



New England School Development Council

28 Lord Road, Marlborough, MA 01752 ➤ Tel: 508-481-9444 ➤ www.nesdec.org

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Superintendent Search

Successful Candidate Profile

JANUARY 2018

This document provides the Successful Candidate Profile to inform the candidate selection process.



New England School Development Council

28 Lord Road, Marlborough, MA 01752 ➤ Tel: 508-481-9444 ➤ www.nesdec.org

To: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

From: Sally Dias, Ed.D.
New England School Development Council (NESDEC)

Date: January 2018

INTRODUCTION

In the months of December 2017 and January 2018, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee, with the assistance of the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), conducted a Community Needs Assessment through a series of focus groups and an online survey. Over 700 people participated in the needs-assessment process (68 in focus groups and 648 in the online survey).

Participants provided their insights and views in response to two prompts:

- What are the qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge and experience you desire in a new Superintendent of Schools?
- What do you see as the immediate challenges and tasks the new Superintendent should focus upon in his or her first six to twelve months in the position?

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee subsequently reviewed and analyzed the community's input and discussed its own perspective to create the resulting Successful Candidate Profile. The Successful Candidate Profile, and the accompanying background information, is designed to guide the interview and selection process during the Superintendent search.

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee wishes to thank and commend all those in the community and the schools who took the time to participate in the community needs assessment process. The Committee looks forward to using the valuable insights gained through this process as it considers candidates for the position of Superintendent of Schools.

Respectfully submitted,
The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE PROFILE

The communities of Acton and Boxborough are seeking a Superintendent who will lead and support the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District in its mission to provide high-quality educational opportunities to all students and to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.

Preference will be given to the candidate with a high level of competence across all aspects of the position of Superintendent and who is a good match for our district's needs and goals. Our ideal candidate demonstrates a significant depth of skill, experience and knowledge in the following areas:

Professional Leadership Qualities *(not prioritized)*

1. Strong Interpersonal and Communication Skills

We are seeking a candidate who can build trust and consensus, who makes personal connections, views the community-school relationship as a partnership and who values building strong relationships driven by the norms of transparency, integrity, trust, courage and excellence. The successful candidate must be able to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing to a wide range of stakeholder groups and possess the ability to effectively frame complex issues for discussion.

2. Understands and Addresses the Needs of an Increasingly Diverse Student Body

We are seeking a Superintendent who can address the academic, social, emotional and material needs of our increasingly diverse and rapidly changing student population which includes cultures with disparate educational priorities and students with a wide spectrum of learning profiles, language learning abilities and socioeconomic diversity. Our Superintendent must have a vision for our district with students as the priority. Preference will be given to a Superintendent who has worked directly with students in the past and understands the pressures they face. We are seeking someone with a working knowledge of programming options that meet the diverse learning needs of all students, prioritizes inclusion and accessibility for all and is committed to initiatives that target balancing academic performance with optimizing mental health and well-being.

3. Effective Decision Maker Committed to Continual Improvement

We are seeking a Superintendent with the ability to evaluate programming in the spirit of continual improvement and who has a track record of leading change-efforts successfully. We are looking for a bold visionary who is flexible and open to change as we evolve as a district, and who has ideas that are future-focused and forward-thinking and that challenge the status quo. The successful candidate must demonstrate leadership and be able to prioritize and sequence initiatives to effectively build consensus; and reach timely, data-driven decisions, and successfully implement these decisions, using an organized, systematic approach informed by educational best practices, research, and local, state and national initiatives.

4. Experienced, Knowledgeable and Engaged

We are looking for a Superintendent with significant classroom and administrative experience who has a working knowledge of school law and policy, collective bargaining and current educational and technology trends. Moreover, we are seeking a Superintendent who will take the time to learn about and understand the communities of Acton and Boxborough, be visible in our school buildings and stay apprised of current issues and activities in our schools and communities. We are seeking a Superintendent who values teachers and understands the challenges they face. We are seeking a Superintendent that values both the unique qualities of each elementary school and understands the complexities of the open enrollment model.

5. Team-Builder that Values Quality and Accountability

A successful candidate must have demonstrated the ability to build effective teams who are able to recruit, manage and retain high quality staff and who recognize the importance of accountability for staff and self. We are seeking a Superintendent who can design and implement evaluation processes that establish clear performance standards and who follows through to resolve performance and/or organizational conflicts in an effective and timely manner.

6. Experience with Budget Development & Capital Projects

We are seeking a Superintendent who has a strong working knowledge of regional school finance and budget development and management, who is committed to budgets that are student-focused and can effectively communicate budgetary issues to stakeholders. We are interested in candidates who have a working knowledge of MSBA processes as well as in-house capital planning initiatives.

Personal Leadership Qualities

- Bold Visionary
- Committed to excellence
- Integrity
- Intellectual gravitas
- Committed to transparency
- Courageous
- Knowledgeable
- Experienced
- Flexible
- Able to motivate and inspire
- Team-builder
- Can hold people accountable
- Organized and systematic
- Insightful

NESDEC SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY AND STAFF INPUT

Preference will be given to the candidate who demonstrates a significant depth of skill, experience and knowledge in the following four areas:

- 1. STRONG INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS; ABILITY TO DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS, ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY AND BUILD TRUST**
- 2. EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING; COMMITMENT TO CONTINUAL DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT**
- 3. UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING STUDENT WELLNESS AND THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND ACADEMIC NEEDS OF STUDENTS**
- 4. EXPERIENCED IN BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS**

Indicators of skill determined via the community needs assessment for each of the above areas are:

STRONG INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS; ABILITY TO DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS, ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY AND BUILD TRUST

- Possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership
- Is able to build trust and relationships with the School Committee, faculty, community and Town officials
- Makes personal connections and builds relationships with staff
- Has experience organizing processes that lead to early buy-in of constituents driven by norms of integrity, transparency, courage, stakeholder involvement and high standards of excellence
- Takes time to learn and understand the communities
- Is proficient at communication with wider communities
- Is able to communicate clearly both verbally and in writing
- Has significant classroom and administrative experience
- Will be visible in schools, aware of current issues and activities in the schools and show an interest in community affairs
- Values schools' uniqueness yet able to unify all as a district
- Has worked with a diverse population and in a large, complex and high-performing district
- Has experience with other cultures and preferably internationally

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING; COMMITMENT TO CONTINUAL DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT

- Has the commitment to supervise and evaluate school programs in the spirit of continuous improvement; has understanding of educational practices, research and national/state/local initiatives; has the ability to frame issues for discussion, reach timely decisions and implement change
- Is knowledgeable about current educational and technical trends
- Uses a systematic approach to managing and improving the schools; has excellent organizational skills, working knowledge of school law and proven ability to resolve organizational conflicts
- Is experienced with keeping a high-achieving school district competitive
- Has intellectual gravitas; is a bold visionary with ideas that are future-focused; is forward-thinking
- Has experience prioritizing initiatives and implementing within a reasonable, realistic timeline
- Has made and implemented difficult decisions; is able to challenge the status quo, make hard decisions and builds consensus
- Is flexible and open to change; has led change efforts successfully
- Has the ability and insight to recruit and retain high-quality staff; has strong personnel management practices and understanding of the collective bargaining process; is able to obtain and retain talent and build a team
- Values teachers and understands teaching challenges
- Is able to motivate, lead, guide and direct people; is committed to implementing the mission statement and vision statement of the school system
- Can walk line between inspiring and ensuring accountability
- Understands the importance of accountability for staff and self; understands how to design and implement an evaluation process that establishes clear performance standards and follows through to resolve performance issues

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING STUDENT WELLNESS AND THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND ACADEMIC NEEDS OF STUDENTS

- Has an appreciation for the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students and has an understanding of the development and implementation of support and intervention strategies to meet those needs
- Understands the different needs of students and has developed programs and opportunities that meet the diverse learning needs of all students
- Has a track record for addressing student social/emotional issues; works on balance and wellness for students
- Understands the pressure on students
- Cares about students and has experience working directly with students
- Is a good communicator with students
- Has vision for district with students as #1

EXPERIENCED IN BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS

- Has a strong working knowledge of school finance, including budget development and management; has the ability to effectively communicate regarding budgetary issues with the School Committee, staff, community and local municipal officials; has clear understanding of federal, state, and local funding issues
- Has developed budgets with a clear focus on students
- Is experienced in leading a district through building projects