

# **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROFILE**

**Fairbanks Local School District**

**October 15, 2018**



**Prepared for the Board of Education**



By  
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## **Fairbanks Local School District Superintendent Search Profile Report**

October 15, 2018

This report presents the summary of findings from the Superintendent Search Profile forums conducted by K-12 Business Consulting, Inc. (K-12), on September 20 and from 77 written search profiles submitted from various stakeholder groups. Once the Board of Education selected K-12 to conduct the superintendent search, a Search Profile Assessment document was created to solicit input from various stakeholders in the community. The Board and administration developed a broad list of community stakeholders to solicit input from as well as a general community wide invitation to meet with K-12 staff members Deb Campbell and Kathy Lowery 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 forums that were held at the Bus Garage and the High School Media Center on September 20, 2018. The information obtained through these sources, and summarized below, should be used to assist the Board in identifying characteristics requested of superintendent candidates.

The Search Profile Assessment form was made available to the district staff, identified stakeholders, and all individuals who attended the focus group sessions. In addition to the 134 individuals who returned written online search profiles, there were 77 individuals who participated in interviews and community forums facilitated by K-12. The results of the written Search Profile Assessment forms are included in this report along with several comments received in face to face discussions held at community forums.

In accumulating the data used in this report, K-12 sought opinions, recommendations and general comments with respect to preferred candidate characteristics, traits, qualifications and personal demeanor, as well as district strengths, weaknesses, issues and concerns which may have a bearing on 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 or staff member who provided information, thus equipping the Board with unbiased data to use as it proceeded to define the search profile for the next superintendent.

A Search Profile Assessment form was used to provide a framework for reporting the information compiled by K-12. Broad themes were highlighted in each question area into eight response groups (support staff, teaching staff, administration/central office, students, bus drivers/mechanics, community/parents, elected officials and the school board). Under each question in the report the response group's common themes were identified. The first category titled as "Consistent" are comments which were frequently heard from all or nearly all eight of the response groups. Comments heard less frequently or only heard in a specific response group are listed only under that response group. The responses noted under "Consistent" for any of the response groups are noted with the highest frequency first then descending to less frequently heard. It is important to note that the data compilation is not a scientific sampling, 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 Fairbanks Local School District. We would also like to thank Mr. Aaron Johnson, CFO/Treasurer, and Mrs. Kelly Heiss, Administrative Assistant, for the professional manner in which all arrangements were made including

mailing invitations and Search Profiles, as well as contacting and scheduling the focus groups 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**

The district is noted for excellent academic achievement (rigor) and a variety of extra-curricular activities with a large participation rate.

Fairbanks Local Schools enjoys an “enviable” reputation in central Ohio and people want to be a part of the district to enhance their children’s educational options.

The community is conservative, has a “small-town feel” and takes pride in their schools.

The community and the parents support the schools and share the same values.

The staff and students are of high quality; they support and respect each other and help each other.

The staff is caring, compassionate, experienced, student-focused and remain in the district for many years adding an element of stability and expertise to the schools.

### **BOARD**

A strong, dedicated teaching staff exists, and they are well qualified with extensive experience.

Fairbanks has great community support, parent participation and terrific students.

Currently, there is a solid financial base.

This is a small district with excellent students, families and teachers who “rally” to help anyone.

The students care about their education and their fellow students.

This is a small, intimate community where people know each other and are engaged with and support the schools.

There is very little turnover in the staff which provides educational expertise and stability for the schools.

There is a vast array of courses for the students and numerous extra-curricular activities.

The academic program is excellent, and the Local Report Card reflects the quality of the district.

Although the buildings are old, the maintenance department does a good job keeping them operable and safe.

### **CENTRAL OFFICE/ADMINISTRATORS**

The community is engaged with the schools and people know each other as this is a small town.

The staff is caring, compassionate and student-focused PreK through 12.

The staff has very little turnover as they like to work in the district.

Currently, the district is financially stable.

The administrators are talented, caring and work hard to ensure each student’s success.

A vast array of courses, programs and extra-curricular activities are available for students.

Maintenance does a good job working with the older buildings.

### **FACULTY**

The teachers are dedicated, hard-working and caring with high expectations for themselves and the students.

Great parental support and community involvement within the schools is evident.

The financial stability is currently strong and there are resources available to support education.

The staff, students and community are great.

The small size of the district is a plus and the district offers many opportunities for the students.

The staff is independent and works well with very little guidance.

The administration has an open-door policy which is greatly appreciated.

Staff members spend many extra hours to ensure the district runs smoothly.

### **BUS DRIVERS/MECHANIC**

The “small-town” community is “well-rooted”, invested in the schools and takes pride in the schools. Sporting events and school events are well supported by the community and the students. The district has quality students who are respectful to each other and to adults. The teaching and support staffs are a stable group of professionals with very little employee turnover. Many graduates come back to this area to work and live.

### **COMMUNITY/PARENTS**

The community is close knit, has a small-town feel and families who share the same values. Academic excellence and the exemplary reputation of the district allow students to thrive academically. The teaching staff value and respect the students and truly care about them. There is significant parent and community support and they are involved with the schools. The traditional values of the school and the community are accepted by the students, the staff and the community. There is closeness among the students, the parents and the community. The school climate and culture create a positive environment for students. The availability of extra-curricular programs and educational options (i.e. STEM program at the elementary level, computer club and the robotics team) for students is impressive.

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS/KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

High morale is exhibited by the highly qualified teachers and staff. The district is tight knit and has that small-town feel. The school district has an “enviable” reputation and has strong academic programs with excellent results. Tolles Career Center and the district programs provides many opportunities for the students. There are high expectations in academic achievement and performance and therefore parents want their children to attend Fairbanks Local Schools. The administrative tenure is a significant factor as it provides stability for the district.

### **STUDENTS**

The staff cares about the students and wants them to be successful. A mutual respect exists. Students receive personal attention from the teachers and they treat you as an individual. The academic program is strong and offers the students many opportunities for a small school. There is a “small-town” feel to the district and we feel safe and comfortable with each other. The community supports the school district and rallies around the schools. Strong adult leadership is present and any staff member would help a student in need. The extra-curricular programs are varied and strong and many students participate in them. The chrome books are a positive addition and technology is emerging well.

## **IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING DISTRICT**

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

### **CONSISTENT THEMES**

A leader who is invested in the district and will make a long-term commitment to Fairbanks Local Schools. The older facilities need maintenance/updating and consideration should be given to a future bond issue to address the aging facilities.

The recent bond issue divided the district. The new leader must be able to mediate and include all stakeholders in a process that is transparent.

Understanding the growth of the district and how that impacts the culture of the district will be important.

Lack of space inhibits additional courses at the high school level and the elementary school is at capacity.

There was a trust factor between the board/superintendent and the community, however, the situation seems to be improving with the current board composition.

### **BOARD**

Aging buildings and a growing district create a challenge to the Board and the community.

A concern exists regarding the continued financial stability if there are no new revenue streams.

There is overcrowding in the schools and continued growth and expansion.

Streamlining the staff to ensure we are being efficient and effective in educating students.

The curriculum should be expanded to meet the needs of each child.

The district needs a strong leader who will commit to the district.

### **CENTRAL OFFICE/ADMINISTRATORS**

It would be important to revisit the bond issue as the buildings continue to age and deteriorate.

The rapid growth is causing limitations as we cannot offer more courses for students or hire additional teachers due to the lack of space at this time.

A lack of trust existed throughout the district but seems to be improving with the new constitution of the Board of Education.

The board, superintendent and community need to be more proactive regarding issues in the district.

### **FACULTY**

The outdated and aging facilities at the high school and middle school and lack of space in the elementary.

The increase in the student population creates a need for more teachers, additional programs and space.

Passing future bond issues and levies to maintain financial stability and improve facilities.

Additional staff and resources are needed for a changing curriculum and diverse pupil populations (gifted, spec. ed.)

The new Media Center is underutilized currently.

### **SUPPORT STAFF**

The district is experiencing growth and therefore there is a lack of space in most of the buildings.

The middle school and high school buildings are aging rapidly and need to be replaced.

The bond issue divided the district because the campaign approach was not unified and did not include all stakeholders.

There was a lack of trust between the board/superintendent and the community, but this seems to have improved with the new board members recently elected.

There are staffing issues in the secretarial areas as they are short staffed.

Some aides and support staff work 29.5 hours a week and do not receive health benefits as a result.

The guidance department needs more help as they appear to be overworked.

### **BUS DRIVERS/MECHANIC**

The growth of the student population and resistance to that growth.

Growth is changing the culture and, therefore, the changing demographics will need to be addressed.

The last levy divided the district as there were issues of transparency and truthfulness.

Life-long residents have different feelings about the district, the bond issue and how money is used as opposed to the newer residents.

### **COMMUNITY/PARENTS**

The growth in the south end of the county, the overlap of boundaries and open enrollment are all contributing to the overcrowding in the district buildings.

The buildings are outdated, and facilities are aging.

There are funding concerns due to growth and additional student needs; there is also a concern for the agricultural community.

There must be more transparency regarding how the permanent improvement funds are being spent in the district.

A Strategic Plan should be created and communicated to the community so that people understand where the funds are being spent each year and over the next 3 to 5 years.

Communication needs to improve as there is a perception that a culture existed where only a few people knew what was happening in the district.

The district needs a person who can bring people together for the common good regarding issues.

There is a concern as to what should happen during the transition period as the district tries to obtain new buildings.

The implementation of the technology in an aging environment is a challenge.

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS/KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

There is significant growth in the south end of the county and many people are not aware of the situation.

There is a concern over the quality of the special education program.

The financial situation is currently stable, but the student growth factor could change that quickly.

Budgeting must be carefully reviewed to maintain fiscal stability in the future.

### **STUDENTS**

The technology advancement is important to students, but they would like a more “blended” approach to the instructional process.

The building is old and falling apart; it is need or repair or replacement (heating and cooling, leaky windows, old desks and the cafeteria).

The new media center is beautiful, however, there needs to be a clearer understanding of how to use the media center as very few students/teachers have used the center thus far.

There is a lack of diversity in the schools, however, future growth could change that for the better.

The school is feeling smaller (more crowded) as the district is growing.

There are rules that should be reviewed as if you violate the dress code you are sent home and miss instruction in that class.

There are financial concerns as the district continues to grow.

## **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**

The next superintendent should possess strong communication skills, be collaborative and open-minded. He/She should have experience in a small school system and understand the conservative values and traditions of the Fairbanks Local Schools and the community.

The person should be highly visible, approachable, accountable, professional and most of all, student-centered.

A leader who respects the staff, the students and the rural, agricultural community. He/She attends events and activities in the district.

A lifelong learner who has integrity and strong interpersonal skills.

An educator who understands technology and is an innovative, 21<sup>st</sup> Century leader.

### **BOARD MEMBERS**

A strong leader who is willing to address difficult situations with an open-mind.

An educator who has a proven track record of excellent leadership skills, communication skills and interpersonal skills.

A motivator with the drive to get things done; someone organized and collaborative.

An honest individual who is transparent on all levels within the district and the community.

The new leader must be student-focused with an emphasis on safety, opportunity and achievement.

The candidate must be the “right fit” for the district and bring unity and purpose to all stakeholders.

### **CENTRAL OFFICE/ADMINISTRATION**

A successful educator who is a life-long learner and has a futuristic vision of education.

Someone who has excellent communication skills (written, oral and listening), uses a collaborative approach and is open-minded; able to make tough decisions and be firm.

A demonstrated ability to be transparent, approachable, personable and someone who can build relationships.

Experience as a superintendent and a person who has high integrity and a proven track record.

A leader who respects the positions employees represent and allows them to do their work.

Someone who is willing to “roll-up” their sleeves and help do the work.

### **FACULTY**

A great leader who is personable, knowledgeable, approachable, friendly, caring, practical and intelligent.

Someone with excellent communication skills who is experienced and professional.

The new leader must be highly visible, involved with and dedicated to our students, staff and community.

A person committed to staying in the district as superintendent for more than two or three years.

A leader who will focus on the student’s best interests, be collaborative and a team player.

Demonstrated communication skills, including an ability to listen and relate to the community and staff.

Ability to provide a vision for maintaining high academic performance and providing additional programs.

A person who will be visible in the buildings, has high energy and shows sensitivity towards others.

### **SUPPORT STAFF**

A person committed to being involved in the community and getting to know the staff and students.  
Demonstrated ability as a good communicator, is personable and can build relationships.  
Someone who has an open-door policy and is fair and consistent with how he/she handles the staff.  
A person who is student-focused and understands that each student learns differently.  
The person must be professional and skilled in their communication style in all aspects of the district.  
A leader who can use the technology and understands 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning.  
An honest person who has integrity, strong ethics and good moral character.  
A leader who is fair, knowledgeable and approachable.

### **BUS DRIVERS/MECHANIC**

The new superintendent must be a mediator to help heal the division that was caused by the bond campaign.  
A leader who supports the staff and backs the decisions made by the department heads.  
Someone who respects the work of the transportation department and the mechanic.  
A person who is highly visible to the staff and community and attends various events in the district.  
A leader who is approachable to all staff and community members.

### **COMMUNITY/PARENTS**

Someone who is fair and has the welfare of the students at the forefront.  
A 21<sup>st</sup> Century educator who will allow the students to advance academically.  
Someone who is honest, trustworthy, highly visible, personable and has excellent communication skills.  
A leader who has integrity and exhibits ethical behavior.  
A proven leader who understands the community and respects the values and traditions of the district.  
He/She is a good listener who understands all constituents should have a voice and should be heard.  
A visionary who is an innovator, understands technology and 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning.  
A fiscally conservative person who can manage finances in the district in the face of growth.  
An innovator who will engage in collaboration with the staff and community.  
A leader who can inspire staff, navigate change and is visible throughout the district/community.  
Demonstrated experience as a “people person” who is willing to listen to all sides with an open-mind.  
Someone who will be resourceful in leveraging the strengths of the community.  
An energetic and enthusiastic leader dedicated to education, academic rigor and excellence.

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS/KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

A collaborator who can bring people together and who is committed and invested in community engagement.  
Someone who can build relationships with all stakeholders in the district.  
A strong leader who can make difficult decisions based on information from all stakeholders.  
He/She should provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate by grade levels and subject areas to improve instruction for the students.  
An educational leader who understands technology and the uses of it instructionally.

### **STUDENTS**

A strong leader who cares about students and staff and is passionate about education.  
A leader who will see all sides of an issue and seek different perspectives.  
He/She understands that this is a “special community” and will want to embrace our traditions and values.  
Someone who is visible at student events and activities and supports and respects the students.  
The new superintendent must have excellent communication skills with all people/stakeholders.

Someone who is excited about the work, enjoys the district and wants to improve the school experience for the students.

An educator who communicates with the students and understands the students and how they feel.

Someone who understands school finance and is careful about how they spend district money.

A person who has positive energy, is kind, cheery and enjoys the students and the district.

**SUPERINTENDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY RANKING**

**1 = MOST IMPORTANT TO 10 = LEAST IMPORTANT**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>BOE</b>	<b>ADMIN</b>	<b>TEACHERS</b>	<b>SUPPORT STAFF</b>	<b>PARENTS &amp; COMMUNITY</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>
Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, students and parents	5	4	2	2	7	1
Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district	3	1	3	1	4	6
Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum	6	8	10	9	8	7
Effective with both written and verbal communication	7	5	8	4	6	4
Successful experience as a superintendent	9	7	5	7	9	8
Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations	10	10	9	10	10	10
Fiscal management expertise	4	9	7	3	3	9
Effective organizational and management skills	2	3	4	5	2	5
Personal involvement and interest in the community	8	6	6	6	5	3
A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills	1	2	1	8	1	2

## RANKING OF TOP AND BOTTOM FIVE (5) IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS ALL GROUPS

<b>RANK</b>	<b>TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS</b>
1	A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills
2	Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, students and parents
3	Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district
4	Organizational and management skills
5	Personal involvement and interest in the community
<b>RANK</b>	<b>BOTTOM 5 CHARACTERISTICS</b>
6	Effective at both written and verbal communication
7	Fiscal management expertise
8	Experiences as a Superintendent
9	Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum
10	Experience in socially and economically diverse student populations

### SUMMARY

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

Clearly, all groups and individuals expressed that Fairbanks's *greatest strengths* include district's (A) The district is noted for excellent academic achievement/rigor and a variety of extra-curricular activities with a large participation rate; (B) Fairbanks Local Schools enjoys an "enviable" reputation in central Ohio and people want to be a part of the district to enhance their children's educational options; (C) The community is conservative, has a "small-town feel" and take pride in their schools; (D) The community and the parents support the schools and share the same values; (E) The staff and students are of high quality and support and respect each other as well as help each other; (F) The staff is caring, compassionate, experienced, student-focused and remain in the district for many years adding an element of stability and expertise to the schools. In short, the Fairbanks Local School District has an exemplary reputation and is held in high regard in central Ohio. The district has many reasons to be proud of the schools and the community.

The *top concerns* facing the Fairbanks Board of Education and the new superintendent in the future – all of which surfaced repetitively through focus group sessions and from the written Superintendent Search Profiles that were submitted individually – included: (A) A leader who is invested in the district and will make a long-term commitment to Fairbanks Local Schools; (B) The older facilities need maintenance/updating and consideration should be given to a future bond issue to address the aging facilities; (C) The recent bond issue divided the district. The new leader must be able to mediate and include all stakeholders in a process that is transparent; (D) Understanding the growth of the district and how that impacts the culture of the district will be important; (E) Lack of space inhibits additional courses at the high school level and the elementary school is at capacity; (F) There was a trust factor among the board, the superintendent and the community, however, the situation seems to be improving with the current board composition.

It is important to note the newly renovated Media Center is an excellent resource for students and staff. A plan for fully utilizing the facility needs to be developed collaboratively among administrators, teachers and

students. It is early in year and the staff and the students are adjusting to the new technology and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning models and how to combine these factors with new instructional techniques.

It was difficult to capture all the characteristics that respondents were looking for in a new superintendent. It is certain that no one person could possibly embody all that was mentioned for attributes of the next superintendent.

In reconciling the many concerns and *characteristics sought in a superintendent* for the Fairbanks Local School District, the vast majority respondents expressed the need for the person to have: (A) The next superintendent should possess strong communication skills, be collaborative and open-minded; (B) Someone who has experience in a small school system and understands the conservative values and traditions of the Fairbanks Local Schools and the community; (C) The person should be highly visible, approachable, accountable, professional and most of all, student-centered; (D) A leader who is visible and respects the staff, the students and the community. He/She attends events and activities in the district; (E) A lifelong learner who has integrity and strong interpersonal skills; (E) An educator who understands technology and is an innovative, 21<sup>st</sup> Century leader.

The new superintendent should be visibly active in the community, serve as role model personally and professionally, be sincere, approachable, and exhibit trustworthiness and integrity. While Fairbanks Local School District seems to be growing it still has that “small- town” feeling where people know each other.

We believe the Fairbanks Local School District is approaching an important period of transition in the next couple of years. Difficult decisions will be required of the new superintendent to balance stakeholder expectations of a high performing district while keeping a realistic eye on available resources. This individual will need to possess effective communication skills, maintain the collaborative vision of the district and implement decisions based on stakeholder input. A skillful superintendent will have the opportunity to help the district navigate through challenging issues, and the district must do so if it is to thrive and continue to build on student success and continue to engender community support. We will look for this key set of skills, and ones that complement each other, in candidates for the next superintendent.

The Fairbanks Local School District serves a close-knit community that is full of pride about their school district’s academic and extra-curricular successes. We believe that the right candidate for superintendent will recognize the opportunity this environment has for them to really be involved in making a difference in the lives of children. This position will be of interest to the right superintendent candidates. We believe we will find the right candidate(s) who have the attributes outlined herein, possess the skills and energy needed to address the issues and concerns expressed by respondents, and who will be happy to be a part of the Fairbanks Local School District community.

Respectfully submitted:

K-12 Business Consulting, Inc