



New England School Development Council

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**Newburyport Public Schools
Director of Pupil Services Search
Successful Candidate Profile**

November 2023

INTRODUCTION

On October 30, 2023, the Newburyport Public Schools, with the assistance of the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), officially posted the position for a new **Director of Pupil Services**. As part of its search, Newburyport also conducted a Community Needs Assessment. The Assessment was conducted via a series of three in-person focus groups on November 15, 2023, and an online survey ending on November 22, 2023.

Participants provided their responses to two prompts:

- What are the qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge, and experiences you seek in a new Director of Pupil Services? Please finish the phrase "***The new Director of Pupil Services should be someone who...***"
- What are the immediate challenges and tasks that the new Director of Pupil Services should focus upon in their first year?

The Newburyport Superintendent of Schools appointed a liaison who assisted in the appointment of a Director Search Screening Committee comprised of key school community stakeholders. The Superintendent and liaison reviewed, analyzed, and approved the community's input to create the Newburyport *Successful Candidate Profile*. The *Successful Candidate Profile* is designed to guide the Director search interview and selection process.

A sincere "Thank You" is in order to all those who participated in the community focus group and online survey needs assessment process.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The Newburyport Public Schools (NPS) requires a high level of competence across all aspects of the position of Director of Pupil Services. Based on the responses provided by focus group and online survey participants, the overwhelming desirable characteristic of a new Director is a **Strong and Experienced Special Education Leader**. It is important to note, however, that the NPS Director of Pupil Services position requires knowledge and skills beyond special education. To that end, participants provided ample feedback as to the qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge, and experiences expected in a new Director.

To ensure the selected Director is a particular fit for NPS, preference will be given to the educational leader who demonstrates a significant depth of skill and knowledge in the following key area:

**Leadership particularly in Special Education Program Management
(staff, student needs, progress monitoring, and evidenced-based curriculum)**

Successful Candidate

More specifically, the successful candidate will be someone who is able to demonstrate expertise in the following thematic areas:

- Creating a district-wide special education vision; someone who is a strategic thinker and able to provide short- and long-term consistency and departmental goals based on input from school administrators, staff and parents; someone who values colleague, staff, and parental input
- Building community relationships and trust among school personnel and parents; someone who is a “people person” and is approachable, transparent, and a good listener; someone who knows how to bring people together and can build partnerships among school district stakeholders
- Working collaboratively with the school committee, superintendent, and school officials to promote special education in the district; someone who will make a commitment to the community
- Understanding the importance of “visibility” in the district; someone who is “hands-on,” visits classrooms, and effectively communicates with staff, building administrators, and parents; someone who meets with the district SEPAC and views parents as partners
- Developing a creative special education budget based on a child-centered philosophy; someone who knows students well and advocates for student needs, stands up for student rights, and seeks alternative funding sources
- Knowing and understanding special education and c.504 laws and regulations; someone who can provide departmental guidance in developing vertically aligned policies and procedures to ensure district-wide consistency, compliance with DESE regulations and confidence among staff and families

- Building staff and department capacity; someone who can assess program strengths and weaknesses and develop programs based on proven, evidenced-based best practice; someone who has the ability to recruit and retain high quality staff; someone who believes in student progress monitoring and data-driven decision making; someone who has a strong knowledge of curriculum resources
- Providing high quality professional development opportunities; someone who believes in life-long learning; someone who sets high self-expectations and high expectations for staff
- Working in partnership with school building principals; someone who believes in the inclusion of students with disabilities and can collaborate with general education personnel to provide effective special education services in the Least Restrictive Environment; someone who can work with general education personnel to blend services and eliminate the interdepartmental "silo" effect

Immediate Challenges and Tasks:

Immediate first year challenges and tasks cited by focus group and survey participants include:

- Be visible in the schools; get to know administrators, staff, students, and families; visit classrooms; observe; "Stop, Look, and Listen" prior to making first-year changes
- Assess the district-wide culture of special education service delivery; identify any necessary changes; embrace change and provide effective leadership to implement change efforts; work collaboratively to implement changes
- Set a common vision, expectations, and procedural practices (vertical alignment) for the special education department that are consistent throughout the district PreK-12+
- Assess staff morale; provide effective oversight, guidance, and clear expectations for special education staff PreK-12+
- Assess status of student behavior management and Social-Emotional Learning in the district; identify and provide evidenced-based opportunities for effective change
- Build bridges between general and special education; eliminate the "silo" effect; promote inclusion of students with disabilities
- Build effective, trusting relationships and partnerships with building administrators, staff and parents; create transparent communication systems with constituents
- Provide guidance and effective oversight for special education staff; get staff excited; identify and target professional development needs
- Become the spokesperson for students with disabilities in the schools and community; advocate for student needs and financial resources; be open and communicative regarding special education finances

Desired Qualifications

The Director position was posted from October 30 through December 8, 2023 in the district, on SchoolSpring, Indeed, and with NESDEC affiliates. In addition to the above qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge, and experiences, candidates must also have the following desired qualifications pertaining to administrative and instructional leadership, student management, and community relationships:

- Massachusetts licensure as a Director of Pupil Personnel, Student Services, or Administrator of Special Education (or proof of eligibility for same)
- Master's Degree required
- Minimum of 5 years of experience as a Director of Pupil Personnel, Student Services, or Administrator of Special Education
- Strong knowledge of pertinent laws and regulations
- Strong organizational, problem solving, interpersonal, and communication skills
- Such alternatives to the above qualifications at the discretion of the Superintendent

THEMES FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Demonstrated ability to:

- Implement Massachusetts special education and c.504 regulations
- Build effective relationships and partnerships; a “people person”
- Build trusting relationships with parent groups and local SEPACs
- Communicate effectively with school district personnel, parents, and municipal officials
- Supervise and evaluate special education personnel; recruit and retain high quality staff; provide appropriately targeted professional development opportunities
- Work and problem-solve collaboratively
- Effectively resolve conflict, disputes and stressful situations
- Assess and develop effective, evidenced-based special education programs; advocate for student needs
- Advocate for effective financial resources
- Strategically plan and develop visionary special education goals and objectives