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**Piper USD 203**  
**Superintendent Search Characteristics Report**

**March 2, 2026**

**Dr. Michelle Hubbard**  
**Kansas Association of School Boards**

# Notes from the USD 203 Piper Characteristics Survey and Focus Groups

March 2, 2026  
Dr. Michelle Hubbard

This report was prepared at the request of the USD 203 Piper Board of Education. KASB staff conducted focused groups on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of February and the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March with administrators, classified staff, students, certified staff, and parents and community members. The major purpose of these sessions was to obtain input for the school board regarding characteristics that others recommend for the new superintendent.

Although there are common characteristics that each community desires, there are frequently board and community-specific characteristics that will separate a candidate from others during the screening process. Our hope is the identified characteristics from the focus groups and the community survey will assist the board and screening team with these unique characteristics in the candidate.

Characteristic questions that were asked during the focus groups were as follows:

- ⊗ Describe or list the most important leadership and personal qualities you would like to see in the new superintendent?
- ⊗ Describe or list the strengths and the good points of your school district the new superintendent will need to understand and support?
- ⊗ Describe or list the most critical needs of your school district the new superintendent will need to understand and support?
- ⊗ What single characteristic or quality will separate the best candidate from the other highly qualified candidates who will apply for the superintendent position?

The following report is reflective of information collected from the survey and focus groups. Based on this information from the survey and focus groups, the final page of the report reflects the Piper USD 203 Board of Education Characteristics that will be used while selecting superintendent candidates.

Sincerely,



Dr. Michelle Hubbard  
Leadership Field Specialist  
Kansas Association of School Boards

**Focus Group Schedule**

<b>February 26, 2026</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>School(s) and Focus Groups</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>1:00-1:45pm</b>	Building Administrator Focus Group	Piper High School 13021 Leavenworth Road
<b>2:00-2:45pm</b>	Piper High School Student Focus Group	Piper High School 13021 Leavenworth Road
<b>3:00-3:45pm</b>	Piper High School Staff & Site Council Focus Group	Piper High School 13021 Leavenworth Road
<b>4:15-5:00m</b>	Piper Prairie Elementary Staff & Site Council Focus Group	Piper District Office 3130 N. 122 <sup>nd</sup> Street
<b>5:30-6:15pm</b>	Community Focus Group	Piper District Office 3130 N. 122 <sup>nd</sup> Street

<b>March 2, 2026</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>School(s) and Focus Groups</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>1:00-1:45pm</b>	Superintendent’s Cabinet Focus Group	Piper Early Childhood Center 4410 N. 107 <sup>th</sup> Street
<b>2:00-2:45pm</b>	District Office, Food Service, and Facilities Teams Focus Group	Piper Early Childhood Center 4410 N. 107 <sup>th</sup> Street
<b>3:00-3:45pm</b>	Piper Middle School Staff & Site Council Focus Group	Piper Early Childhood Center 4410 N. 107 <sup>th</sup> Street
<b>4:00-4:45pm</b>	Piper Creek Elementary & Piper Early Childhood Staff & Site Council Focus Group	Piper Early Childhood Center 4410 N. 107 <sup>th</sup> Street

Focus Groups - 9	Number of participants
<b>Thursday, February 26, 2026</b>	
Building Administrator Focus Group	12
Piper High School Student Focus Group	18
Piper High School Staff & Site Council Focus Group	12
Piper Prairie Elementary Staff & Site Council Focus Group	16
Community Focus Group	12
<b>Monday, March 2, 2026</b>	
Superintendent's Cabinet Focus Group	7
District Office, Food Service, and Facilities Teams Focus Group	13
Piper Middle School Staff & Site Council Focus Group	12
Piper Creek Elementary & Piper Early Childhood Staff & Site Council Focus Group	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>

**Describe the most important leadership and personal qualities you would like to see in the new superintendent.**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Board of Education</b>	
	Instructional leader for ALL kids
	Clear communication - transparent
	Financial budget experience
	Kids First Mentality
	High Energy - Passionate - Approachable - Collaborative Team Builder/Problem Solver
	Support of district vision
<b>Stakeholders</b>	
8	Clear, timely communicator willing to listen
7	Approachable and willing to listen to the needs of the community
7	Authentic - dedicated and understand Piper Schools and Community - community minded. Interpersonal skills to invest personally and get to know students and staff
7	Consensus-Builder/Collaborative leadership including the operations team and staff advisory
6	School finance knowledge and experiences with bond referendum
6	Integrity - always willing to do the right thing
5	Prior building /district level or superintendent experience to include knowledge of special education, superintendent experience preferred
5	Decisive, decision maker and willing to adjust as needed- including the willingness to call snow days
5	Visible and happily engaged in school activities
5	Transparency
5	Passionate and cares about student needs - Kid first approach - Bleed purple
5	High expectations and ability to hold people accountable/follow through
4	Visionary - Forward thinking innovative Leader - district academics and operations
3	Instructional Leader and embraces continued improvement
3	Relationship builder. - Connector - resourceful and ability to recruit
3	Compassionate - caring - empathetic
3	Support and advocate for staff even when it's not popular
2	Driven - activator - ability to make things happen and follow through
2	Accountability and open to constructive criticism
2	Strategic systems thinker/leader
2	Trustworthy - Open and Honest
2	Influencer - Warm demander
2	Delegator - Not a micro- manager
2	Curious - Open Minded
2	Professional and Respectful
2	Continue to keep the classified staff on the map
	Building project/capital outlay plan/facility plan and follow through
	Strong visible advocate for education - local, county and state level
	Flexible

**Describe or list the strengths and the good points of the district the new superintendent will need to understand and support.**

<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Board of Education</b>	
	RWL is an important part of who we are.
	Proud Piper Legacy – commitment to community
<b>Stakeholders</b>	
9	Piper’s PreK–12 Real World Learning model—wall-to-wall academies, senior capstone projects, and robust industry and community partnerships—which they believe make the district a leader in which others seek to learn from
8	Proud Pirate Legacy - School Pride - Small town community feel
7	Strong collaborative teacher leaders - adaptable and open to growth - teachers are always looking to get better - want what is best for students
6	Among the top fastest growing districts in the state
5	Strong support for ALL - inclusive learning environment - self-sustaining special education (no Co-Op)
4	Evolving organized systems approach
4	Strong collaborative administration team - supportive
3	Longevity/Staff retention is good - people want this to be their destination
3	Proximity to accessible local resources
3	School is increasingly diverse
2	Strong district wide support staff
2	Great roadmap in place - strategic plan - Strong portrait of a graduate - Forward thinking
2	National affiliation networks (Future of High Schools, Kaufman work, KU - Redefining Schools, AASA, PLTW etc.)
	Opportunities for personal interest - great extracurricular opportunities
	Forward-thinking school community
	Strong community fund raising support for sports/activities
	Strong relationships between board of education and PTA (Piper Teacher Association)
	Lots of families in the public service industry
	Student potential of Piper graduates
	Tuesday Talks - we love that we feel like a family - personal connections
	Community engagement opportunities (strategic plan - boundary discussion- bond forum)
	Gifted education

**Describe or list the most critical needs that the new superintendent will need to understand and address.**

Frequency	Response
<b>Board of Education</b>	
	Experience with facility improvements and capable of guiding long-range planning, outstanding facility priorities
	Elementary transition is crucial for the next year
	Managing/Planning for enrollment growth
<b>Stakeholders</b>	
9	A leader who can address the district's "unfinished business" by advancing a future bond or pursuing innovative, cost-effective facility solutions. They emphasized the need for a consistent long-range facilities plan and clear connections between facility improvements, academic growth, and community support
8	Stay the course of the elementary transition from K-2 and 3/5 and will be K-5 buildings next year - keep buildings consistent - understanding transportation
7	Piper's strong community identity, the "old Piper vs. new Piper" dynamic, the need to understand KCK political nuances, and concerns about complacency as the district evolves
6	Boundary decisions spark strong community expectations and reactions, underscoring the need for a resilient leader who can stand firm and manage conflict effectively
6	The importance of strong school finance leadership—managing taxes, maintaining balanced budgets, and effectively educating the community while addressing their concerns
6	We need a guaranteed and viable curriculum for ALL students - instructional resources are inconsistent and lack fidelity - must include all three tiers of instruction
5	PLCs - we have a great start, but we need additional support staff at district level to support curriculum and instruction initiatives including new teacher mentorship
4	Piper at times can feel divided - old Piper vs. new Piper - disjointed - must bridge this gap - How do we connect to community groups that don't have kids in our community
3	Piper is increasingly diverse and would need to support and capitalize to utilize as a strength
3	Expanding support services, increasing special education resources, and continuing strong support for the new Co-Op
3	There are concerns around student behaviors and student bullying
3	Building level administration does not have a lot of longevity
2	Due to our size and changing dynamics - lots of staff have multiple roles
2	Arrival and Dismissal traffic is a nightmare - be prepared
2	Streamlining communications - Be willing to address our struggles and be better - we are great at sharing the things we are good
2	Piper may not be ready for a bond initiative at this time and should explore other fundraising options. They stressed that future bonds must be tied directly to academic needs as well as athletics
2	Declining student performance and the need for improved support structures to help teachers accelerate student learning
2	Technology infrastructure and planning for devices is lacking
	We need a better health management system.
	Piper has great staff including district level teams- listen to them
	Student advisory group is strongly needed
	Be knowledgeable about the superintendent search survey
	We need to revisit the student dress code

**What single characteristic or quality will separate the best candidate from the other highly qualified candidates who will apply for the superintendent position?**

Frequency	Response
	<b>Board of Education</b>
	Piper commitment – community involvement
	Successful district level experience
	District level leadership experience
	Driver – go-getter – strong advocate and willing to be at a variety of tables to support Piper
	Personable, collaborative leader - visibly engaged
	<b>Stakeholders</b>
8	Authentic, personable, make people feel comfortable
7	Described their ideal leader as dynamic, inspirational, and innovative—someone who brings positivity, embraces the “Piper Pride” culture, and is all-in for the district
6	Successful experience as a previous superintendent or district level administrator with a strong understanding the complex PreK-12 system and to be able to sustain those systems with growth; some groups preferred superintendent experience
5	Understands and is committed to Piper - get involved in the community - longevity
4	Champion the <b>RWL initiative</b> to include instructional resources to support a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
4	Holding people accountable/follow through
3	Collaborative leader/Collaborative decision maker
2	Family/Community oriented
2	Adaptable
2	Be ability to say no and accept that you can't please everyone
2	Understands Piper’s history and has the foresight to navigate emerging trends in education.
2	Courageous equity driven leadership that allows autonomy with district staff
2	Kids First Mentality
	Strategic Thinker
	Ability to lead others
	Experience with diversity
	Efficient leader
	Accepting all aspects and opinions
	Fiscal integrity

The Piper USD 203 Board of Education, informed by community survey results and extensive focus-group feedback, has identified the following **key characteristics** to guide the selection of the district’s next superintendent. These characteristics reflect Piper’s values, current needs, and ambitious vision for the future.

**1. Student-Centered Instructional Leader**

A leader with deep PreK–12 instructional expertise who prioritizes student learning, supports staff, and strengthens systems to accelerate academic growth for all students.

**2. Clear, Transparent, and Timely Communicator**

Models open, honest communication; listens actively; builds trust; and ensures families, staff, and the wider community are informed and engaged.

**3. Collaborative, Personable, and Visibly Engaged**

Builds strong relationships, is approachable and engaged in schools and community events, and fosters a culture of teamwork and shared leadership.

**4. Strong Financial and Operational Leader**

Brings expertise in school finance, budgeting, and facilities; capable of guiding long-range planning, outstanding facility priorities, and maintaining fiscal responsibility amid continued growth.

**5. Community-Driven and Culturally Responsive**

Understands Piper’s unique community identity - including challenges resulting from rapid growth - values diverse perspectives and actively engages with all stakeholders to build unity and trust.

**6. Champion of Real-World Learning**

Committed to sustaining and advancing Piper’s PreK–12 Real World Learning model, including wall-to-wall academies, capstone experiences, and strong industry and community partnerships.

**7. High-Energy Leader with Integrity and Accountability**

Brings positivity, passion, and authenticity; maintains high expectations; holds self and others accountable; and reflects “Piper Pride” in support of the district vision.

**8. Decisive, Strategic Leader with District-Level Experience**

A forward-thinking leader with successful district-level or superintendent experience who confidently advocates for Piper and serves as an enthusiastic, visible champion of the district’s vision and direction.