

Tulare City School District Superintendent Search Survey

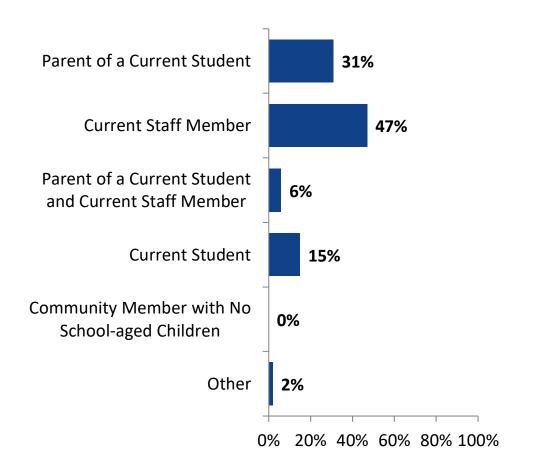
Results and Analysis

McPherson & Jacobson March 2024

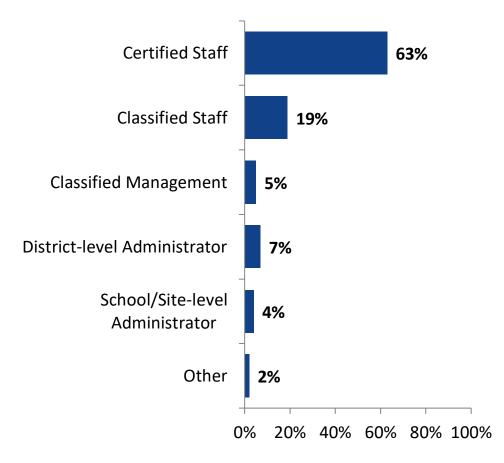


Participant Profile

Which of the following best describes your relationship to Tulare City School District? (N=232)



Which of the following best describes your role in the district? (N=121)



Note: Only those who said they were a current staff member answered this question.



What is good about your community?

Tulare is known for its strong sense of unity and support, particularly during times of need.

It offers various sports activities for children, promoting engagement and keeping them occupied.

Tulare embraces its diversity while maintaining a small-town feel, allowing for close relationships and a sense of belonging.

Residents appreciate the safe, clean environment and the opportunities for involvement, especially in schools.

The community is actively involved in supporting businesses and promoting education and housing advancements.

Overall, Tulare is seen as a welcoming, family-oriented community with a strong sense of tradition and support for one another, making it an ideal place to raise a family.

What is good about your community?

The community is described as fun, friendly, and inclusive, where everyone knows each other and supports one another.

Teachers are highlighted as supportive, and there's a strong sense of unity and strength within the community.

Safety is emphasized, along with kindness and helpfulness towards others, making it a caring and supportive environment.

The community is involved in various activities and exhibits leadership qualities, promoting a sense of togetherness and excellence.

What is good about your community?

Tulare embodies small-town charm with a strong emphasis on Christian values, nurturing compassionate and responsible citizens. The community, often referred to as a "village," is deeply rooted in faith, with churches serving as central hubs for communal activities and teachings.

Despite growth in recent years, Tulare maintains its quaint atmosphere and tight-knit schools, fostering a sense of belonging and pride.

Residents prioritize education and are committed to providing the best schooling within the Tulare City School District. The city's greatness is defined by its relationships, character, and unwavering faith, serving as a timeless reminder of what truly makes a community great.

What is good about your community?

Certified staff said Tulare is characterized by its hardworking and supportive residents who have a strong sense of community where some families have lived for generations.

The community is deeply involved in agriculture and comes together for events like the International Agricultural Expo.

While the town leans conservative, it is also open to new business opportunities and supports its schools and youth programs.

Despite some challenges like gang problems and drugs, there is a strong commitment to supporting one another and providing a safe environment for families.

Overall, Tulare is described as a welcoming, family-oriented community with a small-town feel and a diverse population.

What is good about your community?

The community is praised for its close-knit feel, with residents describing it as supportive, friendly, and like a family. People in the community are willing to help each other and celebrate each other's successes.

There's a strong sense of involvement from parents and a recognition of diversity and inclusivity.

Despite challenges, such as crime and homelessness, there's an overall belief in the positivity and goodness of the community.

The small-town atmosphere fosters strong connections among residents, who know each other well and are supportive of one another.

Classified Management Staff

Good Points About the Community

What is good about your community?

Classified management staff said Tulare is a small, close-knit community.

The community is still supportive and works together for the betterment of its schools and students.

What is good about your community?

District- and School-level administrators said Tulare is a close-knit community that promotes from within to keep a continuum of culture throughout the years.

There is a strong sense of family and community. And Tulare is a community that works for the good of everyone in town.

There are great partnerships with local organizations, including police and fire departments and the hospital/clinics.

What is good about your community?

Tulare is a community where many people grew up and have a connection with each other. There is a strong sense of unity and care for one another, especially during times of need.

The community has experienced growth but maintains a small-town atmosphere, where residents prioritize education and support their schools.

The city embraces its diverse population and works towards business development, education, and housing improvements while upholding faith and traditions. Residents value inclusivity and safety, and there is a deep commitment to supporting families and fostering a sense of belonging.

Despite challenges like vagrancy and occasional crime, the community remains friendly and supportive, with a focus on inclusivity, kindness, and collaboration.

What is good about your school district?

The district has historically felt like a family-oriented community where help was readily available.

Teachers are dedicated to holding students to high standards and equipping them with 21st-century skills. The staff at each school site are supportive of each other and prioritize providing a safe learning environment for students.

There are opportunities for growth and a strong partnership between parents and teachers.

The district is known for its positive atmosphere, commitment to raising up leaders, and quality support for new teachers.

Additionally, there is appreciation for the diversity within the district and efforts to ensure inclusivity for all students.

Communication from the district is valued, and there is a strong emphasis on safety and continuous improvement.

Overall, there is a sense of pride and support within the Tulare City School District, despite occasional challenges.

What is good about your school district?

The school district hosts numerous events and clubs, fostering a fun and engaging environment for students. They offer enjoyable activities and ensure fairness across schools.

There is an emphasis on listening to student opinions and addressing their needs.

The district maintains high standards and provides support to teachers and students alike.

The caring and supportive nature of the staff contribute to a positive learning atmosphere.

Additionally, the district promotes learning through various engaging methods and inspires students to work hard. Despite occasional challenges, there is recognition of the district's efforts to create a conducive learning environment.

What is good about your school district?

The Tulare City School District is known for its innovative collaboration with external partners, such as churches and organizations, which contributes to student success.

Through tailored programs and teacher training, the district fosters a culture of creativity and excellence, leading to rising graduation rates and improved test scores. Education goes beyond academics, focusing on transforming lives and preparing students for the future.

The district also boasts dedicated teachers who prioritize raising caring, creative, and confident children.

Additionally, the district emphasizes effective communication with parents and students, provides after-school programs, and offers high academic performance and a robust curriculum.

Staff members, from the Superintendent down, are noted for their genuine care for the children enrolled in the district.

What is good about your school district?

Tulare City School District is highly supportive, prioritizing the success and well-being of students, staff, and families.

They offer numerous resources and opportunities to facilitate student achievement.

The district is characterized by a sense of community, where individuals are known and valued.

Teachers are dedicated, with a commitment to high standards and providing students with essential skills. There is a strong emphasis on collaboration and teamwork, both within schools and across the district.

Administrators listen to feedback and strive to create a positive work environment.

Additionally, the district demonstrates fiscal responsibility and prioritizes student needs.

Overall, there is a deep sense of loyalty and dedication among staff, creating a supportive and enriching educational environment.

What is good about your school district?

Tulare City School District is known for its professionalism and dedication to students.

They foster strong partnerships with parents, staff, and the community, creating a supportive environment.

The district maintains a family-oriented atmosphere where individuals feel valued and supported.

Employees appreciate the benefits and sense of trust provided by the district.

There is a focus on building relationships and collaboration, leading to a culture of success and pride within the district.

What is good about your school district?

Tulare City School District provides a sense of unity and familiarity among colleagues creating a supportive work environment akin to a family.

Staff members are friendly, hardworking, and always striving to improve processes for the benefit of both students and employees.

What is good about your school district?

Tulare City School District is characterized as a close-knit community that values continuity and promotes from within, fostering trust and strong relationships among staff.

There is a proactive approach to seeking feedback and implementing changes based on input received, ensuring continuous improvement.

Support is readily available and there is a strong sense of family within the district, with a shared commitment to prioritizing the needs of children and families. The district values collaboration and provides ample support for teachers, students, and parents.

Leadership development is emphasized, and there is a culture of openness and communication, with a focus on addressing challenges and fostering growth.

Overall, there is a deep sense of care and dedication among staff members, contributing to a positive working environment and educational experience for students.

What is good about your school district?

Tulare City School District is praised for its dedication to student success and community engagement.

Educators are commended for their commitment to students and for providing strong support for curriculum and instruction.

The district is recognized for its innovative approach to addressing behavioral issues and for investing in resources such as curriculum, technology, and staffing.

There is appreciation for the communication between educators and parents, as well as for the inclusive environment that prioritizes student well-being and academic achievement.

Despite some areas of improvement being mentioned, overall, there is a sense of pride and satisfaction with the district's efforts to create a positive learning environment for all students.



What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?

The feedback provided highlights various concerns and suggestions related to the Tulare City School District. These include:

- Improving communication with parents
- Addressing behavior issues effectively
- Ensuring fairness and inclusivity
- Providing adequate resources and support for special education
- Promoting diversity among staff

Concerns about unequal opportunities among schools, nutrition standards, and parent involvement are also mentioned.

Additionally, suggestions are made regarding curriculum adjustments, accountability for student grades, and addressing disciplinary issues.

Overall, the feedback emphasizes the importance of continuing to foster a supportive, inclusive, and effective learning environment for all students.

What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?

The feedback highlights various issues and challenges that a new superintendent should be aware of when assuming the position. These include:

- Managing student behavior
- Addressing conflicts and bullying
- Handling budget constraints
- Dealing with gang-related issues
- Ensuring effective communication

Additionally, concerns about sanitation, disciplinary measures, and staff professionalism are raised.

What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?

The feedback suggests that the new superintendent needs to prioritize collaboration with external organizations, acknowledge past challenges, and address issues related to student safety, including drug and gang violence.

Additionally, there's a call for stronger personnel management to deal with any problematic individuals within the district.

Understanding cultural differences among students and being familiar with existing and upcoming programs are also important aspects highlighted in the feedback.

What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?

The importance of art and music education is highlighted, with a correlation noted between attendance, achievement, and motivation when K-8 students have access to these programs.

Challenges such as a high English learner population and students living in poverty impacting academics, attendance, and behavior are acknowledged.

The community's holistic support for students and families is emphasized, along with the need for cohesive administration that listens to staff needs.

Concerns include nepotism, administrative failures to support teachers, and changes to scheduling impacting the quality of education.

There's a call for more support for mental health needs, addressing extreme behaviors, and reducing administrative bloat.

Teachers express frustration with behavior management, lack of support, and increasing demands.

Suggestions for improvement include prioritizing student mental health, reducing class sizes, and addressing behavior issues effectively. Additionally, there's a desire for more equitable practices, increased collaboration, and a focus on student learning rather than administrative priorities.

What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?

Staff desires equal treatment for both certificated and classified employees.

There's a sentiment that the district lacks a sense of family and that central office staff are disconnected from school campuses, often implementing unrealistic procedures without providing adequate support. Concerns arise over the placement of principals and decisions made without considering the best interests of students.

Communication gaps exist, part-time positions should be reconsidered for full-time roles, and there's a need for more resources to address behavioral issues and special education needs.

Politics should be kept out of the school district, and there's a call for innovative solutions to address increasing challenges.

The hiring process for classified workers needs improvement, and there's a need for consistent communication throughout the district.

Staff members feel burnt out, and there's a call for more respect for aides and better opportunities for advancement for employees.

Disruptive student behavior is a significant concern, impacting the learning environment for others.

Finally, there's a preference for hiring a superintendent internally who understands the district's issues and can effectively address them.

What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?

The District is facing challenges retaining employees who are leaving for better-paying jobs.

Nepotism is prevalent, with friends and family often being hired or promoted, especially when involved in the hiring process.

Classified staff feels undervalued compared to certificated staff, often overlooked and treated as second-class citizens.

Transparency at the leadership level has diminished, with a lack of clarity on the district's direction and core values.

There's a need for leadership development overhaul, and incoming superintendents should prioritize understanding the concerns of all stakeholders and being open to suggestions, even if they can't always be implemented.

Balancing the needs of employees, parents, and students is crucial in this demanding position.

What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?

The district is on a positive trajectory with leadership and commitment to improvement, particularly through coaching from the Huron Group. However, there are communication gaps between the district office and school sites, and principals need to be more accountable.

Student behavioral and mental health needs are high, impacting schools and teachers. Collaboration is essential for addressing issues like student behavior, mental health, and academic support. Middle schools require reform, especially in addressing disengagement and behavior issues. There's a need for continued support in behavior management and academic areas like ELA and Math.

Teacher morale is low, and diversity in the community requires inclusive practices across all school sites.

There's a perceived disconnect between the district office and school sites, and the new superintendent should prioritize addressing behaviors, holding parents accountable, and improving organization and communication at all levels. Working as a unified team is crucial for addressing these challenges effectively.

What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?

The student population with intense needs has increased, and additional administrative and behavioral specialist support has been beneficial. However, there's a sense that extreme behavioral needs overshadow other students' needs. Support for students with learning disabilities and mental health issues is lacking and inclusive programs and support services for these students must be prioritized.

Bullying and nutrition issues require attention, along with support for teachers managing disruptive behaviors. Students should be held to consistent standards.

Addressing personnel issues, such as excessive time off for some administrators, is important for staff morale.

Parent involvement and communication need improvement, especially for non-English-speaking parents. Communication with parents must be clear and accurate.

School facilities require attention, with a focus on providing adequate resources and maintaining older campuses. Disparities among schools in resources and opportunities need to be addressed

Collaboration with outside organizations is essential, given the area's challenges with drug and gang violence.

The district must understand and respect the diverse cultural beliefs of its students. Hiring practices should prioritize diversity and support for social-emotional learning.

Overall, the superintendent should be familiar with educational goals, community needs, and be prepared for the challenges and responsibilities of the position.

What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful?

Parents/Guardians desire a superintendent who possesses the following qualities:

Communication: They should listen to the needs of both schools and students. They should be open to change, willing to listen to concerns from parents and staff, and take appropriate action.

Patience, Humor, and Perseverance: These traits are important for handling challenges effectively.

Approachability and Trustworthiness: They should be approachable, charismatic, and trustworthy, demonstrating care for the community.

Community Engagement: The superintendent should engage with all members of the community, including classified staff, and be visible in the community.

Strong Leadership: The superintendent should be proactive, honest, humble, and progressive, with a focus on student-centered approaches and equitable practices. Integrity, empathy, and ethical decision-making are essential. They should handle conflicts effectively, avoid nepotism, and adapt to changing situations.

Support for Staff and Students: The superintendent should provide resources, strategies, and programs to support student learning and prioritize the well-being of staff. They should balance academics, arts, and athletics, and be visible and involved in the community and schools.

Knowledge and Experience: Experience as a teacher, administrator, and coordinator is valued, along with familiarity with the district and community.

What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful?

Students would like a superintendent to posses the following:

Kindness and Patience: They should be confident and know how to treat children, as well as kind, patient, and able to make their voice heard while being brave and taking charge. They should understand students' perspectives and be caring, noble, and cool while avoiding yelling. They should possess patience, charisma, and creativity to encourage students to do good.

Understanding and Responsibility: They should understand the needs of students and be responsible for addressing them. They should be flexible, open-minded, and brave, with outgoing communication skills.

Balanced Approach: They should balance social life, school, and drama, handling conflicts effectively.

Leadership: They should be strong leaders who can make decisions to improve the school district.

Effective Communication: They should communicate politely and respectfully while being attentive to teachers and principals.

Community Engagement: They should be involved in schools, meet with teachers and students, and be supportive and inclusive.

Encouragement and Support: They should be encouraging, supportive, and knowledgeable, with strong leadership skills and no favoritism.

What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful?

Community members would like a superintendent that possesses the following:

Long-term Dedication to Children: Emphasis on hiring a superintendent committed to the welfare of the children for the long term, rather than seeking short-term benefits.

Roots in Tulare: Importance of hiring someone with connections to Tulare to encourage longevity in the role and discourage leaving for larger districts with higher salaries. : Belief in the advantages of promoting candidates from within TCSD, as they would already be familiar with existing and upcoming programs.

Experience as Principal: Advocacy for hiring a superintendent with prior experience as a principal to ensure they understand the challenges at the school level. Concern about promoting individuals to leadership positions without relevant experience, particularly without having served as principals previously.

Cultural Understanding: Acknowledgment of the importance of understanding cultural differences to better serve students and parents.

Patience and Open-mindedness: Emphasis on the qualities of patience and an open-minded approach in addressing the needs of the school community.

Budgeting Expertise: Preference for a superintendent with extensive background in budgeting for a district the size of TCSD.

What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful?

The feedback provided highlights several key qualities and expectations for the new superintendent of Tulare City Schools. These include:

Listening and Communication Skills: The superintendent should be a good listener, open to feedback from teachers, parents, and staff. They should also be a clear and effective communicator, ensuring that all stakeholders are well-informed about major decisions.

Leadership and Experience: It is important for the superintendent to have strong leadership skills, with experience in teaching, administration, and preferably in the district itself. They should be knowledgeable about education laws and policies.

Empathy and Support: The superintendent should demonstrate empathy towards students, teachers, and staff, and be supportive of their needs and challenges. They should prioritize the well-being of students and educators alike.

Vision and Adaptability: A good superintendent should have a clear vision for the district's future while being open to new ideas and willing to adapt to changing circumstances. They should be able to make decisions based on what is best for students and teachers.

Community Engagement: The superintendent should be actively involved in the community, building relationships with stakeholders and fostering a sense of unity within the district. They should also be visible on school campuses and attend major events.

Transparency and Accountability: Transparency in decision-making and accountability for outcomes are crucial. The superintendent should be willing to take responsibility for their decisions and actions and be transparent about the district's obligations and priorities.

What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful?

The feedback suggests that the new superintendent should possess a combination of experience, interpersonal skills, and commitment to the district. Key points include:

Experience and Background: Ideally, the superintendent should have experience as a teacher, vice principal, principal, and possibly in district-level leadership roles. This background is seen as essential for understanding the complexities of running a district.

Personable and Approachable: The superintendent should be friendly, approachable, and willing to engage with all staff members. They should be open to feedback and conversations from staff and community members.

Advocacy and Support: It's important for the superintendent to advocate for both students and staff members. They should be willing to fight for the needs of the community and provide support to all staff members.

Understanding and Fairness: The superintendent should be understanding, compassionate, and fair in their interactions with staff, students, and parents. They should be able to listen to concerns and make informed judgments.

Community Connection: Familiarity with the local community, programs, and school sites is seen as important for building relationships with parents, students, and staff. Hiring someone from outside the community may present challenges in connecting with stakeholders.

What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful?

The feedback indicates a desire for stability and leadership rooted in experience and community understanding. Key points include:

Accountability and Integrity: The superintendent should be fair, hold everyone accountable, and prioritize honesty and transparency in decision-making.

Leadership Qualities: Strong leadership qualities such as inspiring others, communication skills, empathy, and resilience are desired.

Community Connection: Preferably, the superintendent should be from the local community, understand its dynamics, and have experience within the district.

Educational Background: Previous experience as a teacher, principal, or administrator within the district is seen as beneficial for understanding the district's culture and challenges.

Promotion from Within: Promoting from within is favored as it maintains continuity, recognizes the dedication of existing staff, and ensures a leader familiar with the district's culture and personnel.

What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful?

Feedback indicates a desire for a superintendent who is deeply rooted in the district and understands the local community's needs:

Community Connection: They should preferably be from within the district, aware of its current state, aspirations, and community dynamics.

Leadership Style: The superintendent should be a problem solver, good communicator, honest, supportive, and experienced. They should be approachable, visible, and involved in school activities and meetings.

Understanding of Funding and Priorities: Knowledge of how funding is distributed and the ability to align it with district priorities is essential.

Qualities and Characteristics: The superintendent should be knowledgeable, caring, impactful, and have a genuine concern for students and staff. They should be innovative, empathetic, and possess strong leadership qualities.

Professional Background: Extensive classroom teaching and site administrative experience are valued, along with proven district-level administrative experience. They should have credibility and trust among their peers and be patient, thoughtful, and willing to make necessary changes.

What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful?

Feedback suggests a need for a forward-thinking superintendent with innovative ideas, compassion, and a deep understanding of the district:

Innovative Thinking: They should bring new ideas and have a track record of working effectively in similar districts.

Compassion and Understanding: The superintendent should be compassionate towards the struggles of teachers, administrators, and students, actively engaging with stakeholders before making decisions.

Experience in the District: Familiarity with the district and its needs, preferably through previous work experience within the community, is highly valued.

Long-Term Dedication: It's crucial for the superintendent to be dedicated to the district's long-term success, avoiding short-term appointments focused solely on personal gain.

Professional Background: Previous experience as a principal is considered essential, ensuring they understand the challenges faced by school leaders.

Community Engagement: They should be visible, approachable, and actively involved in the community, listening to concerns and taking action when necessary.

Summary of Interviews

What is good about your community?

The Tulare community is characterized by its small-town vibe, generational ties, and strong sense of cohesion. Despite growth, the community maintains its close-knit feel, with supportive parents and a kind atmosphere.

The schools have always been viewed positively, and there's a vibrant music and business community.

Located conveniently near various attractions, Tulare offers a safe and family-friendly environment with reasonable living costs.

It's politically conservative but rich in community events, recreational activities, and revitalization efforts.

There's a strong sense of community involvement and support for education, with city organizations collaborating effectively.

The town offers diverse sports and recreational opportunities, and recent expansions have brought more amenities locally.

However, there's a divide between the west and east sides of town, impacting service distribution.

Overall, Tulare is a community that values its traditions, fosters a supportive environment, and continues to grow while maintaining its small-town charm.

What is good about your school district?

The Tulare School District is characterized by its strong elementary school system and gradual growth, fostering a sense of belonging among its members.

There's a consensus on the district's abundance of good people, reflecting strong family values and a commitment to addressing teacher concerns.

The district has successfully passed bonds for school construction, attracting talented employees and offering competitive salaries. Notably, Tulare retains its staff primarily through retirement rather than attrition to other districts.

It emphasizes resource provision, compromise-seeking, and forward-thinking leadership, often implementing initiatives ahead of requirements.

The district boasts diverse programs including VAPA (Visual and Performing Arts), sports, and academic transitions, with a focus on student involvement beyond athletics.

Internal leadership development and community engagement contribute to a cohesive environment, where access to district leaders is facilitated, and collaboration is encouraged.

The district's familial culture extends to students, emphasizing their well-being and personal growth. With a commitment to continuous improvement and student-centered decision-making, Tulare School District is proud of its quality education, caring staff, and focus on the future.

What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?

The Tulare School District faces various challenges and opportunities.

There is a need to address perceptions of certain schools, promote unity within the community despite growing diversity, and ensure equitable education across all campuses. Bridging gaps between parents, students, and teachers, and ensuring representation for administrators' unique needs are important for overall success.

The impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt, requiring a cautious approach to returning to normalcy.

Leaders must collaborate effectively, valuing each member's role and promoting transparency.

Initiatives to improve test scores, support English Language Learners (ELLs), and enhance bilingual programs are essential.

Additionally, there's a call for increased visibility of leadership, engagement with the community, and support for struggling students' mental health.

Strengthening academic focus, addressing disciplinary policies, and enhancing partnerships with stakeholders are key priorities.

The district must also adapt to economic challenges while maintaining a sense of community and honoring past practices.

What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful?

The ideal superintendent for the Tulare School District should possess a variety of qualities and experiences.

They should be adept at compromise and accountability, inspiring staff while accepting responsibility for student performance.

They need to understand the diverse needs of students across different grade spans and cultural backgrounds, as well as have high expectations for teachers, students, and parents. Also, understanding the district's strengths and areas for improvement, as well as being proactive and student-driven, are essential qualities.

Visibility and engagement within the community, including attending events and forums, are important for building trust and understanding.

The superintendent should have a long-term commitment to the district, prioritizing equity and student success while valuing relationships and fairness.

They should be approachable, empathetic, and a strong communicator, able to retain good administrators and work collaboratively with other leaders.

Additionally, they should value all employees and be willing to partner with other districts to support students.

Finally, the superintendent should fully immerse themselves in the identity and needs of the Tulare School District, recognizing its unique challenges and strengths compared to metropolitan districts.

K12 Insight

703.542.9601 | www.k12insight.com