



Florida School Boards Association SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

COMMUNITY FORUMS and FOCUS GROUPS

Date: February 12, 2025

Location: Marathon High School

Facilitators: Gaudreau, Pace

Participants: 9 participants

1. List the strengths and those areas of the school district that the next superintendent will need to understand and continue to support.
 - District works closely with community to offer both academic and sports scholarships and to generate support for special programs and activities, including sports and fine/performing arts
 - Diverse student body
 - School and community traditions
 - Dedicated staff members
 - High parent involvement, particularly PreK – 6th grade
 - Excellent school facilities
 - School facilities are maintained well and respected/valued by students and the community
 - Welcoming atmosphere driven by school administration
 - Unique geography of the Florida Keys, appreciated and cared for by students and the community
 - Student-led groups foster environmental stewardship
 - Environmental education for students and members of the community
 - Community support to help meet basic needs of economically disadvantaged students, including the Success Center at MHS
 - Students benefit from the community's economic and ethnic diversity (wider range of experience, understanding, and appreciation for others)
 - Community members want to 'give back' to the school/district community
 - Tight-knit and supportive community with a vested interest in the students and the district schools
 - AVID program—a strength to grow and sustain, district-wide
2. What are the most critical needs and challenges of the school district that the next superintendent will need to understand and address?
 - Drug education, improve and add incentives for parents and students to participate
 - Offer more Career/Technical educational programs (trade school opportunities)



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- Increase teacher salaries to recruit more qualified teachers (\$100,000 minimum salary)
- Ensure early education programs are high quality and promote strong language/literacy development
- Improve staff/teacher retention programs
- Recognize importance of hurricane/disaster preparedness and the impacts on students, staff members, family members, and the community during evacuations, school closures, and throughout the hurricane season (school starts and stops, food insecurities, mental/emotional health)
- Attract diverse instructional staff members to reflect the diversity of the student population
- Address lack of affordable housing from a multi-pronged effort, including direct engagement by the Superintendent and the School Board with other community leaders in planning and decision-making to address the problem
- Establish and uphold high expectations for academic achievement and behavior for ALL students
- Ensure equitable distribution of programs and opportunities for learning and enrichment for all students in the school district, across schools
- Superintendent needs to recognize and understand the unique needs, strengths, and challenges faced by schools throughout the school district
- Engage community businesses to develop more opportunities to establish apprenticeships and other career learning pathways in partnership with the schools and the school district
- More outreach to retired members of the community to tap into their skills, knowledge, and experience to help and support students
- Increase parent involvement/engagement to better meet the needs of English Language Learners
- Address costs of health insurance for district employees and for students, work with the community to address property insurance cost increases
- Recognize that family members of students and staff members often work multiple jobs in order to afford the cost of living in Monroe
- Improve student achievement
- Recognize and work with community to reduce the high cost of childcare for students' and employees' families

Need identified following the meeting from MHS Forum attendees:

- Need to improve level of respect for teachers from parents, students, and community members in order to improve teacher recruitment and retention
- Need to recognize the impact on student mental health of athletic program competition and local perceptions of favoritism



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3. What personal qualities, professional experience, and other skills should the Board look for in the next superintendent?

- People person, Outgoing – 5
- Strong leader – 5
- Graduate of a College of Education – 4
- Non-partisan – 4
- Experience in education at multiple levels – 3
- Business sense – 3
- Professional dress, be the example for students and staff members – 2
- Value all stakeholders- 2
- Knowledge of childhood development programs and pedagogy (birth to age 22, adult education, and parent education programs) - 2
- Ph.D. in Education – 1
- Good listener - 1