



Superintendent Search Feedback Survey

Results and Analysis

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Medford School District

Overview of the Research Project

The Superintendent Search Feedback Survey was open from December 22, 2025 to January 2, 2026.

The survey was available via a public URL posted on the district's website

The was translated into Spanish.

This report summarizes district-level survey results.

For the open-ended analysis, responses were systematically coded through pattern coding, after which related codes were consolidated into broader thematic categories.

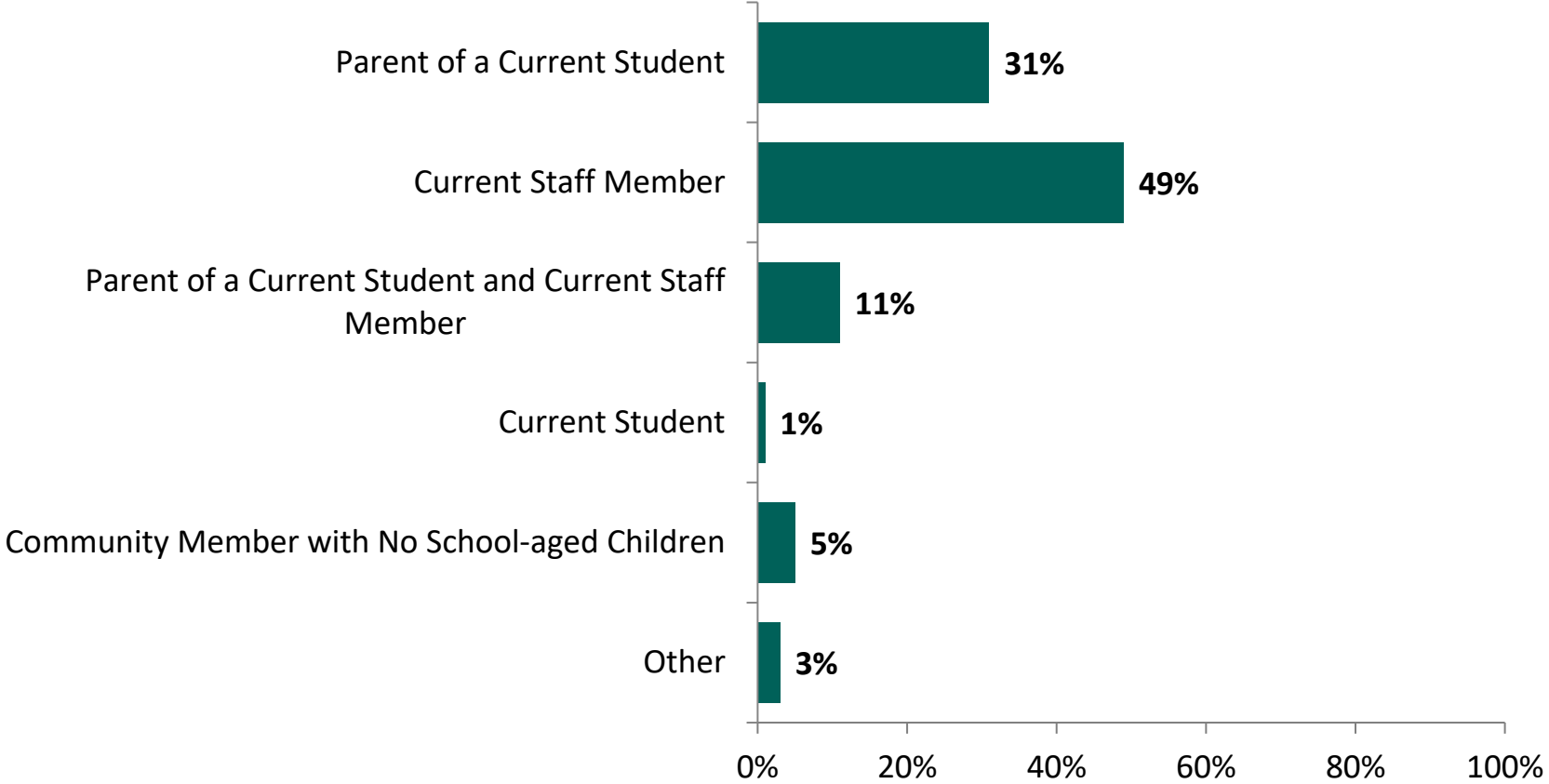
A report including all open-ended responses segmented by relationship to the district was also provided.

Findings for each item in the report exclude participants who did not answer.

Participation and Relationship to the District

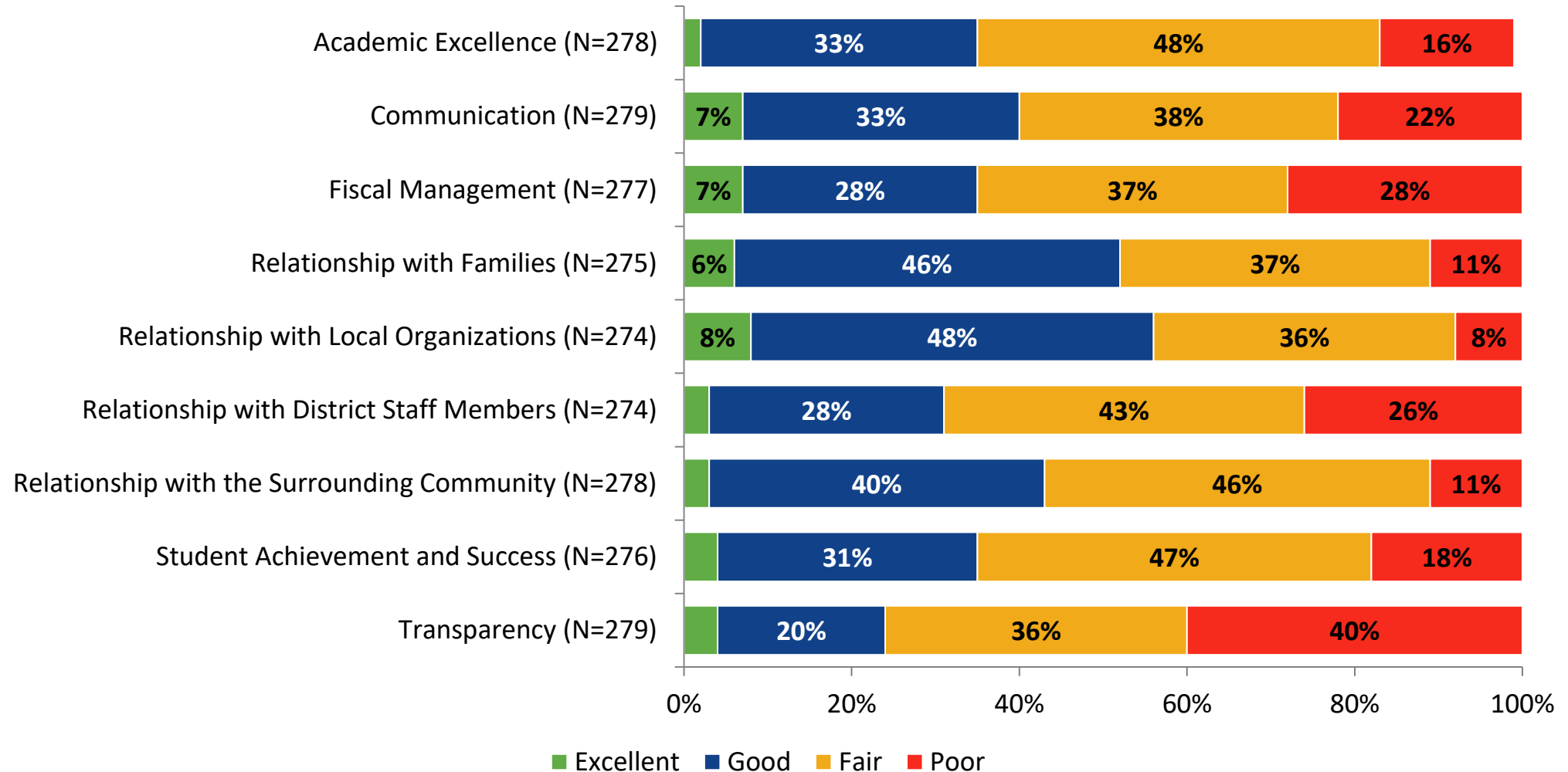
Which of the following best describes your relationship to the district? (N=287)

Total Responses
287



Perceptions of the District

Please rate the quality of the following aspects of the district.



Great Things about the Community and School District

Please tell us great things about your community and school district that potential candidates for superintendent should know. (N=206)

Caring, committed educators and staff are the district's greatest strength. Participants point to the people inside the schools as what makes the district shine. Teachers, support staff, and building-level teams are described as deeply caring, hardworking, and committed to doing what's best for students. Many emphasize the “above and beyond” effort staff put in, mentoring students, building relationships, and creating supportive learning environments.

A close-knit community that values relationships, belonging, and a “family” feel. Participants describe Medford and its schools as places where relationships matter, a district with a “small-town feel” even though it serves a large population. Families, students, and staff frequently experience schools as communities of belonging, where people know each other, support one another, and want children to feel safe, seen, and connected.

A beautiful, outdoors-centered region that offers quality of life and learning opportunities. Participants repeatedly describe Medford as a scenic, resource-rich, and family-friendly place to live. People point to mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, and four seasons, along with outdoor recreation like hiking, skiing, rafting, fishing, and biking. Many also note the area's relative safety and livability, describing it as a place where families want to put down roots.

Families and community partners care deeply and want to support schools—even if they engage differently. Participants emphasize that Medford values education and wants strong schools, even if families aren't always visible in traditional forms of involvement. Respondents also note that community organizations and local partners are willing to collaborate when the district builds trust and creates meaningful ways to engage.

Pride in tradition, history, and the belief that the district can be excellent. Participants reference long histories of strong schools, community identity tied to the district, and traditions of excellence. Many recognize that Medford has the size, history, and potential to be a leading district in the region.

Strong and diverse student opportunities, especially arts, pathways, and innovative programs. Participants celebrate the range of programs available to students, describing them as a key strength of the district. They highlight robust arts and music offerings, strong athletics, clubs and activities, CTE and career pathways, honors options, alternative education programs, and unique experiences like outdoor education and specialized learning opportunities. Families and staff note that these programs help students feel engaged, connected, and able to discover their interests.

Significant Issues and Challenges

What are the most significant issues and challenges the next superintendent should know about when coming to this position? (N=229)

Distrust, poor transparency, and broken relationships. Participants describe feeling talked down to, unheard, or misled, and repeatedly reference lack of transparency, “spin,” and perception management. Many describe strained labor relationships, “us vs. them” dynamics, and cynicism throughout the system, making it difficult to unify around shared goals.

Top-heavy administration and misaligned spending priorities. Participants said the district is overstaffed at the district-office/leadership level while classrooms lack direct support. This includes frustration about high administrator salaries, positions perceived as unnecessary, and frequent references to wasting money on buildings, consulting, “projects,” or marketing while teachers and classified staff are underpaid and schools feel stretched thin.

Student behavior, discipline, and safety concerns. Respondents describe behavior as out of control, with classroom disruption, bullying, violence, and staff injuries often cited. A repeated concern is the lack of consistent consequences, weak discipline systems, and inadequate alternative settings for students with severe behavioral needs. Safety concerns extend beyond behavior to broader community challenges impacting schools.

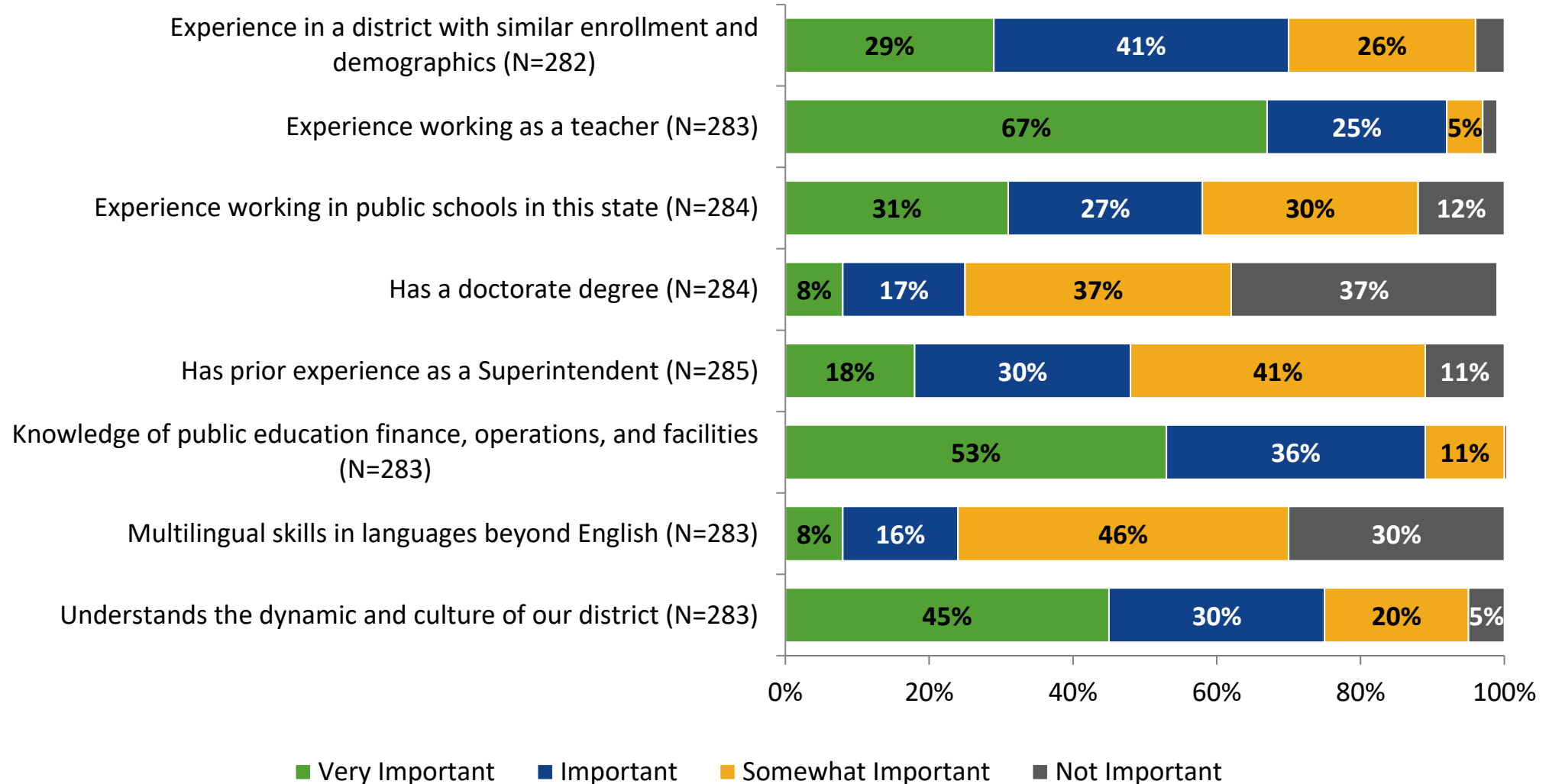
Academic performance gaps and weak systems for learning support. Participants cite concerns that too many students are not reading or performing at grade level, and that the district lacks effective systems for intervention and academic rigor. This includes concerns about “social promotion,” low expectations, weak credit recovery practices, and insufficient differentiation for both students who are behind and those who need advanced challenge.

Curriculum dissatisfaction and a top-down instructional approach. Participants describe frequent curriculum changes, heavy micromanagement, and the sense that instructional decisions are made without meaningful educator input, leaving teachers overwhelmed and students not well served.

Staffing strain: burnout, retention issues, and insufficient support for high-needs learners. Participants describe high levels of educator stress due to large class sizes, increasing student needs, and insufficient staffing, especially in special education, behavior support, counseling, and intervention roles. Many describe burnout, morale decline, and experienced teachers leaving for other districts.

Preferred Areas of Expertise

From your perspective, how much importance should the Board of Education place on each area?



Preferred Characteristics, Skills, and Qualities

What qualities, skills, and characteristics do you feel the next superintendent needs to have in order to be successful? (N=225)

Transparent, honest, and trustworthy. Participants want a superintendent who leads with integrity and communicates clearly. There were mentions of past experiences of gaslighting, misleading messaging, or empty promises. What people want most is authentic transparency, consistent follow-through, and a leader whose actions match their words.

A visible, approachable leader who listens deeply to educators, families, and students. Participants want superintendent who is present in schools, not leading from a desk or echo chamber. Respondents emphasize listening, especially to teachers and “boots on the ground” staff , and making decisions rooted in real classroom conditions.

Strong, steady leadership that can make hard decisions and hold people accountable. Participants want someone who is decisive without being authoritarian . A superintendent who can handle conflict, manage a difficult board, and create clear boundaries for behavior and performance. Many emphasize the need for courage and backbone to act, even when decisions are unpopular, and to ensure accountability at every level, including district office leadership. Participants want a leader who can hear hard feedback without ego and build relationships across divides.

Deep educational credibility and classroom experience. Participants want someone with meaningful teaching experience and building-level leadership experience. There is skepticism toward leaders who are perceived as career administrators, political figures, or outsiders without school experience.

Fiscal responsibility and willingness to reallocate resources to classrooms. Participants want a superintendent who understands budgeting, can manage funding constraints, and is willing to reduce top-heavy bureaucracy and “pet projects.” Many emphasize that spending should prioritize classrooms, staff pay, and student supports, not district office growth, marketing, or unnecessary initiatives.

Student-centered, safety-focused, and able to serve diverse needs. Participants want a superintendent who keeps students at the center. Many also call for cultural awareness (including bilingual/bicultural leadership) and real commitment to ensuring all students are supported—not just in words, but through systems and staffing that match student needs.



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