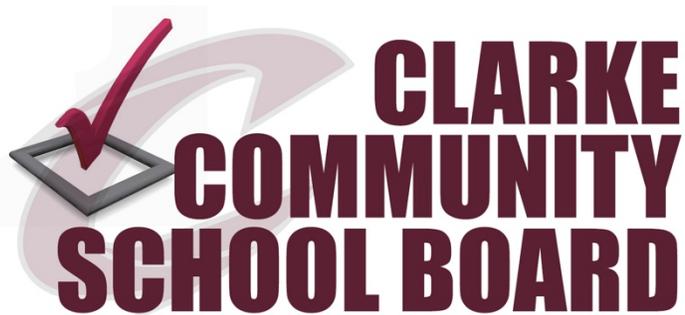


**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**SLUG: Tough Decision-making: Insights from the Clarke Schools' Superintendent Hiring Process**

(OSCEOLA, IA – MAY 7, 2021) In a recent announcement from the Clarke Community School Board, the decision was made to hire Dr. Alan Dykens, currently the Pre-K - 12 Principal at Lamoni Schools, as the new superintendent for the district. While many outside the halls of Clarke Community Schools were unaware of the work being put in “behind the scenes,” the school board is inspired by their decision and the steps taken to recruit the right candidate for their community.

The announcement, made on April 29th by professional recruitment consultants McPherson and Jacobson on behalf of the Board, followed numerous weeks of preparation and evaluation including consulting with the Board as well as community members on establishing the “Ideal candidate criteria.” Key to the Board was finding a candidate who not only met demanding educational and business experience standards, but also embodied:



- **Leadership / Management Expertise** – *is visionary and optimistic, encompassing a growth mindset with a ‘Can Do’ approach to leadership and school improvements. An organized, efficient, and consistent person who uses time and resources wisely, makes decisions and understands how they impact the whole district, holds self and others accountable, motivates others, recruits and evaluates with the best interests of students in mind.*
- **Open and Community-building Communication Skills** – *creates trust and a positive culture/work environment through clear written and verbal communication, listening, collaboration, relationship building, and transparency with the ability to have difficult conversations.*
- **Strong Financial Experience** – *has a background in Iowa School Finance, and the willingness to use this knowledge to demonstrate vision and creativity in budgeting for ongoing growth in all areas of programming.*
- **Strong Personal and Professional Character** – *is an individual with strong moral character, high integrity and trustworthiness, and who is ambitious and driven, humble and resilient, genuine and authentic, and loyal with a strong work ethic.*
- **Visibility** – *is a family-oriented, approachable professional who is visible in our school and community and who is vested in our students, their families, their activities, our schools, and our community.*

Knowing that the impact of a new school superintendent would reach beyond the Board room, through collaboration and transparency the Clarke School Board members also sought input and gathered perspective from a variety of outside stakeholders. Clarke teachers and support staff, administrators, as well as students, their families, and the community as a whole were offered an opportunity to provide their insights through an online survey and open meetings to discuss the following topics:

- *What are the greatest assets of the Greater Clarke Community?*
- *What are the strengths/assets of the Clarke Community School District?*
- *What characteristics are most important in the next superintendent of the Clarke Community Schools?*
- *What are the most significant district, community, or state issues the selected person will face and need to deal with in order to be effective immediately?*

After the criteria from the Board had been established and input from the stakeholders was reviewed, 19 applicants were narrowed to a group of select four that were to be vetted by the Board as well as stakeholders.

On April 28th, after a day of tours with all four candidates as well as input from all involved, from students to administration and board members, final candidate information was presented to the Board for deliberation. Over hours, each candidate was presented and their information was discussed. Ultimately, when the Board adjourned from their closed session, Dr. Alan Dykens was the unanimous choice, winning the position in a 7 to 0 vote.

The Board's decision to publicly establish their criteria as well as their desire to involve input from a variety of external perspectives shows their commitment to make the decision a truly transparent, community-based one. In the end, Dr. Dykens not only checked all of the boxes for the position as an educator and administrator, but also exceeded expectations, based on research of his past work and personal history, the input submitted by the stakeholders, and the review of all of the facts during deliberation. This matched the quality of character and the standards set by the extended Clarke community. The Board is pleased the process worked and look forward to welcoming Dr. Dykens when he starts in July.

If there are additional questions on the Clarke Community School Board's process or the decisions made you can download the overview of the Clarke Process Summary, or you can reach out to the Board through Clarke Community Schools' Administrative Offices at 802 N Jackson St, Osceola, IA 50213, phone: 641-342-4969 or to their Web site at: [www.clarke.k12.ia.us](http://www.clarke.k12.ia.us)

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**REFERENCE LINKS:**

*DECISION ANNOUNCEMENT LINK: [https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded\\_file/1236956/Clarke--Press\\_Release\\_\\_4--hiring\\_announcement.pdf](https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/1236956/Clarke--Press_Release__4--hiring_announcement.pdf)*

*SURVEY ANNOUNCEMENT LINK: <https://clarkecountylife.com/clarke-schools-asking-for-public-input-in-selection-of-new-superintendent/>*

*CLARKE BOARD SUMMARY LINK: [https://clarkecountylife.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Clarke-Comm-Schools\\_SuperintendentSummary\\_050521.pdf](https://clarkecountylife.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Clarke-Comm-Schools_SuperintendentSummary_050521.pdf)*