

State Board of Education Releases State Superintendent Search Survey Results

JACKSON, Miss. – The Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) today released the results of its survey of members of the public about the qualities and priorities they believe the next state superintendent of education should have to help ensure every student in Mississippi graduates from high school prepared for success in college, career and life. Approximately 900 people completed the survey. Most respondents identified themselves as teachers (35%), followed by district/school administrators (17%), parents/guardians (16%) and business/community leaders (4%). The remaining respondents included post-secondary representatives, statewide leaders/legislators, students, school/district employees and other citizens. The survey asked respondents to rate the level of im-

portance of a list of qualities and priorities they want from the next state superintendent of education and were provided the opportunity to add additional comments. The majority of respondents rated the following qualities as “very important” or “extremely important”:

1. Inspires trust, has high levels of self-confidence and optimism, and models high standards of integrity and personal performance: 89%
2. Is strongly committed to a “student first” philosophy in all decisions: 85%
3. Develops and communicates a vision coupled with the ability to lead a large, complex organization dedicated to continuous improvement: 83%
4. Possesses the ability and passion needed to continuously improve student performance on a statewide basis, especially in identifying

and closing student achievement gaps: 80%

5. Identifies and selects team members who can advance the State Board of Education Strategic Plan: 80%
6. Possesses the leadership skills required to meet the challenges of a racially, ethnically and culturally diverse state: 76%
7. Works with legislators on key issues and leads a complex organization throughout the legislative process: 75%
8. Provides leadership in the planning, implementation, and assessment of relevant professional development for all state educators: 71%
9. Is a resident of Mississippi or has some ties to Mississippi: 62%

The majority of respondents rated the following areas of focus as “very important” or “extremely important”:

1. Develop and retain effective teachers: 95%
2. Increase access to high-quality Career and Technical Education programs and pathways that lead to national industry certifications: 83%
3. Improve academic outcomes in low-achieving schools and districts: 80%
4. Increase access to high-quality early childhood programs: 73%
5. Support students’ social and emotional learning and mental health needs: 73%
6. Increase access to advanced coursework (AP, dual credit/dual enrollment, IB): 65%
7. Decrease achievement gaps among student subgroups: 64%
8. Sustain and/or increase the rigor of academic standards: 63%
9. Help students accelerate learning and recover from the pandemic: 59%
10. Require programs implemented by the Mississippi Department of Education to collect data about how each program has improved student proficiency or performance to determine if a program is effective or should be continued or modified: 57%
11. Increase capacity of teachers and leaders to implement digital learning: 52%

The SBE will use the survey results to help evaluate candidates for the state superintendent of education position. The SBE is working with the firm McPherson & Jacobson, LLC to lead the search process and expects to select a final candidate before the end of 2023. Senate confirmation during the 2024 legislative session is required to complete the appointment process. Find all MDE news releases at mdek12.org/news

DOWN TO EARTH

By Timothy E. Parker

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13					
P	A	M	P	A	U	S	E	D	D	A	S	H					
14	A	H	E	A	15	P	O	O	16	E	D	N	A				
17	W	O	R	L	D	18	A	T	O	N	E	19	S	F	E	E	T
20	N	Y	C	21	E	D	I	T	22	G	U	I	L	E	S		
23	H	I	R	A	M	25	N	E	E	R							
26	27	O	M	A	N	28	M	E	T	H	O	D	S				
32	B	A	N	T	U	33	E	U	R	O	35	A	P	E			
38	O	N	T	O	P	39	O	F	T	H	E	41	W	O	R	L	D
42	E	S	S	43	D	E	E	R	44	N	O	M	A	D			
45	F	A	R	E	A	S	T	47	P	I	T	Y					
49	S	T	E	T	51	C	R	O	S	S							
53	S	C	H	L	E	P	54	B	O	O	B	56	T	O	E		
59	W	O	R	L	D	60	S	H	A	T	T	E	R	I	N	G	
62	A	R	E	A	63	S	A	K	I	64	Y	U	C	C	A		
65	T	E	E	S	66	T	H	E	A	67	S	T	E	E	D		



I had been in the stand only 15 minutes when the doe appeared. When it crossed the path I came in on, she immediately smelled an unfamiliar odor and followed it with her eyes to my tree stand. Now, she was at full alert, trying to bring into focus the blob that was in the tree. She moved to my left trying to wind me but was unable to satisfy her curiosity until I had come to full draw. I landed what I thought was a good shot. It was a little high but I was sure it did the job. Instead of a pass-through shot, the arrow stayed planted in her side. I knew this would present a few problems, but I was still confident. After nearly three hours, I left without finding the deer or even one spot of blood. My disappointment still haunts me; not the disappointment that comes from a missed opportunity, but the kind that comes because shot deer are meant to be found and are meant to supply food for the table. Otherwise, it’s a needless death. For nearly three hours I hunted for that one lost and wounded doe. I was not concerned with spooking a buck by rambling around or in getting back into the stand to find

another one. I was intent on finding the one that had strayed and was now lost. It was more important to me, for her sake, to leave the others in order to find her. My heart was literally broken when I left unsuccessful. As I thought about this story that had played out, I was reminded of the story in the Bible about the lost sheep. That story tells about a shepherd who had 100 sheep. One of the little lambs became lost and instead of staying with the 99, he went after the one that had gone astray. This was the illustration Jesus used to describe God’s desire and love for each of us. The Bible says he sent Jesus to seek and to save those who are lost. You may think God wants nothing to do with you because you have wandered away. You may think he has no desire to find one when he has 99 others. But that’s not God’s way. His way is the way of the deer hunter who searches diligently for the one that is wounded, hurt, and lost. His way is the way of persistence, and his heart is broken when the lost are not found. But he will never stop looking. Never.

gary@outdoortruths.org

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