SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROFILE

Lakota Local School District
Liberty Township, Ohio
November 21, 2016

Prepared for the Board of Education

By
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This report presents the summary of 10 stakeholder focus group sessions and five (5) Community Conversation meetings that were held throughout the district between October 12, 2016, and November 1, 2016, plus the findings from 157 Superintendent Search Profile Criteria Questionnaires that were received through November 15, 2016, and subsequently tabulated by K-12 Business Consulting, Inc. (K-12). Once the Board of Education selected K-12 to conduct the superintendent search, the Search Profile Criteria Questionnaire was created in order to solicit input from various stakeholders in the community. The Board and administration reached out to a broad list of individuals for participation. In addition, a general community-wide invitation was generated to meet with K-12’s search consultants over two days in order to discuss the characteristics in greater depth. Any stakeholder who had a desire to express an opinion was welcome to submit a search profile and personally meet with K-12 at the open community-wide forums that were held at the Board of Education office. These forums were in addition to the five (5) Community Conversation meetings offered by the Board. The information obtained through these sources, and summarized herein, should be used to assist the Board in identifying characteristics requested of superintendent candidates.

The Search Profile Questionnaire was made available to the district staff, identified stakeholders, plus all individuals who attended the focus group sessions. In addition to the 157 internal and external stakeholders who returned written search profiles, there were 140 citizens and district staff members who personally participated in the Board-sponsored Community Sessions, as well as 85 citizens, staff members, parents, community members, and students who participated in the 10 focus group sessions that were facilitated by K-12. The results of the submitted search questionnaires are included in this report along with the frequent comments received in face-to-face discussions held at Community Conversations and focus group sessions.

In accumulating the data used in this report, K-12 sought opinions, recommendations and general comments with respect to preferred candidate qualifications, characteristics, traits, and personal demeanor, as well as district strengths, weaknesses, issues and concerns which may have a bearing on the future leadership strengths for the next superintendent. At the request of the Board, K-12 sought the views of a broad range of individuals represented in the district to assist in the search process. It was determined that K-12 would report the findings to the Board without revealing the identity of any citizen, staff member, or student who provided information, thus equipping the Board with unbiased data to use as it proceeded to define the search profile for the next superintendent.

The Search Profile Questionnaire was used to provide a framework for reporting the information compiled by K-12. Broad themes were highlighted in each question area into six (6) response groups – school board members, administrators, teachers, support staff members, parents and community members, plus high school students. Under each question in the report, the response group’s common themes were identified. The first category entitled as “Consistent” summarizes comments that were frequently heard from all or nearly all of the response groups. Comments heard less frequently or only heard in a specific response group are listed under that response group. The responses noted as “Consistent” for any of the response groups are shown with the highest frequency first then descending to responses less frequently heard. It is important to note that the data compilation is not a scientific sampling, and nor should it necessarily be viewed as representing a majority opinion of those interviewed in the response group.
K-12 would like to commend the Board of Education for its efforts to include many stakeholders of the school district in the development of the superintendent search profile. Many respondents expressed positive feelings about being involved in this process and the opportunity to help shape the future of the Lakota Local School District. We would also like to thank Treasurer Jenni Logan for the professional manner in which all arrangements were made, including the dissemination of invitations and search profiles, as well as scheduling the focus group sessions that made this profile possible.

**STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT**

**Question #1: What do you consider to be the two or three most significant strengths of the district?**

**CONSISTENT THEMES**
History of dedicated, caring, student-centered staff members who do outstanding work.
A strong, supportive community with involved PTOs and parents with high expectations.
Great reputation of the district, and a history of high academic achievement.
Fiscal responsibility and current financial stability of the district.
Diversity of population of the district, coupled with students who support each other and seek unity.
Strong academic programs, and a variety of curricular and co-curricular offerings.

**BOARD MEMBERS**
Dedicated, hard working, and competent educators, administrators, and support staff members.
Strong community support for the district. Commitment of parent groups.
Diverse population of the district.
Current financial stability of the district.
Consistent and high-end educational programs, and many opportunities for students.
Solid academic achievement in the district.
Dedicated Board members who genuinely care about the district.

**ADMINISTRATORS**
Committed, student-centered teachers who are committed to meeting the needs of all students.
Staff members who care about students and the community.
Collaboration and professional relationship between the administration and the LEA.
Current financial stability of the district and fiscally responsible decision-making.
Strong community support. Parents who have high expectations. Students who care for each other.
Educational offerings are high quality. Wide variety of opportunities for students.
Able to recruit good staff members for the district.
Great reputation of the treasurer’s office.

**TEACHERS**
Dedicated, highly qualified staff members who give 100%, and who love children and public education.
Supportive community, parents, and PTOs. Solid community partnerships.
Long-standing positive reputation of the district and a rich history of academic excellence.
Diversity of the student population. Students genuinely support one another.
Willingness of the district to be innovative, and – at the same time – hold students to high standards.
Good working relationship between the administration and the LEA.
Great early childhood opportunities in the district.
Fiscal responsibility. Improved technology in the district.
**SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS**
Quality of teachers and administrators and their loyalty to the district. Integrity of staff.
Students who work hard and support each other.
Great parent support in the district. Families take ownership of how the schools perform.
Innovation by district staff rather than staying with the status quo.
Fiscal responsibility has been a top priority in the district.
Safety improvements in the district.

**PARENTS AND COMMUNITY**
Excellent teachers and involved administrators who care about students and their growth.
Willingness of staff to work long hours and make themselves available to parents.
Diversity of the student population and the community.
Solid reputation of the district. High academic performance and high expectations.
Willingness of district to go the extra mile to meet the special needs of students.
Caring, active community. Supportive parents. Hard-working PTOs.
Friendly administrators who make themselves available to parents outside the regular work day.

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**
School pride. Strong school spirit. A safe, healthy, and friendly educational environment at school.
Connectivity between teachers and students. Teachers push students to succeed. Special needs are addressed.
Strong academic programs. Good credit flexibility.
Variety of extra-curricular opportunities. There is “something for everyone.”
Anti-bullying enforcement has improved.
Diversity of school population. Students support each other. Good sense of unity.
Overall community is strong. Good communication between the schools, parents, and students.
Availability of improved technology in school.
IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING DISTRICT

Question #2: What do you consider to be the two or three most important issues facing the district?

CONSISTENT THEMES
Considering the restoration of previous budget cuts, especially those in art, music, P.E., and technology. Sensitivity to diversity/demographic issues and the increasing number of non-English speaking students. Future financial stability, coupled with the reality that more home owners are without school-aged children. Need to have a vision that will ensure high standards and academic excellence. Retention of quality staff members in the future. Need for the administration to address staff morale concerns that are the result of various factors.

BOARD MEMBERS
Balancing internal and external stakeholder expectations, while facilitating effective parent involvement. Establishing the district’s future vision. Maintaining quality, and formulating a meaningful instructional plan. Sensitivity and responsiveness to changing demographics, the challenges of diversity to meet the needs of all students, plus increased poverty and related ESL issues. Maintaining financial stability and improving credibility by demonstrating the district runs like a business. Addressing lingering staff morale issues associated with previous budget cuts that have not been restored. Need to keep up with changing Report Card realities. Consider expansion of foreign language program.

ADMINISTRATORS
Need to develop a clear vision and common goals to meet the needs of all students and foster high academic achievement in the future. Addressing the challenges associated with the changing demographics in the district. Continued financial stability. Addressing the challenges of creating long-range plans that align with budget realities. (No deficit spending.) Need to enhance opportunities for students in the areas of art, music, and foreign language. The realities of ever-changing state and federal mandates. The future tax levy realities of the increasing number of home owners in the district without school-aged children.

TEACHERS
The restoration of cuts made in music, art, physical education, and technology. Staying attractive for new families when other area districts have academic offerings that Lakota no longer has. Consideration to lengthen the day of junior high students. Examining the number of high school periods. Sensitivity to demographic/diversity issues and the increasing number of non-English speaking students. Concern over teachers leaving the distric, and the retention of quality teachers and administrators. The need for administrators to “see-through” initiatives that have been started, and work on internal PR. Need to have a vision to rejuvenate and sustain a culture of high standards, excellence, and excitement. Teacher morale has been adversely affected by a variety of issues, including the unrestored previous budget cuts, and new district-level requirements and state mandates.

SUPPORT STAFF
Future financial stability and considering the restoration of previous budget cuts in art, music, and P.E. The retention of experienced and quality staff members in the district. Being responsive to the changing student population and demographics of the district. Need to engage the community in a new positive public relations program.
PARENTS AND COMMUNITY
Parent costs and fees associated with extra-curricular activities.
Future funding realities and maintaining financial stability.
Understanding the fact that so many homeowners in the district do not have school-aged children.
Keeping a careful eye on safety and security issues.
Need to examine whether high school course offerings for non-college bound students are sufficient.
Responsiveness to the district’s diversity and changing demographics; need to ensure that course offerings are sensitive to needs of all students, and that there is effective inclusion for students with special needs.
Need to develop a vision to maintain high academic standards and excellence.
Lack of busing and safety concerns associated with same. Half-day kindergarten.
Turnover of teachers and retention of quality of staff members.
Teacher-student ratios and overcrowding in some schools.
Administration needs to take steps to improve staff morale and reduce the amount of time spent on testing.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Need for more teacher/administrator training pertaining to diversity, race, religion, sexual orientation.
More sensitivity is needed regarding racism, discrimination, and all religious holidays.
More overall understanding is needed by all pertaining to the district’s shift in demographics.
Support is needed for more academic clubs. Sports are supported more than clubs.
School fees are too high and almost the highest in the GMC.
Social media bullying is a new problem and many wish that something could be done about it.
Better integration of technology in the classroom is needed.
Lack of transportation opportunities.
Freshmen feel isolated because they are in another building.
Healthier food is needed in the cafeteria.
**CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW SUPERINTENDENT**

**Question #3**: Please tell us your two or three characteristics that you think the Board should look for in a new Superintendent.

**CONSISTENT THEMES**
One who will foster collaborative working relationships with internal and external stakeholders to develop a meaningful vision for the district.
Able to implement academic strategies to facilitate instructional improvement and student growth.
One who is committed to understanding the diversity and demographic changes in the district.
One with strong interpersonal relations skills who will be visible and approachable in the schools/community
Able to address lingering concerns regarding previous cuts in music, art, physical education, and technology.
Demonstrated experience supporting fiscally responsible decision-making.

**BOARD MEMBERS**
One with integrity who will provide thoughtful, inspirational leadership with consistent expectations to move the district forward to the next level academically.
Demonstrated experience in fostering genuine, authentic relationship building and collaboration with internal and external stakeholders.
A strong, honest, and visionary academic leader with demonstrated interpersonal relations skills.
One who can reach out to sub groups, relate to diverse student populations, and work with all people.
Capacity to focus on improving teaching and learning, and facilitating meaningful professional development.
A good listener who can develop connections and put a priority on being approachable and visible in the district and community. Needs to be able to manage change effectively.
A financially responsible leader who has experience in fiscal management and district business operations.
One who has superintendent-level or equivalent experience, and is able to lead a district the size of Lakota.

**ADMINISTRATORS**
One who can champion a collaborative, collective vision for the district and model the way with confidence.
One who is able to recognize the strength of a team and mentor leaders to greatness in their respective roles.
A visionary who can bring together internal and external stakeholders in order to move forward collectively.
One who can foster continuous and targeted instructional improvement to ensure teaching excellence.
One who can target operational and community outreach to ensure efficient delivery of services.
An academic leader who recognizes the importance of strong relationships among administrators.
One who is able to determine what is working, what needs improvement, and plan accordingly.
Able to implement academic strategies and interventions to meet the ever-changing needs of pupils.
One with interpersonal skills who will be engaged in the community and understanding of its diversity.
Able to address the district’s growing and changing diversity needs (economic, cultural, academic).
One who can understand the nuances of the cultural influences on how to provide a 21st century education.
Able to close the “achievement gap” while maintaining a high level of academic achievement districtwide.
One who will have a priority to learn and understand Lakota’s political landscape.

**TEACHERS**
One who will support teachers and value true collaboration and meaningful communications with LEA.
One who is approachable, accessible, and capable to genuinely listen to the concerns of the district.
One who values and appreciates the arts, and able to understand how many wish previous cuts are restored.
One who is able to think “outside of the box” and able to follow-through on meeting the needs of students.
One who can insure there will not be an “us v. them” divide between the staff and the administration. Someone who will value the staff, students, and families in the district and be visible to them. One who will be vested in the Lakota community, and committed to understanding its diversity population. An experienced, effective communicator who believes in people and who has a student-centered vision. One who is positive and upbeat, and has demonstrated strong leadership skills. Demonstrated ability to lead the district into the future with high academic standards and best practices. One who understands how important positive staff morale is, including that of the non-teaching staff.

**SUPPORT STAFF**
One who is able to establish a trusting relationship with staff members while making them feel supported. Demonstrated experience as a problem solver. One who values others and engages them. A charismatic leader who can develop a personal investment in the community and the school district. A positive leader who also is business educated. Able to support future fiscal responsibility. Someone who will be willing to get to know the staff bottom to top, and not just stay at the central office. One who is fair and understanding, knowing that everything is not as it appears on the surface. One who truly cares about the welfare of children. Able to listen to the concerns and input from staff and parents. Able to respect all staff members in their roles in maintaining high standards. Able to accept ideas from the experienced administrators currently working in the district. Embraces diversity and promotes professional growth of all employees.

**PARENTS AND COMMUNITY**
A strong leader with an ability to share a global vision and inspire students, teachers, and parents to follow. Someone who treats everyone equally and fairly, and puts the welfare of students first. Someone who is able to listen to and consider new and reasonable suggestions, ideas, and complaints. One who will listen and be open to ideas “outside of the box” to make the best decision for students. One who will be visible in the schools, and improve communication with the community and businesses. Able to understand district’s diversity and changing demographics, and mobilize the business community. A public figure of integrity who has the welfare of all students as his/her top priority – not just those at the very top or at the very bottom. Able to work with politicians to reduce the volume of school testing. One who will see the need to restore budget cuts in art, music, physical education, and technology. A personable and rational administrator with a proven record of fiscal responsibility and controlling costs. A motivator with a calm demeanor, strong communication skills, and a commitment to collaborate. One who be committed to understanding the district’s diversity and changing demographics.

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**
One who will be visible in the schools and approachable. Students should know who he/she is. An open minded person who will listen and seriously consider the opinions of others, including students. Able to respect how students have to juggle their time between school work, extra-curriculars & social life. Someone who is skilled in public relations and will be involved in the community. One who will accept students of all backgrounds, and will be respectful of others and their opinions. One who is organized and able to address situations as they arise in a fair manner. Able to insure that students are treated fairly. Consider bringing back the 7-period day. Willing to investigate whether the budgets of student activities are fair in comparison with athletics. One who will try new things and not be satisfied with the status quo. Able to replace ineffective teachers with new ones.
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<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>BOE</th>
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<th>TEACHERS</th>
<th>SUPPORT STAFF</th>
<th>PARENTS &amp; COMMUNITY</th>
<th>STUDENTS</th>
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<td>Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, students and parents</td>
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<td>Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district</td>
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<td>Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum</td>
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<td>Effective with both written and verbal communication</td>
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<td>Successful experience as a superintendent</td>
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<td>Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations</td>
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<td>Fiscal management expertise</td>
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<td>Effective organizational and management skills</td>
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<td>Personal involvement and interest in the community</td>
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<td>A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills</td>
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RANKING OF TOP AND BOTTOM FIVE (5) IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS ALL GROUPS

1 - 5 MOST IMPORTANT TO 6 - 10 LEAST IMPORTANT

RANK TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS
1 Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, parents, and students.
2 A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills.
3 Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district.
4 Personal involvement and interest in the community.
5 Effective organizational and management skills.

RANK BOTTOM 5 CHARACTERISTICS
6 tie Effective with both written and verbal communications.
6 tie Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations.
8 Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum.
9 Successful experience as a superintendent.
10 Fiscal management expertise.

SUMMARY

The information gathered through surveys and interviews bear strong similarity across all sub-groups with respect to the Lakota Local School District’s strengths, issues and concerns facing the district, as well as the characteristics desired in the next superintendent.

The consistent themes expressed by groups and individuals about the Lakota Local School District’s greatest strengths include: (A) History of dedicated, caring, student-centered staff members who do outstanding work; (B) A strong, supportive community with involved PTOs and parents with high expectations; (C) Great reputation of the district and a history of high academic achievement; (D) Fiscal responsibility and current financial stability of the district; (E) Diversity of population of the district, coupled with students who support each other and seek unity; and (F) Strong academic programs, and a variety of curricular and co-curricular offerings.

The top concerns and challenges facing the Board of Education and the new superintendent in the future – all of which appeared on surveys received and were expressed during the ten focus group sessions and/or the Community Conversations – include the following: (A) Considering the restoration of previous budget cuts, especially those in art, music, physical education, and technology; (B) Sensitivity to diversity and demographic issues as well as the increasing number of non-English speaking students in the district; (C) Future financial stability, coupled with the reality that more district home owners are without school-aged children; (D) Need to have a vision that will ensure high standards and academic and academic excellence; (E) Retention of quality staff members in the future; and (F) Need for the administration to address staff morale issues that are the result of various factors.

It was difficult to capture all the characteristics that respondents were looking for in a new superintendent. It is certain that very few leaders could possibly embody all that was mentioned as desired attributes. The vast majority of respondents expressed the need for the new superintendent to be one who: (A) Will foster collaborative working relationships with internal and external stakeholders to develop a meaningful vision
for the district; (B) Is able to implement academic strategies to facilitate instructional improvement and student growth; (C) Is committed to understanding the diversity and demographic changes in the district; (D) Has strong interpersonal relations skills who will be visible and approachable in the schools and community; (E) Is able to address lingering concerns regarding previous cuts in music, art, physical education and technology; and (F) Has demonstrated experience supporting fiscally responsible decision-making.

In most cases, the consistent themes summarized above closely matched the specific desired superintendent characteristics submitted by the 157 internal and external stakeholders who returned the Superintendent Profile Criteria Questionnaire to K-12. The overall top five (5) desired characteristics of the new superintendent submitted separately by the six (6) sub-groups – most of which complimented the consistent Question #3 themes summarized on page 6 herein – were: (1) Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, and students; (2) A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills; (3) Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district; (4) Personal involvement and interest in the community; and (5) Effective organizational and management skills. Interestingly, a characteristic that was not included in the overall top five (5) was for the new superintendent to have “Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations.” This characteristic, however, was separately expressed as a high priority in the written answers to all three (3) profile questions, as well during the focus group sessions and Community Conversations that were held. This difference very well could be the consequence of other desired characteristics having a more immediate need in the minds of the respondents, and/or a belief that the new superintendent will be committed to developing understanding and responsiveness to the district’s diversity and changing demographics.

It also deserves noting that “Successful experience as a superintendent” was listed near the bottom of the list of desired characteristics of the new superintendent. This should not be interpreted in a negative sense. Rather, the interpretation of this response is that the overwhelmingly number of respondents concluded that it is not necessary for the new superintendent to have direct experience as a superintendent.

We believe the Lakota Local School District is approaching an important period of transition. This will require the new superintendent to balance stakeholder expectations to keep student achievement high, while keeping a realistic eye on available resources. This individual will not only have to possess effective communication skills and foster a solid working relationship with the district’s staff, but he/she should be visible, approachable, and able to develop a collaborative vision that will have broad stakeholder buy-in. The new superintendent will need to positively respond to future issues pertaining to the district’s diversity and demographic changes. In addition, decisions will have to be made whether to restore previous budgetary cuts, a matter very much on the minds of many district employees, parents, and high school students.

It also is clear that both internal and external stakeholders of the school district see the hiring of a new superintendent as a true opportunity to harness new collaboration, foster transparent communications, and facilitate relationship building in order to move the district forward in a positive fashion. A new superintendent, with support from the Board of Education, the staff, and the community, can help provide this leadership.

The Lakota Local School District is a large district that is full of pride about their school district’s long-standing exemplary reputation, high academic achievement, quality curricular programs, and broad extra-curricular opportunities. Parents, community members, and business professionals genuinely care about the school district and are willing to be involved. The district offers much to its residents and it has well-established community values. We believe that the right candidate for superintendent will recognize the opportunity this environment has for him/her to be involved in making a difference in the lives of children.
and to have a high quality of life. This position will be of interest to the right superintendent candidates. We believe we will find the right potential candidates who have the attributes outlined herein, possess the skills and energy needed to address current and future issues expressed by survey respondents, and who will be happy to lead the district and the community into the future.

Respectfully submitted:

K-12 Business Consulting, Inc