

Maryland State Board of Education National Search for State Superintendent of Schools

PREPARED FOR GREENWOOD/ASHER
ASSOCIATES

Background & Methodology

- InsideOut Insights conducted a hybrid quantitative/qualitative asynchronous conversation and survey from December 22, 2020 through January 19, 2021.
- A total of 229 constituents participated in the 30-minute study, conducted as follows:



- New answers enter the database
- Unaided part of the process

- Before new answers leave the database (and enter the answer pool), they are checked for uniqueness and grammar

- Respondents react to answers provided by other respondents
- Measured on 3 point scale

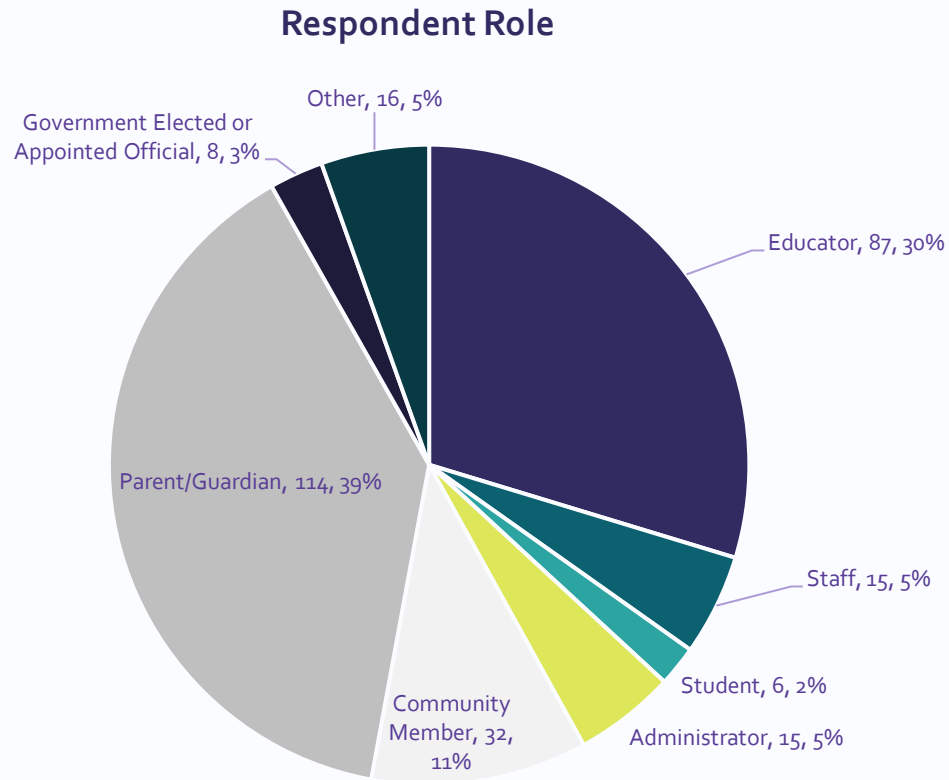
- Similar answers are replaced with a representative answer
- Answer pool is consolidated toward unique answers representing the breadth of solution

- The process of building a "consensus answer" to a research question is dynamic
- Answers are built entirely from respondent-provided statements
- The experience of each respondent is unique

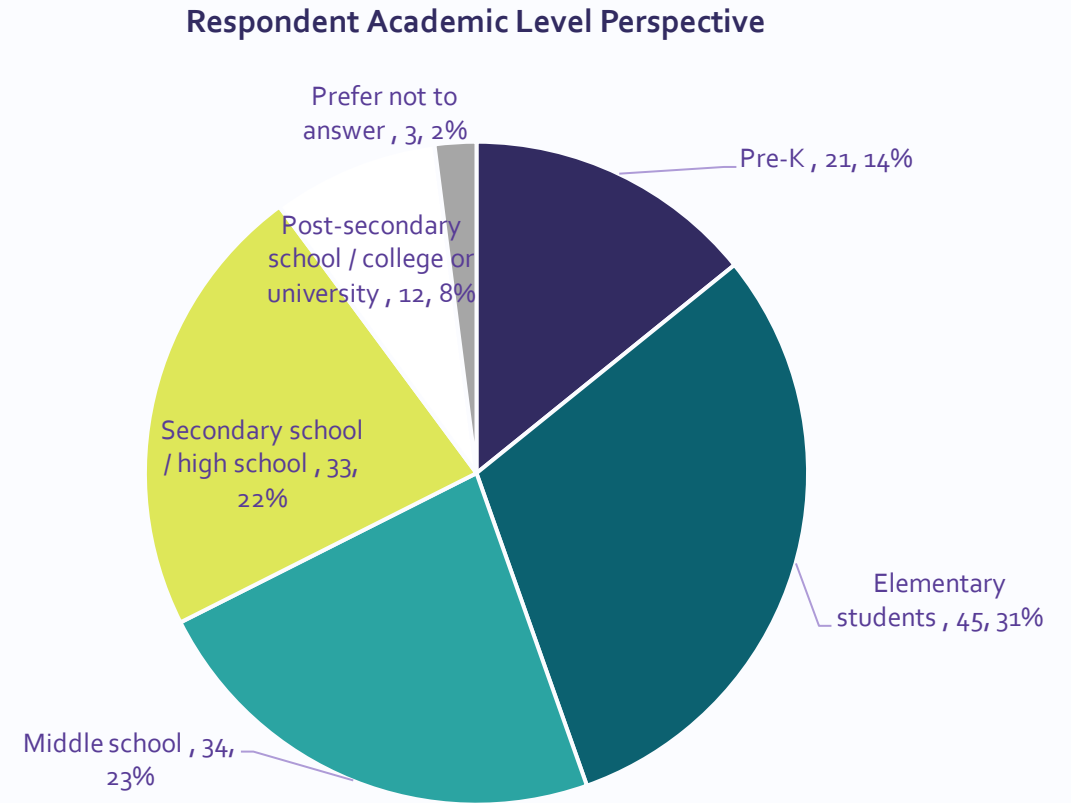
About Our Methodology



Breakdown of Respondents



N=229



N=148

Q: Which of the following best describes your role? You can select up to two roles.

Q: Which of the following academic levels best describes the perspective you bring in this role? (You can select more than one.)

Key Findings

Maryland's diversity drives important desired State Superintendent traits.

Desired Leadership Traits in State Superintendent

Strengths of the State of Maryland

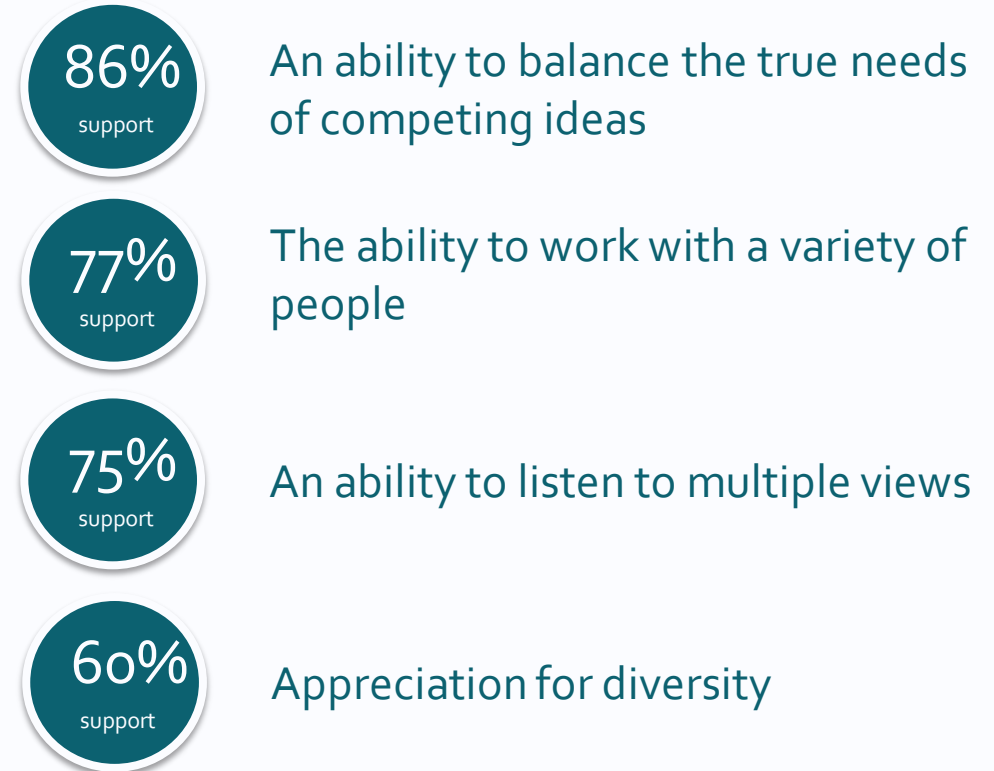
88%
support While we are a smaller state than most, our Counties have very diverse public education needs

79%
support Maryland is geographically diverse with mountains, rural farmland, urban centers, and ocean beaches

74%
support Maryland is greatly diverse in ethnicity

Strengths of Maryland Public Schools

83%
support Diversity of students



N=229

Q: What do you see as the main strength(s) of the state of Maryland that distinguish it from other states?

Q: What do you see as the main strengths of the Maryland Public School System?

Q: What LEADERSHIP QUALITIES do you believe will most contribute to the success of the next State Superintendent?

The ideal candidate:



CREATES A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

Constituents want a candidate who excels at collaboration, transparency, and diplomacy, helping them to feel included and appreciated.



UNDERSTANDS THE SYSTEM FROM THE INSIDE

It is critical for a State Superintendent to have walked in the shoes of those they are managing, as well as to have had prior educational leadership experience.



LEVERAGES RESOURCES APPROPRIATELY

Constituents want to see a State Superintendent who excels at high-level management and delegates to the experts as their disposal, rather than trying to be an expert themselves.



VALUES STUDENT SUCCESS ABOVE ALL

Most importantly, a candidate must have proven (and continue to demonstrate) that the driving principal behind all decisions is the well-being of the students.



The constituents of the Maryland Public School system believe themselves to be a valuable and knowledgeable part of the system.

The ideal State Superintendent is one who is able to listen to their expertise and make them feel heard and valued while still advancing education on a strategic level.

Detailed Findings

THE CURRENT CLIMATE

Maryland's top perceived strengths center on diversity: geographic, cultural, and ethnic.

The Main Strengths of the State of Maryland

88%
support

While we are a smaller state than most, our Counties have very diverse public education needs

65%
support

Maryland is greatly diverse in geography

79%
support

Maryland is geographically diverse with mountains, rural farmland, urban centers, and ocean beaches*

63%
support

Diversity of constituents

74%
support

Maryland is greatly diverse in ethnicity

63%
support

Diversity of student body

70%
support

It is very diverse

61%
support

Access to education for various backgrounds, including rural communities

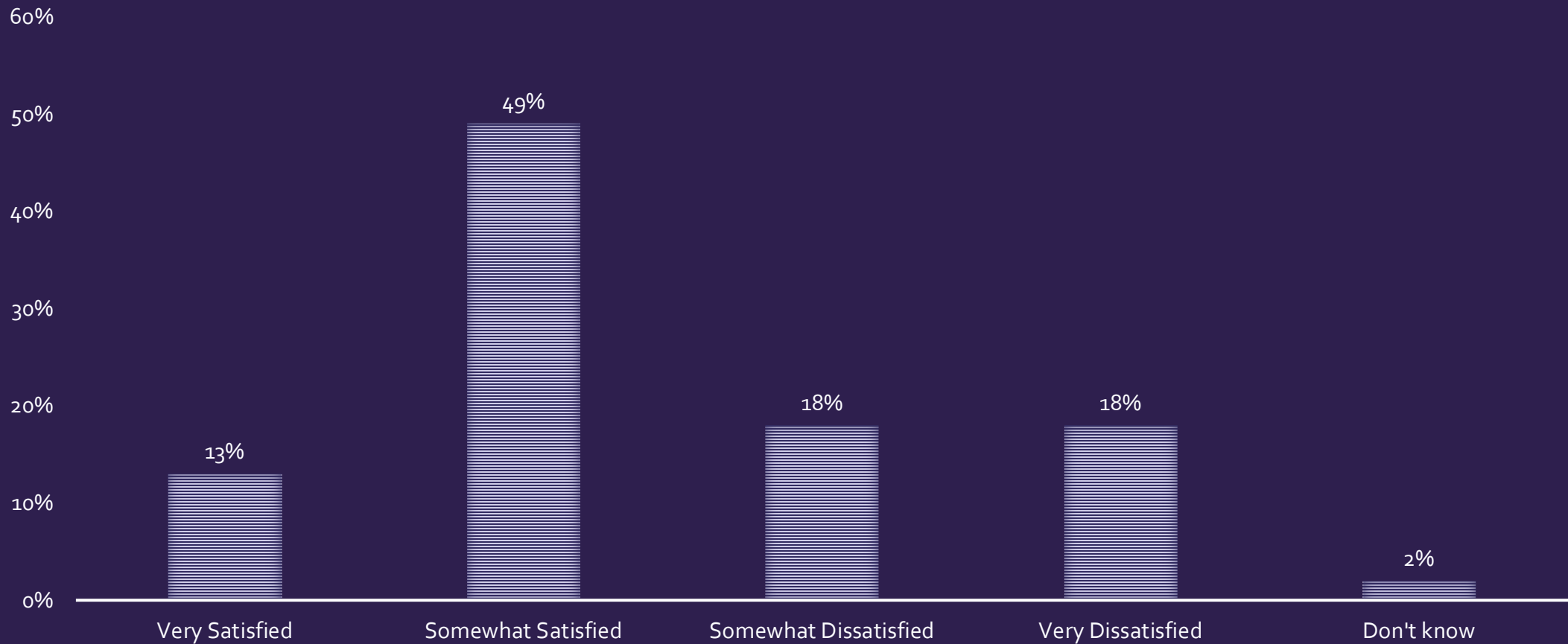
66%
support

Maryland is greatly diverse in culture



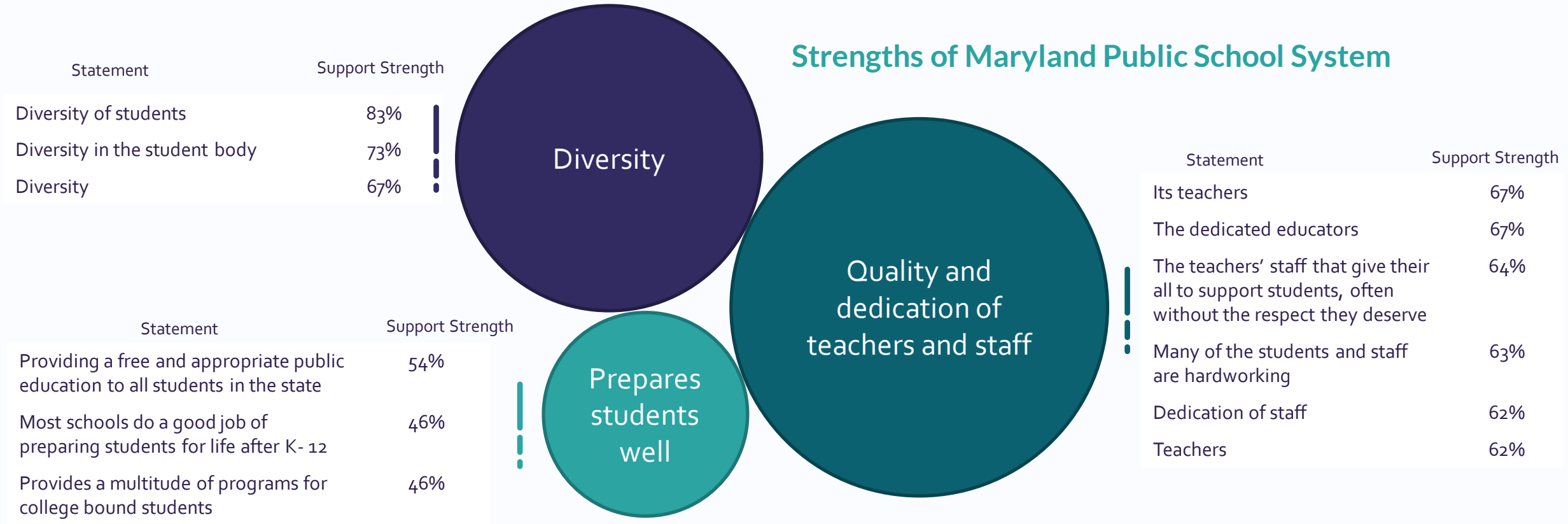
The need to recognize this diversity is reflected throughout study responses

The Maryland Public School system is seen as largely successful, with the majority of respondents being somewhat satisfied overall.



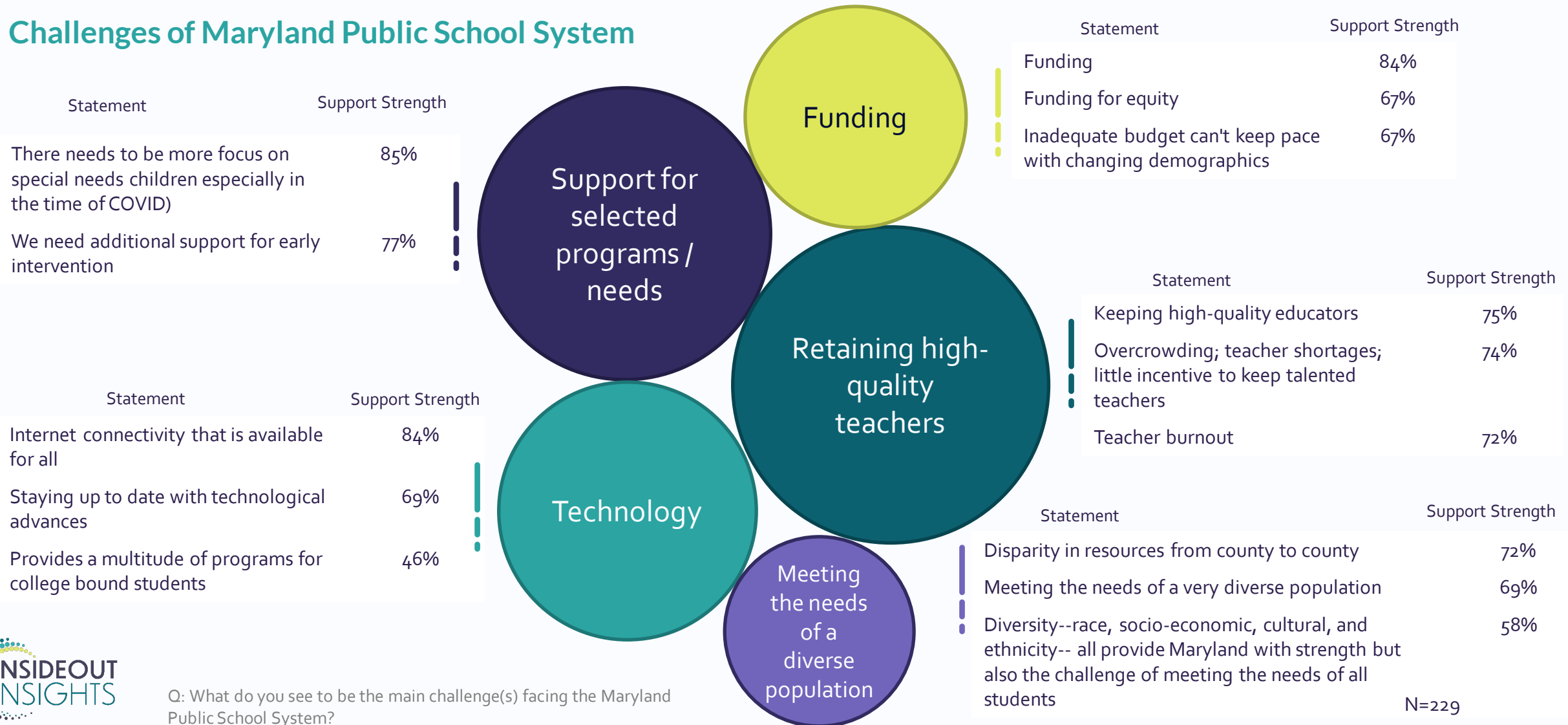
Constituents appreciate the high-quality education and diversity of the student body within Maryland Public Schools.

Strengths of Maryland Public School System



Despite high satisfaction rates, the Maryland Public School system faces a number of significant challenges.

Challenges of Maryland Public School System



Q: What do you see to be the main challenge(s) facing the Maryland Public School System?

N=229

Opportunities to improve include both tangible and intangible elements.

Statement	Support Strength
We need more support for those with special needs	85%
More access to early education (pre-k)	75%
We need more support for those with disabilities	62%

Statement	Support Strength
Better diversity training	72%
Ensuring all students have access to a high-quality educational experience*	67%
More equitable funding	58%



Statement	Support Strength
Better buildings for old buildings	83%
Need to replace the very old buildings	77%
Rebuild the old school buildings	76%
Some buildings are very old	76%

Statement	Support Strength
Teacher and other staff shortages and staff retention remain an ongoing challenge for education quality*	74%
Overcrowding; teacher shortages; little incentive to keep talented teachers	74%
Invest in our teachers	60%

Statement	Support Strength
Coordinate better between State agencies for communication	70%
Increased communication between the MSDE and the community including seeking input from all constituencies to inform the System's work*	64%
Asking for teacher and community input or seats on the board	62%

*Pre-seeded statement (created by MSDE)

Q: What are the ways the Maryland Public School System could be doing a better job meeting the needs of their constituents?

N=229



Detailed Findings

DESIRED CANDIDATE ATTRIBUTES

In choosing a new State Superintendent, constituents focus on leadership qualities that highlight their need to be heard and included.

Top Leadership Qualities Desired in State Superintendent

Caring & Empathetic



Empathy, organized, good communicator

87%

Caring, organized, good communicator

85%

Collaborative



An ability to balance the true needs of competing ideas

86%

Collaboration with all stakeholders, knowledgeable, ethical, problem solver, crisis management, and caring

85%

The ability to work with a variety of people

77%

Trustworthy



High integrity, honesty and ethics*

85%

Honesty, diversity, non-biased, not controlled by others

85%

Open & Inclusive



An ability to balance the true needs of competing idea

86%

Someone who can admit our faults and failures and create a vision with a plan

83%

Listening

81%

Transparent



Transparency with practices

85%

Need transparency

82%

*Pre-seeded statement (created by MSDE)

N=229

Q: What LEADERSHIP QUALITIES do you believe will most contribute to the success of the next State Superintendent?

Constituents want to see a State Superintendent with a range of interpersonal skills along with strategic strength.

Top Talents Desired in State Superintendent

Empathy

Statement	Support Strength
Listening	86%
Cares about students*	85%
Being able to relate and have compassion	83%



Excellent Communication

Statement	Support Strength
Excellent communication skills*	85%
Strong communicator	85%

Diplomacy

Statement	Support Strength
Someone who is a team builder	85%
Diplomacy, fostering an open attitude of respect for the community	84%
Accessible, approachable and visible*	79%

Critical Thinking

Statement	Support Strength
High- level problem solving skills	85%
Strategic thinker	85%
Analytical	78%




*Pre-seeded statement (created by MSDE)

Q: What TALENTS do you believe will most contribute to the success of the next State Superintendent?

N=229

In constituents' minds, the State Superintendent should have extensive first-hand experience working as and with the people they are managing.

Top Experience Desired in State Superintendent

		Statement	Support Strength
Experience with diverse audiences 		Experience with diverse groups of staff	85%
		Education background working with a diverse population	81%
Previous experience as a public school educator 		A teacher	81%
		Has been a public-school teacher	79%
		A superintendent MUST have a background in education especially	77%
Extensive leadership experience 		Knowledge of policy making	76%
		Previous school or district leadership, analytical, fiscal acumen	72%
		Significant amount of years in leadership roles	72%

N=229

Q: What BACKGROUND and/or EXPERIENCE do you believe will most contribute to the success of the next State Superintendent?

Detailed Findings

SUPERINTENDENT PRIORITIES

Constituents want to see a State Superintendent focus on improving the student experience through a number of priorities:

TOP PRIORITIES FOR STATE SUPERINTENDENT

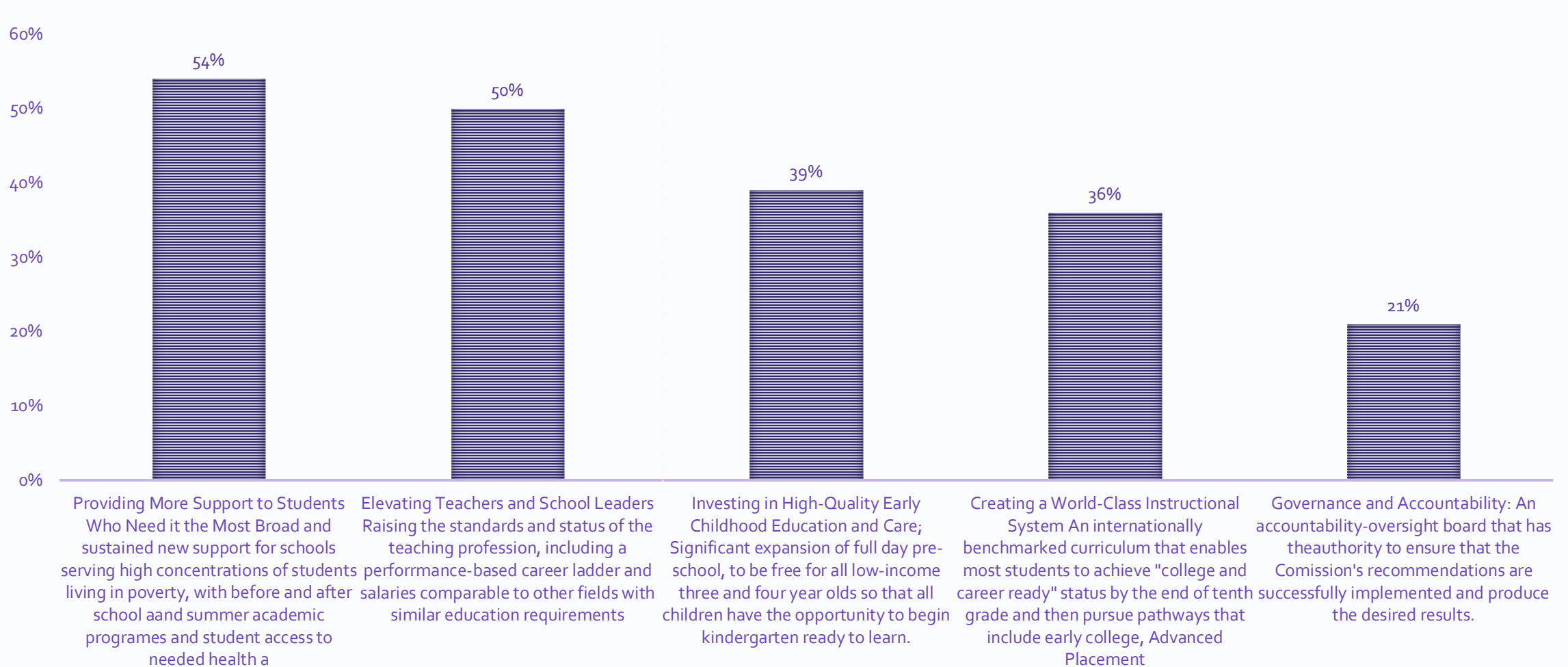


Statement	Support Strength
Adequate funding for schools	88%
Provide every student with highly effective teachers, educational leaders, and all other school personnel necessary to achieve success consistent with measurable goals*	87%
Covid recovery	81%
Building trust, budgets, technology to be up to date and available for student learning, maintaining quality teachers	80%
Seeing to the social/emotional well being of all students post pandemic. Bringing MD education into the 21st century. Ensuring every student is met and taught to their specific level. True equity	79%
Fixing these horrible buildings	78%
Funding, over testing	78%
Serve as an effective liaison with local, state, and federal educational agencies and organizations*	78%
Fighting for the funding necessary to support the school system	74%
All our children deserve quality educations	73%
	n= 229

*Pre-seeded statement (created by MSDE)

Q: What do you see as the major priorities facing the next State Superintendent?

Aided priorities from the Kirwan Commission align with unaided priorities: focusing directly on the student experience.



Q: Of the five major policy areas identified by the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission), which two (2) areas do you believe should be a priority for the next State Superintendent?

N=229

In order to excel at online learning, Maryland teachers and family must be supported with necessary technology and training.

Statement	Support Strength
Have reliable and affordable internet for all. Technology divide	87%
All students need to have equal access to tools (computer, internet access, support) required for successful transition to remote learning and digital solutions*	87%
Equitable access to working technology for teachers	87%

01



Equitable access to technology

- For students
- For teachers
- Internet
- Necessary hardware



02

Training and resources

- For teachers to teach in a new way
- For parents to support at-home learning

Statement	Support Strength
Supporting parents with strategies to support their students who are engaged in remote learning*	78%
The teachers need REAL training opportunities	74%
Well-trained teachers	72%

*Pre-seeded statement (created by MSDE)

Understanding and valuing digital solutions will be important for the next State Superintendent.

- Many think that **online learning**, in at least some capacity, **is here to stay**.

"Classes are making a shift to be more online. Modern times require modern solutions."
Educator

"Agree. Digital learning is here to stay. Embrace the potential."
Parent/Guardian

- This means that it is important for the State Superintendent to be able to understand the needs of teachers and students enough to understand the issues, but **specific experience can be outsourced**.

"Not specific, but experience that affords them a comprehensive understanding."
Administrator

"It is important to have basic qualifications but not expertise. The ability to synthesize is key."
Community Member

"May not need to understand the technology, but must understand its role, importance."
Government Official

Q: How important is it to you that the next State Superintendent have qualifications or expertise specific to online learning and digital solutions? Please explain your answer.

Support for Pre-Seeded Statements

Current Situation

N=229

State of Maryland Strengths	Support
Maryland is geographically diverse with mountains, rural farmland, urban centers, and ocean beaches:	79%
Diverse population of the state:	58%
Proximity to the nation's capital:	50%
Highly educated state with a high percentage of Marylanders holding a bachelor's degree or higher and with a high concentration of STEM professionals, opportunities abound for people in science and technology:	47%
Access to world-class healthcare:	30%
Main Strengths of Maryland Schools	
Maryland citizens support a strong public educational program:	44%
Passionate education employees, support staff, teachers and administrators in every school district:	42%
Higher education in state is nationally ranked and recognized:	33%
Location and size—Maryland has 24 Local School Districts:	22%
Engaged legislature and governor; very supportive of education reform and funding education:	10%
Ways MPS Could Do Better	
Teacher and other staff shortages and staff retention remain an ongoing challenge for education quality:	74%
Ensuring all students have access to a high-quality educational experience:	67%
Increased communication between the MSDE and the community including seeking input from all constituencies to inform the System's work:	64%
MSDE staff vacancies, salaries and working conditions are current challenges in need of a long-range improvement plan to recruit and retain high quality employees:	40%
MSDE finance and procurement services are challenges:	39%
Technology at the MSDE level is behind the local school districts and needs immediate improvement:	34%
State Superintendent responsibilities include numerous committees and assignments that detract from strategic and operational issues at MSDE	n/a*
MPS Main Challenges	
Changing educational priorities as a result of the Kirwan Commission and the Blueprint for Education will challenge the Superintendent, MSBE, MSDE and local School districts:	67%
Diversity--race, socio-economic, cultural, and ethnicity-- all provide Maryland with strength but also the challenge of meeting the needs of all students:	58%
Accountability measures regarding student progression to grade-level expectation – how are they being measured:	54%
Strategies for remediation for students who are not making adequate progress:	42%
MSDE and the Accountability Board roles in governance, responsibility and collaboration will be key components of the new Superintendent's tenure:	36%
Increase academic performance and accountability for all its students, especially for low-achieving schools:	29%
Maryland's size and governmental structure increase the political complexity of the State Superintendent's role:	24%

Desired Superintendent Attributes

N=229

Leadership Qualities	Support
High integrity, honesty and ethics:	85%
Coalition builder—inspires through vision and can communicate and be the Maryland pinnacle spokesperson for promoting Maryland public education:	69%
Ability to analyze existing programs and reallocate resources:	67%
Visionary:	66%
Political acumen:	33%
Talents	
Cares about students:	85%
Excellent communication skills:	85%
Accessible, approachable and visible:	79%
Transparent:	62%
Servant leader:	45%
Background & Experience	
Possess teacher, school administrator and District superintendent experience:	62%
Experience in facilitating efforts in school improvement/school reform, diversity, equity, and inclusion, student-centered learning:	62%
Direct experience dealing with crisis management and coordinating with federal and state agencies when necessary:	60%
Demonstrate technology experience that includes all aspects; enterprise/business systems, infrastructure, instructional technology and preparing Maryland to transform to digital disruption for improving education:	50%
Demonstrated ability to build and maintain a high-performance organizational culture of appropriate innovation and risk-taking:	49%
Direct experience working within the State of Maryland Public School System:	35%

Superintendent Priorities

Major Priorities	Support
Provide every student with highly effective teachers, educational leaders, and all other school personnel necessary to achieve success consistent with measurable goals:	87%
Serve as an effective liaison with local, state, and federal educational agencies and organizations:	78%
Address the learning achievement gap and prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts:	66%
Ensure a safe learning environment for all, including supporting proactive efforts (e.g., mental health support, social/emotional learning, etc.) and equitable disciplinary practices:	63%
Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, legislators, business interests, and community leaders:	60%
Accelerate/overcome the learning loss and other educational impact/effects from the pandemic:	54%
Remote Learning	
All students need to have equal access to tools (computer, internet access, support) required for successful transition to remote learning and digital solutions:	87%
Supporting parents with strategies to support their students who are engaged in remote learning:	78%
Innovation in integrating technologies, instructional strategies, and emerging skills that enable all students to reach their full potential in a globally competitive environment:	73%
Educators need to be provided with necessary training to transition to remote and digital learning:	62%
Necessary oversight to ensure that online courses are providing equal learning experiences to in-person classes:	45%

Recommendations for Board of Education

Most Important to Keep in Mind During Search	Support
Needs of various regions of the State of Maryland are taken into account during the search:	40%
Open communication regarding the progress of the search:	34%
Need to work closely with legislative bodies and political leaders during the search process to ensure the next State Superintendent has their support:	17%
On-boarding support to ensure the success of the next State Superintendent:	14%

Respondent Demographics

How satisfied are you with the Maryland Public School System overall (as a state system)?

	All completes Completes	Administrator Completes	Community Member Completes	Educator Completes	Government Official Completes	Other Role Completes	Parent/Guardian/Student Completes	Staff Completes	Student Completes
Very Satisfied	13%	20%	16%	13%	13%	6%	12%	13%	33%
Somewhat Satisfied	49%	60%	38%	57%	63%	63%	45%	53%	50%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	18%	7%	25%	21%	13%	19%	16%	13%	0%
Very Dissatisfied	18%	13%	22%	9%	0%	13%	24%	20%	17%
Don't know	2%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	3%	0%	0%
n	229	15	32	87	8	16	119	15	6

Which of the following best describes your highest attained education level?

	All completes Support	Administrator Completes	Community Member Completes	Educator Completes	Government Official Completes	Other Role Completes	Parent/Guardian Completes	Staff Completes	Student Completes
Less Than A High School Diploma	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	17%
High School Degree or Equivalent	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%
Some college	3%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Associate degree	4%	0%	3%	2%	0%	6%	7%	7%	0%
Bachelor's Degree	19%	7%	22%	9%	25%	19%	30%	7%	17%
Postgraduate degree (Master's, Doctorate, etc.)	67%	93%	75%	84%	75%	69%	53%	80%	0%
Other	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	17%
Prefer not to answer	4%	0%	0%	2%	0%	6%	3%	7%	50%
n	229	15	32	87	8	16	114	15	6

How informed do you consider yourself to be, regarding the roles and responsibilities of the State School Superintendent?

	All completes Completes	Administrator Completes	Community Member Completes	Educator Completes	Government Official Completes	Other Role Completes	Parent /Guardian Completes	Staff Completes	Student Completes
Very Well- Informed	30%	27%	28%	25%	75%	50%	27%	40%	17%
Somewhat Well-Informed	51%	40%	59%	53%	13%	50%	53%	53%	67%
Not Well- Informed	19%	33%	13%	22%	13%	0%	20%	7%	17%
	229	15	32	87	8	16	114	15	6

Of the five major policy areas identified by the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission), which two (2) areas do you believe should be a priority for the next State Superintendent?

	All completes Support	Administrator Support	Community Member Support	Educator Support	Government Official Support	Other Role Support	Parent/Guardian Support	Staff Support	Student Support
Investing in High-Quality Early Childhood Education and Care; Significant expansion of full day pre-school, to be free for all low-income three and four year olds so that all children have the opportunity to begin kindergarten ready to learn.	39%	27%	50%	41%	25%	50%	38%	33%	33%
Elevating Teachers and School Leaders Raising the standards and status of the teaching profession, including a performance-based career ladder and salaries comparable to other fields with similar education requirements	50%	60%	44%	59%	88%	19%	53%	47%	50%
Creating a World-Class Instructional System An internationally benchmarked curriculum that enables most students to achieve "college and career ready" status by the end of tenth grade and then pursue pathways that include early college, Advanced Placement courses, and/or a rigorous technical education leading to industry -recognized credentials and high-paying jobs.	36%	27%	34%	31%	0%	44%	35%	40%	50%
Providing More Support to Students Who Need it the Most Broad and sustained new support for schools serving high concentrations of students living in poverty, with before and after school aand summer academic programes and student access to needed health and social services, and increased support for English learner and special education students.	54%	60%	50%	56%	63%	38%	51%	67%	33%
Governance and Accountability: An accountability-oversight board that has the authority to ensure that the Comission's recommendations are successfully implemented and produce the desired results.	21%	27%	22%	13%	25%	50%	24%	13%	33%
n	229	15	32	87	8	16	119	15	6

Please indicate which state or local system you're currently employed with:

Answer	Support	Completes
Maryland State Department of Education	11%	11
Allegany County School System	2%	2
Anne Arundel County School System	4%	4
Baltimore City School System	3%	3
Baltimore County School System	5%	5
Calvert County School System	2%	2
Caroline County School System	1%	1
Carroll County School System	3%	3
Cecil County School System	1%	1
Charles County School System	0%	0
Dorchester County School System	1%	1
Frederick County School System	3%	3
Garrett County School System	1%	1
Harford County School System	0%	0
Howard County School System	12%	12
Kent County School System	0%	0
Montgomery County School System	6%	6
Prince George's County School System	31%	31
Queen Anne's County School System	2%	2
Somerset County School System	0%	0
Independent School	0%	0
Prefer Not to say	11%	11

What best describes your ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

	All completes Support	Administrator Completes	Community Member Completes	Educator Completes	Government Official Completes	Other Role Completes	Parent/Guardian Completes	Staff Completes	Student Completes
Black or African American	21%	27%	18%	26%	11%	6%	18%	18%	14%
White	54%	53%	52%	52%	56%	59%	52%	53%	29%
Asian	3%	0%	0%	4%	11%	0%	3%	0%	14%
Hispanic, Latino or Spanish Origin	3%	7%	3%	0%	0%	18%	3%	0%	0%
Native American or Alaska Native	3%	0%	3%	3%	0%	0%	1%	6%	14%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Other	5%	0%	6%	2%	11%	6%	5%	6%	0%
Prefer not to answer	16%	13%	18%	11%	11%	12%	16%	18%	29%
	242	15	33	92	9	17	119	17	7