

## Wichita Public Schools Board of Education 2023 Superintendent Profile

***“Wichita Public Schools prepares all students to achieve college, career and life readiness through an innovative and rigorous educational experience.”***

### **Operating Environment of the District**

Wichita Public Schools is part of an innovative community in the largest city in Kansas. The District enjoys the general goodwill of the community, local businesses, and many positive partnerships.

- As the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest employer in the area, the district employs a highly qualified staff who daily work to ensure the best education available for our children.
- The world walks in our hallways. Our district is richly diverse, including three predominant ethnic groups that comprise 86% of our student population (Hispanic, Caucasian and African American), more than 100 languages spoken in the homes of our students, and families that come from 93 countries of birth.
- Our district supports the needs of all learners, from the most highly skilled and academically successful, to those who need special supports to succeed. Some are new to our country and receive language instruction as well as academic support, and 78% have some level of economic disadvantaged.
- The allocation of more than \$980 million in funds is focused on the *Every Student Future Ready* strategic plan. In fact, 86% of the district’s operating budget is invested directly to support students and schools.
- Nearly \$245 million in pandemic relief funding has been used to maintain staffing levels after unprecedented enrollment adjustments, support employee retention in competitive labor conditions, implement programs to overcome learning loss and provide mental health supports, and supplement principal resources to support the unique needs of their schools’ student populations. That funding must be spent by September 2024 and will require the district to assess how to support critical priorities when this supplemental funding goes away.
- While community support of capital projects through two bond issues has upgraded much of the district’s infrastructure, the average of school buildings in WPS is almost 60 years old, creating challenges for the structure and safety of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments and technology. As costs increase for capital projects, the district’s Capital Outlay fund is limited in the number of deferred and preventative maintenance projects it can sustain during a budget year.

### **Direction of the Wichita Public Schools**

In April 2018, the Wichita Board of Education approved the *Every Student Future Ready* strategic plan. The four major priorities of the plan are focused on:

- Increasing high school graduation rate,
- Increasing 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy,
- Enhancing college and career ready opportunities for students, and
- Ensuring that school are trusted as safe school environments.

When the new superintendent begins their tenure in the 2023-2024 school year, it will be imperative to engage the community and create the next bold strategic plan for the Wichita Public Schools.

### **Upcoming Priorities**

As the district prepares to develop its next strategic plan, priorities have been identified through stakeholder engagement, including:

- Student behavior and social emotional challenges post-pandemic.
- Advancing student academic progress and narrowing the achievement gap, particularly in the priority area of literacy.
- Budget issues, including the cutbacks that will occur because of completed ESSER/pandemic relief spending, and the scheduled sunset of high-density at-risk state funding.
- Recruitment and retention of staff in an extremely tight labor market, and declining student enrollment in teacher education programs.
- School boundary and building enhancements to provide 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments in safe and secure facilities, influenced by changing demographics across the community.
- Enhanced community relationships to further innovate programming and partnerships in support of college and career ready opportunities for our students.

### **Characteristics of the Next Superintendent**

Grounded in feedback from WPS stakeholders, the Wichita Board of Education will look for the following characteristics in the successful superintendent candidate:

- Is willing to listen to input and is also a decision maker.
- Possesses the leadership skills, knowledge and sensitivity required to respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by a diverse student body and community.
- Has a strong moral compass that is rooted in justice and equality.
- Is a strong communicator in speaking, listening and writing.
- Has experience recruiting and maintaining exceptional staff for the district and schools.
- Can delegate and oversee the work of staff (i.e. leading by example) and appropriately maintain accountability.
- Is strongly committed to a “student centered” philosophy in all decisions.
- Possesses the ability to enhance student performance, especially in identifying and closing or narrowing the gaps in student achievement and opportunity.
- Promotes a positive and professional environment that includes mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, administrators and Board.
- Has classroom experience in a K-12 setting.
- Makes recommendations and data-driven decisions.
- Has a commitment to and experience working with all genders, races and socio-economic groups while promoting positive and inclusive student behavior conducive to a healthy and safe learning environment.

### **Of Additional Importance**

The Board will seek a candidate with leadership experience in a large urban district, and will require the candidate to have a current district-level administrative license from Kansas or another state.