

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROFILE

BETHEL LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



October 24, 2022

Prepared for the Board of Education



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Bethel Local School District

Superintendent Search Profile Report October 24, 2022

This report presents the summary of findings from the Superintendent Search Profile focus groups conducted by K-12 Business Consulting, Inc. (K-12) during the week of October 17, 2022. Eight profile forums were held and 113 written search profiles were submitted from various stakeholder groups. Once the Board of Education (BoE) selected K-12 to conduct the superintendent search, a Search Profile Assessment document was created to solicit input from various stakeholders in the community. Stakeholders were identified by the BoE in addition to a community-wide invitation welcoming individuals to meet with Ms. Deb Campbell and Dr. Dustin Miller of K-12 to discuss superintendent characteristics. Any stakeholder who had a desire to express an opinion was invited to either submit a search profile questionnaire and/or meet with K-12 at meetings held during the week of October 17, 2022. Information obtained through these sources, and summarized below, will be used to assist the BoE in identifying characteristics of potential superintendent candidates.

The Search Profile Assessment document was made available to district staff, identified stakeholders, the community at large, and all individuals who attended focus group sessions. In addition to the 113 individuals who returned written and online search profiles, there were 67 individuals who participated in interviews and community meetings facilitated by K-12. The results of the written Search Profile Assessment focus groups are included in this report along with comments received during these discussions.

Some individuals submitted questionnaires but did not attend focus group sessions. We are also aware of some focus group attendees electing not to submit questionnaires. While written comments are included in this report, some of the numerical responses in the Ranking section could not be included because those responses were blank or because items were not ranked with an appropriate numerical value.

In accumulating 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 of the next superintendent. At the request of the BoE, K-12 sought views from 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 BoE without revealing the identity of any citizen or staff member who provided information, thus equipping the BoE with unbiased data to use as it proceeded to define the search profile for the next superintendent.

The Search Profile Assessment document was used to provide a framework for reporting the information compiled by K-12. Broad themes were highlighted in each question area into several response groups (central office staff/administrators, high school students, teaching and support staff, community/parents, and Board of Education members). 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 six of the

response groups. Comments heard less frequently or only heard in a specific response group are listed only under that response group. 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 BoE 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 Bethel Local School District. We would like to thank Tina Hageman, Treasurer, Shelley Pierron, Administrative Assistant for the professional manner in which all arrangements were made, including mailing invitations, arranging for meeting space, as well as contacting and scheduling the focus groups that made this profile possible. We also want to acknowledge Jacob Watson, Communication Director for his assistance with the district's web site.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

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

Consistent Themes

1. The Bethel Local community has pride in its schools.
2. Teachers and staff are caring and attentive to the needs of their students.
3. Although experiencing growth, Bethel Local has a small school, family feel and a tradition of community support.
4. Parents are supportive of Bethel Local and prioritize being involved in the education of their children.
5. Students at Bethel Local have several opportunities to learn and grow, both inside the classroom and out.

Board of Education:

- The Bethel Local community cares about its schools.
- Teachers are caring and attentive to student needs.
- The school district has stable financial backing from the Bethel Local community.
- As a historically small school, Bethel Local has a community feel where families support each other and the school district.
- Communication between the school district and community has improved over the years.
- Strong academic success continues to be a priority.

Administration:

- The Bethel Local community is supportive of its schools and actively involved.
- Bethel Local is located in a good area that is attractive to staff and families.
- There is pride in the schools from students, teachers, and the community overall.

- Teachers are dedicated to their students and continue to be adaptable to the needs of their students.
- Although it can be seen as a pressure point, the recent growth at Bethel Local is a positive that will serve the overall district well in the future.

High School Students:

- Teachers are caring, understanding, and willing to go the extra mile to help students.
- Bethel Local is a good community and a nice place to grow up.
- There is a family feel to Bethel Local and a lot of support from the community.
- The diversity at Bethel Local makes it a special place to go to school.
- There are a lot of opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, for students.
- Students feel there is a high level of mutual respect among their peers.

Teachers & Staff:

- There is a sense of community among faculty and staff at Bethel Local that makes the district an enjoyable place to work.
- Parent involvement at Bethel Local is strong and they are dedicated to the success of their children.
- Teachers are dedicated and work hard for their students.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and provide a strong and relevant academic education to students.
- The small size of Bethel Local allows faculty and staff to get to know families and work together with them on behalf of their students.
- Diversity at Bethel Local makes it a rich place to learn and grow.

Parents & Community:

- The students of Bethel Local are kind and demonstrate strong school spirit.
- Teachers are dedicated and work hard for the students of Bethel Local and have the respect of parents and community members.
- There is an overall family feel in the Bethel Local community and people take care of one another.
- The community cares about its schools and are willing to be involved both in the classroom and for extracurricular activities.
- There is a lot of pride and tradition throughout the Bethel Local community.
- Bethel Local has historically provided small classes sizes and a school environment where students feel a part of the larger community.
- The diversity at Bethel Local provides a nice growth opportunity for all students.
- The school district has been smart about financial resources and utilizing taxpayer dollars 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

1. Growth and school facilities is an ongoing concern. Thoughtful plans need to be developed to handle this growth in a manner that Bethel Local can blend both history (Old Bethel) and vision (New Bethel) for the betterment of the school district.
2. Like many school districts, a national political divide has created division among the Bethel Local community. Discussions about controversial issues need to occur in a measured way that allows diverse opinions to be heard and ultimately work in a way that builds consensus over how to move forward.
3. A shifting community has brought more English Language learners to the school district. There is wide consensus that further supports need to be implemented so all can thrive in their educational setting.
4. Teacher retention continues to be a concern of all stakeholders in the Bethel community, including students. How to retain strong educators needs to be a focal point of the Board of Education and district leadership.
5. School leader turnover has created stress for the Bethel Local community. The community wants a leader dedicated to Bethel Local and one who will be invested for an extended period of time.

Board of Education:

- Growth and facilities are a continued concern.
- Although Bethel Local has been fiscally sound and supported by its community, ongoing discussions need to take place about offering competitive wages across the board to retain top-notch employees.
- Due to growth and the ebb and flow of national politics, the Bethel Local community is more divided to date. Work needs to continue to honor the community's wonderful traditions as well as embrace meaningful ways for students and families to grow into the future.

Administration:

- Growth in the district has created stress on both individuals and facilities. Continued discussions to address this concern need to be prioritized.
- Differing opinions about education have created some division among the school community. The next superintendent will need to prioritize this aspect of the work, honor diverse opinions, and find consensus forward.
- Changing student demographics include more English Language learners. Providing additional educator and material resources is needed to sustain a quality learning environment.

- Bethel Local needs to be thoughtful about retaining qualified leaders and teachers in order to provide consistency in student learning.

High School Students:

- Overcrowding at the school, although being addressed, has created stress during the school day.
- Increased language barriers between students and their teachers have created challenging situations for learning and teaching.
- Appropriate Wi-Fi coverage should be consistent throughout the school, teaching resources should be up to date, and discussions should be had as to why students are timed-out of certain websites, etc.
- Extracurricular resources (e.g., band and athletic equipment) are aging and plans for replacement are needed.
- The district and community need to continue being supportive and open minded about issues of diversity. Honoring religious diversity is a specific area of support to be considered.

Teachers & Staff:

- Although there is not an easy solution, overcrowding and growth in the district need to be priority issues.
- Consistency of administrator tenure continues to be an issues for Bethel Local.
- Community tensions have created additional stress for faculty and staff to effectively support students in their learning.
- Teacher turnover is high and causes breaks in continuity of learning.
- An increase of English Language learners has created a need for more resources
- Diversity among students makes for a positive learning environment and this should be embraced throughout.

Parents & Community:

- Growth throughout the district continues to be the number one issue and concern for all in the Bethel Local community.
- The community continues to be divided over the place of school and how non-academic issues appear in that context. It will be important for the next superintendent to understand the complexities of these issue and work to bring factions together as one district.
- Staff retention needs to be a priority so Bethel local can retain great teachers.
- Although hard to measure, there are some who feel the Board of Education are not representing the values of the Bethel Local community. A new superintendent needs to work to bridge the gap with community members who feel their voices are not being heard/represented.
- The Bethel Local community continues to become more diverse. The support of English Language learners needs to be a continued focal point moving forward.

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

1. A superintendent who is kind, accessible, and visible throughout the district.
2. A leader who will respect the traditions of Bethel Local while also keeping an eye to the future.
3. A consensus building willing to make fair and equitable decisions on behalf of the students, staff, and the Bethel Local community.
4. An open and honest communicator who will include stakeholders when major decisions are made on behalf of the school district.
5. A superintendent who understands population growth and has experience navigating overcrowded schools.
6. A superintendent who will become invested in the Bethel Local community.

Board of Education:

- Bethel Local needs a proven leader who can create a vision for the district and use it to make informed decisions for the future.
- A leader who understands a changing school community is needed. The new superintendent needs to respect the values, norms, and traditions of the Bethel Local community while embracing the future.
- The superintendent is a challenging job and Bethel Local needs a unifier who can incorporate varied perspectives when making decisions.
- Bethel Local's next superintendent needs to be an effective communicator to all stakeholders.
- A leader who focuses on evaluating resources used by staff and then providing resources.

Administration:

- Due to the family feel of Bethel Local, the next superintendent needs to be approachable and visible.
- A superintendent who is a listener and includes stakeholders in the decision-making of the school district.
- A skilled leader in conflict resolution to navigate some of the current divisions in the community.
- A proven instructional leader to keep the academic reputation of Bethel Local strong.

High School Students:

- A superintendent who is involved and gets to know all students, not just one population or building level.

- A leader who is caring, fair, honest, and unbiased in their approach.
- A superintendent who is committed to Bethel Local and willing to stay.
- A superintendent who creates a welcoming environment for all students, especially diverse populations.
- Someone who is visible throughout the district.
- Someone who is a good communicator and includes students when decisions are made on their behalf.

Teachers & Staff:

- The next leader should be personable in their work with the students, teachers, parents, and the community.
- Leading is hard and our next leader needs to be willing to ultimately stand up for what is right. Consensus building will be key.
- Open and honest communication around all issues, especially challenging problems.
- Someone with experience in growing districts.
- A visionary leader able to create long-term plans that include both a respect for history and a look forward.
- A leader with a “work together” attitude for the better of Bethel Local.

Parents & Community:

- We need a proven leader who is honest, trustworthy, and value driven.
- Someone who is transparent in their approach and an excellent communicator.
- A superintendent who is goal driven, but flexible in decision-making as circumstances shift.
- A leader who embraces change but does not devalue the past.
- A leader willing to get to know Bethel Local and appreciate the values of a traditionally rural community.
- A superintendent who is visible throughout the entire community and is invested in the work.
- Someone willing to embrace differences and work equally with constituent groups.

SUPERINTENDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY RANKING

1 = MOST IMPORTANT

TO

10 = LEAST IMPORTANT

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

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

<u>RANK</u>	<u>TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS</u>
1	Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, students, and parents
2	A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills
3	Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district
4	Successful experience as a superintendent
5	Effective organizational and management skills

<u>RANK</u>	<u>BOTTOM 5 CHARACTERISTICS</u>
6	Effective at both written and verbal communications
7	Personal involvement and interest in the community
8	Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations
9	Fiscal management expertise
10	Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum

SUMMARY

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

All groups and individuals expressed that Bethel Local’s *greatest strengths* include: (1) The Bethel Local community has pride in its schools; (2) Teachers and staff are caring and attentive to the needs of their students; (3) Although experiencing growth, Bethel Local has a small school, family feel and a tradition of community support; (4) Parents are supportive of Bethel Local and prioritize being involved in the education of their children; (5) Students at Bethel Local have several opportunities to learn and grow, both inside the classroom and out.

The *top issues and concerns* facing the Bethel Local Board of Education and the new superintendent in the future – all of which surfaced repetitively through focus group sessions and from the individually submitted Superintendent Search Profiles – include: (1) Growth and school facilities is an ongoing concern. Thoughtful plans need to be developed to handle this growth in a manner that Bethel Local can blend both history (Old Bethel) and vision (New Bethel) for the betterment of the school district; (2) Like many school districts, a national political divide has created division among the Bethel Local community. Discussions about controversial issues need to occur in a measured way that allows diverse opinions to be heard and ultimately work in a way that builds consensus over how to move forward; (3) A shifting community has brought more English Language learners to the school district. There is wide consensus that further supports need to be implemented so all can thrive in their educational setting; (4) Teacher retention continues to be a concern of all stakeholders in the Bethel community, including students. How to retain strong educators needs to be a focal point of the Board of Education and district leadership; (5) School leader turnover has created stress for the

Bethel Local community. The community wants a leader dedicated to Bethel Local and one who will be invested for an extended period of time.

In reconciling the concerns and the *characteristics sought in a superintendent* for the Bethel Local School District, the vast majority of respondents expressed the following: (1) A superintendent who is kind, accessible, and visible throughout the district; (2) A leader who will respect the traditions of Bethel Local while also keeping an eye to the future; (3) A consensus building willing to make fair and equitable decisions on behalf of the students, staff, and the Bethel Local community; (4) An open and honest communicator who will include stakeholders when major decisions are made on behalf of the school district; (5) A superintendent who understands population growth and has experience navigating overcrowded schools. (6) A superintendent who will become invested in the Bethel Local community.

The new superintendent should be visibly active in the schools and the community, serve as a role model personally and professionally to students and staff, be sincere, approachable, and exhibit trustworthiness and integrity. The fact that Bethel Local schools will continue to grow and become more diverse will take added attention from school personnel for the community to keep that “small-town” feel that everyone embraces.

We believe the Bethel Local School District is approaching an important period of transition in the years ahead. 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, establish a vision and long-range plan collaboratively with all factions of the school and community. 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 Bethel Local School District is 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. 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 Bethel Local School District community.

Respectfully submitted:

K-12 Business Consulting, Inc