

School District of Pickens County Superintendent Search

Focus Groups and Online Survey Summary
October 26, 2026

DATE: October 26, 2026

TO: The Board of Trustees
School District of Pickens County

FROM: Scott T. Price
Dr. Darrell Johnson
Judy LeGrand
South Carolina School Boards Association

RE: Report on focus group meetings and online survey to discuss the search for a superintendent

Attached, please find the notes from the focus group meeting and community meeting held in the district. The purpose of these meetings, conducted as part of your superintendent search, was to share information about your search for a new superintendent and to gather input including desirable qualities for the superintendent.

Judy LeGrand met with the Superintendent Leadership Team on September 21, 2026 to gather their input. Dr. Darrell Johnson and Scott Price met with community members on September 29 at Liberty High School. There were approximately 10 people present for the community meeting.

The staff and community were also given the opportunity to take an online survey to determine the characteristics needed in the next superintendent for the district. I have attached a summary of this survey. 774 people took the survey.

This information should be kept in mind while implementing the process of selecting the superintendent and can be used to share with the new superintendent as he/she begins their tenure as superintendent of the district.

IMPLICATIONS OF FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS

Obviously, you cannot project the perceptions with statistical validity on all residents of the district by conducting Focus Groups or an online survey. That is neither the purpose nor the value of sessions.

Focus groups and surveys do, however, provide a barometer of public opinion and are valuable in bringing to the surface both what people believe to be true and the emotion of their feelings.

This report captures various viewpoints expressed by the focus groups and survey. Whether or not the board members agree with the perceptions reported, they should recognize that such beliefs do exist.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTION

This report reflects the responses to the primary question: *“What characteristics, experiences, and qualities should the Board of Trustees look for in the recruitment, screening, and selection process for the next Superintendent of Schools?”*

SECTIONS OF THE REPORT

Part 1	Responses gathered from SLT and Community Meeting	Pages 4-8
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Notes from Superintendent Leadership Team Meeting

The following were the comments shared by the Superintendent Leadership Team regarding the qualities, characteristics, and experiences that the next superintendent of the School District Of Pickens County should possess.

- Experience with capital improvements budgeting
- Strong financial background
- Well-rounded individual
- Strong experience in traditional public education
- One academic focus
- Continue the forward momentum of the district
- Someone who will not make changes just for the sake of change
- Should know the community
- Ability to connect with people
- Understand and protect the culture of the community
- Experience as a principal
- Experience working with a leadership team
- Strong leader but not a micro manager
- Understands the positive aspects of this district
- A visionary
- Able to focus on the day-to-day but see the big picture as well (5-10 years out)
- Knowledge of and willing to support special education
- Must have a good working relationship with the board
- Understands local and state politics
- Understands the conservative nature of the community and the board
- Keep focus
- Calming influence
- Trustworthy
- High integrity
- Has a plan to stay competitive and draw teachers to the district
- People focused
- Understands economics and budgeting
- Continue with system to develop leaders
- Communicate clearly in difficult times
- Collaborative – bring the right people to the table
- Understands all levels: elementary, middle, and high school
- Focus on long-term success
- Willing to commit to staying – does not view this as a steppingstone to the next district
- Continues to network with other superintendents in the state and around the country – as a resource to share ideas
- Constantly seeking high level of success
- Think beyond the county

- Student-centered
- Ability to grow our own people/develop leaders
- Understand broad and diverse student populations
- We need a good listener, not just a cheerleader; someone with integrity and free of conflicts of interest; someone with an understanding the diversity and disparity of our district and the different "ecosystems," as another speaker put it. I am interested in someone who values all the students and groups, not just the athletes or the academic achievers.
- Accountability
- Additional resources in classrooms
- Collaboration
- Collaborative- provide opportunities for mental health counselors and behavioral health
- Communicator. Also, someone who will explain directives to district and school administrators.
- Community oriented- awareness of various and unique needs of each school
- Compassionate
- Futuristic and understanding long term goals
- Hear everyone at every level
- Innovative with Resources
- Integrity
- Leadership without disrupting the team
- Listener- someone who hears
- Overall, happy with district. Not looking for change agent.
- Passionate
- Provide additional resources for school social worker
- Recognize success and push forward
- Resource in classrooms
- Review budget to hire more social workers
- Self awareness in Leadership; how they operate
- Someone who can be resourceful and has firsthand knowledge/experience of working in the classroom and aware of the needs of their community, specifically knowing the needs of and respecting each school as its own ecosystem, providing individual care for what the needs are in said school/community.
- Someone who has experience in, knowledge of providing more wholistic care for students to include not just addressing academic needs but providing support with housing, mental health care and basic needs. Someone who is open to providing more training in this area for staff who are already addressing these issues and even partnering with the mental health agencies in the community to support stress reduction for staff, administrators and teachers and mental health support to students and parents. The hope would be for the new superintendent to expand social services by adding additional school social workers who can support connecting students to resources, making home visits as needed and supporting the mental health of both students and staff, teachers and administrators.

- Someone who is a collaborator with board members, district employees, teachers, students and parents, who will listen to those under their leadership and take their ideas, thoughts into consideration when deciding what is next for the district.
- Someone who is innovative and looking to and has experience with creating methods that support student's academic success while taking into consideration support for the parents and teachers.
- Someone who is passionate about the work they do, ways to grow and improve as well as someone who is compassionate in their approach to leadership.
- Someone who is self-aware and humble and knows what their personal and professional limits are. Someone who is not afraid to grow, seek help and be willing to change gears (so to speak) if a plan or idea is not working out/or in the best interest of the students, teachers, parents or district staff.
- Someone with classroom experience. (bonus for time w/ Sp. Ed, Counseling, Mental Education)
- Spend time in classroom
- Steadfastness
- Support teachers
- Understanding dynamics of a winning team
- Understanding that different schools have different needs depending on that particular community
- Visible and available.
- Work with Teachers in classrooms

PICKENS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY FORUM COMMENTS

- Spend time in classroom
- Someone with classroom experience.
- (bonus for time w/ Sp. Ed, Counseling, Mental Education)
- Understand broad and diverse student populations
- Work with Teachers in classrooms
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Hear everyone at every level
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- Listener- someone who hears
- Collaboration
- Innovative with Resources
- Self-awareness in Leadership and how they operate
- Additional resources in classrooms
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- Community oriented- awareness of various and unique needs of each school
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- Passionate
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- Provide additional resources for school social worker
- Review budget to hire more social workers
- Collaborative- provide opportunities for mental health counselors and behavioral health
- Steadfastness
- Futuristic and understanding long term goals
- Communicator. Also, someone who will explain directives to district and school administrators.
- Understanding dynamics of a winning team
- Leadership without disrupting the team
- Recognize success and push forward
- Overall, happy with district. Not looking for change agent.
- Visible and available.
- To reiterate my comments from last night, particularly based on Dr. Johnson's phrasing of the question:
- Work experience:

- I am interested in a candidate who has classroom teaching experience, not just in training and degree completion. This is important so that the superintendent can focus on the teacher-student connection, which is at the heart of an effective education system. "Bonus points" for multiple levels (k-5, middle, and high school) and for special education teaching. In addition to leadership at multiple administrative levels.
- Qualities and Characteristics: We need a good listener, not just a cheerleader; someone with integrity and free of conflicts of interest; someone with an understanding the diversity and disparity of our district and the different "ecosystems," as another speaker put it. I am interested in someone who values all the students and groups, not just the athletes or the academic achievers. In short, looking for a candidate that does not show favoritism or personal agendas, who understands and focuses on the heart of education, which is the teacher and the student process

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Question 1 What group do you represent? (Please select only one)

What group do you represent? (Please select only one)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Administrator	5.86%	45
Community Member	8.20%	63
Parent	47.79%	367
Student	2.21%	17
Support Staff	12.37%	95
Teacher	23.57%	181
Answered		768
Skipped		6

Question 2. Rank each of the following items on a 1-5 scale with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

Feedback from all groups combined:

	Weighted Average
Accessibility and responsiveness to community	4.38
Commitment to equity	4.11
Commitment to community and staff	4.69
Experience as a former Superintendent	3
Skilled communicator (both internal and external)	4.53
Live within the district and willing to make a long-term commitment	4.24
Experience in district budget development and management	4.11
Demonstrated commitment to athletics and other extracurricular activities	3.61
Demonstrated involvement within community: civic clubs, churches, etc.	3.76
Demonstrated experience in working with diverse groups	3.87
Commitment to and understanding of emerging technology in education	3.84
Commitment to building constructive relationships with the business community, higher education, and legislative delegation	4.02
Demonstrated strong background in curriculum and instruction	4.22
Commitment to insuring strong accountability measures for principals and teachers toward student achievement results	4.23
Experience in building and maintaining schools	3.98
Experience at the district level	3.78
Experience in closing achievement gaps, graduation rates and drop-out rates	4.1
Answered	772
Skipped	2

Question 2. Rank each of the following items on a 1-5 scale with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

Feedback from Administrators:

	Weighted Average
Accessibility and responsiveness to community	4.4
Commitment to equity	4.13
Commitment to community and staff	4.73
Experience as a former Superintendent	2.22
Skilled communicator (both internal and external)	4.51
Live within the district and willing to make a long-term commitment	4.36
Experience in district budget development and management	4.2
Demonstrated commitment to athletics and other extracurricular activities	3.73
Demonstrated involvement within community: civic clubs, churches, etc.	3.98
Demonstrated experience in working with diverse groups	3.76
Commitment to and understanding of emerging technology in education	3.51
Commitment to building constructive relationships with the business community, higher education, and legislative delegation	4.2
Demonstrated strong background in curriculum and instruction	4.02
Commitment to insuring strong accountability measures for principals and teachers toward student achievement results	4.24
Experience in building and maintaining schools	3.93
Experience at the district level	4.44
Experience in closing achievement gaps, graduation rates and drop-out rates	4.18
Answered	45
Skipped	0

Question 2. Rank each of the following items on a 1-5 scale with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

Feedback from Community Members:

	Weighted Average
Accessibility and responsiveness to community	4.28
Commitment to equity	3.61
Commitment to community and staff	4.62
Experience as a former Superintendent	3.3
Skilled communicator (both internal and external)	4.32
Live within the district and willing to make a long-term commitment	4.25
Experience in district budget development and management	4.15

Demonstrated commitment to athletics and other extracurricular activities	3.8
Demonstrated involvement within community: civic clubs, churches, etc.	3.98
Demonstrated experience in working with diverse groups	3.54
Commitment to and understanding of emerging technology in education	3.95
Commitment to building constructive relationships with the business community, higher education, and legislative delegation	4.05
Demonstrated strong background in curriculum and instruction	3.97
Commitment to insuring strong accountability measures for principals and teachers toward student achievement results	4.2
Experience in building and maintaining schools	4
Experience at the district level	3.88
Experience in closing achievement gaps, graduation rates and drop-out rates	4.07
Answered	62
Skipped	1

Question 2. Rank each of the following items on a 1-5 scale with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

Feedback from Parents:

	Weighted Average
Accessibility and responsiveness to community	4.46
Commitment to equity	4.1
Commitment to community and staff	4.64
Experience as a former Superintendent	3.05
Skilled communicator (both internal and external)	4.52
Live within the district and willing to make a long-term commitment	4.27
Experience in district budget development and management	4.1
Demonstrated commitment to athletics and other extracurricular activities	3.71
Demonstrated involvement within community: civic clubs, churches, etc.	3.79
Demonstrated experience in working with diverse groups	3.89
Commitment to and understanding of emerging technology in education	3.97
Commitment to building constructive relationships with the business community, higher education, and legislative delegation	4.01
Demonstrated strong background in curriculum and instruction	4.25
Commitment to insuring strong accountability measures for principals and teachers toward student achievement results	4.33
Experience in building and maintaining schools	3.93
Experience at the district level	3.65
Experience in closing achievement gaps, graduation rates and drop-out rates	4.18
Answered	367
Skipped	0

Question 2. Rank each of the following items on a 1-5 scale with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

Feedback from Students:

	Weighted Average
Accessibility and responsiveness to community	4.31
Commitment to equity	4.38
Commitment to community and staff	4.33
Experience as a former Superintendent	3.31
Skilled communicator (both internal and external)	4.6
Live within the district and willing to make a long-term commitment	4
Experience in district budget development and management	4
Demonstrated commitment to athletics and other extracurricular activities	4
Demonstrated involvement within community: civic clubs, churches, etc.	4.24
Demonstrated experience in working with diverse groups	4.5
Commitment to and understanding of emerging technology in education	4.06
Commitment to building constructive relationships with the business community, higher education, and legislative delegation	4
Demonstrated strong background in curriculum and instruction	4
Commitment to insuring strong accountability measures for principals and teachers toward student achievement results	4.56
Experience in building and maintaining schools	4.13
Experience at the district level	3.75
Experience in closing achievement gaps, graduation rates and drop-out rates	4.31
Answered	17
Skipped	0

Question 2. Rank each of the following items on a 1-5 scale with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

Feedback from Support Staff:

	Weighted Average
Accessibility and responsiveness to community	4.56
Commitment to equity	4.32
Commitment to community and staff	4.83
Experience as a former Superintendent	3.01
Skilled communicator (both internal and external)	4.67
Live within the district and willing to make a long-term commitment	4.37
Experience in district budget development and management	4.25

Demonstrated commitment to athletics and other extracurricular activities	3.63
Demonstrated involvement within community: civic clubs, churches, etc.	3.86
Demonstrated experience in working with diverse groups	4.08
Commitment to and understanding of emerging technology in education	3.95
Commitment to building constructive relationships with the business community, higher education, and legislative delegation	4.13
Demonstrated strong background in curriculum and instruction	4.18
Commitment to insuring strong accountability measures for principals and teachers toward student achievement results	4.45
Experience in building and maintaining schools	4.24
Experience at the district level	4.05
Experience in closing achievement gaps, graduation rates and drop-out rates	4.23
Answered	94
Skipped	1

Question 2. Rank each of the following items on a 1-5 scale with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

Feedback from Teachers:

	Weighted Average
Accessibility and responsiveness to community	4.15
Commitment to equity	4.18
Commitment to community and staff	4.79
Experience as a former Superintendent	2.94
Skilled communicator (both internal and external)	4.54
Live within the district and willing to make a long-term commitment	4.12
Experience in district budget development and management	4.07
Demonstrated commitment to athletics and other extracurricular activities	3.25
Demonstrated involvement within community: civic clubs, churches, etc.	3.46
Demonstrated experience in working with diverse groups	3.82
Commitment to and understanding of emerging technology in education	3.53
Commitment to building constructive relationships with the business community, higher education, and legislative delegation	3.96
Demonstrated strong background in curriculum and instruction	4.32
Commitment to insuring strong accountability measures for principals and teachers toward student achievement results	3.88
Experience in building and maintaining schools	3.94
Experience at the district level	3.73
Experience in closing achievement gaps, graduation rates and drop-out rates	3.86
Answered	181
Skipped	0

Question 3. In choosing the next superintendent, which path or strategy below do you think the Board of Trustees should take? (Choose ONE answer)

Feedback from all groups combined:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Find a candidate who will stay the course and continue the good work of the current administration.	22.98%	176
Find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the current administration, but who can make some necessary changes.	54.96%	421
Find a very different kind of candidate - one who is ready to take the District in a significantly different direction.	22.06%	169
	Answered	766
	Skipped	0

Question 3. In choosing the next superintendent, which path or strategy below do you think the Board of Trustees should take? (Choose ONE answer)

Feedback from Administrators:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Find a candidate who will stay the course and continue the good work of the current administration.	55.56%	25
Find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the current administration, but who can make some necessary changes.	40.00%	18
Find a very different kind of candidate - one who is ready to take the District in a significantly different direction.	4.44%	2
	Answered	45
	Skipped	0

Question 3. In choosing the next superintendent, which path or strategy below do you think the Board of Trustees should take? (Choose ONE answer)

Feedback from Community Members:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Find a candidate who will stay the course and continue the good work of the current administration.	39.34%	24
Find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the current administration, but who can make some necessary changes.	37.70%	23
Find a very different kind of candidate - one who is ready to take the District in a significantly different direction.	22.95%	14
	Answered	61
	Skipped	2

Question 3. In choosing the next superintendent, which path or strategy below do you think the Board of Trustees should take? (Choose ONE answer)

Feedback from Parents:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Find a candidate who will stay the course and continue the good work of the current administration.	20.60%	75
Find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the current administration, but who can make some necessary changes.	54.12%	197
Find a very different kind of candidate - one who is ready to take the District in a significantly different direction.	25.27%	92
	Answered	364
	Skipped	3

Question 3. In choosing the next superintendent, which path or strategy below do you think the Board of Trustees should take? (Choose ONE answer)

Feedback from Students:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Find a candidate who will stay the course and continue the good work of the current administration.	18.75%	3
Find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the current administration, but who can make some necessary changes.	68.75%	11
Find a very different kind of candidate - one who is ready to take the District in a significantly different direction.	12.50%	2
	Answered	16
	Skipped	1

Question 3. In choosing the next superintendent, which path or strategy below do you think the Board of Trustees should take? (Choose ONE answer)

Feedback from Support Staff:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Find a candidate who will stay the course and continue the good work of the current administration.	18.95%	18
Find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the current administration, but who can make some necessary changes.	60.00%	57
Find a very different kind of candidate - one who is ready to take the District in a significantly different direction.	21.05%	20
	Answered	95
	Skipped	0

Question 3. In choosing the next superintendent, which path or strategy below do you think the Board of Trustees should take? (Choose ONE answer)

Feedback from Teachers:

Answer Choices	Responses	
Find a candidate who will stay the course and continue the good work of the current administration.	16.76%	30
Find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the current administration, but who can make some necessary changes.	62.01%	111
Find a very different kind of candidate - one who is ready to take the District in a significantly different direction.	21.23%	38
Answered		179
Skipped		2

Comments from online survey:

- I would like to see someone who can carry this forward. It's so important for our students, staff and community to feel safe with this person and that they will continue to be rooted in our heritage and legacy...
- We need someone outside of Pickens to come in and honestly care about change for all of Pickens county! Not feed into the Daniel community. There are so many schools in our county that deserve so much more.
- The board should find someone from outside of Pickens County who is respected, qualified, and not a part of the "good old boy" clique.
- I pray that whoever takes his place, continues his mission for excellence.
- Our students need to know they are loved and cared for. The world they live it might be hard and hateful, but with the help of a Christian superintendent and local churches we can show students there is hope. Students who have no hope want have better graduation rates or test scores. They have to know we care about them.
- Someone local that has lived here, knows and appreciates Pickens. Pickens County is a beautiful place to be. The heritage is rich and full of history. Let's continue to celebrate and build on what is here.
- I believe we need the next Superintendent to maintain at the same level of allowing churches to help within our district. In our world in which we live (which can be harsh and cruel) allowing the churches to have a part in helping students/staff is vital. The amount of students and staff that have received help/assistance is needed in our area. I beg the board not to allow someone to come in and dismiss what our community churches have built within our district.
- I think it is very important that the new Superintendent continue forward with what we are doing now. It is vital to have someone from our area, and that currently works within our district be promoted into this position.
- The next superintendent should have a passion for children and continue in the same path that we are currently on. I pray that the next superintendent will still allow FCA and all pro Dad continue across the district. A lot of kids don't have love and nurturing at home and the only love they're shown is during these events.
- Willing to work with church and Jesus, to put a positive back on students, Students are the main goal not parents winning about who said this or drama. Let's keep a positive example, all are created equal, to be loved and instructed how to be a leader and positive influence in our community, Give teachers Support in helping teachers love kids. Not a one sided opinion
- I believe we need someone who knows the community, and that will continue to allow the churches to be involved. Education is very important, and so is allowing pastors to spread the gospel within the schools! Please make sure the new hire is ok with this. Thanks!!
- "As a product of the SDPC as well as a parent of a current educator for the SDPC, I feel the board as well as the superintendent needs to empower our teachers with tools and the time to actually teach in the classroom.
- I also would like for the access that our area churches have in our schools to continue. I feel this helps create a positive environment for our students."

- To do what is best for our schools and students in Pickens County regardless of what other county's may be doing.
- They should be willing to accept the ways of the community, and never ever be closed minded toward the Christian clubs and groups that meet on there own time either before or after school hours!
- We need someone who will continue to allow churches in the area the privilege to come in serve the students that want to be served.
- It is obvious that the community and student body have and are thriving in the current environment.
- I understand that the dynamics and landscape have changed, but that doesn't mean our current values should.
- I strongly agree with keeping the same course with the same foundation verses changing just to say we are "adapting " to the area.
- I hope that the next decisions that are made for our area focuses on what has been important in the past.
- Christ, Commitment, Community "
- I want the next superintendent to continue to allow Church involvement in the Schools! My children have been very responsive in a positive way through the extracurricular involvement from church groups!
- Someone who is truly collaborative, one who understands how to effectively work with corporate and nonprofit partners to ensure the overall success of students and the community. The district, companies, schools, nonprofits, partners...none can do this work alone, it takes all working together for students to succeed on the highest level.
- In my opinion, the ideal candidate would be a person who has independent business experience- this would be far more effective than a career educator. A small business owner would be ideal, if they are also a good communicator. Someone who has developed the skills to bring teams together as well as has lived and died by the balance sheet - not passed along debt or skipped maintenance.
- Integrity, servant leadership, honesty, maturity and the ability to create a healthy, positive, productive, supportive culture that rewards the passionate pursuit of serving the needs of students. This would be a welcome change. The board should also be able to demonstrate a full and dedicated effort to find external candidates before simply choosing a recommended successor from within the district office. This is an opportunity for the Board to reset their role and actively operate as an effective oversight body.
- Over the past decade, Pickens County School District has established itself as one of South Carolina's premier public school systems. That success did not happen by accident. It was made possible through the commitment and vision of the Board of Trustees, and the tireless work of an exceptional team of educators who have dedicated themselves to student success.
- We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past. It is imperative that we stay the course. This is not the time for experimentation or a dramatic shift in direction. Pickens County is a special place with a unique culture, strong Christian community values, and an educational system that has become a model for others across our state. That culture has been carefully built and must be protected.
- The superintendent is the single most important leadership position in Pickens County. The individual selected will shape the future of thousands of students, influence the

success of our workforce, and impact the quality of life in our community for years to come. The strongest path forward is clear: choose a leader who understands our district, shares our values, has earned the trust of our educators and community, and is prepared to build upon the extraordinary progress already underway.

- Please make the right decision. Preserve the momentum, protect what has been built, and promote from within.
- I believe the next superintendent should be a strong listener and relationship-builder who values the voices and experiences of teachers, students, families, and administrators. The superintendent should understand that student success and teacher well-being are closely connected and should prioritize a healthy, supportive school culture throughout the district. I believe major district initiatives, including decisions regarding the hybrid schedule, should be evaluated through the lens of both student outcomes and the impact on teachers' workload, well-being, and ability to effectively serve students. All teachers should have meaningful opportunities to provide feedback about these decisions, and that feedback should be genuinely considered.
- I would also look for a leader who embraces a whole-child approach to education and recognizes that academic achievement is influenced by students' social, emotional, behavioral, and mental well-being. This should include supporting teachers with the resources, professional learning, and systems they need to effectively meet the increasingly complex needs of students. An added benefit would be a superintendent with recent classroom experience, particularly experience navigating the changes in education since COVID-19. Our schools continue to feel the effects of the pandemic through changes in student behavior, learning needs, social development, and the increasing dependence on technology. A leader who understands these changes firsthand would be more likely to recognize the realities teachers and students are experiencing in today's classrooms.
- The next superintendent should be visible, accessible, and approachable in schools, willing to listen before making major decisions, and committed to transparent communication. They should be open to feedback from classroom teachers at all levels since they are the ones in the trenches with our students. The superintendent should be willing to evaluate whether current initiatives are actually benefiting students and teachers, and able to make thoughtful decisions based on both quantitative data (i.e., test scores, referrals) and qualitative data (i.e., the lived experiences of those working directly with students).
- Finally, I believe the district needs a superintendent who can build trust, support innovation, advocate for teachers and students, and create a shared vision for the future while maintaining a strong focus on the people who make our schools successful. Without a clear vision, all processes and efforts are often siloed, and in some instances, our processes actually work against each other.
- Ensure the candidate prioritizes the relationship with Tri-County Technical College as the district's premier higher education partner. Great work has been done, and this work needs to continue for the students and community.
- Our district is running so well. It needs to stay the course. I feel it is important that the new superintendent come from within the district. We have some wonderful, qualified individuals right here that are more than prepared to take over. We don't need to go outside our district. We have done a great job of preparing individuals here to take over.

- Integrity, focus on supporting teachers and students, classroom experience, excellent listening skills.
- Ability to work with key partners to increase opportunities for graduates to get sustainable, meaningful careers to support their families
- The only necessary changes I would recommend are to continue what we are doing but refine it with a simpler approach, build a deeper relationship with our churches and community, and improve our budgeting with spending. Be careful and wary of candidates who are only looking for a power grab and ladder climbing in their profession. Test the quality and character of the candidate's passion, not just their resume. We need someone with smarts, yes, but we need someone even more with the heart and strong shoulders to do what is necessary in the day of which we live. Someone who knows that he or she can't do it alone but trusts God and builds a team around them that cares about these students.
- The board should look for a superintendent with extensive experience at multiple levels (elem. and secondary) as an instructional leader and a firm commitment to student learning from early childhood through graduation. He or she should understand how a strong curriculum, effective teaching, useful assessment, and timely support for students all work in conjunction with each other and should be able to convert that understanding into a small number of priorities which schools can properly implement.
- Just as important are honesty, good judgment, and the ability to earn trust. The next person to be superintendent should carefully listen to teachers, school leaders, families, and students; make sure that his or her decisions are clearly communicated; develop capable leaders; and keep the district accountably responsible for the results. He or she should appreciate the strengths that already exist in Pickens County while also being willing to look at and deal with those areas that need improvement. Sound financial and operational judgment will be necessary to continue the work."
- Someone that has possibly filled in for the current superintendent in the superintendent's absence. That kind trust must have significant merit to that person's leadership skillset.
- Follower of Jesus Christ with integrity, honesty, good character and a love for children and their success.
- A good communicator.
- Someone who will listen to the teachers and make changes when necessary.
- Someone who values student learning, but is not solely focused on test scores. Growth of students goes far beyond what their test scores are, especially in classes where they aren't tested. Students are much more than a test grade"
- Someone who actually listens to parents and educators when making decisions regarding our schools and children. Don't just look at facts and figures, but talk to educators and truly understand the needs of students in our districts. Be willing to drastically change what isn't working and expand on what is working. Thank you!
- The next superintendent should look at positions beginning at the top. Can any be eliminated? How many positions do not directly impact student learning. The emphasis needs to be academic focused. Not social media focused. Less emphasis needs to be placed on "fun". There is too much time out of the classroom. Allow teachers to teach. .
- There needs to be a superintendent who values all disciplines in the district and not just administrators and teachers.

- Our next superintendent needs to have the courage to make bold decisions and changes
- The superintendent needs to run the district like a school district and not a business. So much emphasis has been put on community partnerships that you have failed to prioritize the students sitting in the classroom.
- We need a superintendent who has experience with students in PreK to fifth grade. We have been catering to the high school students too long and our foundation has been compromised. We need to stay the course and stop dramatically changing curriculum year to year. The need to merge special education with general education needs to stop. Our gen ed teachers are burning out trying to run in 90 directions. We need to follow surrounding districts and pursue self contained classrooms in special education again. This co-teaching bandwagon we've jumped on has caused our gen ed students to suffer. The special education students are being put above the general education students.
- Our next superintendent should have experience at the elementary level or at least be familiar with the pressure that is being put on elementary teachers. Elementary teachers and children are dealing with so much with behavioral issues, SPED students, particularly medically fragile or multiple disabilities, being pushed into regular classrooms. Our next superintendent needs to have a strong understanding of educational law. He/ She recognized that special education services are legally required while also protecting opportunities and supports for general education students. In addition there should be a willingness to challenge decisions. Someone who speaks up when district, state, or federal mandates may unintentionally disadvantage general education students. He or she should also have a strong support for teachers. Morale is at an all time low across this district, especially at the elementary level. He/ she should recognize the challenges teachers face balancing diverse student needs and provides training, staffing, and classroom support. Most importantly, general education teachers should not be expected to become SPED teachers or MLL teachers. Other districts have self contained classrooms for these types of students, yet SDPC has the most unrealistic expectations about inclusion and co teaching, especially in the lower grades. The only students being discriminated against in SDPC are the general education students. We need someone who will fix it. Someone who will fight for 80% of SDPC students, not just the other 20%.
- Someone who values honest feedback and will have honest conversations even when it's hard. Transparency is key and addressing the challenges head on as the leader of the district.
- Strong character who's actions represent their beliefs and willing to take direction from the Board. Willing to stand up for traditional family values and not let liberal ideology indoctrinate our schools, specifically through the teachers and books.
- I want someone that will take care of the teachers and staff. I want someone that will absolutely CARE about special education and will be willing to spend A LOT of time in the classroom. Especially classroom with kids that need some specific education. We have too many kids in regular Ed classrooms that need to be in special events and it take WAY to long for the kids to be placed in the right placement I don't have a problem with special education but I do have a problem with how long it take to have placement. I love special education. I love the kids but I feel like the special education department don't do enough for their teachers or their students

- The SDPC needs a superintendent who will support teachers on the front lines instead of implementing one-size-fits-all initiatives that add more work to teachers and take away the autonomy and passion on which our successes are based. The next leader should be focused on hiring the right people and supporting them--not enforcing blanket mandates that penalize good teachers, are ignored by some teachers, and are difficult to enforce. Our next superintendent should be fearless in enforcing the policies that we believe in and unafraid to "ruffle the feathers" of students, parents, teachers, and community members.
- Someone who understands that not every school or community has the same needs. Someone who values learning over graduation rate. Someone who knows how and when to say yes and no. Some people at the district office say yes to everything but don't follow through.
- The next superintendent should give more support and communication with teachers and make efforts to require parental support and accountability in their children's education.
- I strongly feel there are some amazing candidates who already work for the district and we should be looking at them before expanding the search.
- We need someone who will speak up with no fear of being unpopular. In modern speak..."say the quiet/weird part out loud!" Be brave! If a new technology idea isn't working, dump it. Don't be afraid to go low tech in the basic subjects. Continue and increase support and use of PCCTC.
- As far as insuring strong accountability measures for principals and teachers toward student achievement results
- I'm much more concerned with insuring strong accountability measures for students and providing support for teachers holding students to their educational standards & behavioral boundaries. "
- A candidate who is not politically correct, woke or a liberal but one who supports values aligned with the common sense people of Pickens County.
- Leadership- well respected by peers and those that report or have reported to them. Accountability- doing the right thing and standing behind that, Respect teaching it living it and expecting it from their staff, responsibility -understanding the job and the taking ownership of the parts that you are responsible for. Hiring smart people to fill other roles. Building a team of people in our district who believe in the success of our students and our community. Integrity- doing the next right thing.
- We need someone with local roots and not a politician. We need someone who will bring discipline back to our schools. Someone who is not willing to sacrifice our kids education to placate those who refuse to learn and behave in a manner that is conducive to education. We need a leader who will support the basics of education and not a political agenda forced upon our students by liberal minded teachers.
- The next superintendent should be a visible, approachable, and collaborative leader who genuinely values the voices of teachers, students, parents, and community members. I believe SDPC needs a superintendent who understands the realities of the classroom and makes decisions with the impact on students and educators at the forefront.
- The ideal candidate should have a strong understanding of instruction and student achievement, while also recognizing that supporting teachers and retaining high-quality educators are essential to maintaining a successful school district. They should be

willing to listen to staff, communicate clearly and consistently, and build trust through transparency and follow-through.

- I would also value a superintendent who is forward-thinking and willing to embrace innovation while maintaining the traditions and strengths that make SDPC a strong district. Most importantly, the next superintendent should be student-centered, ethical, fiscally responsible, and committed to creating a positive culture in which students and staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to succeed.
- I believe when a school district is performing well, hiring a superintendent isn't about starting over—it is about sustaining momentum while refining what already works. The goal for the board is to find a leader who respects the existing culture, and has trained under that leadership, and has the discipline to build upon established success rather than tearing down over a decade of meaningful work.
- Supports Athletic improvements with funding, facilities, etc.
- I feel we need to look outside of our district for new leadership to bring in new ideas and perhaps invest in staff within the schools, not just at the administration level.
- The future Superintendent should not come from within, if there is not a candidate that is willing to change the direction of our district.
- As a parent and staff member. I hope we can find some one that will finally do something about the behavior problems that disrupt the learning of the other students in the class room. Deal with these problems and test scores go up because students can actually learn what they are there to learn. We need someone who is not so far removed from the classroom and understands what is realistic goals for teachers and staff. We do not need someone who is a trend setter or wants to make a name for themselves.
- 1. Committed to increasing graduation rates 2. Competence in being fiscally responsible
- I think being community minded is important!
- Because we have a robust senior leadership team, it is not necessary for the next Superintendent to have all the knowledge. Wisdom and discernment to leverage the expertise already on staff are more beneficial than personal experience in all things.
- Also, the next Superintendent must be respectful of the traditions of the community's families (not just the district's story) and work collaboratively to maximize and preserve the characteristics and qualities that have led to Pickens County having more Medal of Honor recipients per capita than any other county in the United States. Those distinctions are significant and should matter to those who help educate the county's children.
- The new superintendent must discern the times and understand the challenges dividing our nation. There are competing forces working to determine the direction of public education and, thus, the future. The superintendent's vision must be bold enough to champion what is objectively true and morally right, no matter what direction the winds of current events blow.
- For example, in the Bible, equity means fairness, moral uprightness, and impartial justice that treats everyone without favoritism. In secular modern culture, equity in education refers to ensuring students who have been historically marginalized by educational institutions receive sufficient support and access to resources. Those two understandings of the same word conflict with one another more than complement each other. The superintendent has to be able to navigate that difference wisely, even when that means challenging current societal preferences.

- Business leaders, higher education, and legislators are not the primary stewards of children. That distinction and authority rest solely with parents and families, and the next superintendent must recognize and honor that truth, not lead the district's schools despite it.
- This county has been blessed. The next superintendent will be most successful if he/she is intimately familiar with the One from whom all blessings flow. Boldness is a byproduct of righteousness. SDPC's next Superintendent will need both.
- Should be a Strong Christian, focus on 3 Rs, return discipline to the classroom, keep kids safe
- God fearing!
- The next superintendent should be a visible, accessible, student-centered leader who genuinely listens to the educators and staff doing the day-to-day work in our schools. I would like to see someone who values teacher input before implementing new initiatives and who understands that successful programs require adequate staffing, planning time, training, and resources—not simply additional expectations placed on already full workloads.
- It is especially important that our next superintendent understand the unique needs of special education. Special education teachers balance instruction with extensive legal, compliance, progress-monitoring, meeting, and case-management responsibilities. District decisions regarding staffing, schedules, caseloads, duties, and new initiatives should reflect the actual time required to perform those responsibilities well.
- I hope the Board seeks a superintendent who is transparent, collaborative, willing to examine whether district practices are truly working, and comfortable making changes when the data or feedback indicate they are needed. Data should guide decisions, but student and teacher experiences should also matter.
- Most importantly, I would like a superintendent who recognizes that supporting students begins with supporting the people who serve them. Retaining strong educators requires more than appreciation; it requires sustainable workloads, adequate planning time, appropriate staffing, meaningful professional support, and a willingness to listen when employees identify barriers that are affecting their ability to do their jobs well."
- We would like to see a superintendent committed to ELA that focuses on the Science of Reading with fidelity for our 1 in 5 children that struggle to learn to read. (Not Reading Recovery),.
- We need a superintendent who is willing to take a hit to the graduation rate until we can re-establish the baseline of what a SDPC diploma should represent.
- We also need a superintendent who is willing to consider working parents and teachers when making huge decisions like the calendar. . "
- Our superintendent needs to value and prioritize authentic learning and equipping students with real skills over graduation rates!
- We need transparency and a willingness to make some IMPORTANT changes.
- You've been doing well. Find someone to keep up the good work. Make sure he or she will keep woke and dumb ideas from the education schools out of Pickens. Make sure he or she will respect parental rights.
- Our next superintendent should be a strong supporter of teachers. He/she should have a strong background in elementary education, not just secondary education.. It is important to have someone in charge of our district who understands ALL levels of

education. The next superintendent also needs to listen to feedback from the teachers and make the necessary changes to fix the issues we are seeing in the classroom. He/she needs to trust teachers as professionals and eliminate micromanagement. He/she needs to be visible in schools, needs to be approachable, and needs to work with our board as a cohesive unit to make the best-informed decisions for our district, in collaboration with teachers from ALL levels of education.

- Commitment to holding ALL stakeholders (including parents...truancy, etc.) accountable for student achievement results, not just teachers and principals
- We need a good listener, who will intertwine themselves at all schools with all involved; from the top of the district, through the school admins, staff, students, and parents. They also need to have connections with all communities involved. This service and commitment is then taken outside of our community gain support from other groups, communities, districts, and government.
- Hire based on merit not social justice. I want their soul focus on education especially math and reading and giving the teachers what they need to succeed. A passion for children's to become productive members of society in all aspects of life based on development of character virtues. Encourage parental authority and transparency. An embrace of our history of American exceptionalism and traditional values and a push for both sides of the evolution/creation facts to be presented and discussed. I would like at least an op-it for lessons from FEE, Tuttle Twins, Praeger U, etc. And more emphasis on cursive, it's very good for tactile development in many areas, not just writing.
- Conservative candidate that doesn't believe in progressive/socialist ideals and that will push to actually educate our youth and grow this county out of poverty. Tried and blue collar work should be encouraged by this candidate
- Conservative beliefs who will fight for our children's education. No progressive or liberal values.
- I would like to see a candidate that puts students and their families first. I also would like the committee to elect someone from this district or at least this state with a child that is or will be a student in Pickens county. I feel this will give the candidate more reason to make better decisions about the path and future of curriculum and the way our children will be taught!
- Our focus on the goals laid out in our strategic plan have guided us towards our most successful years as a district. I absolutely want to stay on the exact path we are on and continue to improve as a unified team.
- I love our district. I believe we have several people who would be an excellent Superintendent in the district that are passionate about us being successful in so many areas that would support our students, employees, and community interests.
- No woke beliefs
- Commitment to teaching kids to read, write, history and mathematics and NOT woke ideology. When I went to school I could NOT tell you what the political beliefs were of my teachers. It should be that way again. Teach..... DON'T indoctrinate!
- Needs to be committed to diversity equity and inclusion
- Someone with a strong focus on students' academic success and a strong background in classroom instruction. Someone who can support both the educators in the district and make difficult decisions when it comes to ensuring our students receive the best education.

- If the person is more committed to equity, pro-trans or other "woke" ideas, that is a hard pass. I would like to see a Super who is committed to increasing the quality of education to all students, without putting extra emphasis on targeted groups. I would appreciate someone who is also committed to giving our children a strong foundation in more of a "classical education." Someone who has strong interpersonal skills and is not just a numbers wonk. the district is heading in the right direction ,so I don't think you need a huge course correction. Good luck in your search--it is not an easy task given that there a limited pool of qualified Supers (and potential Supers) in the country. I am sure you all will find a great candidate.
- A person who has background in all areas of education 4k - 12th grade. Someone who will make decisions with the School Board, to include community and staff members, in decision making. Also, look at the whole district, not just the graduation rates...
- The prospective superintendent should be aware of and in-step with current multi-year foward-thinking/ planning roadmaps. Stay the course and stick to the plan!
- Someone who is committed to make every department in this district excel.
- I would prefer someone who has a history with SDPC and understands the positives and negatives of the district. The next superintendent should prioritize genuine learning and academic preparedness rather than focusing on graduation rates as a measure of success.
- The next superintendent should be someone who makes decisions based on the best interests of the entire district. "
- I feel the board should look for someone who is a true believer in our Lord Jesus Christ who has ethics and is fair and trustworthy.
- We need someone who is focused on the schools and not expanding the district office. There are too many assistant superintendents and directors at the district level. The funds need to go back to classrooms and students.
- I believe it is time for new leadership with new ideas but now is the time for someone with experience outside our district and a different perspective to lead our district. I think our DO staff has grown too large, with too many assistant superintendents, directors, assistant directors and we are not spending the money on students and teachers, just supervisors.
- Go-getter, hands-on, student-centered mindset, approachable and visible (spends time in school, listens to employees and takes into account areas of improvement), collaborative, advocator, fair and consistent, visionary thinker
- The superintendent does not need to have ""friends"" within the district already. The cronyism that has plagued our district needs to stop. We need qualified candidates in all leadership positions, not meeting quotas or ""yes men"". So, the superintendent needs to be able to lead, even if it offends and hurts feelings.
- The superintendent needs to understand the dynamics of our current classroom. This could mean hiring a recent teacher, or at least someone who is willing to actually visit classrooms. Classrooms have drastically changed since 2020, and most district leadership is oblivious to this fact. Teachers are struggling, but being blamed for students who no longer value education.
- Also, the superintendent should move away from the over-reliance on technology. It would save our district money, and it would allow students to actually learn again. "

- Someone who is going to keep Principals accountable. Teachers need support. they do the heavy lifting lets make sure they are valued and supported.
- Should be looking for the best in the district as a whole.
- I would like our next superintendent to be visible, approachable, and actively involved in our schools. We need a leader who regularly visits classrooms, listens to teachers, and understands the challenges faced by those working directly with students each day.
- The superintendent should carefully evaluate district-level and administrative positions to ensure resources are being used effectively and that classroom teachers receive the staffing, materials, and support they need. I also believe administrators should remain connected to classroom realities by preparing lesson plans and serving as a substitute teacher at least once each nine weeks. This firsthand experience would help district leaders make more informed decisions and better understand the workload and needs of both teachers and students.
- Above all, our next superintendent should value teacher input and make decisions based on what will most directly benefit students and the educators who serve them.
- Student engagement, respect, and discipline are major issues that I see in my school. I would love to see a shift to holding students accountable.
- A public education champion, someone who will fight for state funding, someone who will use evidence based education strategies, someone who will support inclusive public education and not let one organization or mindset/belief drive the direct of school education materials, work with city leaders on growth and include new school space as a priority.
- We should look for a candidate who is willing to challenge students and encourage a "back to basics" learning approach. This means discouraging the use of computers and artificial intelligence on the classroom.
- Someone who understands the whole child is not about test scores. All of our students need meaningful opportunities inside and outside the regular school day. Teachers need to feel heard, understood, and appreciated, and our next leader should not be so far removed from the classroom that they can no longer relate to everyday life inside the classroom.
- I believe an internal hire is exactly what we need to stay on track with where we are now. Our school district is incredible!
- However, I think there are significant changes that need to take place when it comes to handling behavior and supporting teachers in the classroom. There are changes that need to be made when it comes to the screening process for evaluating children. There are children that are in regular education classrooms that don't need to be because they have special needs or severe behaviors, and it is not appropriate for the child or the teacher because the child is not being set up for success and the teacher cannot run their classroom and help the other children learn if they are having to deal with behaviors/special needs. There are also extreme behaviors that take place in the SPED classrooms with students that honestly don't belong in the special ed classroom. I realize this probably is something that is occurring because of things that are in place at the state level, but we need to see change in the classrooms that support teachers more."
- Of good character above reproach and commitment to Pickens Co. School District.

- We need someone who will use the schools we already have and not try to consolidate small schools in the district.
- The next superintendent should be a strong instructional leader who understands that the primary work of a school district is improving the experience and outcomes of students. I believe the board should look for someone who has demonstrated success in leading people, developing strong relationships, communicating clearly and consistently, and holding themselves and others accountable for results.
- The superintendent should understand the work of principals and teachers and be willing to listen to the people closest to students while still having the courage to make difficult decisions when necessary. They should be visible and accessible to staff, students, families, and the community, and should work to build trust across all levels of the organization. I would also place a high value on someone who understands the district's history, culture, and current direction, while still being willing to challenge us to continue improving. The next superintendent should be focused on developing leaders within the organization and creating opportunities for strong people to grow and take on greater responsibility.
- Ultimately, I believe the district needs a superintendent who can balance people and performance—someone who cares deeply about students and employees, understands the realities of school-level leadership, communicates a clear direction, and is willing to stay focused on the work necessary to make the district better.
- I cannot imagine the difficulty of being a superintendent. Now, the district needs to look into the future and recruit the best visionary that also understands the limitations of our community. It may be in-house, but it also may be a "stranger" that can move the district into the future. Only the best for our little ones is the standard.
- A person of integrity who understands the complexity of the educational system. A person who is invested in this community - preferably a person who is already in this district.
- As much as it pains me to say this, I'd like to see the new superintendent not be one of the good ole boys. Also, someone who will cut back on the unimaginable amount of people that are at Central Services. Instead of paying people at CS, use that money to put teachers in the schools (class size, special ed. classes, etc.). Teachers don't have enough hours in the day to teach because they are having to deal with the following - without help from administration:
 - Inattention, ADHD – Constant movement, calling out, interrupting, acting without thinking
 - ADHD – hyperactive/impulsive
 - Frequent arguing, refusing requests, deliberately challenging authority
 - Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)
 - Aggression, serious rule violations, destruction, stealing
 - Conduct Disorder (CD)
 - Excessive worry, avoidance, crying, perfectionism, frequent reassurance seeking....Anxiety disorders
 - Persistent sadness, irritability, withdrawal, loss of interest.....Depressive disorders
 - Severe, recurrent temper outbursts with persistent irritability .Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder (DMDD)

- Difficulty with social communication, flexibility, changes in routine, or restricted/repetitive behaviors....
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Significant difficulty reading despite appropriate instruction Specific Learning Disorder with impairment in reading (often called dyslexia)
- Significant difficulty with mathematics
- Specific Learning Disorder with impairment in mathematics (often called dyscalculia)
- Significant difficulty with written expression Specific Learning Disorder with impairment in written expression
- Difficulty understanding or expressing spoken language
- Language Disorder
- Difficulty with coordination, handwriting, cutting, catching, etc. Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)
- Repetitive involuntary movements or vocalizations.....
- Tic disorders, including Tourette's disorder in certain circumstances
- Extreme difficulty separating from caregivers....
- Separation Anxiety Disorder
- Repeated aggressive or destructive behavior accompanied by significant emotional/behavioral difficulties. Those are a few examples.
- The new superintendent needs to have a minimum of 15 years in the teaching profession, preferably at various levels. Education is changing all around us. No longer are students learning by sitting and listening/taking notes. Teachers need to get creative with their presentations/expectations of standards. So, maybe some beneficial training for teachers instead of having CS staff that gives no support to teachers.
- A strong Christian with Godly character, values and morals.
- With a desire to serve the schools and community whole heartily with strong regard to the best interests for parents and students. Maintaining integrity and wholesome and healthy environments for growth and learning.
- Characteristics and qualities the board should look for in the next superintendent are well-spoken, personable, willing and able to talk to everyone that works in the district no matter their position or title, and someone that has a heart for our youth.
- The district does a good job of working with students who don't fit in the box of the average student, such as providing an alternative school and virtual school. I would love to see these continue and improve.
- Let's find someone who cares about making sure there is safety and fun in schools.
- Willingness to make changes when needed including evaluating effectiveness of district office positions and personnel.
- Strong commitment to ethics. Recognizing that the district is more than just educators, but that Bus Drivers, Kitchen Staff, and Custodial staff are just as important, and deserve to be invested in.
- Our district needs someone who is already committed to the SDPC and has been apart of this community for many years. We need someone who already knows our current demographic and genuinely cares about our teachers and students. Bringing someone completely new in would cause much confusion and unneeded changes to what is already great. While there's also room for improvement, so many of our amazing educators have stayed within our district most, if not all, of their career due to the current

working conditions we've grown to appreciate over the years. I strongly believe we need someone who is already a strong part of our current administrative team and worked hand-in-hand with the current superintendent and board.

- I feel it is important to find someone familiar with Pickens County's culture and knowledgeable about SDPC's current initiatives and investments.
- A focus on knowing this community and understanding the limitations and opportunities. Not one of the questions above addressed the new superintendent's commitment to - or experience with - special education services or students living with disabilities, syndromes, or other medical conditions. That makes me sad.
- I would hope our school board members are equally concerned with hiring someone who understands, values, and prioritizes the needs of these students, not only the needs of those interested in athletics or after-school activities.
- Candidates who value academics and extracurricular activities for full student development; candidates who base district decisions on data and law, not politics.
- Find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the current administration, but who can make some necessary changes.
- Strong sense of right and wrong and not just making the district report card look good, but holding students responsible for their successes and failures
- I'm hoping the new superintendent is committed to conservative values, and requires our schools to adhere to those values. I'm also hoping he or she takes a stand against communist, Marxist and socialist ideology that is being taught around our country and not allowing that in Pickens county schools. Additionally, please bring handwriting and cursive back and more pen to paper and way less Chromebook usage. Thank you.
- Please search for a superintendent who realizes that Pickens County is indeed in the USA and the culture is much different here than in other countries. Culture makes a HUGE difference in correctly running our schools. We cannot copy bits and pieces from other cultures and expect the same results.
- I feel it is important to have a superintendent that is in touch with what is going on in classroom and the increasing workload placed on teachers. Having someone who is willing to stand behind and defend reasonable teacher expectations is important to me.
- Our family would like to voice that our biggest priority for the next leader of our district is one that values EDUCATION over current cultural ideologies. No sex education for elementary, no gender "affirming" ideology, no push/acceptance of LGBTQ+ indoctrination, no encouragement to lie to parents, no belief that schools overrule parenting, etc. We value a priority in protecting our students, and their souls, from the grips of what other districts are calling "education."
- Additionally, we would want a leader that values protection of students AND staff from disruptive behavior that includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate language, yelling, physical assault, and other behavior that is shrugged off as acceptable. Enough is enough! Everyone else's education and career should not suffer because we cater to the problem.
- Our next leader should be steadfast and long suffering in his/her belief that children are of highest value. He or she should hold tight to the belief that students should be protected, should have the gift of being able to READ, and should be given tools to be productive citizens after their education experience. "

- I think that the next superintendent needs to be someone from the community who is familiar with its strengths and the challenges its people face. Someone who will put the students, teachers, and staff first and continue the good work of the current administration would be great!
- A candidate that is a Christian leader. Who will continue to have a strong moral compass, transparent communication, and fight against promoting ideologies that are detrimental to America and have negative impacts to the students in the district. A leader that takes extreme ownership of all the school districts and maintains a high educational, extracurricular activities, and good sportsmanlike athletic standard. Involved in local Christian churches and the Pickens county school communities, as well as the growth of school budgets, building resources, and staffing the right school administrations.
- The board should be looking for a candidate that is committed to growth, particularly in the area of mental health resources in the district. This could be discussing/allocating budget for the hiring of more mental health counselors or hiring school social workers at each school to assist with resource support and other need support systems for students.
- The next superintendent should be a skilled communicator who is capable and willing to be the "face" of the district. They should show the ability to build meaningful relationships and lead by example. The superintendent should be able to effectively implement a clear and concise vision with measurable and achievable goals and not be easily distracted or influenced by outside noise or unvalidated trends. Lastly, the next leader should have a strong commitment to all levels of students served (PK-12) and not narrow their vision or focus to only the areas that align with their familiarity, comfort, or past experiences.
- Someone who will make hard decisions and not promote bad principals to the district office.
- Go outside the good 'ol boy network that's been in place at the district level for too many years. Understand that Clemson university calendar dates should be factored into holidays (especially spring break) as the largest employer in the county. Allow booster clubs to use funds at each individual school without the obligation of equity across all schools. If the money is raised at one school and not the other, the school that raises the funds shouldn't be penalized/handicapped by the lack of effort of other schools especially at the high level.
- Emphasis on teaching and not teaching to pass a standardized test
- The new Superintendent should have real classroom experience at some point in their career and it should be clear that their "client" priorities are in the following order 1.) Students 2.) Teachers 3.) School Level Admin/Staff 4.) Parents 5.) Local Community 6.) District Staff
- Needs a willingness to assess current policies and make changes if necessary. Such as addressing the stress and difficulties that are put on the teachers and students by using multiple grading programs and class schedules.
- I think they should be kind and also have some experience
- Someone who thinks outside the box and can have a smaller school setting mindset. Bigger is not always better. Kids need a community at school and when they are so large, that's lost.. Someone who actually asks what the community is wanting for their kids instead of trying to put Band-Aids on things that are not working. We love and grew

up in Easley and just hate seeing people leave to go to a district down the road bc of our schools.

- Someone who will take proper measures that most people wouldn't.
- A superintendent must be someone who has a clear vision and who has a proven track record of sticking to that vision regardless of external pressure. I believe we are a district worthy of a coveted candidate who has experience as a superintendent.
- We need to focus more on actually educating these students! Instead of just graduation rates and how it "looks" on paper. We are failing the kids by just passing them along and not holding them accountable.
- Whoever is chosen needs to listen to teachers about the effects of scheduling. SDPC is currently on a hybrid schedule, and it is very draining. On decisions like this and other grand scale ones, rationale should be provided/ communicated clearly for ultimate buy-in.
- Local knowledge and district office experience. Experience as teacher , administrator , and District office experience as member of Superintendent leadership team . Not outsider
- Experience, Primary focus of education not athletics, back up staff when parents of a student complain (sometimes little Johnny and little Mary are not angels and or need to be placed in a different environment).
- Don't overlook candidates skilled in running large organizations. Consider recruiting outside of education. Emphasis private sector experience with large organizations.
- We need someone that loves and understands Pickens County, will operate similarly to current superintendent, knows how to leverage good community influencers (churches, non-profits, businesses, colleges), prioritizes character building (things like All-Pro Dads and the Positivity Project), achievement oriented (raise standards--our students can achieve more when challenged), support high-performing teachers (not the loudest teachers), and add opportunities to create well-rounded students (increase time outdoors and look for opportunities in nature).
- A superintendent who has ideas about addressing attendance issues is sorely needed. Many of the issues with students dropping out, students failing classes, etc. are directly related to low attendance. A superintendent who will look for new ways to retain teachers and support new teachers is needed. I am seeing a huge turnover rate in the school I am teaching at. This leads to several long term sub situations and students being behind academically.
- The next superintendent needs to be charismatic to demand more of parents instead of forcing teachers to carry the burden of social, emotional, mental, and physical education and needs.
- The next superintendent needs to be insightful and require district employees in the classroom teaching, subbing, and immersing in the day to day struggle before forcing teachers to follow curriculum instead of standards.
- The superintendent needs to look closely at special services in order to help children not worry about percentages.
- The superintendent needs to be strong enough and intelligent enough to only have needed positions in the district office allowing decreased overhead.
- The new superintendent needs to be transparent, know the teachers not just leadership at the schools, and stop the good ol' boy system.

- Candidate should be seeking to make adjustments to student accountability of student learning and individual behavior, especially at the secondary level. A focus on college readiness needs to be a concern and reimplemented. At the primary level, reaching significant progress in improving literacy preparedness. Being an advocate for student attendance and in-person education would traditional quality in which would appreciated. Primary attributes of honesty, transparency, communication, systems management, and strong individual problem solving.
- Pickens County has so much to offer, and I'd love to see a superintendent who leads by example, encourages principals and schools to achieve excellence, and who will take Pickens County to the top. Also, I think it is important for schools and administrators to emphasize good morals and ethics. The leader in me program is great, however, the same kids are recognized every year and I feel like the "average" kids get left out. Another huge focus is bullying, and it is in EVERY school. I realize administrators and teachers can only do so much, but it would be wonderful if students could attend seminars on how to deal with bullies. I feel like a lot of eyes are turned to things that shouldn't be turned to, and then the situation is put in parents hands, in which, we personally instruct our kids not to back down. Basically, it would be great for students to have resources to talk about bullies and to deal with them properly. I would also be in favor for harsher punishment for bullies. Thank you for this opportunity. We look forward to the new Superintendent's leadership and direction for Pickens County.
- It should be someone who has not been out of the classroom for 10 years. I am more interested in spending money on teachers and teaching and less on technology in the classroom. I think experience in the classroom is important, not titles.
- Fine arts-minded, not just athletics.
- I feel that the next superintendent should be someone who has worked in our school district and knows our community and wants to continue making positive changes.
- The next superintendent should be an accessible, honest, and decisive leader who listens to employees, parents, students, first responders, and the community. The district needs someone willing to make meaningful changes—not merely continue existing practices because they are familiar.
- School safety must be treated as a genuine operational responsibility rather than a series of “feel-good” measures intended mainly to reassure people. The next superintendent should work closely with school resource officers, emergency responders, and other frontline personnel to identify vulnerabilities and implement practical, layered improvements. Even relatively inexpensive measures can make a meaningful difference. Examples include professionally installed and properly anchored security film on vulnerable glass, improved door and lock hardware, and code-compliant methods of reinforcing classroom doors during a lockdown. Staff members who work in these buildings every day often recognize small problems and workable solutions that may be overlooked at the district level. Their concerns and recommendations should be taken seriously.
- The superintendent should distinguish between measures that merely look reassuring and those that actually delay unauthorized entry, improve emergency response, and protect students and employees. Safety recommendations should be evaluated for effectiveness, compliance with fire and building codes, cost, and real-world practicality—and then followed through to completion.

- The district also needs strong educational leadership with measurable expectations for student achievement. Principals and teachers should receive the resources and support necessary to succeed, but there must also be meaningful accountability. Decisions concerning curriculum, budgets, technology, facilities, athletics, and extracurricular activities should be based on student needs and measurable outcomes rather than appearances or public relations.
- Previous superintendent experience may be beneficial, but it should not outweigh integrity, sound judgment, accessibility, communication skills, and the courage to address longstanding problems. The board should select someone whose goal is not simply to make people feel better, but to make our schools demonstrably safer, improve educational results, support employees, and earn the community's trust through honest communication and meaningful action.
- Exploring other countries way of education made impacts that made SDPC a leader, particularly in testing, making sure students have outdoor outlets/free play. One thing I would welcome as a change is having DO employees being required to substitute in various classrooms a certain number of days each year. Not only would that keep the folks at the DO in the trenches but it would save us money to pay other that need to be recognized better. I truly believe admin forgot what it's like to be in a classroom; however, they also do not know what the classroom is like today.. As long as students aren't pulled out during tier 1 instruction and works with our supporting teachers, I'd love for our students to get pulled out. The students absolutely HATE having our SPED or ML teachers coming into our classes. It doesn't matter how well they work with all students, our students know why they are in our rooms. Co-teaching should be one of the options not being what feels like forced to use. Our next superintendent has big shoes to fill and a lot of work to do.
- We desperately need to focus on building a new middle school in Easley. We also need a leader that will take into account test scores as that does reflect academics, which is what school is supposed to be about. We don't need someone that looks outside of our country for solutions since the U.S is fundamentally different than other countries and you cannot compare apples to oranges, but someone that can think critically and logically to develop unique solutions for Pickens County. I would also like someone with a strong record of budgeting as families are struggling, prices are going up, and we need to figure out how to best use the resources we already have without burdening tax payers. I think it would be best to have a leader with many years in the classroom because teachers understand the importance of small class sizes, funding for materials, and discipline procedures. Teachers would also benefit from having a leader that communicated with them directly, and listened to what they have to say since teachers are the ones in the classrooms, seeing the areas of strength and weakness, and educators know what resources they need to help students succeed. Sending out Google surveys is not a good way to hear directly from the hearts of teachers.
- The next superintendent should be a strong instructional leader who understands how to align curriculum, instruction, resources, and funding so that the district operates as a cohesive, focused team. This leader should value and actively seek the expertise of our teachers, ensuring their voices are represented in decisions that directly impact teaching and learning. The superintendent should also be committed to identifying, developing, and empowering leaders from within the district, building internal capacity, and creating opportunities for employees to grow into leadership roles.

- While having a candidate who knows our community is valuable, some of the best leadership this district has historically had came from another part of the state. I think it will be easy to choose a candidate who is already on leadership in the district; however, I hope and pray that the search will extend outside of Pickens county with an open mind for someone who can bring new ideas. Present leadership is excellent. But it will be beneficial to have some fresh eyes looking at the future of SDPC.
- Great Personable Supt who is easy to talk to re: Solving Problems and working closely with Superintendent Leadership Team (SLT) at the District office to help Support All schools in our District.
- We need a superintendent who is focused on the requirements of the emerging workforce, understands budgeting process, and is sincerely interested in listening to the concerns of teachers.
- We need a student-centered leader who can build upon our district's progress while streamlining district-level operations to focus resources where they matter most—in the classroom. The ideal superintendent will provide clear instructional direction while respecting teacher autonomy, eliminating unnecessary meetings and administrative oversight. They should prioritize funding for certified staff and fair, competitive compensation for our essential classified personnel. Rather than forcing a 'one-size-fits-all' model across all schools, the next leader should honor the unique needs of our diverse student population and ensure that diversity is reflected in district leadership.
- The next superintendent should be someone who understands and is committed to keeping up with the ever-changing needs and trends of our society and culture. Someone who is committed to keeping Pickens County a place where people can have autonomy and feel supported by leadership, but also make necessary changes to keep up with the times. This person should have an understanding of management styles and efficiency in systems. Someone dedicated to retaining their employees and providing spaces for feedback to improve.
- I would love to see someone who is not from our school district and has a new perspective and isn't a part of the "good ole boys" system.
- I hope the committee searches for a candidate who is familiar with Pickens County and doesn't want to come in and make sweeping changes. SDPC is a model school district in the state and we don't need anyone to interfere with that and impede forward progress. I am a proponent of an internal hire; someone who is already familiar with our communities and schools.
- A superintendent who has been and is a part of Pickens County. Our students and their families are unique and need someone who actually understands the needs of the community.
- Someone who is very faith based, understands the need for funding for special education, understands that technology should be a tool and not a replacement!!!! Someone who values morals and ethics and continues to put more input in learning and less in sexuality in a school. Someone who believes in anti bullying and is willing to stop it. Someone who understands behavior and how to address parents accordingly.
- Someone who sees all employees as equal rather than there being an obvious divide and treatment of certified staff vs classified staff. This includes pay rates.
- For the next superintendent, I would like to see someone who has not spent their entire career in administration. Someone who is dedicated to thinking like those that serve

students every day and putting themselves in our shoes. Someone who is not going to create random jobs out of thin air and will make the changes that are needed to see Pickens County be successful while also making the employees feel supported and heard. Someone who is seen around in the schools and is actually talking to those whose lives are affected by the decisions that they and those that report directly to them are making.

- The next superintendent should have:
 - A good knowledge of and connection to the people of Pickens County Dedication to teacher well-being in words, actions, and management style
 - Deep understanding of people living in poverty
 - Demonstrated Christian values
 - Support of character education and patriotism efforts and curriculum
 - Experience in all areas of the job but not necessarily expertise
 - A willingness to learn
 - An appropriate integration of technology but a significant reduction in what we have now
 - A desire to pour into our current student base, not grow the county
 - I would like to see someone that cares about the district, employees, and students and has been in the district and not an outsider. I think if you've lived the majority of your life living in Pickens County then you know what's needed from our district and can show your commitment to the district.
 - Is against SEL and Common Core Standards and DEI and knows what age appropriate means and knows how to handle disciplinary actions effectively.
- As a parent of three kids in the Pickens County School District, I do not want someone who boasts achievements within an already- failing school system (one of the worst in the world and SC is one of the worst in the Nation). Instead, I would rather find an educator who is humble and open minded. One who has studied the works of the greatest, most effective educators ever known (Charlotte Mason, John Taylor Gatto, Maria Montessori) rather than being painfully indoctrinated by a ""Childhood Education Degree"" that fails our children on every single level. I want someone who understands how detriment using technology over books, paper, pencils is to brain development and neural connections. (Obviously a Chromebook can be used as a tool, but not for instruction). I want someone holistically-minded that understands the detriments of processed food (a single ""free"" school lunch contains more soy, GMO ingredients, and seed oils than a child should ingest in a YEAR), fluorescent lighting, lack of outdoor time, etc. has on children. There's a study where school lunches were switched to whole, simple foods resulting in negative behavior instances dropping by NINETY-SIX PERCENT.
- I would like to see my tax dollars used in classrooms and on teachers with ""boots on the ground"" as opposed to in a District Office.
- I don't want someone with years of accolades within the current system. Who should be proud of that? I want someone that can't be bought, that understands actual brain development, and someone that understands whole-body health and it's relationship to the ability to learn and retain. We must move away from teaching for tests and move towards learning to seek and discern knowledge. That is our only hope.
- , I think a new superintendent from outside of the SDPC ecosystem would be ideal. Year-round school philosophy would be a plus IMO.

- I would love to see a candidate who backs their staff. Someone who will not brush off children's behaviors or turn the blind eye at the elementary level when students are a real threat to student/teacher safety. I understand it can be a challenge but no student or teacher should fear school due to the behavior of another student and year after year we've dealt with this. We've fought HARD, but the system is built to work against us. Stand up and say no more when we bring legitimate safety concerns to the district for help. We aren't complaining for no reason. It takes away from our ability to teach and from the students ability to learn when we are having to address behavior, evacuate classrooms etc... So a strong no BULLCRAP meter would be great!
- I believe the next superintendent should be a strong educational leader who is committed to student success, high-quality instruction, and the continued growth of our schools. It is important that this person understands curriculum and instruction, values the role of extracurricular activities in developing well-rounded students, and listens to and supports teachers. I would also look for a leader who communicates openly, collaborates with educators, makes decisions based on the needs of students and schools, and is committed to providing teachers with the resources and support necessary to do their jobs effectively.
- SDPC needs a Superintendent who understands reality and is not working for their own agenda. As a teacher, there are areas of the school that need less oversight. There are areas that need more oversight. The superintendent needs to be willing to listen and APPLY the concerns that teachers have and also let go of the things are being done because "that's just what we do." The next superintendent needs to be willing to have a few years of lower graduation rate so that our students are held accountable for their learning. The next superintendent needs to work to raise classified and certified pay significantly because a proper raise has not been provided in years. The next superintendent needs to be willing to work for the students and teachers and staff, even if that means upsetting the community for the greater good. The next superintendent needs to work with budgets to ensure that all students are receiving the same opportunities. The next superintendent needs to be willing to listen--to parents, to students, to employees--about the things that can better our schools and our environments.
- We need a leader who finds value in ALL areas of education. Our music departments have been gutted for athletics. We need someone who understands that students need the option to participate in music, arts, and theater, as well as athletics. Innovation is wonderful, but there is also value in some traditional education. We need to get away from technology in the lower grades. We also need to work on accountability that involves the students and parents (attendance, assignment completion, and behavior), but we have lost some very important things in our pursuit of graduation numbers. We need to make sure our graduates are earning their diplomas.
- loyalty/honesty/accountability
- Strong Christian background but loves students, staff, and community of Pickens County especially. Is vested because he/she lives in our area
- Commitment to inclusivity of special needs students at their home schools and to fostering a culture where the most vulnerable children feel included, seen and welcomed!

- I believe that Pickens County could really benefit from someone OUTSIDE of the district. Pickens County could use someone with outside perspectives and ideas so that we can grow and learn as a district while making necessary changes.
- I have worked in many school areas, and I will say that I enjoy teaching here with the Finnish model. It seems to respect teachers more than where I have been and treat them as professionals with common sense. I prefer to stay that course.
- Honest, loyal to this district, fair and equal. Interest in all the schools I think hiring an "outside" person would be ok, I think we just need to make sure they are in it heart and soul.
- A superintendent should be of strong-minded person and of good spirit, well educated and honesty.
- Please consider someone who is accountable, authentic, and willing to listen to the people on the front lines. As a teacher, I can tell you that when changes are made simply to create the appearance of improvement, the staff often ends up doing all the work with very little meaningful payoff.
- Students and staff crave structure, consistency, and dependable leadership. Constantly adding new initiatives, programs, or expectations in an effort to "improve" us can sometimes have the opposite effect. It can create unnecessary stress, take time away from what truly matters, and make it harder for teachers to do their jobs well.
- We absolutely should continue looking for ways to improve, but there needs to be a balance. I would hope our next superintendent values stability, listens to teachers and staff, and focuses on meaningful changes that actually benefit students rather than change for the sake of change.
- 100% experience is not necessary. Find someone who is up to the challenge of learning and propelling the district. We need someone who is personable, relational and interested in our community, families and students.
- Committed to the staff.
- Someone who won't kill us with meetings and will just let us teach.
- This is not a turn around district. I think the next Superintendent should be one that can help the district continue with it's forward momentum. We don't need change for the sake of change.
- I am not impressed with South Carolina public schools. SC could use experience & knowledge from states ranking higher & performing better in public education.
- I strongly believe the candidate should have recent experience in a school and understand the current needs of school staff and students. I also believe our district should consider what a few other states have put into place where district employees substitute teach at least 8 times a year and see how the classroom changes from year to year. Students are ever changing and our leadership needs to know what those changes are.
- Innovative, has the ability to stand up to political forces, a willingness to invest in our schools — not shortchange our district by bending to tax-cutting rhetoric from the vocal minority. Focus on creating parity for students regardless of their income or background. Investing in and believing in our teachers and defending their teaching in this age of pointless culture wars that undermine the full and complete education our students deserve — one that prepares them for the real world where science is real, work ethic matters, diversity exists and beliefs are challenged.

- "Make the students number one. Support the good teachers. Get rid of the slacker. Involve the parents more. Treat each sport , band etc. in the same way with respect. Put the best person qualified in this position.
- We need to make Pickens county school the best it can be. BUT don't try to copy the other school in the area. Let's own ours and make it Pickens county way
- The next superintendent needs to be a strong leader. A Godly person who holds the values of honesty and compassion.
- The board should look outside Pickens County for the next superintendent. It's time to move away from the good ole boy politics and have a fresh start with new ideas and perspectives.
- Integrity, strong work ethic, empathy, someone who will advocate for the children in our district not everyone else. Issues to address: test scores, focus on curriculum vs. outside influences, the rampant bullying problem in Pickens county schools.
- Looking for people who understands a change now effects 5 years down the road, this isn't just limited to buildings but the course work as well.
- We need someone ready to elevate our district in a great way both in education and extracurricular activities.
- Honest
- Effective
- Has been in the classroom in the last 10 years"
- Look for someone from Pickens County. Someone who has grown up here and knows all of what Pickens County offers/stands for. Someone above all that represents your teachers. A person who knows they won't make everyone happy, but have proven that the teachers they have worked with have rallied behind them in the past. My hope is that the next superintendent would be the same, someone that SCDPC teachers know want the best for them.
- Please avoid any candidates with connections to Moms for Liberty or other extremist political groups
- Knowledge of the working of SDPC and willing to make necessary changes to make it better.
- no to year round school expansion, no to four day school, definitely should focus on closing the gaps but with some thoughts on improving gifted children options
- someone who will hold adults and students accountable for wrongdoings which is a problem that exists today.
- Someone that has been with the distance and in different roles is very important
- As a 4K teacher, I hope the board prioritizes candidates that support the SDPC Strategic Plan Innovate '28's Goal 4: Academic Growth and Excellence: School, College, and Career Readiness. Specifically, candidates who value an Early Childhood Education Plan.
- I feel our currant leadership has been great. I believe we need a similar type of leadership. With a change of strategy we run a risk of going backwards. I don't feel that the problems in education fall on the local level but at the State level. Parents have got to start being Parents again. Teachers and leadership can only do so much.
- Faith based leader
- Less technology for students
- Experience in the classroom.

- Someone who understands and supports the arts programs within our district with more than verbal support. Arts are both curricular and extracurricular and should be shown as much support as athletics. A well rounded student has access to top-tier arts education from kindergarten through 12th grade. A superintendent should acknowledge and support this.
- I would like a superintendent that remembers what it is like being in the classroom of today not the classroom of 15 years ago. Also one that will listen to teachers and understand where teachers are coming from and understand our frustrations.
- Experience in schools with significant socio-economic diversity
- I would love it to be someone who taught and worked in an elementary school. The district office is extremely heavy in adults who taught and worked in high school schools. There needs to be way more of a balance.
- Someone that values and understands the arts K-12- choir orchestra theater band, all fine arts
- Continue to partner with local churches in Good News Club, Release Time, FCA
- The NEXT Superintendent should in many ways maintain the current relationship between a strong commitment to all members of the community and providing a high quality education to our children at every level while willing to explore innovative changes that challenge and stretch our educators and administrators. Our next Superintendent should also reflect the growing diversity of the County to include forming diverse relationships with community leaders from diverse backgrounds. He or she should be committed to servant leadership while embracing bold and inspiring
- Down to earth, passionate, knowledgeable, intelligent, hardworking and treats people equally
- As a teacher and parent, I would like a superintendent who believes in academic rigor and true, deep learning, not experiments, fads, or increasing reliance on technology. Also, I would like a superintendent who believes in holding students accountable for their conduct and achievement as much as their teachers and other district staff are held accountable.
- Accessibility services are vastly undeserving and resources are not adequately allocated to them. The majority of families who have kids with disabilities have been getting services out of pocket due to the stringent requirements and small budget.
- This person needs to be data-driven, open to changing in light of research, diversity-minded, and likely external in order to avoid perpetuating some of the previous administrations weird "in-club" actions.
- With the unfortunate rise in school safety issues (e.g., school shootings), I would like to have a superintendent in place that places equal priority on safety as they do education quality. I would prefer someone with significant knowledge of emergency situation preparedness and action, and a law enforcement (or law enforcement-adjacent) background is preferred. I want someone in place that can lobby for additional safety funding (e.g., multiple SROs per school), which would include increased security measures, such as school property boundary surveillance and alarms.
- Knowledgeable about Pickens County. We presently have people at district level who can do the job and will have support from teachers and administrators as opposed to an unknown. We could lose present administrators and very talented individuals at district

office. Experience in our county is extremely important- you have a known experienced talent why take chance on unknown

- This person needs to value the people of the school district, from the veterans to the first-year teachers.
- This person should put high emphasis on teacher retention, from the veterans who still add value to their schools, to young teachers.
- This person should consider significant changes to the structure of education in the school district: regarding pathways for those who are seeking post secondary education and then for those seeking a trade. Grad rates must be encouraged not by giving students diplomas, but by providing pathways that will motivate students who hate school to attend school.
- Qualities need to continue with a strong faith-based leader with a continued vision to lead our students, staff, and community forward.
- We need someone who will understand kindergarten as early childhood and will stop making kindergarteners take a developmentally inappropriate test like IREADY 3 times a year!! That is excessive for 5-year-olds!
- Outside experience is important. More focus on teacher retention and recruitment. Someone who focuses on making teachers feel supported and allow schools to run independently without district-wide mandates. Attention to excellence while also making the changes necessary to retain students and build upon our unique and diverse school system from our smallest schools needs to the largest.
- I think someone who is good with the staff and very capable of doing this job.
- I feel that it is important to look for a leader with a commonsense approach. We need smaller class sizes and less emphasis on technology. Too much screen time is hurting our children. We also need administration that is more visible in the schools.
- Experienced parent, budget and business sense, local and qualified candidate, safety is a top priority
- Definitely want one that will strive to keep Bible study in our schools. This may be the only time a student is able to hear about Jesus! One who is qualified and able to pass all the background checks!
- They should have real classroom experience so they understand what challenges our current teachers are facing.
- The next Superintendent should value student success, achievement, accountability, discipline, and education above all else. Education is not about a school report card with easily manipulated data. It is simply about helping students prepare for their futures (college, career, military, etc..). The Superintendent should hire competent professionals to carry out that goal and trust them to do so without micromanaging. The superintendent can make up goals to be presented to the public, but the students and staff will always be aware of what is valued inside our schools. Above all, the Superintendent should have beliefs and values that are consistent with the beliefs and values of the constituents of Pickens County.
- In touch with the current classroom and students. Be involved in all of the communities, not just the high achieving and/or best athletic schools.
- Keep the family values and what's important. Please don't go woke. This county loves God, family and country. We should be proud of our military and encourage building

strong families. Strong communities start with strong families. Christian values keep families strong.

- The next superintendent should have more “runway” than “experience”. They should make positive, forward, student-focused optimizations to current district protocols. They should be more broadly tied to SPDC during meetings than emphasizing a specific religion or people. They should naturally uplift rather than “oversee” as part of their character. They should be someone who was promoted within SPDC.
- Get someone who is going to have some common sense. Stop with this year-round scheduling and go back to a traditional summer break. Get someone who isn’t going to cave to liberal bull crap and will keep trans talk out of the schools. There is no reason for a teacher to be allowed to talk to my children about politics and push their socialist ideas on them. If a superintendent cannot have a backbone against that then keep them away.
- The future superintendent should have recent and relevant experience in the classroom environment. To be able to fully gauge the pulse of the stakeholders within the schools of the district, the future superintendent should have a vision that aligns with educators, parents, and students.
- We need a superintendent who understands children of poverty and to be effective in this county.
- We need to reassess tech use in the classroom. 1:1 has only benefited Google's bottom line while driving screen addiction for our students. I would like to see less investment in tech, fewer fluff administrative jobs, smaller class sizes, and more investment in teachers. Also, actually enforcing the phone ban by investing in phone locks would be great.
- I believe our next superintendent should have a strong understanding of the culture, values, and traditions of our district. While I recognize that growth and positive change are sometimes necessary, I would not like to see drastic changes that take away from the foundation that has made our district successful. Our district has historically upheld conservative values, and I believe it is important for the next superintendent to respect and keep those values in mind while leading our schools and community forward.
- Get fresh blood!!
- One who cares for the kids and puts common sense in the lessons cursive writing and what Jesus would do.
- Would like to see someone who supports the arts as much as athletics. Both are important to the development of our students.
- One that is focused on the whole child and their continued education. Not just the latest fads of education.
- No current principals. No one with their own agenda.
- A leader who not only understands secondary education, but also has a background/understanding of early childhood and elementary and it's importance as well.
- A Superintendent that has the guts to stand up to parents and support the teachers in the classroom in every aspect. A true leader understands that all children and adults are different, learn differently and grow differently. Teachers in this district need a leader who is going to advocate for parents to be held accountable as much, if not more, than the classroom teacher for their child's education. Our new Superintendent needs to be a strong enough person who is not afraid to allow teachers to do the job they have been

hired to do and support them while doing it as opposed to forcing them to teach all children the same lesson on the same day without mastery before moving on and then judging them when the data points do not perform as good as it looks on paper. I think our new leader needs to rid the current administration and begin building a new legacy of truth, support, compassion, and fairness to all as opposed to the "good ole boy" system that seems to be the trend with our current leader. It is time for new beginnings and that starts with a Superintendent who is capable of leading the district with people who are qualified and actually needed to see that all personnel are valued.

- Someone that will listen to the parents when the principals do not and hold them accountable. Someone that will make sure our children get a good education in an environment they can feel safe in.
- By significant changes I want to see, I mean similar to what Mississippi and other states have done to dramatically increase their reading and math comprehension. Other than that, a In administrator who loves students and teachers, is willing to be an active member in our community and live here, someone who understands neurodivergent students and their needs, and who has a family and faith focus in their personal life.
- The next superintendent of the School District of Pickens County should be a student-centered, ethical, and collaborative leader who is committed to continuing the district's tradition of academic excellence while preparing students for a changing world. The ideal candidate should:
 - Put students' needs, safety, well-being, and success at the center of every decision.
 - Support, respect, and retain teachers and staff by listening to their concerns and providing meaningful professional support.
 - Communicate openly, honestly, and consistently with students, families, employees, the Board, and the broader Pickens County community.
 - Build trust through transparency, accountability, sound judgment, and follow-through.
 - Value innovation while preserving programs and practices that have proven successful.
 - Use data and community input to make thoughtful, equitable decisions that improve outcomes for all students.
 - Demonstrate strong financial and operational leadership and be a careful steward of public resources.
 - Promote college, career, and life readiness through strong academic, career-and-technical, arts, athletic, and extracurricular opportunities.
 - Work effectively with local businesses, higher education institutions, community organizations, and families.
 - Understand and appreciate the unique needs of all schools and communities throughout Pickens County.
 - Have the courage to make difficult decisions while remaining approachable, humble, and respectful.
 - Be visible and engaged in schools and community activities, with a genuine commitment to building relationships.
 - Above all, the next superintendent should be a unifying leader who shares the district's commitment to "Engaging Today—Empowering Tomorrow" and can provide both stability and forward-thinking vision for the future."

- I would like to see someone in this position who has high expectations for teachers and students but understands the realities of the very different communities that are served. This includes acknowledging that high school, middle school, and elementary schools are very different and have varying needs. Some autonomy needs to be given back to individual schools. School leadership
- should reflect a high degree of experience as instructional leader and manager not based on who they know or the area where they have served. "
- Integrity. Person who holds the bar for academic excellence and holds students accountable for soft skills like being on time, attendance and discipline. Students should not be rewarded because they fail to meet the minimal standards to help reach a graduation rate goal. Superintendent that takes pride in helping prepare students for the future.
- I would like our next superintendent to have qualities such as empathy and the ability to forecast the consequences of decisions made at the district level through the lens of ALL levels K-12 students and teachers. I understand that a person can not predict the future but I would like someone who is experienced at a variety of levels (primary-secondary) within a school system.
- One of the most important commitments is to advocate and defend school libraries and everyone's freedom to read. This would look like being part of a larger trust building of teachers, educators and librarians in addition to directly addressing the censorship movement in Pickens County.
- I would love for the candidate to be someone that has worked in the trenches , maybe a former teacher , that knows how tough it can be in the classroom. It seems so many ideas are presented and implemented without consideration of how it will actually work in real time. (Because they are in administration and have idea how it really is with behaviors, testing, rigorous schedules, etc.
- Consolidating the 4k program to was not a good path. We should have expanded the program district wide. The purpose of 4k is to catch the kids that will struggle in school early on and identify those children and provide the best assistance.
- Commitment to insuring strong accountability measures for principals and teachers toward student achievement results"" I would focus more on supporting our principles and teachers to help these children achieve a good education vs. holding the principles and teachers responsible for not meeting a certain data achievement criteria. That will just have them more focused on getting their students to a certain number and be focused on data related to student pass rate, graduation and drop-out ratings. They already focus on standardized testing too much. Another important quality for the next superintendent is empowering our principles and teachers when dealing with difficult students and their parents. There needs to be more immediate consequences for students that are disruptive and dangerous to all the other students within the class. Giving our teachers more support in empowering them to make decisions for the good of all students within their classrooms. Pickens County is a rural community, we need to be focused on what is good for our students within our county and not what experimental practices are working in NY or another country. We need someone who is experienced within our community and understands our communities needs. Our classroom student to teacher ratios are extremely high for middle and elementary schools. Our next Superintendent should be local, they do not need to be someone with prior experience as a Superintendent or even experience working at the district for a long time. We need

someone fresh from the schools and sees what all of the schools need, want and can provide ideas and strategies to achieve all of things mentioned above. "

- Would like a superintendent that is fiscally responsible and will continue to demand high educational value. The amount of money spent at the district office should be significantly reduced and transferred to schools to decide how to achieve the district goals at a school level.
- I think the next superintendent should have some background in education. They should have to have been a teacher or principal. If not they should have to go volunteer and see what these principals and teachers go through daily before they can make decisions for staff and our children.
- New person needs to hold people accountable and punish those who do wrong.
- Education experience, open minded to change, understanding of technology, willing to hear teachers and students comments and concerns, understands the importance of diversity
- Someone with a Doctorate in Education!
- We don't need major change, just focus on teaching kids and nothing else. Don't need any woke junk either. Let the kids be kids and help them learn how to use their own brains their own way.
- Special education and FAPE need an overhaul
- No politically motivated candidates!
- I come from generations of teachers, and have many personal friends who are or have been teachers, both within Pickens county and without. Everything I've heard from them, and experienced as a Pickens county student, and now the parent of Pickens county students, tells me this: that a superintendent with prior experience is not NEARLY as important as a superintendent who understands what it's like to be a classroom teacher. I also think our county could benefit dramatically from a superintendent who understands and values the diversity of experience, culture, and religions represented in our beautiful county.
- We do not need someone to come in with their liberal agenda.
- Strong leader with a vision for maximizing district resources to make Pickens county competitive with Greenville
- SDPC needs someone outside of the district.
- I support any candidate whose top priority is opening a new middle school. Have the largest middles school in the state of South Carolina is NOT a statistic to be proud of -
- Don't based selection based solely on prior work within our area but NO RADICAL LEFT WING CANDIDATES TO RUIN OUR SCHOOLS !!
- Find a candidate that will cut out unnecessary jobs at the district level.
- Diverse
- Understand that our district is unique. We are a mostly rural area with some higher population suburban centers and families have a lot of connections to the universities and counties around us. Find a way to better utilize the technology -elementary schoolers don't need to bring Chromebooks home and should be used sparingly in the classroom. Let our school calendar be somewhat in sync with the surrounding counties and universities with regards to fall and spring break. Encourage foreign exchange programs in the high schools. Improve quality and quantity of school lunches. Especially portion sizes for older kids

- I believe our next superintendent should be a strong, independent, student-centered leader who makes decisions based on what is best for all students and schools across our district. Building positive relationships with community members is important, but those relationships should never result in certain individuals, groups, or communities having greater influence or access than others.
- Our superintendent should value transparency, fairness, and consistency and be willing to listen to a wide range of voices, not only those who may be well-connected or especially influential within the community. Every student, regardless of family background, socioeconomic status, culture, religion, or personal circumstances, deserves equitable access to an outstanding education and the opportunities our district provides.
- I would also hope for a superintendent who respects our community's values while recognizing that our schools serve families from diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Above all, decisions should remain focused on students, educators, academic excellence, and what will strengthen our schools for the entire community"
- Focus on back to basics academic foundational, conventional education. Math, Science, English. Views extracurricular programs as EXTRA, not the main focus. Take a hard look at current use of technology including electronic texts and Chromebooks, to ascertain if they truly are more effective than conventional methods. Not afraid to reverse course on use of technology if evidence points to that being more effective.
- Dependable, trustworthy, and knows/understands the needs from the maintenance of the buildings to the needs in the classroom.
- Pickens County has always been focused on people. This needs to continue with students driving every decision but being mindful of the people that surround students. It takes the whole community.
- We need to restructure the athletic department. Our coaches are playing favorites. Children should not be required to play a "club sport" to be on a public school team. However, this is what is going on. Also, coaches should not be allowed to coach their children's team if favoritism is being shown. This goes for any employees within the district and alumni.
- The landscape of education is changing rapidly. It will be important that the new leader has an extensive background in business leadership and change management.
- Someone who will ensure equity across the district specifically with school buildings, campus facilities and funding.
- Pickens County is extremely diverse from a socioeconomic standpoint; having a superintendent who is able to help guide the district in equity matters is extremely important.
- I would like someone who supports 504 and IEP plans and doesn't view them as looking bad on a school. This individual should view 504/iep as a good thing to help a student succeed. Schools should be encouraged to make those plans to increase success.
- Transparent, Good Communicator, Positive, Steady, Innovative, Student-Focused
- The next superintendent should be a visible, approachable leader who genuinely listens to teachers, staff, administrators, students, and families. They should understand the day-to-day realities of working in our schools and value the input of the people who work directly with students.

- I would like to see someone who communicates clearly and honestly, is willing to make difficult decisions, and holds themselves and others accountable. Decisions should be based on what is best for students and schools, not simply what looks good on paper.
- It is also important to have a superintendent who values and supports employees, recognizes the importance of retaining strong teachers and staff, and works to build trust throughout the district. They should be willing to visit schools, ask questions, listen before making decisions, and remain connected to what is actually happening in classrooms.
- Most importantly, I would like a superintendent who is student-centered, fair, consistent, transparent, and willing to lead rather than simply manage."
- Consistent, communicative, connective, competent
- Although ties to the community are important, sometimes only knowing this area is a hindrance to growth and innovation.
- A school superintendent should be forward-thinking and have a proven track record of sound logic and successful plans. They should care equally about every single demographic in the community and especially find ways to integrate affordable educational resources for both those who are marginalized and teachers, who should not be footing the bill of most school supplies and academic support themselves. Empathy and strength of character are very important values as well, and additionally, I'd very much like to see someone address the issue of public school curriculum. I would like someone who sees what I see when I look at elementary school children and my own child: little minds with SO much more power than we give them credit for. I would hope for someone who could hold the community accountable for keeping our kids challenged to reach their full potential.
- Someone who has a servant's heart and loves the communities we serve. Someone who also looks out for the well-being of all personnel and isn't too sensitive to the criticism that comes with being at the top. Someone who isn't afraid to "shake things up" in order to make sure all leadership, teachers, and employees are working hard every day to ensure our kids are set up for success when they graduate.
- No experience is necessary a good trustworthy person who will do all the right things
- I want my children to continue to learn and have education without the fear of politics, or moral/beliefs being pushed on my children that are against my beliefs. Hard conversations like religion, gender, sexual orientation etc. should not be pushed in a classroom unless as their parent I approve of it. My son does release time but again I approved and signed off on it. I want my children to continue to have access to stem programs that challenge them and prepare them for what's after school
- Student Centered
- Empathy for Staff- workload is heavy
- Someone not focused on micromanaging teachers and gives teacher autonomy to do what they are trained professionally to do.
- Someone who looks to be focused on do what's best for PC without having to be in the spotlight.
- Humble and strong leadership "
- I would prefer a candidate who is rooted in faith, building, strong schools, fighting for the right instruction in classrooms, behavior management, zero tolerance for bullying, and engaging students without technology.

- The next superintendent should be someone that is hired from within our district and already knows the people and systems put in place. This person should bring fresh perspective but also continue the good work and the course the district is already on.
- A student-centered, forward-thinking leader who has the courage to challenge the status quo, a genuine passion for children and education, and the ability to lead meaningful, sustainable progress while remaining accountable to teachers, families, and the community.
- I don't feel a new superintendent needs to be an expert in all educational/ facility/ curriculum areas. He needs to be an effective communicator and leader that inspires those working with him to do their best and be successful in their respective areas.
- The new superintendent must be willing to put his face in front of the media and public as a leader of the District. All we've seen or heard from in recent years was the PR person.
- If the focus is going to be on Graduation rates, this new superintendent needs to not automatically inflate those but to actually raise standards instead of lowering them so ""the numbers work"".
- The new superintendent must hold elementary, middle and high schools all to the same standards as our elementary principals have been way more involved in the classroom than middle or high.
- The next superintendent must be fully committed to achieving the goals of Innovate '28 and prepared to lead SDPC into its next 5-year era, Elevate '33.
- This leader must believe deeply in experiential learning and be willing to transform traditional classrooms and schools into innovative, immersive learning environments.
- The superintendent must have a business mindset and make bold, responsible financial investments—redirecting resources when necessary and building innovative new schools where enrollment, growth, and student performance data demonstrate a clear need.
- The superintendent must also meaningfully involve students, families, educators, businesses, and community partners.
- This leader must honor the progress and commitments of Innovate '28, expand proven models across the district, establish measurable priorities, prepare every student for future opportunities, and position SDPC as the first choice for families.
- Someone with a conservative fiscal vision, willing to put teachers first, willing to put Principals back in the building, and willing to actually give schools some autonomy since it has been completely stripped away in the past 5 years.
- As a parent and staff member I would like for the board to find someone that shares in the communities Christian values and morals and will seek the Holy Spirit for wisdom in making decisions for this district and the education of our children. Someone that will not always be looking for the next best thing but for what's best for this area. Someone that will engage with what's going on in the classrooms and not lose touch with what our teachers and students are dealing with day in and day out. Someone who loves this district and wants what's best for it.
- The next superintendent should have an elementary background.
- Someone who will maintain a standard for educators and hold them accountable for student performance.

- I'd like a superintendent that is a strong leader that will hold principals and teachers accountable for a robust and consistent curriculum. I'd also like to see significantly more done about bullying and the role athletics (e.g., football) plays in not disciplining those responsible.
- This person should be more involved at the school level. They should understand the needs of not only the students but the teachers. Teachers need to be supported from the top down.
- I am commenting as a concerned parent because I believe our schools need stronger leadership, clearer expectations, and real enforcement of the rules already in place.
- We need a leader with the courage and accountability of someone like Joe Clark, the principal portrayed in Lean on Me. Not someone who simply puts rules on paper, but someone who makes sure those rules are followed consistently, fairly, and with purpose.
- Many students today do not seem to know how to function without a phone in their hand. Even more concerning, basic academic skills appear to be falling through the cracks. While helping my stepdaughter apply for scholarships, I was shocked to find that she struggled to spell words such as "college" and even the name of her intended major, "agriculture." That should concern every parent, teacher, and board member.
- What troubled me even more was her statement that some teachers "didn't care what they did, just don't tell anyone." If students believe that is the standard, then we have a serious problem. Rules, discipline, respect, and academic expectations must mean something.
- This is not about blaming one person. It is about making sure our schools are places where students are expected to learn, behave, and grow. If we want better outcomes, we must be willing to enforce better standards."
- Trustworthy and transparent, honesty and focus on the kids and teaching them the foundations and skills they need and supporting the family unit and parents in best ways to support their child's education
- I believe there are some improvements to communication and safety that need to be implemented.
- The next superintendent should have background in education and understand what it is like to be a teacher. They should be willing to look at other districts within the state and country and see what educational methods are most effective.
- Not someone is pro year round school. The summer is short enough as it is.
- The next leader of SDPC should look upon ways to improve teacher to student ratio to help improve discipline and educational performance in the classroom. They should also take a hard look at the district office to see if payroll can be saved in that area to distribute back to the schools. If hiring from the inside will any changes occur or will it continue down the same path? If hiring from the outside will that candidate be able to come in and excess what changes need to take place to help lead the team in Pickens Co to continue to grow the school district in the correct direction. You all have a difficult job to do, I pray the decision that is made will be the one that benefits the students, they are the most impacted my this decision.
- We need someone that listens to the community and communicates through transparent videos and giving appropriate facts and solutions to issues in a way that we can see they mean what they say. The trust in the school systems is declining so we need someone strong enough to handle misconduct openly and honestly no matter what prestige any

school or staff may have. We also need someone that defends the teachers and staff when they make the right decisions and openly supports them.

- Someone who loves their job, takes it seriously and willing to make necessary changes to better the school district
- Someone that will stop allowing students to just pass to another grade when they don't even attend school half the year. Reevaluate all these iep plans for some students a lot of them don't need they just don't want to do the work. Honestly a lot of these kids are going to fail when they become adults, some can't count read clocks or basic things because they just get promoted to the next grade just for numbers I'm not putting it all on the teachers but the teachers should be able to teach. Someone that don't just want numbers South Carolina is the laughing stock when it comes to education especially Pickens county. Students need to start being held accountable for their actions instead of getting a pass just because they are a good person. That's my two cents don't know how far this is going but hope it works
- Preferably holds similar conservative values as, however maybe more willing to allow autonomy and less forcing curriculum and scheduling from the district level.
- To me, commitment with our students and our parents in our workers, looking forward to seeing the new candidate soon.
- We don't need any woke superintendent. This South Carolina, not California.
- Strong leadership skills, lives in area, open to live Q&As, strong Christian beliefs, stays away from woke agendas
- Someone who will hold these schools accountable for passing students on to the next grade when they are not ready and when there is proof that the student should continue to be passed on to the next grade.
- Needs to understand our the individual communities that make up the whole of SDPC and what makes SDPC so special in terms a people focused culture.
- Do not consider nor hire anyone with experience or knowledge of, or desire to implement DEI.
- Everyone needs to be held accountable to their ability, integrity, and merit. "
- Someone vested with students with special needs
- The next superintendent should have experience in district leadership, but not necessarily prior superintendent experience. To me it is important to have someone who can lead building level leaders to carry out the mission and vision of the superintendent, board, and district as a whole.
- I want to see Pickens county thrive for all students, I want to see a strong leader in special education and one who will stand up to state legislators when needed.
- Someone who is not enamored with technology as the only solution. Dedicated to the separation of politics, church and state. Someone who recognizes and addresses the significant failures of the achievement measures and standards used to make funding decisions in SC schools.
- Someone who prioritizes supporting teachers through higher pay and makes decisions for students by using proven scientific research, while focusing on reducing the cost burden of ballooning higher level administrator roles. Someone who won't make curriculum decisions based upon political views or backdoor deals.
- Suggested priorities:

- All SDPC schools should receive equal funds per student and equal access to benefits. Each school should have resources for higher achieving students as well as 1-1 support staff for students with special needs. Differentiation only works with similar-level students. One classroom teacher/co-teacher cannot be expected to do it all. Easley needs a second high school on the Greenville side. Countywide transportation should be available to all “magnet” schools.”
- Someone who wants to revisit the use of technology in the district. Technology is vastly overused and needs to be scaled back drastically. The next candidate should be someone with extensive teaching experience. The next superintendent should commit to subbing in a classroom at least one day per month and in every school at least once during the year.
- The next superintendent should be someone who knows what is going on in the schools/classrooms day to day. They should come from a teaching background to understand what teachers are going through each day.
- Someone that actively listens to the people they govern and reflects their decision making based upon suggestions from them.
- SC is far behind many other states when it comes to academics. We are struggling to keep up with poor children who have parents who do not care. We need a superintendent to get involved with the community and work on gaining support for those families with community outreach. One who cares about the arts and extracurricular activities, not just sports. Our choral programs are terrible compared to states around us. We have kids not interested in anything. Go back to pen and paper and help them learn how to be motivated by working with their hands.
- And please work on communication. Not just from the district, but teach the principals how to be a principal and help them understand what servant leadership looks like.
- We need someone who is going to be accessible and listen to parents, teachers, students, and all stakeholders before crucial decisions are made. We also need someone who will hold students accountable for behavior and attendance. The focus of one student shouldn’t supersede the rest of the class. We also need someone who will establish measures to protect more adults from having to endure physical harm while trying to help students.
- Someone that understands and respects the culture of our county. Someone committed to excellence and that represents ALL students.
- ...closing achievement gaps, graduation rates and drop-out rates” should not be achieved by forcing problem students out.
- We love Pickens county and we are really making improvements. It would be great to see someone continue this course of growth.
- The next superintendent should be committed to educational excellence and equity first. As a parent of a Liberty High student, I feel there is a gross inequity in academic equality between county schools. It is unacceptable for Liberty High school to not offer basic AP courses, like Calculus and English, and for anatomy and physiology classes to lack the budget for hands-on dissection experiments. I understand that larger schools will have more students and larger budgets, but basic classes and equipment should be guaranteed by the district administration. In addition, the next superintendent should be open to discussion of these and other topics with parents and community members, instead of constantly referring parents back to the principals and administrators at the local school.

- Integrity and one who is not willing to bend the rules for athletes to win at all costs. One who doesn't support administrators who ARE willing to cover up for athletes and win at all costs
- Empathetic without being easily manipulated.
- High amount of integrity especially in the face of adversity.
- Keeps human dignity above equality.
- Loves the person not because of who they are but because of who the superintendent is.
- Should look for someone who will build relationships not only with the teachers and faculty in the school district, but also with students through attendance at athletic/music events and has a high standard level of achievement for state testing.
- I would prefer someone who already knows our district.
- Honest, transparent, strong disciplinarian, fair,
- Conservative and hold students and PARENTS to a high standard.
- Dress code improvement - uniforms
- System in place for teachers to be respected by students.
- Absolutely NOT find a candidate that will take the district in a very different direction. Unless the direction gives principals and teachers more freedom to teach high quality hands on inquiry based social studies and science at the lower levels where building background knowledge is so important for older grades. Students aren't getting the science background they need and when I asked the state department representatives I was told that science instruction is a LOCAL decision. That means the superintendent and the board can do something about it.
- Willingness to listen to parent/student/ teacher input is important. I appreciated the superintendents openness and willing to listen and communicate and make changes necessary during the covid era . A superintendent who is willing to make the hard decisions (like opening schools during covid) is critical. He made the right decision even though a lot of parents were not happy. One of the questions for new candidates should be how they would have handled covid school closures and if they agreed with the last administrations decision. God forbid it happen again, our kids can't lose a year worth of education in formative years waiting to see what happens.
- We need a conservative old fashioned superintendent. Someone who take things back to the old way of doing things. Someone who will tighten up the dress code. Someone who will bring back corporal punishment. Someone who will change the schedule where school starts after Labor Day and ends before Memorial Day. Someone who will discipline students when needed.
- I believe the district is moving in a positive direction. I encourage the board to find someone with Christian values
- Bring back real learning for students. Get their faces out of screens.
- Unapologetic in commitment to education and will not use SDPC students and schools as a pawn for political aspirations
- Humility and willingness to work with the whole district area.
- We need a leader committed to families and their values in Pickens County. Preferably someone familiar with what those values are. We don't need someone that places more and more restrictions on how every minute in the classroom is spent. Yes, consistency

across the district is great but I feel that teachers and administrators all have too many boxes to check each day to be as effective as they could be.

- Someone that's cares and understanding more about the disabled students. They need more one on one in the classroom
- SDPC is on a path of continuous improvement with an excellent trajectory. We are leading the way with Innovate '28 and showcasing how a balanced approach to teaching and learning leads to student growth and positive outcomes I am hoping the next Superintendent will lead with a people first mindset. He has assembled a strong team and leads in a way that provides a steady calm allowing for everyone to keep our eyes on the horizon. Communication, the ability to bring people together, and the ability to handle stress with a calm demeanor is vital for a Superintendent in the chaos of today. I hope the Board will seek to hire a candidate with strong ties to Pickens County who and understands the value of building a culture around Respect, Innovation, Service, and Excellence. I know you will find the right person for the task without looking too far.
- I would like a superintendent that can ENSURE the students have the best available education.
- I feel like we should have someone in house who already knows the rank of the schools and stuff that goes on a day today basis in our district
- A leader who leads by serving others.
- They should have kids you can't understand kids if you don't have any
- We desperately need someone who understands all levels of education. Our district leadership leans heavily on secondary education experience, and we need someone who also understands and has experience in elementary education. We need someone strong in curriculum and instruction, someone who has been held accountable in the classroom for standardized test scores, someone who has taught post-COVID students, and someone who will be a voice for our teachers and students to be held accountable for teaching, learning, and mastering the state standards.
- The next superintendent needs to be approachable to parents and teachers. They need to value the teachers in their buildings by allowing them to make decisions about pacing and curriculum based off of student needs and not a master schedule. Veteran teachers pay scales need to be brought up to what first year teachers are. They need to allow principles to support their staff in a way that boosts moral and creates a sense of community within the school. Every school should have equitable facilities so that schools are not treated as the "outcast school."
- Christian values and commitment with excellence. Classroom experience as administrators tend to forget what dealing with kids involve.
- Accountability is key, Loves children and the success of the children is paramount
- The biggest weakness in public schools is the emphasis on STEM without considering the whole child. This has been the case since No Child Left Behind. I would want a superintendent who is willing to aim for actual meaningful individualized learning and who is less interested in placing the focus on curricula and placing more emphasis on teacher training, teacher instructional accountability, and measuring practical outcomes produced for kids that not only include academic results, but also civic and social skills. Teachers need to have genuine training, not just in-services, that allow administrators to standardize instructional practices and hold them accountable for implementation and

not just child outcomes. This requires someone who is bold, compassionate, and willing to go against the status quo on behalf of staff and students.

- Prioritizing the good of the community at the expense of providing opportunities and educational advancement is a fundamental issue with Pickens county. We need to prepare our children to succeed anywhere in the world, not just live comfortably in Pickens.
- For Pickens County Schools, the hiring committee should look for a superintendent who brings clear direction, steady leadership, and a genuine commitment to our students and staff. The right person will have strong instructional leadership skills, use thoughtful strategic planning to keep the district moving forward, and communicate openly with families, teachers, and community. They should understand and follow IDEA, Section 504, FERPA, and Title IX, manage resources responsibly, and lead with an equity-focused mindset. Most of all, Pickens County needs someone who creates a positive, supportive environment where students thrive and educators feel heard.
- Understands Special education and has experience with it.
- Someone that will drive education in Pickens County to prepare students for a technological future and not rely on test scores as a benchmark, but rather developing students to be productive members of society. Helping student develop their strengths versus demanding certain scores.
- Look for a superintendent who will make some sort of commitment to getting the children who don't learn like every other student some extra help so they can excel instead of worrying every week about grades when they genuinely need help not from a computer screen!
- I do not want someone that will come in and allow litter boxes in bathrooms and boys in the girls locker room. I want someone that will help our students grow and become the better future for our country. No woke nonsense
- Pick a candidate that has no tolerance for bullying so that kids can enjoy school and feel safe.
- Dedicated to continuing the advancement of being able to share the gospel in the schools by continuing all pro dad, FCA, and other groups and allowing churches to continue partnering with schools to help achieve this.
- Please get someone with extensive experience in the classroom/administration...preferably recently. Also, someone who pushes for true academic/career ready progress rather than just hitting a graduation rate goal.
- I'd like a superintendent not satisfied with comparing himself to SC (43rd or worse depending on source), but nationally. We should strive for more than we have in the past. Our goals should be top 3 in state and better than 50th percentile nationally as a start.
- "I hope the board looks for a superintendent who is first and foremost focused on students — recognizing that every child is different and that a one-size-fits-all approach to education simply doesn't work.
- I'd love to see someone who values and supports great teachers, listens to parents and genuinely views families as partners in their children's education. Strong communication, transparency and a willingness to listen — even when the feedback is difficult — matter tremendously.

- I also think our next superintendent should be someone who is willing to think outside the box, celebrate what is working, honestly address what isn't, and make decisions based on what will best help students learn and succeed rather than simply maintaining the status quo.
- Most importantly, I hope we find someone who knows this community, wants to be part of it, and will build trust with students, families, teachers and staff. Our kids deserve a leader who sets high expectations while also understanding that success can look different for different students."
- I believe it is important that our next superintendent have experience as a classroom teacher. This person needs to know what it is like to be "in the trenches" of daily life as a teacher in Pickens Co. They should be familiar with the demographics in our area. They should be ready to advance our district by building up the staff that are here and committed to SDOC. They should be willing to listen to input from teachers.
- Commitment to the job with an enactable vision for growth. They must show support for educators, and success of students and ignore politicians or "influencers".
- Always keeping the children in mind. The children are our future leaders and life changers.
- The board should seek a superintendent who leads with integrity, communicates openly, and puts students at the center of every decision. This person should be visible in our schools, approachable to families and staff, and willing to listen to classroom teachers before making decisions that affect instruction.
- As a teacher and parent, I would value a leader who sets high academic expectations while supporting safe classrooms, consistent discipline, and the needs of all learners. Recruiting and retaining excellent educators should be a priority, including protecting instructional time, reducing unnecessary administrative burdens, and providing meaningful professional development.
- The next superintendent should also recognize that success takes many forms. Strong academics, career and technical education, engineering and STEM programs, skilled trades, and partnerships with local employers and colleges all help prepare students for life after graduation.
- Above all, the board should look for someone with demonstrated results in improving student outcomes, supporting employees, and managing public funds responsibly. Pickens County deserves a superintendent who builds trust, explains difficult decisions, welcomes feedback, and follows through on commitments."
- I think too much focus has been on graduation rate that we have lost a connection with building relationships.
- I feel like we should look for someone who embodies these qualities
 - exceptional communication
 - strong leadership
 - solid problem-solving skills
 - someone who is good financially who can allocate resources fairly
- As this position is filled, I think it is important that someone in the top positions has an elementary background. So, if this person comes from a secondary background please consider promoting someone to an upper level position that can represent elementary.

- You need to find someone who will be students first. That will hold teachers accountable for not also adhering to that culture. Culture is what is important! Take care of that, and your extracurricular activities. And your educational achievements will follow!
- SDPC is known for its family culture and support we have for each other. This individual will need to understand our community and our culture.
- Must believe in changes to hold the disobedience as a priority to make our sports, and schools a safe place for students. Friendships, and politics has overrun the schools and has made the system an unsafe environment. I would like to see the new superintendent be strict of smoking policies on coaches, and students. Change is important for everyone's future.
- I really like and believe in the direction that the district is heading and want to continue that course. I believe if we can get someone that is qualified internally that might be our best situation.
- Honest, fair, committed,
- Business experience to strengthen performance focus.
- This does not have to be an in house situation. It seems that is done a lot at Pickens County. Please look for someone in all of our best interest.
- Find a Spirit filled Christian who will seek guidance from The Lord first and foremost.
- As a teacher in SDPC, I would love to have a superintendent who is well versed in special education. I want a superintendent who is committed to relationships within the community. A superintendent who is able to support all teachers. And someone who can bring some light into the classrooms. It is important that we have someone who has been in the classrooms recently, so that they can understand the truth behind what students in today's day and age are like.
- A superintendent who understands the value of our diverse student body and supports the students' right to read freely.
- I hope that the board takes into account culture when searching for a superintendent. Some change may be necessary but drastic changes could upset the culture of an already stressful time in our career.
- I feel our districts needs someone who can relate to others and not feel as if they are better than others. I feel they need to be humble and a servant minded leader. I feel we need the gaps closed from district office decisions and classroom needs.
- A superintendent who is willing to make actionable change on the excess of leadership positions and retain classroom teachers.
- Honesty, integrity, and someone outside of the SDPC.