

Consultants' Report
 Albion Central School District
 A Synthesis of Data Collected from the Online Survey and Focus Groups
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Introduction

This report serves as a synthesis of the data collected from the online survey posted to the District's website and meetings between the 12 (including the Board of Education) focus groups and the consultants. It covers three broad areas: 1) the traits, characteristics and behaviors the new Superintendent should possess, 2) opportunities for the new Superintendent and 3) challenges for the new Superintendent.

The purpose in sharing this information is to inform the Board with regard to what the school community and community at-large see as important. The report can also be shared with the new Superintendent to assist him/her in developing an entry plan and setting priorities. The consultants have, for the most part, chosen not to interpret what the data "says"; the consultants do discuss how the results from the online survey and focus group discussions relate to and support one another. The consultants have also sent individual comments, without attribution, to the Board in a separate, confidential document.

Survey

The survey, which was posted for approximately four weeks on the District's website, was completed by 581 respondents. The consultants analyzed the survey for salient information and present a summary, below.

Survey Participation by Group

A resident of the Albion CSD WITHOUT children currently in its schools	167
A resident of the Albion CSD WITH children currently in its schools	231
A member of the Albion CSD teaching staff	100
A member of the Albion CSD support staff	36
A member of the Albion CSD administrative staff	8
A student attending the Albion CSD	43
A business owner	16
Other (e.g., Grandparent, former ACSD teacher, bus drivers, former student)	34

Total number exceeds total responses due to some respondents selecting more than one member group

Preferred Experiences and Skills

From a list of 30 experiences and skills, respondents were asked to indicate the **five** that they desired or felt were most critical for the next Albion Superintendent of Schools to possess at this point in time.

The following is a ranking from across all respondents of the top 10 in order of preference along with the number of votes received. Due to space limitations, only the top seven are included in the brochure.

It is worth noting that more than half of all respondents indicated that the next Superintendent should have experience with the #1 characteristic - ***creating a positive school culture***.

- 1) Ability to create a positive school culture: 296
- 2) Ability to clearly identify problems and develop effective solutions: 276
- 3) Strong commitment to improving student achievements/student success: 258
- 4) Strong presence in the schools and community: 228
- 5) Committed to involving others in decision-making: 167
- 6) Places a high value on character development and discipline: 163
- 7) Can successfully engage parents and partners in education of their children: 162
- 8) Displays positive, can-do attitude with a good sense of humor: 142
- 9) Evidence of being a person of unquestioned integrity: 134
- 10) Knowledgeable of New York State education law, regulations and practices: 118

Areas of Focus

Respondents were asked to rank eight areas of focus over the next three-five years for the new Superintendent. From across all respondents, the rank order of the eight areas of focus was:

- 1) Instruction/student performance: 410 (See #3 and 7 above)
- 2) Communication with the community: 289 (See #1, 5 and 7 above)
- 3) Budget and finance: 219
- 4) Improving technology: 214 (See #3 above)
- 5) Building relationships and trust with stakeholders: 186 (See #1, 4, 5, 6, 8 above)
- 6) Building/sustaining a strong interscholastic sports and/or art and programs: 173
- 7) Communication with internal and external stakeholders: 162 (See #1, 5, 7 above)
- 8) Contract negotiations and/or labor relations: 59

As we would expect, the Preferred Experiences and Skills overlap with Areas of Focus. In other words, those completing the survey expressed a preference for candidates who possess the experiences and skills they are feel are necessary in order to address identified areas of focus.

It is worth noting that Instruction/Student Performance (#1) significantly outranked other areas of focus.

When synthesizing results of these two questions, i.e., Experiences and Skills and Areas of Focus, it is clear that those who answered the survey view the ability to create a positive school culture with a focus on instruction and student performance as the top two priorities for the next Superintendent.

Comments from the Surveys – Summarized

Below is a summary of comments received from the respondents. The list is not exhaustive but rather representative of all comments. Comments generally align with the other areas of the survey.

- Inclusive and transparent in their decision-making process
- Fiscally responsible
- An advocate for **all** children
- Student centered
- Approachable
- Relationship builder
- Strong and effective communicator
- Understands the dynamics of a rural community
- Forward thinking and future focused
- Committed to excellence
- Advocates and supports high expectations for all students
- Experienced and sees value in technology
- Proactive versus reactive
- Supports faculty and staff
- Someone who can bring all stakeholders together
- Interacts with and gets to know students
- Someone with experience and who knows about teaching
- A systems thinker when it comes to discipline
- Sees value in a variety of programs for students
- Focuses on creating a culture of enthusiasm and pride
- A personal of high moral character who is both fair and flexible
- Consistently present at student events and activities
- Believes in developing the whole child
- Capable of making and leveraging community relationships and partnerships
- An approachable person visible in the community
- Strong evidence of being a team player
- A willingness to try new things and grow the District
- Fair and consistent

Focus Group Comments

The facilitated sessions with the focus groups provided some robust data for consideration. Drs. Ramming and Lawrence used the research based Creative Problem Solving tools “Brainstorming” to help groups generate ideas and “Highlighting” to help groups converge upon themes from among the many ideas they generated. The data are presented with regard to these three questions:

- 1) What might be all the traits, characteristics and behaviors the next Superintendent should possess?
- 2) What might be all the challenges facing the next Superintendent?
- 3) What might be all the opportunities available to the next Superintendent?

The themes are summarized by focus group, below.

Students

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- Methodical
- Persistent
- Friendly
- Appreciative of diversity
- Involved

Challenges

- Create inclusivity
- Complaints
- Transparency
- Offering adaptive and varied instructional delivery
- Parents
- Resistance to change

Opportunities

- Agricultural life
- Ability to create change
- Great community
- Potential grow staff and self professionally
- Supportive community

ACS Union Support Staff

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- Student centered
- Invested
- Effective communicator
- Fair
- Approachable

Challenges

- Building trust with stakeholders – including community and BOE
- Student safety: pre-Covid and current
- Issues of diversity
- Fiscally responsible with a focus on students
- Lack of common and unifying direction

Opportunities

- Committed staff
- New ideas and possibilities
- Integrate new technology
- Influence through effective communication

CSEA (Support Staff)

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- A person of good character – values and actions

Challenges

- Covid-19 response
- Understanding the uniqueness of a small community

Opportunities

- To make a difference
- Focus a mission on students first

Parents

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- Community oriented
- Motivated
- Committed
- Problem solver
- Communicator who follows through

Challenges

- Covid-19 response
- Student safety
- Issues surrounding diversity
- Technology
- Difficult personalities on the Board
- Involved parents
- Ensuring no favoritism

Opportunities

- Leverage and make new connections
- Purple Eagle pride
- Widespread support
- Great staff

Community Leaders

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- Motivated
- Compassionate
- Leader
- Engaged
- Integrity
- Fair
- Longevity

Challenges

- Unions
- Shrinking population
- Finances
- Change of employees
- Community issues
- Cuomo/NYSED mandates
- School security
- Dynamics of the BOE

Opportunities

- Expectation of and for success
- Engaged community
- Positively influence new administrators/administrative team

Alumni

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- Student centered
- Vision
- Ethical and approachable
- Inclusive leader
- Visible
- Strong communicator
- Technology is a focus
- Fiscally responsible
- A parent

Challenges

- Covid-19 response and instructional delivery
- Upcoming discipline decision
- School and community culture
- Budget

Opportunities

- Strong schools
- Passionate community
- Small town values

- Diversity

Contract Staff & Cafeteria

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- Inclusive decision maker
- Personable
- Good listener and outgoing
- Inventive and open minded
- Ethical
- Proven leader

Challenges

- Budget
- Parent concerns
- Driver/student issues and enforcing rules
- Covid and related planning
- Building relationships with school community and community at large
- Relationship with the BOE

Opportunities

- Small and tight-knit community
- Strong programs
- Committed and effective district leaders
- Community ready to move forward
- Diversity

Albion Teachers Association

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- Visionary leader open to change
- Establish educational leader
- Respects and values staff
- Person of character
- Good communicator

Challenges

- Demographics
- No Shared Decision Making
- Academic outcomes
- Rebuilding trust
- Divided staff
- Lack of guiding vision
- Conflict among Board members

Opportunities

- Staff is committed and eager toward improvement
- Great athletics program
- Strong community involvement

- A “waiting and wanting” community to be led

Albion Administrators Association & District Admin

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- Strong moral character
- Develops and reciprocates trust
- Deep understanding of teaching and learning
- Invested in the District and community

Challenges

- Split Board
- (Re)building relationships

Opportunities

- Re-uniting school community and the community with the District
- Great community support

Central Office & Tech Staff

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- People person
- Fiscally responsible
- Civic minded

Challenges

- Parent issues
- Safety in schools
- Response to COVID
- BOE “dynamics”

Opportunities

- Current fiscal condition
- Strong reputation in the arts and sports
- Caring and supportive community willing to step up and help

Open Forum

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- Genuine communicator
- Reflective
- Effective leader
- Invested
- Family
- Honest

Challenges

- Meeting the needs of the whole child
- COVID
- Lack of technology
- “Cleaning up the mess”

- Recapturing our reputation
- Building relationships in the schools and community
- Succession planning

Opportunities

- Untapped potential
- Small town
- Great community support
- Purple Eagle Pride
- Beautiful facilities

Board of Education

Traits/Characteristics/Behaviors

- Collaborative
- Effective communicator
- Inclusive in decision making
- Approachable
- Good moral character
- Visionary thinker

Challenges

- Resistance to change
- Student motivation
- (Re) Build trust
- Staff morale
- Instilling a sense of safety and security

Opportunities

- Excellent student body
- Committed staff
- Tremendous community pride and support
- Opportunities for growth
- To “make a mark”

Not surprisingly, the data from the focus groups align with what stakeholders shared in their survey responses and comments.

Conclusion

The consultants will use the results of the survey and meetings with focus groups in the development of the recruitment letter and brochure. We will also share this information in discussions with prospective candidates.

We suggest that the Board utilize this report to understand what the school community and community at-large see as important. The Board can also share the report with the new Superintendent as a means of helping him/her develop an entry plan and establish priorities and, if it chooses to do so, post it the District’s website.