

Waconia Public Schools Superintendent Search

Stakeholder Engagement Superintendent Search Survey

Overview: On March 18, 2022, the “Waconia Public Schools Superintendent Search Survey” was made available to the public both online and in hard copy. The survey remained open for respondents until April 3, 2022, and a total of 864 people completed the survey.

RESULTS: Survey takers were asked to identify the role that best reflected the basis for their responses. The categories selected by the survey takers are provided below.

- 67.36% of respondents selected “Parent/Guardian”
- 22.53% of respondents selected “Staff Member”
- 7.20% of respondents selected “Community Member”
- 1.74% of respondents selected “Business Owner/Agriculture”
- 1.05% of respondents selected “Other”
- 0.12% of respondents selected “Student”

Areas of Expertise: Those who responded to the survey were also asked to identify the top six desirable areas of expertise they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted areas of expertise are listed below in order of preference.

- Budget and Finance
- Collaborative Leadership
- Curriculum Development/Evaluation
- School Reform (i.e., Strategic Planning, etc.)
- Personnel Management
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Specialized Skills: The top six specialized skills the new superintendent must possess were identified in the survey results as shown below.

- Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner in dealings with the School Board, staff, and community
- Experience in school finance
- Develops and directs an effective leadership team
- Is a “people person” with proven abilities in human relations and communications
- Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders (*tie with*): Is visible and accessible to the School Board, staff, students, parents, and community
- Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives; values teamwork



Previous Experience: Respondents were asked if previous superintendent experience is important. Based on the results, 52.57% of the respondents selected “Yes,” while 47.43% of the respondents selected “No.”

Personal Characteristics: Survey takers were also asked to identify the top six personal characteristics they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted personal characteristics are listed below in order of preference.

- Honest and ethical
- Effective communicator
- Problem solver
- Transparent
- Personable
- Consistent

TOP RESPONSES COMPARED

TOP SIX AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Parent/ Guardian (580)	Staff Member (194)	Community Member (62)	Business Owner /Agriculture (15)	Other (9)	Student (1)
Budget & Finance	Collaborative Leadership	Collaborative Leadership	Budget & Finance	Budget & Finance	Curriculum Development/ Evaluation
Collaborative Leadership	Budget & Finance	Budget & Finance	Personnel Management	Collaborative Leadership	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	Contract Administration and Negotiations	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	School Reform (i.e., strategic planning, etc.)	Contract Administration and Negotiations	Oversight Special Education
School Reform (i.e., strategic planning, etc.)	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	School Reform (i.e., strategic planning, etc.)	Contract Administration and Negotiations	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	
Personnel Management	Public Relations	Personnel Management	Collaborative Leadership	Personnel Management	
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	School Reform (i.e., strategic planning, etc.)	Contract Administration and Negotiations	Declining/ Increasing Enrollment	Cultural Competence	



TOP SIX PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Parent/ Guardian (580)	Staff Member (194)	Community Member (62)	Business Owner /Agriculture (15)	Other (9)	Student (1)
Honest and Ethical	Honest and Ethical	Honest and Ethical	Honest and Ethical	Honest and Ethical	Creative
Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator	Transparent	Effective Communicator
Problem Solver	Problem Solver	Transparent	Transparent	Effective Communicator	Honest and Ethical
Transparent	Transparent	Problem Solver	Problem Solver	Consistent	Inclusive
Personable	Personable	Personable	Resourceful	Empathetic	Personable
Consistent	Consistent	Consistent	Confident/ Consistent	Problem Solver/ Personable	Problem Solver

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Parent/ Guardian (580)	Staff Member (194)	Community Member (62)	Business Owner /Agriculture (15)	Other (9)	Student (1)
Yes: 48.73%	Yes: 67.40%	Yes: 54.24%	Yes: 26.67%	Yes: 44.44%	Yes: 0.00%
No: 51.27%	No: 32.60%	No: 45.76%	No: 73.33%	No: 55.56%	No: 100%



TOP SIX SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Parent/ Guardian (580)	Staff Member (194)	Community Member (62)	Business Owner /Agriculture (15)	Other (9)	Student (1)
Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community	Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community	Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community	Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community	Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community	A "people person" with proven abilities in human relations and communications
Experience in school finance	A "people person" with proven abilities in human relations and communications	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Delegates authority while maintaining accountability	A "people person" with proven abilities in human relations and communications	A visionary, creative thinker
Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders	A "people person" with proven abilities in human relations and communications	Experience in school finance	Delegates authority while maintaining accountability	Acts with honesty and in an ethical manner with the School Board, staff, and community
Visible and accessible to the School Board, staff, students, parents, and community	Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives; values teamwork	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders
Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders	Visible and accessible to the School Board, staff, students, parents, and community	Visible and accessible to the School Board, staff, students, parents, and community	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups of stakeholders	Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives; values teamwork
Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives; values teamwork	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Experience in school finance	Effectively mediates and accommodates different perspectives; values teamwork	Knowledge of and experience with equity leadership challenges and opportunities	Experience in managing transition



Additional comments: Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions in the survey and on average, 600 of the 864 respondents provided additional commentary. These results were then reviewed by MSBA representatives, with reappearing ideas identified and grouped into themes. These themes are highlighted below for each of the questions.

1. What are some of the good things taking place in Waconia Public Schools today?

<p>Waconia Public Schools has a capable, collaborative staff that goes above and beyond for each student in the school district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Amazing teachers working hard and supporting our kids.</i> • <i>Teachers really care for their students.</i> • <i>Teachers are working hard and are dedicated to student well-being and success.</i> • <i>The teachers enjoy being with the students, they are going above what is expected to get the students engaged in learning.</i> • <i>Very caring, giving, hard working group of educators in schools.</i> • <i>Waconia has an amazing group of teachers and support staff that value children, families and learning.</i> • <i>The teachers and staff continue to work together to allow students to have an exceptional education. They care about students and want to help them succeed.</i> • <i>Enabling teachers working collectively on how to best teach their kids.</i> • <i>Quality of teachers is amazing. We need to keep these teachers.</i> • <i>I really do commend how the teachers, staff, and district has handled the many struggles and barriers of last 2 years with covid.</i> • <i>Great teachers and administrators at the elementary level.</i> • <i>Our teachers are highly educated, and passionate about kids.</i> • <i>Positive teachers who put student needs first.</i> • <i>I like that the teachers seem to be very invested in our kids and there is good support for the kids.</i> • <i>The caring staff from teachers, nurses, paras etc. have all been outstanding and I want them to feel happy in their jobs so we can retain these remarkable humans!</i> • <i>It has amazing, hard-working, dedicated teachers.</i> • <i>Excellent teachers; involved Principals and educators.</i> • <i>The teachers and staff are very involved with the students.</i> • <i>Individual teachers and staff go above and beyond in working with students.</i> • <i>Wonderful teachers that go the extra mile to make sure their students are succeeding as much as possible.</i> 	<p>325 related responses</p>
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<p>Waconia Public Schools does everything it can to meet student needs through a variety of curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Excellent opportunities with regards to learning opportunities and extracurricular activities/clubs/sports.</i> • <i>Kids have options to explore their passions, both within the school day and through before/after school activities.</i> • <i>Wide and good selection of activities for students.</i> • <i>Diverse activities offered for students of all ages.</i> • <i>Lots of activities (e.g., arts, sports) and different educational tracks (e.g., trades)</i> • <i>Overall, we have been satisfied with the educational experience my kids have received. We offer a wide range of extracurricular activities.</i> • <i>AP classes and lots of activities for high school kids.</i> • <i>The district provides a great amount of activities for students to participate in and become a part of the community.</i> • <i>We have very successful extracurricular activities.</i> • <i>The best thing that Waconia has going for it is the diverse numbers of opportunities that students have to try new things and find a place to tryout their personal passions.</i> • <i>If students are looking for challenges in curriculum and out of school activities, students can find those kinds of challenges.</i> • <i>Good balance between tech-based learning and old-fashioned learning. Good drama and musical programs.</i> • <i>Great special education programs, wonderful sports programs.</i> • <i>Diverse course offerings; innovative programs across the board (lunchroom to classroom).</i> • <i>All of the arts-related programs that kids can be involved in.</i> • <i>Diverse programming for all interests - engineering, music, academics, etc. Whether a student is highly academic or highly hands on in trades they can find a fit here.</i> • <i>I appreciate the ability of the students to be involved with foreign languages earlier than some districts nearby. The Marching Band program is amazing! And I see lots of opportunities for students excelling in their studies.</i> • <i>Our curriculum and educational program is outstanding.</i> • <i>At the high school level, a range of opportunities for students - CTE, advanced academics, extracurricular, strong music program, and athletics.</i> • <i>Variety of programs for students and varying interests.</i> 	<p>225 related responses</p>
<p>Waconia community members and parents strongly support the district and provide whatever help they can for the students to be successful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A community that is generally very generous and supportive of the schools and its fundraising efforts. Parents are generous as well.</i> • <i>Parents who are engaged and invested in their children's education.</i> 	<p>119 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A generally supportive and positive community in support of the school district.</i> • <i>Strong community support/parent involvement.</i> • <i>The support for the students and staff.</i> • <i>Active in community involvement.</i> • <i>A supportive and engaged community.</i> • <i>Community involvement/parent school opportunities.</i> • <i>Community support of students and programs.</i> • <i>High level of community engagement and support.</i> • <i>Parents getting more involved in their children's education.</i> • <i>The school has great supporting community.</i> • <i>Strong parent involvement. Parents are having a voice on child's education.</i> • <i>The school and the community have rallied to get funding for new and updated school buildings and fields.</i> • <i>The public community is supportive of the schools in most regards.</i> • <i>The community is vested in the school, keep making sure all kids are thought of...even the ones who shy away from the limelight.</i> • <i>Parents are invested in their own student(s).</i> • <i>A community that has deep passion for the schools and is heavily involved.</i> • <i>Strong Parental involvement and support.</i> • <i>The community support of school activities and programs.</i> 	
<p>The Waconia community appreciates that the district provides a positive learning environment that focuses on developing relationships and high academic rigor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The teachers and administration work to create an environment that allows students to be successful.</i> • <i>Teachers are enabled to leverage their own style and talents to do their work. The result is unmistakable sincerity and meaningful connections with students.</i> • <i>Waconia's education is excellent socially, emotionally and academically.</i> • <i>Waconia schools have adapted to the ever-changing face of education technology, student emotional needs, and parent expectations. Teachers have been flexible and giving to provide what each student needs.</i> • <i>Teachers are dedicated. Students comes first for them.</i> • <i>The teachers and their dedication to the job through the rough years. No matter what they roll up their sleeves and show up for the kids who matter most!</i> • <i>Great teachers who work tirelessly to support students.</i> • <i>Amazing Teachers who truly care about their students. Both academically and emotionally!</i> • <i>Kids enjoy their interactions with their teachers and have made positive connections with them.</i> • <i>The work being done in the areas of DEI and cultural awareness are valuable in helping all students find a place of belonging. When they feel they belong, they are better able to learn.</i> • <i>Inclusivity, respectfulness, kindness, thoughtfulness, great education.</i> • <i>Kids feel like they belong.</i> • <i>The teaching of inclusion by our wonderful teachers.</i> 	<p>109 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It's not all about the test scores. It's about learning.</i> • <i>Provides a good atmosphere for learning and developing as a young person.</i> • <i>Support for LGBTQ+ students is strong.</i> • <i>Vibrant community feel.</i> • <i>The staff really care about students and make that clear to our students which lends itself to students feeling valued and welcomed.</i> • <i>I love that our community is continuing to work on our cultural competence and bringing a sense of belonging for all of our students.</i> • <i>An active attempt to teach curriculum from a diverse perspective. My kids are excited to go to school every day (and one is in middle school so that says a lot). They feel they can speak their mind.</i> 	
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2. What challenges do you see for our district over the next five years?

<p>The Waconia community is concerned about the increase in enrollment and the lack of physical space to accommodate these students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Growth! It's a positive challenge, but we will need to be making decisions with long-term planning included.</i> • <i>We are going to need a new elementary school with all our growth, and we worry the community won't be supportive of another referendum.</i> • <i>Growing enrollment and not enough space.</i> • <i>How the district is going to manage the growth that will take place with all the new housing.</i> • <i>Keeping up with the growth of our city (and therefore school enrollment) and associated budgetary and educational needs and considerations.</i> • <i>Community growth will lead to crowded classrooms.</i> • <i>The rapid growth of the community (housing) is going to strain our schools from a capacity standpoint.</i> • <i>Continued community growth and enrollment.</i> • <i>The community is growing - and with growth will come changes in the economic and cultural diversity of the community. The district needs to be prepared for transitioning to different needs.</i> • <i>The school enrollment is going to grow with the new housing developments going up. The schools are already full.</i> • <i>Growth of enrollment numbers and limited space.</i> • <i>Management of staff and Increasing enrollment along with 2 aging elementary schools.</i> • <i>The class sizes are too big and continue to grow. More houses are being built so enrollment will continue to grow, but facilities are filling up so having classroom space is becoming difficult.</i> • <i>With the huge housing growth, I believe there will be an increase in student enrollment. I worry that classrooms and buildings will become over-crowded.</i> 	338 related responses
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Growth in enrollment that is coming very soon and how to handle the facility needs.</i> • <i>School space for accommodating new families moving into new developments, classroom sizes.</i> • <i>Growth in student population...needing more staff and more space for classrooms.</i> • <i>A lot of community growth which means more students, so space will be a big concern.</i> • <i>Managing growth and keeping class sizes down.</i> • <i>Continued city growth, class sizes.</i> 	
<p>The Waconia community is concerned about the district's finances and the community's ability to continue to support requests for additional funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It seems finances have been an issue given the levies in the last few years. • Being conservative with finances. • Funding is always a problem with all schools. How to best use the budget, pay teachers enough to want to stay with district, disperse funds to all areas. • Money needs to be managed more responsibly and with increased transparency. • The finances seem to be a big mess and the district has asked for a lot of money from taxpayers already. I'm all for paying taxes for better schools, but there seems to be a huge amount of mismanagement with money. • Keeping high quality education with the lowest budget possible. • Dealing with budget problems and the deficit. • Properly running an effective budget and making financial cuts in areas that will NOT affect student learning and class sizes. • The budget; was not set up correctly and it doesn't look good when you have to keep coming back asking for more. • The financial situation for the district is very concerning. • Finances, taxpayers will not approve future proposals/levies to support the situation we've been in for years. Fix the budget and more transparency. • My biggest concern is the budget and potential of increase in the student population due to increase development. • Budget and overcoming the deficit. • I worry that the district will continue to ask the taxpayers for more money when we are already strapped, and yet I want my kids to have a great education. • I see the school district having become strategic on budgeting to continue to have the school system thrive. • Budgeting problems as we are in debt. • Getting the budget issues fixed and being transparent with where all of our missing taxpayer money is disappearing to. • Difficulties in predicting budgeting issues due to immediate needs. • Money. We need the state of MN to give public schools more money. • Many won't vote for another referendum since they community was lied to last time about where they money was going to end up. 	<p>264 related responses</p>



<p>The Waconia community understands the district is having trouble recruiting and retaining quality teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It seems that there has been a high rate of turnover over the last few years.</i> • <i>Attracting and retaining quality teachers and leadership and keeping this at the forefront for budget considerations.</i> • <i>Retaining staff. The staff have been stretched way too thin the past few years.</i> • <i>The need for more teachers and to pay teachers better and listen to them in order to retain them.</i> • <i>Good teachers will burn out and leave for saner environments, accelerating a problem money won't be able to solve at that point.</i> • <i>Retaining and providing more than adequate pay for top quality teachers.</i> • <i>Keeping teachers in this district.</i> • <i>Teachers and staff being asked to do more with less resources.</i> • <i>Retaining quality educators with the current pay scale.</i> • <i>Hiring new teachers that have the passion for teaching.</i> • <i>Fixing the relationship with teachers and making them feel valued.</i> • <i>Low teacher morale. Very long hours with high expectations and low pay, especially for teachers with master's degree. Much more money can be made in the business world. Good teachers are leaving, and others are thinking about leaving.</i> • <i>Teachers are leaving the profession at an alarming rate.</i> • <i>Keeping teachers motivated and satisfied with their jobs.</i> • <i>The increasing rate of teacher shortages. How are we going to support our teachers and administrators through this challenge? What are we going to do to keep teachers teaching?</i> • <i>We need to hire more teachers, special education staff and reading specialists. Our class sizes are too high at the lower elementary level.</i> • <i>Teacher contracts - we need our superintendent to honor the staff and support them in their fight for honest and fair pay.</i> • <i>We are losing a great number of key players and leaders from our schools and District Office this year. The financial deficits combined with fatigue from the impact of the pandemic have left the faculty and staff in an exhausted state.</i> • <i>Teacher retention with current perceived low morale. Teacher wages . . . lower than neighboring districts.</i> • <i>Keeping good teachers when few out there then we look at our pay scale and how that not keeping up. Soon only the bigger, influential schools will be able to attract and pay good proven teachers.</i> 	<p>226 related responses</p>
<p>The Waconia community has differing ideas and concerns about the curriculum the district offers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There are still many things in place at all levels that seem to be "old school" in what we're asking our kids to do or not do in their learning.</i> • <i>Kids with extra abilities and special needs will be at risk of marginalization as the district belatedly scrambles to maintain a semblance of its bearing. The district</i> 	<p>162 related responses</p>



<p>will wear down to generating overwhelmingly average students because that's where all the energy it has left will be focused.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need to change the Curriculum and let teachers teach!! Reach children that have ADHD and are Dyslexic. • Maintaining “neutral” curriculum and not changing social studies (in particular) to align with political viewpoints. • Helping students who have experienced learning loss from COVID-19. • The curriculum offerings need to be updated and energized and funded to broaden exposure to and preparation for careers and internships that are not college-tracked but undeniably needed in today’s workforce. • Meeting the emotional and social needs of our students and keeping and improving support services. • Outdated curriculum and teaching strategies that reflect small town thinking and not the best practices. • Government curriculum infiltrating our schools. • Getting students caught up on the last three years of chaos. • School curriculum going away from teaching the fundamentals. • Keeping our schools focused on core education and free of social agendas. • Continued pushback over pc curriculum. • Maintain and improve academics, curriculum, athletics, and technology excellence and inclusion of diverse students and perspectives. • Parents wanting to be able to define or veto a teacher's curriculum. • We need cultural sensitivity and looking at our school system and curriculum to acknowledge where bias exists and work to change it. • Banning books, micromanaging teachers, and sheltering our students from the past is not a feasible plan nor is it just in our everchanging environment. • While broadening our curriculum to teach about history and background from all cultures is very important, it is also important to build our students up, so they ALL feel successful without tearing specific groups down which causes divisiveness. 	
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3. What does the new superintendent need to know about the history of the school district and community to be successful?

<p>The next superintendent should know Waconia’s stakeholders have polarized political views and differing visions for the district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The expectation is to have a continued growth mindset in educational philosophies that fit the best interests of ALL students, not just in the best interests of a small group of members of the community with loud voices.</i> • <i>There are strong voices in the community, but they do not represent everyone.</i> • <i>Waconia is very divided. It is going to take hard work to steer things back on track.</i> 	<p>146 related responses</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We are no longer a cohesive group, but deeply divided and hurt.</i> • <i>Tends to be a conservative city but needs to be pushed to be more inclusive to all students and families.</i> • <i>The school has only grown and has split interest across parents.</i> • <i>Waconia wants to keep the small-town community values</i> • <i>We have a vocal politically charged parent group that does not represent the majority but tries to influence board decisions.</i> • <i>Knowledge of the potentially politically fueled battleground of suburban school districts, balancing multiple sides of issues and ultimately leading the school district in a progressive manner.</i> • <i>We have a highly conservative community.</i> • <i>We are a very traditional family values, conservative district. People move here because they want to raise their family in this community that upholds traditional values.</i> • <i>This is a growing community with a wide variety of thoughts about what is best for the school district.</i> • <i>This is a conservative community that responds well laid-out planning and a focus on developing all of our kids' talents and gifts. This community will protect our kids at all costs.</i> • <i>There is a growing political rift emerging in the community that has trickled down to the schools - especially during COVID.</i> • <i>Waconia has a variety of political views with often very outspoken opinions. Because education views can lean one direction, please consider that might not be the majority view of the community and listen to both views openly.</i> • <i>We are an overwhelming conservative community. At its heart, Waconia is a small town trapped in a much larger community. The superintendent needs to be overwhelmingly on the side of the STAFF and STUDENTS.</i> • <i>My ask is that the new superintendent recognizes the small-town values of our community, while positioning our kids for success in today's ever changing and challenging world.</i> 	
<p>The Waconia community wants the next superintendent to know trust has been broken between the community and district due to a lack of transparency and communication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communication across all schools is poor.</i> • <i>There's a population in the community that doesn't trust the school district's spending and transparency.</i> • <i>The school board tends to act unilaterally without considering the collective opinions and perspectives of the isd110 parents, teachers, and community as a whole.</i> • <i>Many in the community do not trust that the school board or district admin have been transparent or even honest about fiscal policies over the last several years.</i> • <i>The public does not trust the school board/superintendent. Financial information has not been shared openly. Need to be transparent.</i> • <i>Transparency has been lacking and there has been poor collaboration between school board and superintendent.</i> 	<p>144 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community members have lost trust in the administration.</i> • <i>S/he needs to be familiar with our financial situation, the history of it, and how it has affected and strained relationships between teachers/administrators/school board.</i> • <i>Over the last few years, there has been less trust among the community, school board, and faculty so I feel that relationships and our district/community culture has also begun to take a negative turn.</i> • <i>There is tension between school board and district leadership.</i> • <i>The relationship between the school board and the public to be tense.</i> • <i>Staff has pretty low moral right now, not feeling heard or appreciated.</i> • <i>I can sense that there is a growing distrust between the district staff and the administrators/school board. The staff has been promised many things (financially speaking) over the past years and those have not been lived up to.</i> • <i>The school district and community need to rebuild together. Even previous to Covid, the decline in trust and communication started.</i> 	
<p>The Waconia community wants the next superintendent to know it is a desirable, close-knit community that is growing quickly in population and diversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Waconia is growing in population, but there are still families that have been here for generations and those people want to keep Waconia values and identity intact.</i> • <i>Waconia is equally a blue-collar and white-collar community.</i> • <i>The superintendent needs to understand that the school district has a diverse group of people with many backgrounds. Waconia historically has accommodated children from all backgrounds well and needs to continue to do so.</i> • <i>Waconia is a tight knit community that has grown significantly in the past two decades. As the community grows, we need to promote opportunities, inclusivity, and continue to provide strong academics for all students.</i> • <i>We definitely have a small town feel and want to keep it that way, even with a growing population.</i> • <i>Waconia will be changing demographically.</i> • <i>It is a growing district that has a changing population.</i> • <i>The community was built around hard-working people.</i> • <i>The new superintendent needs to know that the school district and the community are tight knit.</i> • <i>The district is growing and with that can come challenges.</i> • <i>Our city is growing, and demographic are changing with the growth.</i> • <i>We were once a small farm school and are no longer that way. We need to adjust and adapt with our growth. Big changes need to happen.</i> • <i>We are growing. While that is a good thing, it will be important to keep the small-town feeling that attracts people here in the first place.</i> • <i>This district and community can be a very special place. I think Waconia has done well to accommodate many different educational goals.</i> 	<p>132 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Waconia is an excellent town. A great place to raise a family and experience kindness in daily interactions.</i> • <i>They should know that we have a very intelligent community. They (parents, students, business owners, and others) are well informed and educated.</i> • <i>How quickly it has grown while trying to maintain a small-town small-district feel with big-district opportunities.</i> • <i>We are still a small, loving community at our heart. Our unique stores, businesses and locations are what make us a better community.</i> • <i>This is a wonderful place to live and raise a family.</i> 	
<p>The Waconia community wants the next superintendent to understand the community is highly involved in the schools and wants a voice in decisions effecting students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Parent input should be valued and sought out.</i> • <i>Families appreciate having their voices heard.</i> • <i>Parents want to and should be involved when it comes to their children's education.</i> • <i>There is a lot of community pride for the school district.</i> • <i>This community will not hold back to give their opinions. Also, this community will always come to volunteer and help out when ever needed.</i> • <i>The community fully supports the school district. Parents want to know that they care about their children and will do what's best for them.</i> • <i>School is the center of the community. Lots of school pride. Support of music and the arts.</i> • <i>This community is very proud of their schools. They hold very high standards.</i> • <i>Parents are very involved and vocal about their student's education.</i> • <i>The community takes a lot of pride in the school district.</i> • <i>Parents want to be involved in decisions that the school district makes. We are very proud of District 110!</i> • <i>Parents want transparency. We want to know curriculum; we want to be involved and should be involved in what our children are learning.</i> • <i>Parents are engaged and active within the schools.</i> • <i>Community is supportive but high expectations especially around the handling of finances.</i> • <i>We have amazing students and a community that values education and has high expectations for student success.</i> • <i>We have a lot of pride in our history. Our schools have traditionally been top-notch. Our parents are very supportive of our teachers, strong community support.</i> 	116 related responses
<p>The Waconia community wants the next superintendent to know about the district's history of finance issues and the community's frustrations regarding past referendums.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Past financial errors and budget concerns.</i> 	116 related responses



- *The community is tired of referendums to fund facilities and the excessive hiring of middle management employees.*
- *The community is willing to sacrifice to make the schools great but that is wearing thin and cutting staff. The money problem will be difficult, and I hope the new hire will not look at school staffs as the choice to cut.*
- *The financial management of ISD110 has been a total disaster and parents are tired of endless tax increases to pay for stuff we don't need.*
- *We have lived in the Waconia school district for 5 years and have had two tax increases/referendum passed. While I believe and will continue to support our schools financially - I also believe there will be a limit to how long we can continue to rely upon those funding means.*
- *The wasteful spending in the last decade is infuriating to them. It needs to stop.*
- *There have been to recent referendums passed and the community is tired of hearing we are out of money, meanwhile teachers' salaries have not stayed commensurate with surrounding districts, and we are losing quality staff because of this.*
- *The school board and administration need to figure out how their past and current financial issues happened and develop a plan to prevent it from happening again.*
- *District has had financial challenges and has not kept pace with other local districts.*
- *There is distrust of the admins/board regarding being in debt, so passing a referendum anytime soon will be difficult.*
- *We need to get out of debt and bring back the classes and sports that we have had to discontinue due to funding.*
- *Focus on education and the management of the finance. The spending has gotten ridiculous.*
- *Budget issues have been very controversial and local taxes has given the education system the bad end of the stick.*
- *Community is supportive but high expectations especially around the handling of finances.*
- *They should also be aware that in the last few years we have passed two levies, just barely the last time around, to increase school funding and many of the things that money was supposed to be used for don't seem to be getting the appropriate funding as a result.*
- *We are in SOD and in need of funds, but the community is not impressed by what has happened with their money up to this point and may be unwilling to continue backing the district.*



4. Additional Comments:

<p>The Waconia community wants the next superintendent to be a strong leader and have “soft skills” to build trust and effectively engage with district stakeholder groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I want our next superintendent to be positive, energetic, supportive, creative, and a problem solver. This person needs to have time to get into the buildings and build strong relationships with staff.</i>• <i>Please find someone who supports teachers and support staff.</i>• <i>I hope someone is hired that sees public school as a place for children to learn and socialize.</i>• <i>We wish and hope that the new superintendent will be able to recognize the divisions and work to heal them.</i>• <i>We appreciate a superintendent who have knowledge IN the classroom and listen to parents and teachers.</i>• <i>Waconia prides itself on the success of the school system. The new superintendent will need to keep up with that level of excellence and move with the changing tides of technology.</i>• <i>Please look for experienced candidates who have knowledge of growth challenges.</i>• <i>We need someone who is going to lift us out of this and move us in a more positive direction.</i>• <i>The board needs to hire someone with a backbone and strong financial skills.</i>• <i>We need a superintendent that puts students, staff, and education first. A person who is a people person - one who truly cares about people, who walks the walk and doesn't just talk the talk. One who is ethical, honest, and transparent - however, these qualities should not have to be listed, it should be a given that our new leader is these things.</i>• <i>We want a superintendent that works with teachers and treats them as valued and respected colleagues.</i>• <i>We would like to see a true leader that doesn't fear pushing back when the majority of parents have concerns. I'm hopeful that our new superintendent will have that type of integrity and leadership.</i>• <i>We need a superintendent who values children, respects educators, and has an innovative education vision.</i>	67 related responses
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