avoiding decisions driven by partisan or special-interest pressure.

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

- **Exceptional place and lifestyle:** Parents repeatedly describe the area as an exceptional place to live with a high quality of life, emphasizing balanced and healthy lifestyles, clean air and water, and a more relaxed small-town pace. They note that big-city amenities are still accessible, so candidates can enjoy small-town living while remaining within reach of additional services and cultural opportunities.
- **Natural beauty and outdoor recreation:** Families stress the stunning natural environment, including mountains, rivers, lakes, snow, and “vacation-land” surroundings that offer endless, year-round outdoor recreation such as skiing, hiking, biking, and other mountain activities. This outdoor focus supports a healthy lifestyle for both students and staff and is framed as a major draw for anyone who enjoys nature and recreation outside of work.
- **Tight-knit, engaged community and schools:** Parents consistently mention a tight-knit, caring, and welcoming community with strong small-town values, highly engaged families, and a culture where people know and support one another. They also highlight motivated students, hardworking teachers, high academic standards, and a community that strongly values and invests in education, creating a supportive environment for a superintendent to lead and innovate.

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

- **Stability and longevity:** Many comments stress choosing someone likely to stay, asking how long candidates foresee being in the role and how to decrease churn.

Parents want a superintendent who understands small-town, mountain communities and is prepared for the financial, climate, and lifestyle challenges so they do not leave after a short tenure.

- **Housing and cost-of-living realities:** A major theme is that the Board must select someone who grasps the high cost of housing and living, and how those factors affect recruiting and retaining quality staff. Parents suggest being upfront with candidates about financial realities, considering housing stipends, and choosing someone ready to navigate YVHA/Brown Ranch impacts and broader affordability issues.
- **Leadership quality and experience:** Respondents repeatedly ask for a strong leader with proven success in similar districts, ideally with prior superintendent or high-level leadership experience. They emphasize vision, the ability to “shake things up” where needed, strategic thinking, and experience in rural or mountain contexts, while also valuing people skills and common sense over résumé alone.
- **External hire vs. local/inside candidates:** A recurring theme is preference for an outside hire who brings fresh ideas, is not embedded in existing politics, and can challenge the status quo. Some comments still ask that any local candidate be thoroughly vetted and not chosen just for being known in the community.
- **Accountability, integrity, and trust:** Parents frequently call for high integrity, transparency, and the courage to hold administrators and teachers accountable when performance is weak. They describe concerns about unethical or ineffective staff, lawsuits, and a perception that problems are minimized, and they want a superintendent who will confront issues honestly rather than protect adults.
- **Focus on students, not politics:** Many comments stress putting kids and outcomes first, including college and career readiness, CTE, and a balanced education that isn’t driven by fads or partisan agendas. Several note discomfort with “wokeness,” visible political leanings in classrooms, or over-focus on equity at the expense of excellence and ask for re-balancing toward academic quality and whole-child wellbeing.
- **School culture, safety, and morale:** Parents highlight concerns about school culture, morale, and safety, especially at high school. They want improved connection, honest attention to bullying and violence, and stronger security measures so students and staff feel safe and supported.
- **Staff support, pay, and working conditions:** Another common theme is the need to address staff compensation, workload, burnout, and respect. Parents want a superintendent who understands how cost of living and housing drive retention problems and who will advocate for living wages, better support, and fair treatment of teachers and staff.
- **Diversity, inclusion, and special populations:** Comments call for leadership that can improve diversity and inclusion efforts and reform special education, particularly at high school. Parents mention gifted education, CTE, bilingual and bicultural understanding, and ensuring all students, especially those with disabilities, are respected and well served.
- **Calendar, innovation, and structural change:** Finally, a noticeable thread is interest in structural innovation, including exploring a four-day week or more flexible calendar and “shaking up” traditional ways of doing things. Parents want

someone willing to question past practices, use data wisely but not narrowly, and implement changes that support family life, student learning, and staff sustainability.

Respondent Group: Staff Members 170 Responses

This section summarizes stakeholder feedback in the Steamboat Springs School District Superintendent Search from 170 respondents who identified themselves as staff members.

1. Respondents were asked, “What one word best describes how you feel about the district?” 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 district that superintendent candidates should know?” The most common themes emerging from these responses included:

- **Community and relationships:** Strong community support, small-town feel, and close-knit school communities where students and families are known and invested. Supportive parents, active partnerships (e.g., CMC, community organizations), and pride in students and schools.
- **Whole child and student opportunities:** Emphasis on the whole child: academics, athletics, arts, extracurriculars, CTE/experiential learning, and life skills. Many opportunities for all students to belong and succeed, including gifted, CTE, and other specialized programs.

- **Strong staff and professional culture:** Well-educated, experienced, and dedicated staff who “wear many hats,” care deeply about students, and stay long-term. High expectations, high achievement, and pride in quality teaching, with strong building-level leadership and professional learning.
- **Equity, inclusion, and mental health:** Clear value on equity, inclusion, and serving multilingual and underserved students, even as this remains an area for growth. Strong and growing focus on mental health, social-emotional learning, restorative practices, and whole-child wellness supports.
- **Collaboration, communication, and union partnership:** Collaborative culture with open communication, transparency, listening, and shared decision-making between staff and administration. Strong teacher voice and union partnership, with respect for teacher professionalism, autonomy, and organized structures like strategic planning and PD days.
- **Stability, resources, and organizational strengths:** Financial stability, strategic planning, and effective use of resources (including grants) to support programs and staffing. History of academic excellence, accreditation with distinction, and the ability to retain staff where leadership and climate are strong.

3. The next question asked for perceptions (4.0 rating scale) about several operational facets of the Steamboat Springs School District. 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>
Communications	3.04
Financial Management	2.53
Relationships with Families	2.95
Relationships with Staff Members	3.05
Student Achievement	3.28
Transparency	2.63
Preparing Students for College and Career	2.70

4. Respondents were asked to select the three most critical issues from a list of 13 frequently identified issues in school districts. The ranking of these critical issues (from most important to least important) indicated:

Staff Recruitment and Retention	63.96%
Special Education Services	34.23%
Mental Health Services	27.93%
Diversity and Engagement	27.03%
Teacher Quality	27.03%
College and Career Readiness	20.72%
Family and Community Relations	18.02%
School Safety and Security	18.02%

Financial Management	15.32%
Social Emotional Learning	15.32%
Academic Outcomes	14.41%
Communication	9.01%
Facilities and Grounds	7.21%

5. As a follow-up question, respondents were asked to identify any additional critical issues the next superintendent should make a priority. Frequent themes emerging as additional critical issues were:

- **Staff pay, housing, and retention:** Many comments emphasize financial support so staff can live in Steamboat, including higher salaries, equitable wages for all roles (teachers, preschool, paras, support staff), and cost-of-living adjustments tied to the area’s high housing and living costs. Staff repeatedly link affordable housing, employee housing options, and competitive compensation to recruitment and retention, describing an emerging hiring and retention crisis and the need for strategic planning around upcoming retirements.
- **Mental health services for students and staff:** Respondents repeatedly call for continued or expanded contracts with school-based counselors, mental health services, and SEL supports in schools. They also request direct support for staff well-being—such as mental health stipends, manageable workloads, and schedules (including interest in a four-day week) that reduce burnout.
- **Special education staffing and support:** Many entries focus on underfunding and understaffing in special education, including shortages of qualified paraprofessionals, heavy role overload for special education teachers, and concerns about compliance and equitable services for vulnerable students. Staff highlight the need for livable wages and sustainable staffing models in special education, clearer communication about new SPED programs, and better inclusion structures so general and special education can collaborate effectively.
- **Broader culture, communication, and planning:** Comments also frequently mention transparent communication, authentic engagement with staff and community, and involving staff voice in decisions such as calendars, initiatives, and strategic planning. There is a strong desire for a positive professional culture—where teachers are trusted as experts, ineffective systems are addressed (including some concerns about ineffective teaching), and the board avoids micromanagement while the superintendent leads a clear, updated strategic plan.
- **Academic programs, CTE, and student opportunities:** Staff often raise issues around balancing CTE with core academics, expanding high-quality CTE and college-and-career readiness opportunities, and improving supports for multilingual/emerging bilingual students. They also flag concerns about technology overuse in elementary grades, meaningful professional development, class sizes, and consistent expectations and grading practices to support student learning.

6. Respondents were asked to select the five most important characteristics the next superintendent 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	55.86%
Possesses a background in public education	45.95%
Builds strong community relationships	36.04%
Values educating the whole child	31.53%
Is committed to equitable access to learning for all students	30.63%
Communicates effectively	27.93%
Engages and listens to stakeholders	27.03%
Takes responsibility and is accountable for their actions	25.23%
Places the needs of students above anything else	24.32%
Resolves conflicts with dignity and grace	23.42%
Fosters creativity, risk taking, and innovation	21.62%
Builds strong and diverse teams	16.22%
Stands firm behind decisions that may not be popular	16.22%
Promotes safety and security across the district	15.32%
Uses data to make informed and transparent decisions	15.32%
Spends time in classrooms	15.32%
Values school autonomy	13.51%
Maintains a vision focused on the future	10.81%
Thinks and acts strategically	9.91%
Previous experience as a superintendent	9.01%
Adapts effectively to changing circumstances	5.41%
Promotes student participation in the arts, athletics, and activities	5.41%
Delivers improved student outcomes	4.50%

7. Respondents were then asked via constructed response to identify any additional characteristics the next superintendent should have. Discernable trends identified were:

- **Relational and listening skills:** Staff repeatedly mention a superintendent who is kindhearted, empathetic, and approachable, with a genuine eagerness to learn and support others. They stress strong listening skills, open-mindedness, and spending visible time in classrooms, hallways, and community events.
- **Communication, transparency, and integrity:** Clear, consistent communication and transparency in decision making show up throughout the responses. Staff also highlight integrity, honesty, accountability, and behaving ethically while holding others to high standards.
- **Educational and leadership experience:** Many comments call for significant classroom experience in addition to prior superintendent or district-level leadership, including knowledge of finance, HR, strategic planning, pedagogy, and special education. Staff value leaders who ground decisions in educational research and data, maintain high academic standards, and understand small, rural/resort districts and multi-hat roles.

- **Staff support and advocacy:** Staff want someone who treats teachers as professionals, advocates for staff pay, housing, and well-being, and “has our back” in conflicts and bargaining. They emphasize valuing teacher voices, supporting school autonomy, investing in staff development, and building strong, collaborative administrative teams rather than operating in an adversarial way.
- **Student-centered and equity-focused:** A strong student-first stance appears often. There is also a desire for an advocate for immigrants, students with disabilities, and other marginalized groups, who champions equity, inclusion, and access to needed resources and supports.
- **Strategic, data-informed decision-making:** Staff frequently mention strategic thinking, adaptability to changing circumstances, and the ability to balance big-picture and on-the-ground perspectives. They want decisions based on data and research rather than popularity, with a willingness both to stand firm on tough calls and to admit and correct mistakes.
- **Community presence and long-term commitment:** Living in Steamboat or at least being deeply embedded in the community is named as a major plus, with several calls for someone who lives locally, understands the high cost of living, and plans to stay 8+ years. Staff want a public, visible face at events who respects local traditions while also engaging with neighboring districts as partners.
- **Collaborative, innovative culture building:** Collaboration and teamwork are recurring themes: working with teachers, administrators, neighboring districts, and the city; building strong teams; and promoting a “Culture of Yes” that supports creativity and innovation. Staff also point to valuing both arts and athletics, promoting student engagement, and leading thoughtful shifts around technology and screen use.
- **Personal qualities and demeanor:** Beyond humility, staff note kindness, patience, sense of humor, positivity, resilience, and being grounded. They appreciate low-ego leadership, willingness to share credit, stability, and remaining calm under stress while still demonstrating strong, confident leadership.

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

- **Exceptional outdoor lifestyle:** Year-round outdoor recreation is everywhere: skiing, snowboarding, biking, hiking, rafting, fishing, and access to the Yampa River and nearby wilderness areas. Staff describe Steamboat as “no better lifestyle,” “paradise,” with world-class recreation right outside your door, making it easy to maintain a healthy, active way of life.
- **Tight-knit, supportive community:** Responses repeatedly mention a small-town feel, “tight” and “close-knit” community, where people look out for each other and show up in times of need. The town is known for its welcoming, friendly culture and authentic “real town” character, blending ranching heritage with a strong sense of belonging and mutual support.
- **Strong schools and support for education:** Staff emphasize an “amazing,” “high performing,” award-winning district with highly trained, dedicated

educators and strong teacher culture. The community strongly values education, providing generous support (including philanthropy and a dedicated tax) and close parent involvement, which would give a superintendent a powerful base for impact.

9. Finally, respondents were asked if there were additional things they thought the Board of Education should consider during this search process. The most common themes arising from these comments included:
- **Community connection and local fit:** Many comments emphasize wanting someone who lives in or is willing to become an active member of Steamboat, understands the “small town/fishbowl” context, and respects the district’s existing culture and traditions rather than importing big-district approaches or making changes just to “leave a mark.” Staff repeatedly mention long-term commitment, knowledge of local housing challenges, and a desire for continuity with the positive culture built under recent leaders.
 - **Educational background and prior experience:** Staff frequently call for prior experience as a superintendent or central-office leader plus a strong foundation as a classroom teacher, with familiarity with Colorado standards, legislation, and K–12 initiatives. They also note the value of experience across grade levels, awareness of gifted education, special education, and diverse or higher-need districts, and an ability to use hard academic data to guide improvement.
 - **Integrity, character, and relational leadership:** A major theme is integrity—a leader with a strong moral compass, honesty, and no “questionable history,” who is not narcissistic or toxic. Staff want someone who builds relationships, listens to all stakeholders, is visible in schools, models respect, and continues the interpersonal strengths of leaders like Dr. Wicks and Celine (team approach, support for teachers, and collaborative decision-making).
 - **Support for staff, pay, and housing:** Many responses highlight urgent concerns about low pay, housing insecurity, and staffing shortages, asking for a superintendent who will advocate for teachers and support staff and recognize their contributions. Themes include addressing “poverty-level” conditions, preventing brain drain, valuing each employee’s impact on student learning, and ensuring strong hiring and personnel practices.
 - **Focus on underserved students and equity:** Several comments call for a leader passionate about serving multilingual learners, students with IEPs, and other underperforming or underserved groups, bringing innovative programming and training to support them. There is also emphasis on equity, mental health, and ensuring all students feel supported academically and socially as the community becomes more diverse.
 - **Strategic vision and continuity of progress:** Staff want a leader who aligns with the existing strategic plan, can help redesign it when needed, and keeps academic growth moving forward while avoiding change for its own sake. They ask for clear vision (5–10 years out), data-informed improvement, and someone who can balance introducing new perspectives with honoring what is already working well.

- **Listening, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement:** Another strong theme is a superintendent who listens to and collaborates with teachers, principals, parents, and community members, continuing to include staff in decision-making. Staff emphasize active listening, transparency about decisions, willingness to visit classrooms, and taking teacher recommendations seriously in both hiring and program changes.

Stakeholder Focus Groups Summary Report

Executive Summary:

The district is a **high-performing, inclusive, and community-centered system** whose greatest strength is its people—exceptional educators, staff, administrators, and students united by shared values, integrity, and a commitment to doing what is best for kids. Strong partnerships, stable funding through the ½-cent sales tax, a clear strategic plan, and a cohesive leadership team support the **whole child**, while emphasizing public education, social justice, multilingual learners, collaboration with the union, and transparency. Community involvement, resiliency, and advocacy are defining characteristics.

The **high school experience is a standout point of pride**, offering freedom, choice, and real-world relevance through strong teacher relationships, diverse academic and career pathways, CTE, internships, AP courses, and college credit opportunities. Learning is connected to the local environment, student voice is valued, and mental health supports contribute to a safe, respectful culture that prepares students for life beyond graduation.

As the Board of Education hires a new superintendent, it should be **clear, intentional, and grounded in stakeholder feedback**, prioritizing character, integrity, cultural fit, and student-centered leadership over accolades. The superintendent will serve as the face and voice of the district and must align with its values, vision, and community expectations.

The incoming superintendent must be prepared to navigate **declining enrollment, affordability and housing challenges, staffing recruitment and retention, funding uncertainty, equity across schools, and increasing mental health needs**. Additional complexities include special education redesign and litigation, CLDE program improvements, curriculum alignment, graduation requirements, transportation equity, safety, and sustaining high performance with limited resources in a rural context.

To be successful, the next superintendent must be a **visible, transparent, relationship-driven, and decisive leader** who listens deeply, communicates clearly, builds trust, and collaborates across the district and community. A clear vision, growth mindset, resilience, and the courage to make thoughtful decisions—while centering student well-being and future readiness—will be essential to leading the district forward.

Administration:

22 in attendance

Summary:

The district's greatest strength is its **people**—high-quality educators, staff, administrators, and students who are compassionate, committed, and united by a shared vision. The community is welcoming, deeply connected, and supportive, with strong pride in high expectations, integrity, and doing what is right for students. Financial stability, strong partnerships, and a culture centered on mindfulness, care, and continuous improvement provide a solid foundation and positive momentum for the future.

As the Board of Education selects the next superintendent, it should remain focused on **student-centered leadership**, proven results, and meaningful stakeholder input. The ideal candidate will align with and advance the strategic plan, communicate effectively, and demonstrate integrity, humility, and the ability to build trust across the district and community.

The incoming superintendent must be prepared to address **declining enrollment, workforce transitions, mental health needs, housing and cost-of-living challenges, evolving programming demands, and fiscal sustainability**, while navigating Colorado-specific finance, legal, and policy considerations. Timely decision-making and system-wide alignment will be critical.

To succeed, the next superintendent must be **visible, collaborative, and forward-thinking**—a systems leader who listens first, builds on existing strengths, leads change with courage and transparency, and maintains a strong commitment to students, staff, and community for the long term.

Individual Comments:

Tell us about the good things and strengths of the district.

- People - talent, smart and passionate
- The right people are in the right positions to make things happen
- Connectedness
- Welcoming community - students and staff
- Call it home
- Support, dedication, and commitment
- In a financially strong position and have more than others - needs protected to carry into the future
- Compassion and passion of administrators
- Caring about community
- Students
- Integrity of staff
- Support - interventionist, GT support, opportunities for kids to do things outdoors
- Unified but have autonomy
- Parent/community is unique; mainly positive but some entitlement
- Resources to support the school and give generously
- Pride in having high expectations and wanting to excel; but challenge to focus on top priorities
- Teachers and support staff

- Emphasis to take care of self, each other, and families allows for best foot forward every day
- Staffs compassion, commitment, and deception - always want to get better
- Shared vision that is driven by the strategic plan; all bought into and believed in it which increased hope and motivation
- Partnership from community and overly involved
- People want you to be successful
- High quality teachers
- Welcomeness into district when they start
- Retracting and retraining staff; limited turn over
- Students are phenomenal - polite, gracious, respectful
- Amazing momentum - take us to the moon!
- Caring
- Intentional about being mindful and caring
- Mindfulness integration, gratitude, self-care as priorities
- Do the right thing no matter where you are and not what you will get out of it
- Strong physical network

What does the board of education need to consider during the process? What would you tell them?

- Previous experience as a superintendent
- Track record - what have you accomplished and is proven
- Input from stakeholders - read it and use it
- Developing specific questions for interview panels that honor strategic plan so can immediately continue to move district forward and align with the district
- Can take us to the next level with a new strategic plan implementation and is doable/ realistic
- Good communicator and can carry themselves well
- Beyond interview process - talk to previous district and ask questions, take time to understand their impact from the schools they came from
- A unicorn
- Keep in mind why we are all here - passion for kids and student centered
- Respect stakeholder input and hear what is said
- Importance of ALL staff - everyone plays into what we have going on
- All jobs are important and contributes and should be recognized
- Be cautious and not wowed by resume without talking to who they have worked with and don't have private agenda

What are the issues the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the position?

- Declining enrollment - need to start adapting
- Conflicting demands of parents - credits, weighting grades, concurrent enrollment
- Strong relationships with union groups and keep focus on the students
- Being able to delegate - have rights people in the right place to do the work
- Address mental health issues and the impact it has to access to education - threat assessment issues
- Veteran staff retirements in next 3-5 years
- Child care needs of staff
- Cost of living and lack of housing
- EB and cultural linguistically diverse program knowledge - vision for future
- Special education center base programing needs and impact on changes

- Fiscal cliff of grant funded positions - decisions need made to provide continued support
- Professional development opportunities and growth
- Economy can be volatile
- Strong budgeting and innovative approach with limited funds
- Able to make changes in a timely manner to benefit students
- Enhancing and recruiting students to become educators
- Addressing needs of changing community - programming, staffing, community partnerships
- Programming and alignment need action in a short time frame
- Alignment of schools is tight and needs to keep going
- Mental health awareness - not robust services in the community; no sustainable funding
- Programs that keep students engaged at high school - curriculum, CTE,
- Being able to adapt to change to kids needs of today for indicators of success
- Enter and intra applications and consider rezoning our school boundaries
- Needs to have Colorado understandings - finance, legal aspects, etc.
- Programming and changes happening at state and national level changes
- Legal lawsuits knowledge - circumnavigate small community and can't please everyone and being OK with it
- Steamboat is its own AU (Administrative Unit)
- Cost of housing
- Connection to real life relevance
- Involves kids and community with internships and opportunities
- Can lead with administrators

What are the characteristics the new superintendent should have to be successful?

- Present in buildings, kids, admins
- Aware of initiatives but aware of innovative overload
- Lifelong learner - learn system and what is going well and areas of weakness
- Listen and learn
- Solid vision while honoring community and area values
- Systems thinker - do work of strategic plan
- Visibility
- Vision for future
- Willing to listen to understand and trust in what we have
- Level of continuity
- Level of connectedness
- Thought partner
- Team builder and not operating in silos
- Healthy pulse on each school community and can support the needs
- Help teams work together
- Climate culture at district office to match schools
- Innovative
- Looks to what future of education looks like
- Willing to take risks and make mistakes
- Courage to stand on the vision
- Entrepreneurial
- Don't do the same things all the time
- Seasoned and not knee jerk reactions
- Passionate about children and education
- Data drive
- Qualitatively as well as quantifiable to change as necessary
- Forward thinker with experience with change
- Connectedness with community, staff, and between buildings

- Trusting work done
- Good communicator - internal and with community
- Collaborate with district leaders
- Develops and supports culture and collaboration
- System improvement to move system forward for kids
- Transparent in decision making - why and how
- Inspirational
- What is best for kids - lead with love and not fear
- Long term commitment - longevity and continuity
- Understand size of district and limited layers; must know every employee
- Shown previous success in district
- Willingness to handle and make decisions
- Has a healthy work / life balance to show best selves
- Model expectations
- Trustworthy and does the right thing no matter what
- Honest and trustworthy
- Honors outcomes but loves the process - more important than end product
- Experience working with charter schools and landscape to build
- Believes in school of choice
- Trust in people who work for you and not micromanage
- Willing to be part of the community
- Understands technical things - affordable housing and legal issues
- Understands building facilities needs - CTE knowledge
- Want all employees to grow and develop in their role

Staff:

no one attended

Community:

1 in attendance

Summary:

The district's strengths lie in its **community-minded culture, stable leadership, and supportive educators**. Schools are well led, students are engaged in learning, and mental and emotional health supports are available, contributing to a strong and steady learning environment.

When hiring a superintendent, the Board of Education should be **clear and aligned** on the qualities they seek, the goals that must be accomplished, and the district's long-term vision. Clarity of expectations is essential to selecting the right leader.

The incoming superintendent should be aware of the **growing pressures on students and families**, particularly around mental health, safety, and the complexity of being a student today.

The role requires constant engagement, resilience, and the ability to manage stress in a highly visible position.

To be successful, the new superintendent must bring a **clear vision, deep understanding of the community and its dynamics**, and a growth mindset. Strong relationship-building skills, personal strength, and the ability to say no when necessary—while keeping students’ future readiness at the center—are critical leadership qualities.

Individual Comments:

Tell me about the good things/strengths/points of pride about the district.

- Got inside look
- District is community minded
- Leadership is strong
- Stable district
- Supportive teachers
- Students engage and learning
- Schools have strong leadership
- Mental/emotional health support is available

What would you talk to the board of education that they should consider when hiring?

- Understand what you are looking for - qualities
- Know what needs accomplished and the goals that are set
- Do they have a vision for the future
- Make sure you are crystal clear on what you want

What are the issues the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the position?

- Smart kids but challenge of being a kid now
- Growing mental health issues and the need to support families
- Parents put a lot on the district to support
- Safety and security
- You are on ALL the time
- Stressful to be engaged continually and chewed up and spit out
- Thick skinned

What are the characteristics the new superintendent should have to be successful?

- Clear vision
- Understanding of community needs - know their wants and needs
- Know environment - climate, dynamics of extremes, housing challenges, social consciences environment, supporting families, resort aspects
- How to grow students
- Staying current on happenings around the globe so kids can be prepared to go out
- Growth mindset
- Strong leader
- Good relationship builder
- Not be afraid to say no - can't be a yes person
- Personal strength

Students:

16 in attendance

Summary:

The district's high school experience is a major point of pride, offering **freedom, choice, and real-world relevance**. Students benefit from strong personal connections with teachers, a wide range of academic and career-focused courses, CTE pathways, internships, AP options, and opportunities to earn college credit through Colorado Mountain College. Learning is connected to the local environment, student voice is valued, and staff are unified in their commitment to preparing students for success beyond graduation. Mental health supports and a safe, respectful culture further strengthen the student experience.

As the Board of Education hires a new superintendent, students emphasize the importance of selecting a leader who is **passionate, approachable, and genuinely invested in young people**. The superintendent should look beyond test scores and finances, communicate a clear future vision, model strong values aligned with district beliefs, and be visible, caring, and willing to listen—especially to students.

The incoming superintendent should be aware that the system is **not perfect**. Key challenges include curriculum alignment, clarity around course offerings and pathways, consistency in student support, access to counseling and mental health resources, and ensuring all students are prepared early for life after high school. The community is engaged and opinionated, requiring a leader who listens broadly and values multiple perspectives.

To be successful, the new superintendent must **connect authentically with students**, prioritize well-being alongside academics, remain open to innovation, and actively support student voice and advocacy. Confidence, resilience, inclusivity, and a strong presence in schools—paired with thoughtful engagement with community organizations—will be essential to leading effectively and earning trust.

Individual Comments:

Tell me about the good things/strengths/points of pride about the district.

- Freedom within the school
- Less like high school but a transition to college
- Variety of classes offered - academic to real world classes
- CTE classes and pathways offered
- Career exposure and log hours through internships
- Colorado Mountain College classes
- Personal connections with the teachers
- Opportunity to learn college credit
- AP class offerings
- Classes that incorporate where we live and resources we have (mountains)
- All employees in the district care where the students are headed and set up for success

- Teacher are unified
- Support students to be successful in all aspects
- Mental health resources
- Appreciate student voice and responsibility they have with it in a safe environment

What advice would you give to the board of education as they start to hire the new superintendent?

- Passionate about their role
- Excited to be on the job
- Can connect with people
- Friendly
- Body language is importance
- Willing to help and be involved
- Caring about school and understand what teenagers want to do
- Need to go beyond scores and finances of district
- Awareness of their role
- Overall future goal that they are striving for
- Balance of mental health, talking, being involved
- Comfortable in the unknown and comfortable meeting people through that
- Morals align with school beliefs (ie - school beliefs)
- Leadership within the school and willing to listen to

What are the issues/challenges the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the position to be successful?

- It's not perfect
- Curriculum alignment - different teachers teach the same class but have different experiences
- Not all teachers are invested in the students and need to be more caring - not about getting stuff done
- Lower class doesn't know much about future preparation and needs talked about since freshman year
- Curriculum based on what need to know and to application to real world and how we can use it
- Mental health resources are talked about enough and don't know there is support available
- Counseling department is hard to get help from
- Counseling sheet doesn't have all classes listed that are available
- Confused on what classes you can take when - needs clarified
- Community is opinionated and need to be able to deal with and collaborate with them
- Be able to listen to the students
- Don't rely on just one group for input - ask around
- Different viewpoints are need to be seen to get a full answer

What are the characteristics the new superintendent should have to be successful?

- Want to know and can connect with students
- Care about wellbeing of students and not just test scores

- Openness to change and try new ideas - AI
- Present around the school
- Be able to make friendly connection
- Bringing involved and spirit for the school
- Support student advocacy and wanting to hear from them and taking into account what is said when making decisions
- Inclusion and mental health environment
- Prior connections to the district and other people that they can build on
- Organizations within the community and being aware how to utilize them
- Don't take what others say as criticism - trust in your ability as a leader and don't let it falter your work
- Stand up for yourself and know what you are doing

SSEA:

13 in attendance

Summary:

The district is a **high-performing, inclusive, and community-supported system** with exceptional staff, engaged students, and strong partnerships. Stable funding through the ½-cent sales tax, a clear strategic plan, focused professional development, and a cohesive administrative team have strengthened support for the whole child. The district values public education, social justice, multilingual learners, collaboration with the union, and transparency, while offering unique programming and growing opportunities such as CTE and native language literacy pathways. Community involvement, resiliency, and advocacy for staff and students are major points of pride.

As the Board of Education hires a new superintendent, it should **listen deeply to feedback**, be thoughtful and critical, and prioritize **character, integrity, and cultural fit over accolades**. This leader will be the face and voice of the district, so understanding the district's unique culture and hiring the right person—who will truly move the district forward—is essential.

The incoming superintendent must be prepared to address **declining enrollment, affordability, housing and childcare challenges, staff recruitment and retention, funding uncertainty, and equity across schools**. Significant attention will be needed for special education (including an ongoing lawsuit and program redesign), CLDE program improvements, graduation requirements, transportation equity, safety, and sustaining high performance with limited resources. Monitoring change thoughtfully, strengthening accountability, and maintaining strong union collaboration are critical.

To succeed, the new superintendent must be a **transparent, relationship-driven, and decisive leader** with strong communication skills, integrity, and a collaborative mindset. They should be present in schools, understand rural contexts, value all employees, ask hard questions, and remain committed to continuous improvement in the best interest of students, staff, and the community.

Individual Comments:

What advice would you give to the board of education as they start to hire the new superintendent?

- Listen to the feedback
- Be the representative you were voted to be
- Character of person is more important than the accolades and resume
- Be selective and critical
- What will move us forward and being the best district we can be
- Face and voice of the district - its an important decision to make
- Do your homework, dig deep and listen to the panels
- Can be a challenging place to jump into and know uniqueness of the culture
- Hire the best person for the position

Tell me about the good things/strengths/points of pride about the district.

- 1/2 cent sales taxes funding
- Amazing staff at schools: caring, dedicated professionals
- High performing district
- Strong parent involvement
- Highly educated teachers and staff
- Experienced staff
- Increasingly diverse staff and students population
- Board and superintendent supportive of the union
- Social justice curriculum for all students is powerful
- Inclusive district for all students, all backgrounds
- Students with high expectations for themselves and goals for themselves after high school
- Resiliency - meeting challenges and going past them
- Current model of support and having the back of teachers from superintendent currently
- Advocacy - advocates for staff on critical needs
- Supportive of needs for staff and students and have what they need
- Community supports district and wants best for schools and student education
- Increased focus with strategic plan
- Professional development more focused over the years
- Pro-public education community and school community
- Growing population of multi language learners
- School board and superintendent supportive of public education and trust in them
- Topics being taught are what is needed
- Focus on best needs of the district
- Intra and inter district programming that has been supported which makes us unique
- Meet the needs of kids and foster needs of whole child
- Cohesive administrative team that works well together
- Kind, well education, and trained teachers
- Supportive administration
- Students are great - involved in so many things
- Community involvement
- Collaboration within the district and community
- Students involved in numerous programs
- Changing to meet the needs of kids with additional opportunities such as CTE
- Given time for collaboration
- Given the gift of time
- Provided native language literacy pathway for students

- Open to honor different perspective and work to bring together
- Transparency has improved
- Partnering with community for special events - screen time, suicide prevention
- Community is part of the district and they provide and support when needed
- Strong superintendent makes this happen

What are the issues/challenges the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the position to be successful?

- CLDE program improvement will start in 2027-28 school year
- Decreasing enrollment and need to attract students back
- Value all perspectives
- Affordability
- Attract young teachers
- Keep salaries where teachers can stay and live
- Child care
- Housing
- Retaining qualified and experienced teachers in the district
- Potential graduation standards and graduation requirements
- Making sure resources are available to keep schools moving forward
- Keep high performance rating
- Creative to keep programing even if numbers dwindle
- Funding concerns federally, state, and local concerns
- Creative in working with programming
- Desire to keep small class sizes
- Special education crisis with ongoing 4 year lawsuit
- Need a center based location and can work with families to make the change manageable and successful
- Continue to work with union on statewide health care initiative and working with legislators
- Knowledge and experience in special education desired
- Collaboration needs to continue with union and values it
- Monitor changes taking place - don't jump into it (Alma, Panorama, curriculum adoptions, etc)
- Isolating place and challenging to get to places
- Transportation and equity among schools as not all have public transportation available
- Special education need to bridge to a new one
- Somewhat void in great programing due to location
- Safety awareness
- Programs for student with mental health issues
- Professional development for staff to learn and grow
- Renewal of 1/2 cent sales tax
- Gauge of culture and climate in every building - it varies greatly
- Equity among buildings for collaboration time
- Look at culture and climate surveys to know what is happening in each building
- Involved in teachers union to know and understand what is happening
- Accountability for administration of the district is lacking

What are the characteristics the new superintendent should have to be successful?

- Effective communication skills
- Transparent
- Clear and direct with community, staff, and administration
- Building relationships - people skills
- Values collaboration
- Integrity
- Moral conscious
- Best interest of staff
- Can relate to all employees
- Experience at all levels
- Creative
- Knowing different programming models
- Understand rural living
- Approachable
- Values relationships within and outside the relationship
- Care about every person
- Decisive
- Doesn't go back on their word
- Makes a decision and sticks with it
- Listens
- Cares
- Open to collaboration
- Present in schools and buildings
- Knows kids, teaching staff, and parents
- Be able to ask tough questions - what can we do differently? What changes can we make? How can we be better?