

Written responses

The response to each question below should not exceed 500 words. All responses should be sent in a single document via email to superintendentsearch@fsba.org no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7.

How do you navigate budgetary constraints while advocating for fair salaries, and what strategies do you have for ensuring teachers feel valued and supported in their roles?

Everyone knows that education is a servant industry. For the majority of employees, the process of student development is a calling. We must have systems in place to ensure we hold public education employees in high regard and provide them the support necessary to perform this vital work.

Culture for Employees:

This school board has shown time and again that if resources are available they will be in the hands of the employees. The last five years, I served as the chief negotiator for the school board. Each year of ESSR funds, these were available for employees. We've also been able to increase base salaries each of the five years I participated in negotiations. I appreciate our cooperative relationship with OCEA, the bargaining unit for staff and teachers. I will continue to work with OCEA to provide our employees with the opportunity to use their collective voice to improve salaries and the working environment.

Another valuable resource we can give employees is time. Collaborative planning has allowed teachers to not have to reinvent the wheel, save their allocated planning time, and share resources with specific area experts and each other. No one should have to feel isolated in lesson planning.

I will work to model a work/life balance for employees. This can be accomplished by maximizing use of the time we have with students and contracted hours. Strategic use of time, maximizing resources, and ensuring efficiency of systems can ensure employees have time for family life outside of school/work.

Assessing the Current Financial Situation:

The end of ESSER funds will create budget constraints, but we have strategically been able to navigate a path forward. It will take the next year or two to monitor and adjust funding to be able to sustain and not lose financial and instructional resources that we have been able to build over recent years. This monitoring will focus on measuring the return on investment of purchased resources and to the extent those are used to move student achievement and the goals of the Strategic Plan forward.

Focus on the Future:

A culture of support starts at the top and works its way down through staff to the students. An individual that feels appreciated and valued will share that forward. This is further highlighted by the focus of Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan which focuses on culture building. Our commitment to continuous improvement in this area is highlighted by the strategies of that goal.

How impressive is it that we have a system that can allow for an employee like myself to move from a substitute teacher to a classroom teacher, a middle school dean, to high school assistant principal to principal at Okeechobee High School, to Assistant Superintendent to, hopefully, the Superintendent position.

I will continue the tradition of putting resources, both financial and instructional, in the hands of employees. There will always be difficult decisions to be made. Those decisions will be measured through a lens of fairness and sustainability.

Can you describe specific actions you've taken in the past to foster a positive culture that boosts student and staff morale and considering the unique context of Okeechobee County Schools, what strategies would you prioritize in your first 6 to 12 months to promote a positive environment for success?

The Brahman Way:

I mentioned this in my cover letter when describing development of The Brahman Way at Okeechobee High School. My goal was to make the students at OHS believe they were part of something bigger than themselves. I wanted to build a responsibility for self-accountability and service by ensuring classmates were moving forward as well. Together, with all stakeholders: students, staff, and parents, we built The Brahman Way. It was embedded in the culture and I know it positively impacted everything instructionally, artistically, and athletically accomplished by students on that campus.

How do I build this moving forward over the next 6 to 12 months?

I will work on these three areas immediately and simultaneously:

First, we need a “way of work” that everyone can buy into.

Rebranding will help us move in that direction. It will be vital to include all stakeholders in the process.

Strategic Plan Goal 2: Branding for a common vision around:

How do we remain the best option for staff, students, and parents?

Second, I will strive to keep pulse checks in place to get feedback from a variety of sources: academic data, discipline data, surveys, interviews, conversations with staff and community. The current Climate Surveys provides information with a focus on pride, respect and safety. These areas will always be the focus for improvement. Discipline is an area that appears every year on the Climate Survey to improve. I work on this monthly with assistant principals and share data regularly to address patterns that develop.

Third, there is a need for succession planning for key positions in the District. This is identified in Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan, but it continues to be an immediate challenge. We cannot allow years of institutional knowledge to walk away or retire without a solid plan to capture that knowledge. Manuals and department procedures are in place, but there is value in a system to allow employees to learn under those experts before they depart. Another aspect of succession planning is ensuring employees are ready for positions that may become available. This is vital for administrative positions. We will continue to map out opportunities for those with interest or have been identified as potential leaders to gain the experiences necessary to prepare them for future opportunities.

The uniqueness of Community Support:

This community rallies around our students: Scholarship Night, funding the End the Hunger Program, the Employee of the Year Banquet, a Graduation Party for Seniors, countless fundraisers and examples of support for all ten schools. I greatly appreciate it and I know our staff, students, and parents do as well. It’s what makes Okeechobee special.

I will continue to monitor and build upon areas of focus with two thoughts in mind: where we currently are as a district and where we need to grow to ensure Okeechobee County Public Schools are the best options for students, staff, and parents.

Video Responses

Scope and Purpose As the next step in the process, the Okeechobee County School Board requests that you video record your responses to the 3 questions below. Your answers to these questions will allow the board to hear your responses as well as witness your communication style and technical abilities. The Board requests that you video yourself, upload your video to YouTube or Vimeo, and provide the link to the video so that the Board can view it. Videos cannot exceed 10 minutes total (approximately 3 minutes per question).

Videos cannot be emailed due to the file size. Deadline Your video must be uploaded (see instructions below) and the link to the video must be emailed to superintendentsearch@fsba.org no later than 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7.

How would you ensure that we are serving the needs of the whole child while balancing the primary mission of academic success?

[\(Link to video response.\)](#)

In your experience, how have you navigated differences of opinion or conflicting priorities with the board while working to establish a shared vision for education?

[\(Link to video response.\)](#)

How have you improved student achievement in your current role and what would you do to improve student achievement in OCPS?

[\(Link to video response.\)](#)