

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Superintendent Search

Norwalk Public Schools

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October 20, 2026



Interviews, Focus Groups, and Community Forums

- Board & Administration
- School Staff and Teachers
- Student & Community Forum In-Person

Leadership Profile Report Participation

Groups	Personal interviews or focus groups, including Community Forum
Board of Education Members	9
Interim Superintendent	1
Administrators	44
Faculty	200
Support Staff	10
Students	9
Community/Parents/Guardians (includes Community Forum)	64
Union Leadership	11
Total	348

Each of the Individuals and Groups Were Asked to Share Their Thoughts on These 3 Questions

1. How would you describe the strengths of the District?
1. What do you see as the greatest Opportunities for Growth in the next few years?
1. What characteristics and areas of expertise would you like to see in the next Superintendent?



Summary of Comments & Consistent Themes

From Interviews, Focus Groups, and Community Forum

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Interviews

In-depth, 1-on-1 discussions with key stakeholders and district leadership.

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Focus Groups

Targeted collaborative sessions across various representative peer groups.

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Community Forum

Broad public feedback gathered from community members, parents, and guardians.

(alphabetical order)

Strengths of the District – Consistent Themes

01

Academic Achievement

Active use of data to monitor performance, drive continuous improvement, and support academic growth across schools.

02

Comprehensive Academic Pathways and Specialized Programs

Robust specialized offerings, for example, IB (International Baccalaureate), P -Tech, Marine Science, Dual Language, STEAM, Elementary School SEM, Montessori, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

03

Dedicated and Caring Staff

Highly praise -worthy teachers, administrators, and support staff who are committed, work hard, and put children first.

04

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

Rich cultural, linguistic, and demographic diversity across the student body, supported by strong equity and inclusion initiatives.

05

Engaged Community and Partnerships

Active involvement from parents, local businesses, community organizations, and civic leaders who support public education.

Strengths of the District – Consistent Themes (Continued)

06

Engaged Student Body

High participation in activities and multiple opportunities for growth in the district.

07

Performing Arts and Music Programs

Strong commitment to music, theater, and arts education, including award-winning marching bands and middle/high school productions.

08

Social -Emotional Learning and Student Support

Dedicated focus on student mental health, supporting high-need populations, and nurturing students beyond standardized testing.

09

Strong Instructional Leadership

Effective building-level administrators, central office leaders, and collaborative leadership teams.

10

Upgraded Facilities and Long -Term Capital Planning

Ongoing progress on facility improvements, new school construction projects, and long-range facilities planning.

Opportunities for Growth – Consistent Themes (Continued)

01

Budget Restraints and Fiscal Transparency

Managing tight budgets, reliance on property taxes, rising healthcare/special education costs, and improving public transparency around financial decisions.

02

Communication, Consistency, and Coordination

Improving centralized communication to eliminate conflicting messages, and ensure district-wide alignment.

03

Human Resources, Hiring, and Staff Retention

Streamlining HR hiring processes, addressing competitive pay (especially for paraprofessionals), and reducing staff turnover/poaching from neighboring districts.

04

Multilingual Learner (MLL) and Translation Support

Enhancing resources, support services for non-English speaking students and families.

05

Pathways and Program Alignment

Ensuring specialized pathways are aligned across grade levels, routinely evaluated to assess program effectiveness, and properly resourced.

06

Political Dynamics and Inter-Agency Relationships

Fostering stronger collaborative relationships between the Board of Education, city government, state representatives, and labor unions.

Opportunities for Growth – Consistent Themes

07

Restoring and Building Trust

Rebuilding trust among the central office, school board, staff, labor unions, parents, and community members.

08

Special Education Resources and Infrastructure

Addressing high caseloads, administrative structure, program consistency, co-teaching models, and rising Special Education costs.

09

Student Accountability

Meeting increasing student behavioral challenges, fostering student independence and critical thinking.

10

Technology Integration and AI Boundaries

Navigating digital learning, managing device use, and establishing boundaries around artificial intelligence to ensure students maintain independent critical thinking skills.

Summary Characteristics of the Next Superintendent

From Interviews, Focus Groups, and Open Forums

All groups consistently spoke of the importance of the next Superintendent having the following desired characteristics:



- Collaborative Relationship and Community Builder
- Commitment to Equity and Diverse Populations
- Exceptional and Transparent Communicator
- Fiscally Competent and Financially Savvy
- Knowledgeable and Pedagogically Experienced Leader
- Knows Norwalk and is Community-Vested
- Politically Savvy and Resilient
- Strategic Leader with Clear Vision
- Student-Centered Decision Maker
- Supportive and Empowering Leader
- Visible, Approachable, and Present

Survey Results

Survey Results

Groups	Online Survey
Administrators	49
Faculty	165
Support Staff	49
Students	54
Parents/Guardians with children in the District	411
Community/Parents/Guardians without children in the District	59
Total	787

District Strengths*

- District schools are safe. (TL)
- The District engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups. (CE)
- The District employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools. (M)
- The social and emotional needs of students are being addressed. (TL)
- The District is working to close achievement and opportunity gaps. (VV)

Key

TL = Teaching and Learning

M = Management

CE = Community Engagement

VV = Vision and Values

*in ranked order

Top Rated Characteristics Constituents Desire in a New Superintendent*

- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators (CE)
- Be an effective manager of the District's finances and operations (M)
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools (M)
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel (VV)
- Demonstrate measurable student outcomes grounded in research and emerging best practices (VV)

* Key
CE = Community Engagement
M = Management
VV = Vision and Values

*Respondents were asked to select 4 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent.

Desired Characteristics

Desired Characteristics

After seeking input from its Board members, parents, staff, students and the community via focus groups, interviews, and an online survey, the Norwalk Board of Education seeks a strong strategic leader who is

- **Collaborative Relationship and Community Builder:** A strong relationship builder who can bring together the Board, staff, unions, city council, state representatives, and diverse community partners.
- **Commitment to Equity and Diverse Populations:** Culturally competent leader who advocates for ALL students.
- **Exceptional and Transparent Communicator:** An open, authentic communicator who keeps all stakeholders informed, explains the "why" behind decisions, and actively listens.
- **Fiscally Competent and Financially Savvy:** Possesses strong financial acumen to manage complex budgets, understand local/state funding structures, and optimize resources for students.
- **Knowledgeable and Pedagogically Experienced Leader:** Grounded in education, research, curriculum, Special Education, and Pre-K–12 systems to continue academic growth.
- **Knows Norwalk and is Community-Vested:** Has an understanding of Norwalk, values its unique culture, and is committed to staying for the long term.
- **Politically Savvy and Resilient:** Able to navigate local and state political dynamics, handle high-pressure situations with a smile, and stand their ground when necessary.

Desired Characteristics (Continued)

- **Strategic Leader with Clear Vision:** A future-focused, visionary leader who aligns long-term goals with system wide implementation, collaboratively crafts a District-wide strategic plan, and establishes benchmarks for progress
- **Student-Centered Decision Maker:** Places children at the forefront of every decision, supporting academic growth, the arts, and social-emotional well-being.
- **Supportive Empowering Leader:** Respects existing staff and accomplishments, does not micromanage, utilizes the talent of the current staff, and fosters high morale and shared leadership.
- **Visible, Approachable, and Present:** Highly visible in schools and community events, accessible to students, staff, and parents without pretense

The successful candidate will:

- Be certified as a superintendent, or capable of gaining certification in Connecticut;
- Demonstrate a sincere commitment to the long-term success and well-being of the District.

Next Steps

- ▣ Recruiting
- ▣ Interviewing
- ▣ Selecting

Thank you!