

Quintin Shepherd

Evanston - Skokie School District 65

1. Please share why you are interested in this position and your unique qualifications for it.

I am uniquely qualified to serve as the next superintendent of Evanston 65 because of my background, experiences and skills. I have spent my administrative career in places where I have honed my skills as a systems architect. In all situations I have been afforded the opportunity to help my School District not only identify and communicate clear direction, but design systems to achieve our goals. Through this process I have discovered perhaps my greatest strength and greatest joy in education - which is to "grow" not only kids, teachers and administrators, but also to grow the Board of Education, the School District and in many instances the community as we evolve into the School District we wish to become. This, in turn, has pushed me to grow and has resulted in a true continuous learning cycle for every District I have led.

With this mindset, I have found we will be able to do whatever we put our collective minds to accomplishing. I am excited about the proposition of becoming a part of the great tradition of Evanston 65, and would value the opportunity to lead the School District for many years to come. I look forward to learning more about the District in the coming weeks. As we have the opportunity to know each other better I look forward to meeting with the Board, Parents, Community and even Students to see if this is a potential fit for all of us!

2. Please list the five accomplishments in your professional career of which you take the greatest satisfaction and why you do so.

1. Achieving the Board Governance Recognition for the 2012 school year through the Illinois Association of School Boards: What gives me satisfaction about seeing my District achieve this recognition is knowing we earned it through some tumultuous events. Three years ago, our student achievement scores (ISAT) were declining rapidly and were at their lowest point in several years. Our financial situation could not have been worse. At that same time, the Board and I had a lengthy discussion about setting an audacious goal (earning the Board Governance Recognition), improving our overall management and aligning to strategic goals. We wanted to set a goal that would not only push us to improve, but keep our focus on the true "governing role" of Board members.

Earning the Governance Recognition gives me great satisfaction because I know the tireless effort my Board members have put forth to really earn it. They have committed to a process of self-improvement, governance improvement, policy improvement, etc. This improvement cycle has re-energized our District. It has also sent a very clear message to our community, teachers and students. Many Districts say that they believe in life-long learning and continuous improvement

but our District doesn't have to say it- we can prove it through our actions. We have changed the culture (not just the climate) of our District.

2. Student Achievement Scores (2010-2013): From the years 2006-2010, our ISAT scores show a significant decrease in every tested area and in every school building. Our scores were plummeting and our District was suffering. Other measures of achievement were sporadic and trending downward. Many of our administration did not know how to interpret the scores and did not know what to do about the downward trend.

Starting in 2010, we immediately made large scale curricular changes (textbooks, technology re-deployments, etc.) and began intensive professional development for administration and staff. We also initiated program restructuring to align to our student achievement goals.

Resulting from our decisive approach towards using individual student data to measure success, we were able to realize immediate gains in student achievement. Unable to find a good data management tool that we could afford, we simply built one using nothing more than spreadsheets (and a lot of time). By re-orienting our instructional approach we have shown tremendous student achievement growth and are closing the achievement gaps for every sub-group in our District.

I am proud of this accomplishment because it means more students have better life opportunities as a result. I am also proud because of the work of the administration and staff who have literally turned our district around. This turn-around has created a tremendous amount of forward momentum and I believe we are no longer just keeping up, but pulling ahead. We are well underway towards mapping the common core, measuring achievement of common core targets and utilizing growth-modeled instruction for our students. Success breeds optimism and that gives people hope.

3. English Language Learning (ELL) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): There are approximately 80 languages/dialects spoken in Skokie 69. In the history of the District, we have not made AYP for our ELL students. Starting in 2010 and throughout 2011, we went through a significant ELL restructuring process. Put simply, instead of pull-out instruction, we moved to push-in instruction. We now have bi-lingual programs. About half of our classrooms K-5 are now ELL Sheltered classrooms.

In 2012 (and again in 2013), our ELL students met AYP! My pride cannot be contained. I am proud of our teachers for becoming ELL certified in order to better meet the needs of our students. I am grateful to my Board for their trust. I am especially proud of the students, who have shown us they are capable of working hard and achieving at very high levels.

4. Financial Recognition: In November 2010, District 69 had less than 30 days cash on hand when looking at all operational funds. The Board set a crisis management goal (not allow the district to fall below 30 days cash on hand) and a five-year financial goal (30% year-end fund balance).

Significant program restructuring, bidding of contracts, RIFs, and grant writing have allowed our District to reach the five-year goal in three years.

I ask that you take this financial goal (and my pride in reaching it) in context of the above information. In short, in 2010 achievement was at a low point, our District was unaligned and disorganized, and we were in financial disarray. In the past four years we have made significant improvements to our organizational structure and effectiveness through the Board Governance Recognition, Student Achievement (ISAT and ELL), and overall financial health.

5. My relationship with the Amboy CUSD #272 superintendent: I take great professional and personal pride in my mentor relationship with Superintendent Jeff Thake. The reason I take such pride in this relationship is because of what it means. It means that I was able to leave Amboy on good terms. It means that Superintendent Thake is comfortable talking with his predecessor. It means that I didn't "quit" on Amboy after having taken a new job. It means that I left Amboy in a better position than what I found it and the Board and their Superintendent are committed to continuous improvement. I take great pride in all of this because it is my belief that a superintendent casts a long shadow on the District they lead. That long shadow is often symbolized in the culture they create while there and what remains when they are gone.