

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROFILE

Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District

April 11, 2019



Prepared for the Board of Education



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Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District **Superintendent Search Profile Report**

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This report presents the summary of findings from the six (6) Superintendent Search Profile forums conducted by K-12 Business Consulting, Inc. (K-12) on April 4, 2019, and from 110 written search profiles submitted from various stakeholders. Once the Board of Education selected K-12 to conduct the superintendent search, a Search Profile Assessment document was created to solicit input from various stakeholders in the community. The Board and administration developed a broad list of community stakeholders to solicit input from as well as a general community wide invitation to meet with K-12 staff members Debbie Campbell and Dennis Leone to discuss the characteristics in greater depth. Any stakeholder who had a desire to express an opinion was welcome to submit a search profile and personally meet with representatives of K-12 at open forums that were held at the Mills Lawn Elementary School Music Room and at the High School Cafeteria and Library. The information obtained through these sources, and summarized below, should be used to assist the Board in identifying characteristics requested of superintendent candidates.

The Search Profile Assessment form was made available to the district staff, identified stakeholders, plus all individuals who attended the focus group sessions. In addition to the 110 individuals who returned written search profiles (42 from parents and community members, 28 from teachers, 21 from high school students, 11 from support staff members, five from board members, and three from district administrators), there were 89 stakeholders who participated in interviews and focus group sessions facilitated by representatives of K-12. The results of the written Search Profile Assessment form are included in this report along with several comments received in face to face discussions held during the focus groups sessions.

In accumulating the data used in this report, K-12 sought opinions, recommendations and general comments with respect to preferred candidate characteristics, traits, qualifications and personal demeanor, as well as district strengths, issues and concerns which may have a bearing on future leadership goals for your next superintendent. At the request of the Board, K-12 sought the views of a broad range of individuals represented in the district to assist in the search process. It was determined that K-12 would report the findings to the Board without revealing the identity of any citizen or staff member who provided information, thus equipping the Board with unbiased data to use as it proceeded to define the search profile for the next superintendent.

A Search Profile Assessment form was used to provide a framework for reporting the information compiled by K-12. Broad themes were highlighted in each question area into six (6) response groups (teachers, administrators, support staff, parents/community members, students, and the school board). Under each question in the report, the response group's common themes were identified. The first category titled as "Consistent" are comments that were frequently heard from all or nearly all six (6) of the response groups, and appeared frequently on the surveys that were returned. Comments heard less frequently or only heard in a specific response group are listed only under that response group. The responses noted under "Consistent" for any of the response groups are noted with the highest frequency first, then descending to less frequently heard. It is important to note that the data compilation is not a scientific sampling, nor should it necessarily be viewed as representing a majority opinion of those interviewed in the response group.

K-12 would like to commend the Board of Education for its efforts to include many stakeholders of the school district in the development of the superintendent search profile. Many respondents expressed positive feelings about being involved in this process and the opportunity to help shape the Yellow Springs Exempted

Village School District. We would also like to thank Susan Griffith, the Board's Superintendent Search Liaison, and Steffanie Marchese, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, for the professional way all arrangements were made, including disseminating invitations and Search Profiles, as well as contacting and scheduling the focus group sessions and community forum that made this profile possible.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

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

CONSISTENT THEMES

Dedicated, hard-working teachers and staff members who genuinely care about students and their families. Innovative Project Based Learning curriculum that empowers and involves students in decision-making and provides them with real-life educational knowledge.

Supportive and involved parents and community members. Small size is appreciated district-wide. A culture that embraces, values, and encourages diversity.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Great teachers and great students. Solid educational opportunities throughout the district.

Project Based Learning curriculum, student empowerment, and a culture for innovation and risk taking.

Diversity in the student body and community. District's progressive views.

Emphasis on involving all students and providing life skills for them. De-emphasis on student testing.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Strong and friendly teacher-student relationships. Teachers who genuinely care about their students.

Flexible, open-minded, and relaxed school atmosphere that supports diversity.

Project Based Learning with involvement of students in decision-making and curriculum choices.

Willingness of district to try different teaching methods and alternative ways for students to learn.

Solid community support and positive communications with parents and citizens.

Smaller class sizes that can facilitate foster meaningful discussions of controversial issues.

ADMINISTRATION

Talented and dedicated staff that has a singular focus of excellence.

A supportive community that values the schools and accepts diversity.

Small size facilitates making constructive changes that are innovative and consistent district-wide.

A focus on deeper learning with Project Based Learning. A progressive education that does not over emphasize testing.

Staff is focused on the whole child. Students in Yellow Springs are naturally curious and want to learn.

Staff is willing to take issues head on and have earnest discussions about them.

TEACHERS

Dedicated, caring, passionate, and hard-working teachers who collaborate with each other district-wide and utilize best practices.

Supportive and involved parents and community members.

Shared vision for innovative learning.

Support for diverse students and Project Based Learning.

Smaller schools with smaller class sizes. Location of district and demographics of the population served.

Support for the arts.

Teachers who are part of the community and have lived in Yellow Springs for many years

SUPPORT STAFF

Dedicated teachers and staff members who care about students and families.

Small community with stakeholders who wish to be involved in the schools.

Flexible, student-focused, and interactive teaching that drives a positive educational environment with Project Based Learning activities.

District has been able to embrace, value, and encourage diversity. “Out-of-the-Norm” is accepted.

Parents and their children who can be who they are, and are here because they genuinely want to be here.

Positive teacher-student relationships have been developed and valued district-wide.

PARENTS and COMMUNITY

Project Based Learning encourages real life education.

Quality teachers, administrators and support staff in the district, which has a strong reputation for academic excellence and honors.

Community and staff involvement and support of the schools.

Support of diversity and inclusion.

Small district with a community feel. Small classes.

District fosters independence in thought and innovation, and provides opportunities for students to express themselves and engage in meaningful problem solving.

IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING DISTRICT

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

CONSISTENT THEMES

Aging facilities needing repair and upgrading.

Project Based Learning in need of updated data systems and a fresh restructuring.

High cost of housing and high taxes, resulting in a disconnect between the Yellow Springs' high-income population and many of the district residents who are not part of the high-income population.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Facilities needing significant upgrading.

Increased cost to live in Yellow Springs, combined with tax issues for the fire station and water treatment.

Aging population in the district that may feel less connected with the school district.

Equity concerns regarding special education teachers and students, female teachers and students, plus teachers and students of color.

Performing arts curriculum having equal financial support as athletics do.

Regaining trust after issues involving previous faculty and administrators.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

School lunches with a wider variety are needed.

Project Based Learning program needs a fresh restructuring to ensure that projects are not too long, and the scope of regular curriculum is not short-changed. Understaffing in several areas.

School facilities and lack of funding. Concerns over upkeep and repairs.

Respect for student opinions that may be inconsistent with the village and staff.

ADMINISTRATORS

A continued focus on deeper learning goals and Project Based Learning.

Need to support the social and emotional needs of students to increase academic performance.

Inadequate facilities. Small tax base, while classified as wealthy, is far too small to generate large dollars, thus making facility renovations and replacements quite difficult.

Improving trust.

Integration of the arts which some worry may be lost in the future.

TEACHERS

Facilities in need of repair and upgrading.

Staff morale needs to improve.

Integration of Project Based Learning with all curriculum (considering age appropriateness as well).

Professional development for Project Based Learning needs to be restructured to be more meaningful.

Data systems pertaining to district's Project Based Learning need to be utilized and updated.

Sustainability of open enrollment totals in the future.

SUPPORT STAFF

Condition of aging facilities and fiscal priorities for the future.

Negative opposition and inaccurate rumors expressed by some residents, especially on social media.

Disconnect between the district's high-income population and the rest of the district's population.

Addressing accountability and credibility concerns on the part of the administration and the Board.
Amount of time needed to get special education students identified.

PARENTS and COMMUNITY

Facilities that are in dire need of repair.

Need to improve both trust and transparency.

Lack of a plan to take Project Based Learning to the next level.

Lack of affordable housing in Yellow Springs, contributing to a loss of students.

Need for sustainable funding for the future, complicated by high taxes discouraging residents to vote for Yellow Springs school levies.

Negative opinion sharing, often on social media.

Decreasing diversity and minority representation among staff and students.

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

An open-minded collaborative communicator who will listen to others before decisions are made.
One who is honest, trustworthy, visible, transparent, and active in the community.
Able to embrace the culture and diversity of Yellow Springs and work collaboratively with stakeholders.
One who can support and understand Project Based Learning and provide leadership to improve the program and take it to the next level.
Capacity to address district funding issues and collaboratively develop a plan to improve facilities.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

An excellent communicator who is collaborative and creative, and who can foster a meaningful working relationship with the Board and the district staff.
One who is understanding and knowledgeable of Yellow Springs and its diversity.
Able to deal with very involved parents who will speak their mind on various issues.
One who is supportive of our curriculum and Project Based Learning.
A leader who is trustworthy and forthright, and able to collaborate with stakeholders to develop a new vision.
Willingness to see education as more than test scores.
One who has curriculum strength and an understanding of feminism and restorative justice.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

One who will listen, be open to new ideas, and be understanding of our environment and our diversity.
A good communicator who is organized, visible, collaborative, and active in the district and community.
One who is knowledgeable of Project Based Learning and able to improve it and take it to the next level.
A leader who values close teacher-student relations, reaching out to students, and respecting their opinions.
Ability to decisively address district's facilities and lack of funding.

ADMINISTRATION

One with an ability to navigate issues and lead a highly educated and capable staff.
A forward-thinking leader with an ability to make changes and prioritize student outcomes and needs.
One with excellent communication skills who can collaborate and connect in the community.
Experienced with students of many ages and backgrounds. One who will ask "Is this good for students?"
One who will involve stakeholders in decision-making, but able to make difficult decisions when necessary.

TEACHERS

One who is an excellent communicator and able to listen to others before decisions are made.
One who shows respect to others and displays transparency, honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness.
A supportive, instructional leader who can show empathy to teachers, students, and the community.
Able to find a blend between Project Based Learning and regular curriculum, and understand that Yellow Springs is a school that *has* Project Based Learning rather than *being* a Project Based Learning school.
Able to foster meaningful professional development for entire district to improve student learning.
One with demonstrated willingness and the capacity to seek the truth and facilitate new ideas.
A leader who can welcome and embrace diverse perspectives, advance the needs of learners and staff, maximize the involvement of stakeholders, and be visible in school and at activities.
One who will balance the high expectations of teachers and unite staff.

SUPPORT STAFF

One who is both a good communicator and a transparent good listener.

A family-oriented, charismatic, compassionate leader who is an open-minded problem solver.

A thick-skinned motivator who can measure needs and determine what is not going well.

Ability to understand Yellow Springs, its culture and how it is community-oriented.

One who supports the diversity of the district.

A leader with integrity who is fair, honest, credible, and firm. Able to have an open-door policy.

Understanding of the fact that all staff wishes to feel included and kept informed about district issues.

A leader who will move us forward while allowing us to do our jobs.

One can see the strengths of people and help them strive to be the best they can be.

Understands Project Based Learning and will be able to take the program to the next level.

PARENTS and COMMUNITY

One who is a good listener and an eloquent communicator. Able to demonstrate conviction, clarity, compassion, and interpersonal skills.

A strong, proven, successful, and visionary leader who leads by example.

One who embraces diversity and the culture of the school district.

Able to take Project Based Learning to the next level.

One who is respectful of others, and demonstrates integrity, honesty, and open mindedness.

A leader who is willing to live in the school district and participate in the community.

Capacity to be an out-of-the-box thinker and problem solver.

Able to promote student leadership and academic growth.

SUPERINTENDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY RANKING

1 = MOST IMPORTANT TO 10 = LEAST IMPORTANT

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

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

| RANK | TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS |
|-------------|---|
| 1 | Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, students, and parents |
| 2 | Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district |
| 3 | Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum |
| 4 | Experience in socially and economically diverse student population |
| 5 | Effective organizational and management skills |

| RANK | BOTTOM 5 CHARACTERISTICS |
|-------------|--|
| 6 | Effective at both written and verbal communications |
| 7 | Personal involvement and interest in the community |
| 8 | Successful experience as a superintendent |
| 9 | A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills |
| 10 | Fiscal management expertise |

SUMMARY

The information gathered through surveys, interviews, and focus group sessions bears strong similarity across all groups with respect to the Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District's strengths, issues and concerns facing the district, as well as the characteristics desired in the next superintendent.

The consistent themes expressed by groups and individuals about the Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District's *greatest strengths* included: (A) Dedicated, hard-working teachers and staff members who genuinely care about students their families; (B) Innovative Project Based Learning curriculum that empowers and involves students in decision-making and provides them with real-life educational knowledge; (C) Supportive and involved parents and community members; (D) Small size is appreciated district-wide; and (E) A culture that embraces, values, and encourages diversity.

The *top concerns* facing the Board of Education and the new superintendent in the future – nearly all of which appeared on surveys submitted and surfaced repetitively during six (6) focus group sessions – included the following: (A) Aging facilities needing repairs and upgrading; (B) Project Based Learning in need of updated data systems and a fresh restructuring; and (C) High cost of housing and high taxes, resulting in a disconnect between the Yellow Springs high income population and many of the district residents who are not part of the high income population.

It was difficult to capture all the characteristics that respondents were looking for in a new superintendent. It is certain that no one person could possibly embody all that was mentioned as desired attributes for the new superintendent. The clear majority of survey respondents and focus group session participants expressed the need for the superintendent to be a person who has the following characteristics: (A) An open-minded collaborative communicator who will listen to others before decision are made; (B) One who is honest, trustworthy, visible, transparent, and active in the community; (C) Able to embrace the culture and diversity of Yellow Springs and work collaboratively with stakeholders; (D) Able to support and understand Project Based Learning, and provide leadership to improve the program and take it to the next level; and (E) Capacity to address district funding issues and collaboratively develop a plan to improve facilities.

The consistent themes summarized above were either shared with K-12 during focus group sessions or submitted in writing on the surveys that were returned to K-12. These themes also closely matched the top

five (5) desired characteristics of the new superintendent – in the eyes of the of the six (6) sub-groups that responded to Question #4 in the survey. (See top of page 9 above).

The new superintendent should be visibly active in the school buildings and the community, serve as a role model personally and professionally to students and staff, be sincere, approachable, collaborative, and exhibit trustworthiness and integrity. The Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District values the fact that it is culturally and socio-economically diverse. It is a village that has a strong sense of community. People in Yellow Springs know and appreciate each other. The new superintendent must embrace these qualities as well.

We believe the Yellow Springs Exempted Village School District is approaching an important period of transition in the next couple of years. Tough decisions will be required of the new superintendent to meet stakeholder expectations to support and improve Project Based Learning, keep student performance high, become involved in the community, work with the Board to develop a plan to address the condition of facilities, and maintain fiscal stability in the district with voter support. The new superintendent will have to establish trust and demonstrate an ability to make decisions collaboratively, involving all stakeholders. A skillful superintendent will have the opportunity to help the district navigate through these challenging issues, and the district must do so if it is to thrive 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.

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 Yellow Springs Exempted School District community.

Respectfully submitted:
K-12 Business Consulting, Inc.
Greene County ESC