

# **Minnewaska Area Schools Superintendent Search**

## **Public Engagement Superintendent Search Survey**

**Overview:** On March 5, 2026, the “Minnewaska Area Schools Superintendent Search Survey” was made available to the public both online and in hard copy. The survey remained open for respondents until March 18, 2026, and a total of 288 people completed the survey.

Although this survey was opt-in (meaning individuals must actively choose to participate), MSBA’s analysis of the results do indicate a cross-section of people who are invested in the district were reached through the survey process. Knowing it took time and effort to do so, the school board and MSBA deeply appreciate each and every respondent who participated in the survey. The information these individuals shared through their responses will provide valuable input for the school board to consider as they move forward in selecting the next superintendent to lead Minnewaska Area Schools.

The results of all quantitative survey responses are summarized in the first five pages of this report, beginning below with those from across the district who participated in the survey.

**Self-identifiers:** Survey takers were first asked to identify the role that best reflected the basis for their responses. The categories selected by the survey takers are as follows:

- 55.56% of respondents selected “Parent/Guardian”
- 26.39% of respondents selected “Staff Member”
- 14.58% of respondents selected “Community Member”
- 2.78% of respondents selected “Other”
- 0.69% of respondents selected “Student”
- 0.00% of respondents selected “Business Owner/District Partner/Agriculture”

**Areas of Expertise:** Those who responded to the survey were also asked to identify the top six desirable areas of expertise they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted areas of expertise are listed below in order of preference.

- Budget and Finance
- Collaborative Leadership
- School Facilities
- Strategic Planning
- Public Relations
- Curriculum Development/Evaluation



**Previous Experience:** Respondents were asked if previous superintendent experience is important. Based on the results, 50.00% of the respondents selected "Yes," while 50.00% of the respondents selected "No."

**Specialized Skills:** The top six specialized skills the new superintendent must possess were identified in the survey results as shown below.

- Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
- Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight
- Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills
- Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
- Delegates authority while maintaining accountability
- Develops and directs an effective leadership team

**Personal Characteristics:** Survey takers were also asked to identify the top six personal characteristics they believe the new superintendent must possess. The most frequently noted personal characteristics are listed below in order of preference.

- Effective communicator
- Transparent
- Problem solver
- Ethical
- Personable
- Consistent

The following tables provide another perspective of the quantitative data, categorizing each question's responses by self-identifiers. The number of individual responses per category were:

- Parent/Guardian (160)
- Staff Member (76)
- Community Member (42)
- Other (8)
- Student (2)
- Business Owner/District Partner/Agriculture (0)

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**

<b>Parent / Guardian (160)</b>	<b>Staff Member (76)</b>	<b>Community Member (42)</b>	<b>Other (8)</b>	<b>Student (2)</b>
Yes: 47.06%	Yes: 55.41%	Yes: 50.00%	Yes: 42.86%	Yes: 100.00%
No: 52.94%	No: 44.59%	No: 50.00%	No: 57.14%	No: 0.00%



## TOP SIX AREAS OF EXPERTISE

<b>Parent / Guardian (160)</b>	<b>Staff Member (76)</b>	<b>Community Member (42)</b>	<b>Other (8)</b>	<b>Student (2)</b>
Budget & Finance	Budget & Finance	Budget & Finance	Budget & Finance	Budget & Finance
Collaborative Leadership	Collaborative Leadership	School Facilities	Collaborative Leadership	Collaborative Leadership
Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	School Facilities	Collaborative Leadership	Curriculum Development/ Evaluation	Fluctuating Enrollment
Strategic Planning	Public Relations	Public Relations	Fundraising/Grant Writing	Business Partnerships
School Facilities	Strategic Planning	Strategic Planning	Student Testing Results and Achievement	Curriculum Development/ Evaluation
Personnel Management	Personnel Management	Personnel Management	Contract Administration and Negotiations	Strategic Planning

## TOP SIX PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

<b>Parent / Guardian (160)</b>	<b>Staff Member (76)</b>	<b>Community Member (42)</b>	<b>Other (8)</b>	<b>Student (2)</b>
Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator	Effective Communicator
Transparent	Consistent	Ethical	Problem Solver	Ethical
Problem Solver	Problem Solver	Transparent	Consistent	Confident
Ethical	Transparent	Personable	Ethical	Consistent
Personable	Ethical	Consistent	Flexible	Inclusive
Consistent	Personable	Problem Solver	Personable	Flexible

The following two pages directly compare the school board's responses to the specialized skills question. These results do indicate significant alignment between the board and public, as board members prioritized many of the same categories as a majority of the district's constituencies.

# Minnewaska – Superintendent Search

## **Leadership Profile:**

- Demonstrates expertise in educational financial management, ensuring strategic allocation of resources and robust oversight of budgeting processes
- Upholds the highest standards of integrity, fostering ethical practices
- Delivers clear, confident, and flexible communication that is thoughtfully adapted to meet the needs of various audiences and situations
- Maintains consistent visibility and accessibility, actively engaging with the school board, faculty, learners, families, and community members to foster collaboration and support
- Collaborates constructively with the school board, presenting well-considered options and insightful recommendations to facilitate effective decision-making
- Builds trust and fosters cooperative relationships with a wide range of groups and communities

## **Minnewaska Hiring Criteria and Public Input Survey:**

### **Specialized Skills - Board**

1. Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight
2. Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
3. Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills
4. Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities
5. Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
6. Works cooperatively with the school board; provides options and recommendations

### **Specialized Skills – Public Input**

1. Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
2. Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight
3. Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills
4. Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community
5. Delegates authority while maintaining accountability
6. Develops and directs an effective leadership team

### **The following areas of expertise rose to the top in the public input survey:**

- Budget and Finance
- Collaborative Leadership
- School Facilities

### **Is previous superintendent experience important?**

Board: Yes = 57%; No = 43%      Public Input: Yes = 50%; No = 50%

All highlights are to show where there is alignment with both the school board and the community.

## TOP SIX SPECIALIZED SKILLS

<b>Parent / Guardian (160)</b>	<b>Staff Member (76)</b>	<b>Community Member (42)</b>	<b>Other (8)</b>	<b>Student (2)</b>
Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Delegates authority while maintaining accountability	Delegates authority while maintaining accountability
Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight	Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight	Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight	Experience in implementing practices that support student safety and mental health	Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills
Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills	Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills	Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Develops and directs an effective leadership team
Delegates authority while maintaining accountability	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities	Demonstrates clear, confident, and adaptable communication skills	Experience in developing and/or implementing a strategic plan
Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Experience in implementing practices that support student safety and mental health	Develops and directs an effective leadership team	Leads with honesty and in an ethical manner with the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities
Experience in implementing practices that support student safety and mental health	Visible and accessible to the school board, staff, students, parents, and community	Experience in developing and/or implementing a strategic plan	Develops trust and works collaboratively with diverse groups and communities	Experience in school finance, including resource allocation and fiscal oversight

**Additional comments:** Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions in the survey, and on average, 185 of the 288 respondents provided additional commentary. These qualitative results were then reviewed by MSBA representatives, with reappearing ideas identified and grouped into themes. These themes are highlighted below for each of the questions.

**The superintendent search survey asked the following four questions:**

1. What are some of the good things taking place in Minnewaska Area Schools today?
2. What challenges do you see ahead for the district over the next five years?
3. What does the new superintendent need to know about the history of the school district and community to be successful?
4. Additional comments.

**1. What are some of the good things taking place in Minnewaska Public Schools today?**

<p><b>Minnewaska Public Schools is strengthened by caring, dedicated, and experienced teachers, paraprofessionals, and staff who build strong connections with students and provide steady support across the district.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>There are really phenomenal teachers, student support providers, and paras at Minnewaska!</i></li> <li>• <i>Great teachers.</i></li> <li>• <i>Many excellent teachers, along with the middle school and high school administrators.</i></li> <li>• <i>WIN Academy has a positive, encouraging staff that is extremely dedicated to the needs of their students.</i></li> <li>• <i>Elementary staff is great to work with, wonderful with the kids.</i></li> <li>• <i>Dedicated staff who are in communication with parents.</i></li> <li>• <i>We have some wonderful teachers.</i></li> <li>• <i>The teachers are amazing and we need to make sure they're supported appropriately.</i></li> <li>• <i>A strong and experienced leadership team.</i></li> <li>• <i>Great teachers and staff.</i></li> <li>• <i>Excellent teachers.</i></li> <li>• <i>Teachers and long term paraprofessionals.</i></li> <li>• <i>Strong caring teachers.</i></li> <li>• <i>Our daughter has had some great para's and teachers.</i></li> <li>• <i>We have an excellent staff.</i></li> <li>• <i>We have educators (many of them homegrown) who genuinely care about their students and about preparing them for the world.</i></li> <li>• <i>The instructors all seem to genuinely care.</i></li> <li>• <i>Amazing teachers who want to help the kids learn and grow.</i></li> </ul>	<p>98 related responses</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I believe we have built a staff full of passionate, caring, and student-first people who love Minnewaska.</i></li> <li>• <i>The staff seem great! Many caring and truly great teachers.</i></li> <li>• <i>Solid teaching staff.</i></li> <li>• <i>Elementary teachers and intervention groups.</i></li> <li>• <i>The elementary staff, SpEd in particular, is TOP NOTCH.</i></li> <li>• <i>Great staff hires.</i></li> <li>• <i>Seasoned staff at both the elementary, middle, and high school.</i></li> <li>• <i>Elementary school staff are welcoming and are there for the right reasons.</i></li> <li>• <i>Strong connections are made between staff and students.</i></li> <li>• <i>The staff go above and beyond, making school a place where kids want to be. The work ethic and compassion of the staff there is amazing.</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Minnewaska Public Schools provide students with a broad range of opportunities to learn, grow, and get involved extracurricular activities. Music programs, college-credit options, and varied student activities stand out as important strengths in the district.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>There are lots of opportunities for our students to develop and succeed through academic, creative, and athletic opportunities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Bridging academics, arts and sports.</i></li> <li>• <i>Strong music/art programs.</i></li> <li>• <i>We offer a wide variety of activities and opportunities for students.</i></li> <li>• <i>Music programs, extracurricular activities for all ages.</i></li> <li>• <i>Varied opportunities for education; expose kids to technical trades.</i></li> <li>• <i>Variety of activities to build a culture for students: athletics, arts, and other activities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Great programs.</i></li> <li>• <i>Lots of student/parent activities, a lot of opportunities for non-sport activities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Lots of extracurriculars, college course offerings.</i></li> <li>• <i>The different opportunities available to students.</i></li> <li>• <i>The High Potential (Gifted &amp; Talented) program.</i></li> <li>• <i>Lots of college class/credit opportunities for students.</i></li> <li>• <i>Music draws community to the school.</i></li> <li>• <i>Music and sports.</i></li> <li>• <i>Involving children in different activities around the schools, getting them motivated to learn more about themselves and education.</i></li> <li>• <i>Variety of classes and activities.</i></li> <li>• <i>There is a larger selection of sports available for the students.</i></li> <li>• <i>The music program.</i></li> <li>• <i>Lots of extracurricular activities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Number of college credit classes offered.</i></li> </ul>	<p>65 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The music programs are flourishing.</i></li> <li>• <i>Lots of opportunities for education and extracurricular activities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Kids are given amazing opportunities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Our Music Program continues to be a great asset to our students and community.</i></li> <li>• <i>The band program is phenomenal.</i></li> <li>• <i>High quality music programs.</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Minnewaska Public Schools provide students with a strong overall education grounded in high academic standards and strong student achievement. Academic growth, strong test scores, and expanding pathways for college, work, and trades reflect a district focused on preparing students for success.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The feeling that students are generally receiving a quality education.</i></li> <li>• <i>Level of education.</i></li> <li>• <i>Good curriculum//Good test scores.</i></li> <li>• <i>The students are learning effectively.</i></li> <li>• <i>The elementary is working hard at incorporating STEM and problem solving into their curriculum.</i></li> <li>• <i>High academic standards.</i></li> <li>• <i>Student achievement.</i></li> <li>• <i>There are lots of opportunities for our students to develop and succeed through academic opportunities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Bridging academics.</i></li> <li>• <i>Graduation rates.</i></li> <li>• <i>Test scores reflect high achievement overall.</i></li> <li>• <i>Overall, I believe the education students receive here is stronger than that of many surrounding districts.</i></li> <li>• <i>Focus on mathematics and literature.</i></li> <li>• <i>A great set of curriculum standards.</i></li> <li>• <i>Moving from a purely education goal to allowing students to choose pathways that also include work experience and trade prep.</i></li> <li>• <i>Our test scores are the top of the conference and section.</i></li> <li>• <i>Our curriculums are up-to-date.</i></li> <li>• <i>All-around growth in academics.</i></li> </ul>	45 related responses
<p><b>Minnewaska Public Schools are supported by a strong sense of Laker pride, positive relationships, and an inclusive, student-centered environment where students feel safe, connected, and proud to belong.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Healthy environment for kids.</i></li> <li>• <i>School pride.</i></li> </ul>	32 related responses



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a great district and community which is reflected in the values of our school.</li> <li>• Open and inclusive of student body.</li> <li>• Good school spirit. Strong traditions are upheld.</li> <li>• The focus on Laker pride.</li> <li>• Most teachers, support providers, and paras value not only each student's learning but also building connections and positive relationships with them.</li> <li>• Laker Pride.</li> <li>• Safe, friendly.</li> <li>• Kids feel safe and happy to learn and engage.</li> <li>• Strong traditions within the school that have been passed down from generation to generation.</li> <li>• Open and inclusive of student body.</li> <li>• The students are happy.</li> <li>• Connections with the students and the help that is needed.</li> <li>• Inclusion and support of WIN academy.</li> </ul>	
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## 2. What challenges do you see ahead for the district over the next five years?

<p><b>Minnewaska Public Schools face ongoing concerns about declining and fluctuating enrollment affecting both the district's stability and its funding. Competition from online learning, homeschooling, open enrollment, and broader community factors such as housing and jobs add to the challenge of attracting and keeping families in the district.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining enrollment. (This phrase was used 18 times.)</li> <li>• Enrollment. (This single word descriptor was used 10 times.)</li> <li>• Fluctuating enrollment. (This phrase was used 5 times.)</li> <li>• Looking at the bigger picture of enrollment.</li> <li>• Managing the enrollment slide.</li> <li>• A declining student enrollment is concerning!</li> <li>• Our enrollment is trickling down.</li> <li>• Declining enrollment and the increase numbers of students taking PSEO courses.</li> <li>• Getting young Christian families to move in the area. The area has been a retirement community. Which keeps housing availability down for younger families to be able to move in. Which keeps numbers down for enrollment.</li> <li>• Keeping families to stay in the community, to keep healthy student numbers.</li> <li>• A blip in enrollment.</li> <li>• Fluctuating or declining enrollment as we face challenges with online schooling, PSEO, charter schools, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>96 related responses</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Declining enrollment will be the biggest challenge we face over the next few years.</i></li> <li>• <i>Any partnerships between school and community to create more job opportunities while promoting our school will help tremendously with declining enrollment.</i></li> <li>• <i>Keeping enrollment high.</i></li> <li>• <i>Keeping families in our district (lack of housing &amp; jobs here).</i></li> <li>• <i>Too many open enroll or home school. No one is looking at this trend as to why.</i></li> <li>• <i>Declining enrollment is a worry.</i></li> <li>• <i>Enrollment numbers dropping.</i></li> <li>• <i>Up and down enrollment which effects funding and the budget.</i></li> <li>• <i>Enrollment concerns in the younger grade levels.</i></li> <li>• <i>Attracting students to our district and giving families the options of hybrid and on-line learning through our district.</i></li> <li>• <i>How do we combat online schooling and homeschooling?</i></li> <li>• <i>With declining enrollments, the district will have to be creative, including developing online learning, and re-examining traditional educational systems.</i></li> <li>• <i>Creating an online high school to combat enrollment decline.</i></li> <li>• <i>Declining enrollment, which leads to less funding.</i></li> <li>• <i>Low enrollment but same amount of principals who are ineffective to lead in the 21st century.</i></li> <li>• <i>Loss of student enrollment.</i></li> <li>• <i>Declining enrollment because Minnewaska has a terrible reputation in the area.</i></li> <li>• <i>Families are choosing to open enrollment at other area schools.</i></li> <li>• <i>How can we keep families here?</i></li> <li>• <i>Trying to keep enrollment the same or up.</i></li> <li>• <i>Drop in enrollment. More students choose online schooling vs the traditional in-school education.</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Minnewaska community wants the district to address aging facilities, ongoing maintenance needs, and limited space in areas such as the elementary school, gyms, and specialized student support settings. Keeping buildings safe, functional, and updated while securing community support and funding for improvements will be an ongoing priority for the district.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Building upgrades.</i></li> <li>• <i>Our schools need some updates.</i></li> <li>• <i>Maintaining school facilities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Getting community support to update our facilities.</i></li> </ul>	89 related responses



- *The parking lot needs to be re-done and getting any money for improvements after the last referendum being so soon and so out of touch with what was needed it will be hard to get another to pass for things the school actually needs.*
- *Managing needed facility updates will be a challenge.*
- *Allocating money to make the appropriate upgrades to our district.*
- *Aging facilities.*
- *Upkeep on 3 buildings.*
- *Facilities needs updates.*
- *Maintenance on the school grounds and expanding part of the structure to meet the needs of the students and community.*
- *Deteriorating facilities.*
- *Repairs and updates are needed in both buildings. In the auditorium, there is a leak. One set of bathrooms at the elementary school could use some new stalls. These are two smaller repairs that I know of. There are also larger repairs that need to be addressed.*
- *Condition of building(s).*
- *Building is going to be outdated.*
- *Facility needs being addressed.*
- *The inability to pass a referendum to enhance our buildings.*
- *Rising operational costs and upgrading the aging infrastructure.*
- *Facility maintenance.*
- *Outdated facilities.*
- *Maintenance on the building.*
- *Infrastructure.*
- *Deteriorating building.*
- *Building and infrastructure updates.*
- *Building upkeep and maintenance.*
- *Aging elementary school that is also lacking space.*
- *Facilities need to be addressed. Parking lot is embarrassing. HVAC doesn't work. Torn carpeting. Dated areas of the school.*
- *Maintaining dated HVAC and facilities.*
- *Building infrastructure. Space at elementary school.*
- *WIN Academy (Starbuck Campus) needs serious fixes if they are going to remain in Starbuck (roof, HVAC, multiple rooms are unusable, etc.).*
- *Maintaining the buildings and grounds.*
- *Facilities, gym space.*
- *Need to keep pool functions.*
- *We have some maintenance issues to take care of. We lack gym space for youth activities and school day activities.*
- *Gym room especially in the winter, parking lot, heat/air.*
- *Updates to the school.*
- *Needing more space for sports.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facility improvements are a never ending and important for the district to maintain.</li> <li>• Maintaining three campuses.</li> <li>• Building maintenance, above the yearly budgeted amounts.</li> <li>• Facility improvements, especially related to safety measures.</li> <li>• Need for more gym space, safer entryway and student pickup.</li> <li>• Building constraints, a need for more special education spaces, aging buildings and parking lots.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Minnewaska Public Schools need to navigate ongoing financial pressures by balancing current needs, making careful spending decisions, and maintaining fiscal responsibility. Referendum fatigue, community division over funding, and broader economic pressures add to the difficulty of securing support for future investments.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being fiscally responsible about the school's current needs.</li> <li>• Gain support for a referendum.</li> <li>• Balancing the budget without asking for a referendum every year.</li> <li>• Addressing the financials of the district. Continuing to go to the tax payers for more money all the time is not acceptable. Hard decisions will have to be made. Cuts need to be made.</li> <li>• Cutting wasteful spending.</li> <li>• The budget: using funds wisely and being realistically resourceful.</li> <li>• Funding to keep up with all the needs of the school.</li> <li>• Future referendums, as the prior referendum may have been too large in scope, causing strong division in the communities. Smaller bite size portions may be easier to get passed.</li> <li>• Unable to pass the referendum this fall may present some challenges.</li> <li>• A failed referendum will be difficult follow-up with one that passes.</li> <li>• Passing a student-focused referendum that includes facility updates, as well as improvements in student programs.</li> <li>• Older generations saying no to funding.</li> <li>• A new referendum in the next few years will take some community support and repair from the failed one last year.</li> <li>• Voting down the greedy and inconsiderate attempts at property tax increases.</li> <li>• With lower enrollments numbers I do not believe the district is adequately reducing it's spending or taking a closer look at where they are placing their focus.</li> <li>• Possible financial woes given the political climate.</li> <li>• The failed referendum that outside agitators influenced community members to vote No on.</li> </ul>	<p>71 related responses</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Financial challenges relating to the economy, inflation and general sentiment around the middle class not wanting to be taxed more.</i></li> <li>• <i>District might be in a positive position financially but will need to get creative with a referendum for facility needs.</i></li> <li>• <i>Fixing issues that need to be fixed that weren't able to do with the referendum. Making smart business decisions to better our school without going overboard into areas we don't need.</i></li> <li>• <i>Budgeting in a time when State and County are taxing at high rates so little is left for local education.</i></li> <li>• <i>With uncertainty from the state's budget, the new superintendent will need to continue to build on the financial position of strength Mr. Rankin has put us in.</i></li> <li>• <i>Maintaining fiscal responsibility while giving our students opportunities for growth.</i></li> <li>• <i>Many of the needs listed in the referendum need to be addressed.</i></li> <li>• <i>Too many administrative staff in business office.</i></li> <li>• <i>Money and funding.</i></li> <li>• <i>Financial and technological resources will likely continue to be ongoing challenges.</i></li> <li>• <i>Keeping administrative and teachers cost down.</i></li> <li>• <i>Declining enrollment, therefor needs to be very fiscally wise and or conservative minded.</i></li> </ul>	
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**3. What does the next superintendent need to know about the history of the school district and community to be successful?**

<p><b>Minnewaska Public Schools serve a proud, close-knit, and deeply invested community shaped by strong support for its schools, small-town values, and lasting ties to the district. The next superintendent will need to understand both the strengths of that community pride and the lingering divisions and sensitivities that remain from consolidation and the district’s multiple town identities.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>We are a caring community.</i></li> <li>• <i>This school district is very proud and committed to the school. They are a tight knit group of people who stay in the community.</i></li> <li>• <i>Our community, in general, is strongly supportive of our district.</i></li> <li>• <i>That our district was built out of the need to consolidate smaller communities into a larger one. A lot of Lakers come back to raise their families in this community and want their kids to be Lakers. We are a small community with a lot of love for our school.</i></li> </ul>	<p>106 related responses</p>
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- *When the two high schools merged to make Minnewaska it created a strong group to come together. Just keep the peace and the area is strong with good people.*
- *We are a passionate community.*
- *Our district has a lot of community support. We are a economically diverse district, and the disparity between top and the bottom is quite large. The district formed in the fall of 1991, but in some ways we are still separate communities.*
- *Strong blue collar and agricultural community that commands a special understanding of the needs and resources of the people.*
- *Multi town/area school.*
- *We are a conservative community.*
- *The Laker community is very passionate about supporting the school.*
- *Our community, in general, is strongly supportive of our district.*
- *They need to understand how our school district is a representation of Pope County.*
- *We are multiple communities working together and at times that can be challenging when perceptions are that the district supports one community more than another.*
- *It's difficult to navigate and integrate into this community if you didn't grow up in the community.*
- *As a community, we have and want to maintain small town, traditional values.*
- *This school district is very proud and committed to the school.*
- *The school is a great gathering point and a source of pride for our whole community.*
- *We are a small community with a lot of love for our school. We show up for our kids and want the best for all who come through our school doors.*
- *The community has historically been supportive of our students, teachers and schools.*
- *The community has also been known for many diversities of groups (business, agricultural, healthcare etc.).*
- *Small community that can get stuck in this old way of doing things.*
- *Small town means everyone knows your business before you do.*
- *This community has STRONG agricultural roots. This community is small business, trades, and agricultural.*
- *This community has always supported education and the school staff.*
- *Residents and businesses want to support the school and the students.*
- *There's a lot of legacy students, so to celebrate that families stay or move back to the area while being welcoming and inclusive to new families.*
- *There are multiple communities that have strong identities.*
- *Older voting demographic.*
- *This is a proud community that supports the schools.*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Our district has a lot of community support.</i></li> <li>• <i>Our community is made up of many elderly people and parents living on assistance.</i></li> <li>• <i>Our family has lived here for 10 years. Many people in this school district are related to each other.</i></li> <li>• <i>Very close knit community and school district.</i></li> <li>• <i>The new superintendent needs to be respectful of the size and demographic of our communities.</i></li> <li>• <i>The combined district still needs attention and encouragement to stay strong.</i></li> <li>• <i>He or she needs to know about the consolidation and the feelings of the different communities involved.</i></li> <li>• <i>The Glenwood and Starbuck rivalry runs deep.</i></li> <li>• <i>At one time Starbuck and Glenwood had their own schools and it's taken many years for these students to blend into Minnewaska.</i></li> <li>• <i>The current school district is comprised of multiple historic districts in the county and some of that tribalism still exists in the community.</i></li> <li>• <i>We are a consolidated district and there are still some strong feelings of Us Vs Them with the towns (especially the older people).</i></li> <li>• <i>The next person needs to understand the dynamics of the 5 communities in our district, the history and pain that has taken place with the merger of Minnewaska Area.</i></li> <li>• <i>Even after 30+ years I still think there are divisions within the communities when it comes to Minnewaska.</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Minnewaska Public Schools need a superintendent who is visible, honest, and deeply engaged with the full community, with a commitment to building trust across all groups. Success will depend on strong communication, inclusive leadership, and a clear focus on uniting the district around what is best for students.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community likes a visible superintendent that collaborates with school board and teachers.</i></li> <li>• <i>That all stakeholders need to be communicated to and valued across all of our represented communities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Be the leader that kids look up to.</i></li> <li>• <i>Put the needs of our children first.</i></li> <li>• <i>We need someone to bring the entire district together as "one Minnewaska", not Glenwood, not Starbuck, etc., etc.</i></li> <li>• <i>Would be nice to hire someone who has already built a positive relationship with the staff, students, and community, lives in the area, and possesses the necessary qualities to be a superintendent.</i></li> </ul>	<p>70 related responses</p>



- *We need someone to be inclusive and kind to all and demonstrate this from the start.*
- *There needs to be a level of respect for those that do the work every day and that needs to start at the top.*
- *Be friendly and work with us. Every problem can have a solution if all use communication and understanding.*
- *Very important to include all communities/entire county in decisions and communication.*
- *Just because one group is the loudest doesn't mean it reflects everyone who lives in the area, finding a middle ground is important.*
- *This is outstate Minnesota, people appreciate honesty and hard work.*
- *While a superintendent should naturally have tact, it is especially important to exercise it here.*
- *Building trust with both the school team and the broader community will be important. Community members appreciate seeing and hearing from their leaders, so being present, visible, and engaged at school and community events will be key to long-term success.*
- *As with many outstate districts, I feel one of the biggest challenges is finding someone that can garner the support of the community for the passage of referendums.*
- *Doesn't need to know any previous history as long as they are willing to learn.*
- *He or she must understand the district's cultural history, community values, and past strategic decisions.*
- *Honesty and respect needs to be a priority!*
- *You will never please everyone. You will need to be able to look for the greater good overall and execute that.*
- *The superintendent needs to be consistently visible in our community.*
- *That he or she needs to work with the teachers and community for their input.*
- *You HAVE to be out on the community, be ready to talk to anyone, and build on any previous relationships.*
- *Honesty is the best policy.*
- *It is absolutely necessary that the superintendent be involved in this school and this community. Their first priority must be Minnewaska's success!*
- *That he or she must be an active and visible member of overall community. They should get out of the buildings, join a civic organization or two, and remember that they are part of a system rather than the previous leader.*
- *Remain professional but still build relationships with parents and community members.*
- *The failed referendum damaged some of the community support and relationships. There were a lot of concerns about district communication, truthfulness and accuracy of what the actual plan was, financial concerns,*

<p><i>and differing opinions about long term needs. The new superintendent should understand this context.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Be honest and straightforward. Don't hide things to create dishonesty in the system.</i></li> <li><i>• They need to understand the extent of how community minded Minnewaska is.</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Minnewaska Public Schools operate in a community that expects fiscal responsibility, careful use of taxpayer dollars, and a practical, transparent approach to funding school needs.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Our community also demands fiscal responsibility and accountability.</i></li> <li><i>• The Pope county communities have unwilling to help better our schools/communities by supporting initiatives financially.</i></li> <li><i>• Use resources available. Don't come looking for handouts.</i></li> <li><i>• Keeping the tax dollars down while still getting funding for the school via grants etc and being transparent about those things will be good for the community to see to get trust back in the school system.</i></li> <li><i>• The school does not need a bunch of wasteful spending. It needs to take care of the students.</i></li> <li><i>• The community puts sports too high on the priority list spending too much on athletics and not enough on education.</i></li> <li><i>• The community wants to ensure taxpayer funds are used appropriately and not doing extra projects just because it would look good.</i></li> <li><i>• That a \$25,000,000 referendum is not wanted by the community or a 3rd gym either.</i></li> <li><i>• Just needs to be financially aware and able to keep a solid fund balance.</i></li> <li><i>• Failure of the bond to pass. Need to get it passed next time. Get a more MODEST bond (less money, only essentials like roof and HVAC) to actually make it pass.</i></li> </ul>	<p>30 related responses</p>

**4. Additional Comments:**

<p><b>Minnewaska Public Schools need a superintendent who leads with honesty, integrity, visibility, and fiscal responsibility while building trust, supporting staff, listening well, and keeping students at the center of decisions.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• I think the superintendent needs to visit all schools more than once a month or so and it would be nice for them to KNOW the staff that works in the buildings.</i></li> <li><i>• Above all, we value honesty and integrity and a genuine heart to help kids.</i></li> </ul>	<p>42 related responses</p>
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- *Make informed weather decisions (2 hours late, cancelled, etc).*
- *Positive attitude.*
- *Praying you find someone that cares for ALL students.*
- *Our next superintendent needs to be fiscally responsible, above all else. They need to be able to balance a budget, and make cuts if the incoming funds don't cover the outgoing expenditures.*
- *Don't be afraid to make waves to do what is ethical.*
- *Really looking forward to a superintendent that is honest, that is consistent, that doesn't make inappropriate comments to and about staff. We need a strong leader to right the ship, but also one who listens, considers and makes decisions based on what's best for the students, staff and school as a whole.*
- *His or her character must be true*
- *Focus on our school with good ethical moral values to raise our children into the world.*
- *A strong leader who genuinely values these things—not just in words, but through actions—will make a difference. Supporting staff, empowering the right people to lead and grow programs, and recognizing the importance of morale will be important..*
- *It is my hope that new leadership will bring a fresh, collaborative perspective, especially when facing a challenging, cliquy, and ego-driven school culture*
- *Ethical leadership. Works with teachers and not divide them.*
- *That the staff needs a superintendent who will support them and not tolerate hateful or unkind behaviors from students (or families).*
- *The next superintendent needs to be flexible, creative, honest, hardworking and present. Come with ideas to help make Minnewaska better.*
- *The superintendent should be someone who will not back down to those who think they wield the power to put the best interests of our children first.*
- *The new superintendent needs to be personable and likeable, not just good business acumen*
- *We need a leader who is visible and active in our community.*
- *We need to get back to being fiscally responsible, truthful, transparent, and open to what the people's thoughts.*
- *We need a strong forward thinking leader that can research the needs and opinions of staff and parents.*
- *Would love to have someone who could reach the whole community and bring people together.*
- *A superintendent who actively engages with staff, listens to different perspectives, and encourages collaboration could help strengthen morale and trust.*
- *Hopefully, the new super will be an effective and realistic communicator.*