



**PROVIDING DIRECTION FOR
OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP**

BWP

**Richland School District One Superintendent Search
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

March 25, 2025

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I. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- A. To identify the perceived strengths and challenges within Richland One Schools.
- B. To identify desired qualities and characteristics of the next superintendent.
- C. To build community understanding and support for the superintendent search process.
- D. To ensure the broadest possible community participation in the superintendent search process.

II. SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The BWP search team conducted an extensive Community Engagement Process that involved Richland employees, students, and the Richland One community. The process consisted of an online survey and numerous meetings with constituent groups.

On March 12 - 13, 2025, the search team facilitated 31 small group discussions, individual interviews, and 3 community forums. Sessions were held with school board members, central office administrators and staff, school staff groups, students, governmental officials, and community members. (*Attachment 1*)

Over 210 individuals participated in these sessions, and we received 14 emails.

The online survey, *Finding a Leader for Our Future*, was designed and posted on the school system website. It was available beginning March 10 and closed on March 20, 2025. There are 4,903 completed surveys—1,662 parents and 1,505 staff.

(See Attachment 2, which includes a number of surveys completed in English (4,828) and Spanish (75), and 1,537 student responses. (*Attachments 2/3*))

This multifaceted approach to community engagement reflects the Richland One School Board's commitment to seeking input from students, employees, and community members. The process has yielded significant thought-provoking responses that provide clear guidance as the search proceeds.

III. QUANTITATIVE COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Below are the three highest-rated responses to each of the five non-demographic questions from the online survey, *Finding a Leader for Our Future*. Preliminary data were gleaned from 4,903 responses, and Attachment 1 contains the survey results.



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- A. Survey Question #4 asked respondents to **select the three most significant strengths of Richland One Schools from the following list:** Supportive community, Quality teachers and staff, Size of the district, Available resources, School building and facilities, Parental support, Financial management, Technology, Effective leadership, Curriculum, and Educational options and programs.

The top results were:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Educational options and programs – 48 % | 3. Supportive community – 37% |
| 2. Quality teachers and staff – 41% | 4. Available resources – 32% |

- B. Survey Question #5 requested responders to **select the three important leadership skills you would like to see in a superintendent from the following list:** Communication skills, Instructional skills, Managerial skills, Financial skills, Organizational skills, Interpersonal skills, and Public relations/community relations skills.

The three top results were:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Communication skills – 67% | 3. Managerial skills/ Operational skills – 44 |
| 2. Financial skills – 54% | |

- C. Survey Question #6 requested responders to **select the three most important characteristics you would like a superintendent to exhibit** from the following list: Commitment to the community, Confidence, Enthusiasm, Integrity, Good judgment, Visionary, Team – building ability, Change agent mindset, Risk-taker, Negotiator, and Peacemaker.

The three top results were:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Integrity – 53% | 3. Commitment to the community – 48% |
| 2. Good judgment– 51% | |

- D. Survey Question #4 requested responders to **indicate whether you believe the item is either extremely important, important, or not important in the new superintendent** from the following list: Doctorate degree, Experience as: a superintendent with a proven record of success, Experience as a superintendent in a

district of similar size, Experience as an assistant superintendent or equivalent level, Experience as a district-level administrator, Experience as a principal, Experience as a classroom teacher, Experience in finance, Experience in personnel, Experience in instruction, Experience in facility construction and management, Experience in technology, Experience working with diverse groups of people, Experience in strategic planning, Experience in South Carolina, and Experience in the Southeast.

The top results were:

1. Experience in strategic planning - 97%
2. Experience working with diverse groups of people – 96%
3. Experience in instruction– 94%
4. Experience in personnel – 92%
5. Experience as a superintendent with a proven record of success – 92%

- E. Survey Question #8 requested responders to **select what they consider to be the three most important issues or concerns facing the district in the next five years** from the following list: Community relations and support, Recruitment and retention of high-quality staff, Either increasing or decreasing student population numbers, Funding, Facilities, Meeting federal and state accountability mandates, Availability of and use of technology, Curriculum and instruction, Parental involvement, Graduation rates, and School safety.

The top three results were:

1. Recruitment and retention of high-quality staff – 77%
2. Funding – 41%
3. Facilities, Curriculum and Instruction, School safety – 35%

IV. QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK FROM OPEN PUBLIC FORUMS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Below are the responses collected from the interviews, small group meetings and community Forums. Each session was structured to receive feedback related to three questions:

What do you see as the strengths of Richland One Schools?

What are the greatest challenges in Richland One Schools?

What qualities, characteristics, and experiences does the next superintendent of Richland One Schools need to possess and demonstrate?

Below are the three questions and “prominent responses” received from each session. Responses were deemed to be “prominent” when they were expressed multiple times during the sessions and/or when they were considered uniquely relevant and insightful. For organizational purposes, the “prominent responses” were organized using the relevant top-rated categories on the Community Survey.

A. Question 1 (Q4 – Strengths) –

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST STRENGTHS OF RICHLAND ONE SCHOOLS?

Prominent responses” from the Community Engagement Sessions include:

1. *Educational options and programs* – 48 %
Abundant vocational opportunities and programs like Career Tech, a wealth of instructional resources and programs with an array of programs for all students, many provisions for underserved students, outstanding educational programs, program opportunities and choices for all students.
2. *Quality teachers and staff* – 41%
Longevity of many employees with family ties and histories, a great team of teachers who want what is best for students, qualified staff , and a wealth of instructional resources
3. *Supportive community* – 37%
Community cares and is involved in supporting schools, good partnerships with the community – connections with the city, strong community support, military friendly, strong community and parental involvement, sense of community, post-secondary presence and support
4. *Available resources* – 32%
Financial and community resource-rich, great resources and professional development, equitable resource distribution



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Additional comments:

Diversity of students served, location of district, diversity – inclusion of rural, suburban, and urban – wealth and poverty, great kids who want to participate and be engaged,

B. Question 2 (Q 8) – Important issues)–

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE GREATEST CHALLENGES FACED BY RICHLAND ONE SCHOOLS?

Prominent responses from the Community Engagement Sessions include:

1. Recruitment and retention of high-quality staff – 77%
Recruitment and retention of talented staff, loss of teachers, more attention needed in understanding teacher/staff challenges, need to recruit teachers to rural areas. aging infrastructure, many facilities need renovation and replacement, huge facilities issues because of so many older facilities, issues with early learning center, need to understand the complexities and challenges of the different segments of rural, suburban, and urban communities, older schools neglected, address student learning gaps, keeping the focus on children while using data, schools are not a secure environment, declining enrollment, concern with leadership, lack of equity in programs, holding students accountable, need for additional mental health resources, socioeconomic achievement gaps
2. Funding – 41%
Lack of public funding provided to the district, transparency in financial information, need for updated technology, loss of funding for needed programs, and questions about funding transparency.
3. Facilities, Curriculum and Instruction, School safety – 35%
Need facilities study and plan to address aging infrastructure needs, understanding the need for consolidation of facilities,

Additional comments:

A negative image of the district, lots of negative perspectives coming from parents, media, politics that is hard to combat, diversity and its impact on kids, need for better communication in the district, cooperation with the Board and superintendent, need to restore trust in district, the uncertainty of state and national politics, lack of an updated strategic plan, need to develop an operational strategic plan, need to tell our story better, divided Board, we are not in good shape, understanding of challenges of being urban, suburban and rural and the spectrum of economics, ensuring equity, operational and efficiency study needed, lack of transparency.

C. Question 3 –

WHAT QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS DOES THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT NEED TO POSSESS AND DEMONSTRATE?

*Please note that Survey Questions 6, 7, and 8 relate to the qualities and characteristics of the next superintendent, and there is some degree of overlap in listing prominent responses.

Prominent responses three most important leadership skills (Survey question 5)

1. Communication skills (67%)

Great communicator – good communications with everyone, is an active listener who values input from all groups, ability to build relationships, has the power to motivate, ability to focus on morale building and earning trust with staff and community, ability to make people feel safe and supported, authentic presence and visibility in the schools and community, willingness to listen to students, empathy on how students feel and see things, collaborative decision maker.

2. Financial skills – 49%

Experience in capital improvement projects, security in financial management demonstrated in places where they worked, experience in business management, proven record of good stewardship of tax dollars, financial expertise, ability to create a master plan that may need to include a bond referendum, changing of attendance areas, closing and/or adding schools.

3. Managerial skills/ Operational skills – 44%

Can share decisions based on data, willing to be straightforward and direct when acknowledging when



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something is not being accomplished, can move staff forward and knows how to pick a supportive team, experience in business management, organization leadership skills, demonstrated

ability to hold staff accountable, politically savvy, problem solver, has business sense and organizational leadership experience,

Additional comments:

Needs to live in the district, looking for longevity, no previous “baggage” that will raise community concern, proven track record in a district with similar demographics, understanding of the complexity of Richland One,

Prominent responses Characteristics (Survey question 6 – 3 most important characteristics) from the Community Engagement Sessions follow:

1. Integrity – 53%

A level of honesty, transparency, and servant leadership. Humility, integrity, truthfulness and candidness, moral and ethical compass.

2. Good judgment– 51%

Has the courage to deal with issues and manage complexities, ability to navigate difficult politics, courage and background to make tough decisions.

3. Commitment to the community – 48%

Willing and open to engaging with the community, parents and community leaders, need to live in the district, a leader who has the ability to bridge the past with a strategic mindset to move the district forward, looking for long-term commitment to the community.

Prominent responses (Survey question 7 – Extremely important/important) from the Community Engagement Sessions follow:

1. Experience in strategic planning - 97%

Visionary leader, ability to help others see the future, knowledgeable of shifting educational trends, strategic planner

2. Experience working with diverse groups of people – 96%

Has a lens for equity – puts in forefront of all decisions, can engage and empower community stakeholders, is a relationship



builder, and has visibility throughout the community.

- 3. Experience in instruction– 94%
Needs to be Chief educational officer, not just chief executive – demonstrates they know about instructional goals – demonstrates academics comes first, strong instructional expertise, demonstrated ability to improve instruction and address benchmarks in student learning, demonstrated ability to address gaps in student learning, understands the use of technology for kids and training needed for teachers, has “boots on the ground” experience as a teacher and school administrator.

- 4. Experience in personnel – 92%

The ability to attract and manage talent and support people while holding them accountable, will help grow staff – develop leaders and provide them opportunities for growth in a collegial environment, and success in employee and community relationships.

- 5. Experience as a superintendent with a proven record of success – 92%

Proven track record of success, experience developing positive Board – superintendent relationships, understanding the roles of the superintendent and school board, believes “all means all” and every child is important

Additional comments:

Will be committed to Richland One, possesses cultural competency, possess good emotional intelligence and empathy, recognizes they are in the Bible Belt, has and uses common sense, understanding of Richland One,

V. COMMON THEMES ACROSS SURVEY RESPONSES TO

QUESTION 5 – Three most important leadership skills you would like a superintendent to have

QUESTION 6 – Three most important characteristics you would like a superintendent to exhibit



QUESTION 7 – Indicate whether you believe it is extremely important/important in the new superintendent

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GROUP RESPONSES TO ...

What Qualities and Characteristics Does the Next Superintendent Need to Possess and Demonstrate?

Following a thorough analysis of the data collected from the Community Surveys, Public meetings, Interviews and Group discussions, we have developed a Draft Leadership Profile.

To organize our thoughts, the BWP search team focused on four major descriptors that capture the most frequent themes from the Community Survey, Community Engagement Sessions, and emails we received.

These include:

- Visionary Instructional Leader
- Effective Communicator
- Collaborative Manager
- Personal Qualities

VII. DRAFT LEADERSHIP PROFILE 2025

The recommended draft Leadership Profile outlines the qualities, characteristics, experiences, and skills necessary for the next Superintendent of Richland One Schools. This document defines the type of leader best suited to guide Richland One Schools into the future.

DRAFT Richland One Leadership Profile

Richland School District One seeks an energetic, innovative, and visionary leader who will collaborate with internal and community stakeholders to provide equitable and forward-looking educational opportunities for all students. A proven track record of success as a superintendent, assistant superintendent, or equivalent administrative position, along with a doctoral degree, is preferred. Experience in a large, highly diverse district is also preferred.



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The successful candidate will reflect the following attributes:

- *Is a dynamic, progressive leader with a strong understanding of the complexities of teaching and learning who will initiate and support educational programs that prepare students for further education and the 21st-century workplace.*
- *Demonstrated experience in implementing instructional initiatives that broaden opportunities and close achievement gaps.*
- *Is strategic and innovative, demonstrating a capacity to build on existing strengths, address areas needing improvement, and make sound, equitable decisions.*
- *Is a consensus builder who helps unify a diverse community and actively engages multiple stakeholder groups with differing perspectives.*
- *Possesses the courage to make decisions that prioritize students' best interests.*

Visionary Instructional Leader

- Possesses significant instructional expertise and a deep understanding of the PK-12 continuum.
- Is a forward-thinking progressive leader with a solid understanding of teaching and learning and will initiate/support multifaceted educational programs that prepare each student with post-secondary and career readiness.
- Has demonstrated experience in implementing initiatives that expand opportunities to meet the needs of all students and close achievement gaps.
- Has shown the ability to develop cohesive and effective instructional leadership teams at the district and school levels.

Collaborative Manager

- Has strong practical knowledge of the operational areas of a school district, including financial planning and accounting, human resources, construction and facility management and addressing aging infrastructure challenges, transportation, safety, technology, and food service.
- Has expertise in effective strategies to attract and retain qualified and



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- diverse staff through transparent hiring processes.
- Has “hands-on” experience with strategic and long-range planning.
- Is strategic, innovative and demonstrates the experience to build upon existing strengths, will enhance areas needing improvement, and will make sound equitable decisions.

Effective Communicator

- Is a consensus builder and collaborator who will bring all segments of a diverse community together in engaging multiple stakeholder groups with differing perspectives.
- Is politically astute and has the ability to work within complex political environments.
- Is an active listener who understands, values transparency and builds trust throughout the community.

Personal Qualities

- Can build a positive culture of trust and respect based on openness and fairness.
- Is a unifying individual intent on building strong working relationships with internal and external stakeholders.
- Seeks to be visible in the schools and active in the greater community.
- Has the courage to always be guided in making decisions that are in the best interests of all students.

VII. FINAL COMMENTS

The BWP search team members have learned a great deal about the Richland One School System and its community, and we were very impressed by the willingness of participants to share openly. The team appreciated meeting key leaders from the community, schools, and district. We found the staff to be skilled and dedicated. We were pleased to learn about the various program offerings, particularly the technology available to faculty and students. We hope the next superintendent will fully use community support and resources. The team will use the approved Leadership Profile to actively engage in the recruitment phase of the search process for selecting your next leader.



APPENDIX A-

Interview and Focus Group Feedback Transcriptions

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS INTERVIEWS – 7 meeting

Strengths:

- the district attempts to provide for every student
- district administrators and teachers
- a lot of work has gone into a number of different priorities, for example,
- in the top 2% in the size of school districts – urban, suburban, and rural settings
- diversity of the district - range of students coming from different backgrounds – so many kids of different ethnicities
- opportunities for every child
- competitive salary base due to total budget
- abundant vocational opportunities and programs like Career Tech, acknowledging college degrees are not always necessary – students can go straight into the workforce
- 50 years of vocational opportunities
- next door to Fort Jackson with basic training in their backyard
- Capital city
- great district
- largest employer in the county, labeled as the 4th largest
- athletics - 2.0 policy of GPA to play sports, - 2 teams on their way to state
- IB, Capstone, Career Center, High School to College as well as non-traditional pathways
- there is a place for every type of student
- resources – financial and community resource-rich
- longevity of some employees – have family ties and histories
- the diversity of the students served
- resources – financial and community resource-rich
- longevity of some of the employees – family and historical ties
- diversity of students served
- community support/partnerships
- community cares and is involved in supporting the schools
- great team of teachers who want the best for their students
- diversity
- program opportunities and choices
- resource rich - staff gets to select what resources are needed per school
- all three facets of community types - urban, suburban, and rural with a higher poverty level than surrounding districts



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- the number of Richland One graduates who go on to achieve great things, as showcased in our Hall of Fame
- improved communications since 2008 but can use more improvement

Challenges:

- communication with leaders and organizations
- different factions need to be brought together
- clusters and cliques
- negative images of the district are those that get reported
- politically infused agenda about the growth of the Capital city
- footprint of the capital city that is shared with the University, governmental building, city, county, state
- not taxing the school district and the reaction of those who are a part of the tax base – have a freeloader mentality about the district
- at the state level – public dollars are provided to the school district
- learning how to reallocate dollars to meet the needs of public education
- recruitment and retention of talented staff
- need to know it is a non-partisan board, but partisanship is starting to creep in
- need to better communicate about district
- need to proactively tell our stories
- image and reputation of the district
- board room - becoming less policy and more about mindset
- the administration and schools need to up their game
- jobs often occur by who you know and not your abilities
- huge international staff
- cut over 200 staff positions in the last couple of years and have about 40 vacancies
- large class sizes in some settings
- teacher retention - 200-250 vacancies
- need a direct line of communication from the principal to the superintendent
- filling positions
- issues with the early learning center
- lack of transparency
- communication
- equity in sharing resources
- transparency in financial information
- loss of teachers – reassigned overnight
- district/administrative level bureaucracies – lots of layers to get

to the superintendent and more access is needed

- diversity and the impact on kids
- more attention is needed to understand teacher/staff challenges
- recently employees fired
- so much division – people are looking out for themselves - looking for a “gotcha” moment
- morale is kind of low
- some people are not being truthful

- some hires are based on who they know and not what they know
- overlooking qualified but not connected to the fold
- some dismantling of programs - need to improve review of programs and processes to determine status
- promotions based primarily on who they are and not the quality of their work
- people need to feel comfortable expressing themselves – some are afraid to speak – afraid of retaliation

Qualities and Characteristics:

- chief communicator - good communication with everyone is extremely important
- provides evidence-based facts and information when communicating
- has a lens focused on equity - considers that an important value and keeps it at the forefront of decisions
- can reach all 7 clusters
- is an active listener who values the input of all groups but will be the decision-maker
- can engage and empower the community
- thinks globally
- can conduct town hall meetings and can handle the feedback and outcomes
- is not an introvert
- will be committed to Richland One
- excellent at telling the positive story of the good things that occur
- possess cultural competency
- will be able to bring. All the factions together
- will need to get a clear picture of Richland One, its different areas cliques and clusters
- has educational experience and an educational background
- a visionary leader
- will respond to issues with facts and data
- possess good emotional intelligence and empathy
- a relationship builder



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- will not be afraid of people and can meet them where they are
- needs to be the chief educational officer, not just the chief executive – demonstrates they know about academic goals – demonstrates academics go first
- puts on their public relations suit and needs to be politically savvy
- has to get out to community events and recognizes this is not just a 9-5, 5 days a week job
- recognizes they are in the Bible Belt and have a level of faith in the job and community – at the Met and eating fish on Friday nights
- likes and interacts with children
- needs to have vision and make others see into the future
- comes in with both a futuristic and can-do attitude and can prove it and be convincing
- lots of healing needs to take place – a 9-year rewind needed
- recently employees fired
- so much division – people are looking out for themselves - looking for a “gotcha” moment
- morale is kind of low
- some people are not being truthful
- some hires are based on who they know and not what they know
- overlooking qualified but not connected to the fold
- some dismantling of programs - need to improve review of programs and processes to determine status
- promotions based primarily on who they are and not the quality of their work
- people need to feel comfortable expressing themselves – some are afraid to speak – afraid of retaliation
- Decent understanding of curriculum
- Good communicator
- Solid instructional expertise
- Visionary – establish direction where we want to go
- Ability to build relationships
- Somebody who knows the district
- transparency
- Strategic in their approach
- Looks at things objectively
- Will not believe everything you hear
- Ability to discern people with the ability to see past next week
- Forward thinking
- Lots of cleaning up to do so needs some supervisory experience
- Vast and wide range of experience – has had some successes
- Can share how and how and talk about successful things they have put in place
- Will help grow staff – develop leaders who will be willing to provide opportunities for growth



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- Uses internal skill staff that can develop a more collegial environment
- Can share decisions based on data from support to how to use and present data
- Reviews and makes decisions based on what was wanted
- willing to be straightforward forward may need to be blunt when acknowledging when something is not being accomplished
- can move the team forward and knows how to pick a supportive team
- Hands-on and a level of honesty
- hands-on
- will have more presence at schools generally
- can sell the district to teachers and staff
- recognizes and acknowledges the toughness of the job for teachers
- the ability to select the right school leader
- will be in tune with what's happening in schools and will not ignore the issues and problems
- has the power to motivate
- can lead with both iron and a silk glove – firm but motivational
- has had experience in early childhood education
- has experience in capital improvement projects
- needs to get to what is the crisis for some
- demonstrates organizational leadership
- experience in business management
- experience with legal terms
- secure in financial management demonstrated in places where they worked
- has a vast and wide range of experience and some successes – can talk about and share how things were successfully put in place
- will help grow staff and be willing to develop leaders
- has a decent understanding of curriculum strategies in their approach
- looks at things objectively
- forward thinking
- willing to listen to teachers and staff
- instructional leader
- ability to focus on morale building and earning trust with staff and community
- Ability to improve instruction and address benchmarks in student learning
- Involvement in the community



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Other:

- needs to live in the district
- should live in the district
- would like to see someone with a Ph.D. however, the quality of the Ph.D. is important
- needs to have/had superintendent experiences versus being a superintendent with not enough experience
- in district residence would be nice there will be a need to check on the general good even if they don't live in the district
- needs a doctorate - many people in the Cabinet have doctorate degrees in education and PH.D. and the person will need to have a high level of education since they will be surrounded by great minds
- a seated superintendent is preferred, but that may come with a cost
- they should live in the district
- community notices longevity

Community Forums (3) – 62 (Dreher HS, Eau Claire HS, Lower Richland HS)

DREHER HS

Strengths:

- wealth of instructional resources and programs with an array of programs for all students
- challenging – no cookie cutter and focus on the whole child
- retains good teachers despite not always having the support, financial compensation and faithfulness
- wonderful opportunities – need to keep that position and grow
- Montessori Program
- community involvement and support – fills the gap where the district has needs and rallies around the schools
- CTE – Continuing Education Programs
- good administrative staff
- multiple communities that are close-knit
- in the capital city



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Challenges:

- nobody wants to stay
- trust of the University to encourage students to train and work in the district
- cooperation between the board and superintendent
- neglect of early childhood programs
- district level management
- communication within the district is crucial
- blind board for the previous superintendent search
- stagnant – there is a waiting list for some programs
- some programs need to be expanded
- the board needs an eye-opener
- massive IDA and 504 problems – the system is dysfunctional
- rural areas need focus, attention and support
- tardiness in schools is not addressed
- there is a need to understand the complexities and challenges of the different segments of rural, suburban, and urban communities needs
- need more connections
- the atmosphere of mistrust and lack of district trust generates fears of retribution - teachers need to be able to feel that they are trusted even when errors are made – strategies need to be implemented to restore trust
- a plan for early childhood education
- have lost incredible teachers
- can we do everything for everybody - are we trying to do too much instead of worrying about the basic stuff
- work, culture and climate – teachers and students need to feel they are safe
- we are behind in technology because of the lack of technology coaches
- some schools are working well – there are teacher shortages, especially at the middle school

Characteristics:

- a CEO and a good steward of the tax dollars
- can make people feel safe in the environment – especially related to retaliation fears
- understand the use of technology for kids and the training needed for teachers
- a visionary is desperately needed
- success with employee and community relationships



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- demonstrated accountability
- ability to communicate
- can support their decisions
- confident and competent
- has a vision and can rally the troops
- has the courage to deal with issues and manage complexities
- experience in being in a complex district and a proven body of work
- will be out in schools more than just programs
- will be visible
- understands system and subsystem interfacing and will be able to communicate that to all even providing unique service
- a risk taker
- enables staff to understand they are here for support
- must have strength

Other:

- do not miss out on some candidates based on doctorate or superintendent titles
- the candidate should look like the community

EAU CLAIRE HIGH SCHOOL (14)

Strengths:

- dedicated employees, many of whom educated in R1
- strong support for new teachers
- alumni give back generously
- many support services for students
- strong curriculum resource teachers
- consider students “our children”
- culture of compassion
- wide variety of academic programs
- willing to invest in students
- open to new ideas

Challenges:

- uncertainty because of state and national politics
- discipline – the need for more alternative settings
- transience
- rezoning needed to balance school enrollments
- lack of service coordination in dealing with high-risk students
- lack of an updated strategic plan



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Desired Characteristics:

- genuine
- versatile
- financial expertise
- meaningful teaching and building administration experience
- no previous “baggage” that will raise community concern
- strong communicator
- good on follow-up
- female candidates should be recruited and considered
- proven track record in a district with similar demographics
- “homegrown” candidates should be considered
- understands that a little snow is a big deal in the south

LOWER RICHLAND HS – 30

Strengths:

- New Board – new direction
- Community support
- Great teachers and students
- Proud of Lower Richland One
- Focus on career-based education
- Military presence
- IB programs
- Strong grass-roots community

Challenges:

- Teacher retention and filling vacancies
- Personnel need to get better
- Need to tell our story much better
- Communication

Qualities and Characteristics:

- Authentic presence and visibility in schools
- Must understand the community
- Ability to get back to the basics – reading and math
- Understanding of the history
- Not a micromanager
- Support for teachers and will hear their voices
- Driven by wanting all students to succeed
 - Ability to keep up with technology
 - Visionary



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- Confidence and courage to push back on national narratives
- Problem solver
- Has boots-on-the-ground experience as a teacher and school administrator
- Willingness to listen to the student

SUPERINTENDENT STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL – 15

Strengths:

- many opportunities and special programs
- The district tries to help students
- family oriented
- teachers work hard

Challenges:

- food
- bathrooms in bad repair
- hard to get transportation for teams and field trips
- slow approval for field trips
- old schools have been neglected
- smaller schools get left behind

Characteristics and Qualities:

- someone who is real and sincere and “not just putting on a show”
- visible at school and community events
- consideration
- follows up on the problems and concerns brought to him/her
- appreciates every school
- empathy for how students feel and see things
- cares for people

District Administration, Executive Team, Legal, Department Chiefs - 42

Strengths:

- like a family at all levels – a tight-knit group with opportunities for growth
- diverse
- resource rich



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- academically on the right track – 3 years of sustained progress
- student-centered – whole child focused – providing transportation, meals, extensive programs
- good partnerships with the community – connections with the city
- focus on student growth versus finite test scores
- great district with great potential
- loyal teachers and support staff and they may leave but come back
- city-urban-rural leaving a big footprint
- so much support from students and each other in all departments
- focus on students and families
- students who want to succeed
- good leadership team in place with team cohesiveness, collaboration and boots on the ground
- resources
- diverse programs
- location
- skilled staff
- equitable resource distribution
- the board cannot have a split vote on the superintendent
- old history and tension among the board
- city schools and capital location
- potential to build partnerships
- engage in community and move to when we need to
- rural, urban, city – “state of the county schools”
- family connections
- staff takes care of each other
- school choice options
- funding
- wealth of instructional resources
- location (state capitol, college town)
- level of community engagement
- “12 month/7 day per week” district
- community amenities
- “can-do” attitude of staff
- Communications across departments
- local postsecondary options
- district has been a “trailblazer”
- great talent – are we using it to the highest potential with the right people in positions is the question
- focus on children
- action-oriented
- blessed with resources
- standards driven
- majority of stakeholders believe that every child can be successful
- Richland One is a transformation model with high expectation levels
- data focused that we need to continue to review
- great people and staff who exhibit care overall
- great resources and professional development
- the cabinet is second to none – honesty within the leadership team



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- great kids who want to participate and be engaged
- schools are moving in the same direction with clearer expectations
- moving towards more favorable relationships with staff and students
- volunteers – Chamber and community members
- likes the district and works well with the administration
- good community
- we're suburban, urban, and rural
- various school programs
- strong financial position – high bond rating can save taxpayers money
- good internal controls
- educational side is in pretty good shape
- no lack of resources
- heavy fund balances and savings
- diversity – inclusive of rural, suburban and urban and both the wealthy and those in poverty
- finances and other resources – some are political
- great teachers and smart people working with district
- vision for students to move to excellence
- location- major route runs through Columbia
- central to the state

Challenges:

- diversity – challenges of being urban, suburban, rural and the spectrum of economics
- needs accountability to see needs are taken care of
- coming in during a politically charged time – ex. Early Childhood Center controversy
- board turnover – members will have been very involved – and may have micro-managed
- divided board
- division between board and community
- ensuring equity
- relationships with legislators and pockets in the community and with the State Department
- the need to bring back values and a sense of belonging for the community, faculty and staff
- faculty and staff need to feel valued, heard and comfortable in their ability to speak out
- addressing the adverse needs of students
- silos
- public perception
- communication
- we are not in good shape



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- Leadership functions like the past— affluent local schools receive significantly more support.
- always under a microscope
- politics of the state and region
- new board working to find its footing
- academic achievement
- need for updated technology
- understanding the nuances of
- size and geographic diversity
- parental support
- academic achievement
- need for updated technology
- understanding the nuances of
- size and geographic diversity
- parental support
- unreasonable expectations of families and communities
- teacher shortage/General staffing shortages
- recruitment and retention
- facility equity
- lack of professional development of classified staff
- lack of continuity – a system of schools rather than a school system – silo operations
- no analytical or higher level of thinking
- does not seem to look at processes or procedures
- need facilities study and plan and review the need
- need to engage the community to get buy-in
- need to develop an operational strategic plan – there are no plans now
- lots of old facilities
- understanding the consolidation of facilities and the management and operations of facilities
- maintenance of facilities, many sites over 20 years old and consolidation needs **to** be considered
- too many folks try to implement their plan
- geographically large and sometimes hard to get to all schools – 52 buildings
- recognize that a building is not your schooling history
- politically driven issues ex. Early Childhood Center
- difficult to recruit teachers for rural areas
- vacancies created when a smaller class size formula is used
- lots of negative perspectives coming from parents, media, and politics is hard to combat
- political perspectives aspect – programming now tied up in politics creating a real political challenge – hardest year at the local level
- public relations ex. Early Childhood Center buy-in in called for after the storm
- developing a good relationship with the Department of Education



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- challenge on the educational size
- level of uncertainty
- political environment – on the doorstep of the Federal Department of Education and navigating through it will be a challenge as we understand our responsibility
- helping staff navigate through the resources
- provide all support children need and overcome any gaps
- navigation and expectations of Early Childhood
- school leaders need some more umph – slow in reactions and responses
- expectations need to be out there
- principals need to be stronger, fair and consistent
- need to move folks’ merit and not longevity
- being in the capital
- different for newcomers – there are cliques
- strengthening professional learning communities and looking at triangulation of assessment with a need to delve into the data
- keeping the focus on children while using data
- operational and efficiency study needed – possibly with a third-party
- still living as in a paper age

Qualities and Characteristics:

- can lead the board
- can keep momentum is the main thing
- transparency
- politically savvy
- ability to develop talent
- vision of where you want to go and how to get there
- understanding of the complexity of Richland One
- proven track record of success
- strong leader who will hold people accountable
- healer
- relationship builder
- understanding the roles of the superintendent and school board
- instructional and management expertise
- understanding the seriousness of our situation
- ability to build trust
- problem solver
- can navigate the diverse issues and can still move the district and students forward
- a relationship builder
- exudes confidence – can sell what is being offered



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- a people person, not a people pleaser- gets along and interacts well with all
- willing to listen
- strong communicator with good interpersonal skills
- strong in accountability
- has a master plan which may need to include a bond referendum, changing of attendance areas, closing and/or adding schools
- has and will have a positive board/superintendent relationship and can demonstrate how they have navigated working for the board
- comes in and takes time to learn and to get to know who is already in place and evaluates
- knowledgeable about how the board works
- is not afraid to take risks and navigate Board relations
- will go into buildings with a knowledge base and background information
- can assimilate and see what may not need to change
- knowledge of SC educationally and has done their homework
- has business sense and organizational leadership experience
- has experience in with budget cuts

Other:

- doctorate may be needed – needs district-level and executive-level experience
- consider internal candidates
- Board needs to get on the sales team
- can galvanize the troops
- will have engagement and conversations with county leaders as partners
- need to be a visionary leader
- establishes connections and engages with the community, partners, the government, etc.
- has long-range planning experience
- can conduct an efficiency study, especially for the top 5 departments
- can conduct a process and procedures review
- identifies areas of need with the board
- not afraid to tackle split board and community
- can work with the board having open communication with all board members
- can look at what is being done and is it as expected



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- will get out of the way of accepting “we’ve always done it this way” mentality
- has a good track record
- can navigate the back ways yet move forward with the SC culture
- politically savvy
- one who understands the SC culture and can work with legislative and political leaders
- can address community contacts that are needed to feel engaged
- willing and open to engage with the community versus an air of superiority
- understand how the district is funded and will get to know county, state and local funding
- funding strategies and sources
- understand the landscape of the district
- will grow our own leaders
- a people person
- will be in tune with teacher self-efficacy
- has the capacity to do the work – an instructional leader
- keeps their eye focused on instruction
- will be in classrooms and schools
- has a whole-child mindset
- collaborative
- a great communicator
- believes “all means all” and that every child is important
- has the heart for this work
- cares about all kids
- can navigate the political side
- can create and build levels of trust
- transparent
- has humility
- recognizes all are a part of the puzzle and empowers others
- understand the needs of children and families
- should watch and observe before suggesting changes
- a good leader
- has integrity, is truthful, and candid
- is about children and what’s best for them
- cares about staff and employees
- will get familiar with the community
- politically savvy
- a good communicator who knows when to listen and when to be quiet
- be real and not fake
- someone who wants to be here
- has district office experiences – as a chief you get to see the whole and understand how the system works
- has and uses common sense
- will not have knee-jerk reactions
- someone who will listen
- has experience with diverse communities
- comfortable in all settings
- possesses politically savvy



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- develop good relations with the Board as well as the county and state politicians
- knows how to pick folks with strengths to match your deficient areas
- is a kind person and is genuinely nice
- empathetic but no-nonsense and respectful
- has demonstrated good communication skills with all
- truly understands Scand school systems
- fiscal watch on credit card usage
- approachable
- transparent
- ability to navigate difficult politics
- fair and consistent
- familiar with SC
- knowledge of instructional trends
- polished professional
- connected to stakeholders
- communicator
- understand community culture
- record of professional achievement/proven track record
- experience in inner-city schools
- seeks input and uses it effectively
- delegates to and trusts staff
- builds trust
- supports district choice options
- strong financial expertise
- takes care of staff
- constant learner

Other:

- Doctorate is not necessary – some amazing people may be missed - experience is just as good
- Senior-level experience should be required but not necessarily a seated superintendent
- needs to have a doctorate – this will bring a certain level of respect from one who has pursued this training
- does not necessarily need to be a seated superintendent but must have experience and needs to understand the flexibility needed of the role
- living in the district should not be a deal breaker but must demonstrate an investment in the community
- having a doctorate might be a good thing
- there may be a board policy regarding residency
- consider the best and choose wisely – our future is at stake
- a doctorate degree holder will be more respected, but experience will need to have come from a large district



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- has supervised in a superintendent-type role
- needs to live in the district
- needs to live within Richland County not necessarily the district
- doctorate – not necessary but would be nice
- has experience versus just the superintendent title
- needs to have someplace to stay in the district even though they might not live here
- consider a woman of color
- academic achievement
- need for updated technology
- understanding the nuances of size and geographic diversity
- parental support
- unreasonable expectations of families and communities
- teacher shortage/General staffing shortages
- recruitment and retention

Principals/Others (50)

Strengths:

- school clusters – encourage schools to work together – high school with a coordinator from the surrounding elementary and middle schools
- successful programs
- dedicated teachers
- a question regarding the choice program application process
- military friendly – base has a lot of kids
- staff and teachers love what they do and are internally doing the best they can
- lots of pathways in the district- i.e., 2- and 4-year degrees
- incredibly diverse district – some people forget – the white bubble is not healthy or global
- opportunities
- technical school
- resources
- strong community and parental involvement

Challenges:

- folks looking to grow rather than accepting the status quo
- crisis management experience to support parents and communities
- transparency



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- teacher turnover
- finding teachers
- aging infrastructure
- administrative heavy – lots of chiefs and not enough Indians
- good old boy system
- accountability in district support for the schools
- rich White people who are sometimes the loudest voices and want to communicate that the district is broken this helps to create a split when sometimes everyone listens to the loudest
- not all members of the community will realize the need for them to provide input
- concern about skewed results based on who participates
- the hateful and vicious small population of white people in the community
- the State Dept. of Education
- aging staff working in a bureaucracy – they need to deal with new educational realities
- teacher exodus – teacher retention
- concerns with leadership
- questions about misappropriation of money
- early childhood center process is an example of leadership's lack of seeking community involvement and participation
- not all principals listen to the superintendent – strategies needed on how to get them to listen
- inconsistencies related to community partnerships
- race is an underlying theme in the community
- declining enrollment
- no follow-up on absenteeism
- summer and after-school programs that are not working
- bullying in the classroom
- schools are not a secure environment
- principals need to know their jobs with monitoring and mentoring
- should consider year-round schools at the elementary and middle school levels
- school buildings are old and need to be upgraded – some are health hazards or will be and need school inspections
- homelessness of some students

Qualities and Characteristics:

- honesty
- communicator
- ability to navigate challenges and problem-solve



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- willingness to listen to the community
- team builder – healer
- collaborator
- ability to address issues of equity
- fair
- strong leader
- strong financial background
- boots on the ground experience
- servant leader
- integrity
- adaptable
- technology savvy
- can mentor others
- successful in working with all groups
- string transparent leader
- will interact with students
- needs to be a diplomat who knows how to work with the politician
- strategic and big thinker with a strategic mindset in a district that has a 70% poverty rate
- will lead strategically
- can pivot and be a leader
- needs to be able to pull in followers a leader who can bridge the past and create a futuristic team
- someone who goes out into the community to learn about what is occurring
- one who knows and cares about kids
- one who will think outside the box and will allow principals to do so as well
- will make sure staff is trained on new products and ideas
- will not just bring in their buddies
- one who will be in the schools
- a leader not transparent
- a solution finder
- a caring person who knows how to communicate
- not transparent or afraid of job loss
- can get the job done and not have personal involvement or fraternization with staff in the same location which is unacceptable

Other:

- unsure whether a doctorate is necessary but they need to have had extensive experience
- they need to live in the district where they can get to know people and not be unconnected
- doctorate or some educational experience - a degree is not especially needed
- they do not need to be a seated superintendent or one who has had that title – administrators are all working from the same playbook



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- may need to have two residences – must be seen as a part of the community which will be important in these 500 square miles
- a doctorate is not needed but common sense is
- should live in the district to be close to those they are helping

TEACHER THINK TANK– Secondary/Elementary - 12

Strengths:

- community feels
- CATE and STEM programs
- passionate and well-trained teachers
- “student first” mindset

Challenges:

- geographic and demographic diversity
- family involvement
- lack of equity: programs and technology
- lack of holding students accountable
- old hardware does not match new software packages
- communication is not timely
- individual school needs are not adequately addressed

Desired Characteristics:

- personal
- present in the schools
- seeks input from teachers
- not hierarchical
- does not simply appease influential people
- understand the limitations of standardized testing

PRINCIPALS – 50

Strengths:

- resources
- professional development
- diversity of community
- career advancement opportunities
- community partnerships
- compensation



Richland One Community Engagement Report

- leadership quality
- job stability
- staff comradery
- school choice programs
- rich community history
- level of accountability
- extracurricular opportunities
- fine arts
- career-technical education
- variety of options for students
- 1-to-1 technology
- student focus
- volunteer programs
- summer programs for students

Challenges:

- demographics
- family involvement
- technology has fallen behind
- hiring process needs to be streamlined
- many facilities need renovation or replacement
- special education processes
- need for additional mental health resources
- inequitable staffing formulas/class sizes
- need for more robust and varied alternative programs
- program equity
- residency verification process
- need for comprehensive school rezoning

Desired Characteristics:

- communicator/ability to articulate a vision
- collaborator
- instructional leader
- visibility
- proven transformational leader
- experience as a teacher and building administrator
- hears everyone, not just the influential
- risk-taker
- holds to his/her decisions
- backs staff
- holds district-level staff equally accountable
- approachable
- people person
- does what's best for kids
- research-driven
- advocate for all stakeholders
- will share the district's positive story



Richland One Community Engagement Report

SIC Chair/Presidents – 8

SIC Chair (1)

Strengths:

- provisions for underserved kids
- school board and superintendent are willing to try to answer questions
- summer programs and offerings
- visible board and superintendent
- good resources
- all students have access to dual enrollment
- community partnerships
- neighborhood schools
- safe/secure environment

Challenges:

- superintendent and board need to increase the quality and quantity of communication with staff and the community
- lack of trust within the district
- communication and transparency
- teacher shortage
- support for teachers
- need for quality teachers who can deliver
- huge facility issues because of so many older facilities
- attracting and retaining teachers
- **inequity** in staffing formulas for large and small schools

Qualities and Characteristics:

- financial expertise
- moral and ethical compass
- “person of the people”
- Visionary
- Understanding of community – clusters/neighborhood schools
- Integrity
- Courage/backbone to make tough decisions
- Will address equity in school programs
- Energy – will be excited to work here
- Ability to marshal resources
- visionary, especially in a changing national environment
- Compassionate
- motivator – “leads people well”
- loves the district



Richland One Community Engagement Report

PTO – 5

Strengths:

- Diverse district
- Diverse programs for students
- Many dedicated teachers and staff
- Small neighborhood schools
- Not involved in culture war

Challenges:

- Number of other teacher vacancies
- SPED concerns – inclusion issues
- Lack of transparency
- Backlog of services
- HR
- Achievement gap

Qualities and Characteristics:

- Financial manager
- Excellent leadership skills
- Demonstrated ability to address gaps in learning
- Need to rebuild trust
- Strategic planner
- Ability to work with marginalized students

Strengths:

- internal and external collaboration
- Qualified staff that goes “above and beyond”
- diverse educational opportunities for staff
- internal and external communications
- outstanding educational programs
- task-oriented and welcoming culture
- low student-teacher ratios
- classified and certified staff work effectively together
- accessibility of supervisors and administration
- classified staff members are strongly supported



Richland One Community Engagement Report

Challenges:

- loss of funding for needed programs
- the socioeconomic achievement gap
- teacher satisfaction and retention
- parents don't always feel "heard"

Qualities and Characteristics:

- genuineness
- integrity
- fairness
- ability to "stand firm"
- ability to navigate the politics
- financial skills and expertise
- committed to student success

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES- 14

Strengths:

- internal and external collaboration
- Qualified staff that goes "above and beyond"
- diverse educational opportunities for staff
- internal and external communications
- outstanding educational programs
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- genuineness
- integrity



Richland One Community Engagement Report

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- the socioeconomic achievement gap
- teacher satisfaction and retention
- parents don’t always feel “heard”

Qualities and Characteristics:

- genuineness
- integrity
- fairness
- ability to “stand firm” and navigate the politics
- financial skills and expertise
- committed to student success

POSTSECONDARY LEADERS (3)

Strengths:

- recognizes that the district serves a demographically diverse population
- strong postsecondary presence in the immediate region



Richland One Community Engagement Report

Challenges:

- many opportunities for grants and other partnerships with postsecondary institutions are being missed

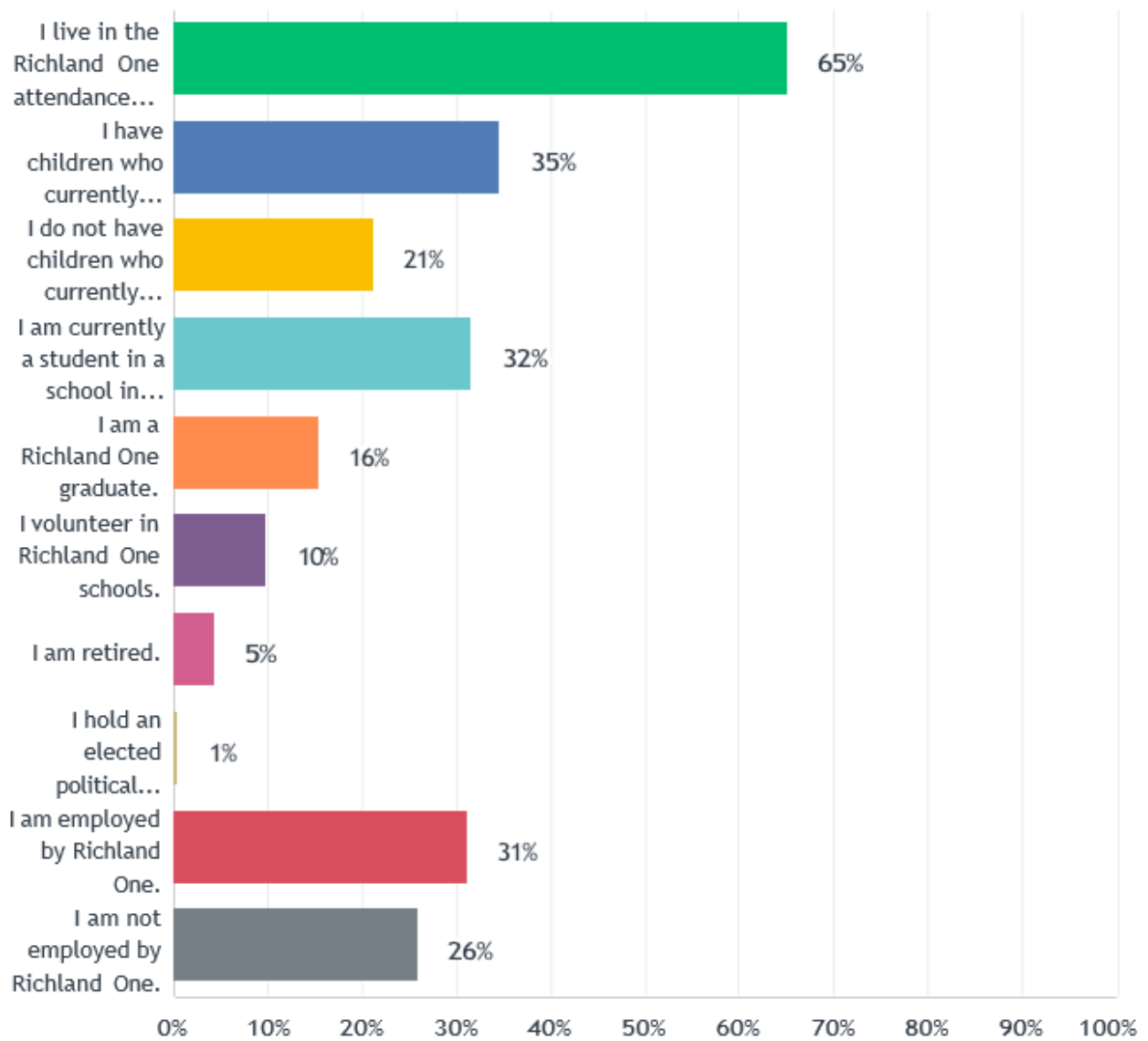
Desired Characteristics:

- experienced in developing partnerships with postsecondary institutions

APPENDIX B: Survey Results

Q1 Please indicate all that apply to you:

Answered: 4,828 Skipped: 34





Richland One Community Engagement Report

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I live in the Richland One attendance area.	65%	3,152
I have children who currently attend a Richland One school.	35%	1,682
I do not have children who currently attend Richland One schools.	21%	1,025
I am currently a student in a school in Richland One.	32%	1,537
I am a Richland One graduate.	16%	754
I volunteer in Richland One schools.	10%	482
I am retired.	5%	218
I hold an elected political office.	1%	27
I am employed by Richland One.	31%	1,515
I am not employed by Richland One.	26%	1,253

Total Respondents: 4,828

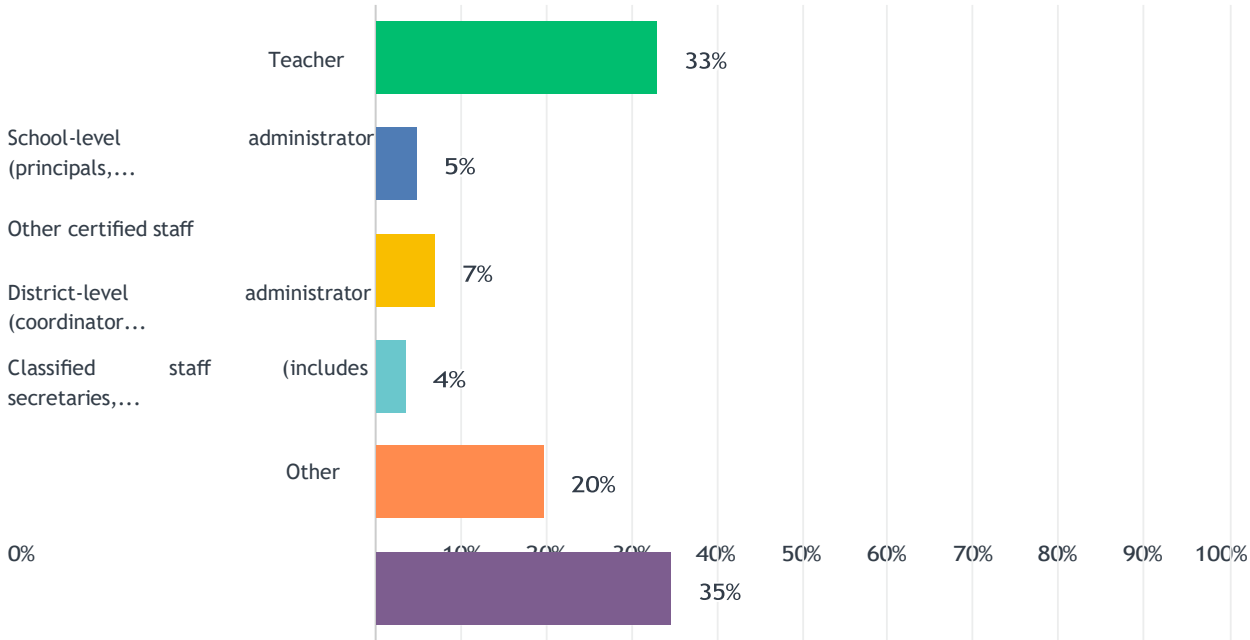


Richland One Community Engagement Report

Q2 If you are employed by Richland One, please specify your position:

Answered: 2,325

Skipped: 2,537



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Teacher	33%	768
School-level administrator (principals, assistant principals)	5%	114
Other certified staff	7%	162
District-level administrator (coordinators, directors, executive directors, chiefs)	4%	84
Classified staff (includes secretaries, instructional assistants, custodians, bus drivers, food service and maintenance workers)	20%	462
Other	35%	810

Total Respondents: 2,325

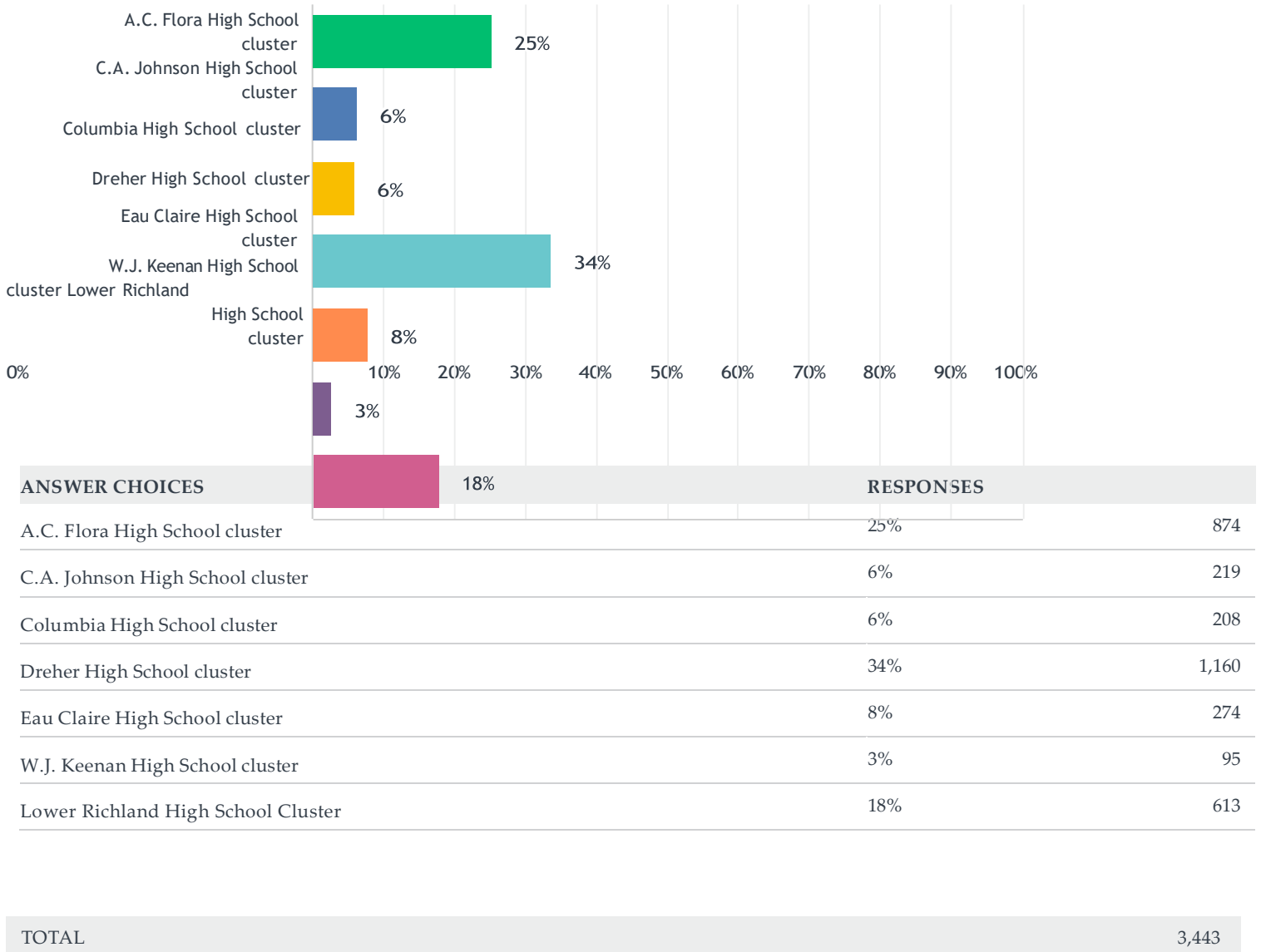


Richland One Community Engagement Report

Q3 If your children attend Richland One schools (or if you are a Richland One student), please specify your attendance area:

Answered: 3,443

Skipped: 1,419



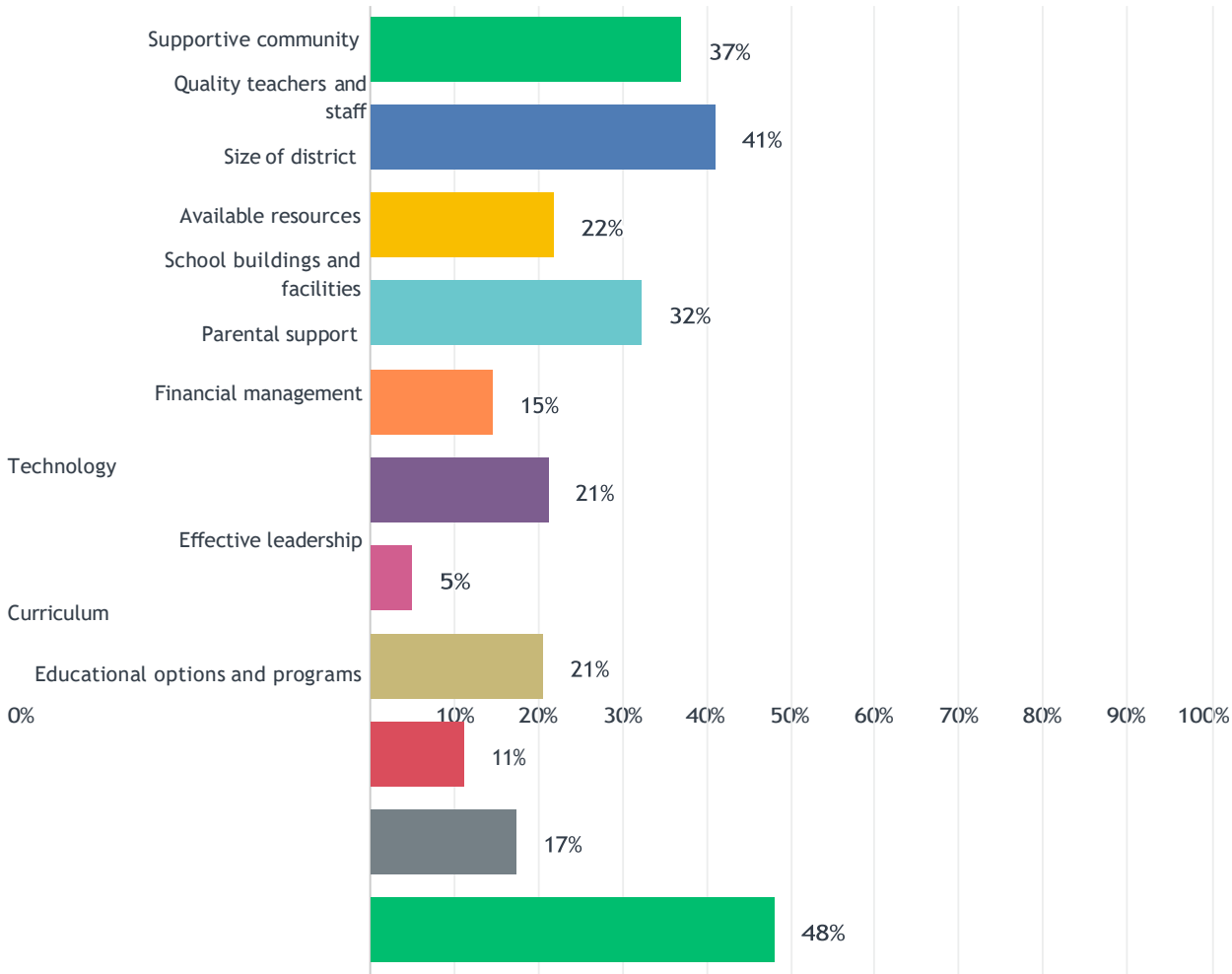


Richland One Community Engagement Report

Q4 Select from the list below the three most significant strengths of the district:

Answered: 4,459

Skipped: 403





Richland One Community Engagement Report

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
Supportive community	37%	1,659
Quality teachers and staff	41%	1,831
Size of district	22%	984
Available resources	32%	1,442
School buildings and facilities	15%	658
Parental support	21%	949
Financial management	5%	228
Technology	21%	922
Effective leadership	11%	502
Curriculum	17%	776
Educational options and programs	48%	2,146

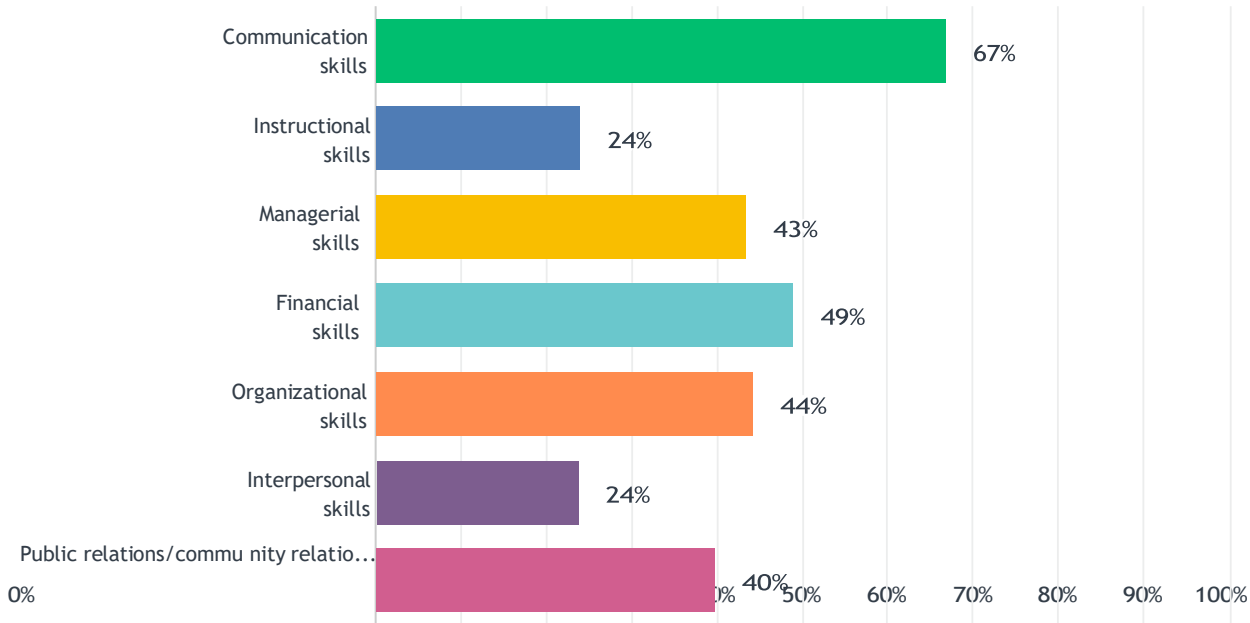
Total Respondents: 4,459



Richland One Community Engagement Report

Q5 What are the three most important leadership skills you would like to see in a superintendent?

Answered: 4,387 Skipped: 475

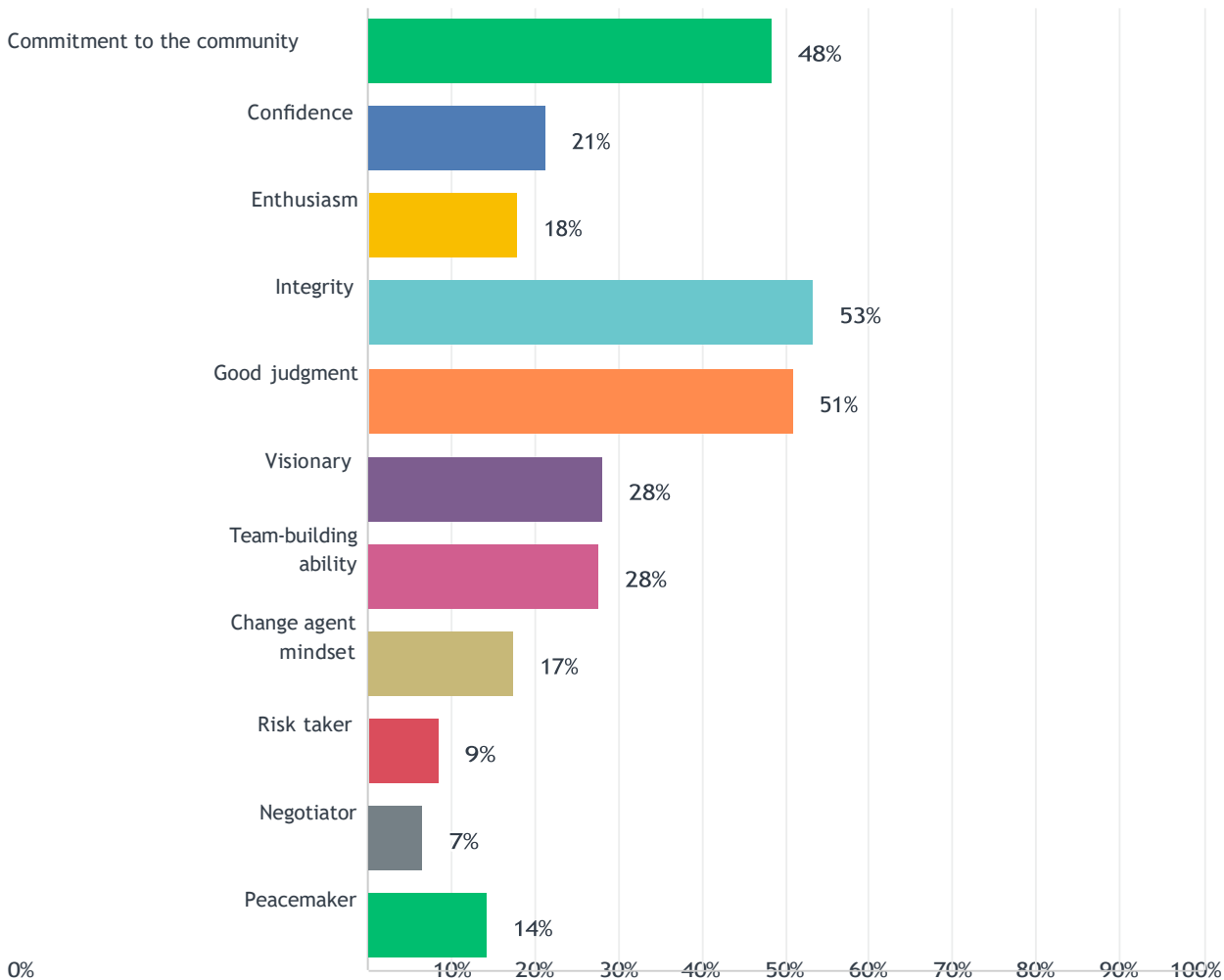


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Communication skills	67%	2,941
Instructional skills	24%	1,057
Managerial skills	43%	1,905
Financial skills	49%	2,149
Organizational skills	44%	1,941
Interpersonal skills	24%	1,050
Public relations/community relations skills	40%	1,746

Total Respondents: 4,387

Q6 What are the three most important characteristics you would like a superintendent to exhibit:

Answered: 4,305 Skipped: 557





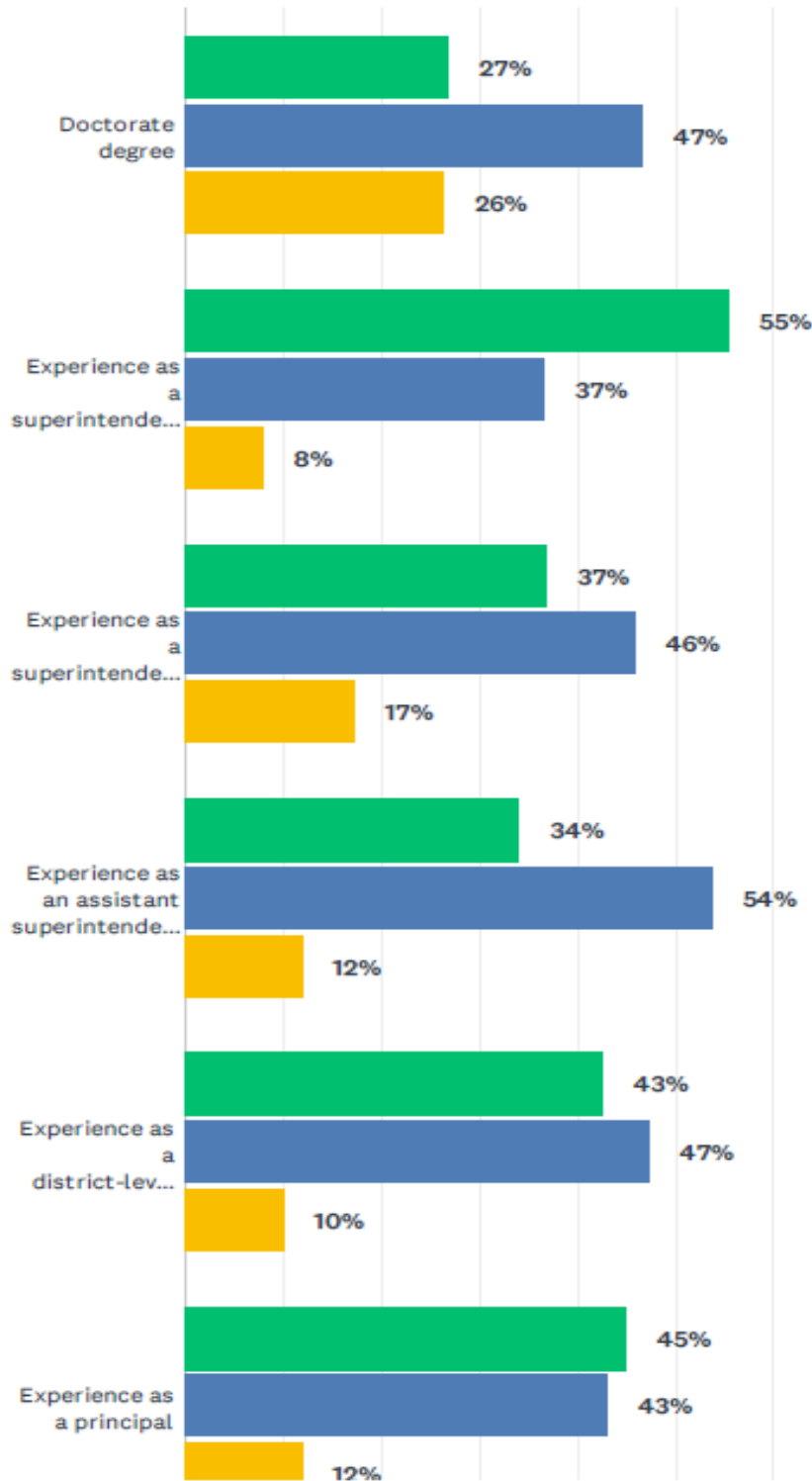
Richland One Community Engagement Report

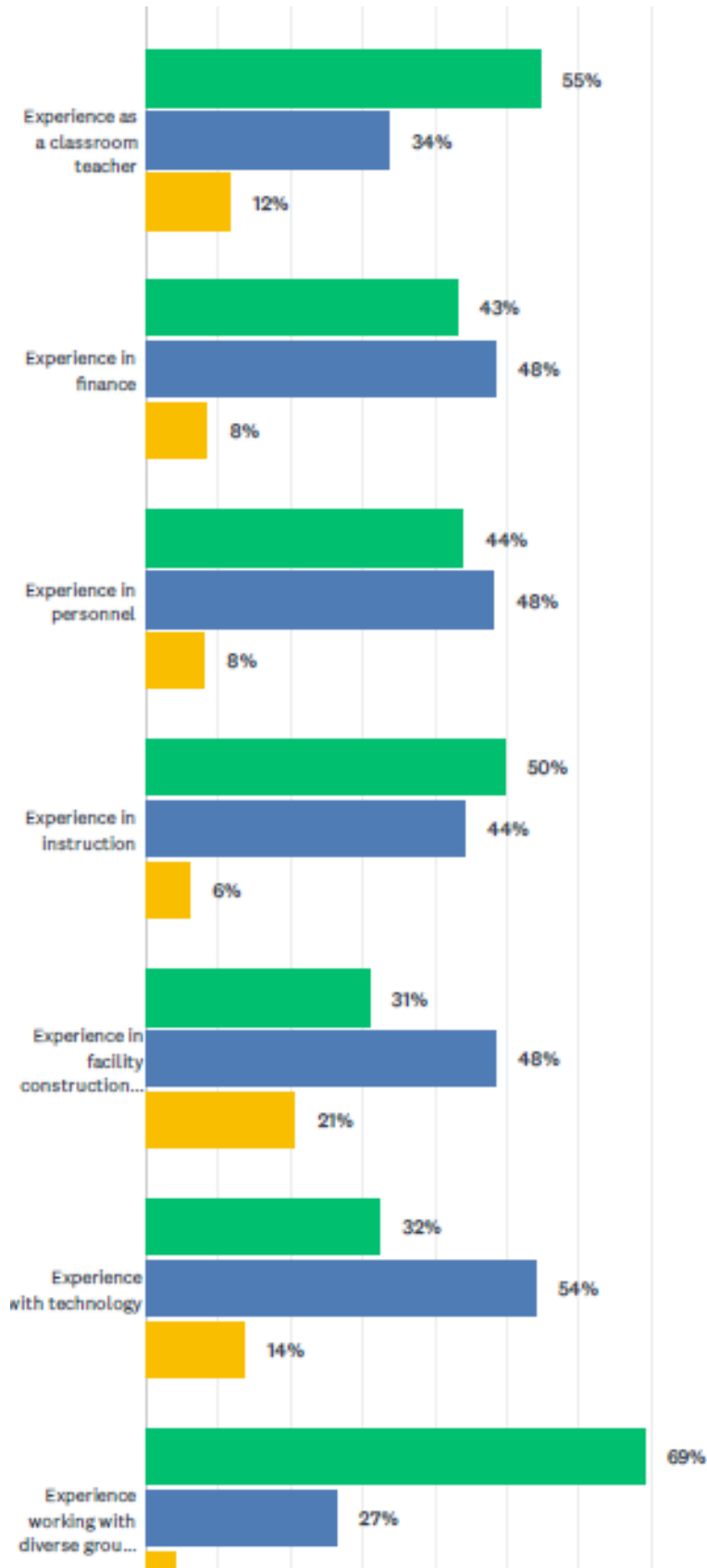
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Commitment to the community	48%	2,080
Confidence	21%	917
Enthusiasm	18%	773
Integrity	53%	2,293
Good judgment	51%	2,194
Visionary	28%	1,211
Team-building ability	28%	1,194
Change agent mindset	17%	752
Risk taker	9%	366
Negotiator	7%	284
Peacemaker	14%	613

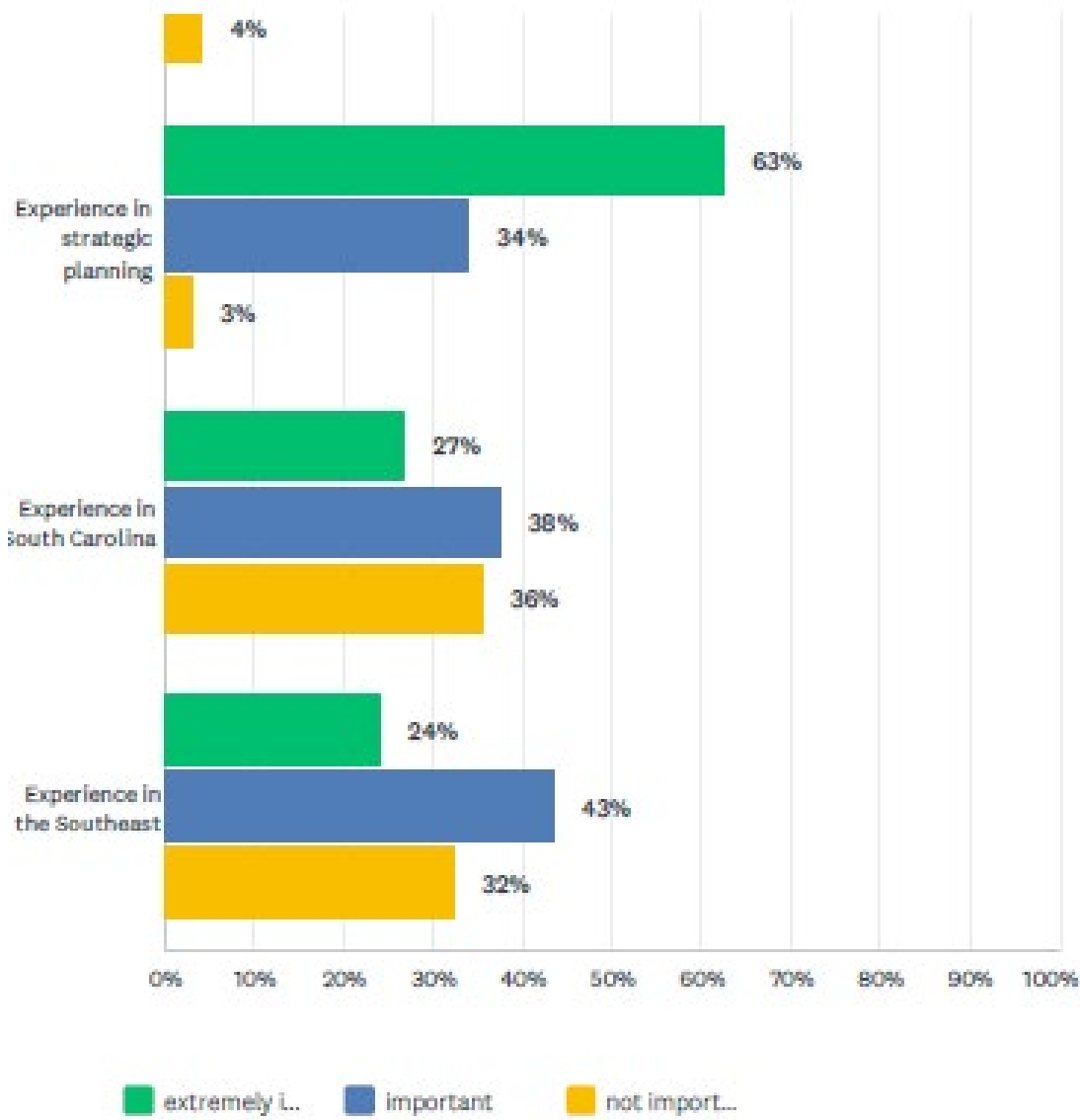
Total Respondents: 4,305

Q7 For each of the items below, indicate whether you believe the item is either extremely important, important, or not important in the new superintendent:

Answered: 4,075 Skipped: 787







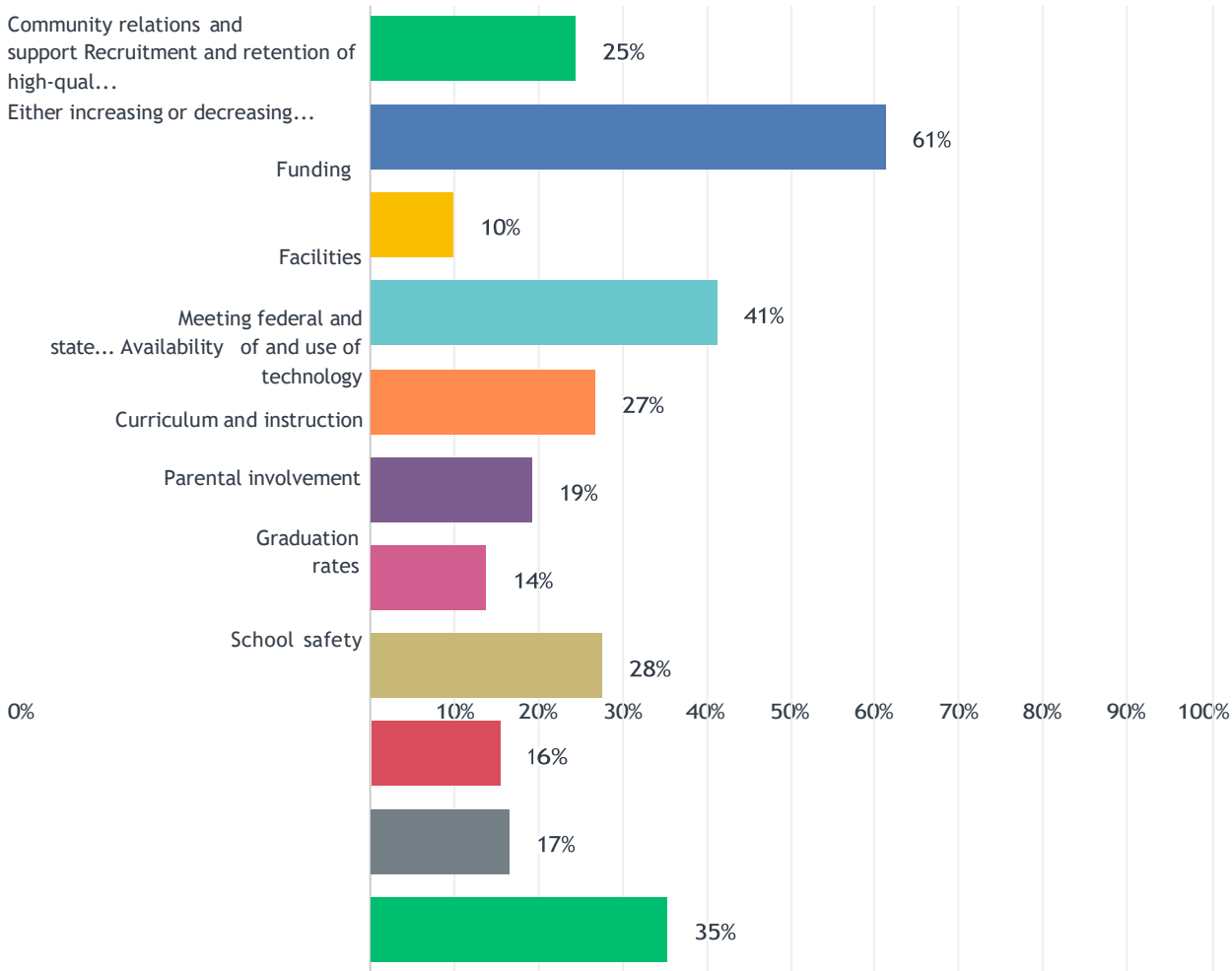


Richland One Community Engagement Report

Q8 From this list of challenges that school districts often face, what do you consider to be the three most important issues or concerns facing Richland One in the next five years?

Answered: 4,030

Skipped: 832





Richland One Community Engagement Report

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Community relations and support	25%	990
Recruitment and retention of high-quality staff	61%	2,472
Either increasing or decreasing student population numbers	10%	408
Funding	41%	1,671
Facilities	27%	1,082
Meeting federal and state accountability mandates	19%	778
Availability of and use of technology	14%	555
Curriculum and instruction	28%	1,115
Parental involvement	16%	630
Graduation rates	17%	668
School Safety	35%	1,424

Total Respondents: 4,030