



*New England School Development Council*

28 Lord Road, Marlborough, MA 01752 ➤ Tel: 508-481-9444 ➤ [www.nesdec.org](http://www.nesdec.org)

## **Newburyport Public Schools Superintendent Search**

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### **Successful Candidate Profile**

**December 2017**

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



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**To:** Newburyport School Committee

**From:** Carolyn J. Burke, Ed.D.  
New England School Development Council (NESDEC)

**Date:** January 3, 2018

# **NEWBURYPORT SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE PROFILE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

During the second week of December 2017, the Newburyport 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. One hundred eighty-five (185) people participated in the needs-assessment process.

Focus group 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 pressing tasks and challenges ahead for him or her during the first six months to a year?

The Newburyport School Committee subsequently reviewed and analyzed the community's input from the focus groups and the online survey and then added its own perspective to create the Successful Candidate Profile. The Successful Candidate Profile is designed to guide the interview and selection process during the Superintendent search.

The Newburyport School Committee wishes to thank and commend all those 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 Newburyport School Committee

## **NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The community of Newburyport expects a high level of competence across all aspects of the position of Superintendent. To ensure the selected Superintendent is a particular match for our district's needs and goals, the School Committee reached out to the community through a series of focus groups and an online survey. The School Committee used the valuable information gathered through the focus group and survey process to inform its decisions in creating the following Newburyport Successful Candidate Profile.

### **SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE PROFILE**

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

- **Building Effective Relationships**
- **Future-Focused Leadership**
- **Effective Operations Management**

To the Newburyport Schools, a candidate with a depth of experience and knowledge in these areas would be:

#### **BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

- A leader who thrives in an energized, involved community that wants the very best education for its students; a leader passionate about educating students for *their* 21<sup>st</sup> Century future and committed to working with staff, students, parents and the larger community to create the needed programs and opportunities to make this happen.
- A leader who builds the capacity of staff to meet and exceed the goals of the district; one who supports administrators and teachers in their work including providing any needed coaching, supervision and professional development to ensure all staff have the skills, knowledge and mindset required to meet job expectations.
- A team leader who is inclusive, thoughtful, personable, and approachable; one who establishes and expects a positive learning and working environment.
- An open, clear and concise communicator with proven excellent written, oral and presentation skills; seeks and shares accurate information in a transparent and timely manner and through multiple mediums, including the press and social media; a leader who understands the importance of creating channels for communication that enable parents, teachers/staff, students and the community to offer insights and to seek and share information; follows through and responds to all inquiries and ideas in a respectful and timely manner.
- A leader who builds a cohesive teaching and administrative team for Grades PreK-12, including all departments; one who inspires staff to be outside-of-the-box thinkers; a leader with a proven track record of hiring, supporting and collaborating with skilled professionals.
- A leader with demonstrated ability to work effectively with the School Committee to ensure in a timely manner that School Committee members have the accurate information and data needed to make informed decisions.

- An involved leader who is visible, is out in the district on a regular basis, is in the classrooms and departments – directly observing, talking with students and staff, and getting to know on a first-hand basis the people and students in the schools and the strengths and needs of the district; a leader who is known by parents, students and staff.
- A leader with integrity who follows through, implements decisions, provides honest feedback and builds trust.
- A knowledgeable community leader who seeks out, respects and considers the input, expertise and the services for students that exist in the wider community – Community Groups, City Leaders and Businesses, the Newburyport Education Foundation, Colleges etc.; and who builds innovative and creative partnerships that serve the needs of the students and the district.
- A calm, confident leader with excellent problem-solving and conflict management skills who models, encourages and expects respectful dialogue; someone who expects to receive, and is honestly able to listen, consider and respond to the many and sometimes conflicting and passionate voices that exist in the district and wider community.
- A leader who is calm under pressure; when faced with controversial situations or crisis situations, is able to take and direct needed action.
- A district administrator able to work collaboratively and effectively with the Mayor, City Council, Finance Administration and other community groups as a knowledgeable, collaborative advocate for students.
- A leader skilled in public relations and the various modalities of media, who is proactive in the community and elsewhere; communicating and celebrating all of the wonderful things that are going on in the schools and district.

### **FUTURE-FOCUSED LEADERSHIP**

- An innovator with strong leadership skills who is able to envision and lead the implementation of our Strategic Plan in a focused, well-paced and supportive way that builds on the strengths within the district and community.
- A leader who ensures that all student services, including special education services and services that support students' social and emotional health, are embedded and aligned with the district's vision and expectations and are led and staffed by highly qualified professionals; someone who understands and is able to ensure that the district is serving the needs and socio-economic, social-emotional, and academic challenges found within our students' demographics; someone able to assess the quality of current programs and to develop a plan for continuous improvement.
- A leader able to re-imagine teaching and learning and facilitate and encourage that re-imagination process.
- A politically aware leader who understands the need to educate and inform the community about the Strategic Plan and other initiatives in the district, and the value to them in supporting these efforts.
- An educator who understands the community's desire for a strong academic program that will provide their children with the skills and knowledge they will need to effectively navigate through their future world; someone who appreciates the need for ensuring students develop the skills to maintain their social and emotional health.

- A leader who understands the importance of our students developing an appreciation for the rich diversity that exists among people; an educator who will ensure that all students in Newburyport are provided a quality education.
- A well-rounded leader who knows the value for students provided by Fine and Performing Arts programs, as well as sports programs and other enrichment programs in the district.
- A leader knowledgeable and skilled in the use of technology to educate children, to administer the district and to communicate with constituents; someone able to guide the discussions as we make decisions around acquiring and using technology.
- An experienced leader able to knowledgeably guide the School Committee and district as decisions are made around highly charged and complex issues (later start times...); understands systems including subsystems that are impacted by any given choice.
- A trustworthy guide for the district and district administrators; a leader who is up-to-date with DESE (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) public school regulations and guidelines, Massachusetts school law, Federal regulations, Special Education regulations, etc.
- A leader who has established long-standing professional and political peer relationships and who is able to seek out and bring to Newburyport new ideas that have worked in other districts; someone who is well-informed about successful models from other towns and that are worthy of consideration by Newburyport.
- A leader who understands the importance and value of ensuring that schools are a safe setting for students and staff, where they are supported and encouraged, where bullying is dealt with swiftly and consistently, where the schools consider disciplinary action through the filter of restorative justice practices that build a safe and supportive community.

### **EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT**

- A leader with a strong working knowledge of school finance and experience working collaboratively with municipal leaders; someone who appreciates and follows approved channels of communication; someone who models integrity, transparency and the ability to knowledgeably and respectfully discuss accounting, goals, issues and other matters...in a manner that seeks a positive resolution for all parties.
- An administrator able to work with district teachers, administrators and parents to develop and advocate for an accurate budget supported by clear rationales that will be funded by the City: an advocate for students and the schools in the community.
- An administrator able to assess and explain our district's current and future facilities/maintenance needs to City leaders and the wider community; someone able to lead any efforts to update facilities for the benefit of students.
- A leader with the skills, knowledge and strength of character necessary to reallocate resources based on implementing the Strategic Plan.
- An administrator skilled and experienced in Interest Based Bargaining and/or other effective, positive (win-win) contract negotiation strategies.

### **EXPERIENCE**

- has 10+ years of successful experience as a classroom teacher

- has building principal and central office level experience with a district level perspective
- has successful contract negotiation experience
- has implemented a strategic plan
- has experience participating in the implementation of, or implementing a district Safety Plan, that includes working with community safety leaders (e.g. police, fire department...)

**TASKS and CHALLENGES UPON WHICH THE COMMUNITY WISHES THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT TO FOCUS IN FIRST SIX MONTHS TO YEAR**

- Build relationships: take time to get to know the members of the school community and the larger community. Meet and talk with your administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents. Build strong relationships with the Newburyport Education Foundation, with Youth Services, with the Learning Enrichment Center...the Newburyport community is very interested in having a voice and in being a part of the district.
- Communicate clearly, transparently, informatively and in a timely fashion with parents, staff and students. Post open-ended opportunities for individuals and groups to communicate. Provide a format for people to voice questions or observations. Leverage the voices of our students, for example by creating a student advisory council. Develop clear district-wide communication protocols, practices and expectations to ensure timely, informative communication and prompt responses to any emails, phone calls, etc.
- Get the lay of the land, learn the district. Make it your practice to gather information before acting or recommending an action. Be visible. Be in the schools and departments on a regular basis to learn for yourself what actually occurs rather than relying on secondhand verbal or written reports. Provide the School Committee with accurate, well-researched reports and information.
- We are at a critical point in implementing our Strategic Plan and believe that bringing it to fruition will ensure that we achieve the level of excellence we want for our students; we expect that the successful candidate will continue this effort. They will work with students, families, teachers, and all administrators to understand and focus the wide variety of work currently being done on the plan. The ideas that people have ought to be turned into actionable work that positively shifts students' daily experiences.
- Analyze our special education program and make recommendations for continuous improvement. Ensure equitable and timely access to special education resources for all qualifying students. Ensure that we provide a cohesive, strong, PK-12 special education department that meets the diverse needs of our students and is staffed by highly-qualified administrators and staff. Provide support and training, ensure staff is skilled in special education screening, procedures, regulations.... Look at our programs for underserved populations – are we meeting their needs?
- We are looking for leadership that will continue the progress we have made to ensure that our district is "seamless", that transitions between schools for students are minimally

stressful, that our curriculum reflects a coherent approach from preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade.

- Support the implementation of our five-year plan for technology. Demonstrate a true fundamental understanding of how technology can be used in education, administration and communication. Learn about and address parental concerns around the use of technology in education.
- Keep going with our other initiatives support the plans that are already in process.
- Effectively manage/chair/oversee the “later start time” committee. Bring closure to the later start time debate.
- Attract, develop and retain high quality staff including administrative staff. Develop a first-hand knowledge of the strengths of your staff. Ensure staff members understand the expectations for their roles and have the knowledge and skills to meet those expectations. Holds yourself and everyone accountable for excellent job performance.
- Begin discussions with the administrative team, the teachers’ union and other interested parties (e.g. the School Committee) to address the ongoing and regular attrition through retirement of a portion of our teaching and administrative staff. The larger principle here is to address our ability to sustain the progress we have made, as well to continuously improve as a district.
- Create a district-wide culture of co-problem solving and outside-of-the-box thinking. Look for new ways of doing things (like course selection procedures at the High School).
- Network with other Superintendents to discuss programs and initiatives and to generate regional cooperation for different initiatives; for example the later start times initiative.