Superintendent Search Survey
Boston Public Schools
April 2022
Superintendent Search Survey

Survey available to all members of the Boston Public Schools community about desired qualities in a superintendent.

● Available in 10 Languages

● [https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/supt-search](https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/supt-search)

● Survey window: March 14 - April 15

Number of Survey Responses: 507
Respondents
Question: Please select the option(s) that most accurately describe your relationship with BPS. Check all that apply.
Race/Ethnicity of Survey Respondents and BPS Students

85 survey respondents declined to answer this question.
Neighborhoods of Survey Respondents and BPS Students

- Survey Respondents
- BPS Students

- Allston-Brighton: 6%
- Back Bay: 1%
- Beacon: 2%
- Charlestown: 3%
- Dorchester: 15%
- East Boston: 34%
- Fenway: 1%
- Hyde Park: 1%
- Jamaica Plain: 4%
- Mattapan: 12%
- North End: 5%
- Outside of Boston: 3%
- Roslindale: 1%
- Roxbury: 6%
- South Boston: 9%
- South End: 4%
- West Roxbury: 13%
Survey Response Language

- Arabic: 0.3%
- Cape Verdean: 1.4%
- Chinese: 1.6%
- English: 94.5%
- French: 0.2%
- Haitian Creole: 1.8%
- Portuguese: 0.2%
- Somali: 0.4%
- Spanish: 22.9%
- Vietnamese: 0.2%

Survey Respondents vs BPS Families Preferred Language
Results
How important to you are the following qualities or characteristics in the next superintendent?

- Demonstrated leadership in improving educational outcomes for all students: 99% very important, 18% important
- Experience closing opportunity gaps including supporting students with disabilities and ELs: 94% very important, 64% important
- Ability to lead system-wide change to enact reforms: 93% very important, 69% important
- Experience leading a large urban school district: 90% very important, 85% important
- Experience as an educator: 87% very important, 66% important
- Commitment to anti-racism and equity: 86% very important, 57% important
- Knowledge of Boston and the BPS community: 99% very important, 84% important
- Effective communication skills including honesty and transparency: 92% very important, 60% important
- Commitment to empowering parents, guardians, students, and other stakeholders: 89% very important, 53% important
- Proven record of being visible and actively engaged in their schools and community: 89% very important, 36% important
How important to you are the following qualities or characteristics in the next superintendent? - **Very Important Only**

- Effective communication skills including honesty and transparency: 84%
- Demonstrated leadership in improving educational outcomes for all students: 81%
- Ability to lead system-wide change to enact needed reforms: 69%
- Commitment to anti-racism and equity: 67%
- Experience as an educator: 66%
- Experience closing opportunity gaps including supporting students with disabilities and ELs: 64%
- Commitment to empowering parents & guardians, students, & other stakeholders: 60%
- Knowledge of Boston and the BPS community: 54%
- Proven record of being visible and actively engaged in their schools and community: 53%
- Experience leading a large urban school district: 51%
Very important qualities or characteristics and Whether respondents attended or plan to attend a community listening session
Very important qualities or characteristics and Race/Ethnicity of Respondents

- Effective communication skills including honesty and transparency
- Demonstrated leadership in improving educational outcomes for all students
- Ability to lead system-wide change to enact needed reforms
- Commitment to anti-racism and equity
- Experience as an educator
- Experience closing opportunity gaps including supporting students with disabilities and ELs
- Commitment to empowering parents & guardians, students, & other stakeholders
- Knowledge of Boston and the BPS community
- Proven record of being visible and actively engaged in their schools and community
- Experience leading a large urban school district

Survey respondents were categorized by race/ethnicity:
- Asian
- Black/African-American
- Hispanic/Latinx
- White

* Marks indicate significant differences in responses among race/ethnicity groups.
Question 1 (329 responses)
“What other qualities or experiences are important to seek in the next Superintendent?”
QUESTION 1 MAJOR THEMES: What other qualities or experiences are important in the next Supt?
Cluster Key-Words

What other qualities or experiences are important to seek in the next Superintendent?

**School Community Engagement** (131 responses):
help, district, willing, support, families, commitment, community

**Provision of Quality Education** (74 responses):
quality, exam, education, high, children, students

**Administrative Collaboration** (57 responses):
team, set, stand, effectively, union, work, staff, ability

**Understanding of Education System and Boston** (52 responses):
system, understands, years, knows, city, boston

**Effective Leadership** (10 responses):
courage, necessary, deep, ability, experience, management, empathetic, outcomes, political
EXAMPLE RESPONSES IN EACH CLUSTER

**School Community Engagement:**
‘A person who truly understands the community, has worked within the education system, a team builder, collaborator, open-minded to change. Someone who will tirelessly advocate for the students of BPS.’

**Provision of Quality Education:**
‘Someone who can bring high quality education to BPS for the next generation of students. Someone who has a vision for BPS that answers the call for high quality education but also has a plan for how BPS can pivot when the next COVID wave hits. Someone who is proactive vs reactive.’

**Administrative Collaboration:**
‘Someone who will ensure that the central office is well-organized and effectively supports leaders and teachers in the various schools.’

**Understanding of Education System & Boston:**
‘I want to further emphasize how important I think it is for the superintendent to come from Boston and demonstrate understanding of Boston Public Schools and its local context. I think this quality is crucial to a superintendent’s success in the district. Fully understanding the complexities, strengths, weaknesses, and history of our district takes years, and any superintendent who does not have that background knowledge is at an immense disadvantage.’

**Effective Leadership:**
‘I'd love for the next Superintendent to have experience in navigating an extremely complex urban district. BPS has many areas that desperately need to be addressed but are political hot potatoes. Improving outcomes for all students will require confident leadership and a vision that is clearly communicated to all stakeholders.’
FOCUS OF RESPONDENTS OF COLOR

- Relative frequency of responses was fairly consistent between white and people of color respondents
- People of color respondents were more likely to emphasize School Community Engagement (45% vs 38%)
- White respondents were more likely to emphasize Understanding of Education System & Boston (20% vs 11%)
Question 2 (318 responses)
“What question would you most like a candidate for the job to answer?”
QUESTION 2 MAJOR THEMES: What question would you most like a candidate for the job to answer?

Question 2 Cluster Distribution

- Supporting the Needs of Diverse Learners: 166
- Addressing School Community Needs: 54
- Systematic Reform: 47
- Providing Equitable Access to Education: 31
- Improving Quality of Education: 19
What question would you most like a candidate for the job to answer?

**Supporting the Needs of Diverse Learners** (166 responses):
- job, special, learning, staff, needs, years, support, teachers

**Addressing School Community Needs** (54 responses):
- needs, families, system, bring, community, vision, arts, address, ensure

**Systematic Reform** (47 responses):
- district, ensure, improve, system, based, think, education, quality, high, exam

**Providing Equitable Access to Education** (31 responses):
- vision, racial, city, resources, teachers, improve, change, families, public

**Improving Quality of Education** (19 responses):
- education, best, public, involved, boston, provide, help, children
EXAMPLE RESPONSES IN EACH CLUSTER

Supporting the Needs of Diverse Learners:
‘What plans do they have to address mental health for students with Special needs and what plan do they have to support/train teachers who teach students with special needs?’

Addressing School Community Needs:
'How would you address the racial inequity in BPS?'

Systematic Reform:
‘What is your plan for creating more quality middle and high schools. The mayor talks about expanding early childhood programs but is ignoring the children that are already in the system as plans for phasing out k-8 schools unfold and we have no high school and now no path to exam school?’

Providing Equitable Access to Education:
‘Share your vision or proposed plan for making all schools more equitable for all students?’

Improving Quality of Education:
‘How will you determine which practices (in Central Office, in schools/classes) and policies in BPS should stay and which should be eliminated or changed for the good of our children and their futures? Specifically, what will you do to center the needs and futures of children over the interests of adults?’
FOCUS OF RESPONDENTS OF COLOR

- Relative frequency of responses was fairly consistent between white and people of color respondents.
- People of color respondents were slightly more likely to emphasize Supporting the needs of diverse learners (57% vs 51%).
- White respondents were more likely to emphasize Addressing School Community needs Needs (20% vs 12%).
Appendix
BACKGROUND ON CLUSTERING

- The natural language processing algorithm assigns each response a value based on how often a word or phrase is used in the response and the uniqueness of those words and phrases across all responses.

- These values are then used to group the responses into clusters. The Analytics Team reviewed the top keywords from each of these clusters to determine the common thematic elements and assign names to the clusters.

- This is most useful for giving a general sense of the themes that emerge from the survey, and whether the focus of responses differed between subgroups of respondents.

- A single response may not seem particularly applicable to the cluster in which it is assigned - results are more reliable as sample size increases.