



*New England School Development Council*

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**TO:** Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

**FROM:** Dr. Sally Dias, Senior Search Associate  
New England School Development Council

**RE:** Development of the Successful Candidate Profile

**DATE:** January 8, 2018

Attached please find a working draft of the community needs assessment report, entitled *Successful Candidate Profile*. This report was developed based on community input. **Section 1, or the actual Successful Candidate Profile (pages 2-5) is in draft form.** The final profile will be developed based on changes/edits requested by the School Committee.

In preparation for the discussion of the Successful Candidate Profile, we suggest the following:

- Read and consider Sections 2 and 3. These sections begin on page 6 and contain the comments and data from the focus groups and the online survey.
- After reading Sections 2 and 3, carefully review Section 1 (pages 2-5).

**-then-**

- Consider the major themes, and the bulleted list of indicators that are under each theme.
  1. Do the stated themes capture the major thoughts/ideas/issues offered by the community?
  2. Would you re-prioritize any of the indicators (bullets)?
  3. Are there any indicators you would like to add?
  4. Are there any indicators that you would edit?

In the end, the purpose of reviewing the Successful Candidate Profile is to ensure it truly reflects the views of the community as interpreted by the School Committee. We thank you, in advance, for the thought, time and energy you are devoting to this important component of your Executive Search.



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## **Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Superintendent Search**

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### **Successful Candidate Profile**

**JANUARY 2018**

This document reports the results of the community outreach portion of the superintendent search process and provides the Successful Candidate Profile to inform the candidate selection process.



**To:** Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

**From:** Sally Dias, Ed.D,  
New England School Development Council (NESDEC)

**Date:** January 2018

This report contains the following three sections:

**Section 1: Pages 3-5** present the Acton-Boxborough Successful Candidate Profile.

**Section 2: Pages 6-17** provide the summary of results of the community outreach from which the profile was developed.

**Section 3: Pages 18-end of document** present the results of the online survey in graphic form along with text responses to the open-ended question.

# ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE PROFILE

### INTRODUCTION

In the months of December 2017 and January 2018, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee, with the assistance of the New England School Development Council (NESDEC), conducted a Community Needs Assessment through a series of focus groups and an online survey. Over 700 people participated in the needs-assessment process (68 in focus groups and 648 in the online survey).

Participants provided their insights and views in response to two prompts:

- What are the qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge and experience you desire in a new Superintendent of Schools?
- What do you see as the immediate challenges and tasks the new Superintendent should focus upon in his or her first six to twelve months in the position?

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee subsequently reviewed and analyzed the community's input and discussed its own perspective to create the resulting Successful Candidate Profile. The Successful Candidate Profile, and the accompanying background information, is designed to guide the interview and selection process during the Superintendent search.

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee wishes to thank and commend all those in the community and the schools who took the time to participate in the community needs assessment process. The Committee looks forward to using the valuable insights gained through this process as it considers candidates for the position of Superintendent of Schools.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

## **SECTION 1: ACTON-BOXBOROUGH SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE PROFILE**

The communities of Acton and Boxborough expect a high level of competence across all aspects of the position of Superintendent. To ensure the selected Superintendent is a good match for our district's needs and goals, the School Committee reached out to the community through a series of focus groups and an online survey.

The School Committee used the valuable information gathered through the focus group and survey process to inform its decisions in creating the following Acton-Boxborough Successful Candidate Profile.

### **SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE PROFILE**

*Preference will be given to the candidate who demonstrates a significant depth of skill, experience and knowledge in the following four areas:*

- 1. STRONG INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS; ABILITY TO DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS, ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY AND BUILD TRUST**
- 2. EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING; COMMITMENT TO CONTINUAL DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT**
- 3. UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING STUDENT WELLNESS AND THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND ACADEMIC NEEDS OF STUDENTS**
- 4. EXPERIENCED IN BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS**

Indicators of skill determined via the community needs assessment for each of the above areas are:

#### **STRONG INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS; ABILITY TO DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS, ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY AND BUILD TRUST**

- Possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership
- Is able to build trust and relationships with the School Committee, faculty, community and Town officials
- Makes personal connections and builds relationships with staff

- Has experience organizing processes that lead to early buy-in of constituents driven by norms of integrity, transparency, courage, stakeholder involvement and high standards of excellence
- Takes time to learn and understand the communities
- Is proficient at communication with wider communities
- Is able to communicate clearly both verbally and in writing
- Has significant classroom and administrative experience
- Will be visible in schools, aware of current issues and activities in the schools and show an interest in community affairs
- Values schools' uniqueness yet able to unify all as a district
- Has worked with a diverse population and in a large, complex and high-performing district
- Has experience with other cultures and preferably internationally

### **EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING; COMMITMENT TO CONTINUAL DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT**

- Has the commitment to supervise and evaluate school programs in the spirit of continuous improvement; has understanding of educational practices, research and national/state/local initiatives; has the ability to frame issues for discussion, reach timely decisions and implement change
- Is knowledgeable about current educational and technical trends
- Uses a systematic approach to managing and improving the schools; has excellent organizational skills, working knowledge of school law and proven ability to resolve organizational conflicts
- Is experienced with keeping a high-achieving school district competitive
- Has intellectual gravitas; is a bold visionary with ideas that are future-focused; is forward-thinking
- Has experience prioritizing initiatives and implementing within a reasonable, realistic timeline
- Has made and implemented difficult decisions; is able to challenge the status quo, make hard decisions and builds consensus
- Is flexible and open to change; has led change efforts successfully
- Has the ability and insight to recruit and retain high-quality staff; has strong personnel management practices and understanding of the collective bargaining process; is able to obtain and retain talent and build a team
- Values teachers and understands teaching challenges
- Is able to motivate, lead, guide and direct people; is committed to implementing the mission statement and vision statement of the school system
- Can walk line between inspiring and ensuring accountability
- Understands the importance of accountability for staff and self; understands how to design and implement an evaluation process that establishes clear performance standards and follows through to resolve performance issues

## **UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING STUDENT WELLNESS AND THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND ACADEMIC NEEDS OF STUDENTS**

- Has an appreciation for the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students and has an understanding of the development and implementation of support and intervention strategies to meet those needs
- Understands the different needs of students and has developed programs and opportunities that meet the diverse learning needs of all students
- Has a track record for addressing student social/emotional issues; works on balance and wellness for students
- Understands the pressure on students
- Cares about students and has experience working directly with students
- Is a good communicator with students
- Has vision for district with students as #1

## **EXPERIENCED IN BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS**

- Has a strong working knowledge of school finance, including budget development and management; has the ability to effectively communicate regarding budgetary issues with the School Committee, staff, community and local municipal officials; has clear understanding of federal, state, and local funding issues
- Has developed budgets with a clear focus on students
- Is experienced in leading a district through building projects

## **TASKS THE COMMUNITY WISHES THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT TO FOCUS UPON IN FIRST SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS**

- Take time to understand the community and school district
- Build trust and improve community relations among the School Committee, faculty, parents, taxpayer community and Town officials
- Pay attention to the wellness and mental health of students
- Lead school building projects
- Analyze and make recommendations regarding school choice in Acton-Boxborough; understand the pros and cons of very independent elementary schools
- Look at equity issues including outcomes, physical spaces available, elementary school cultures, PTO funding, school population differences (e.g. economically disadvantaged); support a culture of equity
- Engage and work constructively with a changing population: cultural and economic (including increasing ELL and low income population)