

# **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROFILE**

**Washington Court House City School District**

**Washington Court House, Ohio**

**April 17, 2017**



**Prepared for the Board of Education**



By  
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## **Washington Court House City School District** **Superintendent Search Profile Report**

April 17, 2017

This report presents the summary of 11 stakeholder focus group sessions that were held at Liberty Hall, the Board of Education Central Office, and Washington Middle School on April 3, 2017, and April 11, 2017, plus the findings from 78 Superintendent Search Profile Criteria Questionnaires that were received through April 14, 2017, and subsequently tabulated by K-12 Business Consulting, Inc. (K-12). Once the Board of Education selected K-12 to conduct the superintendent search, the Search Profile Criteria Questionnaire was created to solicit input from various stakeholders in the community. The Board and administration reached out to a broad list of individuals for participation. In addition, a general community-wide invitation was generated to meet with K-12's search consultants over two days to discuss the characteristics in greater depth. Any stakeholder who had a desire to express an opinion was welcome to submit a search profile and personally meet with K-12 at the open community-wide forums that were held at Liberty Hall. The information obtained through these sources, and summarized herein, should be used to assist the Board in identifying characteristics requested of superintendent candidates.

The Search Profile Questionnaire was made available to the district staff, identified stakeholders, plus all individuals who attended the focus group sessions. In addition to the 78 internal and external stakeholders who returned written search profiles, there were 73 citizens, district employees, parents, community members, and high school students who participated in the 11 focus group sessions that were facilitated by K-12. The results of the submitted search questionnaires are included in this report along with the frequent comments received in face-to-face focus group sessions.

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

The Search Profile Questionnaire 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 – school board members, administrators, teachers and support staff members, high school students, parents, and community members. Under each question in the report, the response group's common themes were identified. The first category entitled as "Consistent" summarizes comments that were frequently heard from all or nearly all of the response groups. Comments heard less frequently or only heard in a specific response group are listed under that response group. The responses noted as "Consistent" for any of the response groups are shown with the highest frequency first then descending to responses less frequently heard. It is important to note that the data compilation is not a scientific sampling, and 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 future of the Washington Court House City School District. We would also like to thank Treasurer Becky Mullins for the professional way all arrangements were made, including the dissemination of invitations and search profiles, as well as scheduling the focus group sessions 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**

School facilities district-wide.

Dedicated, caring staff members who are child-centered and who do all they can to help students succeed.

Strong community support of the schools and district programs.

Experienced employees who are committed to working together.

Solid variety of extra-curricular offerings, including strong music and performing arts programs.

### **BOARD MEMBERS**

Remarkable facilities, with improved technology.

Instructional talent of teachers. Hard working support staff. Commitment to children and their success.

Strong sense of community and support for the district and engagement in the schools.

School pride, tradition, spirit, and the ability of people to reach common ground.

Levy support historically, and fiscal responsibility of the Board.

### **ADMINISTRATORS**

Great building and resources.

Committed, student-centered staff and teachers who are focused on meeting the needs of students.

Support from the community and a commitment of its citizens. Great historical traditions.

Value-added scores of students. Commitment to celebrate the district's success stories.

Experienced administrators who work well together throughout the buildings.

The staff rapport and positive environment in schools. Welcoming, friendly staff throughout district.

Parental support of curricular changes, gifted program, and Advanced Placement courses.

Responsiveness of district to address the different issues of students needing support

### **TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF**

Beautiful school facilities. Pleasant school environments. Wonderful students.

Dedicated, caring teachers and staff members who love children, and who go the extra mile to make a difference. Willingness of teachers to try new things in the classroom.

Long-time, experienced employees who are deeply invested in the community. Many have grown up here.

Strong, close-knit community that supports the schools. Citizens and staff who are open to new ideas.

Positive staff relationships, positive work environment, and good building-wide administrative support.

Co-curricular offerings, especially athletic programs and music programs.

District-funded professional development opportunities, which have been valuable to many, including the middle school counseling program.

## **PARENTS**

School facilities. Technology in the classroom. Facilities for sporting events.

Close knit community and the tremendous support of parents.

District cares about issues facing the students. The overall education offered is excellent.

Professionalism of the administration, faculty, and staff. Caring employees district-wide.

Smaller size of district enables parents to get-to-know teachers, administrators, and staff.

Transportation district-wide is good.

## **COMMUNITY**

Nice up-to-date facilities which are well thought of in the community.

Strong community support, as evidenced by levy successes and fund raising by community members.

Caring staff members. High quality teachers.

Excellent performing arts department. Strong DECA program. Terrific H.S. concert and marching bands.

## **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

School loyalty and pride. Strong school spirit. A safe and friendly educational environment at school.

Caring teachers who support their students in every way they can. Challenging courses offered.

Great facilities. Community support for the schools and the programs.

Strong academic programs.

Good variety of extra-curricular opportunities.

## **IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING DISTRICT**

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

### **CONSISTENT THEMES**

Increased poverty and its impact on the schools.

Need to improve academic achievement and the district's state Report Card ratings.

Lack of articulation and continuity of instruction between buildings, grade levels, and subject areas.

Need to improve staff morale, heal division in the district, and improve the district's overall image.

Need to provide more life skills courses and vocational offerings at the high school level.

The need to develop and implement a clear vision for the district.

### **BOARD MEMBERS**

Academic achievement and ODE state indicators need improvement. Work needed with reading scores.

Morale of staff and citizens. Division in the district. Having the right people in the right seat.

Need better instructional leadership for curriculum decisions and building-level implementation.

Finding the best superintendent to lead with high expectations and collaborative communications.

Potential need for a future tax levy. Lack of local funding, coupled with increased poverty.

Need to repair working relationship with the ESC and the MVECA.

### **ADMINISTRATORS**

Declining socio-economic status in the community. Increased poverty and its impact on district schools.

Student achievement needs to improve, along with success with state indicators.

Lack of continuity of instruction between buildings, grade levels, and subject areas.

Lack of trust in school board. Need to improve staff morale and unity. Perceptions of hidden agendas.

Division in the district over the departure of the previous superintendent and related PR concerns.

Employee uncertainty about future district priorities. Need for the district to have a clearer vision.

Lack of vocational classes. Need to keep pace with technology changes.

Transportation issues need to be addressed better. Overcrowding and poor discipline on many buses.

Need to improve working relationship between bus drivers and administrators.

### **TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF**

Increased poverty in district. Not many new jobs in the area, which translates to fewer new students.

Increased teacher turnover in the district, creating a lack of stability. Need to address staff morale concerns.

Lower salaries for all in district, coupled with the Board's reluctance to ask for more money from voters.

Need for parents to be more involved, to care more, and to be held more accountable for home environment factors that impact schools in a less-than-favorable way. There are students who see drug abuse at home.

Need for more vocational training for students. Increased support needed for the special education program.

Poor communication from the top down. District image needs improvement. Clear vision is needed.

Perceptions of Board member personal agendas affecting decision-making and contributing to a lack of trust.

Teachers are too often left out of the decision-making process.

Curriculum is not carried over from building to building as it should be.

Keeping up with technology needs that affect students.

## **PARENTS**

Increased poverty in the district, coupled with parent alcoholism and drug abuse.  
Too much turnover of young teaching talent. Lower salaries for district teachers.  
Lack of a commitment to create a systemic culture of excellence.  
Need to improve state test scores and have a clear vision for district academics.  
Curriculum is not cohesive between buildings and may be lacking state standards.  
Lack of vocational offerings for non-college bound students.  
Lack of implementing College Credit Plus, which could help many lower income and disadvantaged pupils.  
Lack of trust with some administrators and the board. A lack of unity district-wide.  
Decline in parent involvement in recent years.  
Student discipline should be better.

## **COMMUNITY**

Changing the reputation of the school board and creating a more positive image for the district.  
Teacher turnover in the district. Too many are leaving due to lower salaries.  
Need to improve student achievement and do better with state indicators.  
Need to establish a meaningful vision for the district.  
Challenging and preparing students for life beyond high school, including more vocational courses.  
Scheduling concerns at the high school. Counselors, not computers, should generate the schedules.  
Concerns over adequacy of preparing high school students for college advanced science courses.  
Need to keep drugs out of our schools and work with law enforcement to do so.  
Student discipline and bullying is a concern.

## **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Inconsistent enforcement of student discipline, bullying problems, and cell phone rules.  
Student discipline on school buses is not enforced as it should be.  
Frequent violations of Public Display of Affection (PDA) all over school.  
PDA problems at the back of school buses.  
More life-skills courses are needed. Home Economics is one example of a course that is missed.  
More vocational courses are needed.  
The impact that increased poverty in the district has had on the schools.  
Length of extra-curricular practices and late home arrivals make it very difficult to get school work done.  
Students should have more involvement in school-level decision-making.  
Too many bugs in schools.

## **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**

One who is committed to making decisions that are child-centered and in the best interests of students.  
Demonstrated success in leading schools forward academically to improve state Report Card ratings.  
One with public relations skills who can address issues involving staff morale, division, and trust.  
One who is collaborative and able to foster unity throughout the district.  
A people person who is honest, dynamic, and open-minded, and who is a proven excellent communicator.  
One who is approachable and will be visible in the schools and the community.

### **BOARD MEMBERS**

Able to develop a vision of where our district needs to go and how to get there. Able to inspire others.  
One who can heal the wounds of our staff and citizens caused by recent events in the district.  
One who can develop a meaningful plan and obtainable goals to improve the district's test scores.  
One who is a strong instructional leader who demonstrates passion, internal motivation, and drive.  
Demonstrated experience as a dynamic leader whose leadership causes others to follow. Fosters respect.  
A top-notch professional who is emotionally intelligent, open-minded, knowledgeable of pedagogy, understands school issues, and who can foster genuine communication and collaboration.  
Is skilled in critical thinking and conflict management. Able to develop trust and delegate responsibility.  
Values relationship building. Is approachable and "kid" focused as well as people focused.  
Able to evaluate problems, set a vision, establish strategies, and willing to make the right decision – not the popular decision. Must be able to understand that he/she is the superintendent 24/7, 365 days per year.  
One with high morals and ethics, and who understands the PDA in school and buses will not be tolerated.

### **ADMINISTRATORS**

One with demonstrated experience in collaboration, and an ability to unite WCH schools together.  
A leader who can be trusted, with no hidden agenda, and who will have a vested interest in the community.  
One who can recognize the strength of a team and mentor leaders to greatness in their respective roles.  
A people-person with character and integrity. A communicator who is able to give staff loyalty and respect.  
Be visible and able to listen to others genuinely, to build up others, and address district staff morale issues.  
One who is adaptable and committed to bringing the entire district staff together. Able to foster healing.  
Must be someone who has the ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, students and parents.  
Able to distinguish who in the community are, and are not, representing the best interests of the district.  
Cannot be a politician or a fake leader. Must have the ability to lead the Board and district to higher levels.  
Must be kid-centered, and able to embrace ideas that are already in place and working well.

### **TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF**

Familiarity with poverty and how it affects the school district is a must.  
Must be committed to making decisions that are in the best interests of students' long term.  
An honest, trustworthy person with demonstrated success as an educator, and with no personal agendas.  
Must have experience as an excellent communicator, a lead learner, a problem-solver, and a change agent.  
One with backbone, who earns respect from others. Must be approachable. Must have a vision.  
Must have a strong, moral character and operates on principles rather than on feelings or trends.  
Must become part of our community. Must be visible by attending events, sports, the fair, etc.

Able to encourage respectful questioning from district employees in a way that employees will not fear repercussions. One who won't play favorites and can handle criticism without lashing out.  
Needs to solicit feedback from staff on what is working and not working.  
Must have integrity and high expectations for all.

### **PARENTS**

Must be a strong, honest leader with personal morals. Must be a model for students.  
Must excel in communication and able to treat everyone the same. Must be a good listener.  
Demonstrated ability to manage and correct problems within the district in an appropriate matter.  
Demonstrated success in leading academic improvement and a vision for continued improvement.  
Has a commitment to build relationships with staff, students and parents. Must be visible everywhere.  
Must become involved in the community and establish "roots" here.  
Cannot become involved a "Good Old Boys" concept of management. Must have integrity.

### **COMMUNITY**

Demonstrated leadership, management, and finance skills. Able to establish a clear vision for the district.  
Improved student achievement must be the number one priority.  
Must be trustworthy, honest, and positive. Must be able to communicate effectively with all stakeholders.  
Must have high integrity and able to become involved in the community. Must be energetic and enthusiastic.  
Demonstrated success in putting kids first and standing up for what is right.  
Must be able to work well with the Board and the Treasurer.  
Able to recognize that many in the business community may question purchasing practices.

### **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

One who will connect with the students and respect their points of view.  
One who will be visible in the schools and be approachable. Students should know who he/she is.  
A strong leader who has integrity, who is open-minded, and who will do what is best for students.  
An open-minded person who will listen and seriously consider the opinions of others, including students.  
A leader who is positive and an effective communicator with all people.  
Able to respect how students have to juggle their time between school work, extra-curriculars & social life.  
Someone who is skilled in public relations and will be involved in the community.  
One who is organized and able to address situations as they arise in a fair manner.  
Able to ensure that students are treated fairly.

## SUPERINTENDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY RANKING

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

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

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

### 1-5 MOST IMPORTANT TO 6-10 LEAST IMPORTANT

#### RANK TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district.
- 2 Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, parents, and students.
- 3 A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills.
- 4 Personal involvement and interest in the community.
- 5 Effective organizational and management skills.

#### RANK BOTTOM 5 CHARACTERISTICS

- 6 Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum.
- 7 Effective with both written and verbal skills.
- 8 Successful experience as a superintendent.
- 9 Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations.
- 10 Fiscal management expertise.

### SUMMARY

The information gathered through surveys and interviews bear strong similarity across all sub-groups with respect to the Washington Court House City School District's strengths, issues and challenges facing the district, as well as the characteristics desired in the next superintendent.

The consistent themes expressed by groups and individuals about the Washington Court House City School District's greatest strengths include: (A) School facilities district-wide; (B) Dedicated, caring staff members who are child-centered and do all they can to help students succeed; (C) Strong community support of the schools and district programs; (D) Experienced employees who are committed to working together; and (E) Solid variety of extra-curricular offerings, including strong music and performing arts programs.

The top issues and challenges facing the Board of Education and the new superintendent in the future – all of which appeared on surveys received and were expressed during the 11 focus group sessions – include the following: (A) Increased poverty and its impact on the schools; (B) The need to improve academic achievement and the district's state Report Card ratings; (C) Lack of articulation and continuity of instruction between buildings, grade levels, and subject areas; (D) The need to improve staff morale, heal division in the district, and improve the district's overall image; (E) The need to provide more life skills courses and vocational offerings at the high school level; and (F) The need to develop a clear vision for the district.

It was difficult to capture all the characteristics that respondents were looking for in a new superintendent. It is certain that very few leaders could possibly embody all that was mentioned as desired attributes. The vast majority of respondents expressed the need for the new superintendent to have following characteristics: (A) One who is committed to making decisions that are child-centered and in the best interests of students; (B) Demonstrated success in leading school forward academically to improve state Report Card ratings; (C) One with public relations skills who can address issues involving staff morale, division in the district, and

trust; (D) One who is collaborative and able to foster unity throughout the district; (E) A people person who is honest, dynamic, and open-minded, and who is a proven excellent communicator; and (F) One who is approachable and will be visible in the schools and in the community.

In most cases, the consistent themes summarized above closely matched the specific desired superintendent characteristics submitted by the 78 internal and external stakeholders who returned the Superintendent Profile Criteria Questionnaire to K-12. The overall top five (5) desired characteristics of the new superintendent submitted separately by the six (6) sub-groups – most of which complimented the consistent Question #3 themes summarized on page 6 herein – were: (1) Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district; (2) Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, and students; (2) A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills; (3) A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills; (4); Personal involvement and interest in the community; and (5) Effective organizational and management skills.

It also deserves noting that “Successful experience as a superintendent” and “Fiscal management expertise” were listed near the bottom of the list (8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>) of desired characteristics of the new superintendent. This should not be interpreted in a negative way. Rather, an interpretation of these responses is twofold: (1) The overwhelmingly number of respondents concluded that it is not necessary for the new superintendent to have direct experience as a superintendent (which the Board of Education concluded as well with an earlier job posting that stated only “Successful administrative experience required”); and (2) The work of Treasurer Becky Mullins and the 2016 Auditor of State Award for a “clean” district audit translate into “Fiscal management expertise” – while important -- not being as important as other desired characteristics listed.

We believe the Washington Court House City School District is approaching an important period of transition. This will require the new superintendent not only to possess effective communication skills and foster a solid working relationship with the district’s staff to facilitate district Report Card improvements, but he/she will need to be visible, approachable, and able to develop a collaborative vision that will have broad stakeholder buy-in. The new superintendent also will need to positively respond to issues pertaining to staff morale, division in the district, and the need to foster unity.

It also is clear that both internal and external stakeholders of the school district see the hiring of a new superintendent as an opportunity to harness new collaboration, foster transparent communications, and facilitate relationship building to move the district forward in a positive fashion. A new superintendent, with support from the Board of Education, the staff, and the community, can help provide this leadership.

The Washington Court House City School District is a district that is full of pride about the school district’s programs and extra-curricular opportunities. Parents and community members genuinely care about the school district and are willing to be involved. We believe that the right candidate for superintendent will recognize the opportunity this environment has for him/her to be involved in making a difference in the lives of children and to have a high quality of life. This position will be of interest to the right superintendent candidates. We believe we will find the right potential candidates who have the attributes outlined herein, possess the skills and energy needed to address current and future issues expressed by survey respondents, and who will be happy to lead the district and the community into the future.

Respectfully submitted:

K-12 Business Consulting, Inc