

Mississippi School Boards Association

State Superintendent Search

Professional Organizations' Executive Directors' Survey
September 23, 2009

The Mississippi State Board of Education desires input from Mississippi professional organizations' executive directors regarding criteria that they would like for the State Board to consider as the State Board decides on a new State Superintendent.

I. Questions

1. What do you feel is the most important quality the new State Superintendent should possess?

Answer: The new State Superintendent has to be able and willing to listen to parents and students with an openness that gives what they have to say the same status of importance that the new Superintendent gives to what he or she hears from the rest of the education stakeholders.

2. What would you like the State Board to know or consider as it searches for a new State Superintendent?

Answer: The State Board of Education should consider that the voices of parents and students are important and that the concept of "student first" should be part of the State Board process, not only in the search process, but also part of the on-going process of policy formation and implementation during the tenure of the new Superintendent.

There should be focus groups of students and also of parents across the different regions within the state to obtain their input as to characteristics desired in the new superintendent.

The State Superintendent should focus on keeping students in school rather than, when problems arise, permitting them to be pushed out of school, onto the streets and into the juvenile justice system.

II. Characteristics

Rating Scale

1. Very Important
2. Important
3. Somewhat Important
4. Not Important

1. Has successfully met the challenges of leading a large organization dedicated to ambitious goals, high standards and continuous improvement.	2
2. Has demonstrated the ability to articulate a clear vision of quality education with documented evidence of consistent, positive results.	1
3. Understands Mississippi's institutions, culture and political and educational leadership.	1
4. Has current successful experience serving as a school superintendent in a Mississippi public school system.	4
5. Has a proven record of implementing programs that address the achievement gap with emphasis on special needs, gifted & talented, culturally diverse and low socio-economic students, while focusing on the needs of all students.	1
6. Is committed to producing measurable results in low-performing schools and reaching the short-term goals of proficiency by 2014 in all Mississippi schools.	1
7. Is committed to challenging high-performing school districts to evaluate school impact on student achievement and to develop programs and a curriculum that focuses on the needs and academic advancement of high-achieving students.	1
8. Demonstrates an ability to inspire, motivate and build consensus among high-impact decision makers such as legislative, business, community and school leaders.	1
9. Is well informed about standards-based education and successful reform efforts in Mississippi.	2
10. Is strongly committed to a "student-first" philosophy.	1
11. Inspires trust, possesses self-confidence and models high standards of integrity.	1
12. Possesses excellent communication skills and can effectively establish dialogue with all stakeholder groups.	1
13. Holds a doctorate degree.	4
14. Is knowledgeable about the impact of technology.	2
15. Has a strong background in curriculum and instruction.	1
16. Has proven ability in result-oriented strategic planning.	1

III. Comments

1. There needs to be a consistent commitment to decreasing the dropout rate and increasing the graduation rate during the tenure of the new State Superintendent.
2. There needs to be a commitment to dismantling the school to detention to expulsion to juvenile justice pipeline.
3. There needs to be a focus on ensuring that students who graduate high school are college-ready, employment-ready, and especially life-ready, having mastered the skills and tools they are supposed to obtain in school.
4. The new State Superintendent needs to be a person who is able to withstand the intense pressure from the forces that are opposed to full funding for public education, who do not want the turnaround process to succeed, and who prefer to put public money into privately-owned, privately-governed charter, private and other school institutions rather than into traditional public schools.
5. The new State Superintendent ought to be a person committed to effective support for positive behavior intervention support systems and committed to ending the beating of students on school grounds by educators under the guise of corporal punishment.

IV. Optional Information

Submitted by: Mike Sayer, Senior Organizer and Training Coordinator for
Southern Echo, Inc., Jackson, MS
on behalf of:
Southern Echo, Inc. and the MS Delta Catalyst Roundtable

The Mississippi Delta Catalyst Roundtable is comprised of:

Southern Echo, Inc.

Nollie Citizens for A Quality Education (Holmes County)

Concerned Citizens for a Better Tunica County

Concerned Citizens for a Better Greenville (Washington County)

Sunflower County Parents and Students Organization

Action Communication and Education Reform (Montgomery County)

Activists With A Purpose (Grenada County)

Youth Innovation Movement Solutions (Lee County)

Citizens for Educational Awareness (Montgomery County)

Parents and Youth United for a Better Webster County

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We're here for you...