



SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

*Final Leadership Profile Report
From Initial Board Input and Community Sessions
October 5, 2015*

Wallingford Swarthmore School District

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We are pleased to present the Leadership Profile Report for the Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent search process. The report provides a synthesis as well as full descriptions from the series of stakeholder discussion groups focusing on the profile draft leadership profile developed by the School Board. That draft leadership profile focuses on a set of key priorities, issues and leadership qualities that the Wallingford Swarthmore School District (WSSD) community seeks in the new Superintendent. The profile will be used to develop the advertisements and will inform the development of interview questions for the search.

Overview

Part One of this report provides the synthesis of the priorities and leadership qualities identified by the various discussion groups conducted with a broad range of stakeholders from the WSSD community in September of 2015. The second part details the results from each discussion group in turn.

Eight focus groups were scheduled. Below is a list of the session dates, target stakeholder groups and the number of participants at each:

- Administrators: September 16, 3:30 p.m.; 13 participants
- Community (Parents, Non-parent taxpayers, etc.): September 16, 7:00 p.m.; 12 participants
- Community (Parents, Non-parent taxpayers, etc.): September 21, 9:00 a.m.; 7 participants
- Students: September 21, 1:00 p.m.; 28 participants
- Support Staff: September 24, 4:00 p.m. 3 participants
- Community (Parents, Non-parent taxpayers, etc.): September 24, 7:00 p.m.; 1 participant
- Teachers: September 28, 4:00 p.m.; 12 participants
- Community (Parents, Non-parent taxpayers, etc.): September 28, 7:00 p.m.; 6 participants

Each discussion group started with an overview of the search process and a review of the Draft Leadership Profile (attached in Appendix #/X) developed by the Board of School Directors. That profile was divided into two parts:

A. About the district, including:

- The three qualities the Board thinks it's most important to wants to preserve in the District

- The three key issues Board believes the District must face
- B. About the superintendent, including:
- The top three *personal characteristics* the Board would like to see in new superintendent, and description of each.
 - The top three *leadership skills* the Board would like to see in new superintendent, and description of each.
 - The top three *professional competencies* the Board would like to see in new superintendent, and description of each.

After a quick overview of the Board's draft leadership profile, participants discussed the profile, including what resonated most with them, what they thought might need more emphasis, what they thought might be missing, any surprises, etc.

As an overview, by-and-large the participants in the stakeholder discussions agreed with the leadership profile developed by the board. At the same time, some important nuances emerged through those discussions, as well as some points that we've added to the Board's initial thinking.

Organization

The report is presented in three parts:

- Part 1 contains a profile that represents a synthesis of the Board's draft profile and the community's responses to that profile.
- Part 2 contains the results from each session, representing the discussion of the participants in each session.
- Part 3 provides a copy of the draft Leadership Profile developed by the Board in early September, 2015.

PART 1: Synthesis and Integration of Individual Sessions into the Board's Draft Leadership Profile

Leadership Profile Synthesis

QUALITIES TO MAINTAIN:

All students have access to well-rounded educational experiences that blend curricular and co-curricular activities to ensure students are provided with a rigorous, engaging and well-rounded educational experience. Key aspects of these “well-rounded educational experiences” are: academic excellence, high expectations for each student, developing strong critical thinking skills, social and emotional intelligence, and experiential learning. A key here is an educational program based on a whole-person approach that includes curricular and co-curricular activities such as art and music as well as athletics. This is essential to develop graduates who are passionate in the pursuit of their own learning; adept at working with others; skillful in multiple areas; effective in solving problems and in working with others; involved with school and broader community social issues and career and college ready.

Use creative problem solving to achieve fiscal discipline and provide robust professional development to insure a high quality teaching staff. Key aspects of this include thinking resourcefully to deal with budget constraints, developing creative solutions to fiscal hurdles to maintain the excellent reputation of the WSSD and insure high quality teaching.

A culture of collaboration that includes teachers, administrators and staff; parents, family and; community members; and nearby colleges, businesses, and other organizations all engaged to support student learning and success. Our teachers and schools collaborate with each other internally, with community and nearby businesses and professionals, as well as with local colleges to support student learning and success. We should continue to strive to develop a culture of collaboration that supports decision-making and structures productive involvement.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

High student performance in an era of mandated high stakes testing while helping students manage day-to-day stress and pressures to achieve.

Financial challenges will threaten our ability to provide the well-rounded educational experiences we want for our children. Part of these challenges are related to our limited commercial tax base. Others are related to skyrocketing costs (e.g., PSERS and medical insurance), and to the vagaries of the PA state funding “system.” Another part of the challenge is insuring that fiscal decisions are based on/balanced by sound educational decisions so that the district doesn't the sacrifice well-rounded education it wants to maintain.

Addressing the spectrum of learning needs of an increasingly diverse student body. Spectrum of *diversity* includes differences in learning needs, as well as diversity of socio-economic status and of ethnicity and race (including English-language learners). It includes kids at both ends of the continuum as well as kids in the middle. In addition, we have seen significant increases in special education costs, as the demand for expensive “outside placements” has increased. We are also seeing increasing demands for high quality programming for gifted students, and more. We need to focus on equity, developing better and more cost-effective ways to meet the needs of each learner, so that all students should have the same opportunities for well-rounded learning, advancement and recognition.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Is ***committed*** to a positive educational and learning experience and outcomes for all children in our diverse student body, as well as the full range of district staff. This commitment includes caring about, interacting with, and building relationships with students, all staff and parents and families.
- Has a track record of ***integrity in decision-making and has earned the trust*** of the range of stakeholders (students, parents, taxpayers, staff and the board) associated with the school district’s objectives. This will require more than a little diplomacy and building trust through transparent decision-making
- Possesses the knowledge, capacity and inclination to focus on the present while anticipating possible challenges and new directions that would move the district forward. This includes noticing when something is becoming a pattern and tackling it.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS:

- Possesses the confidence to identify the key issues facing the school district, demonstrate personal drive and finesse to handle tough decisions that may result and an **ability to collaboratively develop a vision for the district, embody that vision and build a strategy to realize that vision** in ways that that inspires others to collectively believe in its value and work hard to realize it.
- Has the skills and disposition to think and act **strategically**, taking the “long view” in developing priorities. Can craft plans and articulate the direction and reasons that will further develop an excellent school district, and can distribute leadership to achieve those priorities.
 - *Over and over I heard that the “long view” includes settling into the community, but I’m not sure where to put it.*
- Can **build a team and a collaborative culture** in which a diverse group of district staff work together and with community partners work together to support high levels of student learning. Building or strengthening our culture will require working with the “cultures

within cultures” in the district. It also includes building creative partnerships with diverse internal and external stakeholders to bring resources to individual schools and the district.

- Has a track record of developing **innovative** solutions to address current and looming challenges to district growth and student learning, including integrating technology in ways that contribute to well-rounded educational experiences.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES:

- Has demonstrated the ability to work with staff and external stakeholders to develop and implement successful **fiscal management**, effectively allocating resources, effective budget processes and tracking performance to advance district goals focusing on student’s having a high quality well-rounded education.
- Maintains strong, consistent and reciprocal **communication** processes that support listening to, understanding and responding to the needs of the broad range of stakeholders, some that are much more highly involved than others, that are essential to well-rounded learning for all students and that support collaboration and decision-making.
- Has demonstrated abilities to work with others to clearly define key **problems**, understand full range of possible causes and develop and implement ways to address or **solve the problems**. This includes demonstrated abilities to work the politics of the district, community and county.

ADD to professional competencies:

- Has demonstrated high quality expertise at the classroom, building and central office levels, with classroom instructional leadership, building leadership and leadership in K-12 curriculum, instruction and evaluation.



PART 2:
NOTES FROM INDIVIDUAL
STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION SESSIONS

**Wallingford Swarthmore School District
Superintendent Search**

Discussion of Draft Leadership Profile

Administrative team

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

3:30 – 5:00 pm

Facilitator: Harris Sokoloff

Thirteen (13) administrators participated in this lively and rich discussion.

What resonates with participants?

- Culture of collaboration
 - From Superintendent, to administrators to teachers: all collaborate and work together
 - Work well as a team
 - This ties to reciprocal communication later, which we *need more of*
 - There's a fine balance between collaboration and reciprocal communication, on the one hand, and decision-making on the other. Don't want communication to inhibit decision-making.
 - Communication is *not* just showing up at events, but
 - Requires knowing priorities of different stakeholder groups
 - Requires listening to understand the broad issues affecting the schools
 - Scores do matter to the community, but balance is important.

MISSING

- Any mention of instructional leadership, of C&I or the education focus of the superintendent
 - Excellence will require expertise in C&I from a K-12 perspective
 - The administrative team is light on K- program experience or knowledge; clearly a secondary driven school system
 - The three elementary schools *had* 3 different programs, but corrected under Rich.

- Special education at the elementary school level is a process that impacts collaboration K-12 as what kids learn/experience in elementary school finds its way up to middle and high schools.
- Expertise/understanding of tension/balance of C&I and special education law
 - This has impacts on classrooms and the buildings
- Complexity of how to understand the range of available services required in district and out-of-district placements
 - This links to communication with the board....
- Lack of some basic C&I infrastructure is missing in the issues to address
- Re: Experience:
 - Want someone with strong classroom experience, teacher leadership experience and building level experience
- The “long view”
 - Not just takes it but also will be here for the long term
 - Will dig deep into our challenges – “open the curtain” – and involve us in addressing what she/he finds behind the curtain. This will require working with people, collaborating

ADD

- Low SES to diverse student body and
- Add subgroup performance there as well

Collaboration: Welcome input, listen, “reflects” – as a personal characteristic.

- It’s “not just about me” but how we together can make it better.
- A good mentor/coach who is “on the field with us” and not just calling=in plays
- Non-judgmental

Modify:

- Not “direct a vision” but “represent a vision” or “embody a vision”
 - A collaborative vision, not the superintendent’s vision
 - Link to strategic vision statement.

Like

- “Access”/accessibility = equity for *all* levels of students/children
 - We have a long way to go in inclusion in some areas (e.g., extra curricular)
 - This is about *all parts* of the community, poor as well as richer.
- “Robust” as quality of PD for teachers and administrative teams; need PLCs for teachers as well as administrative team
- Acknowledge impact of high stakes test on student experience.
 - Stress of two kinds:
 - Students who say “why do I have to take these tests when I always score at least “proficient”

- Students who think it's futile since they've already failed and will always be below proficient
- Embrace/include communicate with all aspects of community, parents, kids.
 - Great to have someone who had her/his own struggles
- Superintendent has a role in educating non-educators (board, community)
- Trade-offs:
 - We are a “non-test prep” district almost as a point of pride, and yet we do compare test scores. But being “non-test-prep} puts us at a disadvantage as our students don't have lots of test taking skills.
 - And we need benchmarking capacity
 - Need to stigmatize assessment
 - We need to gain comfort with tests to reduce stress.

Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent Search

Discussion of Draft Leadership Profile

Participants: Community Members:

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Facilitators: Harris Sokoloff and Ellen Petersen

There were 12 participants in this session.

Group: Twelve participants, ten women, two men. They all identified themselves as parents of current or former students, in addition as taxpayers. Two are semi-retired participant and 2 people indicated they are or are considering running for school Board.

What is a Hope or Fear?

- Hope to keep our integrity
- Fear of our system going broke
- Hope to repeat the positive past search experience and fear low process participation
- Hope that school maintains academic excellence and I can afford it
- Hope to stop testing; fear we will run out of money
- Hope people can stay in the district, we maintain integrity, and taxes don't cause people to leave
- Hope for a good leader and we put kids first in the process
- Hope to find leader like Dr. Noonan who is collaborative. Fear we will make decisions only with costs in mind

What About The Profile (Distributed to Group) Resonated?

- Creating well-rounded individuals via the commitment to arts, athletics and academics. It upholds the reputation and is why my kids are here
- Profile references literature, math, and science, necessary to teach children how to learn and think. These critical thinking skills support all earners for jobs of tomorrow
- Profile speaks to broad groups of children
- I like reference to cultural of collaboration. Dr. Noonan lived this through his partnerships and visibility)
- Visible leadership is important

- Like collaboration language and should include programs outside of Swarthmore college along with community councils (SHHHS Principal Mary Jo Yannacone initiated)
- Someone who empowers others
- Professional development: I have seen better or better trained teachers who can teach groups of children at different levels in the classroom
- Profile addresses needs across the spectrum in fiscally responsible way
- Teacher development. Need strategy for staffing and risk, how to make better long term and less expensive decisions
- Maintain intentionality of quality of teachers, problem solving skills
- Second page is good but expound on “targets” (e.g. how many grads got through college in 4-6 years)
- Testing point. Need to create stress on students. Perhaps we need good teachers to address test issue. Should be in sync (good teachers teaching the right things that are on the tests)
- I like emphasis on communication
- We don’t need big changes in the district. Lots of things are working

What Would You Add?

- Add “excellence” in all three areas
- Creativity in times of fiscal constraint
- Good listener (e.g. Noonan brought in home and school parents for regular meeting)
- Collaboration might help with fiscal issues (e.g. Wallingford foundation grant, technical school alliances, Widener, Philadelphia Orchestra for maser classes, fire and police departments)
- Offset costs by using local community members to supplement curriculum, internships, grad students lead homework clubs, retired rotary members
- The new superintendent should be able to address educational uses of technology
- There should be a process focus for business side, teacher evaluations
- Consider length of time the candidate may be here, someone who wants to be in WSSD and be part of the community
- Someone who can create the connection to the community, prospective parents, be touted “word of mouth”

Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent Search

Discussion of Draft Leadership Profile

Participants: Community Members

Monday, September 21, 2015

9:00 – 11:00 am

Facilitator: Harris Sokoloff

There were seven participants in this discussion: five parents with children in the district spanning elementary through high school and two grandparents with children in District schools, one of whom is running for school board.

What resonates? What needs more emphasis?

- We are *not* like other school districts, and just because things are done one way in other districts does not mean that's how they should be done here.
 - **Maintain** our culture of involvement
 - That will require flexibility and the use of the human resources (expertise) from the community.
 - The next superintendent must hit the ground learning.
- Communication is a key
 - Someone who is responsive and listens well.
- Missing Issue:
 - The need to “repair the fractured relationship” between the district and Nether Providence Township.
 - Communication is the key here
 - Must see schools as part of the larger community and we have common interests
 - This links to/resonates with some historic tension between Wallingford and Swarthmore
 - An issue is the need to be **transformative** – not more of the same:
 - While money is a key issue, much we can do that does not require more money:
 - Reorganize how the day is used.
 - “Open the system” – for example:
 - Reduce the barriers to students taking AP and honors. Let them take what they want and see how they can do.
 - Open the doors, pull back the curtains:
 - More transparency
 - Reduce barriers to taking risks
 - Let children challenge themselves

- Issue of following what the research says, for example: start time, importance of physical activity to learning, brain injury from high-contact sports, etc.
 - The least we should do is have community conversations about these issues.
- Reduce emphasis on testing to make learning more fun, creative:
 - Focus on “critical thinking skills” rather than on “high performance” (first item in issues to address)
 - Support creativity and flexibility of teachers and embrace the talents in the community
 - Problem is the PSSA and Keystone exams and the amount of time taken to prepare students to take those tests.
- What people mean by “well-rounded” = Core Subjects plus:
 - Music and arts, and more physical activity – during the school day in elementary school and middle school.
 - Experiential learning
 - Creativity
 - Social schools (including learning as a social activity)
 - Joy of learning
 - Understanding technology and the appropriate use of technology
- Note that the stress is not just for kids, but also for teachers and staff. Adult stress can filter-down to the children.
- What about kids in the middle? *Need to include them in the spectrum of learning needs*

Personal Characteristics/Leadership Skills/Professional Competencies:

- Is an educator – experiences in the trenches: Classroom, building, central office
- Take the long view:
 - Includes listening to staff and parents from across the district and different schools and their needs and concerns
 - Requires broad communication
 - Someone here for the longer term and settled into the community
 - Will build collaboration
 - And speak plainly
 - Transformation takes time.
- Fiscal management *in service of* well-rounded great education
 - We want an “academic” (educator) not someone from the business world.
- Integrity and trust are key:
 - Build trust by reaching out and building relationships
 - Trusts others
- Surround self with high-powered individuals (staff and community) who give high powered input, and is not threatened by others’ ideas
 - Open to new ideas
- Not a micro-manager
- MISSING?

- Understand “modern kids”
 - Forward thinking re: social media uses and abuses and help parents and students understand that
- Understanding and expanding technology:
 - However *not an emphasis on “stuff”* but on how and why it can support creative teaching.
 - Teachers will need support to use it well and wisely
 - Note that we don’t teach typing until 8th grade, but expect typed reports in 3rd grade!
- Someone who demonstrates the joy of learning – that will filter-down to staff and students and will support it across the system.
- Someone who cares about kids/about each kid and their learning.
 - Is “working for the kids”
- Demonstrated ability to create a climate and culture of learning, a well-rounded culture and climate of learning.

Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent Search

Discussion of Draft Leadership Profile

Participants: Students
Monday, September 21, 2015
1:00 – 3:00 pm
Facilitator: Rosalind Spiegel

There were ten middle school students in this group, divided evenly between males and females.

One hope or fear

- Hope: That I don't get lost in the school
- Hope: that the new Superintendent will take our ideas seriously and help make them happen
- Hope: I'll get into enriched math
- Hope: That I pass 12th grade
- Hope: That there are more things like this that give students the chance to help with the school district
- Hope: New Superintendent will engage with kids and com to High School and Middle sporting events
- Hope: More things like Relay for Life
- Fear: It will take a long time to get a Superintendent
- Hope: I know which college to go to
- Hope: That we get to help with school discussions (agree with Kevin)

Reactions -- What resonated (stood out) from the power point?

- he/she knows how to communicate with kids
- has a background with kids, someone really good with kids, will interact with us and try to get to know us
- with interact with us, come to events and concerts (not just sports) and be a friendly figure, be there to support us
- but we don't want him/her to make big speeches
- for him/her to take responsibility to make hard decisions
- needs to be committed to us and our education
- knows how to solve problems
- controversies (like dress code)
- someone who can find the middle road
- knows what to do with money and finances

- help us if we are having educational and also problems at home
- I don't think problems at home should be his/her job, that should be the guidance counselor
- let us express our feelings and not judge
- keep us organized, have everything lined up for the year
- keep enrichment
- uses snow days wisely
- not be intimidating authority
- be kind
- communicate
- listen to our views
- be understanding of why kids act out and their needs, let them be themselves but don't let them hurt others or themselves or their grades
- notices when a problem becomes a pattern and knows how to plan for future disputes
- knows about their staff, knows teachers are good and doing their jobs and are not unfairly punishing students
- teachers should communicate so they don't plan tests for the same day

What does well-rounded mean to you?

- that he/she focuses not just learning typical stuff but also computers and technology, things in your life more
- social skills – acting around teachers and friends
- not just plain academics, also social skills like communicating that makes you a more well rounded person
- have a diverse classroom and staff, give us greater respect for different cultures
- after school one on one meetings with teachers
- hardworking and fun
- have fun and learn at the same time
- hire more teachers like Miss. Laird
- lessons students will find interesting
- teach important things and making it fun
- sometimes learning feels like brainwashing
- rigorous and engaging
- challenge us but not get us frustrated

What does collaboration mean to you?

- that he/she will talk more about community service
- do fun things to help the community

- more social events outside the school that are part of schools, like football games, parties and dances
- High school kids go into pre-school and lower grades to help teachers and volunteer – they could go into other schools and older Middle school kids could do this too
- HS tutors after school as an example

What does stress mean to you?

- doing too much in general
- tests are stressful [RS note, see comment above, “- teachers should communicate so they don’t plan tests for the same day”

Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent Search

Discussion of Draft Leadership Profile

Participants: Students
Monday, September 21, 2015 1:00 – 3:00
Facilitator: Josh Warner

Moderator's description of the group:

Group 2 consisted of 8 high school students – four Freshmen, and two each of Juniors and Seniors. One student was African American, and one other was Asian American (or possibly of mixed-race), with ages ranging from 14 to 17. The students clearly cared about their school and school district, and had very good insight toward the deeper issues that will face the new superintendent.

We jumped into what resonated with the students about the issues facing the new superintendent and the professional characteristics desired for the new hire.

Conversations around the Draft Leadership Profile:

The students discussed several components of the draft leadership profile. Their comments fell into one of three categories: a) general observations about the document and the state of their school district [bulleted text]; b) suggestions and clarifications aimed at particular aspects of the draft profile [underlined text]; and c) explicit additions or alterations that should be made to the profile language [boldface text].

Opening comments:

- Strath Haven music program is great and top-notch
 - Funding for this is important
 - 1/3 of all students are members of the marching band (approx. 400)
 - Recent budget cuts for Theatre program (50% cut)
- Arts programs are important too
- S.H. is known for its rich extra-curriculars
 - People actually move to the school district because of this

Suggestion 1 – The new superintendent should be involved in these programs

- The current interim superintendent is very involved with the schools and students
 - Attends sporting events and band events
 - Is present at all student assemblies
 - Has presented a vision for the schools to students at each school

- Is approachable, and knows some students by name
- Described as “down to earth” by the group
 - Whereas previous superintendent was more business oriented and seen as an “authority figure” by students

Suggestion 2 – re: “high student performance,” the new superintendent should be collaborative, down-to-earth, and interact directly with students

Addition #1: “Cares about, interacts with, and builds relationships with students.”

- The group liked the second bullet under ‘Professional Competencies,’ re: experience with and understanding of parents, students, and school districts like this one.

Suggestion 3 – similar to the ground rules point from the whole group presentation, “listening as important as talking” should be emphasized

- The conversation then turned to student issues with continually underperforming / bad teachers
 - Several students mentioned how particular teachers regularly receive complaints from students and parents, year after year
 - These complaints pile up
 - Other teachers and principals just seem to shrug their shoulders about this problem
 - They provide vague responses
 - No one does anything to fix the problem, and it feels like there is an unwillingness to hear out continued student complaints about particular teachers from principals and district level managers
 - Who does anything constructive about this??
 - Some students told the group that they have heard from principals, or other teachers about how such problem educators are placed in some kind of correctional program that helps them be better teachers over time
 - Uncertainty as to how this program works, what it does, and if there are consequences for receiving complaints year after year
 - Student quote: “this is unfair; I mean, why do we have to wait around for them to get better?”

Suggestion 4 – Make the criteria for hiring and retaining teachers stronger

Addition #2: “Form relationships with teachers.”

- Teachers usually get nervous when there are classroom observations done by the superintendent, which affects the whole class.
 - Knowing teachers and forming relationships would ease this

- Plus superintendents would have more information on which to judge teacher performance

Addition #3: “Sustained complaints about overall teacher performance are taken seriously.”

- Students made sure to distinguish one-time complaints from year after year, sustained complaints
- Superintendent should follow up and follow through when it comes to these performance complaints

- The students worked through the confusing/vague language of the first sentence of the first bullet point under ‘Issues to Address.’
- With regard to student stress:
 - Strath Haven has a high performance reputation, and receives high rankings
 - The students feel they have to “uphold” this
 - However, students have their own culture of performance
 - Some of the stress is made within
 - Subtle competitive culture between students and friends
 - The number of extra-curricular activities is high
 - Even though these are fun and enriching, they can take time and add to stress
 - A few students mentioned very late nights required some of the time for extracurriculars
 - The school’s test scores are routinely talked up
 - Students have internalized a lot of this stress which can lead to competition
- Advanced Placement (AP) testing was discussed as an example of stress and how it impacts both student and the school overall
 - The school offers whole classes tailored specifically to a single AP test
 - Many students feel like the score you get on the test ends up defining you
 - Students feel bad if they get a 4 on the test (out of five)
 - The feeling that “the whole class was for nothing”
 - Similarly, pre-SATs or ACT practice exams add to student and school stress
 - A few students mentioned times where entire days or afternoons of classes were canceled so that all Juniors could take a (supposedly voluntary) pre-SAT test.
- Even though the knowledge gained from AP courses is valuable, and can be used in other classes, students felt as if they were defined by the results (i.e., test scores) rather than the process of learning.

Suggestion 5 – Admit it, we already have a testing culture!!

- Re: the wording “we must avoid buying-into the PDE-driven ‘testing culture’” in the first bullet of “Issues to Address.”

Addition #4: Alter the language under Issues, bullet 1 to say “recognize and reduce the stressful ‘testing culture’ already present in Strath Haven High School.”

- Students admitted that stress was present in high school, but had mixed opinions on whether or not it started in 8th grade
- The group recognized that the “test culture” comes from both the school itself and the State

- The students reflected that it seems like the school is in a state of denial about several key things
 - “oblivious to the issues,” such as the testing culture present and the funding issues around extracirriculars like band, sports

Suggestion 6 – Tackle problems rather than avoiding them.

Suggestion 7 – Music and Arts are key to Strath Haven.

- Music programs start young, with H.S. teachers coming to the elementary schools to start students early on instruments.
 - Very encouraging

Addition #5: “Understand, protect, and promote Strath Haven’s music, arts, and extracirricular programs.”

Suggestion 8 – New superintenant should have experience with arts programs, and the abilities to promote and protect them.

- Nearly everyone at the table agreed that all the district schools are very encouraging to all students to be involved in extracirricular activities
 - Example: the girls cross-country team has 70 students
 - Yet the school can’t fully fund its clubs and organizations, which impacts things like travel and equipment for many students
 - Example given for the cross-country team, with the coach saying he can only take X number of students to a match (because of bus capacity)
 - Kids are left out or have to make private arrangements
- Time ran out before any suggestions or additions could be formed about this topic

- The discussion ended with a question as to who does the interviews for the prospective superintendents

Suggestion 9 – Teachers should be present at the job interviews

Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent Search

Discussion of Draft Leadership Profile

Participants: Students
Participants: Students
Monday, September 21, 2015
1:00 – 3:00 pm
Facilitator: Shari Shapiro

There were 10 high school students in this discussion, roughly split between male and female, including one South-Asian student and one African-American student. All students were actively engaged in the conversation, remarking that they are encouraged to be more involved because of the visibility of the interim superintendent

A significant portion of the discussion focused on the “key problems” that the superintendent (SI) has to address. These issues fell into the following categories:

- Providing opportunities, support and encouragement for students to tailor their own educations.
- Providing equal awareness of the resources and opportunities to all students.
- Effectively communicating with different groups of parents and students (socioeconomic divides, students with parents who are not involved, etc.)
- Addressing the high levels of stress and mental health issues in the student body.
- Narrowing the perceived divide between gifted students and all other students.
- Addressing the divide in the student body based on class and race.

Visibility Missing From Profile

Most of the students felt that one major thing missing from the profile was that the SI “must really care about the school and show it.”

- They mentioned the importance of coming to school events, being visible in the hallways, talking to students, coming to student group meetings as particularly important.
 - Apparently the interim SI is skilled at doing this and it is noticed and appreciated by this group of students. In the words of one student, “before interim SI, I didn’t know that’s what a SI did.”
- Another student mentioned that it would be important for the SI to have been a parent of a public school student so that the SI “knows what students are going through.”

Profile Too Vague With Respect To Key Problems Facing The School District; Doesn’t Cover All Issues

Many students felt that the profile was too “vague” with respect to the “key problems, facing the school district.” The students were asked “if you were superintendent, what would you do?” The answers included the following:

- Engage students with learning
- Develop closer relationships with students
- Address mental health issues
- Make significant changes to the gifted program
 - Program that supports all forms of giftedness, not just math and science
 - Allow greater opportunities for access for those students who were not in the program from elementary school (the process was described as “brutal”)
 - Ensure that gifted programming means more challenging work, not just *more work*
 - Provide support to students to stay in the gifted program if they are struggling
 - Make effort to include all potentially qualified students to participate in program, not just those who are extroverts or whose parents push for inclusion
- Ensure all extra-curricular activities get equal treatment (girls/boys, club/team, access to equipment and gym time)
- Not make AP testing mandatory
- Ensure financial responsibility
- Encourage students to organize around social issues

Significance of Mental Health and Stress Management Not Addressed Sufficiently in the “Problems” Section

Mental health and stress management were a theme of concern, and several students were not sure that the description in the “problems” section of the profile was sufficient in this regard.

Stress Generally

- The majority of students felt stressed and that the school had a competitive atmosphere in terms of extracurriculars, getting into prestigious colleges, etc.
 - One student reported a discrepancy with other schools in the area, noting that “a lot of other people think we are particularly stressed.”
- One student said that “stress is only the surface, underlying mental health issues are not addressed.”
 - The student said that these issues need to be addressed at every level in the district. The student also noted that there are people in the district who can help, but they are not particularly present and they have to be actively sought out by the students.

Homework & Testing

- The issues of testing and homework were discussed, with the amount of homework described as a “big problem” by many students.
 - One student told the group that she gets home at 5:40 and has five hours of homework.
 - Another homework issue was the discrepancy among teachers teaching the same classes—some assign a lot of work and projects, others do not. Several students expressed the importance of harmonizing assignments and workload across classes in the same subject.
- Several students noted that the homework issue is connected to a contradiction in the “well-rounded” concept and the perspective of teachers.
 - “Teachers don’t support extracurriculars; and are dismissive of our interests,” said one.
 - Little awareness in assigning homework that students are involved in other things.
- Several students noted that “testing is not a personalized assessment”
- Many students felt that teachers were “teaching to test rather than for learning,” even though the school claimed otherwise.

Reputation

- Several students mentioned the reputation that the school district has for excellence, and that the school’s efforts to retain that reputation in the community is adding to the students’ stress.
 - One student gave the example of the school band. The student felt that the school pushed participation in the band, even if students were not really enthusiastic about it.
- The issue came up again with respect to the “partnerships with community institutions” section of the profile.
 - Some students felt that the partnerships were more about burnishing the reputation in the community as opposed to “advancing students’ learning.”
 - One student noted that there are a ton of opportunities to take college classes, but they are not well emphasized and not all for success of students.

Allowing Students To Tailor Their Educations Should Be A Priority For Next SI

Diversity in learning types was a theme that emerged. Many students said that the part of the profile that needed more detail was the need to create positive learning for “all students,” and that it should be a priority for the next SI to create more

opportunities for students to tailor their own educations to their strengths and interests.

- Many students stressed that the next superintendent should have experience in implementing programming that allow students to tailor their own education.
- Most students want a SI that understands who the students are individually, and recognizes a wider range of gifts and achievement, to create a positive learning experience for all students.
- Most students felt that more encouragement and awareness was needed regarding available opportunities for special recognition or services and support resources.
- Most students felt that many of the opportunities for advancement and recognition were kept “secret” and only revealed to a small segment of the student body that kept getting rewarded over and over.
- Most students wanted the next SI to encourage a diversity in teaching methodology and look at all departments equally, not just math and science.

If The Goal Is To Create “Well Rounded” Student, More Focus On “Soft Skills” Is Needed

The students felt that the discussion of creating “well rounded” students was, in reality, limited to academics, not to becoming well-rounded people.

- Little education on “soft skills”--character, public speaking etc.
- “We are not shown how to present ourselves.”
- “We don’t get any education in how to participate in economy, no business skills.”
- Students expressed skepticism about the “community partnership” aspect of the current values section of the profile. Some students felt that the school does not interact with businesses very much, and that students are not taught a lot about business skills.

More Focus On Guidance Towards Success

- “We don’t get a lot of information on how to be successful from the school, it generally comes from parents.”
- “If we followed administration advice on academic/non-academic electives, then we would not be in the top classes.”
- “We don’t meet our guidance counselor until sophomore year.”
- Lack of guidance from school disproportionately effects people from lower socioeconomic status.

Create Opportunities For More Students To Be Recognized, Avoid “Halo Effect”

- Many students perceived a bias towards the “squeaky wheels”—extroverts, class leaders, extraordinarily high performers and students whose parents advocated for them with teachers and the administration.
- Many students perceived a bias against students without engaged parents or those from lower socioeconomic status in terms of recognition, opportunities and access to special programming
- Several students felt that there should be more recognition of people not always at the top.
- Many students felt that there was a halo effect in terms of recognition and opportunities—the same people were recognized over and over. “It seems like people are chosen in elementary school and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.”
- “Don’t bow to pressure only from parents; listen to students more”

Need For Excellent, Two-Way Communication Is Critical

- In listing the stakeholders who need communication, students should be included.
- More attention to different communications strategies to reach different groups of parents and students.
- Student requests taken more seriously and respond to student requests. “We feel like we are asked for input but not listened to.”
- Rely on students to take initiative more than parental intervention.
- A new student felt that the school should make more information and communication about the way the school works available to new and transferring students.

The Divide Based On Socioeconomic Class and Race Is Keenly Felt

- Most students felt that socioeconomic background affects opportunities.
- “There is a really clear divide between socioeconomic classes. The advanced classes all come from same socioeconomic class.”
- Several students felt that race and socioeconomic class are often intertwined in the district, and that the chasm among the groups should be addressed.
 - However, students admitted that they were not sure how to address the divide “the school can’t force students to hang out together,” but suggested that “maybe [the issues should be] addressed in middle and lower school.”
- At least one student asked “why the school didn’t talk about activism” and felt that the school should encourage students to be more active around social issues.

Additional Issues

- District is not advancing technologically.
- While one student wants the new SI to be fiscally responsible, most students said that they had not noticed a financial strain.

Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent Search

Discussion of Draft Leadership Profile

Participants: Support staff
Thursday, September 24, 2015
4:00 – 5:30 pm
Facilitator: Harris Sokoloff

There were three participants in this discussion, one of whom was an officer in the union and had just left a negotiating session.

What resonates with participants?

- Qualities to Maintain:
 - Culture of collaboration should be revised to say “A culture of collaboration that includes teachers, administration and staff; schools, community and nearby colleges,”
 - Support staff *all* mean a lot to students.
 - Indeed, for some students, support staff may be the only adults in the school they relate to.
 - Culture of collaboration would include something like an intra-net where we can notify each other re: clothing drives, furniture available, etc.
 - Recognizing across the board, of *all* new staff (not just new teachers or administrators)
 - Fiscal responsibility:
 - Anticipate and act even if not popular
 - Cuts should be across the board – no just support staff.
 - Focus on the educational implications of cuts, and note that support staff contribute to kids education (so much of what happens wouldn't without support staff)
 - District helps students who need financial support – e.g., waivers for some fees, etc.
 - Support staff does things for students who need (e.g. coat drives, shoe drives, prom dress drive)
 - Is it really necessary for someone who was just hired to an administrative position or who is promoted to get all new furniture
 - Particularly when we have places where perfectly good furniture may be stored.
- Issues to address:
 - Testing and stress and pressure:
 - Is mandated by the state, and it takes instructional time

- There are periods of weeks where all kids do is take tests: PSSA, final exams, Keystone Exams, AP (which the district requires), which creates great stress
 - Seniors are stress the first three weeks of school this year because we started so late, have days off for Jewish Holidays, assemblies to explain activities, and they need stuff done for early decision applications.
 - We need to address the way our schedule creates pressure and stress for students (and staff alike).
- Personal characteristics:
 - Committed to all students should include those in auto lab, wood shop, cooking, voc tech (trades)
 - Integrity and trust includes someone who inspires us all in and to action, in action as well as in words (where communication skills are important)
 - Also implies someone who is accessible, approachable, visible. Is there and engaged with the students *and* with us all.
 - Has a passion for the job which is evident as long as she/he is here, for the longer term.
 - There was some discussion about whether the pattern of 5 years and out was okay or not. Some argued at least five years with passion. Others argued that having someone younger who is committed for the longer term would be best.
- Leadership Skills:
 - Collaboration means someone who can get Swarthmore College to “help” more – services, internships, lectures, etc. in addition to allowing students to take free courses.
- Professional Competencies:
 - Communication
 - Implies accessibility
 - Saying “no” is a professional competency and doing it well – with parents and others – is a communication skill:
 - Needs to be able to say “No” to parent pressure
 - Is not afraid to say “No”
 - Needs board support for saying “No”
 - Communicates well, including tell me what you want me to do.
 - Alert us to what’s coming
 - Has an attitude of “we are all in it together”
 - This includes transparency in decision-making – tell us why you decide what you do.
 - Can work well with the board:
 - Can “lead up” and not be micromanaged.
 - Interacts well with people at all levels.

Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent Search

Discussion of Draft Leadership Profile

Participants: Parents, community, seniors, non-parents
Thursday, September 24, 2015
7:00 – 9:00 pm

One parent participated in this “discussion”/interview.

What resonates with participants?

- Qualities to maintain and issues to address:
 - Concern about the current elementary math curriculum package and whether it is working for the full range of students. It is still fairly early in implementation and some teachers seem to have some questions/challenges with it.
 - This relates to addressing the full spectrum of learning needs of students.
 - Grateful we have support staff for students – important to maintain...
 - Also relates to PD for teachers.
 - Concern when you adopt a package curriculum, how much flexibility do the teachers have
 - Concern re: teaching to the standardized test. I wish teachers had more flexibility to pursue off-topics that are not related directly to the standardized these because that brings more creativity and energy into the classroom... Teacher can tap into their interests that then can get the kids excited. That flexibility can be very important to teaching and learning. It’s those passions that make the teachers individuals and that can be lost if they are all teaching the same thing.
 - Issue 1 resonates. The testing is stressful – the idea that they have to reach/attain a certain level and whether their responses on tests are good enough, whether it’s what the colleges are looking for.
 - They also put pressure on each other. And they compare what they have and have not done and what that means.
 - I’m hoping the college counseling is good and can address all of these unknowns.
 - Financial concerns: music program, art program are exceptional and is important to be able to provide that for all students.
 - The tax issue. There’s a feeling that the property taxes are pretty high and we worry about what that does to the structure of the community over the long term – perhaps people will move out when they no longer have children in the schools.

- We moved here because it has an excellent school district and the high taxes are less than tuition at a private school. If the taxes help create a great school system, then they are going to good use.
- Missing: aspects of sustainability – lots of folks in community concerned about climate change and sustainability issues and there are already some projects – some parent driven, some student driven – that address sustainability issue and want to move toward including more sustainable practices in the way schools are run. Would like to see more support and perhaps more integration in the way schools are run and also integrating into formal curriculum and other ways to integrate this into what students learn – sustainability and climate change issues.
 - Collaboration:
 - at SRS we have a “dimensions of sustainability” committee with the HAS. Projects include providing personalized plates for each students so that at events we can use washable plates and cups rather than throwing things away. Talked about separating out compostable items in the cafeteria. We need support (which requires money – HAS is currently paying for removal of compostables). The group “My Kitchen Harvest” takes it all to Linvilla, composts it there and I think we then get some back as fully composted for our raised garden beds. Not sure whether he gives it to us for free or whether we pay for it.
 - Parent volunteers at the school do it. We would love to have it incorporated into the running of the school, rather than just a parent project, even if parent volunteers were necessary for its continuity while the school ran it.
 - Also separating out different kinds of recyclable items – normal and special. Students are working with us to do that.
 - There’s also a “green student group” at one elementary and at the high school.
- Personal Characteristics
 - Committed:
 - Dr. Noonan was at everything and that impressed me. It’s important, but a deal breaker.
- Professional competencies:
 - Communication.
 - Particularly early on communicating with the stakeholders. It will be challenging both because of fiscal issues and because this is a very involved school district. Parents can have very strong opinions and are very involved in their children, their children’s education and will require balancing because they don’t always agree. Will be lots of need to balance what the parents ask for and make them feel listened to.

Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent Search

Discussion of Draft Leadership Profile

Participants: Teachers
September 28, 2015
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Facilitator: Harris Sokoloff

There were twelve (12) participants in this discussion: eleven teachers and one staff person. The teachers were roughly divided among the three elementary schools, the middle school and the high school.

Hopes and fears for new superintendent:

- Hope the new superintendent will
 - Have vision that acknowledges the essential role that all (teachers, staff, students, administrators, parents, community, etc.) play in educating students and gives all a role in attaining that vision.
 - Has some longevity, commitment: stays longer than 5 years
 - Welcomes and builds personal relationships with all
 - Is an educator him/herself and has the capacity to be the educational leader who is in touch with what's emerging in education and has a strong connection to the classroom and to curriculum and instruction.
 - Will have a big focus on professional development
 - Has a record of truly valuing the role the support staff plays in the educational mission of the school district
 - Truly values teachers and the professional development it takes to be excellent. Someone who knows what good teaching is and what makes a good teacher, who will use that knowledge to hire the best teacher and use it to evaluate all teachers.
 - Will be present in the schools to “know” the entire district – the different schools and classrooms as well as the community.
 - Will be forward thinking and not always reacting to C&I
 - Will be fearless in thought and measured in action.
 - Will be a big picture thinker and actor and will allow and support creativity and innovation in the classroom
 - Will focus on the best possible outcomes for the neediest students
 - Will utilize the alumni – particularly the successful/role model alumni from the poorest communities.
 - Will distribute leadership and inspire teachers to take leadership
- Fear the new superintendent will be ordinary and uninspiring.

Qualities to maintain and issues to address:

- Issue to address:
 - Not just standardized tests, but mastery from one level to another is crucial.
 - There was some disagreement about this statement. While high school teachers focused on the need for students to have background knowledge and skills and pass each course without going on, elementary teachers argued that development issues are also important at the elementary level, and holding kids back can create long-term problems.
 - “Mastery” looks different at different levels: elementary – middle – high school
 - Need to be clear how we determine mastery.
 - It’s essential to attend to student progress and maturity/readiness.
 - We need to legitimize a variety of ways to demonstrate high levels of performance.
- **Missing issues:**
 - College and career readiness, which includes independent thinking, independent learning, learning how to survive/live after high school
 - This connects to the need for conversation elementary <-> middle <-> high school about students and their progress and abilities, about expectations, about curriculum and teaching.
 - Need to look at the full spectrum of student capacities.
 - And not just at knowledge acquisition.
 - Disconnect between the priorities of the board and the priorities of the teachers:
 - Fiscal issues and test scores –v- educating full person, student progress
 - Saw this disconnect starkly in the presentations of the board president and superintendent at the convocation.
 - Next superintendent will have to bridge this gap... to reconcile the differences.

Professional competencies:

- Can manage the school board, lead up.
- Must be an educator with K-12 experience
 - Successful and meaningful curriculum experience and can lead that process of curriculum and instruction.
 - Should also have some building experience
- Fiscal savvy and experience are also important
 - Must know how to balance the two.
 - Can advocate for educational uses of dollars, not just bottom-line.
 - Can argue for the “best” ways to use resources in services of educational qualities we want to maintain.
 - Can bring in outside resources
 - This is related to “vision and strategy that inspires” from the Leadership Skills section.

Leadership Skills:

- Vision and strategy come first, then creatively problem solve to make the numbers fit.
 - Some argued they want someone with a clear and focused vision, who will involve stakeholders in how to meet that vision. All wanted to avoid a common vision that means nothing in action.
 - ALL should know the direction.
 - Connects to fearlessness:
 - Fearless to work with the board and community to move vision forward.
 - Fearless to take risks and be seen as a person
 - Fearless to face staff with unpopular decisions
 - Fearless to stand up to those who challenge the vision.
 - Once superintendent develops the vision (or is developed with superintendent) the superintendent needs to inspire and motivate all to move it forward.
 - The 3 elementary schools are different, but also needs to be commonality within a vision
 - Vision has to be able to evolve
 - Vision to drive curriculum and instruction decisions
- Team and collaborative culture
 - Community is important
 - But intra-district is crucial as well: vertical teams are nice, but insufficient. Teachers need time and structure to have collaborative and organic conversations/work about kids K-12
 - This kind of collaboration needs to be valued from top-down

Personal Characteristics:

- Get to know and be known by everyone. Must be genuine. Some personal revelation is important.
- Would be nice if this person lived in the district.
- Trust:
 - Hard to earn but crucial
 - We need to trust that decision were made with thoughtful process:
 - Transparent in giving reasons for decisions
 - We can take and understand reasons even for decisions we don't like.
 - Maintain transparency in the face of unpopular decisions
 - Relationships
- Integrity:
 - Is value driven,
 - Strong sense of ethics
 - Show he cares
- Dynamic, fearless, inspiring.

Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent Search

Discussion of Draft Leadership Profile

Participants: Parents and community members

September 28, 2015

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Facilitator: Harris Sokoloff

There were six participants in this conversation, all parents of district students.

Hopes and fears for next superintendent:

- **Hope next superintendent:**
 - Has the ability to understand and analyze a budget
 - Has respect for people in current positions
 - Will stay more than 5 years
 - Will care about the details
 - Concerns about the uneven quality of teaching
 - Concerns about campus security
 - Will be amenable to issues of environmental sustainability
 - Will be supportive of the LGBT community and their experience

Qualities to maintain and issues to address:

- Don't see any mention of core competencies about relationships, particularly understanding of the politics around education.
 - All the issues and qualities to maintain will require political competence – both the politics of Wallingford and Swarthmore and of Delaware County
- Culture of collaboration: need explicit mention of parents and families, particularly given their huge role in the culture of collaboration now.
 - Will also need to manage parents and parent pressures and demands
- Challenge of maintaining fiscal discipline and teacher quality is a huge challenge.
 - How do we decrease spending (or even hold it steady) and maintain the scope and quality of our programs?
 - We get a lot of bang for our buck now, but can it continue?
- Well-rounded includes arts, athletics and academics, and ***all*** are important.
 - Can't/don't want to lose one part just to support another.
 - The culture of the community is "co-curricular" not "extra-curricular"
- Diverse learning needs are not just about special education.
 - Re special education: we need to bring more kids and services into the district so more children can benefit.

Personal Characteristics:

- These are transferrable skills even if the person does not have experience as a superintendent
- Good people skills are essential.
 - Being a diplomat is crucial for building teams and collaboration.
- Integrity and trust *must* include **staff** so they will rally around the superintendent.
- Good communicator and listener.

Leadership Skills:

- Direct a vision:
 - Include others in developing the vision
 - Build on the vision that is there, not just come in with their own
- Not sure what “distributed leadership” means.
 - I think it’s about sharing leadership – which includes the ability to share credit when things go right and about taking part of the responsibility when it doesn’t go right.
- Leadership skill for collaborating with community partners is important, and it’s different than political expertise.

Professional competencies:

- One person suggested expertise in facilities is important.
- Fiscal management – the ability to understand and analyze a budget – is important.
- Problem identification and problem solving
 - Good at both reacting to and at anticipating and avoiding
 - Perhaps “challenges” would be better than “problems”

Other

- Environmental sustainability
 - Support it in curriculum and building construction
 - Recycling is important
- Needs to understand cultures within cultures
 - Across the three elementary schools
 - From elementary to middle to high school
 - Across the four communities that make up the WSSD
 - We need more unity than we have.
 - Need to be more participatory and focus on what’s good for the children



PART 3:
DRAFT BOARD LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Wallingford Swarthmore School District Superintendent Search Draft Leadership Profile

QUALITIES TO MAINTAIN:

All students have access to well-rounded educational experiences that blend curricular and co-curricular activities to ensure students are provided with a rigorous, engaging and well-rounded educational experience. Key aspects of these “well-rounded educational experiences” are: academic excellence, high expectations for each student, developing strong critical thinking skills, experiential learning, and a whole person approach that includes curricular and co-curricular activities. This is essential to develop graduates who are passionate in the pursuit of their own learning, adept at working with others, skillful in multiple areas, and effective in solving problems.

Use creative problem solving to achieve fiscal discipline while maintaining a high quality teaching staff and robust professional development. Key aspects of this include thinking resourcefully to deal with budget constraints, developing creative solutions to fiscal hurdles to maintain the excellent reputation of the WSSD.

A culture of collaboration that includes teachers, schools, community and nearby colleges, businesses, and other organizations all engaged to support student success. Our teachers and schools collaborate with local colleges as well as with each other to support student learning. This includes reaching out to community businesses and professionals in and near the district.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS

High student performance in an era of mandated high stakes testing while helping students manage day to day stress and pressures to achieve. Maintaining high academic standards is essential and we must avoid buying-into the PDE-driven “testing culture” and must keep stress manageable for students. This relates to how we balance our values of a well-rounded educational experience with mandated testing.

Financial challenges will threaten our ability to provide the well-rounded educational experiences we want for our children. Part of these challenges are related to our limited commercial tax base. Others are related to skyrocketing costs (e.g., PSERS and medical insurance), and to the vagaries of the PA state funding “system.”

Addressing the spectrum of learning needs of an increasingly diverse student body. We have seen significant increases in special education costs, as the demand for expensive “outside placements” has increased. We are also seeing

increasing demands for high quality programming for gifted students, English Language Learners, and more. We need to develop better and more cost-effective ways to meet the needs of every learner.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Is **committed** to a positive educational and learning experience and outcomes for all children and staff, and will participate in the community to support that commitment.
- Has a track record of **integrity in decision-making and has earned the trust** of the range of stakeholders (students, parents, taxpayers, staff and the board) associated with the school district's objectives.
- Possesses the knowledge, capacity and inclination to focus on the present while anticipating possible problems and new directions that would move the district forward.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS:

- Possesses the confidence to identify the key issues facing the school district, demonstrate personal drive and finesse to handle tough decisions that may result and an **ability to direct a vision and strategy** for the district that inspires others to work hard and collectively believe in its value.
- Has the skills and disposition to think and act **strategically**, taking the "long view" in developing priorities. Can craft plans and articulate the direction and reasons that will further develop an excellent school district, and can distribute leadership to achieve those priorities.
- Can **build a team and a collaborative culture** in which a diverse group of educators and community partners work together to support high levels of student learning. This includes building creative partnerships with diverse internal and external stakeholders to bring resources to individual schools and the district.
- Has a track record of developing **innovative** solutions to address current and looming challenges to district growth and student learning.

PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES:

- Has demonstrated the ability to work with staff and external stakeholders to develop and implement successful **fiscal management**, effectively allocating resources, effective budget processes and tracking performance to advance district goals.
- Maintains strong, consistent and reciprocal **communication** processes that support listening to, understanding and responding to the needs of the broad range of stakeholders that are essential to well-rounded learning for all students.
- Has demonstrated abilities to work with others to clearly define key **problems**, understand full range of possible causes and develop and implement ways to address or **solve the problems**.