

McMinnville School District – Superintendent Search Survey

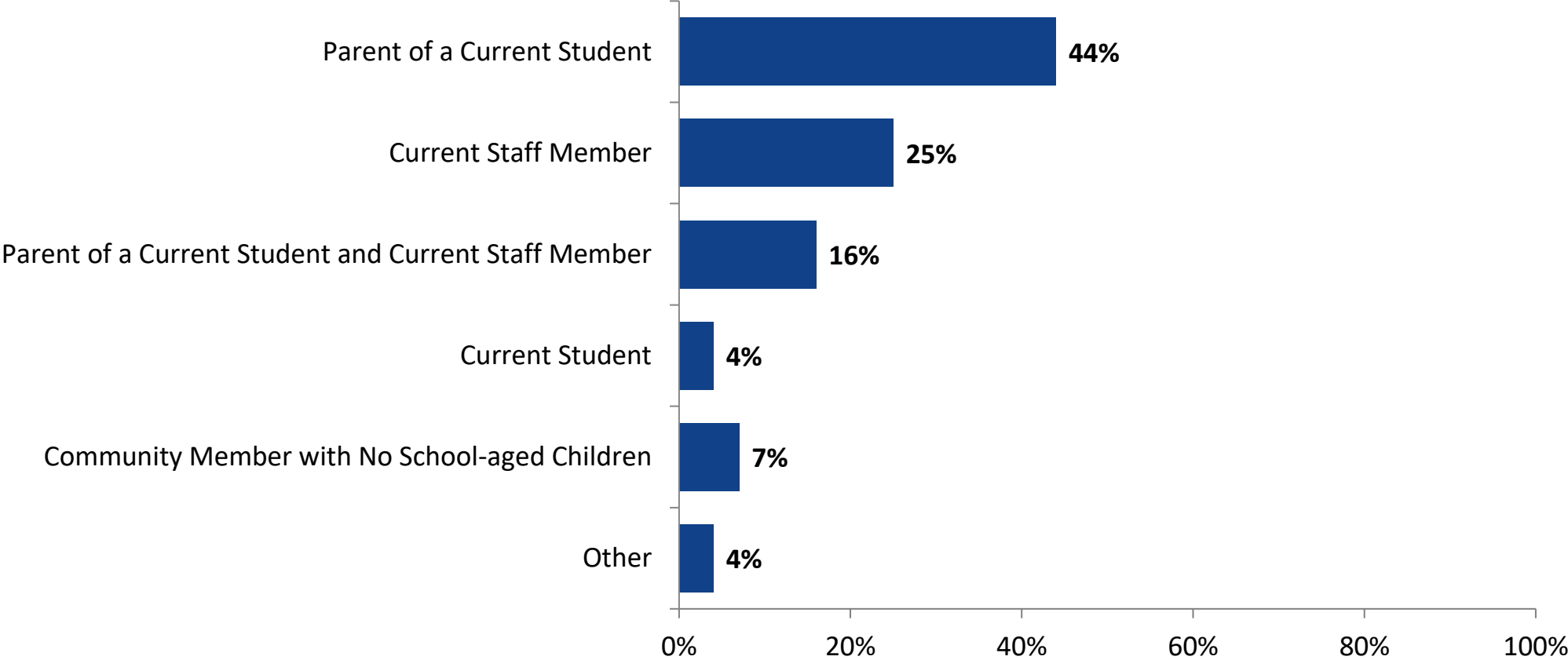
Results and Analysis

McPherson & Jacobson
2025



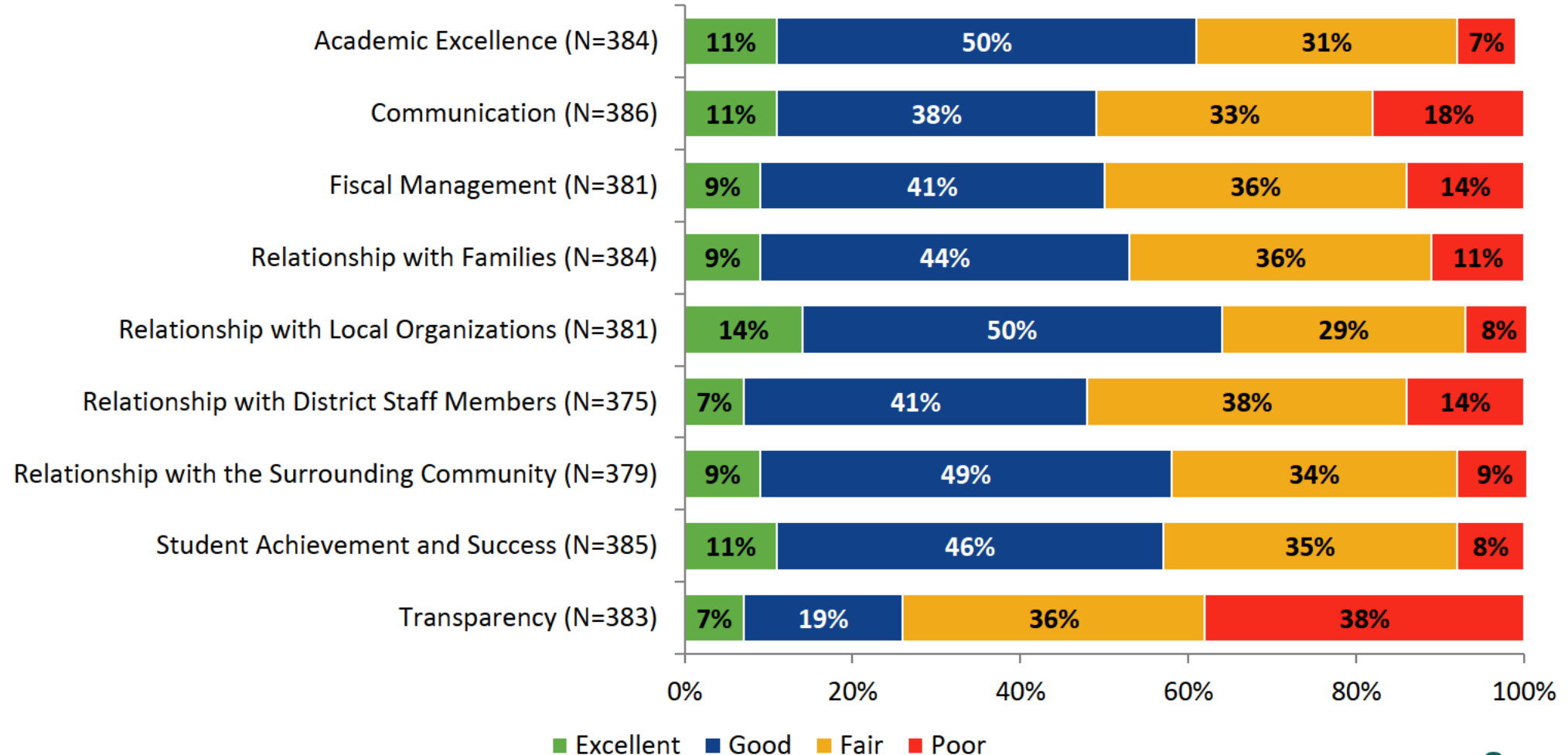
Relationship to the District

Which of the following best describes your relationship to the district? (N=393)



Perceptions of the District

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



Great Things About the Community and District

Please tell us great things about your community and school district that potential candidates for superintendent should know. (N=306)

Academic Excellence and Student Opportunity: McMinnville is proud of its strong programs, especially career and technical education (CTE), advanced coursework, and extracurriculars. Staff and community members want to return to previous levels of academic distinction and innovation. There is appreciation for well-rounded student development, including arts, athletics, mental health, and social-emotional learning.

Dedicated and Passionate Educators: The district is home to highly committed, student-centered educators who care deeply about student success. Many teachers and staff have long tenures or personal connections to the community. There is a culture of collaboration and internal leadership development (“homegrown leaders”).

Desire for Stable, Ethical, and Transparent Leadership: Respondents expressed concerns about district leadership turnover, board politics, and a perceived lack of transparency. There is a strong desire for a superintendent who listens, communicates clearly, leads with integrity, and restores trust. Respondents voiced support for past leadership or urged the district to prioritize relationships and morale over dramatic change.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: The community values its racial, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity. There is support for inclusive practices, bilingual programs, and recognition of historically underserved groups. Calls were made for leadership that is culturally competent, equity-minded, and representative of the full community.

High Community Engagement and Support: The community rallies around schools through volunteering, donations, partnerships, and event participation. Parents are involved and passionate about their children’s education and well-being. Local businesses and organizations often support students through career pathways, donations, and mentorship.

Strong Sense of Community and Connection: McMinnville is described as a tight-knit, small-town community where people know and support one another. There is deep local pride, multigenerational roots, and strong relationships among families, staff, and students. Many emphasize the importance of a superintendent who is local or deeply invested in becoming part of the community.

Current Issues

What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position? (N=311)

Behavioral Challenges, Safety, and Student Mental Health: Stakeholders voiced concerns about student behavior, violence, bullying, and lack of effective discipline systems. Respondents cited increases in anxiety, suicide risk, and trauma-related needs among students—with insufficient mental health support. Staff and parents want leadership that prioritizes student safety and social-emotional wellness, not just academics or compliance.

Broken Trust and Low Staff Morale: A sense of distrust exists toward the school board due to the sudden, unexplained dismissal of the former superintendent and lack of transparency in decision-making. Staff report feeling undervalued, overburdened, and excluded from important decisions. Morale is described as low across many buildings.

Budget Deficits and Resource Misalignment: The community is aware of the district's financial challenges and wants clarity on priorities and spending decisions. Stakeholders criticized “top-heavy” administration and advocated for redirecting funds toward classroom support, early literacy, mental health, and special education.

Equity, Inclusion, and Representation: The removal of the dual language program and lack of culturally responsive leadership were seen as negatives. There is a strong desire for a superintendent who embraces bilingual education, elevates marginalized voices, and supports DEI initiatives. Some fear regressive trends and demand leadership that protects inclusive education and the rights of LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and immigrant students.

Need for Strong, Ethical, and Transparent Leadership: The community is looking for a steady, student-centered leader who listens, communicates honestly, and rebuilds community trust. There is broad support for someone who will honor successful past practices (like PLCs and academic rigor) while addressing systemic weaknesses. The next superintendent is expected to unify a divided district, repair internal culture, and serve as a visible, collaborative leader.

Special Education and Support Services in Crisis: The district's special education program is widely viewed as under-resourced, disorganized, and unsustainable. Teachers describe unsafe conditions, high staff turnover, burnout, and inadequate training for general educators working with high-needs students. Urgent calls were made for staffing increases, program restructuring, and leadership change in the special education department.

Significant Challenges

What do you believe will be the most significant challenges the next superintendent will have to confront? (N=311)

Academic Recovery and Attendance: Concerns about declining test scores, chronic absenteeism, and unfinished learning post-COVID. Stakeholders want a renewed focus on foundational academic skills, rigorous instruction, and meaningful student engagement. Equity and differentiated support for high-needs populations are seen as essential.

Broken Trust and Damaged Relationships: Widespread distrust in the school board, district office, and leadership due to the dismissal of the previous superintendent. Staff morale is low, many feel unheard, disrespected, or burned out. The new superintendent must rebuild credibility and foster transparency with staff, families, and the broader community.

Budget Crisis and Financial Stewardship: Budget shortfalls and looming cuts are a major concern. Stakeholders want more clarity and accountability on how funds are allocated. Many call for reducing central office overhead and protecting student-facing roles and programs.

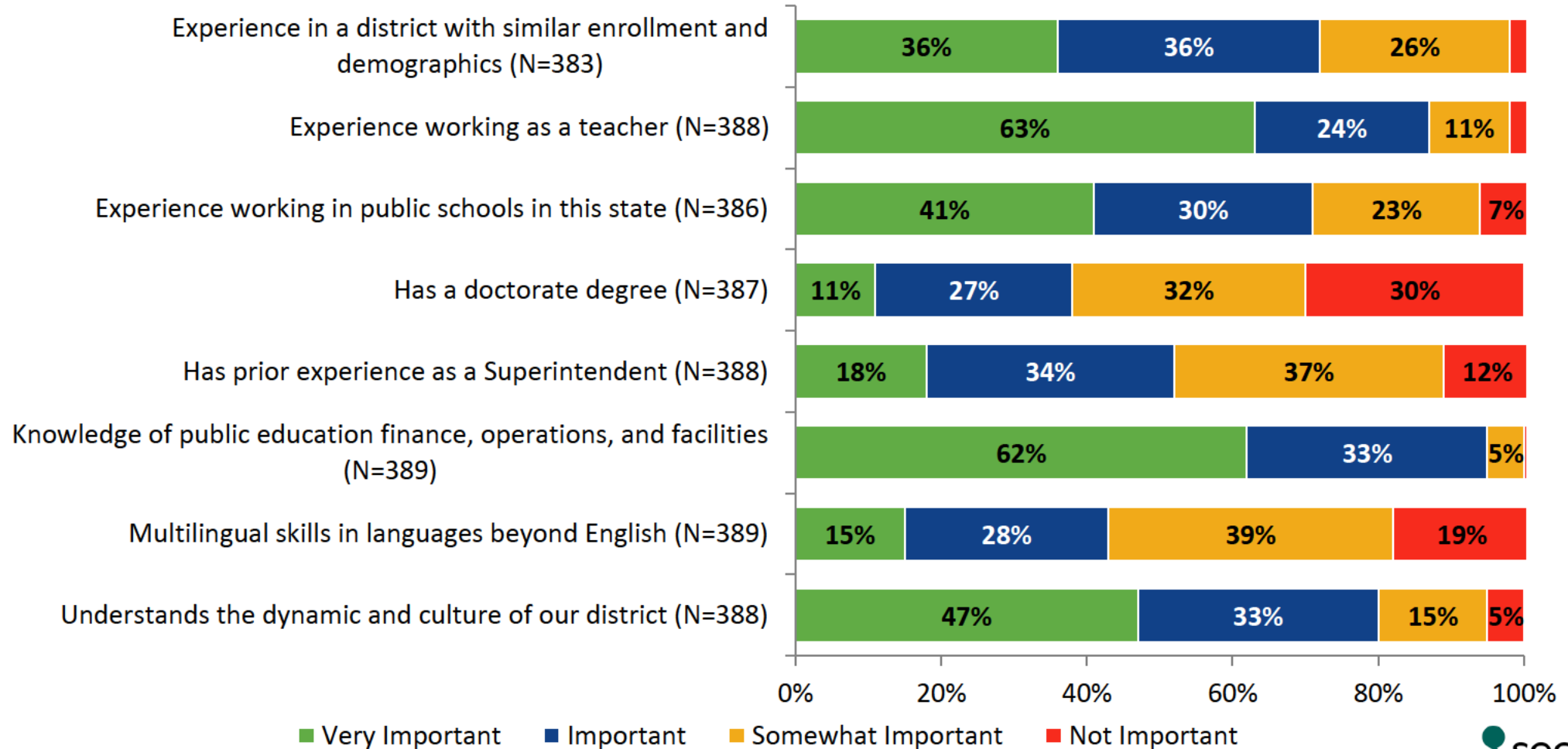
Leadership Vision and Political Navigation: The district is politically divided, and the school board dynamics are seen as dysfunctional. The new superintendent must unify stakeholders, lead with integrity, and resist undue influence from polarizing or legacy-driven voices. A call for bold yet inclusive leadership that listens to all groups—not just the loudest.

Staff Retention, Support, and Working Conditions: Teachers and classified staff feel overworked, underpaid, and undervalued. Respondents cite burnout, lack of resources, and inadequate support for special education and inclusion efforts. There is a strong need for better leadership, mentorship, and collaboration across all levels.

Student Behavior and School Climate: Escalating behavioral issues at all grade levels, including violence and lack of accountability. Concerns about school safety, mental health, and trauma-informed support. Staff are overwhelmed and feel unsupported in managing student behavior.

Areas of Expertise

Listed below are specific areas of expertise that different superintendent candidates may possess. From your perspective, how much importance should the Board of Education place on each area?



Qualities, Skills, Characteristics

What qualities, skills, and characteristics do you feel the next superintendent needs to have in order to be successful? (N=311)

Communication and Listening: Clear, transparent, and responsive communication. Strong listening skills. Ability to engage diverse stakeholders.

Community Connection and Trust Building: Desire to build trust, be visible in the schools, and genuinely connect with staff, students, and families.

Equity and Inclusion: Commitment to equity, anti-racist practices, and culturally competent leadership. Inclusion of all voices.

Experience and Professional Background: Background in teaching and district-level roles. Preference for leaders with classroom and superintendent experience.

Leadership and Decision-Making: Strong leadership presence, ethical decision-making, accountability, and the ability to navigate challenges with confidence.

Student- and Staff-Centered Focus: Focus on student success and staff well-being. Understanding classroom realities, morale, and mental health needs.



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