



IN COLLABORATION WITH



SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Board of Trustees and Downey Unified School District seek a long-term relationship with an exceptional and collegial educational leader who can maintain and build upon the District's strength and potential as their **Superintendent of Schools**.

The District and Community

Downey Unified School District (DUSD) is located approximately 12 miles south of Los Angeles, offering easy access to scenic mountains and beaches. For decades, DUSD has maintained a reputation for excellence, driven by our unwavering mantra, "Our Kids Deserve the Best." This philosophy guides every decision and daily practice, ensuring that students receive the highest quality education and support.

Our Vision

Our vision is clear: to prepare students to be college and career ready, globally competitive, and citizens of strong character. This is reflected in our exceptional 96% graduation rate, demonstrating the success of our commitment to academic excellence and whole-student development.

District Overview

Student Population: Approximately 22,250 students - 88.6% Latino/Hispanic, 5.0% Anglo, 2.8% African American, 2.6% AAPI and 0.8% two or more races. Additionally, 68.5% of students qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch, 14.4% are English Language Learners, and 16% receive special education services.

Staff: Approximately 3,000 dedicated employees

Schools: 22 campuses - 1 early education program (Leap), 13 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 3 high schools, and 1 adult school

Key Achievements and Programs

- **Apple Distinguished Schools:** 11 of our 13 elementary schools have earned this prestigious national designation, with only 43 schools in California and 1,000 schools globally holding this honor.
- **Wellness Centers:** All Downey Unified schools have dedicated Wellness Centers or spaces staffed by licensed professionals, providing students with immediate access to mental health and wellness support.
- **STEAM and Career Pathways:** Students engage in robotics and coding courses starting as early as TK and have access to over 23 Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways, along with state-of-the-art facilities and award-winning CIF sports and cheer programs.

- **CHARACTER COUNTS!:** Our nationally recognized character education program is embedded into academics, discipline, and athletics, emphasizing the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship.
- **Inclusive Practices:** Our Unified Sports Program promotes social inclusion and has been recognized with a CSBA Golden Bell Award and Special Olympics National Banner status.
- **Upgraded Facilities:** In 2014 and again in 2022, voters approved two bond measures which continue to modernize and expand District facilities in alignment with 21st-century educational goals, underscoring the District's commitment to modern, innovative learning environments that inspire student achievement.
- **Maintaining Fiscal Excellence:** Downey Unified has maintained a strong fiscal position through strategic funding oversight and deliberate financial management. DUSD's Business and Financial Services Departments ensure that the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) resources are effectively allocated to provide the best service and support to students, staff, and the community while upholding long-term financial stability.

The City of Downey

The City of Downey is a diverse and vibrant community of approximately 109,000 residents. The population is about 74% Hispanic or Latino, 16% White, 6% Asian, and 4% African American, reflecting the rich cultural diversity that enhances our schools and strengthens our community.

District's Strengths, Needs/ Critical Issues, and the Characteristics Desired in a New Superintendent

Board members, parents, certified and classified staff, students, and community members participated in a process to identify the strengths and needs/ critical issues of the Downey Unified School District as well as the characteristics desired in their new Superintendent. An extensive number of stakeholders participated through meetings and an online survey. The board of trustees prioritized the elements as follows:

District Strengths

- Quality teachers and certified and classified staff with commensurate salary/ benefits
- Visionary and forward looking with high student expectations
- High community engagement and support
- High quality schools that are safe
- Wide range of outstanding programs, such as CTE, whole-child focus, Character Counts, Dual Immersion, AB, GLAD Academy, and more
- Cohesive, stable Board of Trustees
- Visibility of Board, Administrators, and leaders at school sites, events, and in their community
- Strong relationships with Downey PD, Downey FD, the City, and PTA
- Efficient, successful, lean organization
- Stable District enrollment
- Fiscally sound with a stable budget
- Beautiful facilities that are clean, well-maintained, and modernized
- Bond funding is spent wisely

Needs/ Critical Issues

- Maintain enrollment and ADA
- Address learning loss and social-emotional needs due to pandemic and social media
- State and federal funding is an ongoing challenge
- Contain costs relative to Special Education while still providing high quality services
- Reduce/ upgrade portable classrooms/ buildings
- Improve A-G completion rates and mathematics test scores
- Recruit and retain quality teachers to replace retirees
- Maintain all of the successful programs with adequate funding and high quality people (Victory with Honor, athletics, align CTE with postsecondary education/ employment, increase Visual and performing Arts, Character Counts, etc.)
- Increase student involvement/ student voice

Characteristics Desired in a New Superintendent

- Transparent and trustworthy, with outstanding communication skills
- Visionary, a great listener, and open to ideas from others
- Works well with Cabinet, leaders and all staff... mentors others
- Develops successful teams

- A problem-solver– able to resolve issues
- Focus on students, makes student-centered decisions
- Reputation for honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect for others (as well as related to negotiations)
- Fiscally and educationally sound, plus working knowledge of facilities
- Adapts to educational and societal change
- Strong leadership background
- Experience as a California educator in Cabinet, as a Principal, Superintendent, and teacher
- Has obtained a Ph.D or Ed.D (preferably in Education)
- Charismatic and represents the District well
- Provides stability for the Downey USD- will commit for 5+ years
- Proven track record of success and accomplishment
- Visible at schools, school and community events... will get to know students and staff members

The Selection and Application Process

Dr. Debra French, Dr. Ruth Perez Ashley, and Nick Salerno of The Cosca Group (TCG) have been retained by the Downey Unified School District Board of Trustees for the search, recruitment, screening, and selection process for the new Superintendent of Schools.

Interested applicants must submit all of the following to be received by The Cosca Group on or before Wednesday, April 23, 2025 by 5:00 pm. :

- Completed Application Form (as provided herein)
- Personal Letter of Application.
- Resume including record of professional education and professional experiences
- Letters from five professional references (three of which must be current, within the past 12 months)
- During the screening process, reference checks will be made with those familiar with candidates' professional performance. Board members will visit the district and community of the final candidate

Send completed application and related information electronically to:

Mr. Nick Salerno

nicasio.salerno@yahoo.com

All material must be received by the deadline of:

5:00 p.m. on April 23, 2025

CONTRACT TERMS

The successful candidate will be offered a multi-year contract with competitive and negotiable salary, based on qualifications and experience.

For additional information, please contact:



Mr. Nick Salerno

(626) 5230-3041

nicasio.salerno@yahoo.com

Or

Dr. Debra French

(714) 742-3899

debrafrench@yahoo.com

Or

Dr. Ruth Perez Ashley

(562) 884-5104

ruth.perez.ashley@gmail.com