

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Henry County Public Schools

Prepared by: Georgia School Boards Association

This report culminates the Community Online Engagement Sessions, a crucial part of the superintendent search for the Henry County Public Schools. Conducted by the Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) in April-May 2024, these sessions were designed to gather community input instrumental in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new Henry County Schools superintendent and to assist the Board in moving forward with candidate selections and interview preparations.

The GSBA Superintendent Search Process Framework, a comprehensive and rigorous approach, is heavily grounded in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (PSEL):

- Based on research and practical application that impact students' academic success and well-being
- Student-centered and pinpoint leadership best practices designed to ensure that educational leaders improve student learning and secure more equitable outcomes
- Focused on the readiness of educational leaders to “meet challenges of the job today and in the future as education, schools, and society continue to transform.”

The PSEL Standards, a comprehensive framework for educational leadership, were the guiding principles behind the survey prompts. This ensured the survey aligned with the field's best practices and standards.

1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values
2. Ethics and Professional Norms
3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
5. Community of Care and Support for Students
6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel
7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff
8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
9. Operations and Management
10. School Improvement

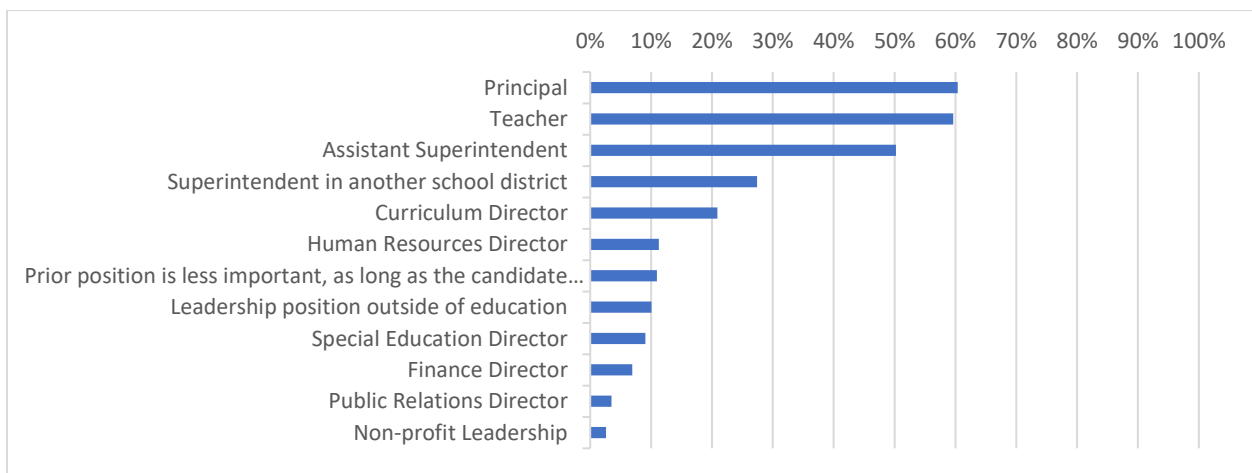
The Henry County Schools Online Survey for Superintendent Qualifications shaped the new superintendent's desired leadership profile. The survey contributed several perceptions, opinions, and ideas, which were then used to develop the profile. The narrative summaries highlight common themes gathered through feedback prompts, while the graphic charts provide rankings based on the activity poll priorities entered by each participant.

Question #1:

Below is a list of positions that superintendent candidates may have held in the past. Although all are valuable, which prior positions do you think would prove most valuable for your next superintendent? (You may check up to THREE positions below.)

Participants: 894 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	# of Participants
Principal	60%	540
Teacher	60%	533
Assistant Superintendent	50%	449
Superintendent in another school district	27%	245
Curriculum Director	21%	187
Human Resources Director	11%	101
Prior position is less important, as long as the candidate has the right skill set	11%	98
Leadership position outside of education	10%	90
Special Education Director	9%	81
Finance Director	7%	62
Public Relations Director	3%	31
Non-profit Leadership	3%	23



Stakeholder Feedback Summary:

The Value of Experience in Educational Leadership

Experience is an asset in any profession, but it holds particular significance in education. The new superintendent, with a background as both a teacher and principal, brings a wealth of experience to their role. This experience equips them with a unique perspective and understanding of the educational system and the challenges that educators and students encounter.

Here are some key points stakeholders desire in the new superintendent:

One of the critical values that the new superintendent holds is excellence. They strive for high standards in all aspects of education. However, they also lead with compassion, understanding the importance of empathy and support in creating a positive learning environment.

Furthermore, the superintendent values diversity, recognizing the importance of inclusivity and representation in the school community. They are committed to creating a welcoming and supportive environment for students and staff from all backgrounds.

Regarding discipline, the superintendent is known for their fair and consistent approach. They understand the importance of maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment while considering each student's needs and circumstances.

The new superintendent prioritizes supporting employees, especially teachers. They believe in empowering and equipping educators to succeed in their roles and recognize teachers' crucial impact on student success.

With a proven performance record, the superintendent has demonstrated their ability to drive positive outcomes and improvements in the educational system. Their leadership has been instrumental in achieving success at school and district levels.

Special education students hold a special place in the superintendent's priorities. They understand these students' unique needs and challenges and are committed to providing them with the support and resources they require to thrive academically and socially.

As a veteran leader with 7-10 years of experience, the superintendent brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to their role. They have a deep understanding of the complexities of the educational system and are well-equipped to navigate challenges and drive positive change.

The superintendent also recognizes the importance of the arts in education. They understand the value of creativity and self-expression in the learning process and are committed to supporting and promoting arts education in the school curriculum.

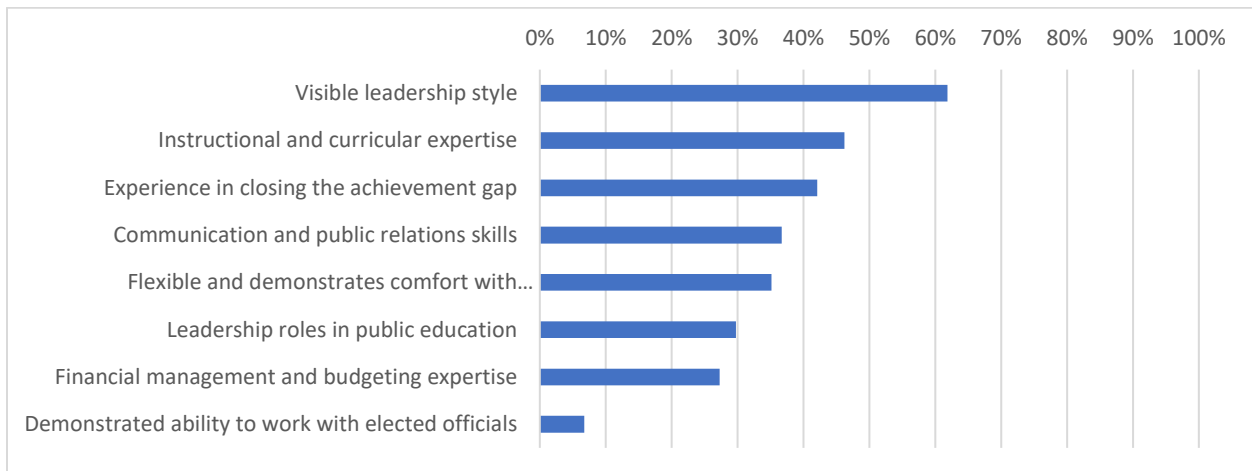
Lastly, the superintendent values input from teachers, recognizing that they are on the front lines of education and have valuable insights and perspectives to contribute. They believe collaboration and open communication are key components of effective leadership and decision-making.

Question #2:

In light of the District’s current strengths and areas for growth, which skills do you believe are most important for your superintendent to possess? (You may choose up to THREE.)

Participants: 891 Skipped: 3

Answer Choices	Responses	# of Participants
Visible leadership style	62%	551
Instructional and curricular expertise	46%	412
Experience in closing the achievement gap	42%	375
Communication and public relations skills	37%	327
Flexible and demonstrates comfort with change/innovation	35%	313
Leadership roles in public education	30%	265
Financial management and budgeting expertise	27%	243
Demonstrated ability to work with elected officials	7%	60



Stakeholder Feedback Summary:

Educational Leadership: Prioritizing Trust, Communication, and Student-Centered Practices

As a new superintendent in the educational realm, it is crucial to prioritize strategies that foster trust, effective communication, and student-centered practices. By combining traditional methods with innovative approaches, a superintendent can cultivate a supportive environment that values educators' input and places students' needs at the forefront.

Key points of focus include:

- **Discipline and Behavior Management:** Implement fair and consistent discipline policies while fostering accountability with parents and students to create a safer and more conducive learning environment.
- **Staff Trust and Communication:** Build trust among staff by valuing their thoughts, treating them fairly, and maintaining open and honest communication about the current state of the school system.
- **Teacher Morale and Professional Development:** Improve teacher morale through effective hiring strategies, professional development opportunities, and a focus on cultural competence and culturally relevant teaching practices.
- **Leadership and Diversity:** Lead effectively and efficiently in a diverse population by demonstrating cultural competence, promoting process improvement, and addressing the district's growing needs and diversity.
- **Student-Centered Approach:** Prioritize student well-being and academic success by putting kids first in all decision-making processes and ensuring that schools are a safe and inclusive for students to learn.

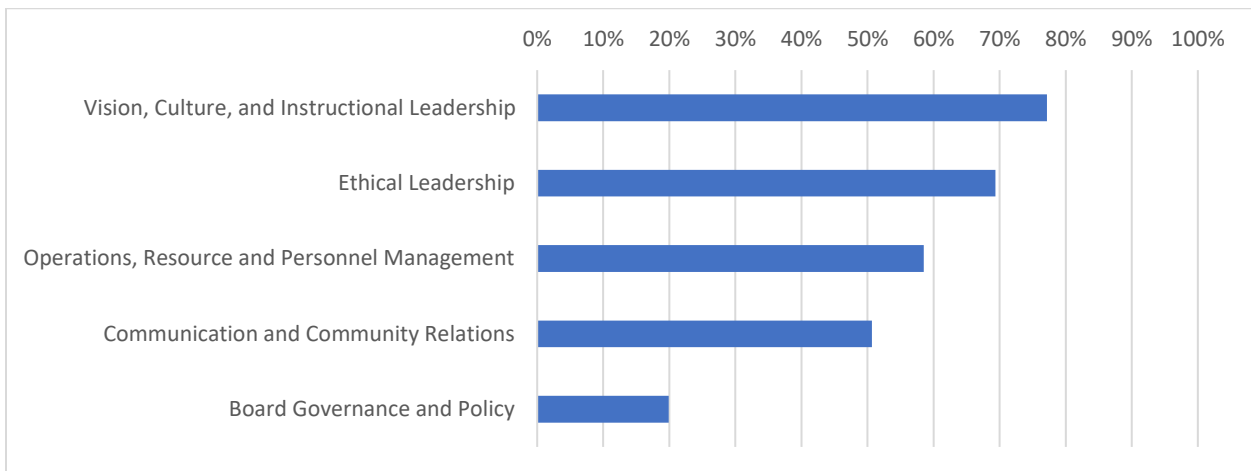
By embodying the qualities of a teacher's superintendent—one who advocates for educators, prioritizes student needs, and demonstrates success in working with diverse school communities—the new superintendent can create a positive and impactful educational environment that benefits both teachers and students.

Question #3:

Which skills (Superintendent Job Standards) are needed most in the Henry County School Superintendent? (You may check the THREE most important skills needed.)

Participants: 894 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	# of Participants
Vision, Culture, and Instructional Leadership	77%	690
Ethical Leadership	69%	620
Operations, Resource and Personnel Management	59%	523
Communication and Community Relations	51%	453
Board Governance and Policy	20%	178



Stakeholder Feedback Summary:

Superintendent Job Standards and Required Skillset

Superintendents are crucial in overseeing and managing various aspects of a project, construction site, or educational institution. To excel in this position, several job standards and a specific skillset are required:

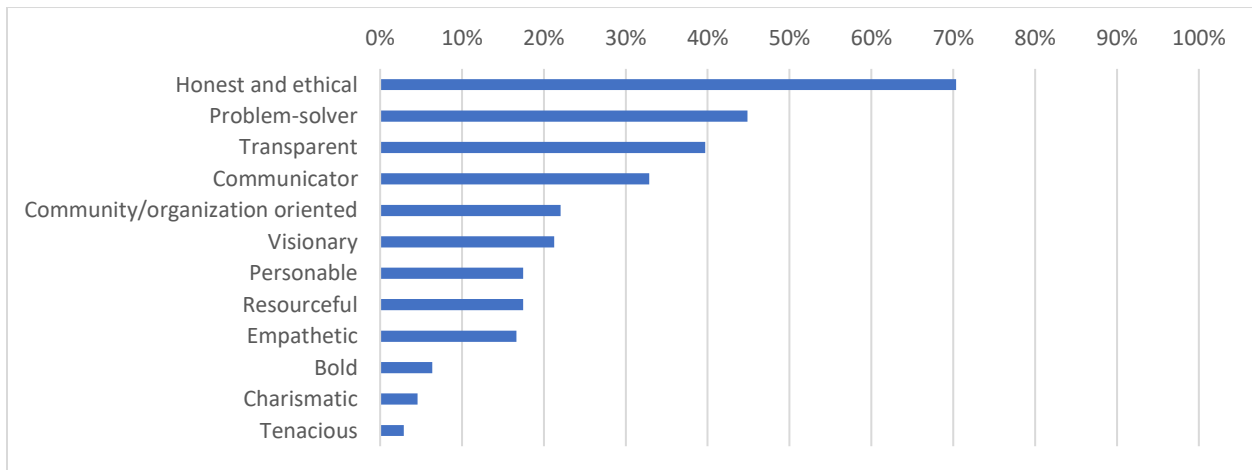
- The new superintendent must create a conducive curriculum for student mastery essential for academic success.
- Retention of veteran teachers is crucial for maintaining institutional knowledge and stability. This includes providing professional development opportunities, offering competitive salaries and benefits, and creating a positive work environment that values teachers' expertise.
- Improving internal communication within the school system can enhance collaboration and efficiency.
- Ensuring safety in schools is paramount for the well-being of students and staff.
- Addressing class sizes is crucial for personalized learning experiences.
- Adapting to demographic changes requires schools to be responsive and inclusive by offering culturally relevant curricula and resources.
- Effective resource allocation is essential for maximizing educational outcomes.
- Emphasizing the holistic development of students involves addressing their social, emotional, and academic needs.
- Addressing ineffective staff members is necessary for maintaining high standards of education.
- Engaging with parents is crucial for building a strong school community and supporting student success.
- Removing politics from education can promote a focus on student needs and academic excellence.
- Expanding career tech programs and arts education can provide diverse pathways for student success.
- Maintaining and attracting skilled, dependable, and dedicated employees is essential for a thriving school system.

Question #4:

In light of the District’s current strengths and areas for growth, which personal traits do you believe your superintendent should possess? (You may choose up to THREE.)

Participants: 894 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	# of Participants
Honest and ethical	70%	629
Problem-solver	45%	401
Transparent	40%	355
Communicator	33%	294
Community/organization oriented	22%	197
Visionary	21%	190
Personable	17%	156
Resourceful	17%	156
Empathetic	17%	149
Bold	6%	57
Charismatic	5%	41
Tenacious	3%	26



Stakeholder Feedback Summary:

Qualities of an Effective Superintendent

An effective superintendent plays a crucial role in a school district's success. They should possess diverse skills and qualities and lead with transparency, ethics, innovation, and resourcefulness.

Here are some key qualities that a superintendent should embody:

- **Transparency:** A superintendent should be open and honest in communicating with all stakeholders, including educators, parents, and students. Transparency builds trust and fosters a positive relationship within the community.
- **Ethical:** Upholding high ethical standards is essential for a superintendent to make decisions that prioritize the well-being of students and the community.
- **Innovative:** Embracing innovation allows a superintendent to introduce new ideas and approaches to improving the quality of education and effectively addressing challenges.
- **Resourceful:** Being resourceful enables a superintendent to make the most of available resources and find creative solutions to budget constraints or other limitations.
- **Accountability:** Holding parents and students accountable for their educational roles is important for maintaining high standards and achieving academic success.
- **Visionary:** A superintendent should clearly envision the school district's future and inspire others to work towards common goals.
- **Problem Solver:** The ability to identify issues, analyze problems, and implement effective solutions is crucial for overcoming challenges in the education system.
- **Accessibility:** Being accessible to educators, parents, and students allows a superintendent to understand their needs and concerns, fostering a collaborative approach to driving improvement.
- **Feedback-Oriented:** Actively seeking stakeholder feedback helps a superintendent make informed decisions and continuously improve the educational experience.
- **Creative Thinker:** Thinking creatively enables a superintendent to explore new possibilities and approaches to enhance learning outcomes and student success.
- **Systems Thinker:** Understanding the interconnectedness of various components within the education system is essential for a superintendent to implement holistic and sustainable changes.

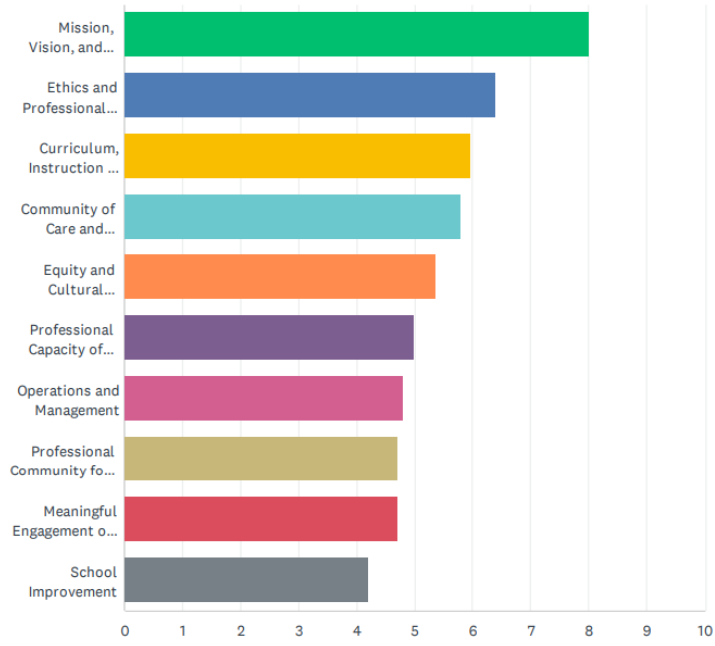
By embodying these qualities, a superintendent can effectively lead a school district toward excellence, foster a positive learning environment, and ensure success for all.

Question #5:

What are the strengths of the Henry County School System? Rank the following standards from 1 to 10 based on the District’s strengths, with 1 representing the system’s greatest strength.

Participants: 894 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Mission, Vision, and Core Values	46%	15%	8%	7%	6%	4%	3%	4%	3%	4%	894
Ethics and Professional Norms	6%	20%	16%	12%	13%	7%	9%	7%	6%	3%	894
Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	7%	12%	13%	15%	12%	10%	9%	9%	6%	6%	894
Community of Care and Support for Students	8%	9%	11%	13%	15%	14%	11%	8%	6%	5%	894
Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	6%	8%	15%	12%	10%	11%	8%	8%	9%	13%	894
Professional Capacity of School Personnel	5%	6%	7%	9%	12%	17%	14%	13%	11%	6%	894
Operations and Management	6%	10%	8%	8%	7%	8%	10%	9%	19%	14%	894
Professional Community for Teachers and Staff	6%	6%	6%	8%	10%	10%	17%	14%	13%	11%	894
Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community	5%	7%	9%	9%	7%	10%	11%	18%	14%	10%	894
School Improvement	6%	6%	7%	8%	8%	8%	8%	10%	13%	28%	894



Stakeholder Feedback Summary:

Strengths of Henry County School System

The Henry County School System demonstrates several key strengths that contribute to its success in providing quality education and student support. These strengths include:

- **Commitment to Mission, Vision, and Core Values:** The school system's dedication to its mission, vision, and core values provides all stakeholders with a clear direction and focus.
- **Ethics and Professional Norms:** Upholding high ethical standards and professional norms ensures a culture of integrity and accountability within the school system.
- **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:** The emphasis on quality curriculum, effective instruction, and meaningful assessment practices enhances student learning outcomes.
- **Community of Care and Support for Students:** Creating a nurturing and supportive environment fosters students' holistic development and well-being.
- **Equity and Cultural Responsiveness:** Prioritizing equity and cultural responsiveness promotes inclusivity and diversity within the school community.
- **Professional Capacity of School Personnel:** Investing in educators' professional growth and development enhances their effectiveness in supporting student success.
- **Operations and Management:** Efficient operations and management practices ensure the smooth functioning of the school system.
- **Professional Community for Teachers and Staff:** Cultivating a collaborative and supportive professional community among teachers and staff enhances morale and job satisfaction.
- **Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community:** Actively involving families and the community in the education process strengthens partnerships and promotes student achievement.
- **School Improvement:** Focusing on continuous improvement and innovation drives the school system towards excellence and better student outcomes.

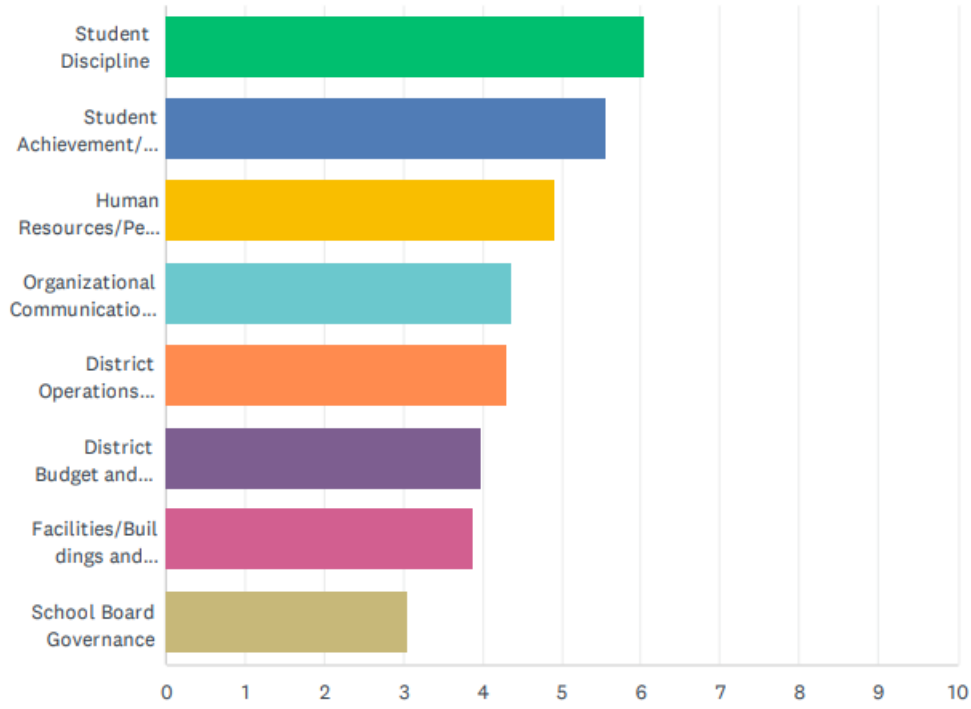
By leveraging these strengths, the Henry County School System can create a positive and enriching educational experience for its students while fostering a culture of excellence and continuous growth.

Question #6:

Rank the following challenges based on the areas of need for the Henry County School System from 1 to 8, with 1 representing the system’s greatest weakness.

Participants: 876 Skipped: 18

Answer Choices	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	TOTAL
Student Discipline	34 %	18 %	15 %	9%	9%	6%	5%	3%	862
Student Achievement/Academics	24 %	22 %	13 %	12 %	9%	7%	6%	8%	860
Human Resources/Personnel/Staff Quality	12 %	14 %	20 %	14 %	12 %	11 %	11 %	7%	861
Organizational Communication/Internal and External	6%	10 %	15 %	18 %	15 %	16 %	12 %	9%	857
District Operations (Transportation, Food Service, Technology, etc.)	11 %	13 %	12 %	12 %	12 %	10 %	13 %	17 %	864
District Budget and Finance	6%	8%	8%	14 %	17 %	23 %	15 %	9%	858
Facilities/Buildings and Grounds	5%	10 %	12 %	12 %	15 %	14 %	13 %	19 %	863
School Board Governance	3%	5%	7%	9%	10 %	13 %	25 %	27 %	862



Stakeholder Feedback Summary:

Ranking Assessment of Weaknesses in the Henry County School System

When evaluating the Henry County School System, stakeholders ranked the weaknesses from 1 to 8, with 1 representing the system's greatest weakness.

1. **Student Discipline:** One of the primary weaknesses is maintaining effective student discipline within the schools. This can impact the overall learning environment and student outcomes.
2. **Student Achievement and Academics:** Another significant weakness is student achievement and academic performance. Ensuring that students meet educational standards and reach their full potential is crucial for the school system's success.
3. **Human Resources, Personnel, and Staff Quality:** The quality of staff and personnel within the school system is essential for providing a high standard of education. This area's weaknesses can affect the effectiveness of teaching and support services.
4. **Organizational Communication:** Both internal communication among staff members and external communication with parents and the community are vital for the smooth operation of the school system. Weaknesses in communication can lead to misunderstandings and inefficiencies.
5. **District Operations:** This encompasses various areas such as transportation, food service, and technology. Inefficient operations in these areas can impact the daily functioning of the schools and the well-being of students and staff.
6. **District Budget and Finance:** Effective budget management is crucial for the sustainability of the school system. Budgeting and financial management weaknesses can lead to resource shortages and impact the quality of education provided.
7. **Facilities, Buildings, and Grounds:** The condition of school facilities plays a significant role in creating a conducive learning environment. Weaknesses in this area can affect the safety and well-being of students and staff.
8. **School Board Governance:** The effectiveness of the school board in providing oversight and direction to the school system is crucial. School Board Governance was the least concern among the eight rankings.

Addressing these weaknesses requires a comprehensive approach involving stakeholder collaboration, strategic planning, and a commitment to continuous improvement in all Henry County School System areas.

Question #7:

Do you have any general comments to add that will help in the Board's selection of the next superintendent?

Participants: 435 Skipped: 459

Stakeholder Feedback Summary:

Selection of the New Superintendent for Henry County School System

As the Board considers candidates for the new superintendent position, it is crucial to focus on several key themes that have emerged from the community feedback. These common themes reflect the aspirations and expectations of various stakeholders within the Henry County School System:

- **Address Student Discipline:** Effectively address student discipline to emphasize the importance of maintaining a safe and conducive learning environment.
- **Teacher Professional Development:** Prioritize ongoing training and support for teachers to enhance their skills and effectiveness in the classroom.
- **Focus on What's Best for Students:** Ensure that all decisions and policies are made with the best interests of students in mind.
- **Open-Door Policy:** Maintain accessibility and approachability to all stakeholders through an open-door policy.
- **Embrace Diversity:** Foster a culture of inclusivity and diversity within the school system to support all students and staff members.
- **Innovation and Change:** Encourage thinking outside the box, promote innovation, and embrace change to drive continuous improvement.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Prioritize transparency in decision-making processes and hold all stakeholders accountable for their actions.
- **Teacher Retention and Competitive Pay:** Address teacher retention issues by offering competitive pay and benefits to attract and retain high-quality educators.
- **Student Achievement and Safety:** Focus on raising student achievement levels while prioritizing school safety and security measures.
- **ESOL and Special Education Population:** Provide targeted support and resources to effectively meet the needs of ESOL and special education students.
- **Stability and Visionary Leadership:** Seek a visionary leader who can stabilize the school system while driving innovation and positive change.

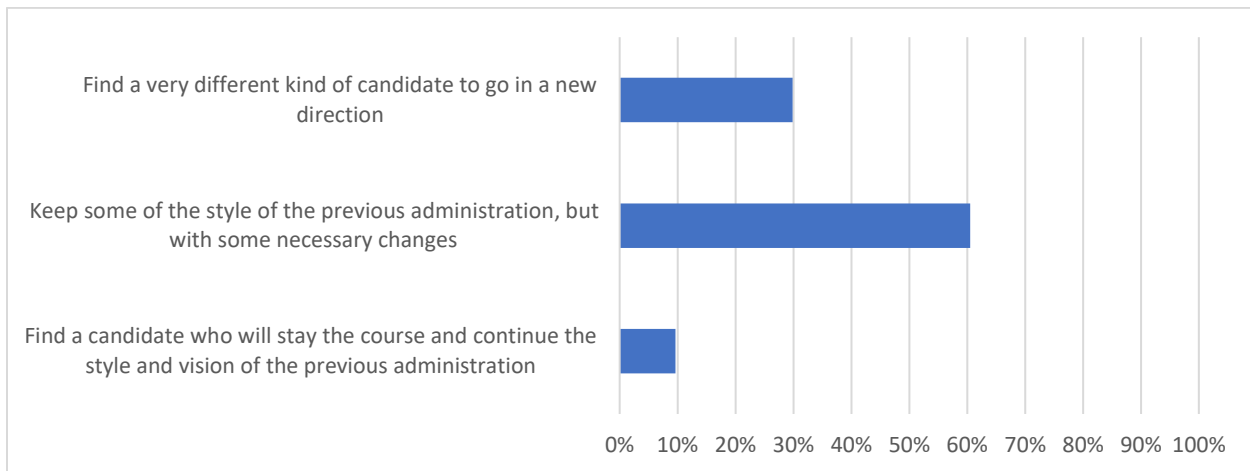
The new superintendent needs to embody these qualities and priorities to lead the Henry County School System effectively and ensure the success and well-being of all students and staff.

Question #8:

In choosing the Superintendent, which path do you think the School Board should take?

Participants: 894 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	RESPONSES	
Find a candidate who will stay the course and continue the style and vision of the previous administration	9.62%	86
Keep some of the style of the previous administration, but with some necessary changes	60.51%	541
Find a very different kind of candidate to go in a new direction	29.87%	267



Stakeholder Feedback Summary:

Evaluating Priorities for Selecting a New Superintendent

When selecting a new superintendent, the School Board must consider the priorities outlined by the stakeholders. The stakeholders have ranked their preferences in the following order:

- 1. Keep Some of the Style of the Previous Administration with Necessary Changes:** This priority suggests a balanced approach where elements of the previous administration's style are retained but with essential modifications to address any shortcomings or adapt to new challenges. This option aims to build on existing strengths while fostering growth and improvement.
- 2. Find a Very Different Kind of Candidate to Go in a New Direction:** This consideration advocates for a more radical shift by seeking a candidate who brings a fresh

perspective and innovative ideas to lead the school district in a new direction. Embracing change and diversity of thought can invigorate the educational system and drive progress.

3. **Find a Candidate Who Will Stay the Course and Continue the Style and Vision of the Previous Administration:** This priority emphasizes continuity and stability by selecting a candidate who aligns closely with the outgoing superintendent's style and vision. The focus here is on maintaining consistency and preserving successful practices.

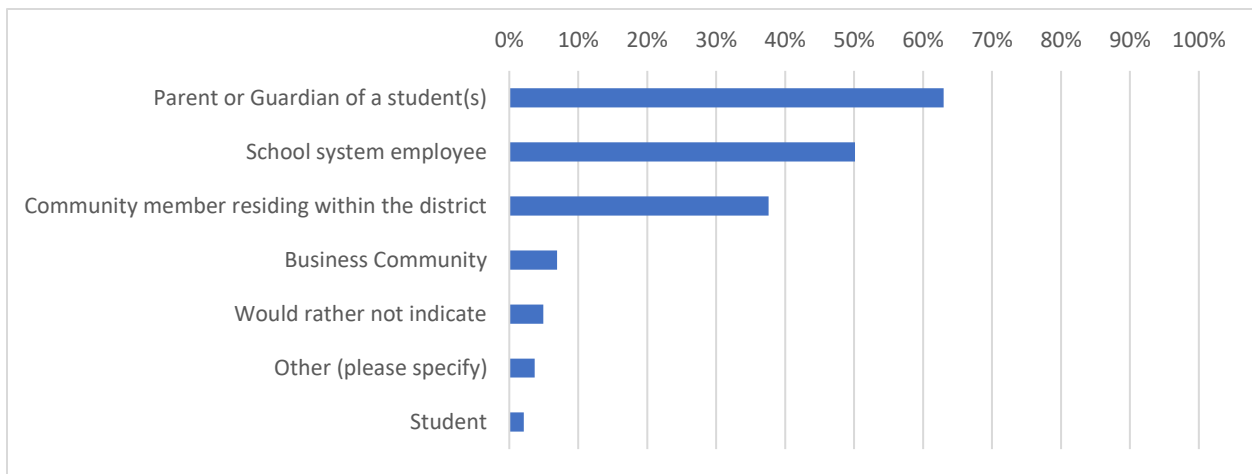
Each of these priorities presents distinct advantages and challenges, and the School Board must carefully weigh the stakeholders' preferences to make an informed decision that best serves the students, staff, parents, and the community.

Question #9:

Please indicate your stakeholder status and select all that apply:

Participants: 894 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	RESPONSES	
Parent or Guardian of a student(s)	62.98%	563
School system employee	50.11%	448
Community member residing within the district	37.58%	336
Business Community	6.94%	62
Would rather not indicate	4.92%	44
Other (please specify)	3.69%	33
Student	2.13%	19



Stakeholder Feedback Summary:

Analysis of Stakeholder Participation

During the stakeholder engagement process, diverse participants were involved, representing various backgrounds and interests. The stakeholders can be broadly categorized into the following groups:

- **Parent or Guardians of a student(s):** Individuals directly responsible for the well-being and education of students within the school system.
- **School system employee:** Staff members and educators working within the school system, contributing to the academic and administrative functions.
- **Community member residing within the district:** Residents of the local community served by the school system who have a vested interest in its success.
- **Business community:** Representatives from local businesses or organizations that interact with or support the school system in various capacities.
- **Other:** A diverse category encompassing a wide range of stakeholders, including but not limited to:
 - **Teacher:** Current or former educators within the school system who provide valuable insights into the teaching and learning process.
 - **Student:** Individuals directly experiencing the educational environment and services the school system provides.
 - **Former employee:** Previous staff members who bring institutional knowledge and historical perspectives.
 - **Former parent:** Individuals who have had children graduate from or leave the school system, offering unique viewpoints on past experiences.
 - **Grandparent:** Family members of students or alumni contributing intergenerational perspectives to the discussion.
 - **Retired teachers:** Former educators who have dedicated their careers to the school system, providing insights based on years of experience.
 - **Spouse of school employee:** Partners of staff members, offering a different vantage point on the school system's operations.
 - **Taxpayer:** Individuals who fund the school system through taxes, with a keen interest in accountability and effective resource allocation.
 - **Local government:** Representatives from municipal or county government entities who collaborate with the school system on shared goals and initiatives.
 - **Community member:** Engaged citizens invested in the local schools' and students' well-being and success.
 - **School council member:** Participants involved in school governance and decision-making processes, advocating for the community's interests.
 - **Non-profit leader:** Representatives from charitable organizations or community groups supporting educational initiatives and programs.
 - **Family members of school employees:** Relatives of staff members who offer a personal connection to the school system and its mission.

- District leader: Administrators and officials responsible for overseeing the school system's policies, operations, and strategic direction.
- Volunteer within the school system: Individuals contributing their time and resources to support school activities and programs.
- External to county person: Participants from neighboring regions or outside the county, providing external perspectives and insights.
- Military service member: Individuals serving in the armed forces, bringing unique experiences and priorities to the discussion on education and community support.

The diverse representation of stakeholders in the school system engagement process ensures a comprehensive and inclusive approach to decision-making, policy development, and community involvement. By incorporating perspectives from various backgrounds and interests, the school system can better address the needs and priorities of all those involved in the educational process.

Appreciation for Henry County Stakeholders

The GSBA team thanks the Henry County School System stakeholders for actively participating in the online engagement session. Your valuable insights, feedback, and contributions have been instrumental in shaping the discussions and outcomes of the session.

We appreciate the time and effort you have dedicated to sharing your perspectives, ideas, and suggestions during the session. Your commitment to improving the Henry County School System is commendable, and we are grateful for your continued support and collaboration.

Your involvement is crucial in the decision-making processes that impact the community. Your voices are essential in driving positive change, fostering growth, and ensuring the well-being of Henry County's stakeholders.