

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROFILE



November 15, 2024

Prepared for the Board of Education



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Pickerington Schools

Superintendent Search Profile Report

November 15, 2024

This report presents the summary of findings from the Superintendent Search Profile focus groups conducted by K-12 Business Consulting, Inc. (K-12) on Thursday, November 7, 2024. Eight profile forums were held and 218 search profile questionnaires were submitted from various stakeholder groups. Once the Board of Education (BoE) selected K-12 to conduct the superintendent search, a Search Profile Assessment document was created to solicit input from various stakeholders in the community. Stakeholders were identified by the BoE in addition to a community-wide invitation welcoming individuals to meet with Mr. Chris Mohr, CEO and President of K-12 and consultants, Dr. Dustin Miller and Ms. Kristy Venne to discuss superintendent characteristics. Any stakeholder who had a desire to express an opinion was invited to submit a search profile questionnaire and/or meet with K-12 at meetings held on November 7, 2024. Information obtained through these sources, and summarized below, will be used to assist the BoE in identifying characteristics of potential superintendent candidates.

The Search Profile Assessment document was made available to district staff, identified stakeholders, the community at large, and all individuals who attended profile forums. In addition to the 218 individuals who returned written and online search profile questionnaires, there were 80 individuals who participated in community profile forums facilitated by K-12. The results of the written Search Profile Assessment focus groups are included in this report along with comments received during these discussions.

Some individuals submitted questionnaires but did not attend profile forum sessions. We are also aware of some profile forum attendees electing not to submit questionnaires. While written comments are included in this report, some of the numerical responses in the Ranking section could not be included because those responses were blank or because items were not ranked with an appropriate numerical value.

In accumulating data used in this report, K-12 sought opinions, recommendations, and general comments with respect to preferred candidate characteristics, traits, qualifications, and personal demeanor, as well as district strengths, weaknesses, issues, and concerns which may have a bearing on future leadership strengths of the next superintendent. At the request of the BoE, K-12 sought views from a broad range of individuals represented in the district to assist in the search process. It was determined that K-12 would report the findings to the BoE without revealing the identity of any citizen or staff member who provided information, thus equipping the BoE with unbiased data to use as it proceeded to define the search profile for the next superintendent.

The Search Profile Assessment document was used to provide a framework for reporting the information compiled by K-12. Broad themes were highlighted in each question area into several response groups (district office staff/administrators, high school students, teaching and support staff, community/parents, and Board of Education members). Under each question in the report, the response group's common themes were identified. The first category titled "Consistent" are

comments which were frequently heard from all or nearly all eight of the response groups. Comments heard less frequently or only heard in a specific response group are listed only under that response group. It is important to note that the data compilation is not a scientific sampling, nor should it necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of those interviewed in the response group.

K-12 would like to commend the BoE for its efforts to include many stakeholders of the school district in the development of the Superintendent Search Profile. Many respondents expressed positive feelings about being involved in this process and the opportunity to help shape the Pickerington Schools. We would like to thank John Walsh, Treasurer and Jacqueline Bryant, Director of Public Relations and Communications, for the professional manner in which all arrangements were made, including sending invitations, arranging for meeting space, as well as contacting and scheduling the forums that made this profile possible.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

Question #1: What do you consider to be the two or three most significant strengths of the district?

Consistent Themes

1. Pickerington Schools has a strong, supportive, diverse, and involved community. The schools serve generational families and continue to prepare for new growth.
2. The teachers and support staff are a dedicated group of individuals who want students to succeed. They are caring and student-focused, dedicated and excellent employees.
3. The district has a wide range of opportunities for students and a high expectation of excellence for in academic endeavors. Students continue to perform well in a variety of areas.
4. Academic, athletic, and fine arts opportunities are widely available, in addition to a huge variety of extracurricular activities for all students.
5. Building level leadership is strong and educators support staff and students, leading with a collaborative approach.
6. Pickerington Schools are considered safe and involve staff who are building relationships with students and assisting with student behavior.

Board of Education:

- Pickerington Schools has a superb staff who care about students.
- The teaching staff is strong and have high expectations for students and they promote academic excellence in our students.
- The district has strong community support and solid parental involvement in a growing and diverse community.
- There is a relatively stable resource level over time, particularly due to the presence of a school district income tax in addition to other revenue sources.
- The overall leadership in the district is excellent and they are always student focused.
- Academics, athletics, and fine arts are strong. Sports programs are excellent and the fine arts (e.g., band, theater, choir) programs are exemplary.
- The district office has effective listening techniques.

Administration:

- The district has quality educators and support staff, and they provide excellent leadership for the schools.
- The district enjoys an extremely supportive and diverse community with multi-generational families as well.
- The academic programs are strong, and varied, and the athletic and fine arts programs are excellent.
- The administrative team is experienced, approachable, and supportive of students and staff.
- There are multiple opportunities for all students. The EL program provides much needed support for students.
- Although the district is large it still has a “small town” feel to it which the community enjoys.

High School Students:

- Students appreciate the inclusive culture and welcoming atmosphere of the different customs found in this diverse community.
- The district offers a wide variety of opportunities for all students, along with opportunities for students to participate in sports, clubs, and extra-curricular activities.
- The community is supportive and involved and a great place in which to live and attend school.
- There are excellent teachers who care and there is mutual respect and kindness between students and teachers.
- The district offers strong academic programs and students are creative and involved in both academic and extracurricular programs.

Teachers:

- Pickerington Schools has a strong, caring staff who want all students to succeed. The staff is student-centered, amazing, and phenomenal.
- There are a variety of academic programs and challenging, rigorous curricula offering many opportunities for students.
- The support staff is excellent and provides whatever is needed for students and teachers in the buildings.
- The athletic programs and extra-curricular activities offer many opportunities for students to participate.
- There is a powerful sense of community, and the schools reflect community diversity and cultural traditions.
- The administrators are people-focused, strong, and efficient leaders in the district.
- Problems are dealt with based on a solution-forward approach.
- The technology program is excellent and cutting edge.

Support Staff:

- There are dedicated teachers, amazing support staff, and a community that supports the schools.

- The EL program is excellent and serves the diverse needs of our students and families.
- The district offers a wide range of educational opportunities for all students.
- The athletic programs are outstanding and many students participate in extracurricular activities.

Parents & Community:

- Pickerington Schools has highly qualified, dedicated teachers, and a great support staff who care about kids.
- The staff is united in the buildings and have a caring and compassionate relationship with each other and the students.
- There are high expectations and many educational and extracurricular activities for all students.
- The administrators are competent educators who care about staff and students.
- The facilities are safe and well maintained. Food services and maintenance are exemplary for a district the size of Pickerington.

IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING DISTRICT

Question #2: What do you consider to be the two or three most important issues facing the district?

Consistent Themes

1. Transparent and clear communication with all district stakeholders is a key priority. Communication must be consistent and frequent to keep all parties up to date.
2. It is important for the superintendent to be visible and engaged in the schools and the community.
3. Growth is a challenge for the district. Steps are being taken, but the conversation should be ongoing about how to finance additional staff and continuing to update school facilities.
4. The district must continue to recruit and retain qualified, dedicated staff.
5. Additional resources are needed for English language and special education programs.
6. Academic achievement needs to remain the number one focus. Although a process has just begun, a clear and communicated vision for the next three to five years will be a significant factor in the continued success of the district.

Board of Education:

- Communication is critically important between the superintendent, board office, staff members, and community. Keeping effective communication as a priority will assist in maintaining transparency among stakeholders.
- Student achievement needs to remain a focus.
- The need for more consistent, complete, timely, and transparent, two-way communication with all stakeholders, particularly school staff and families is necessary.
- As the lead decision-maker, it's important for the superintendent to be decisive in their approach.

- Growth continues to be a reality for Pickerington Schools. Moving forward, the superintendent needs to have a clear vision for navigating these important challenges.
- Positive student behavior is key to safe and high performing schools. This needs to be an area of continued focus moving forward.
- Clearly defined role expectations, set by the superintendent, will allow for more overall efficiency.

Administration:

- Fostering a continued strong working relationship between the administration and certified and classified associations is key. This collaborative work is important to find common ground around what is best for students.
- Transparency among stakeholders and consistent, clear, and effective communication should be a priority.
- The continued growth in the district results in a need for new revenues to provide additional classroom space and additional staff. Classes are at a maximum in all areas.
- There is a need for an increase in English language services and special education services.
- The district must continue to recruit and retain quality staff.
- There is a need for a clear vision and focused implementation of that vision over the next three to five years.

High School Students:

- The staff and administrators need to keep students engaged as there seems to be a lack of motivation, lack of respect, and student apathy in some cases. This is accompanied by mental health issues and a decline in focus and learning.
- The student population is expanding and there is a need for additional resources for all students and staff.
- The district should provide more assistance for struggling students and diverse learners.
- The division between Pickerington Central and Pickerington North can cause some students to feel as if they are not being prioritized by the school district.
- Students need help in figuring out “what to do” after high school. This is a major issue for many students in the district.
- The district should continue prioritizing the needs of all students and make decisions that impact students and staff in a positive way.

Teachers:

- There needs to be a clear vision for the district over the next three to five years as we continue to grow and evolve.
- Resource allocation among programs should be rethought. Certain areas (e.g., special education, English language) are overextended. This leads to teachers and support staff feeling overworked and undervalued.
- Transparent and consistent communication from administration should be prioritized. This helps to build trust throughout.
- Classroom numbers are large and there is a need for more classroom space and additional staff in all areas.

- Transportation issues are an ongoing concern.
- Student discipline issues need to be an ongoing priority.
- The district office often seems defensive if opinions are expressed by staff. The ability to engage in meaningful conversations would be beneficial.

Support Staff:

- Classified staff do not feel they are treated equitably, which can lead to feeling underappreciated.
- Communication needs to be consistent, clear, and frequent by the leadership at the district office.
- Recruiting qualified staff in all areas should be an important focus moving forward.
- There is a need for competitive wages and benefits for all employees.
- Communication seems to come from the “top down” and decisions are made without input from the people impacted.

Parents & Community:

- The district is experiencing continued growth and therefore additional funding must be considered to equitably prioritize staff resources and learning space.
- District policies, especially around student behavior and support, need to be applied consistently across the district.
- Diversity is a rich part of the school district and a focus on being responsive to all students and families is important.
- There is a need for consistent, clear, and frequent communication from the school district. This will continue to instill trust among stakeholders.
- The superintendent needs to be visible and engaged in the community.
- Busing can be a challenge. Routes to school and home should be as streamlined as possible and not disrupted by other issues.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW SUPERINTENDENT

Question #3: Please tell us your two or three characteristics that you think the Board should look for in a new Superintendent.

Consistent Themes

1. A compassionate and visible leader who values individuals, works to get to know all stakeholders, and appreciates the Pickerington community.
2. A strong leader with experience who can craft a shared vision that will carry Pickerington Schools forward in positive ways.
3. A student-centered leader who enjoys being around students outside of formal events and is an engaged community member.
4. A transparent and communicative leader who understands that parents and community members, in addition to teachers and staff, need to be informed and in a timely manner.
5. A kind and empathic leader who gathers diverse perspectives before making decisions.

Board of Education:

- A strong leader with proven K-12 experience, hopefully, in a diverse community.
- An excellent communicator and listener who is transparent and timely with information to the staff and the community.
- A leader who understands growth and how to find resources to support additional programs and staff as the community continues to grow.
- A superintendent who can craft a vision to lead the district forward in positive ways over the next three to five years.
- A compassionate leader who takes time to get to know the individuals of Pickerington Schools and develop systems to support the district accordingly.

Administration:

- The new superintendent must be visible, approachable, open-minded, and use a collaborative leadership style.
- The person must have strong interpersonal skills and be engaged in the community.
- Strong communication skills are critical to all stakeholders in the district.
- A leader who is an active listener, appreciates differing opinions, and leads with empathy.
- The new superintendent should have K-12 experience as a teacher, principal, and superintendent.
- An educator who is familiar with diversity and cultural differences and can be a servant leader.
- A superintendent who can make tough decisions and is fair to others in the decision-making process.

High School Students:

- The superintendent should have teaching and principal experience so they can understand how to work with the students and staff.
- A kind superintendent who is open-minded and understands the importance of being present in the schools and community in a consistent way.
- A listener who understands there is no perfect student and that each student has value and importance in the classroom.
- A visible leader who is teacher centered and cares about all members of the school community.
- A great communicator who is personable, approachable, and can connect with the Pickerington community.
- A superintendent who has a vision and goals and can implement those goals.

Teachers:

- A leader who has experience as a teacher and a principal and understands day-to-day operations and is approachable.
- A superintendent who is visible and shows teachers and support staff that they care about them and make them feel “heard and seen.”
- A respectful leader who values differences and understands diversity and cultural differences.

- A leader who is proactive in problem solving and can handle constructive criticism.
- A strong communicator who can deliver a clear and consistent message to all stakeholders.
- A person who has experience in with growth in a district.

Support Staff:

- A person who is visible in the buildings, approachable, and open-minded.
- A leader who will work to make the support staff feel valued and appreciated.
- A fair leader who treats all staff equitably.
- Someone who understands school finance and is fiscally responsible.
- A caring leader who works to get to know people individually.

Parents & Community:

- A leader who is visible and will be present in the schools.
- A person who has K-12 experience and experience as a teacher in the classroom.
- An excellent communicator and listener who can connect with all stakeholders.
- A leader who is culturally competent and has experience with a diverse community.
- The superintendent must invest in teachers, support staff, and students.
- The leader must be accountable and transparent in all interactions with staff and the community.
- A communicative leader who understands that parents need to be informed, especially in times of crisis.
- Someone who can maintain positive relationships with all stakeholders.

SUPERINTENDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY RANKING

1 = MOST IMPORTANT

TO

10 = LEAST IMPORTANT

CRITERIA	BOE	ADMIN	TEACHERS	SUPPORT STAFF	PARENTS/ COMMUNITY	STUDENTS
Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, students, and parents	1	5	1	2	1	2
Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district	2 (tie)	2	8	6	4	4
Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum	7	10	10	9	10	8
Effective at both written and verbal communications	6	6	7	3 (tie)	8	6
Successful experience as a superintendent	10	8	3	6	3	9
Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations	9	3	4	5	5	5
Fiscal management expertise	8	9	6	10	2	10
Effective organizational and management skills	4	7	9	8	9	7
Personal involvement and interest in the community	5	4	4	1	6	3
A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills	2 (tie)	1	2	3 (tie)	7	1

RANKING OF TOP AND BOTTOM FIVE (5) IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS ALL GROUPS

RANK **TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS**

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, students, and parents |
| 2 | A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills |
| 3 | Personal involvement and interest in the community |
| 4 | Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district |
| 5 | Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations |

RANK **BOTTOM 5 CHARACTERISTICS**

- | | |
|----|--|
| 6 | Effective at both written and verbal communications |
| 7 | Successful experience as a superintendent |
| 8 | Effective organizational and management skills |
| 9 | Fiscal management expertise |
| 10 | Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum |

SUMMARY

The information gathered through surveys and interviews bears strong similarity across all groups with respect to Pickerington Schools strengths, issues, and concerns facing the district, as well as the characteristics desired in the next superintendent.

All groups and individuals expressed that Pickerington School's *greatest strengths* include:

1. Pickerington Schools have a strong, supportive, diverse, and involved community. The schools serve generational families and continue to prepare for new growth.
2. The teachers and support staff are a dedicated group of individuals who want students to succeed. They are caring and student-focused, dedicated, and excellent employees.
3. The district has a wide range of opportunities for students and a high expectation of excellence for students in academic endeavors. They continue to perform well in a variety of areas.
4. Academic, athletic, and fine arts opportunities are widely available with a huge variety of extracurricular activities for all students.
5. Building leadership is strong and the educators support staff and students, leading with a collaborative approach.
6. Pickerington Schools are considered safe and involve staff who are building relationships with students and assisting with student behavior.

The *top issues and concerns* facing Pickerington Schools, which surfaced through profile forums and from individually submitted questionnaires, include:

1. Transparent and clear communication with all stakeholders needs to be a key priority of the district. Communication must be consistent and frequent to keep all parties up to date.
2. The superintendent must be visible in the buildings and the community.
3. Growth continues to be a challenge for the district and a conversation should be ongoing about how to finance additional staff, new classroom resources, and programs.
4. The district must continue to recruit and retain qualified, dedicated staff.
5. Additional resources are needed for English language and special education programs.
6. Academic achievement needs to remain the number one focus. Additionally, a clear vision for the next three to five years will be a significant factor in continued success.

In reconciling the concerns and the characteristics sought in a superintendent for Pickerington Schools, most respondents expressed the following:

The new superintendent should be visible throughout the district, be accessible, exhibit transparency in all aspects of their work, and be committed to Pickerington. Pickerington Schools prides itself on being a community where people know each other and take care of each other, even if some longstanding divisions exist. It is important the new superintendent understands and appreciates the community and becomes invested in it. To that end, the district wants someone who will stay with Pickerington Schools and the Pickerington community for many years to come.

In addition to being invested in the community, we feel the next superintendent should be an instructional leader with a proven track record of academic success. It was clear throughout conversations with stakeholders that academic performance needs to remain a focus. Pickerington Schools has a longstanding reputation of high academic performance, but opportunities for growth should not be overlooked. Additionally, a superintendent with a solid understanding of instructional practice will be able to support school leaders and teachers through meaningful professional learning.

Although Pickerington Schools is in good fiscal shape, we recommend the next superintendent demonstrate a working knowledge of how to pass school levy and bond issues. It is clear from participant feedback that someone with a skillset to sell the need for more funding to a diverse school community will be important. Because of this, it will be important for Pickerington's next superintendent to hold the requisite skills to get to know the school community, understand a five-year forecast, and work to bring constituents along in honoring the historical, and fiscally sound work of Pickerington Schools.

Schools are a microcosm of the communities in which they reside. Although it has been mentioned throughout this search profile, there is no question that understanding the diverse Pickerington community will be key to the next superintendent's success. Although it is common for new school district leaders to embark on listening tours upon arriving, we recommend the next superintendent demonstrate a skillset to systematically use surveys, focus groups, community coffees, and other creative measures to not only understand the district, but begin to

develop a clear roadmap to carry Pickerington into the future. Pickerington is already a wonderful place, but we firmly believe that the stakeholders stand ready to become even more connected under the right leadership.

In closing, Pickerington Schools serves a diverse community that is proud of its schools. We believe that the right candidate for superintendent will recognize this and embrace being part of the rich tradition. There is no question that this position will be of interest to strong superintendent candidates and we believe we will find the right candidate who has the attributes outlined herein, who possesses the skills needed to address the issues and concerns expressed by respondents, and who will be happy to be a part of the Pickerington Schools community.

Respectfully submitted:

K-12 Business Consulting, Inc

