

**Stamford Public Schools
Stamford, Connecticut**

Leadership Profile
for the position
Superintendent of Schools



Stamford Public Schools

EXCELLENCE IS THE POINT.



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February 3, 2026

One of the primary responsibilities of a Board of Education is to hire and evaluate a Superintendent of Schools. Because this task is the Board's alone, there is no obligation to seek input from or engage stakeholders in their selection process. However, Boards that do elect to engage their community enjoy at least three benefits: First, the Board 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 and staff who will directly benefit when the Board and selected Superintendent, functioning as a 'governance team' built on a foundation of trust, have a clear understanding of what is going well, what changes may be needed, and which of those changes should be prioritized.

Methodology

The Stamford Board of Education 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 two week 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

In an effort to meaningfully, transparently, and thoughtfully engage the entire Stamford community, the Board of Education commissioned us to facilitate a total of 74 in-person and virtual listening sessions over the course of a two-week period in January 2026. Members of our search team visited each of the 23 school buildings, and held 13 additional in-person sessions throughout the community. We also held 26 virtual interviews and 12 other virtual sessions. Translators were available in multiple languages ensuring that non-English-speaking members of the community had equitable opportunities to be engaged.

The following table depicts the distribution of participants across each of the engagement sessions:

Stakeholder Group	Engagement Format	<i>n</i>
Faculty and Staff	In-person at 23 schools	231
Parents and Guardians	In-person and virtual	101
Individual Stakeholder Interviews (Other)	One-on-one interviews	84
District and Central Office Staff	In-person and virtual	32
Students	Virtual	28
Community Partners and Organizations	In-person and virtual	26
District Leadership (Cabinet, Executives)	Individual interviews	14
Board of Education Members	Individual interviews	9
Elected and Civic Leaders (Mayor, Government)	In-person	4
Total Participants		529

In addition to the stakeholders participating in our in-person and virtual interviews and focus groups, our ThoughtExchange included 792 participants who shared 738 independent responses to the prompt, *'What is your top priority for the next superintendent of schools?'* which subsequently yielded 16,869 ratings. ThoughtExchange allows for native translation in over 100 languages. Participation in this exchange was predominantly in English (96%) followed by Spanish (3%) and Ukrainian (1%).

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

Stakeholder Group	<i>n</i>	%
Parent or Guardian	367	50
Certified Staff	241	33
Other	40	5
Resident	21	3
Non-Certified Staff	20	3
Administrator	17	2
Student	16	2
Stamford Public Schools Alumni	5	1
Government / Community Official	4	1
Business Owner	3	>1

Results of Interviews and Focus Groups

Participants across interviews, focus groups, and community forums identified several defining strengths within Stamford Public Schools. Chief among these was the district's extraordinary diversity, which stakeholders consistently described as a powerful asset that enriches learning and prepares students to thrive in a global society. Participants expressed pride in Stamford's multicultural, multilingual, and socioeconomically diverse community, as well as in the dedication and resilience of its educators and staff. The breadth of academic offerings, including magnet schools, specialized programs, career pathways, and partnerships with community organizations, was frequently cited as evidence of the district's commitment to meeting a wide range of student needs.

At the same time, stakeholders raised significant concerns about a number of immediate challenges facing the district. Foremost among these were issues related to curriculum coherence and instructional consistency across schools. Participants described frequent changes in curriculum and instructional direction, uneven implementation, and a lack of alignment that has placed additional burdens on teachers and contributed to disparities in student experience. Concerns were also raised by participants regarding trust, morale, and transparency, particularly in relation to central office decision making and communication. Many stakeholders expressed frustration with what they perceived as top-down leadership approaches that have not sufficiently incorporated teacher, staff, or community voice.

In discussing areas for improvement, participants emphasized the urgent need to strengthen communication, collaboration, and trust throughout the system. There was strong support for a Superintendent who is visible, accessible, and intentional about building authentic relationships with educators, families, students, and community partners. Stakeholders consistently expressed a desire for leadership that listens first, communicates clearly and inclusively, and engages stakeholders as partners in problem solving rather than recipients of decisions. Multilingual communication and culturally responsive engagement were highlighted as essential in a district as diverse as Stamford.

Participants also underscored the importance of instructional leadership and academic focus. While Stamford offers many high-quality programs, stakeholders emphasized the need for clearer academic expectations, stronger curriculum alignment, and relevant and sustained professional learning for educators. Teachers, in particular, expressed a desire for greater support, stability, and respect for their professional expertise. Stakeholders emphasized that improving academic rigor and coherence must go hand in hand with addressing equity, ensuring that all students, regardless of school, language background, or neighborhood, have access to high-quality instruction and resources.

Finally, participants highlighted the importance of equity, inclusion, and student well-being as central considerations for district leadership. Stakeholders called for intentional efforts to address disparities in resources, academic outcomes, and access to support for multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and other historically marginalized groups. In addition, participants emphasized the growing need to attend to student mental health, social-emotional learning, and school climate alongside academic achievement. Collectively, these insights point to a community seeking steady, relational, and transparent leadership that can rebuild trust, unify the district, and lead thoughtful, systemic improvement in service of all students.

What are the district's greatest strengths?

The district's greatest strengths lie in its diversity, which is celebrated as a unique asset that enriches the educational experience for students. This diversity spans across ethnic, linguistic, and socio-economic backgrounds, providing a rich tapestry of cultures and perspectives that prepare students for the real world. The district is also recognized for its dedicated and passionate teachers and staff, who are committed to the success and well-being of their students. Additionally, the district benefits from strong community partnerships and resources, including support from local organizations and businesses, which enhance educational opportunities and provide valuable support systems for students and families. The presence of specialized programs and a variety of academic offerings further contribute to the district's ability to cater to diverse student needs and interests. Overall, the district's strengths are rooted in its ability to leverage its diverse

community and committed educators to create a supportive and enriching educational environment.

1. **Diversity:** Diversity is frequently highlighted as one of the district's greatest strengths. Participants mention the rich linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic diversity present in the community, which is seen as a unique asset that prepares students for the real world. The diversity is described as a 'melting pot' and a 'mini UN,' reflecting the wide range of backgrounds and perspectives. This diversity is perceived positively, with many noting that it enriches the educational experience and fosters a more inclusive environment. However, some responses also acknowledge challenges associated with managing such diversity, though the overall sentiment remains positive.
2. **Community Engagement:** Community engagement is seen as a significant strength, with numerous partnerships and collaborations with local organizations and non-profits. These partnerships provide a variety of resources and support for students, enhancing their educational experience. The community's involvement is perceived as a testament to the district's ability to foster strong relationships and leverage external support. Participants express appreciation for the community's willingness to support schools and highlight the positive impact of these collaborations. The engagement is seen as a vital component of the district's success, contributing to a supportive and resource-rich environment.
3. **Dedicated Staff:** The dedication and commitment of the district's staff are frequently mentioned as a key strength. Teachers and administrators are described as passionate, caring, and willing to go above and beyond for their students. This dedication is seen as a driving force behind the district's success, with staff members often praised for their resilience and ability to manage challenges. Participants express a strong sense of pride in the staff's efforts and their impact on student outcomes. The staff's commitment is viewed as a cornerstone of the district's educational quality and community spirit.
4. **Academic Programs:** The district offers a wide range of academic programs, which are seen as a significant strength. Participants highlight the variety of options available at different educational levels, including magnet schools, specialized programs, and career pathways. These programs are perceived as providing valuable opportunities for students to explore their interests and prepare for future success. The diversity of academic offerings is appreciated by parents and students alike, contributing to a well-rounded educational experience. The programs are seen as a reflection of the district's commitment to meeting diverse student needs and fostering academic excellence.
5. **Geographic Location:** The district's geographical location is considered an advantage, offering proximity to major cities and a variety of opportunities. Participants note the benefits of being near New York City, which provides access to cultural, educational, and professional resources. The location is seen as enhancing the district's appeal and providing students with unique opportunities

for growth and development. The geographical setting is also appreciated for its potential to attract diverse families and staff. Overall, the location is viewed as a strategic asset that complements the district's educational offerings and community engagement efforts.

What are the district's greatest immediate challenges?

The district is grappling with a multitude of challenges that span across various aspects of its operations. A significant concern expressed is the lack of consistency and coherence in curriculum and policy implementation, which is exacerbated by a perception of frequent changes and a top-down approach that often excludes teacher input. Financial constraints are another pressing issue, with budget cuts impacting essential programs and staffing, while central office growth is perceived as excessive. Communication barriers, both within the district and with parents, particularly those who are non-English speakers, hinder effective collaboration and engagement. Participants described that district also faces challenges related to equity and access, with disparities in resources and opportunities among schools, and a need for more inclusive practices for diverse student populations, including those with special needs. Additionally, it was communicated that there is a pervasive lack of trust and morale among staff, fueled by perceived mismanagement and a disconnect between decision-makers and those on the ground. These challenges are compounded by socio-economic factors, such as housing insecurity and a growing population with diverse needs, which strain the district's capacity to provide adequate support and services. Overall, the district requires a strategic, transparent, and inclusive approach to address these multifaceted issues effectively.

1. **Curriculum and Instruction:** Participants frequently mentioned issues related to curriculum and instruction, highlighting concerns about curriculum consistency, quality, and frequent changes. There is a perception that the curriculum is not adequately meeting the needs of students, with some describing it as subpar or inappropriate for certain grade levels. Teachers feel burdened by the need to supplement the curriculum to ensure student success, indicating a lack of trust in the current materials. According to participants, the inconsistency in curriculum implementation across schools is also a concern, leading to disparities in educational quality. Overall, there is a call for a more stable, rigorous, and well-aligned curriculum that supports both high achievers and those needing additional support.
2. **Leadership and Administration:** Participants stated that leadership and administrative challenges are a significant concern, with participants expressing dissatisfaction with the current administration's decision-making and communication. There is a perception of a disconnect between central office staff and the needs of schools, with some describing the central office as overstaffed and unapproachable. The perceived lack of transparency and collaboration in

decision-making processes is a recurring theme, leading to mistrust among teachers and staff. Participants also noted issues with the hiring and vetting of leaders, questioning the value and effectiveness of some administrative hires. Overall, there is a desire for more transparent, collaborative, and effective leadership that prioritizes the needs of students and staff.

3. **Teacher Support and Resources:** There is a strong emphasis on the need for better support and resources for teachers, with many stating that they feel undervalued and overburdened. Participants highlighted the lack of necessary materials and curriculum support, which impacts their ability to teach effectively. The perception of inadequate support structures and the need for supplemental materials to ensure student learning are common concerns. Additionally, there is a call for more relevant professional development and training opportunities to help teachers succeed in their roles. Overall, teachers who responded are seeking more respect, resources, and support to fulfill their responsibilities and improve student outcomes.
4. **Communication and Engagement:** Communication and engagement within the district are seen as areas needing improvement, with participants noting a lack of effective communication channels and opportunities for meaningful dialogue. There is a perception that communication is often incomplete, untimely, or one-sided, leading to frustration among parents and staff. The need for stronger parent-district cooperation and more inclusive communication strategies is emphasized, particularly for non-English speaking families. Participants also expressed a desire for more transparency and openness in district communications to build trust and foster a sense of community. Overall, there is a call for more effective, inclusive, and transparent communication practices to enhance engagement and collaboration.
5. **Equity and Access:** Equity and access issues are highlighted as significant challenges, with participants expressing concerns about disparities in resources and opportunities across the district. There is a perception that some schools and student groups are disadvantaged, leading to inequitable educational experiences. Participants noted the need for more equitable distribution of resources, including facilities, programs, and support services. The importance of addressing the diverse needs of the student population, including those with special needs and non-English speakers, is emphasized. Overall, there is a call for a more equitable and inclusive approach to education that ensures all students have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

What areas should be the focus of change?

Based on the participants' responses, several key areas emerge as focal points for change. There is a strong emphasis on improving communication and building trust between the central office, teachers, and the community. Participants express a need for more authentic stakeholder engagement, where teachers' voices are heard and valued in

decision-making processes. There is also a call for a more consistent and rigorous curriculum across all grade levels, with a focus on individualizing support to meet diverse student needs. Enhancing professional development for educators and ensuring competitive salaries to retain quality staff are also highlighted. Additionally, participants stress the importance of addressing equity and resource allocation, particularly in terms of supporting English Language Learners (ELL) and special education students. Mental health support for students and staff, as well as improving school safety and facilities, are also critical areas for change. Overall, the responses indicate a desire for a collaborative, transparent, and student-centered approach to drive meaningful improvements in the educational system.

1. **Teachers Engagement:** Teacher engagement is a prominent theme, with many responses emphasizing the need for teachers to be involved in decision-making processes and to feel valued and respected. Participants express concerns about teachers being ignored or not listened to, which affects morale and effectiveness. There is a call for professional development that is meaningful and supportive, rather than a perceived top-down approach. Teachers believe that if they are engaged and their voices are heard, it leads to better outcomes for students. Overall, the sentiment is that teacher engagement is crucial for the success of educational initiatives.
2. **Student-Centered Focus:** A student-centered focus is highlighted as a critical area for change, with participants advocating for decisions that prioritize student needs and outcomes. There is a strong emphasis on understanding the diverse needs of students and providing individualized support. Participants believe that when decisions are made with students' best interests in mind, it garners respect and support from staff and the community. The perception is that a student-centered approach leads to more effective educational practices and improved student success. This category underscores the importance of aligning educational strategies with the needs of students.
3. **Communication and Transparency:** Communication and transparency are identified as key areas needing improvement, with participants expressing a desire for clearer and more consistent communication from leadership. There is a call for transparency in decision-making processes and the sharing of information with stakeholders. Participants feel that improved communication can help build trust and foster a more collaborative environment. The perception is that when communication is open and transparent, it leads to better relationships and more effective implementation of policies. This category highlights the need for clear channels of communication between all levels of the educational system.
4. **Curriculum and Instruction:** Curriculum and instruction are areas where participants see a need for change, with calls for consistency and alignment across schools. There is a desire for a curriculum that is rigorous and prepares students for future challenges, while also being flexible to meet diverse needs. Participants express concerns about the current state of curriculum

implementation and the need for more practical and engaging instructional methods. The perception is that a well-structured and coherent curriculum can enhance student learning and outcomes. This category emphasizes the importance of having a curriculum that is both challenging and adaptable.

5. **Leadership and Accountability:** Leadership and accountability are seen as crucial for driving change, with participants calling for leaders who are collaborative, transparent, and accountable. There is a desire for leaders who can build trust and foster a positive culture within the educational system. Participants express concerns about the lack of accountability in some leadership and the need for leaders who can effectively manage and inspire change. The perception is that strong leadership is essential for implementing successful educational reforms and achieving desired outcomes.

What should be the new superintendent's change priority?

The superintendent's change priority should focus on rebuilding relationships within the community, schools, and with parents and students. Emphasis should be placed on supporting marginalized populations, such as multilingual learners and special education students, while fostering inclusivity and collaboration across the district. Transparency and open communication are crucial, as is the need to assess and address the strengths and weaknesses of the current system. The superintendent should prioritize equity in resources and academic standards, engage in proactive planning, and ensure that decisions are informed by listening to teachers and stakeholders. Building trust, improving morale, and maintaining high expectations for staff and students are essential for creating a positive and effective educational environment.

1. **Community and Relationships:** The category of Community and Relationships emphasizes the importance of rebuilding and maintaining strong connections within the school community, including parents, students, and staff. Participants frequently mentioned the need for the new superintendent to focus on repairing trust and morale, which have been damaged over time. There is a strong desire for the superintendent to be visible and engaged in the community, fostering genuine communication and collaboration. The perception is that a superintendent who prioritizes relationships will be better equipped to unify the district and create a supportive environment. This category also highlights the need for transparency and inclusivity in decision-making processes.
2. **Equity and Inclusion:** Equity and Inclusion are critical priorities for the new superintendent, as highlighted by participants who stress the need to support marginalized populations and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities. There is a call for addressing disparities in academic standards, grading, and resource distribution across schools. Participants perceive that a focus on equity will help bridge gaps in student outcomes and create a more inclusive environment for all students, including those in special education and

English Language Learners. The superintendent is expected to lead efforts in promoting diversity and cultural responsiveness within the district.

3. **Vision and Leadership:** Vision and Leadership are seen as essential qualities for the new superintendent, with participants emphasizing the need for a clear, shared vision that guides the district's progress. There is a desire for a leader who can inspire and motivate the community while being pragmatic and capable of implementing effective change. Participants express the importance of having a superintendent who is both visionary and operationally strong, capable of navigating complex challenges and making informed decisions. The perception is that a strong leader will be able to align the district's goals and foster a culture of collaboration and innovation.
4. **Communication and Transparency:** Effective Communication and Transparency are highlighted as crucial areas for improvement, with participants expressing concerns about the current lack of clarity and openness in the district's operations. There is a strong call for the new superintendent to prioritize transparent communication with all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the community. Participants believe that improved communication will help build trust and ensure that everyone is informed and engaged in the decision-making process. The perception is that transparency will lead to better collaboration and a more cohesive district.
5. **Academic Support and Standards:** Participants emphasize the importance of maintaining high academic standards and providing adequate support for both students and teachers. There is a call for the superintendent to focus on improving academic rigor and ensuring consistency in curriculum implementation across schools. Participants also highlight the need for professional development and support for teachers to enhance their ability to meet diverse student needs. The perception is that a focus on academic excellence and support will lead to improved student outcomes and a stronger educational system.

Is there anything else you want to share?

The participants expressed a strong desire for a superintendent who is emotionally intelligent, community-driven, and capable of effective communication. They emphasized the importance of a leader who can build trust, engage with diverse communities, and manage complex issues. There is a call for transparency, accountability, and a focus on student achievement, with a preference for candidates with teaching experience and a proven track record. Concerns were raised about the current state of the district, including issues with leadership, communication, and resource allocation. Participants also highlighted the need for a superintendent who can navigate political and financial challenges, support teachers, and foster a positive school culture.

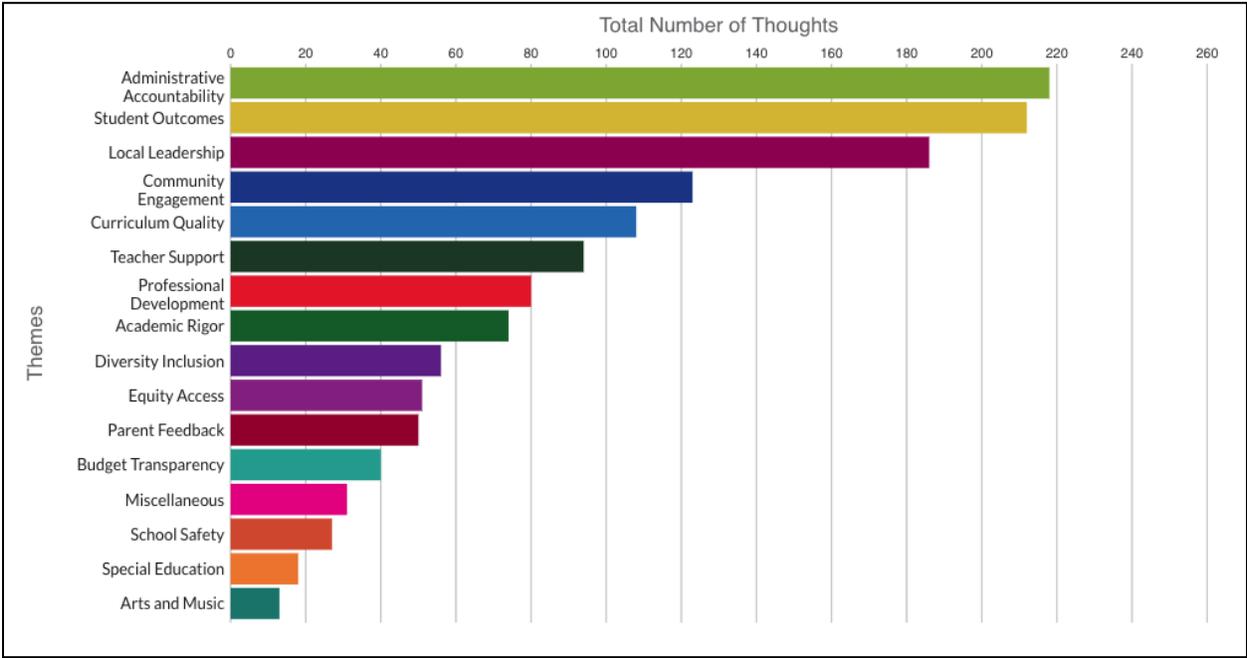
1. **Leadership Qualities:** Participants frequently emphasized the need for a superintendent with strong leadership qualities. They desire someone who is

emotionally intelligent, approachable, and capable of building trust within the community. The ideal leader should be a good communicator, able to listen to various stakeholders, and possess a strong work ethic. There is also a call for a leader who can manage complex issues, be politically astute, and have a proven track record of success. Overall, the perception is that effective leadership is crucial for the district's progress and community trust.

2. **Community Engagement:** Community engagement is a significant concern for participants, who want a superintendent who is deeply involved with the community. They value a leader who is visible, approachable, and committed to understanding and addressing community needs. There is a strong desire for someone who can build meaningful partnerships and foster a sense of unity among diverse groups. Participants also emphasize the importance of a leader who can engage with families and stakeholders to rebuild trust in the public school system. The perception is that community engagement is essential for creating a supportive and inclusive educational environment.
3. **Experience and Background:** Participants express a preference for a superintendent with relevant experience and background in education. They want someone who understands the challenges of a diverse and urban district like Stamford. Experience in large districts and a successful track record are seen as important qualifications. There is also a desire for a leader who has classroom experience and can relate to the needs of teachers and students. The perception is that a well-rounded background will enable the superintendent to effectively address the district's unique challenges.
4. **Accountability and Transparency:** Accountability and transparency are key concerns for participants, who want a superintendent who can be held accountable for their actions and decisions. They emphasize the need for transparent communication and decision-making processes. Participants express frustration with the current lack of transparency and desire a leader who can provide clear explanations for decisions. There is also a call for accountability in terms of financial management and resource allocation. The perception is that increased accountability and transparency will lead to greater trust and effectiveness within the district.
5. **Educational Focus:** Participants highlight the importance of a superintendent who is focused on educational outcomes and student achievement. They want a leader who is passionate about education and can balance administrative duties with a focus on improving student performance. There is a call for someone who can support teachers, manage curriculum effectively, and address the diverse needs of students. Participants also express a desire for innovative approaches to education and a commitment to continuous improvement. The perception is that a strong educational focus is essential for the district's success and the well-being of its students.

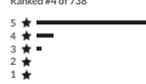
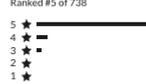
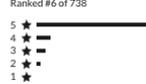
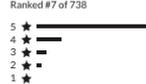
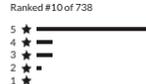
Results of ThoughtExchange Engagement

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



Of the 738 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>Equal opportunity for all students, teachers being well prepared and supported All students deserve an opportunity to shine and learn. A great teacher builds great leaders.</p>	<p>😊 Positive 31</p>	<p>★★★★★ 4.5 Ranked #1 of 738</p> 
<p>I would like the superintendent to treat students and teachers respectfully. Listen to us. We are in the classrooms! Because teachers are TRAINED professionals who know what they're doing. We spend the most time with these kids, and they deserve our best.</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 30</p>	<p>★★★★★ 4.5 Ranked #2 of 738</p> 
<p>The Superintendent must ensure an excellent, well-rounded education for all students. Our community needs citizens with critical thinking skills.</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 25</p>	<p>★★★★★ 4.5 Ranked #3 of 738</p> 
<p>SPS is basically a diploma mill at this point and there are many barely literate and numerate students graduating. Bring back ACCOUNTABILITY. the majority of parents probably agree with this and it is one of the main reasons why people seek out charters/private schools.</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 24</p>	<p>★★★★★ 4.5 Ranked #4 of 738</p> 
<p>Improve academics without lowering standards Lowering standards widens gaps rather than closes them, strong expectations with support help all students succeed and be better prepared for life.</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 23</p>	<p>★★★★★ 4.5 Ranked #5 of 738</p> 
<p>Listening to teachers about what's actually happening in the schools and what needs to be improved/how it should be fixed.</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 31</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.4 Ranked #6 of 738</p> 
<p>Supporting teachers and staff Teachers are not happy. Focus on retaining, and developing effective educators and leaders, and creating conditions where they can do their best work.</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 31</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.4 Ranked #7 of 738</p> 
<p>Don't settle on someone because they are the easiest or cheapest option We need the best fit</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 30</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.4 Ranked #8 of 738</p> 
<p>Someone with a proven track record of working collaboratively with teachers, parents and students. We need leadership that listens and solves for the real problems that our school community struggles with.</p>	<p>😐 Neutral 30</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.4 Ranked #9 of 738</p> 
<p>Prioritizing teachers and students when making big decisions like changing the schedule. Making sure that new plans will benefit students and teachers Prioritizing a high quality curriculum that benefits students and creating resources for students for academic assistance.</p>	<p>😊 Positive 29</p>	<p>★★★★☆ 4.4 Ranked #10 of 738</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.

Strength	Weakness
<p>Participants view the focus on student success and teacher support as a critical strength. They appreciate the emphasis on creating a supportive environment that fosters academic and emotional growth for students while valuing and supporting teachers.</p>	<p>A significant weakness identified is the lack of transparency and effective communication in past administrations. Participants feel that this has led to mistrust and dissatisfaction</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>There is an opportunity to enhance equity and inclusion within the district. Participants see the potential for the new superintendent to implement policies that ensure all students have access to high-quality education and opportunities.</p>	<p>A threat identified is the perceived decline in educational quality and inconsistency in curriculum across schools. Participants are concerned that this could impact student preparedness for future success.</p>

Strengths

- **Prioritize Student Success:** Emphasize the importance of creating an environment that supports both academic and emotional growth for students. This involves implementing programs and strategies that cater to diverse learning needs and ensuring that students have access to the resources they need to succeed.
- **Address Teacher Attrition and Absenteeism:** Focus on understanding the root causes of high teacher turnover and absenteeism. Develop initiatives to improve teacher morale, such as professional development opportunities, mentorship programs, and recognition of teacher achievements.
- **Provide Adequate Resources and Training:** Ensure that teachers have access to the necessary resources and training to effectively perform their roles. This

includes providing up-to-date teaching materials, technology, and ongoing professional development to enhance instructional practices.

Weaknesses

- **Improve Transparency in Decision-Making:** Establish clear and open communication channels to keep stakeholders informed about decisions and the rationale behind them. This can help build trust and foster a sense of inclusion among staff, parents, and the community.
- **Enhance Communication:** Develop strategies to improve communication between the superintendent, staff, and the community. This could involve regular updates, town hall meetings, and feedback mechanisms to ensure that all voices are heard and considered.
- **Address Lack of Openness in Past Administrations:** Acknowledge past shortcomings in transparency and communication, and commit to fostering a culture of openness and accountability moving forward.

Opportunities

- **Implement Inclusive Practices:** Identify and implement practices that support diverse student needs, ensuring that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. This may involve developing targeted programs for underrepresented groups and promoting cultural competency among staff.
- **Address Disparities in Educational Opportunities:** Conduct a thorough analysis of existing disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes. Use this information to develop policies and initiatives that promote equity and inclusion across the district.
- **Develop Policies for Access to Resources:** Create policies that ensure all students, regardless of background, have access to the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. This includes addressing barriers to access and providing support for students from diverse backgrounds.

Threats

- **Maintain High Academic Standards:** Focus on maintaining and enhancing academic standards to prevent a decline in educational quality. This involves setting clear expectations for student performance and providing support to help students meet these standards.
- **Ensure Curriculum Consistency:** Work towards achieving consistency in curriculum across schools to ensure that all students receive a high-quality education. This may involve standardizing curriculum materials and assessments while allowing for flexibility to meet local needs.

- **Focus on Core Academic Subjects:** Prioritize core academic subjects such as math, science, and language arts to ensure that students are well-prepared for future academic and career opportunities. This includes providing rigorous coursework and support for students who need additional help.

Conclusion and Summary

The Stamford Public Schools community offered clear, candid, and deeply informed feedback throughout this engagement process. Stakeholders consistently expressed pride in the district's extraordinary diversity, its dedicated educators, and the breadth of academic programs and opportunities available to students. Stamford's multicultural, multilingual, and socioeconomically diverse community was widely viewed as a defining strength that enriches the educational experience and prepares students for an interconnected world. At the same time, participants were forthright about significant challenges that must be addressed, including inconsistencies in curriculum and instructional quality, concerns about equity and access across schools, strained trust between stakeholders and central administration, and the need for more transparent and inclusive leadership.

Across interviews, focus groups, and the ThoughtExchange, participants emphasized that the next Superintendent must prioritize rebuilding trust and strengthening relationships across the system. A recurring theme was the need for leadership that is visible, emotionally intelligent, and genuinely engaged with students, staff, families, and community partners. Stakeholders expressed a strong desire for a Superintendent who listens carefully, values teacher voice, and fosters collaboration rather than top-down decision making. Clear, consistent, and multilingual communication was repeatedly identified as essential to improving morale, strengthening community confidence, and ensuring that families from all backgrounds feel informed and included.

Participants also highlighted the urgent need to address curriculum coherence, academic rigor, and instructional consistency across schools. While Stamford offers a wide range of academic pathways, magnet programs, and specialized opportunities, stakeholders voiced concern that uneven implementation and frequent changes have undermined confidence in the instructional program. Teachers described feeling under supported and overburdened, often supplementing curriculum materials on their own. As a result, the community is seeking a Superintendent who brings strong instructional leadership, prioritizes professional learning, and ensures that all students, regardless of school or neighborhood, have access to high-quality, rigorous learning experiences.

Equity and inclusion emerged not only as core values, but as pressing leadership imperatives. Participants called for a Superintendent who will actively address disparities in resources, academic expectations, and student outcomes, particularly for multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and historically marginalized populations. This includes equitable allocation of resources, culturally responsive practices, and

accountability systems that ensure fairness and access across the district. Stakeholders also emphasized the importance of supporting student well-being, mental health, and social emotional development alongside academic achievement.

In conclusion, the Stamford Public Schools community is seeking a Superintendent who combines strong relational leadership with operational competence and instructional expertise. The ideal candidate will bring transparency, accountability, and a clear moral compass to the work, while navigating the political, financial, and organizational complexities of a large urban district. Stamford is not asking for superficial change, but for thoughtful, inclusive, and sustained leadership that rebuilds trust, elevates teaching and learning, and advances equity for all students. With a committed Board, engaged community, and dedicated staff, Stamford is well positioned to move forward under a Superintendent who can unify the district around shared purpose and deliver meaningful, lasting improvement.

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





OFFICIAL BUSINESS PARTNER



800 N King Street | Suite 304 2029
Wilmington, DE 19801
www.zeal-ed.com
info@zeal-ed.com
+1 203.885.6011