

Yarmouth School Department Yarmouth, Maine

Leadership Profile for the position Superintendent of Schools



Application Deadline: March 5, 2026
Start Date: July 1, 2026



**Leadership Profile
Superintendent of Schools
Yarmouth School Department
February 5, 2026**

One of the primary responsibilities of a School Committee is to hire and evaluate a Superintendent of Schools. Because this task is the School Committee's alone, there is no obligation to seek input from or engage stakeholders in their selection process. However, Committees that do elect to engage their community enjoy at least three benefits: First, the Committee will learn what is important to their constituents, gain important feedback about the public's perception, and acquire a valuable perspective as they interview each candidate. The second benefit is afforded to the applicants who are eager to know what might be expected of them, assessing their own capabilities before they consider applying to determine if they are a match for the community. The third benefit affects students, who will directly benefit when the Committee and selected Superintendent, functioning as a 'governance team' built on a foundation of trust, have a clear understanding for what is going well, what changes may be needed, and which of those changes should be prioritized. The Yarmouth School Committee has decided to include additional stakeholders in the interview process. These members will include representatives from the administration, staff/teachers, and the Yarmouth community.

Methodology

The Yarmouth School Committee retained Zeal Education Group to deeply engage with the community to appreciate what skills and dispositions the community believes the district needs for the next Superintendent to be successful. Our team had the pleasure of meeting in person and virtually with hundreds of stakeholders. We used a methodology that results in two streams of input. The first stream of information came from a weeklong engagement of all constituents that included in-person and virtual meetings, interviews, focus groups and "Community Forum" style engagements designed to ask each stakeholder the following questions:

- *What are the district's greatest strengths?*
- *What are the district's greatest immediate challenges?*
- *What areas should be the focus of change?*
- *What should be the new superintendent's change priority?*
- *Is there anything else you want to share?*

The second stream of input came from a proprietary tool called ThoughtExchange that facilitates open-ended discussions where participants can anonymously share thoughts and rate others' ideas. The ThoughtExchange prompt presented one open-ended question, in each participant's native language: "*What is your top priority for the next Superintendent of Schools?*"

Participation

Both in-person and virtual focus group meetings were held to engage as many stakeholders as possible in this process. In all, 122 people, either individually or in small cohorts, generated hundreds of independent ideas in response to the five questions that were posed. The distribution of responses were as follows:

Stakeholder Group	<i>n</i>	Stakeholder Group	<i>n</i>
YHS Students	25	YES Staff	7
Community Forums	19	Rowe Staff	6
HMS Students	15	Town Leaders	5
YHS Staff	11	Central Office Admin	4
School Committee	8	Central Office Directors	3
Principals, APs, AD	8	YEA reps	2
HMS Staff	8	Superintendent	1

In addition to the stakeholders participating in our in-person and virtual interview and focus groups, our ThoughtExchange included 284 participants who shared 255 independent responses to the prompt, "*What is your top priority for the next superintendent of schools?*" which subsequently yielded 8,051 ratings. 100% of the participants selected English as their preferred language.

The following table illustrates how responses from each of the stakeholder groups were distributed:

Stakeholder Group	<i>n</i>	%
Parent or Guardian	190	69
Teacher	56	20
Other	13	5

Ed Tech	7	3
Administrator	5	2
Custodian, Bus Driver, Secretary, Nutrition	2	1
Resident with No Children in Yarmouth Schools	1	0
Yarmouth Student	0	0
Not Answered	10	-

Most respondents have deep, long-standing ties to the Yarmouth community. Nearly three-quarters of participants (72%) have lived in Yarmouth for more than six years, including 37% who have been part of the community for 11 years or longer. This indicates that the feedback reflects the perspectives of residents with substantial historical knowledge of the district rather than primarily newer community members.

The Yarmouth School Department community was gracious and inviting. Our team was made to feel welcome and it was clear that there is a deep value for education in Yarmouth.

Results of Interviews and Focus Groups

Participants consistently identified significant strengths within the Yarmouth School Department, including a highly dedicated and collaborative staff, strong academic and enrichment programs such as reading and music, and a close-knit community that actively supports its schools. Yarmouth’s culture of high expectations and community involvement was frequently cited as a defining asset that contributes to both student success and staff pride. At the same time, stakeholders raised important concerns about several immediate challenges, including declining enrollment, questions around academic rigor, increasing budget pressures, and the need to maintain clear, consistent communication. These challenges highlighted a shared desire for trust, transparency, and strategic clarity from district leadership.

In discussing areas for improvement, participants emphasized the importance of strengthening communication and leadership practices across the district. There was strong support for a Superintendent who is visible, accessible, and intentional about building relationships with staff, families, students, and the broader community. Stakeholders expressed a clear expectation that the next Superintendent will inspire confidence by listening first, engaging openly, and establishing a culture grounded in trust and collaboration. In addition, participants underscored the importance of setting clear, shared goals for academic improvement, particularly in the context of changing enrollment patterns and evolving student needs.

Finally, participants highlighted the value of deep community engagement and a nuanced understanding of Yarmouth's unique context. They emphasized the need for thoughtful, strategic planning that balances emotional support for staff with a sustained focus on academic excellence. Proactive, transparent communication was repeatedly identified as essential to navigating challenges, aligning stakeholders, and moving the district forward. Together, these insights point to a community seeking steady, relational leadership that honors Yarmouth's strengths while guiding purposeful and inclusive progress.

What are the district's greatest strengths?

In the heart of a vibrant community, the district stands as a beacon of educational excellence, driven by a deep commitment to student success and community engagement. With active participation from parents and residents, the district benefits from strong community support, creating a nurturing environment where students feel safe and encouraged to grow. Exceptional staff, dedicated to ongoing professional development, ensure a student-centered approach with diverse academic opportunities and support for emotional and social needs. Leadership characterized by trust, transparency, and collaboration fosters a culture of mutual respect and shared goals, with clear communication contributing to a cohesive school system. The district's reputation for academic excellence is well-deserved, offering a wide array of extracurricular activities and preparing students for prestigious colleges and universities. Additionally, the district's openness to innovation and new ideas, particularly in the areas of developing career pathways, technology and curriculum development, highlights its progressive nature. Overall, the district is a wonderful place where the community, staff, and students work together harmoniously, creating an environment where excellence is not just expected but achieved.

1. **Community Support:** Community support is a significant strength of the district, as evidenced by the numerous mentions of strong community involvement and engagement. Participants perceive the community as highly supportive, with many willing to volunteer their time and resources to benefit the schools. The district is seen as a central hub within the community, fostering a sense of pride and connection among residents. This support extends to financial backing, with the community consistently approving annual budgets and other school-related initiatives. Overall, the community's involvement is viewed as a vital component of the district's success and a key factor in its positive reputation.
2. **Staff Quality:** The district is recognized for its high-quality staff, including teachers, administrators, and support personnel. Participants frequently mention the dedication and professionalism of the staff, who are committed to student success and ongoing professional development. The ability to recruit and retain talented staff is seen as a major asset, contributing to the district's high performance and positive educational outcomes. Staff members are perceived as hard-working, caring, and invested in their roles, creating a supportive and

effective learning environment. The strong relationships and collaboration among staff further enhance the district's educational offerings and overall effectiveness.

3. **Communication:** Effective communication is highlighted as a key strength within the district, with participants noting clear, timely, and professional communication practices. The superintendent and other leaders are accessible and maintain open lines of communication with staff, parents, and the community. This transparency fosters trust and collaboration, ensuring that stakeholders are informed and engaged in decision-making processes. Communication is seen as a foundational element that supports the district's operations and contributes to its positive reputation. Participants appreciate the factual and solution-oriented approach to communication, which helps address issues efficiently and effectively.
4. **Student-Centered Approach:** The district's commitment to a student-centered approach is evident in its focus on doing what's best for students and fostering a supportive learning environment. Participants emphasize the importance of early intervention, inclusivity, and providing a wide range of academic and extracurricular opportunities. The district's culture prioritizes student well-being and achievement, with staff and leaders dedicated to supporting students' individual needs and aspirations. This approach is perceived positively by stakeholders, who value the district's efforts to create a nurturing and empowering educational experience for all students. The emphasis on student agency and voice further enhances the district's appeal and effectiveness.
5. **District Culture:** The district's culture is characterized by strong values, collaboration, and a shared commitment to excellence. Participants describe a collegial and supportive environment where staff, students, and the community work together towards common goals. The culture is built on trust, transparency, and mutual respect, fostering a positive and productive atmosphere. Stakeholders appreciate the district's focus on maintaining a cohesive and inclusive culture that supports innovation and continuous improvement. This strong cultural foundation is seen as a driving force behind the district's success and its ability to adapt to challenges and changes effectively.

What are the district's greatest immediate challenges?

The district faces numerous immediate challenges, primarily centered around financial pressures and community dynamics. The recent tax reevaluation has led to significant increases in property taxes, causing concern among taxpayers and impacting budget approval. This financial strain is compounded by the need for transparency in budget allocation and the challenge of maintaining high educational standards amidst these constraints. Additionally, there are concerns about inclusivity, diversity, and the need to address behavioral and mental health issues among students. The district also faces challenges around the training and development needed to adequately support students with special needs. A substitute shortage impacts the ability to provide teachers with professional development during school hours as well as coverage during times of

illness. The district must balance academic rigor with alternative pathways, adapt to technological advancements, and manage behavioral and mental health needs. Community engagement and political neutrality are essential, alongside addressing absenteeism and ensuring effective programming amidst financial constraints and evolving laws.

1. **Budget and Taxes:** The district is facing significant challenges related to budget and taxes, with many participants expressing concerns about rising tax burdens and the need for fiscal responsibility. There is a strong sentiment that the community is losing patience with substantial budget increases, and there is a call for greater transparency in how funds are allocated. The recent reevaluation of properties has led to increased taxes, which has heightened scrutiny on budget approvals. Participants also noted the historical support for budget increases is waning, and there is a need to balance expectations with financial realities. Overall, the perception is that financial challenges are a critical issue that requires careful management to maintain community trust and support.
2. **Diversity and Inclusivity:** Diversity and inclusivity are seen as important challenges that need to be addressed within the district. Participants highlighted the need to tackle issues such as racism, ableism, and derogatory language, which are impacting some students. There is also a call for more open discussions on cultural diversity and hard issues, as these topics are often avoided to prevent conflict. The perception is that while the district has made some progress, there is still a significant need for improvement in creating an inclusive environment for all students. The community recognizes the importance of addressing these issues to ensure that all students feel valued and supported.
3. **Student Engagement and Pathways:** There is a strong focus on enhancing student engagement and providing diverse pathways for students' futures. Participants expressed concerns about the need to balance academic rigor with career exploration and alternative pathways, recognizing that college is not the only solution for everyone. The importance of trades and occupational programs was emphasized, as well as the need to support students in finding fulfilling career paths. The perception is that the district needs to adapt to changing student needs and interests, ensuring that all students have access to opportunities that align with their goals. Overall, there is a desire to broaden the scope of educational offerings to better prepare students for the future.
4. **Technology and Innovation:** Technology and innovation are seen as both opportunities and challenges for the district. Participants noted the need for professional development in areas such as AI and effective technology use, as well as the importance of staying ahead of innovation. There is a concern that technology can be a crutch, potentially leading to disengagement among students. The perception is that while technology is a valuable tool for learning, it must be used thoughtfully to enhance educational outcomes. The district is

encouraged to explore new ways to integrate technology while maintaining a focus on student engagement and learning.

5. **Community and Communication:** Effective communication and community engagement are critical challenges identified by participants. There is a need to listen to diverse community voices and ensure that all perspectives are considered in decision-making processes. Participants emphasized the importance of maintaining open lines of communication and being transparent about district initiatives and funding. The perception is that while the district does a decent job in communication, there is always room for improvement. Building strong community partnerships and fostering civil discourse are seen as essential for addressing the district's challenges and achieving common goals.

What areas should be the focus of change?

The responses highlight several areas for change over time, including redefining education to align with current societal demands, enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration, and improving curriculum alignment. There is a call for increased support for teachers, particularly in AI training and instructional coaching, and a focus on inclusivity and diversity. Concerns about technology use, socio-economic challenges, and special education needs are evident. The importance of building relationships, strategic planning, and transparent communication is emphasized. Additionally, there is a need for improved college counseling, addressing social-emotional challenges, and ensuring equitable education. The overarching theme is to balance immediate changes with lasting improvements while preserving educational excellence.

1. **Educational Strategy:** The category of Educational Strategy encompasses the need for a comprehensive reevaluation of educational goals and methods. Participants highlighted the importance of defining what education should look like in the modern world, with a focus on inclusivity, diversity, and alternative pathways for students. There is a call for strategic planning that aligns with current educational needs and a desire to maintain high academic standards while adapting to changes. The perception is that while sweeping changes are not necessary, a thoughtful approach to evolving educational practices is crucial. Participants also emphasize the importance of balancing traditional educational values with innovative approaches to meet diverse student needs.
2. **Teacher and Staff Support:** Teacher and staff support is a critical area of focus, with participants expressing concerns about workload, professional development, and support systems. There is a strong sentiment that teachers are being asked to do more with less, necessitating better support structures. Professional growth opportunities and instructional coaching are seen as beneficial, and there is a call for more collaboration and communication, particularly around the topic of AI and politically sensitive civil discourse among students and staff. The perception is that improving support for teachers and staff will lead to better educational

outcomes and a more positive work environment. Participants also note the need for central office staff to receive adequate support and resources.

3. **Curriculum and Instruction:** Curriculum and Instruction is noted as an area of concern, with participants noting issues with alignment, pacing, and interdisciplinary collaboration. There is a need for curriculum mapping and better communication between middle and high schools to ensure consistency. Participants express a desire for more structured and developmentally appropriate practices, as well as a focus on reading instruction and the science of reading. The perception is that addressing these issues will lead to a more cohesive and effective educational experience for students. Additionally, there is a call for more attention to the integration of technology in instruction.
4. **Student Well-Being:** Student Well-being is a priority, with participants emphasizing the importance of addressing social-emotional needs and ensuring inclusivity and belonging for all students. There is concern about the pressures students face, both academically and socially, and the need for better support systems. Participants highlight the importance of counselors in helping students navigate opportunities and challenges. The perception is that a focus on student well-being will lead to a more supportive and nurturing educational environment. There is also a call for attention to socio-economic challenges and the need for equitable education.
5. **Leadership and Communication:** The majority of participants shared that the current leadership's attributes includes honest, timely, succinct communication that works to build and maintain trust within the community. Leadership and Communication are seen as important for effective change, with some participants calling for more visibility and engagement from leadership. There is a need for better communication of initiatives and feedback processes to ensure transparency and alignment between district, buildings, and classrooms. Participants express a desire for leadership that is both strategic and responsive to the needs of the community. The perception is that strong leadership and clear communication will foster trust and collaboration among all stakeholders. There is also an emphasis on the importance of building relationships and understanding the unique needs of the community.

What should be the new superintendent's change priority?

The new superintendent's change priority should focus on building trust and gaining an understanding of the district's and community's unique culture and needs while taking a measured approach to change. Participants emphasize the importance of engaging with the community, including students, staff, and local organizations, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the district's strengths and challenges. Prioritizing communication and collaboration, the superintendent should work to maintain strong relationships with the School Committee and union leadership. Additionally, there is a need to address inclusivity, resource allocation/transparency, and educational

leadership, ensuring that all students' needs are met. The superintendent should engage with various community groups, ensure transparency, and support ongoing professional development. Additionally, attention should be given to financial acumen, curriculum alignment, and maintaining positive relationships with the School Committee and union leadership. A balanced approach to change, respecting existing strengths, is essential. By taking the time to listen and learn, the superintendent can effectively guide the district towards continuous improvement while respecting the existing culture and values.

1. **Community Engagement:** Community engagement is a top priority for the new superintendent, as many responses emphasize the importance of building trust and partnerships within the community. Participants highlight the need for the superintendent to be visible, listen to community voices, and collaborate with local organizations and stakeholders. There is a strong perception that understanding the community's unique needs and fostering open communication will lead to a more unified and supportive environment. The emphasis on community engagement reflects a desire for the superintendent to be an active participant in the community, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued. This category underscores the belief that effective leadership is rooted in strong community relationships.
2. **Trust Building:** Building trust is seen as a critical priority for the new superintendent, with many responses stressing the importance of taking time to understand the district and its stakeholders. Participants express the need for the superintendent to be patient, listen, and learn before implementing changes, to avoid eroding existing trust. The perception is that trust is foundational to successful leadership and that it must be cultivated through transparency, communication, and respect for the district's culture and history. Trust building is viewed as essential for creating a positive and collaborative atmosphere where all parties feel valued and heard. This category highlights the belief that trust is a prerequisite for any meaningful change.
3. **Educational Leadership:** Educational leadership is identified as a key area for the new superintendent to focus on, with participants calling for strong vision and direction in educational practices. There is a perception that the superintendent should prioritize curriculum alignment, professional development, and innovative educational strategies. Participants express a desire for leadership that not only maintains high standards but also seeks continuous improvement and adaptation to new educational challenges. The emphasis on educational leadership reflects a commitment to ensuring that the district remains at the forefront of educational excellence. This category underscores the importance of having a superintendent who is both a visionary and a practical leader in education.
4. **Resource Management:** Effective resource management is highlighted as a priority, with participants emphasizing the need for the superintendent to ensure that resources are allocated equitably and efficiently. There is a focus on addressing the diverse needs of students, including behavioral, mental health, and

special education support. Participants also mention the importance of financial acumen and creative budgeting to navigate potential budget constraints. The perception is that careful and strategic resource management is crucial for supporting the district's educational goals and maintaining a high-quality learning environment. This category reflects the belief that the superintendent must be adept at balancing resources to meet the district's varied needs.

5. **Inclusivity and Equity:** Inclusivity and equity are seen as important priorities for the new superintendent, with participants calling for efforts to address issues such as racism, ableism, and harmful language. There is a strong emphasis on creating an inclusive environment that supports all students, particularly those with special needs or from diverse backgrounds. Participants express a desire for the superintendent to lead initiatives that promote equity and ensure that all students have access to the resources and support they need to succeed. The perception is that inclusivity and equity are essential for fostering a positive and supportive school culture. This category highlights the importance of addressing systemic issues and promoting fairness and respect within the district.

Is there anything else you want to share?

The responses emphasize the need for a superintendent who is deeply engaged with the community, prioritizes student voices, possesses innovative leadership qualities, and balances technology use. The ideal candidate must be able to skillfully manage the high expectations of parents and stakeholders, should be innovative, approachable, and capable of building strong relationships while maintaining political neutrality. There is a desire for a leader who can articulate a clear vision, support the change process and ensure inclusivity. The importance of operational knowledge, innovation, change management, collaboration, communication, and professional growth are also highlighted as crucial to a supportive and thriving educational environment. There is an emphasis on maintaining high academic standards while addressing diverse student needs, including special education and gifted programs.

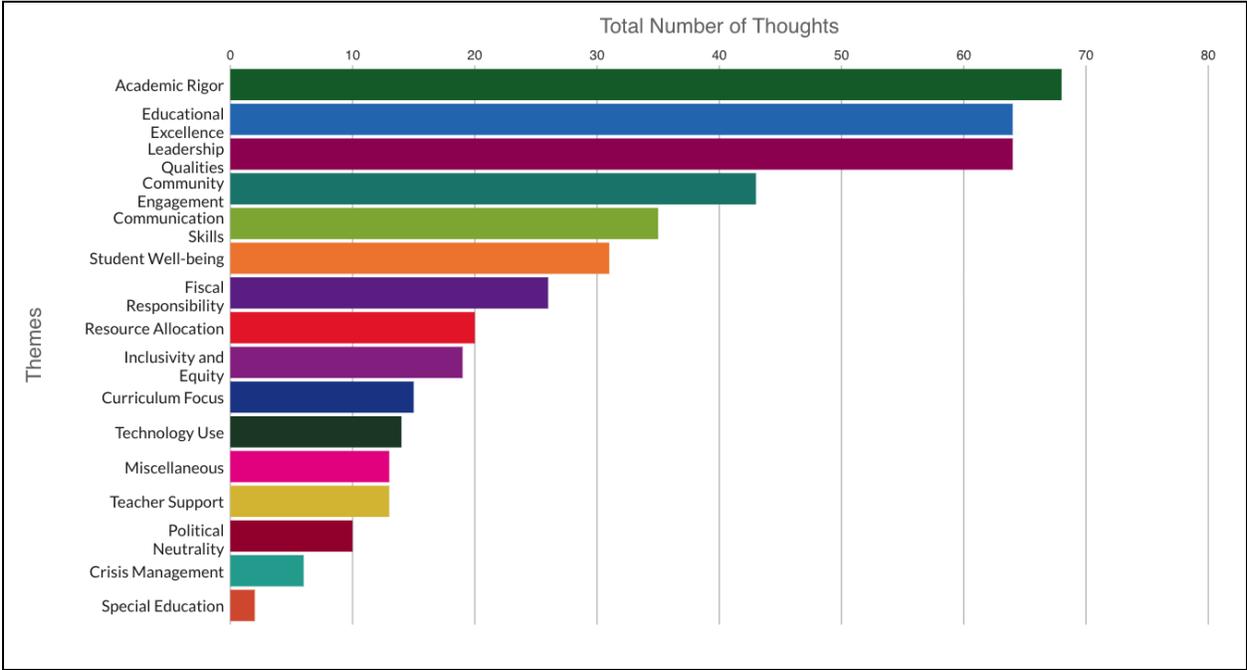
1. **District Reputation and Expectations:** The district's reputation and the high expectations of its community are significant considerations for participants. There is a recognition of the district's history of excellence and a desire to maintain and build upon this strong foundation. Participants expressed concerns about finding a leader who can meet the high expectations of parents and the community while also being a good cultural fit for the district. The perception is that the district's reputation is both a source of pride and a challenge, as it requires a leader who can navigate these expectations while fostering growth and innovation. Overall, the community is keen on ensuring that the district continues to thrive and excel.
2. **Leadership Qualities:** Participants frequently emphasized the need for a superintendent with strong leadership qualities. They highlighted the importance

of a leader who is hands-on, approachable, and capable of building trust and relationships within the community. There is a desire for someone who is innovative, willing to challenge the status quo, and able to articulate a clear vision and mission for the district. The community values a leader who is politically neutral, yet decisive, and can effectively communicate and collaborate with various stakeholders. Overall, the perception is that a strong leader is crucial for maintaining and enhancing the district's success.

3. **Community Engagement:** Community engagement emerged as a significant theme, with participants expressing the need for a superintendent who is deeply involved with the community. There is a strong desire for a leader who prioritizes building relationships with not only students and staff but also with families and community members who may not have direct ties to the schools. The community values a leader who is accessible, open, and willing to immerse themselves in the local culture and dynamics. Participants perceive community engagement as essential for fostering a sense of belonging and ensuring that the district's needs and values are understood and addressed. The overall sentiment is that effective community engagement will lead to a more cohesive and supportive environment.
 4. **Student-Centric Focus:** A student-centric focus is a recurring theme, with participants emphasizing the importance of prioritizing student voices and needs. There is a call for the next superintendent to actively listen to and involve students in decision-making processes, ensuring that their perspectives are valued and considered. Participants also highlighted the need for a leader who is committed to supporting diverse student needs, including those with special needs and those from different cultural backgrounds. The perception is that a focus on students will lead to better educational outcomes and a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Overall, the community believes that a student-centric approach is vital for the district's continued success.
 5. **Operational and Strategic Challenges:** Participants identified several operational and strategic challenges that the next superintendent will need to address. These include managing budget flexibility, supporting change management initiatives, and ensuring effective use of technology in education. There is also a need for a leader who can navigate the political climate and make informed decisions that align with the district's core values and strategic priorities. The perception is that addressing these challenges will require a leader who is not only strategic and visionary but also pragmatic and grounded in the realities of the district. Overall, the community is looking for a leader who can effectively manage these challenges while driving the district forward.
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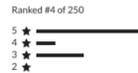
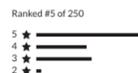
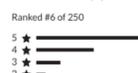
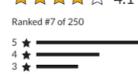
Results of ThoughtExchange Engagement

The following chart depicts the total number of thoughts that emerged from the ThoughtExchange:



Of the 442 thoughts that were shared in the exchange, the following were the 10 highest ranked thoughts based on the number of stars that each thought received out of five.

The following are the verbatim responses to the 10 highest rated thoughts:

<p>Keep high level of teaching in place.</p>	<p>😊 Positive 41</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.3 Ranked #1 of 250</p> 
<p>A leader who is a fair, level-headed, strategic, and exceptionally clear communicator to all--staff, parents, and students Communication--both listening to and conveying information to stakeholders (staff, parents, students)-- is the key to all other aspects of the job.</p>	<p>😊 Positive 39</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.3 Ranked #2 of 250</p> 
<p>Someone who stands up for the values of the Yarmouth School Department, and who is steady, consistent, and reliable A leader needs to have a clear set of values, and not fall to the whims of vocal minorities.</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 38</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.2 Ranked #3 of 250</p> 
<p>Strong and clear communicator A strong and clear communicator in every way: emails, conversations, school board meetings, staff events, and with kids. This builds trust.</p>	<p>😊 Positive 37</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.2 Ranked #4 of 250</p> 
<p>Bringing a culture of excellence to academics and core learning The Yarmouth school system should be providing a foundation of skills and knowledge to prepare students for success throughout their careers.</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 44</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.1 Ranked #5 of 250</p> 
<p>A dynamic leader who prioritizes attracting and retaining the best teachers above all else. Our teachers have the single greatest impact on our kids and they need to know their leader supports them to be their best, regardless of resources.</p>	<p>😊 Positive 43</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.1 Ranked #6 of 250</p> 
<p>Integrity, clear communication We have to model this for our children</p>	<p>😊 Positive 43</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.1 Ranked #7 of 250</p> 
<p>Motivating, supporting, encouraging and supporting teachers to promote the highest level of academic standards. Strong education is the foundation for knowledge, awareness and progress.</p>	<p>😊 Positive 43</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.1 Ranked #8 of 250</p> 
<p>Focus on the school and its primary purpose, student learning. Needs to be someone who can put this first. It's a hard job with a lot of voices. Keeping this as a priority and not trying to please all voices is critical</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 40</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.1 Ranked #9 of 250</p> 
<p>Focus on quality of education, teacher satisfaction because they are amazing, and keeping Yarmouth schools best in class. Primary focus of school is to educate children. This is largely driven by teachers and the administration supporting them.</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 38</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.1 Ranked #10 of 250</p> 

Based on the ThoughtExchange responses, we have categorized the feedback received in the form of a SWOT analysis. These insights provide a deeper understanding of the current status of the district as well as future opportunities.

<p>Strength</p>	<p>Weakness</p>
<p>Participants view strong leadership as essential for maintaining high educational standards and effectively managing the school district. They appreciate leaders who are experienced, transparent, and capable of making informed decisions.</p>	<p>While communication is valued, there is a concern that ineffective communication could lead to misunderstandings and a lack of trust within the community. Participants emphasize the need for clear and honest communication.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p>
<p>There is an opportunity to strengthen community ties by actively engaging with students, parents, and staff. Participants believe that fostering a sense of community and inclusivity can lead to a more supportive educational environment.</p>	<p>Participants express concerns about the potential for financial mismanagement, which could impact the quality of education and burden taxpayers. They stress the importance of balancing fiscal responsibility with educational needs.</p>

Strengths: Educational Leadership

- **Strong Leadership:** Participants believe that having a superintendent with strong leadership skills is crucial for guiding the school district effectively. This includes the ability to inspire and motivate staff and students.
- **Experience:** There is a preference for a leader with a proven track record and experience in educational administration, which is seen as vital for making informed decisions.
- **Transparency:** Participants value transparency in leadership, as it fosters trust and ensures that stakeholders are informed about decisions and policies.
- **Informed Decision-Making:** The ability to make decisions based on data and evidence is seen as a strength, ensuring that the district's actions are aligned with educational goals.

Weaknesses: Clarity, Coherence, and Communication

- **Clear Vision and Communication:** Yarmouth’s challenge is to move from a historically strong, academic outcomes-driven model toward a clearly defined, cohesive shared vision with aligned priorities and systems that can endure leadership transitions while meeting high expectations.
- **Communication & Clarity:** The district currently benefits from strong leadership communication; however, as expectations and complexity increase, there is an opportunity to strengthen system-wide clarity and coherence around vision, priorities, and decision-making to ensure shared understanding and sustainability over time.
- **Potential for Misunderstandings:** Ineffective communication can lead to confusion and a lack of trust, which can hinder the district's progress. To avoid potential misunderstandings, the next leader must place an emphasis on clarity and context related to changes, prioritization, the “why” behind decisions, and the long-term direction of the district.
- **Importance of Trust-Building:** Building trust through honest and transparent communication is essential for maintaining positive relationships with the community. Strengthening system-wide communication practices will support a shared understanding, manage expectations, and ensure continuity as leadership evolves.

Opportunities: Community Engagement

- **Community Engagement:** There is an opportunity to enhance the relationship between the school district and the community by actively involving students, parents, and staff in decision-making processes.
- **Inclusivity:** Fostering an inclusive environment where all voices are heard can lead to a more supportive and harmonious educational setting.
- **Support for Stakeholders:** Engaging with the community can help identify and address the needs and concerns of various stakeholders, leading to better outcomes for students and staff.

Threats: Fiscal Responsibility

- **Financial Management Concerns:** Participants express concerns about the potential for financial mismanagement, which could negatively impact the quality of education and increase the tax burden on residents.
- **Balancing Budget and Education:** There is a need to balance fiscal responsibility with the requirement to provide high-quality education, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively.
- **Taxpayer Burden:** The potential for increased taxes due to budget mismanagement is a concern, highlighting the importance of careful financial planning and transparency.

Conclusion and Summary

Participants consistently identified significant strengths within the Yarmouth School Department, including a highly dedicated and collaborative staff, strong academic and enrichment programs such as reading and music, and a close-knit community that actively supports its schools. Yarmouth's culture of high expectations and community involvement was frequently cited as a defining asset that contributes to both student success and staff pride. At the same time, stakeholders raised important concerns about several immediate challenges, including declining enrollment, questions around academic rigor, increasing budget pressures, and the need for clearer, more consistent communication. These challenges highlighted a shared desire for trust, transparency, and strategic clarity from district leadership.

In discussing areas for improvement, participants emphasized the importance of strengthening communication and leadership practices across the district. There was strong support for a Superintendent who is visible, accessible, and intentional about building relationships with staff, families, students, and the broader community. Stakeholders expressed a clear expectation that the next Superintendent will inspire confidence by listening first, engaging openly, and establishing a culture grounded in trust and collaboration. In addition, participants underscored the importance of setting clear, shared goals for academic improvement, particularly in the context of changing enrollment patterns and evolving student needs.

Finally, participants highlighted the value of deep community engagement and a nuanced understanding of Yarmouth's unique context. They emphasized the need for thoughtful, strategic planning that balances emotional support for staff with a sustained focus on academic excellence. Proactive, transparent communication was repeatedly identified as essential to navigating challenges, aligning stakeholders, and moving the district forward. Together, these insights point to a community seeking steady, relational leadership that honors Yarmouth's strengths while guiding purposeful and inclusive progress.

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Interested candidates are encouraged to apply at www.zeal-ed.com/yarmouth
Questions can be directed to yarmouth@zeal-ed.com

