

NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA

DISTRICT PROFILE



Prepared by

The Northeast Oklahoma District Advisory Committee

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT!

As Dr. David McKellips prepares to retire this summer after a successful 20-year superintendency, the leadership team of the Northeast Oklahoma District is excited to build on our past and reach toward the future. We are prayerfully preparing for our next District Superintendent's leadership through **anointed vision, innovative thinking, and authentic relationships**. We are pleased to announce we are looking for a District Superintendent whom God will use to bring out the best in our pastors and laymen through a combination of individualized attention and collective strategy.

NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA IS A SPECIAL PLACE...

The Northeast Oklahoma district is composed of **45 churches** with **4,810 church members**. Local congregations vary in expression, from rich heritage to recent start-ups, and are Spanish- and English-speaking, with worship attendance ranging from 12 to 278. While our district is well connected by Interstate 44, state highways, and even a few dirt roads, it is the sense of missional relationship that brings us together. From Miami to Meeker, Bartlesville to Muskogee, we believe it is vital to encourage continued growth in established churches while supporting new starts where God directs.

The Tulsa metro is centrally located, with access to district gatherings within a 90-mile commute. Our close proximity to Southern Nazarene University offers consistent access to regional events with minimal travel. However, we are most excited about the journey of Christian Holiness that defines us along the way.



TOP STRENGTHS



Multi-Ministry Expressions



District Diversity



District Proximity



Diverse Property Portfolio



Financial Stability

STRENGTHS AND ASSETS OF OUR DISTRICT

Through prayerful listening, district-wide survey feedback, and thoughtful input from district council and leaders, several consistent themes emerged regarding the strengths God has already established within the Northeast Oklahoma District. These strengths form a strong foundation upon which the next District Superintendent can build with vision, faith, and strategic leadership.

District generosity and careful stewardship have positioned the district to have **financial stability**. This offers a healthy platform for the district to be a resource for churches in need as well as invest in the future through leadership development, church revitalization, and new ministry expressions. Leaders also noted the district's diverse property portfolio as a meaningful resource for future ministry impact. The **variety of properties** across the district represents untapped potential for creative ministry use, community engagement, church planting, and innovative outreach strategies as God continues to open new doors.

The district's **geographic proximity** and **relational closeness** were also identified as significant assets. There is a strong desire to be connected in our ministries. As a smaller district, there is a strong potential for accessibility and connection among pastors, churches, and leaders. Our proximity to one another and to regional events allows further opportunities for partnership, resourcing, and leadership development. Our district wants to be together and serve Christ alongside one another.

STRENGTHS AND ASSETS OF OUR DISTRICT

The Northeast Oklahoma District is further strengthened by embracing **multiple ministry expressions**. Churches across the district serve their communities through a variety of models—traditional congregations, church plants, micro churches, and contextualized ministry approaches—demonstrating flexibility and a willingness to innovate for the sake of reaching people with the gospel. Finally, the **district's diversity** stands out as a unique gift. With rural churches, Hispanic congregations, and a wide range of community settings, the district reflects a rich tapestry of people and ministry environments. Leaders see this diversity not as a challenge, but as a missional opportunity to reach all kinds of people with the transforming love of Christ.

STRENGTHS SUMMARY

The Northeast Oklahoma District is a community of diverse contexts, ministries and people. Across the district, we are connected by our missional faithfulness to Christ and dedication to one another. We long to see people come to Christ, deepen in faith, and grow in their calling as leaders in the church. God has certainly blessed us with the physical, spiritual, and relational means for a new step in answering our call to holiness unto the Lord.

TOP GROWTH AREAS



Generational
Development



Church
Life Cycles



Metro-Centric
Perception



Ministry
Resources



Vision Unity
& Participation

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISTRICT GROWTH

The Northeast Oklahoma District is marked by faithful churches, committed leaders, and a shared desire to see lives transformed through the gospel. Listening sessions and district-wide feedback affirm this deep commitment while also revealing several areas where renewed focus and intentional leadership are needed. These challenges are not signs of failure, but indicators of opportunity, inviting thoughtful discernment, collaboration, and adaptive leadership for the season ahead.

ENGAGING YOUNGER GENERATIONS AND NAVIGATING CHURCH LIFE CYCLES

Across the district, many churches are experiencing aging congregations, declining attendance, and difficulty engaging teens, young adults, and young families. Leaders express concern about long-term sustainability, particularly as properties, structures, and ministry models reflect earlier seasons of church life. These realities present an opportunity to think proactively about generational development, leadership pipelines, and adaptive approaches to ministry that help churches navigate natural life-cycle transitions with hope and faithfulness.

REVITALIZING DISCIPLESHIP AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

There is a consistent desire among leaders for deeper spiritual formation within congregations. While participation and service remain present in many churches, discipleship is often described as inconsistent or shallow, with wide variation in biblical literacy and intentional faith development. This challenge invites renewed attention to cultivating a shared discipleship culture—moving beyond programs toward clear, relational pathways that form mature, committed followers of Christ.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISTRICT GROWTH

STRENGTHENING CHURCH HEALTH, VITALITY, AND SHARED VISION

Many churches across the district describe a season of plateau or decline, with energy often focused on maintaining existing ministry rather than pursuing renewed vitality. At the same time, leaders express a desire for clearer district-wide vision and direction, one that unites churches around a shared sense of purpose while honoring the uniqueness of each local context. This presents an opportunity to strengthen overall church health by clarifying mission, fostering vision unity, and encouraging collaboration rather than isolation.

DEVELOPING, SUPPORTING, AND SUSTAINING LEADERS

Leadership development and care represent one of the district's most significant opportunities. Pastoral burnout is widespread, particularly among leaders serving small or co-vocational congregations. Concerns about succession planning and the development of emerging leaders are also common. These realities highlight the need for intentional investment in leadership development, mentoring relationships, and sustainable ministry practices that support both current and future leaders.

RENEWING CONNECTION, PARTICIPATION, AND MINISTRY RESOURCES

While the district possesses significant strengths across all areas of ministry, including NDI, NMI, NYI, and other networks, these resources are often experienced in isolation. Leaders express a desire for renewed connection, improved communication, and greater collaboration across the district. Beyond assembly and retreat, there is a hunger for additional opportunities for relational growth, shared learning, and meaningful participation in district life. Strengthening these connections offers an opportunity to deepen trust, increase engagement, and foster a stronger sense of shared identity.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISTRICT GROWTH

ADDRESSING PERCEPTIONS OF METRO-CENTRIC INFLUENCE

A recurring theme in district feedback is the perception that attention, influence, and opportunity are centered primarily in the Tulsa metro area. Whether related to geography, communication patterns, or visibility, this perception has contributed to feelings of distance among some churches, particularly in smaller towns and rural communities. This challenge presents an opportunity for intentional listening, equitable engagement, and leadership practices that affirm the value and contribution of every church across the district.

NAVIGATING FINANCIAL AND STRUCTURAL REALITIES

Financial pressure is a shared concern throughout the district. Declining giving, rising costs, limited staffing, and a high number of small congregations place ongoing strain on ministry operations. These realities invite wise stewardship, creative collaboration, and district-level support to help churches pursue sustainable and effective ministry models for the future.

GROWTH AREA SUMMARY

Taken together, these opportunities reflect a district at a meaningful crossroads, one marked by faithfulness, complexity, and hope. While each church context is unique, the shared realities across the Northeast Oklahoma District call for renewed vision, stronger connection, intentional leadership development, and collaborative approaches to ministry. These opportunities help clarify the kind of leadership needed to guide the district through change with wisdom, compassion, and confidence in God's ongoing work.

NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT PROFILE

Our district pastors, board members, and congregants were asked to rank characteristics that ought to be evident in the next Northeast Oklahoma District Superintendent. We received 68 individual responses. While we see all of these characteristics as important, when asked to rank them, respondents noted that these were the most heavily emphasized character traits.

CHARACTER & PERSONAL ATTRIBUTE

1. Integrity
2. Authentic
3. Humility
4. Compassion
5. Empathy
6. Relational Wisdom

PEOPLE & TEAM DEVELOPMENT

1. Pastoral Care
2. Pastoral Wisdom
3. Developing Leadership
4. Effective Communication
5. Building Strong Teams
6. Conflict Resolution

SPIRITUAL & MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP

1. Theological Integrity
2. Church Renewal
3. Intentional Discipleship
4. Adaptive Leadership
5. Passionate Evangelism
6. Church Planting
7. Conflict Resolution

SYSTEMS, STRATEGY & INNOVATION

1. Vision Casting
2. Innovative Thinking
3. Administration
4. Conflict Resolution
5. Leveraging Technology

EXPERIENCE

1. Ministry Experience
2. Multicultural Engagement
3. Regional Proximity
4. Educational Level
5. Church Size

TOP 5 DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

1. Integrity
2. Vision Casting
3. Ministry Experience
4. Theological Integrity
5. Pastoral Care

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT ABILITY STATEMENTS

Given the strengths, challenges, and realities identified from our district survey, we seek a District Superintendent who possesses the following abilities:

CHARACTER & PERSONAL ATTRIBUTE

Integrity

You need to be a leader beyond reproach and someone who prioritizes your relationship with God. Leading from a Christlike example is essential as we develop Christlike disciples.

Authentic

NEO needs a leader who will not only walk-the-walk but is willing to talk-the-talk. Your leadership should always be trustworthy and honest.

SPIRITUAL & MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP

Theological Integrity

You need to have a clear knowledge and affirmation of the theology and polity of the Church of the Nazarene. You will need to lead by example in polity and be a consistent theological voice to the district.

Church Renewal

Helping churches who are facing issues of life cycle, aging congregations, disconnection, and disinterest with effective strategies for renewal and growth.

PEOPLE & TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Pastoral Care

We want someone who will participate in the life of the district, in relationships, visitation, and prayer for our pastors. Resources should be considered for the church, and at times support specifically for the pastor.

Pastoral Wisdom

Out of a wealth of ministry experience, you need to have the ability to listen deeply, discern God's movement among His people, and lead with both truth and compassion.

SYSTEMS, STRATEGY & INNOVATION

Vision Casting

One of your top task will be to come in and create a fresh vision and direction for the district. The vision needs to unite the district and encourage the flourishing of each unique ministry context.

Innovative Thinking

Need to be willing to see new possibilities and to courageously lead the district into fresh expressions of ministry. This means honoring our heritage while creating space for new ideas, models, and strategies that help us reach the next generation.

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT ABILITY STATEMENTS

Given the strengths, challenges, and realities identified from our district survey, we seek a District Superintendent who possesses the following abilities:

EXPERIENCE

Ministry Experience

Our district is looking for a person who has faithfully served in a variety of seasons, settings, and experiences within the life of the local Church. It means bringing not only years of experience, but a breadth of diverse ministry contexts that inform wise decisions, empathetic leadership, and effective support for every church on the district.

Multicultural Engagement

NEO desires a person committed to honoring and including the full diversity of our district across both city and rural communities, and among every cultural and ethnic group God has provided us. It means ensuring every church is seen, valued, and resourced to participate fully in God's mission, regardless of size, location, or background.

ADDITIONAL ABILITY STATEMENTS

Financial Stability

Our desire is for you to be a prayerful steward of the resources God has entrusted to our district, ensuring they are used with integrity, transparency, and with long-term vision in mind. This means building on our District's strong financial health, earned through diligent stewardship, so we can continue to support churches, invest in leaders, and expand the reach of the gospel.

Church Planter/Developer

Be a leader who has a proven ability through previous experiences to send or launch new church plants, multi-sites, or other expressions of the local church. A leader who is able to inspire pastors in existing churches to grow and develop their churches.

While deeply committed to supporting our current churches, we have also sought to foster a district that functions as a growing movement, one that welcomes people at every point in their spiritual journey. Our desire has been to encourage new churches, develop new leaders, and create new ministry expressions that cultivate healthy, compelling congregations.

As the district looks ahead, we do so with gratitude for the foundation that has been laid and anticipation for what lies ahead. We are prayerfully discerning a leader who can faithfully build upon this work, someone prepared to guide the Northeast Oklahoma District through its next season with vision, courage, and a deep trust in God's leading as He continues to shape our future.