

Durham Public Schools Job Profile – Superintendent

Who We Are

Durham Public Schools serves more than 32,000 students across 56 schools in both the city and county of Durham, making the district one of the top 10 largest districts in the state of North Carolina. Durham is recognized as one of the hot spots in the South - from food to history to music to education - more and more people are drawn to the city's dynamic, progressive, diverse and engaged community. Our students are a tremendous source of pride for our district, of which 37.2% are Black, 35% Latiné, 19.5% white, and 8.2% American Indian, Asian, Hawaiian-Pacific, or multi-racial, and approximately 56% eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch. Durham Public Schools strives to embrace, educate, and empower every student to innovate, serve, and lead. Our vision is Igniting the Limitless Potential of each of our students.

We believe in:

- **Equity:** equitable access to the resources and opportunities students need to succeed
- **Shared Responsibility:** acting intentionally and collaboratively involving all stakeholders
- **High Expectations:** embracing a growth mindset and the belief that every child can be academically successful, excelling globally, and reaching their highest potential
- **A Child-Centered Approach:** creating a caring and culturally responsive environment that embraces the whole child and addresses the social, emotional, and academic needs of each student

As a district, we have made important moves to support each of our students, including our [Racial Equity Policy](#) and associated [Equity Dashboard](#), our [LGBTQIA Policy](#), our redistricting work [Growing Together](#), our language justice work, resolutions in support of our Black and Latiné students, and our [Strategic Plan](#). Each of these, and so much more, demonstrates our steadfast commitment to creating safe and joyful environments for our students' academic growth and success.

What You'll Do

The Superintendent of Durham Public Schools will lead the district's work to actualize our vision for our schools. We are proud of the policies and practices that have been put in place. Our Superintendent will work in partnership with the Board and our community to chart the path forward to ensure whole student supports and academic success for each of our students, especially for our historically marginalized communities. We are seeking a leader who is able to recruit, mentor and hold accountable diverse and talented leaders in every school and in our central office. Transparent communication and innovative problem-solving will be essential to this role as we work to retain and attract excellent staff for our schools and work to strengthen our transparency around finances.

Your Key Responsibilities (The "What")

Ensure a successful and equitable educational experience for each of our students

- Inspire educators, students and families and ensure that every school is a place of joyful exploration, creativity, empowerment and learning and reflective of the diversity of the Durham community.
- Fully implement the Board's key policies to ensure that students experience educational success equity regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, country of origin, language, legal status, or socio-economic status.
- Adopt instructional models, curriculum and structures based on practices that are research-based, culturally responsive, and consistently effective in terms of measurable student achievement outcomes.
- Eliminate disparities in opportunities and resources provided to students, ensuring that every school provides strong and positive educational experiences that include access to high-quality instruction and social and emotional support.
- Work with educators and leaders to ensure that all students graduate with a clear plan and the critical thinking skills needed to succeed in college, trade school, or the career of their choice.

- Identify indicators and demonstrate measurable improvement across all indicators of achievement and equity in our schools, including academic growth and proficiency, increased access to pre-K, graduation rates, representation in advanced academics offerings, suspension, absenteeism and chronic truancy.
- Ensures equitable practices in discipline across the district.
- Advocate for and cultivate safe, engaging learning environments that fully support multilingual learners, and students with special needs and diverse learning styles.
- Build on the district's language justice work to intentionally create shared power, practice inclusion and dismantle traditional systems of oppression that have historically disenfranchised non-English speakers.
- Prioritize student voice to reduce absenteeism and chronic truancy, in particular for impacted populations.
- Continue to make intentional efforts to support our Black and Brown students and lead efforts to support the Board's Black and Hispanic Achievement Plan.
- Embrace and advocate for the district's student gender support plans and provide curriculum and books that reflect the diversity of our community, including our LGBTQIA+ students and families.

Attract, support, and retain outstanding leaders and staff

- Ensure that the district systemically recruits, develops, supports, and retains highly effective staff at every layer of the organization, with a particular emphasis on diversity, fair and equitable compensation, and culturally-responsive and equitable practices.
- Create working conditions where staff collaborate, feel seen, valued, and supported, with the resources to do their best work on behalf of the students they serve. This should result in the reduction of employee turnover rates and improvement of staff morale.
- Attract, cultivate, manage and develop a high-performing leadership team to achieve ambitious goals aligned with the district's strategic plan.
- Assess and ensure a strategic organizational structure that is optimized to provide efficient service, strategic problem solving and service mindset in support of each school's success.
- Model and foster conditions for professional growth and organizational learning through continuous feedback, honesty, and coaching. Provide tools and training that enable staff to acknowledge and mitigate their own implicit bias.
- Develop processes for feedback loops and authentic engagement with principals and educators, and set clear parameters for site-based decision-making.
- Build up a strong and diverse pipeline of educators into the district, filling vacancies, especially in high-need areas like our Exceptional Children (Special Education) roles and bilingual staff.
- Partner and collaborate with our employees, including but not limited to our employee associations (in particular the Durham Association of Educators), all of which are vital to our success.

Cultivate a culture that values growth, innovation and joy across schools

- Model a foundational belief in the limitless potential of our students.
- Cultivate an environment that brings joy to every classroom and engenders a growth mindset and a love of learning among educators, leaders, staff, and students.
- Enable creative and innovative problem solving at the classroom, school, and systems level.
- Build on the organization's past successes and commit to continuous improvement through analysis, inquiry, assessment of results, and alignment to the district's strategic plan.
- Seek out and encourage others to consider new, creative, and proven solutions that can help solve persistent and seemingly intractable challenges within the district.
- Transparently evaluate the district's efforts against our priorities and work proactively to plan and recommend pivots or midcourse corrections when needed.

See, value, and listen to our families and community

- Actively seek out voices of our community - especially those that have been historically excluded, disenfranchised or marginalized - as key informants and drivers of district priority-setting and decision-making.
- Instill trust in the district through the ways in which we authentically engage with community, speak with our families, and engage staff and students.
- Inspire and galvanize action across board members, administrators, teachers, parents, students and the broader education, civic, and philanthropic communities in support of the vision and strategy for student success.
- Welcome students as partners in the decision-making process, ensuring that students' voices and feedback are heard at all levels of the organization.
- Maintain consistent visibility and accessibility in our schools, in the community, and at key community events.
- Push back thoughtfully when needed to avoid distraction from core priorities in the interest of student success.
- Provide clear communication about the constraints and parameters guiding our work, distinguishing clearly where there is the opportunity for choice, and where parameters have been established by the state or law.
- Serve as a champion for public schools, rebuilding trust to reverse the current trend of declining enrollment and ensure that Durham Public Schools are the schools of choice for families, students and educators.

Steward the success, sustainability, and equity of the district's finances and operations

- Ensure the financial sustainability and equitable distribution of resources through the effective management of district finances.
- Work creatively to maximize resources and maintain focus on evidence-based practices that align with the strategic plan at the school and systems level.
- Direct the identification and expansion of funding opportunities through bonds, referendums, grants, and legislation.
- Prepare and submit to the Board a proposed annual budget reflecting the Board's defined goals, policies, priorities, and the district's strategic plan. Engage the community to help mold budget priorities.
- Manage the daily operations of the district within defined policy parameters, ensuring effective planning, supervision, execution and evaluation of the programs, services, and facilities of the district.
- Systematize key functions in the district to maximize efficiency, enhance productivity, eliminate silos, and increase access to necessary information for all internal and external stakeholders.
- Ensure effective use of technology and data systems for core human resource, finance, and operational functions.
- Advocate for resources at the city, county, and state level as needed for key efforts, such as universal pre-K.

Work in partnership with the Board, county, and regional leaders

- Work closely and openly with the Board and foster an open relationship and clear vision for role clarity and collaboration between the Board of Education and the Superintendent.
- Communicate and collaborate with all members of the board, keeping the Board up-to-date on developments, initiatives and issues in the district; provide leadership to enable the Board to function effectively.
- Monitor and provide recommendations for district administrative policies to be approved by the Board. Ensure adherence with federal and state laws and district policy.
- Provide the board with accurate and timely information that enables the board to appropriately perform its monitoring function.
- Act as liaison between the district and city, county, and state leadership, local colleges and universities, foundations, neighboring districts, and the US Dept of Education. Assume responsibility for effective public relations and for creating a cooperative working relationship between the schools and our local government.
- Continue to expand institutional partnerships that provide opportunities and resources to our students in alignment with our strategic plan.
- Collaborate with other LEA's and Superintendents to work in support of Public School needs across the state.

The Skills You'll Need to be Successful (The "How")

Collaborative Leader and Coalition Builder

- Values diverse perspectives as a means toward effective decision-making. Cultivates trust among stakeholders and leads by inviting diverse and divergent viewpoints into key conversations before establishing the direction forward.
- Communicates effectively, tailoring messages for each audience, context, and mode of communication.
- Partners effectively across organizational boundaries to achieve meaningful outcomes for students.
- Engages in collaborative decision-making and shares with stakeholders how their input informs district decisions.
- Transparently explains district shortfalls to demonstrate where and how improvement will be achieved.

Reflective Leader/Continuous Learner

- Approaches work with a lens toward continuous learning and continuous improvement. Is willing to openly admit mistakes and course correct when needed in support of the district's goals.
- Remains open to feedback and is able to decipher when it is important to stay the course toward organizational priorities, and when a pivot or change of direction is needed in order to be responsive to real-time data and information about the effectiveness of the district's efforts.
- Uses evidence-based methods to monitor key efforts and openly communicate outcomes and decisions made.
- Does not seek to make everyone happy all the time; rather works to seek resolutions, communicate clearly about what the district is learning, what key information is considered when making decisions, and how the district is moving forward on key efforts.
- Strives toward objectivity. Is willing to respond to criticism with integrity and clarity.
- Is willing to take measured risks to find innovative solutions and address difficult or long standing issues.

Strong racial equity lens

- Addresses matters of race, equity and bias in how decisions are made with clarity, confidence, humility, historical context, and empathy. Recognizes power dynamics that exist within the organization at all levels and works toward eliminating inequities through honest conversations and purposeful actions.
- Navigates systemic racism and other oppressive systems through intentional analysis and documented action; addresses systemic inequities to improve the experience, opportunities, and outcomes for students, teachers, staff, and families of color across the district.
- Fosters and promotes a culture of inclusion and a sense of belonging across the district, and commits to improving diversity, equity and inclusion practices in the district's planning, prioritization and implementation of key initiatives.
- Creates authentic, meaningful relationships across lines of difference (race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic background, LGBTQIA+ status, etc.) both internally and externally.
- Models social and cross-cultural empathy with authenticity and humility.
- Brings an intersectional lens to their work, and demonstrates familiarity with multiple forms of systemic discrimination, including that related to legal status, language, religion, intersectionality, gender, race, and socio-economic status.

Effective supporter and developer of leaders, educators, and staff

- Ability to motivate and form authentic connections with staff, students and community.
- Willing to engage in the most active or difficult parts of the work with our educators.
- Willing to show up in diverse spaces with different layers of the workforce (e.g., riding the school buses, serving lunch, working in classrooms) to engender trust and open communication and shared understanding with all parts of our employee community.

Systems Perspective

- Displays the will and skill to interrupt inequitable processes and systems through honest dialogue and shifting practices; goes beyond recognition of racial disparities to take responsibility and accountability for making things just.
- Analyzes complex situations and data, before making decisions, and then sets clear metrics for success, monitors progress and honestly acknowledges mistakes when something does not go as planned.
- Prioritizes competing demands and willingly makes difficult decisions – and says no – when necessary in the best interest of the district as a whole.
- Excellent organization, planning, and execution of complex initiatives. Is able to plan through the successful completion of short-and long-term priorities, backwards mapping when necessary to ensure that timelines and actions are successfully accomplished. Identifies clear ownership, tasks and ensures follow through of organizational commitments.
- Operates at micro and macro levels, paying acute attention to detail while balancing the overarching goals with detailed steps to achieve the district’s objectives and priorities.

Desired Qualifications

- Demonstrated track record of success with improving student and data-driven decision-making, ideally in an urban public school district setting.
- Deeply understands the unique Durham community and its history, and is committed to becoming an engaged and longstanding member of the community.
- Experience with successful language justice work in particular with immigrants and newcomers strongly preferred.
- Administrative experience leading an organization matching the scale and complexity of an urban school system; includes managing a leadership team supporting multiple units or organizations.
- Successful experience working in diverse economic, multicultural, and multilingual communities and environments. Proven cultural competence skills with a history of inclusive and relevant equity practices.
- Evidence of leading large scale change in urban public school contexts.
- Experience and successful track record of collaboration with educator, parent and community organizations, and employee associations.
- Experience working in conjunction with a board to identify priorities, establish goals, monitor progress, and produce outcomes in service to stakeholders.
- Exceptional written, oral, and visual communications skills and a desire to develop and maintain deep relationships with a variety of diverse constituents.
- Experience managing sustainable finances for a large and complex organization.
- Meets [eligibility criteria](#) to serve as a Superintendent in the State of North Carolina:
 - Must hold a North Carolina principal’s and superintendent’s license issued under the authority of the State Board of Education (NCSBE)
 - Advanced graduate-level (sixth-year) or doctoral license in school administration. **OR**
 - At least a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university and five years of leadership or managerial experience considered relevant by the employing local Board of Education.

How to Apply

We invite qualified candidates for the role of Superintendent at Durham Public Schools to express interest by submitting a Resume and Cover Letter at: <https://apply.workable.com/almaadvisorygroup/j/1C3DA0F1C3/>.

Salary and Benefits

Salary for this integral leadership position is competitive, and commensurate with prior experience. In addition, a comprehensive benefits package will be included in the ultimate offer for the selected candidate. We look forward to discussing details with you as the interview process progresses.