

# School Leader Characteristics

The following list was compiled by the Office of Family and Community Engagement. The list includes feedback received online from Thomas Jefferson High School community members and families.

What Teaching & Education Experience will be most important for the next principal?	What Leadership and Communication Style will be most important for the next principal?	Comments	How would you define yourself? (Please check all that apply.)	What should be the top three priorities for the new school leader?
It is important that a principal have significant classroom experience and experience in leadership, preferably at the secondary level. Business leaders do not have the appropriate experience to lead schools. Charter schools are extremely different than public neighborhood schools so that experience alone is also insufficient. At TJ, the principal should have experience with diverse cultural groups.	A leader for TJ should be comfortable with teens and have a good rapport, responsive to teachers and their needs, fair but firm discipline, and a lens for equity and inclusiveness. Communication should be clear, direct, and prolific.	Significant life experience, ie: at least 15 years out of college.	Denver Public Schools parent or family member, Denver Public Schools staff member	Equity, Community, Discipline
Experience with diverse populations intellect-wise. I like the flexibility TJ has now to meet the students needs. I want to see things like "Latin" as a language continue. TJ works because you realize there are a lot of ways to reach a goal.	Someone who talks to the students without talking down to the students. I like that the current principal knows my daughter and can speak to her without making my daughter feel like a little kid. So no falsetto voice or "fake interest". Talk to the students like people, not a kid.		Denver Public Schools parent or family member	They maintain TJ's focus on being flexible to meet the needs of the student They support the teachers so teachers don't leave They value academic activities (e.g. robotics, DI) as much as they value sports.

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Should have classroom experience and knowledge of all learners including sped, HGT, students of diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.	Have prior administration experience, good management and communication skills. Interest in marketing TJ, growing TJ, keeping culture as a priority. Accessible to students, staff and parents.	Mike Christoff for Principal!!!! Lots of stakeholders who fear negative change should the entire admin team leave TJ. TJ needs to keep the students and families who have helped a keep positive change over past 3 years.	Denver Public Schools parent or family member, Denver Public Schools staff member	Maintaining culture and positive change Ms Morris-Shearer has implemented. Mitigating negatives that come with principal turnover, adhering to core values of DPs, most importantly, Students First. Mike Christoff knows the vision, has been at TJ and been a phenomenal AP, time to make him Principal. Keep TJ thriving!!!
	Organized communication, accessible		Denver Public Schools parent or family member, Denver Public Schools staff member, Denver Public Schools alumni	Experience, firm and clear expectations, willing to be "the bad guy"
Experience teaching in a classroom as well as teaching in high level classes such as AP and IB. Also having taught classes with kids who aren't as motivated so she/he understands the needs of all students.	Easy going but also laying down the hammer when they need to. It is important that he/she knows how to deal with disrespectful students. It is very important that they do not just tell kids what they are doing wrong but also what they are doing right.	Willing to stick with the school and make sure that it does not fall back to how it was before Mrs. Morris-Sherer came and whipped it into shape.	Denver Public Schools student	1. Can keep students (and sometimes teachers) in check. 2. Can make sure students are recognized for academic prowess and reprimanded for behavioral issues

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				and failing grades. 3. Places value in college readiness.
Ability to innovative, explore, investigate, and implement blended learning disciplines and technologies; strong leadership and mentoring experience; and, most importantly, the commitment to stay in the position for the long term. No more 4-years and out stuff that DPS keeps pulling. One more thing: accountable to the parents and students of TJ as much as they are to the faculty, staff, and DPS administration. TJ comes first, DPS second.	Open, honest and up-front dialogue with parents about DPS plans, school plans, projected plans that will impact TJ now and in the future. Focus on students and faculty, not spending more time managing up. Be both an authority figure and a leader who is accessible *and* genuinely interested in students, parents, faculty, and community issues. NOT a DPS-churned out administrator. Must commit to stay and realize education is not in a test but in experience. Provide those.	Intelligent -- emotional and intellectual. Tech-savvy. Well-travelled and knows the inter-connectedness of the world in which we live. Speaks more than one language. Passionate about teaching and knows that learning happens everywhere, at any time. Track record of improving schools not just in test scores, but in atmosphere of community, support, mentorship, inclusivity, exploration, innovation.	Denver Public Schools parent or family member	Blended learning opportunities & technology for every student. Priority on TJ, students, faculty, and parents and continuing the TJ "community" Commitment to the arts, sports, extra-curricular activities, foreign language, and world travel opportunities. *Strong academic focus is a given. But academic innovation is always good.
A veteran teacher with 5 years principal experience. A strong leader with IT background to support the CTM program. Advance degrees in management also a plus.	A hands on leader who is not afraid to create and follow through on new and existing policies in the school. A fair, but firm disciplinarian. Open access to parents and students. Supporter of current community/culture and ideals set forth in the last 5 years at TJ.	Someone who will focus on high academic standards while supporting a culture of leadership among students and teachers.	Denver Public Schools parent or family member	Continue high academic growth; support AP and advanced learning programs for all students; continue current level of expectations for attendance and behavior among the students.
Needs to know and understand the demands on teachers and academic requirements etc.	The current principal has been a very strong leader who has helped to create a strong structure and order to the school. I see the next leader as someone who can		Denver Public Schools parent or family member	Building community and connection and safe and welcoming school Continue to

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	<p>advance upon this foundation by bringing 'heart' to TJ. This would be a strong leader who keeps the strong structure, but who brings a human/warm welcoming touch to TJ. Ideally this would be someone who is inclusive in their leadership who looks to their team for input, and who leverages parents as partners in support TJ's growth.</p>			<p>advance academic success We need to grow our facilities (gym). Currently we have sports players staying late into the night due to limited gym facilities.</p>
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