

Taholah School District



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

PRELIMINARY - May 1, 2024

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) beginning in late April for the new superintendent of the Tahola School District. The data contained herein was obtained from input the HYA associate received from internal and external stakeholders of the Longview Community via an online survey, individual interviews, and focus groups.

The survey, interviews, and focus groups were structured to gather information to assist the Taholah Board of Directors in determining the primary characteristics desired and needed in the new superintendent. Additionally, the HYA associate collected feedback regarding the strengths of the District as well as current and future challenges.

Participation (Pending)

The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in all methods of data gathering are listed in the following chart:

Group	Personal interviews, focus groups, forums & survey
Students	
Family Members	
Community	
Certificated Staff	
Classified Staff	
Administrators/ Supervisors	
Total	

Profile of Survey Respondents

(Use google form pie chart here.)

Summary of Stakeholder Input

All discussions were thoughtful, insightful, and very helpful. The HYA associate conducting the focus groups, forums and interviews would like to thank the participants for giving so freely of their time and for the depth of the discussions regarding Tahola School District during the sessions.

It should be emphasized that the data from focus groups and forums are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups. Topics were included if they emerged as a significant theme or, in the associate's professional judgment, they warranted the board's attention.

Strengths of the District

Data collected through personal contacts and survey responses provided overall an encouraging and optimistic view of the district. The following themes surfaced often and across these multiple data sources:

Tight Knit Caring Community
Commitment to Cultural Education and Traditions
Caring, Student-Centered Staff
Small School Size and Class Sizes
Community and Tribal Support/Resources
Beautiful School & Community Setting

There was a consistent message across multiple stakeholder groups that the District and Community cares deeply about students and their success. Staff work hard to meet the needs of each and every student, and wear many professional "hats" such as coaching, extra curricular activities, and multiple educational functions which is common in small school and district settings.

One of the first responses shared when asked about the strengths of the District was the tight knit nature of the community, many of whom actively engage with the school. Several identified this as both a strength and sometimes a challenge as the engagement is often

supportive but also challenging at times when dealing with occasional conflicts or individual student matters involving misconduct and/or disciplinary action. It was also shared that when a family or the school faces a need requiring additional support, the community has a history of coming together to help with fundraising or other volunteering. The Quinault tribe was also mentioned as a consistent and generous partner with the school often donating resources and collaborating with the district to achieve common goals. The current planning for a new school facility on land donated by the tribe was mentioned by many as an example of this.

The school plays a prominent role in the life of the community with school events, especially athletics, enjoying strong attendance by parents and community members.

The school's location within the Quinault Nation was noted as a strength with tribal culture and traditions integrated into the educational program and school activities throughout the year. This was also identified as a high priority for continued leadership support in the future by most stakeholders.

Many school staff were identified as dedicated and caring, especially those who have served the school for several years. Parents expressed appreciation for the relationships staff have established with them to support student growth and success and several stakeholders identified the school's smaller size (enrollment) and small class sizes as strengths that help staff develop stronger relationships and provide students more individual attention. Recruiting and retaining school staff was also mentioned as a challenge. This is explained further in the next section of this report.

Located on shores of the Pacific Coast within a pristine temperate rainforest, those who work and live here identified this beautiful setting as another strength of the community making it a special place to live, work, and raise a family.

Challenges and Issues Facing the District

No district, of course, is without challenges. The following emerged as common themes:

Student Behavior Issues and Supports
Professional Development Needs
Enrollment / Academic Growth & Achievement
Frequent Leadership Turnover/Changes
Staffing: Recruitment & Retention
Communication

Student behavior challenges were identified by most school staff and many parents as a priority challenge needing leadership attention. School level staff described this as a daily challenge

consuming significant time from classroom teachers and other staff with most also indicating the need for more staff resources to support behavior needs in the school. Concerns were also expressed regarding a perceived lack of accountability for student misconduct, inconsistent behavioral expectations among school staff, and uncertainty regarding staff roles and responsibilities in responding to misconduct. Parents also shared concerns regarding misconduct with most concerns focused at the middle and high school levels and many sharing that vaping and disrespectful behavior toward staff is a current issue. Several staff also noted that the lack of consistency in addressing misconduct contributes to tensions between staff and parents who expect both consistency and fairness in how their students are supported and held accountable.

Individual staff beliefs and opinions regarding behavior management practices were mixed with some expressing the need for greater punitive measures, including exclusion from classrooms, athletic activities, and the school; and others wanting more training and consistent implementation of a schoolwide system of tiered supports and interventions to address student needs. Despite these differences, most staff and several parents feel these issues merit greater leadership attention and planning with all staff involved in decision-making moving forward. Many also expressed a desire for more professional learning focused on best practices related to this challenge. Staff also expressed a desire for more professional development opportunities tied to their individual roles and responsibilities. Attending regional trainings (including ESD offerings), professional conferences, and bringing trainers to the district were ideas shared by staff for consideration.

Some stakeholders are concerned that some students and families living in Taholah choose to attend schools in nearby districts and shared related concerns about school enrollment. While no clear theme was shared regarding why some families make this choice, some shared that a few parents have told them they have concerns regarding academic rigor and achievement and other parents have shared concerns regarding bullying. Others acknowledged that some families may choose this option due to childcare and/or work related logistics.

A majority of stakeholders expressed concern or frustration regarding frequent leadership changes (principals and superintendents) over the past several years and desire more leadership stability and continuity. While a variety of possible reasons for this rate of turnover were shared, there were no patterns identified explaining the departures of past leaders. Instead, there were individual circumstances for each of them that were shared which varied.

Many shared that the ability to attract and retain staff for a variety of positions in Taholah remains a challenge, including these leadership roles. The remote location of the community was most often mentioned as one of the recruiting/retention challenges along with a lack of available housing and commuting costs for staff that live in Aberdeen, Hoquiam, or Ocean Shores. Some also mentioned the need for additional professional development and staff support among working conditions that could help with staff retention.

Internal staff communication at the school was identified as a challenge by some staff wanting more proactive communications regarding upcoming school events, schedule changes, and new initiatives. Some staff noted that the current principal has been impacted by the departure of the former superintendent in December resulting in an increase in leadership responsibilities. She was affirmed for her effort in responding to this challenge with many indicating she is doing her best to manage a very full plate.

Desired Characteristics

Participating stakeholders were asked to name the desired leadership characteristics for the next superintendent of the Taholah School District. The following list of personal characteristics, attributes, skills, and experiences reflects input gathered:

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Superintendent

Taholah School District

Student Centered

Culturally Competent and Aware

Proven Relationship Builder

Collaborative and Inclusive

Effective Communicator

Skilled Problem-Solver

Politically Astute

Systems Thinker and Leader

Visible & Approachable

Humble/Empathetic

Ethical/Professional

Experienced District Leader

Classroom Teaching Experience

Balances Support and Accountability - Students and Staff

Courageous - Ability to make tough decisions

HYA would like to thank all the participants who attended focus groups meetings, individual interviews, or participated in the survey as well as staff who did an exceptional job assisting with logistics during the engagement phase.

Taholah is a special school district and community with a bright future ahead. Thank you for the opportunity to serve!

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. John Bash
Senior Associate