

# Boston Public Schools

## Superintendent of Schools Desired Characteristics

*The Boston Public Schools (BPS) is seeking a strong educational leader who is committed to addressing the issues of equity, coherence, and innovation and embraces anti-racism as an organizational imperative. The next leader of BPS needs to have the skills and expertise necessary to lead the nation's oldest school district to become the first school district in the nation to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps, while fostering a culture of excellence in every school and providing central office managers and school leaders with the support needed to do so.*

The Superintendent must be a visionary, innovative, and results-oriented education leader with a proven ability to manage a culturally, linguistically, and neurodivergent diverse, large urban district. The Superintendent will make the Opportunity and Achievement Gap policy central to the district by promoting the vision, goal, and objectives within the policy to all stakeholders; prioritizing the needs of students and families marginalized by the system; and broadly ensuring that decisions, resources, and funding allocations are driven by the goals and objectives of the policy. The leader of the District is expected to provide innovative and forward-thinking solutions that eliminate both opportunity and achievement gaps, with a specific focus on equity and anti-racism.

The Superintendent must have the proven ability to recruit and retain exceptionally talented, diverse, and culturally-proficient individuals to build effective teams to deliver results for students. The Superintendent must be a politically astute problem solver with outstanding communication skills, including a demonstrated habit of fostering transparency. The Superintendent should have deep, relevant experience and demonstrated commitment to authentic family engagement. The leader must possess rigorous fiscal oversight expertise to address the District's current financial needs.

The Superintendent must possess strong interpersonal skills that enable collaboration and consensus building to secure the necessary political, community, and financial support for the short- and long-term goals of the District. The Superintendent must be highly visible in schools and in community events frequently attended by diverse families, as well as a credible and compelling advocate for preK-12 public education—at both statewide and national levels—in collaboration with the local community. The Superintendent must have a record of successful experience in managing systemic change in a large organization and the proven skills to build an effective team of leaders from diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds who are capable of collaboratively propelling a system that meets the needs of the whole child. The Superintendent must be digitally literate; a digital age person who is globally aware and has a passion to engage, empower, prepare and educate all children for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and global economy as well as anticipate technological progress and its use in the classroom. The Superintendent and all BPS staff are expected to place service to students as the primary focus; to encourage racially, culturally, linguistically, and neurodivergent diverse family and community involvement; to set and achieve goals that have a broad base of support; and to be accountable for those outcomes.

The Superintendent must possess the competence to work with a mayorally-appointed School Committee, participate as a member of the Mayor's Cabinet, and proactively build bridges with all key stakeholders and entire school communities during times of transition, and prior to the implementation of new, planned, and proposed initiatives.

## **Qualifications:**

- **Education:** Master's Degree
- **Certification:** Active and valid MA School Superintendent License Required
- **Required Experience:**
  - 10+ years of related supervisory experience, including experience:
    - Serving as an educator in a public PreK-12 district
    - Leading in public school, state or local government, nonprofit or a business of similar size and complexity
    - Facilitating community, student, family, stakeholder and/or board relationships
  - Demonstrated ability to develop policy, strategic plans, and related initiatives to advance student learning, on-time graduation, and college and career readiness
- **Preferred Experience:**
  - Experience serving as a Superintendent or other chief executive for a large LEA of similar needs, size, and demographics
  - Demonstrated experience working effectively with communities during the pandemic in a manner that built trust and confidence
  - Familiarity with New England, Massachusetts and/or Boston
  - Multilingual, ideally with fluency in one or more of the 9 major languages of the District: Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, Vietnamese, Portuguese, French, Arabic, and Somali.

## **Skills and Qualities**

*The ideal candidate will possess many of the following key skills and qualities identified by the BPS community, and be able to demonstrate the knowledge, experience, and mindsets needed to lead this work.*

### **1. Elimination of Opportunity and Achievement Gaps:**

- Demonstrates the ability to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps and to improve educational outcomes for all students from early childhood to college and career readiness, as well as vocational and life skills development.
- Demonstrates deep experience and knowledge of serving multilingual learners and multilingual students with disabilities.
- Has experience implementing system-wide policies, programs, and practices designed to eliminate achievement and opportunity gaps for students, including adjusting existing policies and executing necessary systemic reforms.
- Demonstrates the ability to cultivate an organizational culture where every person in every department is responsible and accountable for improving educational outcomes for all students at every school and devoted to eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps.
- Displays the cultural competency needed to foster a district that embraces culturally-sustaining beliefs and practices that honor differences and intersectionalities in race, ethnicity, language, ability, culture, gender, and sexual orientation.
- Demonstrated authentic commitment to cultivating an anti-racist organization and reviewing policies and practices with an anti-racist lens.

### **2. Instructional Leadership:**

- Possesses a strong understanding of the challenges of urban education; understands Boston's history of desegregation, as well as its current student population with a high proportion of low-income students, Black and Latinx students, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and

- multilingual students with disabilities.
- Possesses a track record of positive results in improving the performance of low-income students, Black and Latinx students, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and multilingual students with disabilities.
  - Solid experience in educating multilingual learners and evidence of success such as program development, adequate staffing for native language literacy, efficient pace of English language development and native language literacy.
  - Demonstrated ability to lead strong and urgent efforts related to multilingual learners, including meeting District legal obligations to provide adequate educational services to English learners, ensuring adequate and appropriate services for multilingual students with disabilities, strengthening programming development in alignment with the LOOK Act, recruiting culturally-aligned and linguistically-skilled staff, bolstering community and family engagement, and ensuring multiple pathways for all students to graduate with the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy.
  - Proven effectiveness in executing programs that ensure the academic, socio-emotional, and physical development of the whole child.
  - Values and relies on data when making decisions and in the development and implementation of comprehensive monitoring and accountability systems for the academic, personnel, operations, and fiscal management of the District.
  - Displays tolerance for risk-taking, when appropriate, to better meet the needs of students and/or the District.
  - Knowledgeable of best practices in preK-12 instruction, school-based transformation, state turnaround practices, and garnering public support for expansion of early childhood, transforming special education, and updating facilities, with priorities based on need.
  - Has professional success in advancing student skills and knowledge related to critical thinking, the use of technology, and the ability to participate fully in society.
  - Has effectively addressed the specific types of academic challenges facing the Boston Public Schools:
    - Accelerating student learning, healing and academic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic;
    - Codifying and improving literacy instruction in adherence with the science of reading by providing equitable access and differentiated learning for high achievement and to close gaps among marginalized students;
    - Creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive school environments that support student learning and consistently implement restorative justice practices;
    - Successfully educating a high proportion of multilingual learners with diverse native languages including a system-wide shift from English immersion to bilingual education and access to native language instruction;
    - Successfully educating a high number of students with diverse disabilities, especially Black and Latinx male students;
    - Providing differentiated programming to support a wide variety of skill-building and interests of students, including a focus on developing strong vocational education programs as well as exceptional alternative education programs;
    - Transforming district-led and research-based practices and student outcomes for schools requiring Focused/Targeted support and schools requiring Broad/Comprehensive support;
    - Providing professional development for school-based and central office leaders and staff, informed by the district Equity Planning Tools, and resulting in sustained and measurable

improvements in classroom instruction and related student outcomes.

### **3. Management and Operations:**

- Capable of effectively and efficiently leading a system of schools operating under a variety of structures with varying degrees of autonomy and flexibility in decision-making.
- Has demonstrated leadership in system-wide change to promote better learning outcomes through the effective use of available resources.
- Possesses a proven record of attracting, developing, and retaining employees at all levels who reflect the racial and linguistic diversity of Boston, who are sensitive to the mosaic of cultures in each school community, and who believe that academic success is achievable for all students.
- Experienced with capital and operational needs to ensure students are attending schools in state-of-the-art facilities by garnering the requisite community and political support to reach this goal.
- Capable of transforming transportation service to ensure excellent year-round transportation that meets the needs of all families and students, especially students who rely upon specialized transportation to attend school.
- Experienced with creating positive and collaborative relationships with unions/professional associations and effectively and efficiently managing contract or labor agreements to enact needed reforms.
- Success in leading managerial and operational endeavors, such as:
  - Implementing effective systems that result in a safe learning environment;
  - Ensuring reliable, efficient, and fiscally-sound transportation and food services that are received with high satisfaction;
  - Bolstering educator and staff diversity in recruitment, hiring, development, and retention;
  - Improving student assignment and school choice policies to address concerns related to equity and coherence;
  - Leading major capital facilities planning for 21st-century school buildings to be designed and implemented in order to increase equity, expand access to quality, and reduce transitions for families;
  - Redesigning the high school experience to prepare every young person for postsecondary, career, and life-long success;
  - Refining approaches to Weighted Student Funding in budgeting; and
  - Galvanizing central office support and accountability for School Leaders in a system of schools with differentiated autonomy and State accountability determinations.

### **4. Family and Community Engagement:**

- Committed to authentic community engagement. Views families, students, and community members as assets, and is prepared to implement decision-making processes that seek community input in formulating the right problems to solve and in developing solutions.
- Capable of building an engagement infrastructure that promotes shared decision-making, seeks out historically marginalized voices, and enables the district to effectively collaborate with all stakeholders about the potential impacts of decisions before they are made.
- Possesses the excellent communication, listening, and management skills necessary to work collaboratively with the School Committee and appropriate stakeholders in the development, refinement and periodic review of the District's mission, vision, and comprehensive strategic plan to ensure that they provide the District focus and guidance in short- and long-term planning and decision-making.
- Track record of and commitment to being visible and actively engaged in the schools and

community to address issues that are deemed as important to families and communities' values and cultures.

- Displays the ability to develop effective and authentic partnerships with varied community organizations, caregiver and family groups, not-for-profit agencies, businesses, foundations, institutions of higher education, faith-based communities, public officials and other groups.
- Has demonstrated success in engaging caregivers and families as full partners in the education of their children, informed by a co-constructed definition of a well-rounded student.
- Displays ability to be successful in developing respectful working relationships to genuinely engage with key stakeholders, including students, families, teachers, school leaders, staff, bargaining units, community advocates, foundations, partner organizations, media, elected officials, the School Committee, and the Mayor.

## **5. Professional Culture:**

- Displays courage in decision making that will always put the needs of students first, regardless of conflict and criticism; engages in regular, direct conversation and dialogue with students and families.
- Has proven outstanding leadership skills that demonstrate effective, deliberate, and culturally respectful communication.
- Has an ability to passionately motivate others to carry out their roles and responsibilities associated with the district vision and mission as well as the Opportunity and Achievement Gap policy.
- Maintains an openness to innovative ideas from all stakeholders—including students, families, and union partners—to advance the vision and mission of an organization with an annual budget comparable in size to a large urban school district.
- Demonstrates a collaborative leadership style that is open-minded, inclusive, and decisive.
- Creates a collaborative culture among School Leaders, teachers, and central office staff members that focuses on supporting the work of teaching and learning in the classroom and throughout schools.
- Demonstrates strong leadership skills to guide systemic improvement in large institutions and champion public education in Boston, including broad collaboration with other Boston schools for the benefit of all children within the city, while ensuring acquisition of adequate resources and attracting students to the school system.
- Displays knowledge and understanding of the historic political environment of Boston, including the structure of a School Committee appointed by the Mayor, and strong family and community organization involvement.
- Has effective interpersonal and communication skills—verbal, written, and listening—including the demonstrated ability to communicate with key stakeholders in a variety of public and private forums.
- Shows self-awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses and has a documented professional record in building teams of education and management leaders to effectively meet the full range of challenges needed for successful, systemic and institutional change in a diverse urban school district like Boston.
- Exhibits a proven track record in managing large systems, including the application of and use of current technology to improve efficiency and responsiveness.

Terms: Managerial Tier E (Exempt). Individual employment contract. 12 months. Must be available beyond 40 hours per week for meetings of the Boston School Committee, frequent evening and weekend events, as well as for emergencies, to meet the needs of the district. Boston Residency Required.

The Boston Public Schools, in accordance with its nondiscrimination policies, does not discriminate in its programs, facilities, or employment or educational opportunities on the basis of race, color, age, criminal record (inquiries only), disability, homelessness, sex/gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, genetics or military status, and does not tolerate any form of retaliation, or bias-based intimidation, threat or harassment that demeans individuals' dignity or interferes with their ability to learn or work.