

# HIRING LEADERSHIP

**Q: We will be hiring a new principal. What are the most important SKILLS and QUALITIES this person should have?**



*Driven by values including inclusiveness and collaboration, Norman Public Schools has been nationally recognized many times for its academic excellence.*

**Industry:**  
K-12 Public Education

**Location:**  
Oklahoma

**Size:**  
16,000 students | 24 schools

**Use case:**  
Hiring Leadership

When previously hiring a new principal for one of their schools, Oklahoma’s Norman Public Schools did what many districts do: they sent district staff to the school to meet with teachers and ask what qualities were important in their new leader.

“In those kinds of settings, the most vocal person gets their input in and then maybe not everyone agrees with them—but those people don’t speak up,” explains Dr. Shirley Simmons, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services at Norman.

Dr. Simmons and the Norman team saw an opportunity to make their principal searches more inclusive and effective by using Thoughtexchange to give all staff a chance to share what mattered most in their new leader.

“We were able to get thoughts from all of the teachers, even the ones that wouldn’t speak up in a live setting where the whole group was being asked questions,” Dr. Simmons says.

“Thoughtexchange helped us find the right fit for the school because we were able to get input from all teachers,” she says. “The results aligned with some of the thoughts we had of what the staff’s perception of leadership was, and what the staff needed. We used that intel when we were in the interviewing process for principals.”

After several successful new principal hires, using Thoughtexchange to collect input from staff has become standard practice at Norman. And the district is now also using this question when filling other positions such as athletic team coaches.



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**Dr. Shirley Simmons, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services**

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