



UPPER ARLINGTON SCHOOLS

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Leadership Profile Report Summary

October 11, 2022



Why a Leadership Profile Report?

Our goal was to understand the unique history of the school and community, learn their exceptional strengths and significant challenges, hear stakeholders' diverse perspectives, and deepen our knowledge of the attributes, characteristics, qualifications, expertise, and experience necessary to lead the district. We will use all we learned to:

- a) Recruit excellent applicants;
- b) Develop interview questions for screening and for the Board members who interview the candidates; and
- c) To provide important information to the new superintendent and the Board for development of annual goals.

Broad Spectrum of Data Collection

Qualitative: We talked with more than 250 stakeholders in 4 on site forums (2 for staff and 2 for community), 2 virtual forums (1 for staff and 1 for community), 24 focus groups and 7 individual interviews. Because we actively and willingly share our cell phone numbers and emails, we also heard from a few other stakeholders.

Additionally, survey respondents provided 2134 comments.

Quantitative: 1191 respondents. By group, the final tally was:

- 782 parents/guardians of current students
- 25 parents/guardians of future students
- 197 teachers and certificated staff members
- 25 support staff members
- 20 administrators
- 13 students
- 90 residents without children currently in school
- 9 residents with children in other schools
- 30 alumni

Important Caveats

Qualitative Data:

While community members and staff members were invited to 4 on-site and 2 virtual community forums, attendance at all four sessions, attendance was less than 20 at each of these. While the opinions of ALL PARTICIPANTS in focus groups and forums is important, it is not necessarily a representative sampling.

Quantitative Data:

- The survey is NOT a scientific sampling; it is a survey of convenience.
- While the total N is large, some subgroups had 25 or fewer respondents.
- Participants could take survey from multiple devices but those instances are being identified and will be removed from data set.

Bottom Line: Despite the caveats, participants and respondents provided a wealth of data for recruiting and interviewing applicants and for assisting in an effective, successful transition!

Three Big Takeaways

The new superintendent must:

1. Instill trust and mutual respect among disparate voices with conflicting viewpoints.
2. First understand both the history and current conditions of the community and then build relationships, create collaborative consensus, and move the district forward with a shared aspirational and achievable vision.
3. Be a true leader committed to Upper Arlington Schools' growth and improvement and who will engage, inspire, and support stakeholders through courageous, transparent decision-making that keeps student achievement and well-being at the center.

Focus Group/Interview Strengths:

Participants were asked to describe the strengths of the district and areas of pride. We heard numerous responses; here are the 10 most common:

1. Schools are the heart and pride of the community and distinguished by historical and current strong academic performance, exceptional extra-curricular opportunities, and actively engaged parents.
2. The district has an outstanding faculty and support staff who clearly care about the students from a whole child perspective; as one said, “put a ladder there and we will climb it.”
3. Close, positive, and productive relationship with the city, library, OSU, businesses, non-profits, and other services; “an extraordinary sense of community.”
4. Despite limited diversity, the community strives to be welcoming, accepting, supportive, and encouraging of all students and families from an array of backgrounds, ethnicities, and identities.

5. Financial health and oversight; effective and wise use of financial resources.
6. Beautiful, modern, welcoming schools and middle school access to UAHS athletic facilities.
7. Alums return to the district and reinvest their time and talent in the community and support the schools.
8. The administrations and unions have solid, honest, trusting relationships.
9. While there is room for improvement, the special education services and supports are unparalleled.
10. “People come first;” the leadership support for staff families, personal wellness and professional growth is unique.

Focus Groups/Forums/Interviews: Challenges and Issues

Participants were asked to describe the challenges and issues the district faces. We heard numerous responses; here are 10 most common:

1. Navigating internal and external politics of the “hyper engaged.”
2. Sustaining and improving special education services to ensure consistent delivery of IEP and 504 services and accommodations across the full PK-12 continuum.
3. Dealing with the local, state, and national caustic political divisiveness.
4. Sustaining and strengthening academic excellence.
5. Pandemic recovery – especially for students with disabilities or economic disadvantages.

6. Administrative accountability for any school and/or district leadership *inaction or neglect* regarding inappropriate student behaviors, student and staff wellness, or other matters requiring leadership intervention.
7. Moving the DEI initiatives forward and communicating evidence of progress on inclusiveness and success of marginalized groups.
8. Establishing specific metrics and communicating clear data regarding new and existing programs and services, interventions, student success, etc.
9. Threat of complacency borne of historical success.
10. Attending to students' needs regarding access to internships, mentorships, career pathways, and "real world" experience, as well counseling, mental health, and wellness services, and restoring joy to school.

The Survey Says: Top Ranked Priorities for the New Superintendent

		CURRENT PARENT/ GUARDIANS	CERTIFICATED/ TEACHERS	CLASSIFIED/ EXEMPT SUPPORT	RESIDENT W/O SCHOOL CHILDREN	ALUMS	
<u>PRIORITIES</u>	<u>COMPOSITE</u>						
Retaining and recruiting top quality teachers	1 (47.7%)	1			3	1	
Improving academic performance	2 (39.8%)	2			2	3	
Fostering a culture and climate of mutual trust and respect	3 (39.1%)		1	2	1		
Increasing attention to students' & staff social emotional & mental health issues	4 (36.9%)	3	2	1			
Fostering a sense of student and staff connectedness and belonging to our schools	5 (25.9%)		3	2		2	
Unifying diverse voices within the school community	6 (24.8%)						
Ensuring student and staff safety	7 (18.8%)						
<u>PRIORITIES</u>	<u>COMPOSITE</u>	<u>WHITE</u>	<u>NON-WHITE</u>	<u>HETERO</u>	<u>LGBTQIA+</u>	<u>NO DISABILITY</u>	<u>IDENTIFIED DISABILITY</u>
Retaining and recruiting top quality teachers	1 (47.7%)	1	1	1		1	1
Improving academic performance	2 (39.8%)		1	3			3
Fostering a culture and climate of mutual trust and respect	3 (39.1%)	3			1	2	
Increasing attention to students' & staff social emotional & mental health issues	4 (36.9%)	2	3	2	2	3	2
Fostering a sense of student and staff connectedness and belonging to our schools	5 (25.9%)						
Unifying diverse voices within the school community	6 (24.8%)				3		
Ensuring student and staff safety	7 (18.8%)						

NOTES:

Results are provided for groups of 25 or more respondents.

The dropoff between composite priorities 1-4 and 5-7 is important to note.

Percentage responding that it is “extremely important” for the next superintendent to ...

QUESTION	COMPOSITE	PERCENTAGE RESPONDING EXTREMELY IMPORTANT				ALUMS
		CURRENT PARENT/ GUARDIANS	CERTIFICATED/ TEACHERS	CLASSIFIED/ EXEMPT SUPPORT	RESIDENT W/O SCHOOL CHILDREN	
<i>How important is it for the next superintendent to:</i>	n=1191	n=782	n=197	n=25	n=90	n=30
Q4. Elevate student voice?	28	27	29	41	29	29
Q5. Engage staff voice in district decision making?	48	41	87	52	46	38
Q6. Strengthen personalized learning supports?	39	41	33	33	46	38
Q7. Provide student opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics?	53	58	32	41	65	63
Q8. Increase community understanding of the district's financial operations?	28	26	23	35	46	38
Q9. Offer new opportunities for digital community engagement?	8	7	9	14	12	17
Q10. Hold Listen, Learn, Lead roundtables and community academies?	13	12	8	9	22	17
Q11. Recruit and retain highly qualified, effective, and diverse personnel?	66	66	66	61	74	71
Q12. Lead improvements in the curriculum?	53	57	39	24	60	63
Q13. Provide regular and transparent communication to students, staff, parents, & community?	65	63	69	78	73	71
Q14. Understand and address the needs of our increasingly diverse population?	48	45	53	50	59	58
Q15. Be an effective operational manager?	48	48	47	39	51	46
Q16. Demonstrate a deep understanding of emerging educational research & best practices?	47	47	41	52	52	57
Q17. Ensure a culture of belonging and connection for all students and staff?	62	58	77	73	65	71
Q18. Provide a clear compelling vision for the future?	43	42	48	22	41	48
Q19. Be an innovative, “out of the box” thinker?	26	24	28	23	33	46
Q20. Engage parents as partners in their children's education?	44	48	28	27	46	50
Q21. Inspire, motivate, and engage all stakeholders?	35	32	39	45	44	39
Q22. Partner w/ non-profits & businesses to provide internships, apprenticeships, mentorships?	22	22	19	23	33	48
Q23. Close opportunity and achievement gaps?	34	32	34	32	45	58
Q24. Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect?	69	62	93	78	73	67
Q25. Be highly visible in the schools and the community?	37	33	51	52	30	46
Q26. Have experience as a superintendent?	35	30	50	52	36	21
Q27. Ensure students are college and career ready upon graduation?	66	72	46	52	65	58
Q28. Enhance schools' focus on collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, & problem solving?	48	49	41	41	60	58
KEY: GREEN shading indicates at least 2/3 of respondents ranked prompt extremely important						

KEY: Green cells indicate at least 2/3 of respondents ranked prompt extremely important

NOTE: Results are provided for groups of 25 or more respondents

Top ten desired characteristics of the next superintendent

1. Politically astute relationship builder who excels at engaging all voices, listening carefully, mediating disagreements, and building trust.
2. Authentically and deeply committed, energetic, and passionate about ensuring excellence for EVERY child.
3. Role model of integrity, honesty, and transparency with an outstanding work ethic balanced with preserving family time for students and staff.
4. "Freaking fearless," courageous, confident, thick-skinned, yet humble, empathetic, and patient.

5. An extraordinary communicator who has demonstrated how to communicate with and listen to an array of stakeholders.
6. Visible, approachable, and relatable through involvement and being an *active* presence in schools and *immersive* presence in the community.
7. Understands our community, is well-versed in Ohio school funding, laws, and policies, and has demonstrated successful leadership experience in a high profile, high achieving district.
8. Creates stability and builds trust among and between stakeholders.
9. A leader who excels at keeping the district moving forward academically and competitive with the top districts in the state and country.
10. Recent and relevant experience in successfully advancing initiatives to support inclusion, equity, and mental health and wellness.

Comment 194:

“ Highly qualified, able to skillfully navigate balancing the competing priorities and constituencies of this district, all while providing leadership and doing what is best for students’ learning and well-being above all.”

Next Steps

- Recruit applicants, process applications, conduct screening interviews, and reference checking.
- Present the slate on or about the week of November 15.
- Schedule interviews of semifinalist candidates.
- Clarify parameters for contract language and compensation.
- Determine the process for handling finalists' interviews.

With special thanks to:

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- Karen, Karin, and Andrew for their attention to detail, and extraordinary expertise in managing the complex logistics and communications of scheduling interviews, focus, groups, forums, and survey.