

October 3, 2024

Blog – Superintendent Search Next Steps – Focus Groups

Last week, I was able to inform you that the Board of Education had selected the firm of Hazard, Young and Attea (HYA) to help them with the search for your next superintendent. This week, I would like to tell you about some of the next steps in the superintendent search process. During the next month, Mike Ritchie from HYA will be working with the Board of Education to finalize a timeline for the superintendent search. He will also be conducting a series of focus groups to find out what qualities, skills and attributes the Board, students, staff, parents, and community members would like in their next superintendent. Normally, HYA would also be putting out a survey to the community asking staff, students and the public questions about the next superintendent. However, since the Board of Education sent out a survey on this topic last year, I suggested to the Board that this step could be eliminated from HYA's proposal to help reduce the cost of the search.

At this time, I think it is important to remind everyone what the results of last year's survey were in regards to the qualities, skills and attributes that respondents wanted the Board to look for in their next superintendent. Last year's survey was taken by about 430 individuals: 81 staff members, 83 students and 266 parents/community members. In reviewing all of the responses, I think some common qualities and attributes were as follows:

- 1) When asked what type of prior job experience they would like the candidate to possess, most respondents wanted the individual to have experience as a teacher, principal and superintendent.
- 2) When asked how important it was that their next superintendent have prior experience as a superintendent, the most common response among all three groups was that experience was preferred, but not essential.
- 3) The majority of all three groups also would like the next superintendent to have a strategic leadership style, where the individual focuses on long-term planning and analyzes current school and classroom performance and sets goals to reach better results.
- 4) The most common comment about what traits they would like to see in the next superintendent was they wanted someone with good communication skills that will listen to the thoughts and opinions of others.
- 5) The respondents also want a leader who has a good moral compass who is honest, approachable and has integrity. The students want someone who is nice, kind and smart.
- 6) When asked what should be the superintendent's highest priority, most respondents want the next superintendent to be able to lead and unite the different factions within the school district and help it to continue to move forward in providing the best education possible to our students.
- 7) Most feel the biggest challenge will be to pass the next referendums.

The survey and its results were shared with Mr. Ritchie so that he could use the information from the survey and the focus groups responses to create a District Leadership Profile for the Board of Education. This profile will be shared with the Board of Education in early November.

On Monday, October 14 and Tuesday, October 15; Mr. Ritchie will be in the District to meet with focus groups of students, staff members, parents and members of the community. I am currently working with Mr. Ritchie to set up times and locations for each of these focus groups. If you would like to be part of one of the focus groups, please feel free to contact me at

wanderson@email.parkview.k12.wi.us. The student focus groups will meet during the day, probably during the WIN period and/or lunch period. The staff focus groups will meet both during the school day and at the end of the school day depending upon availability and the parent and community focus groups will be in the early evening. Each of the focus groups should last about 45 minutes. The Board of Education is interested in your opinion and hopes that you will take advantage of this opportunity to help provide the Board with important information as it goes through the search process.

If you ever have any questions about either this topic or any school related topic, please feel free to reach out to me.