



— *New England School Development Council*

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Amesbury Public Schools Superintendent Search Successful Candidate Profile

December 2025

This document provides the *Successful Candidate Profile* to inform the candidate selection process.



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To: Amesbury School Committee

From: Mary Malone, NESDEC Consultant
New England School Development Council (NESDEC)

Date: December 2025

Amesbury Public Schools Superintendent Search

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

During the weeks of November 10, 2025, to December 8, 2025, Amesbury School Committee, with the assistance of the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), conducted a Community Needs Assessment using an online survey. The district also held two in-person focus groups (12/1, 12/4) and two virtual focus groups (12/3, 12/8).

Participants provided their responses to two prompts:

- What are the qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge and experiences you desire in a new Superintendent of Schools?
- What do you see as the pressing tasks and challenges ahead for him or her in year one?

The Amesbury School Committee reviewed and analyzed the community's input and then added its own perspective to create the Amesbury School District's *Successful Candidate Profile*. The *Successful Candidate Profile* is designed to guide the Superintendent Search interview and selection process.

The Amesbury School Committee wishes to thank and commend all those who participated in the community needs assessment process.

Respectfully submitted,
Amesbury School Committee

CANDIDATE PROFILE

The community of the Amesbury Public Schools expects a high level of competence across all aspects of the position of Superintendent.

To ensure the selected Superintendent is a particular match for our district's needs and goals, *preference will be given to the educational leader who demonstrates a significant depth of skill and knowledge in the following key areas:*

- ❖ **Community Engagement and Communication**
- ❖ **Strategic and Operational Leadership**
- ❖ **Finance and Operations Management**
- ❖ **Teaching and Learning**

Community Engagement and Communication

A leader who:

- Engages in gaining a historical perspective of the school district and commits to engaging in a listening tour to seek input from all stakeholders: district-wide and in the Amesbury community at large.
- Has the ability to productively engage all stakeholders and develop and build consensus.
- Demonstrates genuine interest in the community and will be actively involved in school and community events.
- Who is savvy and can effectively communicate with all stakeholders through consistent messaging.
- Stays aware of issues, events, and activities throughout the district and views school and community relationships as collaborative partnerships.
- Understands the current educational landscape and will be a strong and effective champion to foster and maintain a student-centered district.
- Demonstrates excellent interpersonal skills and communicates clearly and effectively, both verbally and in written communications.
- Has the ability to listen and consider the strengths, expertise, and value within the current staff to inform decision-making.
- Will be the cheerleader for the district through communicating at School Committee meetings and through newsletters and other venues the many accomplishments and successes of the students and staff in the district.
- Has a communication style and leadership skills that are dynamic, visible, accessible and inclusive.
- Possesses clear communication skills used to articulate goals, expectations, and decisions to a wide range of stakeholders. Needs to excel in communication connecting with staff, students, parents, and community.

Strategic and Operational Leadership

A leader who:

- Has the ability to develop and direct an effective administrative leadership team.
- Demonstrates commitment to implementing the district's mission and vision and will advance student outcomes through district-wide implementation of the Redhawk Roadmap (Amesbury's K-12 Vision of the Graduate).
- Models strong leadership and fosters a collaborative culture among all stakeholders.
- Demonstrates established expertise in change implementation, management, and continuous improvement.
- Demonstrates experience and success in innovative problem-solving and strategic planning, budget development, and capital planning.
- Motivates, leads, guides and directs staff effectively; will cultivate strong relationships with staff by seeking their input, valuing their expertise, respecting their opinions, and through listening to their concerns to inform decisions and practices in the district.
- Is committed to hiring and retaining high quality staff. Focuses on a review and assessment of onboarding procedures and develops plans for staff retention. Will develop exit interviews to determine any patterns or trends among staff separating from the district.
- Holds self and staff accountable for meeting expectations and achieving results.
- Frames issues clearly for decision-making and discussion and reaches timely decisions and manages change effectively.
- Has experience working with various unions and has an understanding of the collective bargaining process.
- Recruits and retains high-quality staff.
- Designs and implements evaluation processes with clear performance standards and follows through on addressing performance issues. Addresses performance concerns directly and constructively, ensuring a culture of professionalism and continuous learning.
- Prioritizes staff development and fosters opportunities for systemwide professional growth and ongoing professional development.
- Has knowledge and experience in Career and Technical Education (CTE) and can build pathways for students in a concerted effort to keep students in the district.

Finance and Operations Management

A leader who:

- Will assess current internal procedures and policies and will implement change in identified areas with the goal of efficiency.
- Has a strong working knowledge of school finance including budget development and

management and has expertise in budgeting and capital planning.

- Will conduct long-range planning in the areas of facilities and other departments of the district with a creative and innovative lens to create efficiency and excellence.
- Makes bold strategic decisions to reimagine and deploy district resources for the sustainability of the Amesbury Public School district.
- Effectively communicates budget priorities to the School Committee, staff, community, and municipal officials.
- Maintains strong working knowledge of school finance, including budget development and management. Understands federal, state, and local funding structures.
- Demonstrates strong organizational skills and has a deep understanding of school law; ensures that the management of schools complies with laws, regulations, and School Committee policies.
- Understands facilities management, long-term maintenance planning and future building needs including the athletic fields.
- Is skilled at working with the budget and can evaluate the school budget to find cost saving measures that will not affect student achievement.
- Can explore alternative funding sources (such as grants) and create partnerships to support district programs and activities.

Teaching and Learning

A leader who:

- Has teaching experience in more than one level preferably.
- Has a strong background in special education and understands the complex needs of students with disabilities.
- Can create a continuum of services, alignment of resources, and academic support for all students and families. Supports and implements intervention strategies to meet students' needs.
- Understands the diverse academic and social emotional needs of all students.
- Demonstrates the ability to unify district-wide programs (academics, special education, the arts, athletics, and extracurriculars) to strengthen students' connections to the school community.
- Stays informed about educational practices, research, and state/national initiatives, and will lead the creation and delivery of effective 21st Century educational programming.
- Understands and leverages technology to support teaching and learning.
- Supervises and evaluates school programs with a focus on continuous improvement.
- Values the roles of extracurricular and co-curricular activities as essential components of a well-rounded education.

- Will solicit the expertise of the educators when making curricular decisions.

TASKS AND CHALLENGES IN YEAR ONE

Tasks

- Build a vision and forge a culture that builds a sense of pride and unites the district as a community.
- Listen and learn about the district prior to making any major decisions. Develop a plan built on the input and feedback from the school community and the community at large. Determine what is working well in the district and where improvements are needed to advance the district in its strategic initiatives.
- Be informed of the initial guidance for graduation requirements and retain the culture of the high school when developing graduation requirements for the district.
- Engage in contract negotiations with a prior proven track record of successful negotiations with all bargaining units.
- Establish effective and meaningful onboarding processes for new senior positions.
- Develop a network with superintendents in surrounding towns and regions.
- Redistribute autonomy to principals and teachers and engage in distributive leadership. Tap into the talents of the staff.
- Develop a strong relationship with the School Committee through establishing norms and adhering to a chain of command.
- Protect and strengthen special education and equity of services. Implement consistent equitable district-wide protocols and services.
- Establish a culture of trust and consistency among building leadership guided by norms and evidenced-based practices. Expectations and performance goals for school leaders should be clear.
- We need a superintendent who is transparent and will evaluate the district with an objective and critical lens to inform future decision-making.
- Conduct a thorough assessment of the district operations such as staffing, finances and instructional support to ensure resources are implemented and distributed equitably and efficiently.
- Be a champion for the district. Keep families engaged from their entry point through graduation.

Challenges

- Conduct an immediate forensic of the budget, reserves, and unfunded obligations.
- Resolve the AIHS issue with transparency and equity. If reopening is feasible, present a timeline and funding plan; if not, present viable alternatives that protect innovation programming and student placements. Ensure AIHS families and staff have participation in the decision process and remediation actions.
- The Amesbury Public Schools is in a difficult fiscal 2027 budget and it will be important

to seek competitive grants and other sources of supplemental funding.

- There is deep concern about multi-year budget cuts, failed override, and the resulting loss of programs and staff.
- Make bold strategic decisions to reimagine and deploy district resources for the sustainability of the Amesbury Public School district
- Establish high expectations for all students and raise academic rigor and instructional consistency through a K-12 academic audit, with a focus on early literacy, grade 5 mathematics, and course placement policies.
- Rebuild and establish a culture of trust with all stakeholders. Assess the current morale of staff and the needs of students and parents.
- Ensure all stakeholders have a voice and equitable opportunities to provide input. Examine the access to professional development opportunities for the elementary staff as compared to the middle and high school staff. Develop solutions to create equity.
- Develop a solid working, trusting, and respectful relationship with the School Committee. Be responsive in a timely manner to the requests by the School Committee for information on student performance and other matters in the purview of the Committee.
- Advocate for programming to meet the needs of students not making adequate academic progress and for those students who are excelling in academic achievement.
- Implement a systematic approach to managing and improving the schools.
- Build a school budget that works within the state aid funding formulas and focuses funds on maintaining the most important services.
- Seek funding to retain high-quality core educational programs, support extra-curricular activities, and mandate support programs.
- Be fiscally aware. Address the inconsistencies found in budgeting, policies, and procedures.