

## **SECTION 2: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

Community input to inform the superintendent search process was sought through community focus groups and an online survey. Over 700 people participated in the needs-assessment process. Respondents were asked to focus on the future of the Acton-Boxborough Public Schools. All participants are to be commended for giving their time and thoughts to this important task.

Participants in focus groups were presented the following two prompts:

- What are the qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge and experience you desire in a new Superintendent of Schools?
- What do you see as the immediate challenges and tasks the new Superintendent should focus upon in his or her first six to twelve months in the position?

The responses for each role-alike group – parents/guardians, community members, administrators, faculty & staff, and students – were grouped into priority areas and are provided in this section of the report.

## **PARENTS/GUARDIANS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

**FOCUS GROUP PROMPT 1: I think the new Superintendent should possess the following qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge and experience...**

### **QUALITIES, CHARACTERISTICS, SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE**

A superintendent who...

Priorities (very important):

- Is proficient at communication with wider community
- Is able to obtain and retain talent and build team
- Can walk line between inspiring and ensuring accountability
- Is able to challenge the status quo, make hard decisions and build consensus
- Has courage and integrity and values transparency
- Is a bold visionary with ideas that are future focused; is forward-thinking
- Is knowledgeable about current educational and technical trends
- Has vision for district with students as #1
- Understands the different needs of students

Other (important):

- Has good understanding of finance and is fiscally responsible
- Is an advocate for students
- Values community partnerships
- Understands inclusion strategies

### **EXPERIENCE**

A superintendent who has ...

Priorities (very important):

- Significant classroom and administrative experience
- Led a district through building projects
- Developed programs and opportunities that meet the diverse learning needs of all students
- Experience keeping a high achieving school district competitive
- Organized processes that lead to early buy-in of constituents driven by norms of integrity, transparency, stakeholder involvement and high standards of excellence
- Developed budgets with a clear focus on students
- Made and implemented difficult decisions
- Experience with other cultures and preferably internationally

- A track record on addressing student social/emotional issues; worked on balance and wellness for students

Other (important):

- Experience with cultural competency
- Promoted academic excellence while mitigating undue pressure on students
- Has demonstrated intellectual rigor that has led to a global perspective and approach
- Experience implementing consistently School Committee policies

## **ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS FROM PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district?

*(Below are the five qualities/skills/attributes chosen most often by parents/guardians.)*

I would like a leader who...

1. Possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership
2. Has an appreciation for the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students and has an understanding of the development and implementation of support and intervention strategies to meet those needs
3. Has the commitment to supervise and evaluate school programs in the spirit of continuous improvement; has understanding of educational practices, research and national/state/local initiatives; has the ability to frame issues for discussion, reach timely decisions and implement change
4. Has the ability and insight to recruit and retain high quality staff; has strong personnel management practices and understanding of the collective bargaining process.
5. Uses a systematic approach to managing and improving the schools; has excellent organizational skills, working knowledge of school law and proven ability to resolve organizational conflicts.

## **ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district?

*(Below are the five qualities/skills/attributes chosen most often by community members.)*

I would like a leader who...

1. Possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership
2. Has a strong working knowledge of school finance, including budget development and management; has the ability to effectively communicate regarding budgetary issues with the School Committee, staff, community and local municipal officials; has clear understanding of federal, state, and local funding issues.
3. Will be visible in schools, aware of current issues and activities in the schools and show an interest in community affairs.
4. Is able to motivate, lead, guide and direct people; is committed to implementing the mission statement and vision statement of the school system.
5. Has an appreciation for the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students and has an understanding of the development and implementation of support and intervention strategies to meet those needs.

**FOCUS GROUP PROMPT 2: What are the immediate challenges and tasks the new Superintendent should focus upon in the first six to twelve months in the position?**

The new superintendent should:

Priorities (very important):

- Build trust and repair relationships with the School Committee, faculty, community and Town officials
- Lead school building projects
- Analyze and make recommendations regarding school choice in Acton-Boxborough
- Look at equity issues including outcomes, physical spaces available, elementary school cultures, PTO funding, school population differences e.g. economically disadvantaged
- Plan for and work with changing population, economically and culturally (increasing ELL and low income populations)
- Revisit regional agreement

Other (important):

- Address problem of drug use among students
- Examine finances of proposed decisions
- Examine accessibility and inclusion within district

## **ADMINISTRATORS**

**FOCUS GROUP PROMPT 1: I think the new Superintendent should possess the following qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge and experience...**

### **QUALITIES, CHARACTERISTICS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS**

A superintendent who...

Priorities (very important):

- Has the ability to manage processes and also make decisions
- Has intellectual gravitas
- Takes time to learn and understand the community

Other (important):

- Is a big picture person who can follow through
- Has a sense of humor
- Has strong communication skills

### **EXPERIENCE**

A superintendent who has ...

Priorities (very important):

- Central Office experience
- Led change efforts successfully

Other (important):

- Building-based administrative experience
- Budget and finance experience, preferably at a regional school district
- Experience with high needs populations

### **ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS FROM ADMINISTRATORS**

Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district?

*(Below are the five qualities/skills/attributes chosen most often by administrators.)*

I would like a leader who...

1. Possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership
2. Has an appreciation for the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students and has an understanding of the development and implementation of support and intervention strategies to meet those needs
3. Has the commitment to supervise and evaluate school programs in the spirit of continuous improvement; has understanding of educational practices, research and national/state/local initiatives; has the ability to frame issues for discussion, reach timely decisions and implement change
4. Will be visible in schools, aware of current issues and activities in the schools and show an interest in community affairs
5. Uses a systematic approach to managing and improving the schools; has excellent organizational skills, working knowledge of school law and proven ability to resolve organizational conflicts

**FOCUS GROUP PROMPT 2: What are the immediate challenges and tasks the new Superintendent should focus upon in the first three years in the position?**

The new superintendent should:

Priorities (very important):

- Examine open enrollment at the elementary level and understand the pros and cons of very independent elementary schools
- Be aware of and deal with often very split opinions on issues (51-49)
- Support a culture of equity

Other (important):

- Be able to balance tension around differences in perspectives on purposes of schooling

## FACULTY and STAFF

**FOCUS GROUP PROMPT 1: I think the new Superintendent should possess the following qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge and experience...**

### **QUALITIES, CHARACTERISTICS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS**

A superintendent who...

Priorities (very important):

- Values schools' uniqueness yet able to unify all as a district
- Values teachers and understands teaching challenges
- Makes personal connections and builds relationships

Other (important):

- Strong communicator

### **EXPERIENCE**

A superintendent who has ...

Priorities (very important):

- Experience prioritizing initiatives and implementing within a reasonable, realistic timeline
- Has worked with a diverse population
- Has worked in a high performing district

Other (important):

- Is able to allocate resources based on student needs

### **ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS FROM FACULTY AND STAFF**

Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district?

*(Below are the five qualities/skills/attributes chosen most often by faculty/staff.)*

I would like a leader who...

1. Possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership

2. Has an appreciation for the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students and has an understanding of the development and implementation of support and intervention strategies to meet those needs
3. Will be visible in schools, aware of current issues and activities in the schools and show an interest in community affairs
4. Is able to motivate, lead, guide and direct people; is committed to implementing the mission statement and vision statement of the school system
5. Is able to communicate clearly both verbally and in writing

**FOCUS GROUP PROMPT 2: What are the immediate challenges and tasks the new Superintendent should focus upon in the first six to twelve months in the position?**

The new superintendent should:

Priorities (very important):

- Improve community relations among parents, Town officials, taxpayers
- Engage and work constructively with a changing population in Acton-Boxborough: cultural and economic
- Be able to work with the School Committee

Other (important):

- Balance push for change and push for status-quo



## STUDENTS

**FOCUS GROUP PROMPT 1: I think the new Superintendent should possess the following qualities, characteristics, skills, knowledge and experience...**

### **QUALITIES, CHARACTERISTICS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

A superintendent who...

Priorities (very important):

- Cares about students
- Is flexible and open to change
- Is a good communicator with students and everyone
- Understands the pressure on students

Other (important):

- Is willing to stay long term
- Proactive

### **EXPERIENCE**

A superintendent who has ...

Priorities (very important):

- Been a strong leader
- Experience working directly with students
- Worked in a large district

Other (important):

- Experience as a Superintendent and/or in other administrative roles

### **ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS FROM OTHERS INCLUDING STUDENTS**

Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district?

*(Below are the five qualities/skills/attributes chosen most often by others including students.)*

I would like a leader who...

1. Possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership
2. Uses a systematic approach to managing and improving the schools; has excellent organizational skills, working knowledge of school law and proven ability to resolve organizational conflicts
3. Has the ability and insight to recruit and retain high quality staff; has strong personnel management practices and understanding of the collective bargaining process
4. Has a strong working knowledge of school finance, including budget development and management; has the ability to effectively communicate regarding budgetary issues with the School Committee, staff, community and local municipal officials; has clear understanding of federal, state, and local funding issues
5. Is able to motivate, lead, guide and direct people; is committed to implementing the mission statement and vision statement of the school system

**FOCUS GROUP PROMPT 2: What are the immediate challenges and tasks the new Superintendent should focus upon in the first six to twelve months in the position?**

The new superintendent should:

Priorities (very important):

- Be active with community and students
- Pay attention to the wellness and mental health of students
- Take time to understand the community and school district

Other (important):

- Both develop and implement new ideas

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

### **ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS FROM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district?

*(Below are the five qualities/skills/attributes chosen most often by School Committee members who responded to the survey.)*

I would like a leader who...

1. Possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership
2. Is able to communicate clearly both verbally and in writing
3. Has a strong working knowledge of school finance, including budget development and management; has the ability to effectively communicate regarding budgetary issues with the School Committee, staff, community and local municipal officials; has clear understanding of federal, state, and local funding issues
4. Uses a systematic approach to managing and improving the schools; has excellent organizational skills, working knowledge of school law and proven ability to resolve organizational conflicts
5. Understands the importance of accountability for staff and self; understands how to design and implement an evaluation process that establishes clear performance standards and follows through to resolve performance issues

## **ALL CONSTITUENTS**

### **COMBINED ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS FROM ALL CONSTITUENTS**

Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district?

*(Below are the five qualities/skills/attributes chosen most often by all respondents.)*

I would like a leader who...

1. Possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership
2. Has an appreciation for the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students and has an understanding of the development and implementation of support and intervention strategies to meet those needs
3. Has the commitment to supervise and evaluate school programs in the spirit of continuous improvement; has understanding of educational practices, research and national/state/local initiatives; has the ability to frame issues for discussion, reach timely decisions and implement change
4. Is able to motivate, lead, guide and direct people; is committed to implementing the mission statement and vision statement of the school system
5. Uses a systematic approach to managing and improving the schools; has excellent organizational skills, working knowledge of school law and proven ability to resolve organizational conflicts

**SECTION 3:  
ONLINE SURVEY AND RESULTS**

## Superintendent Qualities/Skills/Attributes Inventory

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee invites you to provide input regarding the characteristics believed to be important in the next Superintendent of Schools. Below are listed some of the qualities, skills and attributes research indicates are necessary to be an effective Superintendent. By checking the boxes next to your choices, please select the five (5) that you think are most important. All responses will be considered anonymous. Your responses would be greatly appreciated by **Wednesday, December 20, 2017** at noon.

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire.

\* 1. Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed in "a" - "n" below, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district.

I would like a leader who...

- a.--is able to communicate clearly both verbally and in writing.
- b.--possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership.
- c.--has a strong commitment to leading the effort to define and deliver an effective, consistent curriculum.
- d.--is able to motivate, lead, guide and direct people; is committed to implementing the mission statement and vision statement of the school system.
- e.--uses a systematic approach to managing and improving the schools; has excellent organizational skills, working knowledge of school law and proven ability to resolve organizational conflicts.
- f.--has the ability and insight to recruit and retain high quality staff; has strong personnel management practices and understanding of collective bargaining process.
- g.--will be visible in schools, aware of current issues and activities in the schools and shows an interest in community affairs.
- h.--has a good understanding of facilities management, including development of long-term maintenance plans, and budgeting/planning for future building needs.
- i.--has an appreciation for the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students and has an understanding of the development and implementation of support and intervention strategies to meet those needs.
- j.--has a strong working knowledge of school finance, including budget development and management; has the ability to effectively communicate regarding budgetary issues with the School Committee, staff, community and local municipal officials; has clear understanding of federal, state, and local funding issues.
- k.--has the commitment to supervise and evaluate school programs in the spirit of continuous improvement; has understanding of educational practices, research and national/state/local initiatives; has the ability to frame issues for discussion, reach timely decisions and implement change.
- l.--is committed to and fosters continuous staff development and emphasizes system-wide as well as individual development.
- m.--understands that the Superintendent is responsible for management of the schools in compliance with applicable laws and regulations and also in compliance with the School Committee's policies.
- n.--understands the importance of accountability for staff and self; understands how to design and implement an evaluation process that establishes clear performance standards and follows through to resolve performance issues.

2. In the space below, please indicate the challenges and tasks you think are important for the new Superintendent to focus upon in the next three years.

3. Which ONE of the following best describes your role in the school system?

- Faculty/Support Staff
- Administrator
- Parent/Guardian
- Community Member
- School Committee Member
- Other (please specify)



**QUESTION 1:**

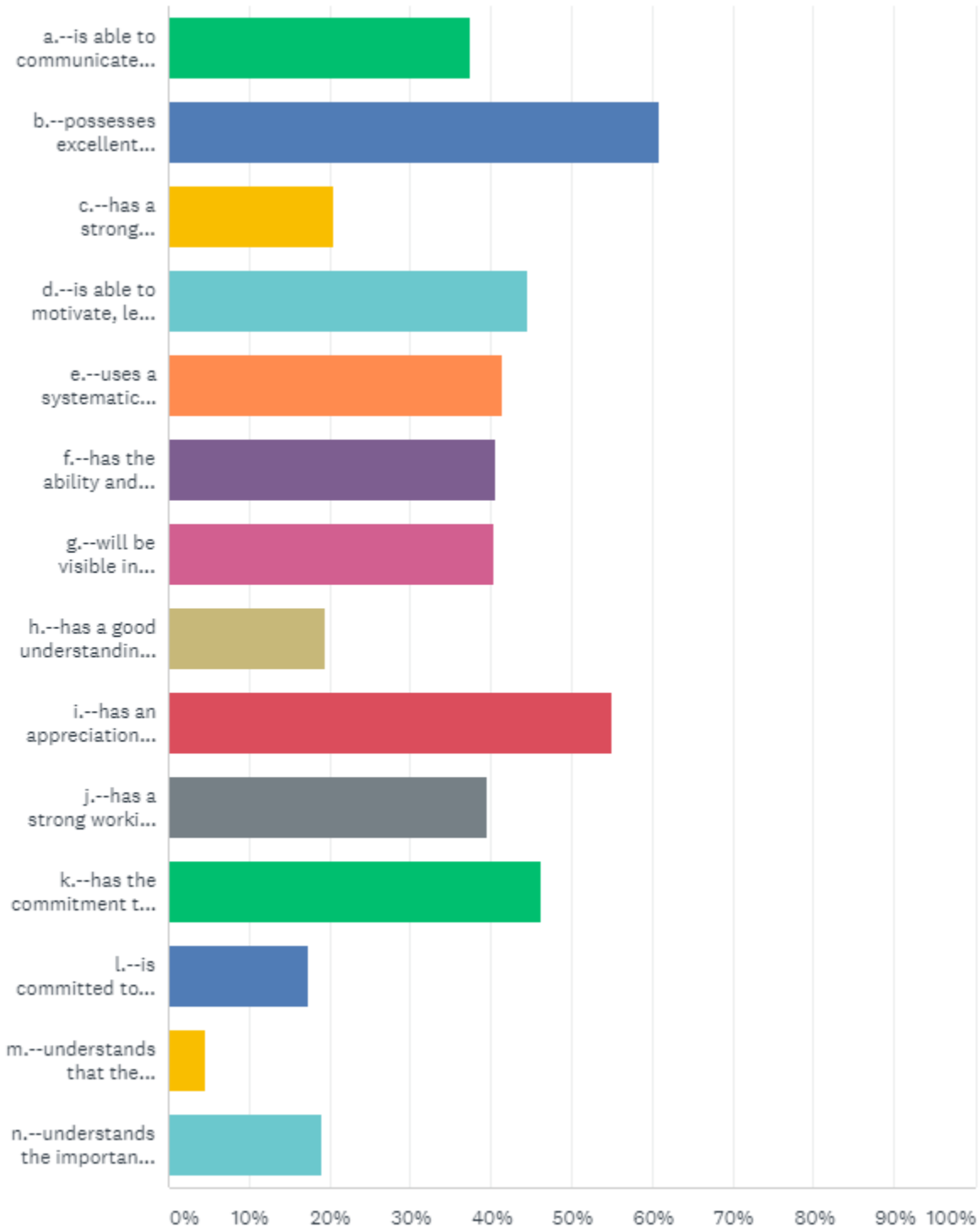
**Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed in "a" - "n" below, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district. I would like a leader who...**

- a. is able to communicate clearly both verbally and in writing.
- b. possesses excellent people skills; demonstrates the ability to involve the community in developing and implementing goals; views the community/school relationship as a partnership.
- c. has a strong commitment to leading the effort to define and deliver an effective, consistent curriculum.
- d. is able to motivate, lead, guide and direct people; is committed to implementing the mission statement and vision statement of the school system.
- e. uses a systematic approach to managing and improving the schools; has excellent organizational skills, working knowledge of school law and proven ability to resolve organizational conflicts.
- f. has the ability and insight to recruit and retain high quality staff; has strong personnel management practices and understanding of the collective bargaining process.
- g. will be visible in schools, aware of current issues and activities in the schools and show an interest in community affairs.
- h. has a good understanding of facilities management, including development of long-term maintenance plans, and budgeting/planning for future building needs.
- i. has an appreciation for the diverse academic and social-emotional needs of students and has an understanding of the development and implementation of support and intervention strategies to meet those needs.
- j. has a strong working knowledge of school finance, including budget development and management; has the ability to effectively communicate regarding budgetary issues with the School Committee, staff, community and local municipal officials; has clear understanding of federal, state, and local funding issues.
- k. has the commitment to supervise and evaluate school programs in the spirit of continuous improvement; has understanding of educational practices, research and national/state/local initiatives; has the ability to frame issues for discussion, reach timely decisions and implement change.
- l. is committed to and fosters continuous staff development and emphasizes system-wide as well as individual development.
- m. understands that the Superintendent is responsible for management of the schools in compliance with applicable laws and regulations and also in compliance with the School Committee's policies.
- n. understands the importance of accountability for staff and self; understands how to design and implement an evaluation process that establishes clear performance standards and follows through to resolve performance issues.

## ALL RESPONDENTS

N=648

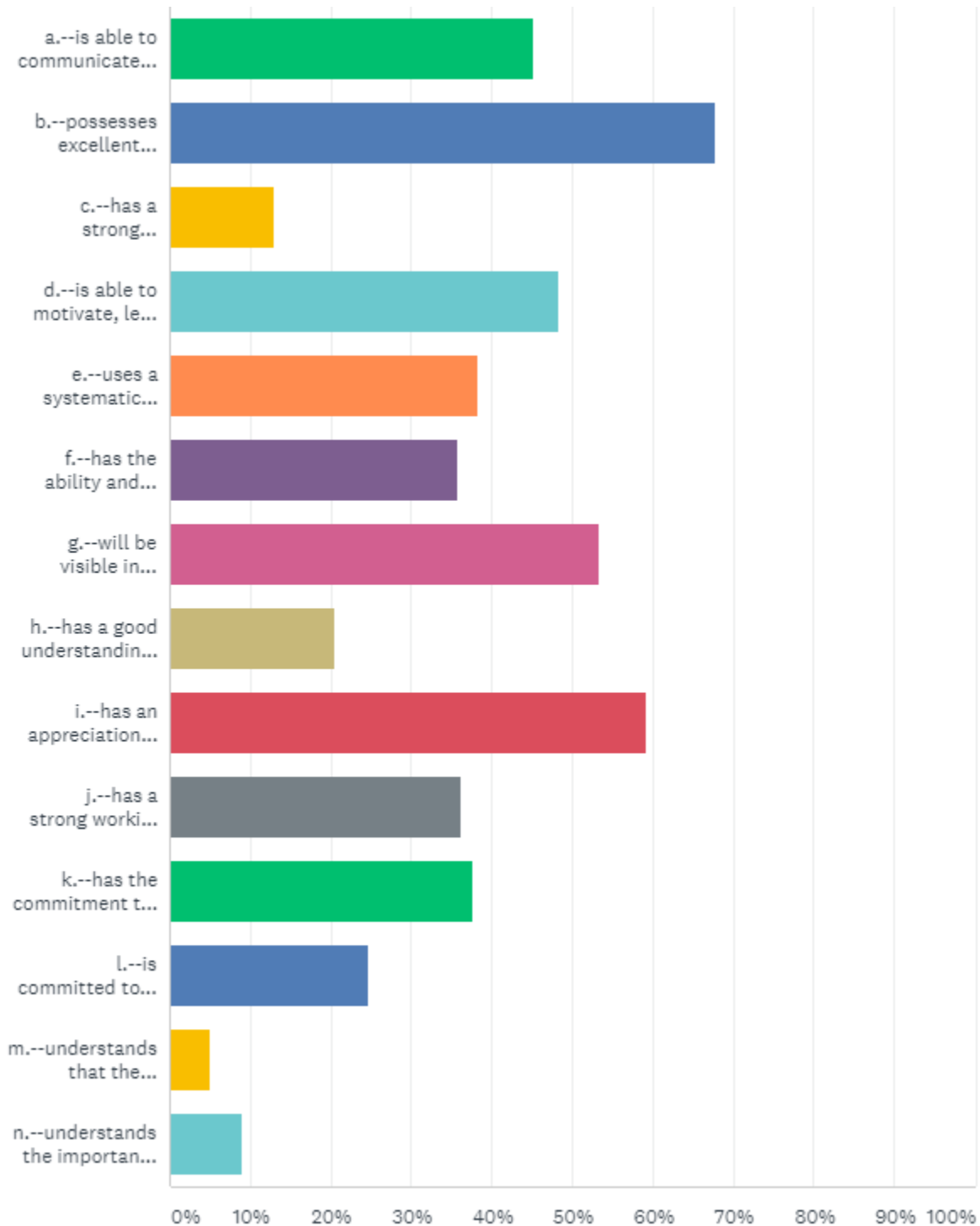
Q1. Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed in "a" - "n" below, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district. I would like a leader who...



## FACULTY/SUPPORT STAFF

N=199

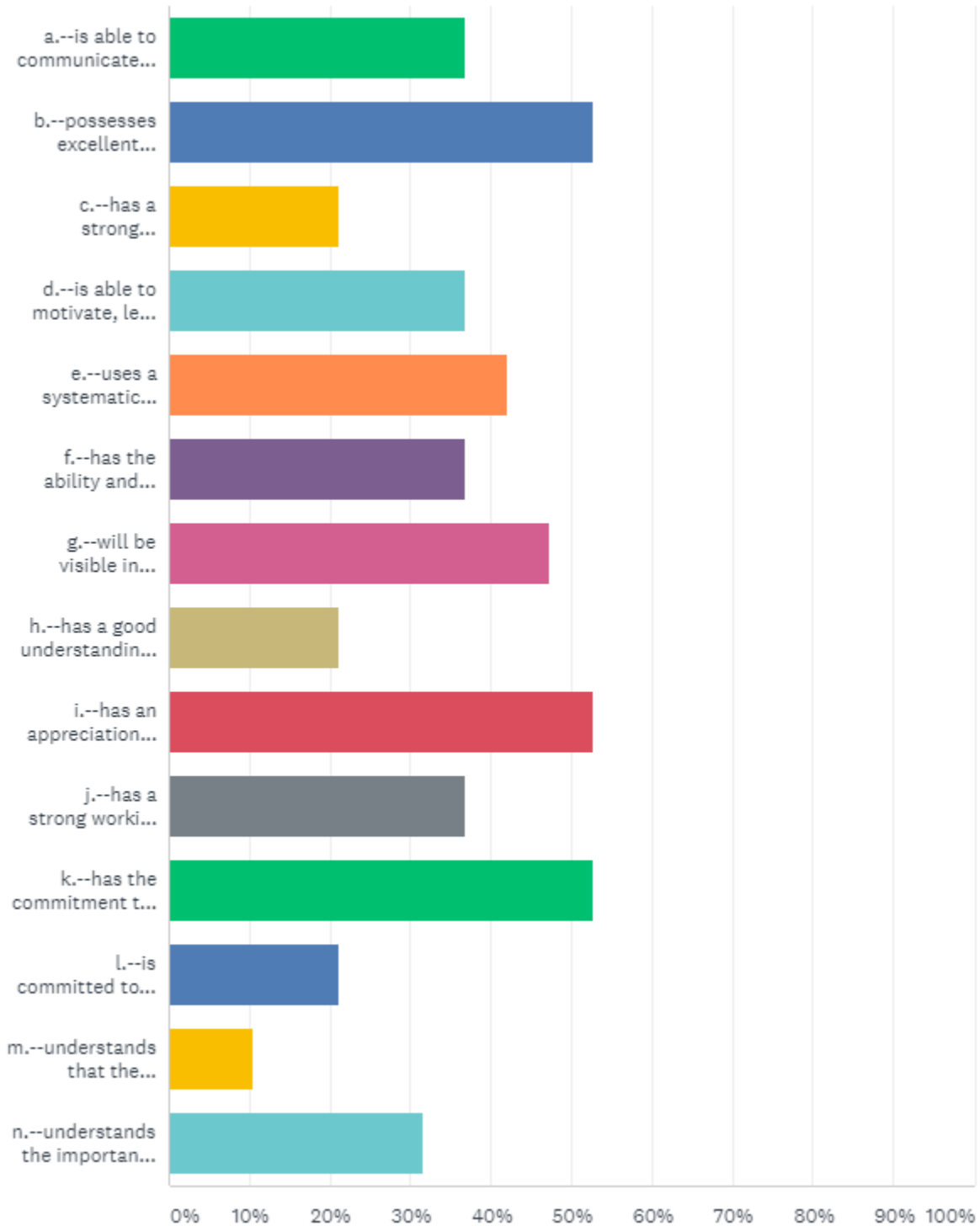
Q1. Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed in "a" - "n" below, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district. I would like a leader who...



## ADMINISTRATORS

N=19

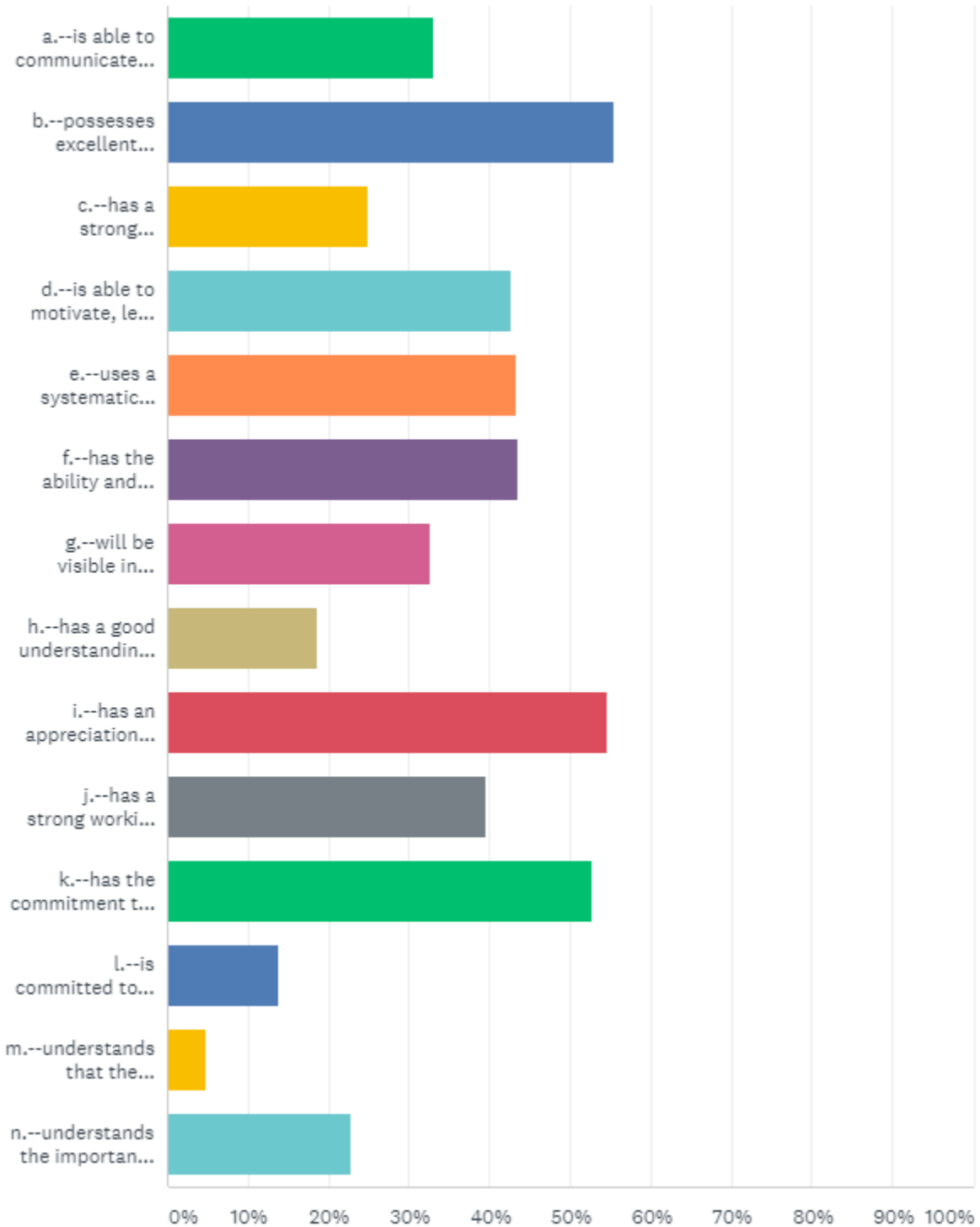
Q1. Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed in "a" - "n" below, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district. I would like a leader who...



## PARENTS/GUARDIANS

N=381

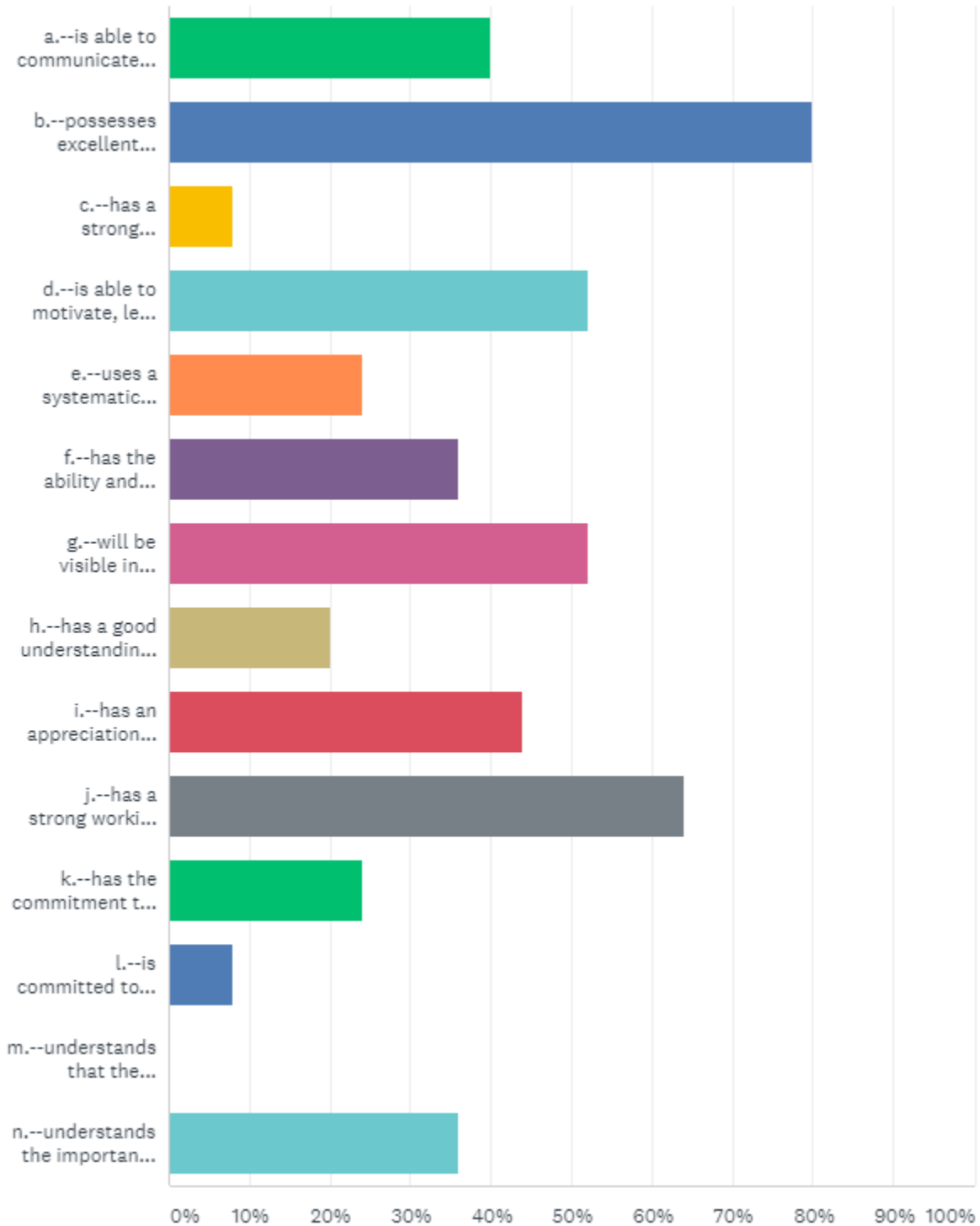
Q1. Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed in "a" - "n" below, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district. I would like a leader who...



## COMMUNITY MEMBERS

N=25

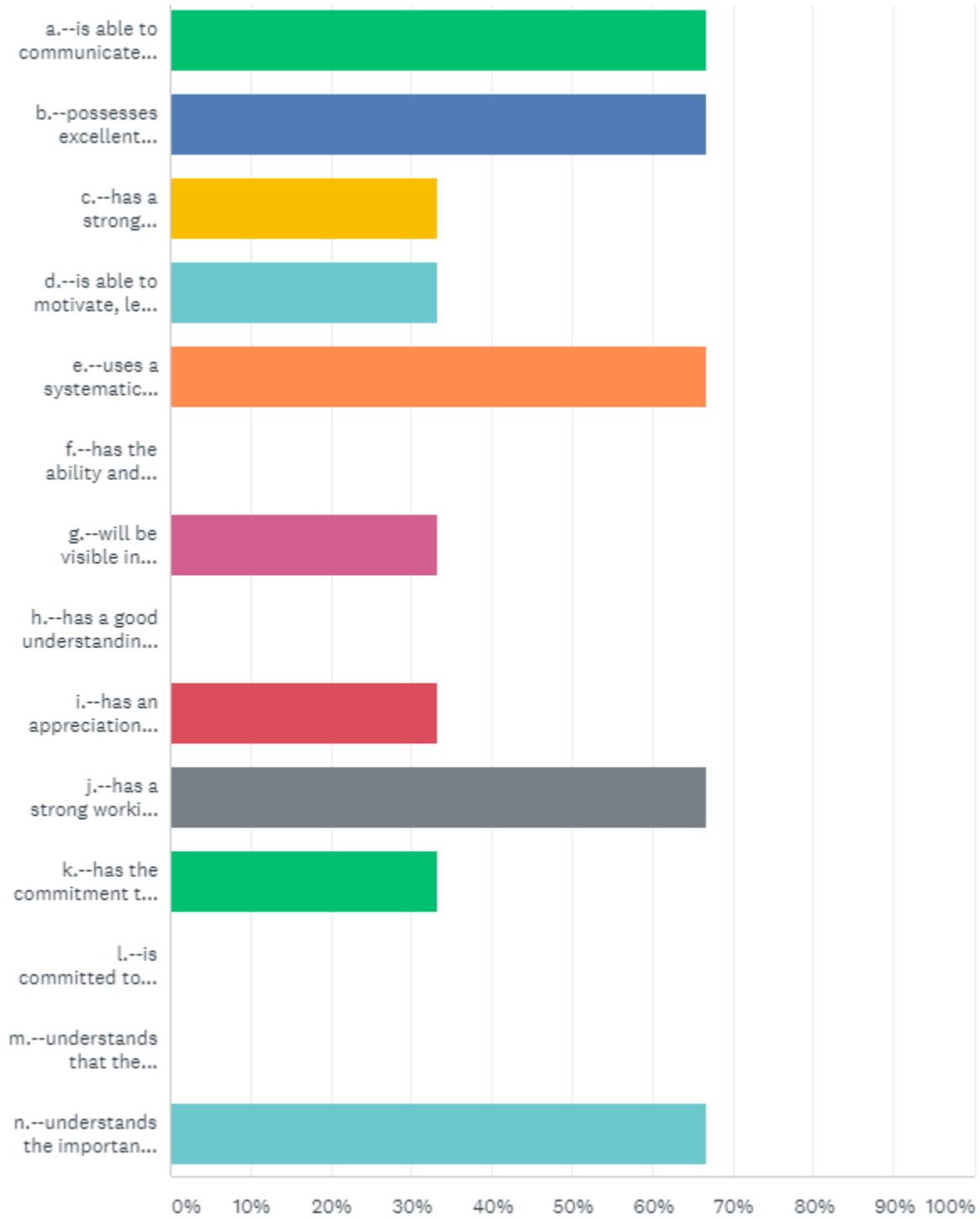
Q1. Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed in "a" - "n" below, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district. I would like a leader who...



## SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

N=3

Q1. Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed in "a" - "n" below, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district. I would like a leader who...



**OTHER**  
**N=21**

Q1. Of the qualities/skills/attributes listed in "a" - "n" below, choose the FIVE (5) you think are the most important for the new Superintendent's success in this school district. I would like a leader who...

