



Superintendent Search

Stakeholder Feedback Report for

***Albuquerque
Public Schools
Albuquerque, New Mexico***

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EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT

Superintendent Search Stakeholder Feedback Report

Executive Summary

Furthering the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) Board of Education's (Board) commitment to comprehensive community engagement, this report summarizing stakeholder feedback in the APS Superintendent Search is the result of Fall Community Event conversations facilitated by Board Members, discussions with standing APS stakeholder groups facilitated by Board members or representatives, and a community-wide online survey.

In total, over 7,700 community stakeholder voices were included in developing this report.

Facilitated feedback was recorded from the following groups:

- ABC Community School Partnership
- Albuquerque Teachers' Federation Representative Council
- APS Foundation
- APS Principals' Association
- Carpenter's Union
- Central New Mexico Community College Leadership
- Emerging Stronger Community Conversations & Online Survey (August 2023)
- Fall Community Event #1 (West Mesa High School)
- Fall Community Event #2 (Manzano High School)
- GLSEN
- Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce
- Kirtland AFB Partnership Committee
- NAIOP Commercial Real Estate Development Association
- Organizing Parents Education Network (OPEN)
- Southwest Institute for Transformation (SWIFT) Board
- Superintendent's Student Advisory Council
- United Voices for Newcomer Rights

The primary objective of each facilitated stakeholder conversation about the superintendent search was to garner responses to the following two questions:

1. What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?
2. What attributes are least desirable in the next APS superintendent?

The online survey posed the following questions:

1. What one word best describes how you feel about APS?
2. What are the 5 most important characteristics for the next superintendent?
3. What are the district's top 3 strengths?
4. What are the district's top 3 challenges?

Additionally, the survey asked for the following information:

1. Respondent's connection to APS (parent/guardian, staff member, community member, etc.)
2. Respondent's zip code
3. Respondent's primary language
4. Respondent's race/ethnicity (optional)

Results of this community engagement are presented in the following three sections of this stakeholder report:

1. Common Themes Among All Facilitated Conversations
2. Online Community Survey Results
3. Common Themes from Individual Community Conversations

Common Themes Among All Facilitated Conversations

When collectively analyzing the responses gathered from the 15 different outreach conversations, the following common themes emerged:

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged among stakeholders included (in no specific order):

Leadership Qualities:

- Commitment to equity in education
- Opposition to the status quo
- Visionary and innovative leader
- Real-world classroom experience
- Data-driven and data-focused
- Willingness to take calculated risks
- Collaborative mindset
- Listening before speaking
- Recognizing the need for a cultural shift

Leadership Experience:

- Superintendent experience
- Demonstrated success in closing the achievement gap
- Track record of success in improving student outcomes
- Managing large school districts
- Demonstrated principal and leadership training
- Supporting fine arts, theater, music, and CTE
- Creating a culture of transparency and a positive workplace

Cultural Competency and Inclusion:

- Understanding of diverse cultures
- Familiarity with APS and New Mexico's cultural nuances
- Giving a voice to underrepresented students
- Understanding of bilingual education and special education
- Advocacy for inclusion and best practices for students with disabilities
- Emphasis on restorative practices
- Implementation of social-emotional learning
- Need for language classes and maintaining home language

Collaboration and Engagement:

- Willingness to partner with unions
- Community school experience
- Collaboration with diverse communities
- Engagement with community organizations
- Emphasis on community partnerships

Communication Skills:

- Good listener, approachable, and easy to access
- Emphasis on integrity, communication, and transparency
- Strong public speaking skills
- Building buy-in from all stakeholder groups

Strategic Thinking and Progressive Vision:

- Willingness to follow through on the strategic plan
- Willingness to challenge the status quo
- Openness to change
- Creative problem-solving
- Focus on cultural change and reallocation of resources
- Equity of funding to schools with fewer resource

Union Experience and Relations:

- Sophistication in navigating teacher union complexities
- Advocacy for students' interests over adults'
- Positive view of unions

Community Engagement and Partnership:

- Knowledge of economic challenges and community support
- Willingness to engage authentically with the community
- Personal lived experiences contributing to understanding
- Creation of partnerships and solving problems collaboratively

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged among stakeholders included (in no specific order):

Leadership Style:

- Authoritarian
- Unwilling to collaborate
- Non-transparent
- Unapproachable

Workforce Relations:

- Disrespect towards the workforce
- Reluctance to collaborate with unions

Professional Background:

- Corporate reformer
- Lack of teaching experience
- No experience in public education

Attitudes and Values:

- Biased
- Inflexible
- Lack of cultural responsiveness
- Close-minded

Community Engagement:

- Not understanding community challenges
- Not willing to be part of the local community
- Superintendent with a history of moving frequently
- Not understanding Albuquerque
- Ineffective communicator

Personal Characteristics:

- Ego-driven
- Racist
- Sexist
- Criminal background
- Manipulative

Online Community Survey Results

The community-wide online survey was developed and distributed by the APS Office of Accountability and Reporting and the Strategic Analysis & Program Research Staff in collaboration with McPherson & Jacobson, LLC. This tool was an updated version of the survey administered during the 2020 APS Superintendent Search. As a result, significant comparative results between the 2020 collection and the 2023 collection are noted.

Expectedly, the largest group of the nearly 7,100 respondents self-identified as parents/guardians (45%), followed by APS staff members (35%) and those who reported being both parents and APS staff (14%). Community members comprised 4% of responses, students accounted for less than 2% of responses and elected officials represented less than 1%.

1. Respondents were asked to select from a multiple choice list of 16 items in response to the prompt: *What are the district's top 3 strengths?* Results indicate:

<u>Identified Strength</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Student diversity	2561	36.14%
School choice options (access to magnet and charter schools)	1803	25.44%
Culture, language, and history of community	1654	23.34%
Teacher quality	1443	20.36%
Bilingual program	995	14.04%
Technology	867	12.23%
School safety/Security	767	10.82%
Special education services	756	10.67%
Has goals and a strategic plan	682	9.62%
Student support	623	8.79%
Community engagement	590	8.33%
Parent engagement	474	6.69%
Career technical options	398	5.62%
Student academic performance	227	3.20%
Fiscal responsibility	149	2.10%
Rigorous academic instruction	124	1.75%

Note: The top 5 responses to this question were consistent, and in the same order, as responses to the 2020 survey.

2. Respondents were asked to select from a multiple choice list of 22 items in response to the prompt: *What are the 3 top challenges the district faces?* Results indicate:

Identified Challenge	Responses	Percent
Teacher shortages	1758	24.81%
Student academic performance	1564	22.07%
Student discipline	1529	21.57%
Teacher pay	1193	16.83%
Class sizes	1136	16.03%
Staff retention	1134	16.00%
Student mental health	1026	14.48%
Poverty	919	12.97%
School safety/security	839	11.84%
Pay for support staff (bus drivers, custodians, educational assistants)	827	11.67%
Rigorous academic instruction	744	10.50%
Buildings need repair	718	10.13%
Classroom funding	676	9.54%
Declining student enrollment	643	9.07%
Special education	592	8.35%
Graduation rates	493	6.96%
Equity	400	5.64%
Budget transparency	357	5.04%
English language learner instruction	81	1.14%

Note: The top responses to this question remained largely the same compared to the 2020 survey responses with the exception of “student discipline” rising four (4) places and “classroom funding” dropping seven (7) places on the list.

Respondents were given the opportunity via open-ended response to identify additional challenges facing APS. No discernible trends or frequency of responses were identified.

3. Respondents were asked to select from a multiple choice list of 22 items in response to the prompt: *What are the 5 most important characteristics of the next superintendent?* Results indicate:

<u>Identified Desired Characteristic</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Puts the needs of students first	2807	39.61%
Possesses a background in education	2690	37.96%
Promotes safety and security in the schools and across the district	2363	33.34%
Encourages transparency at all levels of district leadership	1851	26.12%
Takes responsibility for decisions and actions	1571	22.17%
Prioritizes school-level decision-making	1547	21.83%
Sets high expectations for all students	1483	20.93%
Spends time in classrooms	1406	19.84%
Experience increasing student achievement	1377	19.43%
Promotes student participation in the arts, sports, and other extracurricular activities	1174	16.57%
Promotes innovation in curriculum and instruction	1148	16.20%
Uses data to make informed decisions	1133	15.99%
Inspires and motivates others	1106	15.61%
Honors and communicates the vision and values of the community	940	13.26%
Experience managing the budget of a large organization	858	12.11%
Provides opportunities for communication between educators and parents	831	11.73%
Experience implementing a strategic plan	669	9.44%
Prior experience as a superintendent	508	7.17%
Provides equitable access to technology across the district	478	6.74%
Holds an advanced degree (doctorate/Ph.D/Ed.D)	373	5.26%
Prioritizes district-level decision-making	246	3.47%
Delegates responsibility	202	2.85%

Note: The top 5 responses to this question remained unchanged and in the same order as in the 2020 survey. Other responses that showed notable movement up the list included “prioritizes school-level decision making”, “sets high expectations for all students”, and “increasing student achievement.

Respondents were given the opportunity via open-ended response to identify additional characteristics desired in the next superintendent. No discernible trends or frequency of responses were identified.

Respondents self identified the following races/ethnicities:

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
White/Caucasian	2429	34.3%
None Reported	2155	30.4%
Hispanic	1518	21.4%
Two or more	632	8.9%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	147	2.1%
Black/African American	100	1.4%
Asian	95	1.3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	11	0.2%

When asked to identify primary language, 6,831 respondents indicated English, and 252 respondents indicated Spanish. Two-hundred-forty-eight (248) survey responses were received in Spanish.

Common Themes from Individual Community Conversation

ABC Community School Partnership

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Leadership Qualities:

- Visionary leader
- Willing to take calculated risks; Innovative
- Collaborative mindset - internally and externally
- Someone who listens first before speaking
- Experiences leading schools with a focus on experiential learning
- Superintendent experience

Educational Experience:

- Real-world classroom experience
- Experienced educator
- Vision for equity in education
- Commitment to innovation and deep learning in all classrooms

Commitment to Change:

- Does not accept the status quo
- Ready to lead innovation and deep learning

Collaboration and Engagement:

- Willing to partner with the unions
- Community school experience
- Openness to full consideration and integration of the community school approach in decision making

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

- A corporate reformer more focused on test scores than learning
- Command and control leadership style
- Someone who thinks they have all of the answers

Albuquerque Teachers' Federation Representative Council

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Educational Focus:

- Recent and significant classroom experience.
- Understanding of bilingual education and special education.
- Belief in restorative practices.
- Values fine arts, theater, music, and CTE (Career and Technical Education).

Leadership and Collaboration:

- Ability to force cabinet/tower to work together.
- Superintendents who can bring people together.
- Dynamic leadership with success in another district.
- Emphasis on fewer departments and eliminating sub- departments.
- Partnership with the union.
- Someone who can develop other leaders.

Community Engagement:

- Strong community leader.
- Understanding of the community school framework.
- Cultivation of a positive and stress-free environment.
- Emphasis on community partnerships and overcoming fear of community involvement.
- Belief in dialogue and addressing community issues like absenteeism, truancy, and school lunch nutrition.

Inclusivity and Understanding:

- Bilingualism and understanding of diverse cultures.
- Recognition of the poverty experienced by both staff and students.
- Understanding of trauma.
- Recognition and support for students who take more than four years to graduate.

Innovative Thinking:

- Out of the box thinking.
- Creative ways to staff schools.
- Recognition that teachers teach, not textbooks, and fidelity to the curriculum can be problematic.

Advocacy and Values:

- Opposition to charter schools.
- Standing up to the Department of Education (PED).
- Valuing and honoring educators, students, and their diverse backgrounds.
- Recognition that enrichment is remediation.

Cultural Connection:

- Someone from a state or culture similar to New Mexico, preferably from New Mexico.
- Inclusion and understanding of the local culture.

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Focus on Reform:

- Individuals associated with corporate education reform organizations (Broad Institute or Chiefs for Change).
- A leader with a strong emphasis on corporate-style educational initiatives.
- Someone who perceives the education system as needing to be "fixed" and holds a negative view of students needing to be "fixed."

Charter School Focus:

- Leaders who rely on or advocate for charter schools.

Age and Experience Bias:

- Concerns about individuals near retirement.
- Concerns about individuals who are young and inexperienced, particularly those who may not understand education and collaboration.

Anti-Union:

- Someone who is anti-union.
- Unwilling to support collaborative efforts with professional educators.

A Golden Parachute:

- A candidate who expects or demands a substantial financial package upon leaving the position.

APS Foundation

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Visionary Leadership:

- Visionary leadership capable of finding and implementing opportunities.
- Ability to put work into action and high-performance management skills with experience in large organizations.

Positive Mindset:

- Positive mindset and outlook.
- Strong-mindedness without being overly emotional, emphasizing a healthy mindset.
- Humility and recognition of talent in students, staff, and the community.
- Regular celebration of positive work within the district.
- Open-mindedness, the ability to check ego, and a growth mindset.

Collaborative Leadership:

- Willingness to honor and leverage the work of the foundation.
- Emphasis on working together and winning together, indicating a collaborative leadership style.
- Ability to effectively engage with the business community.
- Involvement with each local school to ensure continuity between them.
- Ability to empower people, be a team builder, and build/nurture relationships.
- A leader who sees themselves as equal to the people in the organization.
- Continued investment in principals and valuing leadership development.

Communication Skills:

- Good listener, approachable, and easy to communicate with.
- Emphasis on integrity, communication, and transparency with the community, staff, parents, and students.

Legacy Knowledge:

- Desire for someone with extensive experience and insider knowledge of APS (Albuquerque Public Schools).
- Hispanic leadership reflective of the community culture

Educational Experience:

- Educator experience at various levels, including classroom, organizational, and principal roles.
- Effective implementation of social emotional learning.
- Preference for a working superintendent with emphasis on experience over a Ph.D.

Student Engagement:

- Engagement with students, including the ability to talk with children and youth.
- Prioritization of putting students first.

APS Principals' Association

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Leadership Experience:

- Experience with turning around student achievement.
- Ability to identify, prioritize, and present plans to address concerns and challenges in APS.
- History of successfully implementing changes and creating systems of change.
- Extensive experience, particularly with a strong background in dealing with teachers and custodial unions.
- Strong financial acumen with the ability to ask questions and ensure financial clarity.
- Ensuring coherence and collaboration across different departments within the school district, fostering a customer-service-oriented approach toward schools

Union Relations:

- Advocacy for what is best for students rather than solely focusing on employee interests.
- Willingness to challenge the status quo and address challenges from unions.

Communication Skills and Organizational Ability:

- Strong communication skills and the ability to communicate effectively and timely without overwhelming with emails.
- Organizational skills to establish clear communication channels within the district.
- Willingness to reorganize the district structure for efficiency, ensuring the right people are in the right positions.
- Ability to change the culture to one of feedback and collaboration.
- Implementation of systems for feedback from both principals and teachers.
- Approachable, visible in the community, and a good face for the district.
- Strong public speaking skills, collaboration skills, and authenticity.

Innovative Thinking:

- Not being part of the current school district (APS).
- A fresh perspective with new ideas and thoughts.
- Not afraid to challenge the status quo and question traditional practices.
- Ability to come up with innovative ideas to solve problems.

Special Education Understanding:

- Experience or at least no fear of dealing with special education.
- Recognition of the importance of collaboration between general education and special education.

Initiative Management and Accountability:

- Awareness of the time required for initiative implementation.
- Understanding and enforcement of accountability in the district.

Educational Background and Classroom Experience:

- Extensive time spent in the classroom.
- Leadership experience as a building leader, school leader, principal, or in a district leadership role.
- Familiarity with grading systems, especially transitioning from standards-based grading in elementary school to ensure consistency and alignment from K-12.

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Non-Merit-Based Decisions:

- Board members must prioritize experience and qualifications over characteristics such as being native to New Mexico or fluent in Spanish.
- An "it's not what you know, it's who you know" mindset.
- Selecting leaders not on qualifications and experience but rather on personal connections.
- Presence of the traditional "good 'ol boy" network mentality.

Lack of Appreciation for Diversity and Individual School Needs:

- Not recognition of the diversity among schools and understanding and respecting those differences.
- Refusal to allocate resources and support equitably, acknowledging that not every school requires the same resources.

Business Background not Education-Related:

- Preference for candidates with an education background rather than a strictly business-oriented one.

Limited Perspective:

- Strong preference for a candidate who is not part of APS, bringing in a fresh perspective, fresh ideas, and fresh approaches.
- Resistance to selecting someone from within the existing system to ensure significant and necessary changes.

Short-Term Commitment:

- Opposition to selecting someone who is just looking to end their career and negotiate a costly contract without genuine commitment to positive change.

Showmanship:

- Disinterest in a "dog and pony show" leadership style, emphasizing substance over theatrics.

Carpenter's Union

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Community Engagement and Impact:

- Awareness of the impact on the community workforce related to APS construction
- Someone from New Mexico with an understanding of the economic reality of the community
- Knowledge of the challenges of the New Mexico economy and its impact on students
- Commitment to supporting staff

Personal Connection to APS:

- Someone who has children who went through APS
- First-hand experience with APS
- Positive view of unions, both with APS workforce and the larger community
- Committed to staying in the community

Commitment to Trades Education:

- Respect for "blue-collar" and trades workforce
- Expanded opportunities for trades education, not just college
- Commitment to getting building trades pre-apprenticeship programs into schools

Partnerships and Innovation:

- Willingness to partner with building trades and community resources to expand opportunities
- Commitment to solving problems such as transportation and partnerships innovatively
- Committed to operationalizing pre-apprenticeship programs and creating community wealth

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Positive view of unions, both with APS workforce and the larger community
- A woman

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

- Someone who disrespects the workforce both in APS and in greater community
- Someone who is afraid to sit at the table with unions and a variety of others
- Someone who is a placeholder and not fully committed
- Someone from out of state

Central New Mexico Community College Leadership

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness:

- Has experience with outcomes inside of goals/guardrails
- Articulates a succession plan upon being hired
- Can use a delegate to move projects forward
- Allows their team to be the experts
- Reimagine bureaucracy so it doesn't get in the way of collaborative efforts

Community Engagement and Integration:

- Makes the community's issues APS's issues
- Values partnerships
- Advocates for resources

Collaboration and Partnership:

- Has political will to find alignment with CNM and UNM
- Build up science & math programs together
- Leans on CNM for professional developmentEnhances supports for students: toward resilience
- Embeds programs throughout district work
- Enhanced discussions about programmatic changes to align programs

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

- Values diversity, equity, inclusion at all levels: workforce, students, families

Education Experience:

- Understands pre-k through post-secondary continuum
- Appreciates opportunities that the pandemic offered

Strategic Program Development and Alignment:

- Finds areas where we have agreement and reflect our priorities (APS and CNM)
- Intentionality around collaboration, especially around readiness for CNM
- Investigates why so many students attend CNM straight out of high school
- Analyze the "one student experience" to fill gaps in transitioning to CNM
- Partner on the idea of vocational counseling (San Diego model)

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Failure to Act:

- Doesn't understand the element of urgency and the stress that comes with it

Accountability and Collaboration:

- Dismisses the need to hold partners accountable without violating the partnership
- Allows bureaucracy to interfere with collaborative efforts

Unappreciative of Partnership:

- Doesn't make APS/CNM a significant priority

Lack of Humility:

- Presents as a savior or expert in everything

Underappreciation of Local Impact:

- Doesn't understand the importance of APS to our economic vitality
- Doesn't recognize the potential in our community and schools
- Doesn't see connection of the goals/guardrails to economic development

Emerging Stronger Community Conversations and Online Survey (August 2023)

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Immigrant background
- Bilingual
- Native New Mexican
- Familiar with Albuquerque and New Mexico
- Supports differentiated learning
- Union-friendly
- Dedicated to all students

Education Experience and Expertise:

- Academic background and education experience
- Classroom teaching experience
- Demonstrated academic achievement
- Can implement the strategic plan
- Student-focused
- Committed to restorative justice

Collaboration:

- Visible and approachable
- Empowering of staff and committed to leadership training

Leadership Qualities:

- Courageous decision-maker and risk-taker
- Professionalism
- Open-minded and adaptable
- Creative problem solver
- Honest, kind, and empathetic
- Visionary, passionate and motivational
- Change agent
- Data-driven and researched based
- Hands-on, progressive leader
- Tech savvy

Community Engagement and Advocacy:

- Responsive to the community
- Community-focused
- Committed to community schools
- Progressive

Strategic Planning and Accountability:

- Committed to the strategic plan
- Transparency
- Results-oriented
- Accountability

Fall Community Event #1 (West Mesa High School)

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Community and Collaboration:

- Collaborative
- Committed to developing community schools
- A team player who is supportive of staff
- Community involvement
- Open-minded and flexible
- Familiar with Albuquerque and New Mexico
- Visible

Equity and Inclusion:

- A leader who is culturally informed and values equity, diversity, and is inclusive
- Committed to restorative justice
- Possesses a strong belief in APS
- Empathetic
- One who values educators and supports unions

Education Background and Experience:

- A servant leader with public education experience
- Demonstrated results in previous leadership
- Knowledge of the district and support for community schools
- Tech and politically savvy
- A change agent who is goal focused
- Strong understanding of special education
- Experience in APS

Safety and Security:

- Values investments in safety and security

Communication and Transparency:

- Good communicator
- Transparent

Accountability:

- Holds people accountable
- Disciplinarian
- Uses data to drive and evaluate decisions

Student Focus and Academic Rigor:

- Student-focused
- Has high expectations for all students
- Focus on academics especially post-COVID experiences

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Sole Focus on Academics:

- Candidates who prioritize academics exclusively, neglecting other important aspects of education.

Isolation from the Field:

- Superintendents who spend most of their time in their office and are not actively engaged with schools and the community.

Lack of Classroom Experience:

- Candidates without direct experience in a classroom setting.

Resistance to Change:

- Superintendents who are resistant to implementing changes or innovations.

Non-Collaborative:

- Candidates who do not prioritize collaboration with various stakeholders.
- Superintendents with personal agendas that may not align with the best interests of the community.

Unilateral Decision-Making:

- Superintendents who make decisions without seeking input or collaboration.

Corporate Reformer:

- Candidates with a background in corporate reform rather than public education.

Limited Public Education Experience:

- Superintendents with no experience in public education.

Lack of Understanding of APS:

- Candidates who do not understand the intricacies of the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) system.

Fall Community Event #2 (Manzano High School)

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Teaching Experience:

- Teaching experience
- Understanding the science of teaching
- Knowledge of special education

Community Connections and Engagement:

- Community connections
- Engaged with the community
- Community engagement
- Collaborative decision-making
- Team builder
- Support for community schools
- Engaged with community
- Familiar with APS and Albuquerque
- Someone from outside APS

Leadership and Change Agent:

- Courageous decision maker and change agent
- Experienced leader and systems thinker
- Supports community schools
- Prioritizes academics especially post-COVID experiences
- Appreciates trauma-informed practices
- Principal and teaching experience

Knowledge of New Mexico and Albuquerque:

- Knowledge of New Mexico and Albuquerque
- Understands history of Albuquerque

Open-minded and Collaborative:

- Eager to change
- Open-minded and collaborative decision-maker
- Good communicator and listener
- Relational
- Reflective

Fiscal Acumen and Data-Driven:

- Strong fiscal acumen
- Research-based and data-driven
- Committed to the strategic plan

Focus on Student Success:

- Ensures appropriate learning environments
- Focused on reading proficiency
- Places priorities of students first
- Champions teachers and students

Inclusivity and Diversity:

- Committed to action
- Models inclusion and equity
- Bilingual
- Inclusive

Personal Qualities:

- Young, creative and confident
- Compassionate and balanced
- Thick-skinned but empathetic

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Leadership Qualities:

- Desire to avoid a superintendent with an authoritarian leadership style.
- Desire to avoid candidates who are resistant to change or inconsistent in their approach.
- Aversion to candidates who are secretive, isolated, or disinterested in the community.
- Concerns about candidates who are perceived as unsupportive of teachers.

Lack of Experience:

- Concerns about candidates with little or no experience in education.
- Aversion to candidates with a history of leadership failure in previous roles.
- Frequent mentions of a preference for candidates with teaching experience.

Bias:

- Concerns about candidates who may be biased, dismissive, or close-minded.
- Specific concerns about candidates with transphobic or discriminatory views.

Focus on Quantity over Quality:

- A desire to avoid candidates who prioritize quantity over quality in educational initiatives.

Cultural Ignorance:

- Concerns about candidates who may be culturally ignorant or lack an understanding of Albuquerque's history and culture.
- A preference for avoiding candidates from outside the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) system.

Not Aligned with Strategic Plan:

- Desire to avoid candidates who are not supportive of or may change the existing strategic plan.

Privatization and Charter Support:

- Concerns about candidates who may be perceived as supportive of privatization or charter schools.

GLSEN

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Diversity and Inclusion:

- Proactive and passionate about diversity, with a commitment to not prejudicing themselves against any type of difference.
- A strong emphasis on being a fierce advocate for all children and young people, appreciating and understanding differences.

Leadership Experience:

- Experience in managing and understanding the complexity of large school districts, noting the scale and financial intricacies of APS.
- A true leader who can create a culture of transparency, open-mindedness, and a positive workplace where individuals feel valued and are unafraid to express ideas and suggestions.
- Courage to stand up for what is right and persuasive skills to advocate for positions aligned with the best interests of students and the community.

Understanding of Laws and Policies:

- Recognition of legal contexts such as Yazzie/Martinez and an understanding of the requirements to address them successfully.
- Awareness of the impact of district policies and practices on working families, including issues like schedule changes

Classroom Awareness and Listening Skills:

- Genuine interest in understanding the reality in classrooms, actively listening to the impact on teachers, students, and staff, especially when things are not going well.
- Capability to implement and monitor real change based on insights gained from listening to challenges in the educational environment.
- Appreciation and understanding of the educational experiences of today's youth, particularly post-pandemic, and the intersectionality of issues like mental health.

Community Engagement and Partnership:

- Willingness to engage authentically with the community and collaborate with community organizations to solve problems and create partnerships.

Personal Lived Experience and Empathy:

- Possession of personal lived experiences that provide context and understanding regarding issues related to race, gender, equality, etc.
- Humility, with a willingness to learn and admit when lacking knowledge, coupled with a commitment to ongoing learning.

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Indecisiveness:

- Concerns about a leader who waffles in their decisions and statements, indicating a lack of decisiveness and clarity in leadership.

Need for Approval:

- A dislike for a leader who seeks approval and tries to be liked by everyone, suggesting a potential lack of independence and willingness to make tough decisions.

Short-Term Commitment:

- A desire for a leader who is committed to Albuquerque and APS rather than using the position as a stepping stone to another district, emphasizing the need for long-term commitment.

No Experience with Diversity:

- A preference for someone with experience in a diverse district, indicating a recognition of the importance of understanding and navigating the complexities of diverse populations.

Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Closing the Achievement Gap:

- A commitment to closing the achievement gap and targeting resources strategically to measure progress.
- Demonstrating a track record of success in improving student outcomes without using poverty as an excuse.
- Being a successful reformer with a strong focus on improving student outcomes and charting a course toward better results.

Leadership Qualities:

- Demonstrating strong leadership qualities, including the ability to face challenges, stick to plans, and exhibit tenacity.
- Utilizing data to inform decisions, change the trajectory of the district, and address gaps in student performance.
- Being transparent with all information, even if the data is not favorable, and holding oneself accountable.
- Prioritizing effectiveness over likability as a leader.
- Not being afraid of unions, willing to face challenges, and not being influenced by fear.

Child-Centric Approach:

- Prioritizing what is right for children over what is convenient for adults.
- Setting high expectations for all students, believing that every child can learn.

Support for School Leaders:

- Supporting and empowering school leaders and principals.
- Supporting charter schools and recognizing that every student deserves a school environment that prepares them for post-secondary education.

Communication and Engagement:

- Influencing and encouraging parent involvement, being community-minded, and effectively telling the district's story.
- Effective communication and engagement with stakeholders, including the willingness to support strategic plans.
- Bringing innovation to non-classroom hours and offering services to families to break the cycle, including resource centers and truancy programs.

Consistency with Guardrails:

- Demonstrating consistency with established guardrails, including positive trends in enrollment, graduation rates, and academic achievement.

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Using Poverty as an Excuse:

- Expectation that the superintendent does not attribute challenges solely to poverty but rather seeks solutions and improvements.

Emphasis on New Mexico Candidates::

- A recognition that the superintendent does not have to be from New Mexico, emphasizing that considering candidates from a broader geographic pool is not limiting.

Big Ego:

- A preference for a superintendent who does not have a significant ego, suggesting a desire for humility and collaboration.

Avoidance of Chasing Trends:

- A preference for a superintendent who does not chase the next big educational trend, emphasizing stability and a focus on proven strategies.

No Professional Commitment::

- An expectation that the superintendent is not seeking the position as a prelude to retirement, emphasizing a commitment to active and engaged leadership.
- A preference against someone who jumps from one job to the next, indicating a desire for stability and a commitment to the role.
- A stated desire for a superintendent with a track record of success, indicating a preference for candidates with a proven history of achieving positive outcomes.

Kirtland AFB Partnership Committee

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Military Base Experience:

- Prior experience working with military bases
- Could use Air Force scorecard to help evaluate candidates

Data-Driven Focus:

- Data-driven and data-focused
- Operational planner – translates data into action
- Correlates budget and student enrollment
- Awareness of how to measure the whole person concept – student outcomes coupled with student readiness

Student-Centric Approach:

- Focus on student outcomes
- Student-first decision-making
- Leadership instills higher expectations for students
- Supports and evaluates programs that are proven to work – high-quality instruction
- Visionary and problem-solver, making challenging decisions in students' best interest

Leadership and Training:

- Leadership working with principals
- Embraces principal and leadership training
- Willing to take big risks and make changes
- Operational planner – someone who will run with the strategic plan
- Supports community schools

Awareness and Accountability:

- Awareness of where APS results are in the spectrum of the country
- Gauges the school district by absolute standards, world-class standards, and best-in-the-nation standards
- Willingness to gauge APS by standards to produce life-ready graduates
- Someone who has failed and graded against how they handled it when they did fail
- Commitment to follow through on the strategic plan
- Core Values: Integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do

Communication Skills and Engagement:

- Communication with the community, teachers, principals, legislature, students, union
- Navigates different fields in communication
- Shows up and is involved – willing to interact with the community
- Communication skills to build buy-in from all stakeholder groups
- Professional relationships with staff
- Honesty and a willingness to admit mistakes or shortfalls

Cultural Competence:

- Understands New Mexico culture, diversity, legislative process
- Implements diversity, inclusion, and educational equity in student learning and teacher practices to support the whole child

Support for Professional Development:

- Supportive of all levels of quality professional development for all staff
- Ability to foster teamwork and cooperation throughout the district
- Promotes positive school climates

Experience:

- Experience in educational leadership
- Willingness to learn from failure and adapt
- Previous experience in operational planning and budget management

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

- Complacency
- Big ego - unwillingness to work with everyone
- Simply an educator - stove-piped in education
- Someone simply wanting to move up the ladder - another urban district associate from a district that is struggling
- Is not committed to supporting the strategic plan

NAIOP Commercial Real Estate Development Association

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Strategic Thinking and Progressive Vision:

- Willingness to challenge the status quo.
- Open to change and flipping the system if necessary.
- Creative problem-solving.
- Focus on cultural change within the education system.
- Reallocation of resources for progress.
- Strategic development for retaining top teachers.
- Clear-eyed and able to make change

Financial Management:

- Ability to secure funds for classrooms.
- Strategic budgeting skills.
- Someone with a business world background.

Focus on Younger Kids:

- Experience improving outcomes for early childhood education, not just high school.
- Valuing education for itself, not just as a means to go to college.

Cultural Competency:

- Unique awareness of Albuquerque culture.

Community Engagement and Feedback:

- Creating connections with parents and the community.
- Experience working with parents.
- Accessibility to community feedback.
- Active involvement in community events.
- Partnership with local businesses.
- Willingness to listen to diverse perspectives.
- Ability to motivate, inspire, and engage parents/caregivers.

Structural Rigor and Discipline:

- Monitoring and reporting on progress.
- Real-world competencies (e.g., navigating a store, financial literacy, etc.)
- Understandable and digestible for the general public.
- Open to different definitions of postsecondary success.
- Accountability for students and adults.
- Consequences when needed.
- Implementing productive work for society.

Communication:

- Acknowledgment of problems with gradual improvement and regular updates on progress.
- Collaboration skills.
- Honest communication about actual progress.

High Expectations:

- No pandering to the bottom.

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

A Serial Superintendent:

- Someone who has a history of moving districts frequently.
- A candidate who may not stay in the position long-term.

Limited to New Mexico:

- The ideal candidate does not have to be from New Mexico.

Supports the Status Quo:

- Beholden to doing things the same way they've always been done.

Insulation/Isolation:

- Someone who is isolated in bureaucratic structures, often referred to as the "two towers."

Organizing Parents Education Network (OPEN)

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Connection to Special Education:

- Preference for someone with a personal connection to special education, ideally with a child who has experienced it.
- A preference for a leader with experience outside of New Mexico to bring fresh perspectives and insights without political allegiances that may limit decision-making.

Open Communication and Collaboration::

- A superintendent who is open to hearing from teachers and parents without fear of retaliation, emphasizing the need for open communication and a "tell the superintendent or tell the board" approach.
- The ability to create buy-in and establish trust across the board, leading and guiding in a patient and trustworthy manner.
- Interest in increased financial oversight over special education funds to ensure proper allocation and impact on students
- Preparedness to engage with diverse communities, including English learners and Native American communities, ensuring they have a voice in advocating for special education
- A desire to work collaboratively with the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) to ensure meaningful professional development for special education teachers and compliance with IDEA requirements.
- An interest in educating principals and staff, especially in special education, with a focus on developing comprehensive plans for staff education.

Commitment to Inclusion and Best Practices:

- Recognition of the need for a cultural shift in special education, emphasizing a change-minded perspective and the adoption of best practices from other places.
- Openness to reducing the use of restraint and seclusion in schools, with a preference for someone committed to setting a goal to eliminate these practices.
- Willingness to focus on areas that are not working and to hold individuals accountable, generating collaborative solutions to address issues.
- Advocacy for inclusion for students with disabilities and neurodivergent students, along with the ability to triage problems effectively.
- A desire for a superintendent who supports a multisensory reading program, specifically aimed at addressing the needs of students from kindergarten through 12th grade.
- A superintendent with innovative ideas to move the district forward, creating a dynamic and evolving educational environment.

Influence Beyond APS:

- Recognition that APS serves as an example to other districts in the state, with a willingness to influence other superintendents through associations and outreach.

Navigating Teacher Union Complexities:

- Sophistication in navigating the complexities of the teacher union while standing for students' interests.

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Non Action:

- Expectation for a superintendent who is action-oriented, hits the ground running, and does not delay decisions by saying, "it's going to take time." Time sensitivity is emphasized.

Reliance on Political Skill:

- Preference for technical competence in education, especially in special education, over political skills. The desire is for substance rather than a polished presentation.

Defensive Roles:

- Averse to hiring someone whose previous experience involves defending the district against parents' and students' rights, aiming for a superintendent who is proactive rather than defensive.

Approaches to Behavioral Issues:

- A superintendent who is committed to one approach to behavioral issues.
- Criticism of an exclusive focus on Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA).
- Desire for a superintendent who re-evaluates policing in schools, particularly avoiding a punitive approach towards students and teachers

Leadership Behaviors:

- Strong emphasis on not hiring a superintendent who is dismissive and disrespectful of special education, citing past examples of disrespect towards special education students
- Desire for a superintendent who thinks systematically and can take a stovepipe approach rather than adopting a reactive "whack-a-mole" strategy.
- Avoidance of a closed-door leadership style, preferring someone who is open, approachable, and not perceived as having a need for excessive security measures.
- Desire for a superintendent who is open to and embraces leadership from teachers, recognizing that teachers have valuable ideas and should not be talked down to.

Environments Not Meeting Child's Needs:

- An emphasis on a superintendent who prioritizes having the educational environment meet the needs of the child rather than focusing on making students fit into the existing environment. The goals should not be compliance and conformity but rather meeting individual needs.

Southwest Institute for Transformation (SWIFT) Board

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Leadership Qualities:

- Has integrity and empathy
- Servant leader
- Sense of humor
- Has a clear and compelling vision in doing business
- Articulates a positive vision and brings people along

Educational Experience and Expertise:

- Experience at different levels of schools (ES, MS, HS)
- Lived experience as an employee of a public school system
- Strong sense of school finance; working well with finance people
- Experience working with all kinds of students and post-secondary endeavors, CTE, and college-bound

Community Engagement and Collaboration:

- Values community
- Collaborative leadership among community partnerships
- Keeps people informed
- Shared leadership understanding
- Values relationships

Cultural Competence:

- Truly understands cultural linguistic assets
- From New Mexico

Organizational Awareness and Change Management:

- Addresses toxic culture in the central office
- Diagnoses system to take measured risks
- Can bring community along to disrupt the status quo
- Aligned with the school board
- Can hear "no" from the school board

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Disrespect for Previous Leadership:

- Don't trash what previous leaders have done:
- Don't come in to "fix" APS

Low Trust and Transparency:

- Don't say one thing and do another
- Do not violate trust with the community
- Do not hide/protect information

Toxicity:

- Do not feed the culture of toxicity
- Hesitancy about promoting from within
- Can internal candidates make the hard decisions?

Outsiders:

- Do not bring an outsider who dismisses our gifts
- Do not bring an out-of-state candidate

Superintendent's Student Advisory Council

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

Collaboration and Communication:

- Collaborative with students and teachers
- Communication skills
- Cooperative
- Approachable and accessible
- Visible in schools
- Community outreach and support

Passion for Education and Change:

- Passionate about education
- Change agent
- Wants to implement real change
- Open-minded and risk-taker
- Makes good policy for everyone

Equity and Resource Allocation:

- Equity of funding to schools with fewer resources
- Gives a voice to those who may not have equitable opportunities

Cultural Competency and Familiarity:

- Understands current culture and supports cultural progress
- Lives or has lived in New Mexico (cultural nuances)
- Familiar with APS specifically

Safety and Security:

- Unwavering when it comes to safety and security (iron fist)

Community Involvement and Support:

- Community outreach and support
- Grow connections to students who aren't as involved
- Fosters community among unique cultures and diverse individuals
- Involved in schools

Experience and Education Background:

- Has been a teacher/education experience

Policy and Sustainability:

- Does what they say
- Implement sustainable initiatives

Student Voice and Representation:

- Gives a voice to those who may not have equitable opportunities
- Understands current student culture

SuperSAC:

- Continue SuperSAC (Superintendent Student Advisory Council)

When asked, *What attributes are least desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

- Close minded and subjective
- Significant and obvious bias
- Outside of New Mexico
- Has ulterior motives
- Only a people pleaser
- Archaic views / personal agendas
- Questionable past
- Predisposition to disliking their constituents

United Voices for Newcomer Rights

When asked, *What characteristics (skills, qualities, experiences, etc.) are most desirable in the next APS Superintendent?* the most common themes that emerged included (in no specific order):

A desire for the next superintendent is for someone who listens and acts on the concerns of all parts of the community, especially those that are most removed from power.

Communication and Language Barriers:

- Information goes home in English, creating communication challenges.
- Language barriers for problem-solving; need for interpreter services, especially with the Homework Hotline.

Concerns About Bullying and Safety:

- Incidents of bullying and safety concerns, such as attempts to force drugs on students, particularly affecting specific groups (e.g., girls in hijabs).

Need for Urgent Solutions:

- Urgency emphasized in addressing concerns, especially those that have been raised before without apparent resolution.

Support for Newcomer Students:

- Urgent need for support, including the establishment of a newcomer school to help students master language skills.
- Concerns about the school's approach to consequences rather than working with families to understand the whole child.

Discrimination and Fear of Backlash:

- Perception of fundamental discrimination, with parents fearing backlash if they raise concerns.
- Fear of retaliation for advocating strongly, even by newcomer specialists in some schools.

Community Engagement:

- Perception that community concerns fall on deaf ears, indicating a need for improved community engagement and responsiveness.

Cultural and Religious Sensitivity:

- Dietary needs of religious groups, such as Halal ingredients, being ignored.
- Request for respect for prayer times in schools.

Equity in Transportation and Education:

- Lack of equity in transportation for students in underserved neighborhoods.
- Need for Arabic classes and the maintenance of home languages at all grade levels.

Taboo Subjects and Communication:

- Need for solutions on addressing taboo subjects and improved communication strategies.