

December, 2024

GRESHAM-BARLOW SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent
Leadership
Profile Report



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PURPOSE

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) during the months of October, November, and December 2024 for the new superintendent of Gresham-Barlow School District (GBSD). The data contained herein were obtained from the input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders, including separate and distinct online surveys administered to all high school students in GBSD. The surveys, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of GBSD and some of the challenges it will face in the coming years. Characteristics were included in the profile if similar comments were from multiple constituent groups.

HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to meet the district's needs. The search team will focus its recruitment on candidates who possess leadership qualities congruent with the profile.

The search team would like to thank all the participants who attended focus group meetings or completed the online surveys and the GBSD staff members who assisted with our meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Mike Richie, HYA Consultant
Brian Ewert, HYA Consultant

DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT

The Gresham-Barlow School District Board of Education is seeking a superintendent beginning on July 1, 2025. The Board of Education expects applicants to be accomplished and energized leaders who understand the unique role and value of the community and school district and who are prepared to engage, collaborate, and inspire teachers, staff, students, parents, alumni and the community to achieve a shared vision of a great school district with great schools.

Gresham-Barlow is a welcoming community of hard-working people where tradition and heritage meet innovation and opportunity in Oregon's fourth largest city and the Portland metro region's second largest city located just minutes from iconic Mount Hood, Multnomah Falls and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, the city of Portland, and Portland International Airport. Gresham-Barlow's location is ideal for families and businesses wanting to start something new and grow.

Gresham-Barlow's diverse population includes longtime residents, young professionals, families, and new immigrant communities. The Gresham-Barlow region has experienced rapid growth over the last 20 years. With that growth, Gresham-Barlow Schools still include a rural, farming community along with a burgeoning urban core. Gresham-Barlow's residents care deeply about their heritage as a homestead and agricultural community, and are committed to building a vibrant

future. Today, Gresham-Barlow is dynamic, innovative and rapidly growing with a mutual desire and drive to thrive. In Gresham-Barlow, we are family.

Visit the Gresham-Barlow School District website for more information:

<https://www.gresham.k12.or.us/>

Gresham-Barlow School District Mission: Inspire and Empower Each Student

Gresham-Barlow School District Vision: Culturally responsive graduates who will thrive in an ever-changing global community.

Gresham-Barlow School District Goals:

- Provide effective, high-quality instruction to each student in our district.
- Provide a physically and emotionally safe and culturally responsive learning environment that gives students and families voice.
- Prudent use of resources that uses an equity lens in decision-making.

District at a Glance:

Elementary Schools: 9
K-8 Schools: 1
Middle Schools: 4
High Schools: 3
Charter Schools: 4
Number of Staff Members: 1,167
District Enrollment: 11,656
2023-24 General Fund Budget:
\$166,438,820

Student Demographics:

White: 50.7%
Hispanic/Latino: 31.7%
Two or more races: 8.4%
Black or African American: 3.8%
Asian or Asian Pacific Islander: 3.2%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 1.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native: 0.8%
English Language Learners: 1,620
Number of Spoken Languages: 91
Predominant Non-English Language: Spanish
Next Most Frequently Occurring Home Languages:
Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, Arabic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The data contained herein was obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with 18 individuals and 22 groups in either interviews or focus group settings. Participants in interviews and focus groups represented a comprehensive network of constituents and partners of the Gresham-Barlow School District. The interviews included senior district administrators and the Board of education; focus groups included staff, parents, students, community/business leaders, elected officials, civic organizations, and district administrators. Focus group participation ranged from 0-40 participants per session. Additional feedback was solicited via email but no stakeholders chose to submit feedback via email. The interviews and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the organization and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years. It should be emphasized that the data is not a scientific sampling, nor does it necessarily represent the majority opinion of each respective group.

Additionally, an online stakeholder survey in three languages was available from November 12, 2024 through December 8, 2024; 422 participants completed the stakeholder survey. High school students were also invited to complete a distinctly unique Google survey specific to each high school which was available from November 12, 2024 through December 8, 2024; 124 high school students completed the Google survey. The high school survey was offered in both English and Spanish. Invitations for participation and information about the surveys were coordinated by GBSD. The stakeholder survey is presented as total responses and also disaggregated by administrative staff, licensed staff, classified staff community members, parents, business/civic leaders. Data collected from the high school student Google survey was gathered separately (by high school). Note: Open-ended responses from both the HYA Stakeholder Survey and the High School Google Survey are not included in this report, but will be provided to the Board of Education in separate documents. In general, the open-ended responses reflect the summaries and data provided within this report.

PROCESS

The structure of the individual meetings and focus groups was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other’s comments. All of those involved in providing input in the selection of the next GBSD Superintendent were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What are the strengths of Gresham-Barlow School District that the next superintendent can build upon?
- What are the challenges facing Gresham-Barlow School District that the next superintendent should be aware of, or you would like to see addressed?
- What characteristics or traits are you looking for in your new superintendent?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with us or that we should know about the Gresham-Barlow School District?

Number of Participants in Interviews and Focus Groups	
Board of Directors	7
District and School Administrators	19
Licensed Teachers and Classified Staff	56
Parents and Community Members	19
Equity Committee (students, staff, teachers, administrators)	22
Students from GHS, SBHS, REY, SWTHS	77
TOTAL	200

It should be noted that participation in the scheduled group sessions and surveys was considered to be low for a district the size of GBSD. The data, therefore, is reported as a summary of participants and is not presented as generalizable across stakeholder populations. It should also be noted, however, that all participants were genuinely engaged, interested in the process, willing to share thoughts and opinions, and were strongly interested in the success of GBSD through the hiring of a new superintendent.

When the data from interviews, focus groups and the surveys were combined, themes emerged. Themes were determined by the number of times an item or issue was mentioned or discussed across groups in both methods of data collection. It should be noted that there was more similarity across group responses than there were differences. This congruence is viewed as a positive characteristic of this search and will bring clarity and focus for the board and the new superintendent.

PROFILE DEVELOPMENT & QUALITATIVE DATA

Perceived Strengths • Perceived Challenges • Desired Characteristics

Strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Based on Interviews)

The Gresham-Barlow School District is recognized for its financial stability, strong community engagement, and commitment to high-quality education. A key strength of the district is its financial health, demonstrated by the successful passage of a ~\$300 million bond in 2016, which enabled the rebuilding and updating of schools. These projects were completed on time and under budget, improving infrastructure and learning environments. Additionally, the district is experiencing stable enrollment, reflecting the community's desire to send their children to Gresham-Barlow schools.

The district benefits from a stable educational environment, marked by low staff turnover and long-tenured leadership. Superintendents and principals tend to remain in their roles longer than state and national averages, ensuring consistency in leadership. This stability fosters a cohesive culture, where staff are deeply invested in the well-being of students. The district's strong relationships within the school system and with the community further contribute to its supportive, collaborative atmosphere.

Gresham-Barlow is also committed to equity and inclusivity, making significant strides in improving relationships with minority students and parents. Initiatives like the Equity Advisory Team and the Dual Language Immersion Program promote a culturally responsive environment. The district supports its employees through competitive salaries, benefits, and a focus on work/life balance, contributing to low turnover and high employee morale. These efforts help ensure that all students and staff feel valued and supported.

Beyond academics, the district offers a well-rounded educational experience through its athletics, extracurricular programs, and strong music and arts offerings. Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, including a specialized CTE Center created through a multi-district partnership, provide students with valuable skills and hands-on learning opportunities. Positive relationships between the administration, employee unions, and staff, bolstered by Interest-Based Bargaining, further support the district's success. With a focus on educational excellence, Gresham-Barlow continues to thrive as a model district in Oregon.

**Challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(Based on Interviews)**

The Gresham-Barlow School District is grappling with multiple challenges that are affecting both its operations and its relationship with the community. Misinformation on social media, which often spreads faster than official communications, has created confusion and mistrust in some cases. A recent security issue at a school has intensified fears around school safety, and political tension, including an urban-rural divide, are further complicating decision-making and community cohesion.

Another challenge is the need for better engagement from both the Gresham and Barlow communities, which are divided by economic realities and demographic differences. The district's increasing diversity and lack of adequate resources has made it difficult to meet the needs of all students, including support systems for the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students. This combined with attendance problems and concerns over academic rigor, are eroding trust with some constituents regarding the district's ability to provide a quality education. These issues are exacerbated by internal instability as the school board prepares to turn over several members in the months ahead while hiring a new superintendent during the same time. The district is also facing external pressures, including competition from neighboring districts, private schools, online schools and the loss of federal funding, which have strained finances.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next GBSD Superintendent as identified by BOARD OF DIRECTORS	
Relationship-Building and Trust	Student-Focused Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent must be a relationship-builder with all stakeholders, fostering trust through transparency, integrity, and ethical behavior. They should actively engage the community, establish patterns of trust, and find common ground among diverse groups. Their approachability, visibility, and ability to connect on a personal level make them a unifying presence in the district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent should prioritize student success, focusing on academic achievement while balancing equity and inclusivity. They must understand the teaching and learning cycle for all learners, including the ability to "move the academic needle." A clear focus on education, rather than divisive issues, ensures alignment with the district's goals of serving all students effectively.
Collaborative and Decisive Leadership	Visibility and Advocacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration is vital, with the superintendent seeking input from stakeholders and working as part of a team. However, they must also demonstrate the decisiveness to make informed decisions after gathering input, ensuring stability and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent should be highly visible within schools and the community, serving as the face of the district. This includes being an active advocate with legislators and representing the district confidently in public forums. They must engage with both

forward progress. A balance between inclusivity and decisiveness is key to navigating complex and diverse opinions.	urban, suburban, and rural stakeholders, demonstrating pride in the district and a commitment to its success.
Integrity and Resilience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrity, honesty, and ethical behavior are fundamental traits for this role. The superintendent must have the resilience to handle controversy, criticism, and complex challenges while maintaining composure and focus. A forward-thinking mindset, coupled with a commitment to continuous improvement, ensures they remain adaptable and innovative while preserving the district's stability. 	

**Strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
DISTRICT and SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**
(Based on Interviews and Focus Group Feedback)

The Gresham-Barlow School District (GBSD) is a vibrant and thriving community known for its strengths in diversity, collaboration, and forward-thinking initiatives. One of its defining characteristics is its cultural diversity, with student enrollment representing a global society. This diversity is embraced through programs like the Dual Language Immersion Program and increased programming for marginalized students, fostering an inclusive environment where all voices are heard. The district prioritizes student and family voices, incorporating them into decision-making processes and emphasizing student-centered policies to meet the unique needs of every learner.

GBSD also excels in providing extensive opportunities for students and families. Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways, dual credit programs, apprenticeships, and advanced placement (AP) offerings equip students with practical skills and college readiness. Innovative programs such as the Center for Advanced Learning and credit recovery programs ensure that students have access to multiple avenues for success. Additionally, the district's investment in a School-Based Health Center, which provides health, dental, and mental health services, demonstrates its commitment to the well-being of its students and community.

Collaboration and leadership are cornerstones of GBSD's success. The district benefits from a highly effective and aligned senior leadership team that works collaboratively with school administrators to address challenges and implement a shared vision for the future. Courageous and honest conversations are encouraged, fostering transparency and continuous improvement. With a fiscally stable budget and well-managed resources, including the successful 2016 bond, GBSD ensures high-quality programming and facilities for its students and staff.

Finally, GBSD's strong community ties and dedication to its staff create a supportive, relational, and inviting work environment. Teachers, staff, and administrators are deeply invested in the district, leading to long tenures and a family-like atmosphere. Programs like the "Grow Your Own Teacher" pipeline and competitive salaries and benefits reflect the district's commitment to attracting and retaining talented professionals. The district's small-town feel, combined with its urban and suburban pride, creates a unique sense of belonging and purpose for all stakeholders.

**Challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
DISTRICT and SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

(Based on Interviews and Focus Group Feedback)

The Gresham-Barlow School District faces significant challenges as it works to serve an increasingly diverse and complex community. One major issue is the need to embrace and adapt to the district's demographic shift, including recruiting and retaining employees of color and providing sufficient resources for marginalized students such as special education students, English Language Learners and "Newcomer" populations. Addressing the educational and social/emotional needs of these students is critical, but a lack of resources and delays in decision-making negatively impact their instructional outcomes. Graduation rates for subpopulations, including ELL and special education students, also need improvement, reflecting systemic gaps in equity and support.

Resource limitations extend beyond specific populations, as GBSD struggles with large class sizes, growing social-emotional and behavioral demands, and insufficient mental health support for students. The district's homelessness rate of 9% further complicates its ability to meet the needs of at-risk families, often requiring reactive rather than proactive measures. Funding challenges compound these issues, with inadequate state funding, unfunded mandates, and the absence of a local general fund levy creating significant budgetary constraints. These financial pressures threaten the district's ability to maintain programs and meet growing demands.

Organizational and systemic challenges also present obstacles to progress. Inconsistent implementation of systems like MTSS and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), as well as fragile alignment across schools, hinder the district's ability to provide cohesive support for students and staff. Leadership development at the principal level is needed to strengthen instructional leadership, while some leaders' resistance to change creates further barriers. Issues with school climate and culture and a lack of adaptive leadership in some schools exacerbate these systemic weaknesses.

Lastly, the district faces some challenges with communication, trust, and transparency. Some administrators express concern about the transparency and timeliness of communication, particularly during periods of change or crisis. Anxiety surrounding the transition to a new superintendent adds to uncertainty, while differences in Board of Education ideology can create additional conflict at times. These factors, combined with ongoing social media pressures and complicated negotiations with teacher unions, contribute to a dysregulated community and a sense of instability within the district. Addressing these challenges will require courageous leadership, a commitment to equity, and effective collaboration across all levels of the district.

**Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next GBSD Superintendent as identified by
DISTRICT and SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

Student-Centered Instructional Leadership	Strong Communication and Relational Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong focus on teaching and learning is essential, with the superintendent acting as an instructional expert who prioritizes student outcomes. They must be committed to equity and ensuring the success of all students, not just some. This includes a deep understanding of preK-12 education and the ability to align district goals with a vision that benefits students and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent must be a clear and accurate communicator who listens deeply, engages authentically, and builds trust with stakeholders. This includes being visible and present in schools and the community, fostering relationships with diverse groups, and articulating decisions with a clear rationale. Adjusting messaging to bring people together and maintaining open, transparent channels of communication are vital.
Strategic and Collaborative Leadership	Integrity and Ethical Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A visionary superintendent who is strategic, intentional, and systems-focused is required. They should believe in distributed leadership, empowering their team while maintaining accountability. The ability to analyze data and use it to drive decision-making, prioritize initiatives, and navigate complex challenges effectively are critical components of this theme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrity, ethics, and a strong moral compass are non-negotiable. The superintendent must make decisions in the best interest of students, even when they are difficult or unpopular. Courage, tempered judgment, and the ability to handle challenges with composure are essential. They must also model empathy and compassion, fostering an inclusive culture where all feel valued and heard.
Community Engagement and Political Acumen	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent must be able to engage with the community meaningfully, serving as the district's face while bridging divides and building partnerships. They need political savvy to navigate complex issues and maintain a balance between the district's needs and external pressures. Living within the community and being accessible and responsive further reinforces their commitment to GBSD's success. 	

**Strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
LICENSED TEACHERS and CLASSIFIED STAFF**
(Based on Focus Group Feedback)

The Gresham-Barlow School District is marked by numerous strengths that showcase its commitment to student success, community engagement, and staff well-being. A defining characteristic is the district's collaborative and student-focused culture. Teachers and staff are described as highly engaged, supportive, and caring, with strong retention among employees. Programs such as the Dual Language Immersion initiative, Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings, and mental health supports provide diverse opportunities and robust support systems for students, reflecting the district's commitment to addressing the varied needs of its learners.

GBSD also takes pride in its diversity and inclusion efforts. The district embraces its multicultural community, celebrating the many languages spoken and fostering an environment that values diverse voices. Initiatives like the "Grow Your Own Program", which supports teacher recruitment and development, and the Affinity group for BIPOC employees exemplify GBSD's dedication to building a culturally responsive and inclusive workplace. These efforts not only strengthen the district but also promote representation and equity among staff and students.

The leadership within GBSD further enhances its strengths. The central office and school leadership teams are described as approachable, collaborative, and deeply connected, fostering a positive and inclusive work culture. With an open-door policy, a willingness to "roll up their sleeves," and a commitment to listening and problem-solving, the district leaders are integral to maintaining a strong, cohesive environment. This leadership style has cultivated trust and a sense of unity across the district, enabling teams to work effectively together toward shared goals.

Finally, GBSD benefits from strong community partnerships and a well-developed infrastructure. Programs like credit recovery and counseling services ensure students have multiple pathways to success, while wellness grants and instructional coaching support staff in their professional and personal development. The district's fiscal responsibility and the active involvement of parent-teacher organizations (PTSO) further enhance its capacity to provide comprehensive educational experiences. Together, these strengths underscore GBSD's dedication to fostering a thriving, inclusive, and connected school community.

**Challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
LICENSED TEACHERS and CLASSIFIED STAFF**
(Based on Focus Group Feedback)

The Gresham-Barlow School District faces several challenges that center on communication, equity, and the need for improved infrastructure to address changing demographics. Communication gaps exist among key stakeholders, including the Board, unions, and administration, leading to an adversarial relationship at times, that hinders collaboration. Proactive communication, particularly with groups critical of the district, and providing clearer, regular updates from the central office are crucial areas for improvement. Building stronger relationships and fostering trust across these groups will create a more cohesive environment to support students and staff.

Equity remains a central focus for the district as it continues to address its increasingly diverse population. Concerns about the lack of diversity among administrators and teaching staff highlight the need to hire and retain more employees of color. Additionally, the district must push harder for equity initiatives, ensure restorative justice practices are uniformly applied, and address gaps in support for LGBTQ+ students. The district's changing demographics require a departure from outdated policies and a more inclusive approach to student achievement and community engagement, ensuring that all voices are heard and respected.

Staffing and workload issues present another significant challenge for GBSD. The district faces a shortage of substitutes which exacerbates existing pressures on staff. Overwhelming workloads and the expectation to take on additional responsibilities without sufficient resources have created strain across the district. Providing more training opportunities for staff, particularly in restorative justice and cultural competency, and addressing these workload challenges are essential steps toward fostering a sustainable work environment.

Finally, academic achievement and student behavior remain critical areas of focus. There is a need for clearer expectations for courses and class structures to improve learning outcomes. Addressing the culture of teachers working in silos and fostering collaboration will also enhance instructional practices. Student behavior issues and the need to hold students and parents accountable require a proactive and unified approach to establish acceptable standards across schools. These challenges, coupled with ongoing budgetary concerns, highlight the need for a clear vision and strategic leadership to support the district's continued progress.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next GBSD Superintendent as identified by LICENSED TEACHERS AND CLASSIFIED STAFF	
Community-Focused and Relational	Equity-Driven and Inclusive Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent must be deeply connected to and in touch with the community, not just as a leader but as an engaged member who belongs and commits to the district. This includes being approachable, visible, and present in schools and community events, demonstrating authenticity and a willingness to listen and understand. Their ability to build trust and relationships, coupled with an open-door policy, ensures inclusivity and connection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A commitment to equity, anti-racism, and cultural competence is essential. The superintendent must celebrate and embrace diversity, advocate for inclusion, and create a culture that empowers all stakeholders. They should possess the courage to stand up for what is right, even when uncomfortable, and promote systemic change that reflects the district's diverse population.
Instructional and Systems Expertise	Ethical and Compassionate Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent must be a strong instructional leader with competence in budgeting, data-driven decision-making, and systems thinking. This includes an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrity, humility, and compassion are central to this role. The superintendent should lead with authenticity and vulnerability, admitting mistakes and

<p>understanding of collective bargaining, rules, laws, and policies. A results-driven mindset ensures a clear vision and focus on continuous improvement in academic outcomes and operational efficiency.</p>	<p>learning from them. Their actions must align with their words, fostering trust and credibility. They should exhibit joy and positivity, instilling hope and pride in the district while remaining grounded and approachable.</p>
<p>Advocacy and Visionary Leadership</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The superintendent must be a courageous advocate for students, staff, and the community. They should possess political savvy and the ability to navigate complex systems to drive meaningful change. A clear, inspiring vision for the district, combined with unwavering commitment and passion, ensures that the superintendent leads for the right reasons, focused on long-term success and stability. 	

**Strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
THE EQUITY COMMITTEE
(Based on Focus Group Feedback)**

The Gresham-Barlow School District has many strengths that reflect its commitment to fostering student success, engaging the community, and promoting inclusivity. A significant highlight is the district’s focus on recognizing and celebrating achievements, from small milestones to large accomplishments. This culture of acknowledgment extends to listening to student and family feedback, demonstrating responsiveness and transparency in decision-making. The district’s proactive efforts in community engagement have yielded impressive results, ensuring that marginalized voices are included and prioritized in shaping the educational experience.

GBSD provides a variety of programs and resources to meet the diverse needs of its students. The district’s career and technical education (CTE) programs are expanding rapidly, with increasing enrollment reflecting their growing popularity. The Dual Language Immersion Program has been a standout success, helping students become bilingual while fostering cultural appreciation. Additionally, alternative education options, such as the REY and Springwater Trail High School and other programs for marginalized students, have proven highly effective, offering tailored support to ensure success. The district’s support of Black Student Union and additional resources for newcomers further underscore its dedication to inclusivity and equity.

A hallmark of GBSD is its focus on accessibility and responsiveness. Teachers, principals, and central office administrators are highly approachable, ensuring students and parents can connect with the support they need. High school counseling services are well-regarded for guiding college-bound students, and wrap-around services, though under-resourced, provide critical support to students in alternative settings. The success of initiatives like the Student Health Center and Mobile Health Unit highlights the district’s commitment to holistic student well-being, offering valuable health resources that extend beyond academics.

Finally, GBSD’s emphasis on creating a positive school culture is evident in the high levels of student engagement and happiness. With a wide array of extracurricular activities and clubs, students are encouraged to pursue their interests, fostering a sense of belonging. The district’s

commitment to building pipelines for future educators, such as the Grow Your Own teacher program, also strengthens community ties, as many graduates return to GBSD as educators. These strengths collectively showcase a district that is deeply invested in its students, staff, and community.

**Challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
THE EQUITY COMMITTEE**

(Based on Focus Group Feedback)

The Gresham-Barlow School District faces several pressing challenges that require thoughtful and proactive solutions to ensure equitable and effective education for all students. One notable area of concern is the need for more advanced and individualized learning opportunities across the district. Advanced classes, particularly in the high schools, are insufficient to meet the needs of high-achieving students. Additionally, the newly adopted curriculum poses equity challenges, as not all students can access its rigorous materials without substantial support, highlighting the need for greater resources to individualize learning.

Issues of inclusivity and school culture also present significant challenges within the district. While Gresham High School (GHS) embraces diversity and cultural differences, Sam Barlow High School is perceived by some as less inclusive, which underscores a need for a more district-wide approach to equity. At GHS, students report a disconnect with administration, including dissatisfaction with how disciplinary issues are handled, such as group punishment practices. Furthermore, a perception of low academic expectations at GHS points to the need for stronger leadership and a unified focus on raising standards across the district.

Behavioral and social-emotional challenges have been exacerbated in the post-COVID world, with dysregulated behavior among students and parents becoming more frequent. Fighting and violence in schools are not always addressed effectively, contributing to a lack of safety and trust among students and staff. Additionally, absenteeism is a growing issue that lacks a systematic approach for resolution, further affecting student engagement and success. These issues are compounded by understaffing, particularly for supporting newcomers, language learners, and students with social, emotional, or behavioral needs.

Finally, structural and systemic issues within GBSD contribute to its challenges. Class sizes are growing, with some high school classes exceeding 40 students, straining teachers' ability to provide individualized attention. The enrollment system is inefficient, adding unnecessary complexity for families. Broader societal pressures, including political tensions and subtle racism within parts of the community, create additional hurdles for the district. Addressing these challenges will require innovative solutions, stronger leadership, and a community-wide effort to prioritize equity, inclusivity, and academic excellence.

**Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next GBSD Superintendent as identified by
THE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Community-Focused and Visible Leadership	Equity-Driven and Inclusive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent must be deeply involved in and visible within the community and schools, fostering trust and a strong connection with all stakeholders. They need to prioritize building relationships, actively engage with families, students, and staff, and maintain an open-door policy. Their leadership should embody servant leadership principles, demonstrating approachability and a commitment to community well-being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong commitment to equity and inclusion for all is essential. The superintendent should advocate for marginalized students, intentionally recruit a diverse staff reflective of the district's demographics, and support systemic changes to address inequities. They must be courageous in standing up for the rights of all students and create an environment that values diversity and inclusion as central to the district's mission.
Student-Centered and Instructional Expertise	Collaborative and Transparent Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placing students at the heart of every decision, the superintendent must listen to students' voices and prioritize their needs, particularly those of marginalized populations. As an instructional leader, they should focus on teaching, learning, and data-driven practices to support academic achievement and holistic development. Their decisions should reflect a commitment to research-based strategies that elevate all learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to listen to feedback and input from all stakeholders before making decisions is crucial. This superintendent should practice distributed leadership, empowering staff and fostering a culture of collaboration. Transparency in communication and decision-making ensures trust and clarity, while proactive problem-solving allows the district to navigate challenges effectively.
Courageous and Decisive Leadership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent must demonstrate courage and resilience, willing to make tough decisions while balancing multiple perspectives. They should hold employees accountable, advocate passionately for public education, and lead with integrity and strength. A strong yet approachable presence, combined with a willingness to embrace complexity and ambiguity, ensures they can effectively address the district's evolving needs. 	

**Strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
PARENTS and COMMUNITY MEMBERS**
(Based on Focus Group Feedback)

The Gresham-Barlow School District (GBSD) has several notable strengths that reflect its commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment for students and families. As an example, Springwater Trail stands out as a school where students are thriving, showcasing the district's ability to provide a conducive learning atmosphere. Additionally, good communication between schools and families ensures that parents are well-informed about their children's education, building trust and fostering a collaborative community spirit.

The district offers a wide variety of programs that cater to diverse student needs. The Sun Program provides valuable after-school opportunities, while the Dual Language Immersion Program has been a positive addition, promoting bilingualism and cultural appreciation. GBSD's Student Health Center is another significant asset, addressing students' health needs and supporting their overall well-being. Moreover, the district's strong alternative programs provide meaningful choices for students who thrive in non-traditional settings, demonstrating a commitment to flexibility and student success.

Cultural promotion and community partnerships are also areas of strength for GBSD. The district actively values and celebrates the diverse cultures represented within its schools, fostering an inclusive atmosphere that honors all students and families. This dedication to diversity is complemented by strong partnerships with local agencies and non-profits, which enhance resources and support available to students and families. Additionally, GBSD has been recognized as an innovation leader in the past, reflecting its ability to implement forward-thinking initiatives that benefit the entire community.

Finally, the district's thoughtful approach to leadership transitions highlights its focus on stability and progress. The current process for hiring a new superintendent is seen as deliberate and inclusive, demonstrating the district's commitment to involving stakeholders in important decisions. Combined with its efforts in special education, where staff do an admirable job supporting learning-disabled children despite limited resources, GBSD continues to prioritize the well-being and success of its students. These strengths position the district as a valuable and resilient educational institution within the community.

**Challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
PARENTS and COMMUNITY MEMBERS**
(Based on Focus Group Feedback)

The Gresham-Barlow School District faces several significant challenges, particularly as it navigates the complexities of supporting a diverse and evolving community. School safety and the management of threats are ongoing concerns that require attention, with a need for improved communication regarding security measures to ensure transparency and build trust. Additionally, many parents feel that the district takes too long to address issues, leading to frustrations and a sense that problems are not being resolved in a timely manner. The lack of response to emails

from some principals and central office administrators exacerbates this perception, leaving families feeling disconnected and unheard.

Another challenge is the district's ability to support non-English-speaking families effectively. Language barriers and cultural differences hinder communication, making it difficult for these families to engage with the schools or assist their children with academic programs. Parents often struggle to navigate the system, leaving students without the necessary support at home. The district must improve resources for multilingual communication, provide more targeted support for non-English-speaking families, and offer cultural competency training to ensure inclusivity and understanding. Additionally, bullying and a lack of accountability for student behavior remain issues, emphasizing the need for consistent enforcement of rules and proactive education on respect and inclusivity.

Mental health concerns among students and teachers also present a substantial challenge. Teachers are overwhelmed with the growing number of students exhibiting social, emotional, and behavioral issues, and there is a need for more "upstream" solutions to address these problems before they escalate in high school. Efforts to integrate outdoor play and project-based learning could provide meaningful opportunities for engagement and emotional well-being. However, the district must balance these initiatives with limited resources and the burden of implementing state-mandated programs without sufficient funding, which places additional strain on staff and infrastructure.

Finally, GBSD must work harder to embrace and celebrate its growing diversity. While the district has made strides in promoting cultural awareness, there is still a gap in recruiting and retaining staff that reflects the student demographics. This issue, coupled with the need to address homelessness and expand concurrent enrollment programs with Mt. Hood Community College and other institutions of higher learning, highlights the importance of long-term planning and community partnerships. Developing a new facilities plan and addressing the possibility of a future bond are also critical to sustaining and enhancing educational opportunities for all students.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next GBSD Superintendent as identified by PARENTS and COMMUNITY MEMBERS	
Culturally Competent and Equity-Driven	Strong and Decisive Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent must understand the district's evolving demographics and advocate for marginalized groups, including newcomers. They should embrace diversity, prioritize equity, and demonstrate cultural competence to ensure all students and families feel valued and supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong leader is essential to address the district's challenges effectively. This includes enforcing rules, taking control of situations, restructuring when necessary, and being ruthlessly honest about the district's needs. The superintendent must be proactive and willing to make changes that align with a clear vision for improvement.

Collaborative and Inclusive Leadership	Effective Communicator and Advocate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent should be an empathetic and collaborative leader, valuing stakeholder input and fostering innovation among teachers and principals. Delegating leadership and empowering others within the system are key to creating a sustainable and dynamic educational environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serving as the district's spokesperson, the superintendent needs to clearly articulate a vision and consistently follow through on commitments. This includes being a truth-teller while maintaining constructive relationships with all stakeholders. Listening to and addressing community concerns is vital for building trust.
Instructionally Focused and Student-Centered	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a background in teaching and administration, the superintendent should focus on foundational areas like literacy in the primary years while fostering a system-wide culture of academic excellence. Their leadership should prioritize students' needs and create a supportive environment for educators to innovate and thrive. 	

**Strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

(Based on Focus Group Feedback)

The Gresham-Barlow School District showcases numerous strengths that highlight its dedication to creating a supportive, inclusive, and future-focused educational environment. Programs like the REY Academy stand out as exemplary for their trauma-informed care, small class sizes, and full-time social work and wraparound services. The program's emphasis on group activities, relationship-building, and restorative practices creates a nurturing atmosphere where students feel valued and understood. By offering multiple ways to earn credits, REY supports diverse pathways to graduation, exemplifying the district's commitment to student success.

Districtwide, Gresham-Barlow excels in recognizing and celebrating student achievements, fostering a culture of acknowledgment for high-achieving, high-growth, and highly involved students. Assemblies celebrating various cultures further underline the district's dedication to inclusivity and diversity. A wealth of clubs and extracurricular activities ensures that all students have opportunities to engage, explore their interests, and build strong friendships and relationships with peers and staff alike. This focus on community and belonging creates a sense of family within the schools.

The district's strong emphasis on college and career readiness is another key strength. With robust CTE pathways, internships, college visitation opportunities, and workforce readiness initiatives, students are well-prepared for their futures. Partnerships with community organizations and nonprofits, along with a solid Newcomers Program at Gresham High School, provide essential resources and support systems that further enrich the educational experience. These initiatives highlight the district's proactive approach to equipping students with the tools they need to thrive in both academic and professional settings.

Additionally, the district's welcoming and responsive culture, including caring teachers and staff who actively listen to and respect students, plays a crucial role in its success. Support for students with 504 plans and IEPs, along with after-school programs and access to resources, ensures that diverse needs are met. The district's openness to student feedback, continuous updates to programs like culinary arts, and strong departmental foundations reflect a dynamic and adaptable approach to education. Overall, Gresham-Barlow's strengths lie in its ability to create a holistic, inclusive, and engaging environment for all students.

**Challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District as identified by
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

(Based on Focus Group Feedback)

The Gresham-Barlow School District faces several challenges that affect the educational environment and student experience. School safety remains a primary concern, with issues such as vaping in bathrooms and overcrowded hallways undermining a sense of security. In some cases, safety protocols are inconsistently followed, and there are calls for the return of School Resource Officers (SROs) to help address safety and security issues. Locked bathrooms due to misconduct like vaping create additional frustrations for students, and concerns about inequitable access to facilities further compound the problem. Transparency and swift communication between administration, staff, and students are areas that need improvement to build trust and ensure safety protocols are effectively implemented.

Another significant challenge is the lack of resources and support for marginalized students, coupled with a need for a more diverse workforce that reflects the student population. Students often feel they lack a trusted adult to confide in, and some express dissatisfaction with relationships between students and teachers or administrators. Incidents of racism among staff and a lack of sensitivity towards certain student groups highlight the need for cultural awareness training and systemic efforts to create a more inclusive environment. Additionally, students feel their voices are not heard or valued, leading to a sense of disconnection from decision-making processes and policies.

Overcrowding and large class sizes further exacerbate the challenges faced by the district. Limited access to certain classes and clubs due to space or communication issues prevents students from fully engaging in their education and extracurricular opportunities. High school students have voiced concerns about early start times, which can negatively impact their academic performance and overall well-being. Additionally, disparities in support and recognition for boys' and girls' sports programs, both in resources and on social media, create a sense of inequity among students.

Finally, there is a perception among some students and staff that central office administrators and school leaders are disconnected from the realities faced by students. Teachers feel hesitant to voice concerns to the superintendent due to fears of not being heard, and students express a desire for administrators to operate on the same level as them rather than asserting power dynamics. Issues such as inconsistent enforcement of rules, lack of follow-through on addressing problems, and poor communication between Gresham and Barlow High Schools reflect a need for stronger leadership and a unified approach. Addressing these challenges requires a commitment

to transparency, equity, and fostering stronger relationships between all stakeholders in the district.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next GBSD Superintendent as identified by HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS	
Student-Centered and Compassionate	Visible and Involved Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent must prioritize the well-being and success of all students, demonstrating genuine empathy and care. They should embrace diversity, focus on building connections with students without being intimidating, and ensure equitable treatment across all schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being consistently present in schools and the community is essential. The superintendent should actively engage with students, staff, and families, earning trust through direct interaction and visibility while fostering a sense of shared purpose.
Action-Oriented and Results-Driven	Culturally Responsive and Inclusive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A superintendent who not only develops plans but follows through with decisive action is crucial. They must be ready to implement new systems, step in when necessary, and ensure accountability across the district while being adaptable and nimble in addressing challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The superintendent should be culturally aware and responsive, embracing diversity and involving all families in the decision-making process. This includes being open-minded, respectful, and committed to fostering an inclusive environment for all students and staff.
Strong Communicator with Integrity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transparency and effective communication are vital. The superintendent must engage stakeholders with clarity, earn trust through integrity, and actively listen to student and staff input. They should foster collaboration and fairness while maintaining a calm and confident demeanor during conflicts. 	

AT A GLANCE
DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEXT GBSD SUPERINTENDENT

- **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
- **DISTRICT AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**
- **LICENSED TEACHERS and CLASSIFIED STAFF**
- **THE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
- **PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS**
- **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Relationship-Building and Trust	Student Focused	Collaborative and Decisive	Visibility and Advocacy	Integrity And Resilience
Student-Centered Instructional Leadership	Communication and Relational Skills	Strategic and Collaborative	Integrity and Ethical	Community Engagement and Political Acumen
Community Focused and Relational	Equity Driven and Inclusive	Instructional and Systems Expertise	Ethical and Compassionate	Advocacy and Visionary
Community Focused and Visible	Equity Driven and Inclusive	Student-Centered and Instructional Expertise	Collaborative and Transparent	Courageous and Decisive
Collaborative and Inclusive Leadership	Effective Communicator and Advocate	Instructionally Focused and Student-Centered	Culturally Competent and Equity Driven	Strong and Decisive Leadership
Strong Communicator with Integrity	Culturally Responsive and Inclusive	Visible and Involved	Student Centered and Compassionate	Action-Oriented and Results Driven

SURVEY DATA

The online stakeholder survey was live from October 4 through October 30, 2024. Invitations for participation and information about the survey were coordinated by GBSD, 422 participants completed the survey. Data is presented as total responses and also disaggregated by administrative staff, licensed staff, classified staff, community members, business/civic leaders, and parent responses. The survey was offered in three languages: English, Spanish, and Russian.

HYA thanks the participants who responded to the survey. Questions were clustered around the following focus areas: Current State of the District, Leadership Profile Attributes, Priorities for the Future, and Open Ended Comments.

When looking at the six disaggregated groups, two conclusions are drawn. First, there is a significant variance in the responses between administrators and the other five stakeholder groups related to the state of the district. Administrators rated the district much higher in all categories than all other stakeholders. This variance is not unusual but can serve as information for future study by the new superintendent and the board.

Second, and on a positive note, there was very little variance by groups when asked about desired leadership characteristics. The groups aligned more closely indicating a desire for more similar characteristics for the new superintendent. This is helpful as the board considers applicants and as the new superintendent accepts a position.

The following sections are results from the full Gresham-Barlow School District Survey for Superintendent Search, also presented to the GBSB Board of Directors.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey results contained in this document are based on HYA's research related to superintendent leadership standards. The survey addresses both district performance and desired characteristics of the superintendent in relation to the following areas:

- Vision and Values (VV)- The leader's ability to provide a clear and compelling vision for the future, align district programs to the broader vision of the district, and uphold high expectations for all stakeholders
- Teaching and Learning (TL)- The leader's ability to guide educational programs, make data-driven decisions, and implement effective instructional change
- Community Engagement (CE)- The leader's ability to be the voice of the district, engage with the community, and involve stakeholders in realizing the district's vision
- Management (M)- The leader's ability to guide operations, manage resources, recruit and retain highly effective personnel, and create an equitable accountability system for all employees

Through the understanding of stakeholder's views regarding the state of the district and the desired profile of the next superintendent, this report will help the district prioritize the desired characteristics of the superintendent in a way that will advance the priorities of the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gresham-Barlow School District Survey for Superintendent Search was completed by 422 stakeholders. The largest stakeholder group surveyed were Parents of Student Attending School. Parents of Student Attending School represented 38.2 percent of all respondents. Almost a third of respondents were Licensed Staff. They made up the second most populous stakeholder group at 30.1 percent of all respondents. The third largest participant group were Classified Staff at 11.6 percent of all respondents.

Regarding the State of the District, the following statements were perceived to be district strengths:

- Technology is integrated into the classroom. (TL)
- Facilities are well maintained. (M)
- The District engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups. (CE)
- District technology infrastructure is sufficient to support use of technology in the classroom. (M)
- The District employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools. (M)

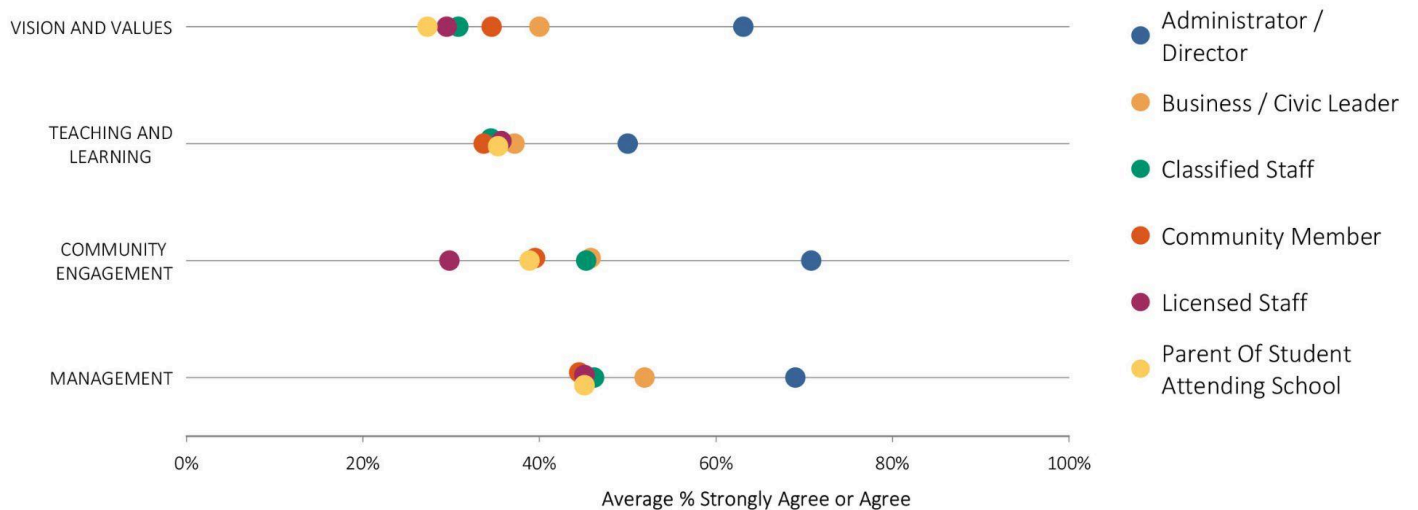
The top-rated leadership profile characteristics constituents desire in a new superintendent are:

- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators (CE)
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel (VV)
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools (M)
- Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life (CE)
- Provide transparent communication (CE)

STATE OF THE DISTRICT SUMMARY

Respondents rated statements related to the state of the district on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported in the appendix.

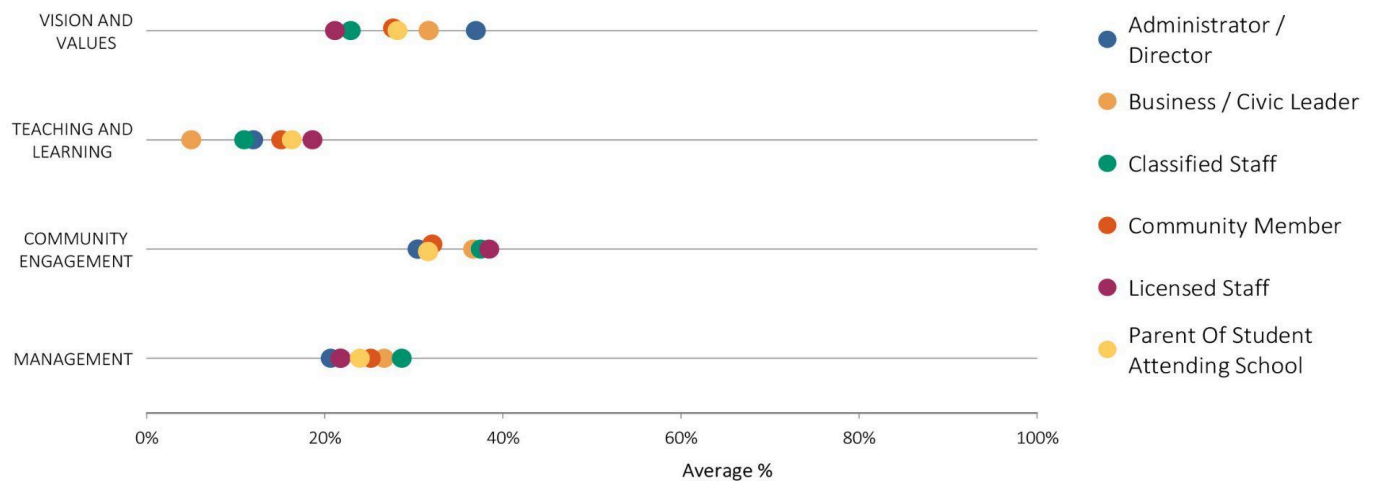
State of the District Results by Constituent Group



LEADERSHIP PROFILE SUMMARY

Respondents were asked to select leadership statements that are most important in selecting a new superintendent. Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported on the next page.

Leadership Profile Results by Constituent Group



LEADERSHIP PROFILE DETAILS (future priorities)

Respondents were asked to select 4 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results by constituent group are presented below. Each constituent group's top 4 most frequently selected statements are depicted by blue cells (reading the chart vertically); consensus is illustrated as multiple constituent groups selected the same statements (reading the chart horizontally).

 Top 4

	All (422)	Administrator / Director (25)	Business / Civic Leader (16)	Classified Staff (49)	Community Member (44)	Licensed Staff (127)	Parent Of Student Attending School (161)
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	56%						
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	46%						
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools	44%						
Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life	37%						
Provide transparent communication	37%						
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	35%						
Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies	32%						
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District	24%						
Be an effective manager of the District's day-to-day operations	21%						
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	20%						
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	15%						
Provide guidance for district-wide curriculum and instruction	9%						

STATE OF THE DISTRICT ITEM ANALYSIS

Percentages of parents, students, administrators, teachers, community members, and other constituents selecting 5 (Strongly Agree) or 4 (Agree) for each item are presented below.

	All (422)	Administrator / Director (25)	Business / Civic Leader (16)	Classified Staff (49)	Community Member (44)	Licensed Staff (127)	Parent Of Student Attending School (161)
OVERALL							
Please rate the overall quality of education in the District.	28%	64%	38%	27%	30%	19%	29%
VISION AND VALUES							
The District provides a clear, compelling shared vision for the future.	36%	60%	50%	33%	34%	37%	32%
The District is heading in the right direction.	27%	68%	44%	24%	27%	18%	25%
The District has high performance standards for all students.	26%	44%	31%	22%	25%	28%	22%
The District makes decisions based on information from data and research.	29%	56%	25%	33%	34%	25%	25%
The District is working to close achievement and opportunity gaps.	38%	80%	50%	35%	43%	36%	31%
TEACHING AND LEARNING							
The District provides a well-rounded educational experience for all students.	26%	52%	25%	20%	34%	20%	27%
Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs.	41%	28%	19%	37%	23%	57%	37%
District schools are safe.	25%	64%	50%	22%	34%	15%	22%
The social and emotional needs of students are being addressed.	28%	36%	31%	27%	23%	27%	29%
Students are on track to be ready for the next grade and ultimately college and career ready.	18%	20%	6%	20%	16%	13%	22%
Technology is integrated into the classroom.	73%	76%	88%	71%	59%	77%	71%
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT							
The District engages the community as a partner to improve the school system.	36%	68%	50%	41%	34%	25%	37%
There is transparent communication from the District.	25%	60%	31%	27%	32%	14%	25%
The District engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups.	52%	76%	56%	61%	45%	46%	52%
MANAGEMENT							
Facilities are well maintained.	56%	80%	75%	45%	52%	45%	64%
The District is fiscally responsible.	35%	76%	69%	39%	30%	28%	30%
The District employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools.	45%	52%	31%	47%	45%	46%	43%
Employees are held accountable to high standards.	40%	44%	19%	43%	30%	51%	34%
District technology infrastructure is sufficient to support use of technology in the classroom.	49%	68%	56%	49%	45%	50%	45%

LEADERSHIP PROFILE ANALYSIS

Respondents were asked to select 4 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results are presented below by constituent group.

	All (422)	Administrator / Director (25)	Business / Civic Leader (16)	Classified Staff (49)	Community Member (44)	Licensed Staff (127)	Parent Of Student Attending School (161)
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	56%	72%	63%	63%	41%	72%	42%
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	46%	64%	63%	47%	52%	33%	50%
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools	44%	20%	38%	51%	39%	48%	45%
Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life	37%	16%	44%	37%	39%	38%	40%
Provide transparent communication	37%	24%	31%	47%	36%	34%	39%
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	35%	32%	13%	24%	36%	50%	28%
Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies	32%	20%	19%	29%	27%	32%	36%
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District	24%	32%	31%	31%	30%	15%	27%
Be an effective manager of the District's day-to-day operations	21%	24%	31%	31%	23%	18%	19%
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	20%	52%	38%	14%	20%	13%	21%
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	15%	4%	6%	14%	9%	11%	24%
Provide guidance for district-wide curriculum and instruction	9%	8%	0%	4%	9%	9%	11%

APPENDIX

GBSD FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The HYA search team completed the following interview and focus group schedule to gather information from stakeholders which then informed this report. Focus group questions are listed on page 4 of this document.

Gresham-Barlow Focus Group and Interview Schedule			
Date	Time	Individual or Group Name	Location
10/8/24	9:00 a.m.	Kris Howatt, Board of Directors, Chair	Virtual
10/17/24	8:00 a.m.	Cathy Keathley, Board of Directors, Vice Chair	Virtual
10/9/24	2:00 p.m.	Dr. Shawn Farrens, Board of Directors	Virtual
10/9/24	11:00 a.m.	David Ligatich, Board of Directors	Virtual
10/14/24	3:00 p.m.	Dr. Mayra Gomez, Board of Directors	Virtual
10/11/24	10:00 a.m.	Blake Peterson, Board of Directors	Virtual
10/9/24	12:00 p.m.	Holly Riegelmann, Board of Directors	Virtual
10/23/24	10:00 a.m.	Sarah Avery, Executive Assistant to the Board of Directors	Virtual
10/24/24	1:00 p.m.	James Hiu, Superintendent	Virtual
10/15/24	8:00 a.m.	John Koch, Chief of Operations	Virtual
10/15/24	4:00 p.m.	Dr. Tracy Klinger, Deputy Superintendent	Virtual
10/15/24	10:00 a.m.	Dr. Angela Freeman, Assistant Superintendent Human Resources	Virtual
10/14/24	2:00 p.m.	Jeff Gibbs, Executive Director of Technology	Virtual
10/17/24	9:00 a.m.	Athena Vadnais, Director of Communications	Virtual
10/11/24	9:00 a.m.	Dennis Clague, Director of Finance	Virtual
10/15/24	5:00 p.m.	Donna Ravenberg, Executive Director of Student Support Services	Virtual
10/15/24	2:00 p.m.	Carla Gay, Executive Director of Innovation and Partnerships	Virtual
10/13/24	6:30 p.m.	Dr. Dawn Joella Jackson, Director of Student Engagement & Inclusion	Virtual
11/14/24	6:00 p.m.	Equity Advisory Committee (parents and students)	Virtual

12/4/24	10:00 a.m.	Equity Advisory Committee (administrators, teachers, classified staff)	DMMS
12/4/24	12:17 p.m.	REY Academy Students	REY Facility
12/4/24	1:30 p.m.	Gresham High School Students	GHS
12/4/24	3:00 p.m.	District Office Staff	District Office
12/4/24	4:30 p.m.	Licensed Staff	District Office
12/4/24	5:45 p.m.	Affinity Group	GHS
12/4/24	7:00 p.m.	Parents and Community Members (English)	GHS
12/4/24	7:00 p.m.	Parents and Community Members (Spanish)	GHS
12/5/25	7:00 a.m.	All District Employees	Virtual
12/5/24	9:00 a.m.	District Office Staff	District Office
12/5/24	11:10 a.m.	Springwater High School Students	SWHS
12/5/24	12:00 p.m.	Business Leaders and Chamber of Commerce	City Hall
12/5/24	12:30 p.m.	Sam Barlow High School Students	SBHS
12/5/24	4:15 p.m.	District and School Administrators	City Hall
12/5/24	4:30 p.m.	Classified Staff	District Office
12/5/24	6:00 p.m.	Licensed Staff	SBHS
12/5/24	6:00 p.m.	Classified Staff	SBHS
12/5/24	7:00 p.m.	Parents and Community Members (English)	SBHS
12/5/24	7:00 p.m.	Parents and Community Members (Spanish)	SBHS
12/6/24	7:00 a.m.	All Stakeholders	Virtual
12/6/24	12:00 p.m.	Business Leaders and Chamber of Commerce	City Hall

BULLETED NOTES FROM ALL GROUPS

The interviews and focus groups of stakeholders generated the following responses. Careful attention has been made to accurately convey the message. The comments listed below emerged from statements made by stakeholders and they are to be considered personal opinions of the individual making the comments regarding the Gresham-Barlow School District.

Board of Directors

What are the strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- 2016 passage of a \$300M bond for school rebuilds and updates; projects were completed on time and under budget
- District is not in declining enrollment; it's actually gained some enrollment
- While expensive, people want to live within the community; parents want their children to attend school in Gresham-Barlow Schools
- Low turnover rate of employees
- Very stable educational system; no major upheaval as in some districts
- Superintendents tend to stay longer than the state and national average
- Principals tend to stay longer than the state and national average
- 2000 Bond helped build a CTE Center; a three district partnership (very successful)
- District has been working hard to improve relationships with minority parents and students (making progress in the area of equity)
- Dual language Instruction programs are successful
- Equity Advisory Teams have been established
- District is financially stable; a solid budget
- In general, BoE has a good relationship/trust with the administration association, classified association, and teacher association
- BoE has worked hard to improve salaries and benefits for all employee groups
- BoE has worked hard to encourage work/life balance for exempt employees
- BoE has a strong contract with the classified employees (Interest Based Bargaining)
- Small town values, people are connected
- Everyone knows everyone
- Staff know kids by name and need
- Athletics and extra-curricular activities are valued within the community
- Dual Immersion Program
- Charter schools are successful (online and Montessori)
- Bargaining is going well this year (it's been challenging in the past)
- Community engagement and involvement
- Great community, they support children
- CTE programs in the high schools and the tri-district CTE program
- Advanced Placement programs
- 2016 \$300M bond
- Much pride in the high schools
- Feels like the district is ready to put volatile differences aside and come together to support all students.
- While racism exists everywhere, it isn't a major issue with the school district
- The district is in good financial shape

- District tries to be in the top third of salaries and benefits with surrounding districts
- Much community pride around the Gresham-Barlow School District
- 99% of the students do the right thing; 1% are incredibly challenging and that's what the community talks about
- Great music and arts programs
- Great athletics and activities for students
- Tight knit community
- Have graduates of distinction
- Generally, the growth in diversity has been positive
- Generally handled the growing pains gracefully
- Highly engaged with the Oregon School Board Association
- Dual Language Immersion Program (K-14 currently but expanding)
- Longevity of families within the community (multi-generational)

What are the challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- Dealing with social media and the speed at which things get to parents that may or may not be accurate
- Fear within the community about a recent gun incident at a high school
- Partisan politics has surfaced within the district
- The communities of Gresham and Barlow need to feel equally engaged in their public school system (and this process)
- One Board director may resign in January (to another elected position)
- Three Board directors may not run again at the end of this term
- Licensed teacher negotiations have been contentious in the past, but have been going well this year, some feel the issue is the association leadership
- School safety (recent gun incident at Gresham HS)
- Transparency in communication from central office
- There is an urban/rural divide; urban flight from Gresham to Barlow
- In the next election cycles, there will be new Board Directors
- There is a political divide
- There is an economic divide (poverty vs affluent)
- District is becoming much more diverse, challenges come with diversity
- West side of district is much more transient
- DEI conversations have become divisive
- Behavior challenges at some schools, some students are dysregulated and out of control
- Dealing with state mandates is a challenge
- Communication
- Transparency
- Fact checking by the general public is rare (social media rules the day)
- More trust needs to be built with the community
- Attendance issues must be addressed
- Feels like the union is manipulating the narrative about school safety
- Union relationship has been quite contentious in the past
- Concerns about academic rigor and what district graduates know and are able to do
- Online schools are drawing many students away from the Gresham-Barlow District

- Repairing public faith in the school district
- Economic crunch of lost Federal dollars
- Fear of change within the community, it's not the community of 20 years ago
- Leadership Team isn't representative of the diversity of the students and families

What characteristics are you looking for in your next superintendent?

- Ability and willingness for broad community engagement
- Good public speaker; good communicator, empathetic communicator
- Must be a relationship builder with all stakeholders
- Must be visible
- Comfortable in the limelight
- Must be a collaborative team member
- Must be a decisive decision maker once all input is received
- Must seek input from stakeholders
- Not a rookie but not at the end of career; must have central office experience
- Must maintain the stability of the district
- Politically neutral
- Student focused educational leader
- Non partisan leader and able to navigate issues with both conservatives and liberals
- More about success for all student vs issues around DEI
- Experienced superintendent
- Similar district experience (rural and urban)
- Good communicator
- People person (good personality and approachable)
- Collaborative
- Personable
- Relationship-builder
- Integrity
- Ethical behavior
- Accountable
- Engaging
- Critical thinker
- Problem solver
- Resilience
- Forward thinking
- Bridge-builder with people and organizations
- Financially wise
- Finds common ground with stakeholders
- Prefer an internal candidate (know the community, know the issues)
- Candidates must know and understand district
- Honest
- Pride in work and school district
- Visible within the community
- Active advocate with legislature
- Personable
- Responsible

- Communicator
- Understands diversity and equity, but also needs to understand the controversy that comes with these topics
- Must be a strong leader
- High Integrity
- Must believe in continuous improvement of the system
- Transparency
- Ability to build trust with all stakeholders; must establish patterns of trust
- Must be the face of the district
- Need stability, not a shake up of the district
- Innovative
- Must be able to move the academic needle
- Must understand the teaching and learning cycle for all learners
- Instructional leader
- Ability to disruptive the narrative about minority students
- Transformational
- Must welcome differing views and opinions
- Must care for the entire community; vision on inclusivity (all means all)
- Must not fear diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Hands-on and action-oriented
- Trust builder
- Must understand every aspect of the district, even while delegating
- Must lead with confidence and strength
- Don't focus on equity to the exclusion of academic achievement
- Resilience

Is there anything else you would like to add or that we should know?

- Unique district
- Significant diverse populations
- Economically diverse (poverty to extreme wealth)
- Some areas of Gresham have higher levels of crime, very diverse, underserved families and students, higher levels of poverty
- Barlow is rural/suburban and affluent

District and School Administrators

What are the strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- Culturally diverse school district
- District provides many opportunities for students and families
- People want to be in GBSD, very relational community
- Fiscally stable school district
- The teaching and learning vision is aligned and strong
- CTE programs
- Apprenticeships
- Increased graduation rates for SPED students
- Big city with a small town feel

- Strong and aligned district leadership team that works well together (highly collaborative and effective)
- Courageous and honest conversations encouraged
- GBSD is a kind place
- Honesty matters
- Heart for kids
- It's managing growing pains
- Generally good relations with Unions
- Teacher salaries/benefits and usually in the top third of surrounding districts
- Hard-working and caring staff
- Teachers, staff, and administrators want to be here
- Forward thinking school district
- Vision for the future
- Ability to foresee challenges and address them
- High quality education
- Work hard to meet the needs of all students, regardless of who they are
- Student voices are heard
- District is flexible and quick to adapt to the changing needs of the community
- Political lobbying has had a positive impact on the legislature
- 2016 Bond was a huge success and managed well
- High level focus on student voice and input
- More voices (including students) at the decision-making table
- Diversity of the students and families
- Dual Language Immersion
- Pipeline for classified employees to become licensed teachers
- System is becoming more aligned: curriculum, teaching practices, data, equity of programming, and educational options
- A new superintendent for Gresham-Barlow is an opportunity for the district.
- CTE and career pathways and options
- Center for Advanced Learning
- Cabinet level is a safe place for fierce conversations about continuous improvement
- District Equity Committee
- Career Exploration
- Dual Credit programs and AP courses
- Center for Advanced Learning
- Family feel within the district
- People grow up in Gresham-Barlow and stay
- People like to work for the school district
- Longevity of teachers within the district
- Grow your own teacher program
- Lots of student input, student voice is important
- Well managed budget
- Tight knit community, a sense of family and belonging
- Long tenure for employees; stability of system (people stay in Gresham-Barlow)
- Caring teachers, staff, and administrators
- Students and families within the community

- Diverse populations with rich culture
- School district enrollment represents a global society
- GBSD is student centered and student focused
- Increasing high quality programming for marginalized students
- School-based Health Center
- Small town feel, people are connected
- System is supportive of students, families, and employees
- Staff is passionate and hardworking
- Systems are becoming more and more aligned, district has a good strategic direction
- MTSS system is functioning well
- Diverse school district, an inclusive district
- Caring and dedicated staff
- Lots of pride within the district
- People work within the district for the right reasons (students)
- Community feel, sense of family
- Employees stay, long tenure
- Caring staff and supportive community
- Consistent and aligned curriculum
- Good work with PLCs going on
- Theater and fine arts program are very good
- Senior leadership team is highly effective and aligned
- School-based Health Center (health, dental, mental health)
- Twilight Credit Recovery Program
- PE and Music at the elementary schools (specials)
- Stable fund balance
- School-based Health Center
- 2016 Bond passage (included HVAC upgrades, security upgrades, tech upgrades, facilities upgrades, athletic field upgrades)
- 1:1 devices for students
- Dual Language Immersion Program
- Pride for the urban, suburban, and rural district that GBSD is
- Students in GBSD are wonderful and brilliant
- GBSD has highly skilled teachers and a wonderfully supportive staff
- New curriculum adoptions and implementation is going well
- Longevity of teachers and administrators
- High level of collaboration
- Concurrent enrollment agreements with higher education
- Automotive program at Gresham HS
- Culinary program at Sam Barlow HS
- Many AP offerings
- After school programs at elementary schools
- Newcomers program
- The arts (art, music, drama, band)
- Strong educational bi-lingual associates

What are the challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- Need to embrace the demographic shift

- Need to staff programs appropriately; lack of resources for marginalized students
- Need to improve graduation rates for all subpopulations of students
- Need to recruit and retain employees of color, including teaching and administration
- 9% homeless
- Large schools and large class sizes
- Need more mental health support at schools
- Transportation system needs to be evaluated
- School safety and making sure the district is doing all it can to maintain safe schools
- Some student violence
- Social, emotional, and behavioral issues and demand of students are increasing
- ongoing, adequate funding from the state - the financial model isn't keeping up with the needs and demands of the students and the community
- Unfunded mandates from the state are a challenge
- Systemic work is still needed at the schools (system is fragile)
- Inconsistent PLC - some are great, others struggle
- More support is needed for at-risk students and families, district is reactive
- Some school leaders push back on change
- More alignment needed between MTSS, data teams, PLCs, etc.
- Leadership development is needed at the principal level (instructional leadership)
- The future of school funding and budgeting
- School climate and culture concerns at Gresham HS
- Diversity of students brings challenges
- There is fear and anxiety of transitioning to a new superintendent (loss of stability)
- District needs adaptive leaders, leaders default to comfort zones
- Dismissive attitudes toward families and students is a challenge
- Leaders must have the courage to make hard decisions and stand by them with strong rationale
- GBSD needs to be purpose and values driven
- The political landscape of the Board can be problematic
- Working with diverse and marginalized populations with limited resources is a huge challenge
- Need more resources for "New-Comer" students and ELL populations, etc.
- Need more resources for social, emotional, and behavioral issues
- Need more funding and resources for the diverse and marginalized populations of students
- No local levy to support the school district's general fund
- Not enough resources to meet the needs of students
- At times, teacher union tactics are challenging to deal with
- Post pandemic recovery has been challenging
- Social, emotional, and behavioral issues are challenging
- Some students feel or are marginalized within the system
- Teacher negotiations tend to be contentious, but this year is better
- The culture/climate and leadership at Gresham HS
- Some in the district don't recognize "privilege"
- Culture and climate at some schools
- Leadership at some schools

- Workload
- Some employees simply have lost the joy of working in public schools
- Communication and transparency
- Student achievement for ELL students and SPED students
- Negotiations can be challenging
- Budgeting process creates anxiety
- Stakeholders seem dysregulated about schools issues at time, and issues escalate quickly
- The debate whether or not to have SROs at the schools
- Communication (who, what, when, how)
- Hard to stay ahead of social media
- Graduation rates and student achievement
- BoE turnover and potential conflict
- Future staffing reductions due to declining enrollment
- Legislation regarding special education laws
- High cost disability reimbursement issues with state
- Unfunded mandates from state
- No local levy
- Trust and transparency with community (and BoE at times)
- A dysregulated community and school district
- Growing diversified population can be a challenge to navigate
- Newcomers students/families that are new to the country and do not speak English
- Need to be SWIFT in making changes that will benefit the Newcomers, delays in decision making negatively impacts the instructional needs of the students
- Some siloed departments can do a better job working and supporting other departments

What characteristics are you looking for in your next superintendent?

- Professionalism
- Must understand the nuances of the GBSD
- Need stability
- Committed
- Instruction focused
- Strong communicator
- Hands-on work horse
- Integrity
- Student-centered
- Strategic and intentional
- Clear communicator
- Visionary
- Instructional leader
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Experienced with central office work
- Accurate messaging
- Positive messaging
- Recognize and deal with the hard conversations

- Ethical
- Visible in community and schools
- Must navigate and lead through challenging and difficult issues and situations
- Must be the face of the district
- Flexible
- Business/finance acumen
- Seek input from appropriate stakeholders, but make decisions as when needed
- Ability to prioritize
- Listen to your team
- Problem solver
- Authentic and engaging
- Articulate clear goals and objectives to the district
- Focused
- Strategic planner
- Ability to engage the community and create partnerships
- Ask questions of department heads
- Believes in distributed leadership
- Must understand Gresham-Barlow (split district)
- Student and family centered
- Must believe in equity
- Must engage stakeholders
- Must hold people accountable
- Must use data and react to data (data-driven)
- Budget and finance acumen
- Must be able to prioritize initiatives
- Learner
- Systems thinker
- Critical thinker and problem solver
- Intelligent
- Bridge-builder within the community
- Believe in a model of Continuous Improvement
- Seeks input from all stakeholders
- Seeks first to understand
- Asks hard questions
- Easy going, fun, friendly
- People skills
- Financial acumen
- Creative and Innovative
- Purpose/values driven
- Clear goals and outcomes
- A leader of preK-12
- Must rebuild trust
- Must build hope for the future
- Must receive stakeholder input
- Decisive decision maker
- Strong communication protocols

- Must build a collective identity for GBSD
- Accessible, available, be human
- Composed
- Thick-skinned
- Highly knowledgeable about GBSD
- Must quickly learn and understand the history of GBSD
- GBSD does not need a disrupter as a leader, they are on the right track with a good vision
- Believes in continuous improvement
- Ability to receive input/feedback and assimilate the information without bias
- Must make hard decisions following input and feedback
- Must understand you can't please everyone all the time
- Strong leader with a backbone
- Must listen to understand
- Must make decisions in the best interest of students in the district
- Focused on teaching and learning, on instructional leaders
- Ability to build rapport with all stakeholders, regardless of political leanings
- Ability to build relationships
- Ability to adjust and nuance messaging to bring disparate groups together
- Understand the strength of the leadership team
- Must attend to all components and departments of the district
- Needs to understand large complex school systems and the problems that emerge
- Leader must be a sophisticated thinker so as to provide order to the system
- Tempered
- Balanced
- Non-reactive and proactive on issues
- Listener of all perspectives
- Seeks input and feedback from all stakeholders
- Clearly communicates decisions with rationale
- Collaborative
- Needs to trust staff
- Needs to listen and trust the expertise of staff
- Must work with the team
- Proactive vs Reactive
- Political acumen
- Financial acumen
- Instructional expertise
- Continuity of leadership
- Must know district
- Compassionate
- Ethical leader
- Distributed leadership
- Focused on all students, not just some students
- Inclusive culture
- Empathy for others
- Strong moral compass

- Must bring people together
- Political savvy
- Strong work ethic
- Willing to be on call 24/7
- Must live within the community
- Prioritize district over politics
- Committed
- Student focused
- Deep, authentic listener
- Empathetic
- Relational
- Visible and present in schools
- Know staff
- Instructional leader
- Courageous
- Communication skills
- Multi-lingual
- Responsive, able to take action

Is there anything else you would like to add or that we should know?

- N/A

Licensed Teachers and Classified Staff

What are the strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- Central office has an open door policy and good at responding to people
- Connected team that cares about one another
- Welcoming
- Strong talented team
- Good leadership team and very humble, always available
- Good retention amongst staff
- Unique community, people come together
- Fiscally responsible
- Ability to talk through problems and work together to find a solution
- Leadership team will roll their sleeves up and dig in
- Proud of the diversity and the many languages spoken across the district
- Student focus
- Collaboration
- Teachers very engaged, supportive and caring
- Value diversity
- Strong PTSO's
- Dual language program, immersion program
- Great alternative options
- Demographics have changed in a positive way, embrace community
- Grow Your Own Program is a success, also the recruitment for Grow Your Own Program

- Great partnerships
- GBSD is a diverse school district, a lot of beautiful cultures
- District listens to diverse voices
- Teacher Grow Your Own Program
- Affinity Group for employees of color
- Instructional coaching
- New Teacher mentor program
- Wellness grant for employees, focused on work/life balance
- CTE programs at the high schools
- Counseling program
- Mental health supports and SEL curriculum
- Credit Recovery programs
- Lots of options for students throughout the district
- Strong infrastructure and supports
- Tight connected district

What are the challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- Communication and relationships amongst some stakeholders
- More proactive communication amongst the groups that tend to be negative towards the district
- Relationship between Board, Unions and Administration needs to improve and become less adversarial, must be able to work together
- More workshops for parents on how to use the apps
- Resources are short
- Stop the policies that would have been acceptable 30 years ago, the district demographics have changed
- Administrators are not diverse
- LGBTQ - concerns, must listen to all voices
- District needs to push harder for equity
- Hold students and parents accountable, teach students what is acceptable
- Need to do better job with more diversity in the high schools, district is setting students up for failure
- Gresham can not be the school that takes on everything and all of the new programs
- Provide more trainings for staff
- Need to hire more staff of color
- Need a unified front for restorative justice across district
- Workload is overwhelming, can't keep piling on
- Former superintendent disrupted the infrastructures and supports that were in place, current superintendent had to put it all back together again
- Budgeting and state funding is and will always be an issue
- Gresham has changed a lot
- Must continue with equity work
- Lack of regular, pertinent information from superintendent/communications office
- Include charter schools in PD
- Retaining teachers of color
- Need block scheduling

- Academic achievement needs to improve
- Need clear expectations for courses and classes
- Culture of teachers working in silos
- Student behavior at some schools is a problem
- There is a sub shortage
- Superintendent and central office administrators need to be in schools more often
- Strong union can be a roadblock at times

What characteristics are you looking for in your next superintendent?

- Hard working
- Dedicated
- In touch with community
- District awareness
- Approachable
- Excellent communicator with translating the jargon, must be able to code switch
- Trustworthy
- Collaborative
- Positive
- Flexibility
- Equity driven and anti-racism
- Instructional leader
- Present
- Business sense
- Understand the collective bargaining process
- Understands rules, laws and policies
- Someone that is hopeful
- Not a stepping stone
- Person of color
- Passionate
- Compassionate
- Active Listener
- Culturally competent
- Vulnerable
- Want to belong to commit and interact with community
- Advocate
- Brave integrity
- Pride in the district
- Humble and remembers everyone
- Inclusive and stand up for what is right
- Comfortable being uncomfortable
- Results driven
- Problem solver
- Committed
- Admit when you are wrong
- Actions not just words
- Focus on inclusion

- Anti-racist
- Does not lead with a discipline mindset, a more open mindset
- Empowers others
- Advocate and unwavering
- Multilingual and cultural
- Present and visible
- Someone that is not going to retire in two years
- Political savvy
- Grounded and approachable
- Not just show up at school and leaves, engaged
- Does not need to be invited to the schools, just shows up
- Advocate the change, celebrate and embrace diversity in all ways
- Understands the budgeting process
- Clear vision
- Leader of leaders
- In it for the right reasons
- Understand the community, be a community member first
- Competent in budget, instruction and data and systems focus
- Integrity
- Joyful
- Accessible, open door policy
- Communicative
- Real, grounded
- Understands the hard work of teaching and learning
- Sense of humor
- Trustworthy
- Relationship builder
- Strong teaching background
- Understands the impact and dysregulated behavior from COVID
- Champion of equity
- Person of color
- Bilingual
- Hire someone with the experience, not someone that just interviews well

Is there anything else you would like to add or that we should know?

- N/A

Equity Advisory Committee

What are the strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- The district recognizes and promotes what is going well in the schools, even the little things are honored and promoted
- District administrators take input and feedback from students and families and take appropriate action on feedback when needed
- The district has worked diligently on community engagement, which has increased dramatically
- The district is engaging students and families that have typically been marginalized
- All voices are acknowledged and heard
- Passage of the bond and new construction has been a huge point of pride in all sectors of the district
- The district is making student voices a priority
- Students within the schools are generally involved, engaged, and happy
- Lots of extracurricular activities and clubs are available to students, and students are allowed to start new clubs as long as they have a faculty sponsor
- CTE programs are growing rapidly and enrollment continues to grow within these programs
- Students and parents have access to teachers, and teacher communication with students and parents is generally good
- Schools have good cultures of learning and engagement
- The board and central office administration are accessible to parents and students as needed (they talk to kids)
- Principals and central office administrators are responsive to parents' needs
- Many community resources are available to families and students, accessible through the school district
- The Community Health Center and Mobile Health Unit are very successful initiatives within the district
- High schools provide quality counseling services for college bound students, good resources for the college bound students
- Good, high quality options and choices for students needing smaller programming
- REY Academy supports many marginalized students, strong alternative programs within the district
- The Dual Language Immersion Program has been a huge success
- Strong Black Student Union at Gresham, very active and engaged in school life
- Graduates from GBSD return to teach within the district after college
- Programming for the "New Comers" is very good, albeit under-resourced
- The "Grow Your Own" teacher program is valuable and effective for recruitment
- Alternative programs are outstanding and enrollment is increasing
- CTE options are good
- While underresourced, wrap-around services for students in alternative settings are very good

What are the challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- The district needs to provide more challenging alternatives for advanced students, more advanced classes are needed at all high schools
- In general, more individualization resources are needed for all students
- Gresham HS embraces and is inclusive of diversity and cultural differences, the perception is that Sam Barlow HS does not actively pursue this type of inclusivity
- There is a perception by many that there are low expectations for student achievement at Gresham HS
- Students at Gresham HS have a general disdain for the administration at the school (not connected, no rapport)
- Gresham HS uses group punishment as opposed to seeking out the individuals responsible and providing consequences (for example: locking the majority of bathrooms due to vaping)
- Fighting and violence at schools isn't always dealt with effectively, it should never be tolerated and consequences should be severe
- There seems to be more dysregulated behavior with students and parents in this post COVID world (poor behavior, disrespect, social/emotional issues, etc.)
- There doesn't seem to be a systematic approach to the teaching of Oregon history using the district adopted curriculum (Tribal History/Shared History)
- It doesn't seem that any administrator is tackling the problem of absenteeism, and it's getting worse
- Not adequately staffed for the challenges schools face: new comers, language learners, special education, social/emotional behavioral issues
- Class size continues to grow (over 40 in some high school classes)
- The enrollment system is messy and inefficient
- The newly adopted curriculum is inequitable and not all students can access the challenging materials without significant support systems
- There are significant dysregulated students and parents throughout the school district (mental health, behavior, social/emotional issues)
- In some sectors of the community, parent demands, parent entitlement, and subtle racism within the community is an issue
- There is fear within the system as to what might come given the state of the nation

What characteristics are you looking for in your next superintendent?

- Communicator
- Encouraging
- Deep understanding of the district and community culture
- Playful, joyful, and in touch with their inner child
- Before making decisions, receive and listen to feedback and input
- Decisive
- Embraces diversity and intentionally supports the marginalized
- Community focused
- Involved and visible in the community and within the schools
- Recruits a diverse staff, staff that matches the demographics of the district
- Collaborative with staff and students
- Listens to students

- Child-centered
- Sees issues as shades of gray, nothing is black and white
- Servant leader
- Integrity
- Strong mind, heart, and will (not soft)
- Believes in equity and inclusion for ALL
- Has strong opinions and shares them, but listens to other opinions
- Family oriented
- Strong heart and loud advocacy for public schools
- Approachable
- Open-door policy
- Proactive vs reactive
- Change agent
- Courage
- Advocate for teachers and students
- Bilingual person of color
- Communicator
- Growth mind-set
- Present, boots on the ground and in schools
- Visible
- Listener
- Transparent in communications
- Brave and thick-skinned
- Student-centered (for all students)
- Teaching/Learning focused (instructional leader)
- Attentive to input and feedback
- Leadership skilled and knowledgeable
- Visionary
- Action-oriented
- Willing to fight for the rights of all students
- Data driven
- Research-based
- Tough decision-maker
- Honest (truth-teller)
- Hold employees accountable
- Prioritize the marginalized students
- Leadership developer
- Distributed leadership style (everyone is a leader)

Is there anything else you would like to add or that we should know?

- Some teachers and staff at GHS graduated from here, went to college, came back, and expect the school should never change, even though the community and demographics have changed. Some refuse to acknowledge that change is needed and the students are not the same as they were 20-25 years ago. GHS needs new teachers who are ready and willing to be inclusive to all students, regardless of who

they are and where they come from. They need training in serving marginalized populations.

- It seems that teachers don't always have adequate resources and training to teach the required courses, this issue needs to be addressed

Parents and Community Members

What are the strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- Students are doing well at Springwaters Trail
- Good communication at the schools
- Good programs after school program (Sun Program)
- School does a good job letting parents know what is going on
- Dual immersion program is a positive
- Student Health Center is a big positive
- Lots of programs in the district
- District promotes a lot of culture
- GBSD has been an innovation leader in the past
- District values students and families (care)
- Special Education (while under-resourced) does a good job with learning disabled children
- GBSD is a good partner with local agencies and non-profits
- Appreciate the thoughtful process in hiring the new superintendent
- Strong alternative programs and choices for students

What are the challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- Heard more negative about the district, we are a new family here
- School safety and threats is a concern
- Lack of information is a problem and difficult for parents that do not speak English
- Lack of support for non-English-speaking people, students are confused by what some of the other students say, cultural differences and different beliefs
- Bullying is an issue, need to do a better job educating right from wrong
- Parents need to be more involved
- Parents are working, maybe more than one job, so it's very hard to get involved but the teachers need the support from the parents
- Hard for the non-English-speaking parents to help kids if they don't understand the programs, parents need more supports from the school
- Takes the district a long time to fix or look into issues
- Students need to be held accountable and follow the rules, no one is enforcing the rules, need to work on following the rules
- Need to accept we have a problem here
- District needs to do what's right with the resources available
- Pursue "upstream" solutions for behavior and mental health issues, by high school it's too late
- Need to get students involved in outdoor opportunities, including more outdoor play
- Need more project-based learning
- Must embrace the growth of diversity

- Must work harder and provide staff that match the student demographics
- Maintain and pursue ongoing relationships with colleges and universities
- Maintain and increase concurrent enrollment programs with Mt. Hood Community College
- Must develop a new, long range facilities plan and address the possibility of a future bond
- Students and families who are homeless (population is growing)
- Principals and central office administrators do not respond to emails
- The community wonders if critical thinking skills are taught at GBSD schools
- Implementing state mandated programs without funding
- Dealing with the unfunded mandates from the legislature
- District must lean in to talk about tough issues related to racism
- Mental health concerns are overwhelming teachers
- Safety and communication related to security issues
- Need more Key Communicator meetings

What characteristics are you looking for in your next superintendent?

- Someone that will try and put into action
- Listen
- Follow through
- Improve school safety
- Needs to ask the stakeholders what they want
- Strong leader
- Enforce the rules
- Take control of what is going on
- Hard worker
- Knowledgeable
- Superintendent needs to know they are walking into a difficult situation
- Will need to restructure
- Willing to make changes
- Communicator
- Spokesperson and face of the district
- Clear vision
- Collaborator
- Delegate leadership throughout the system
- Culturally competent
- Must have a "lived experience" in teaching and administration
- Allow teachers and principals to innovate and be creative
- Focus on literacy in the primary years
- Ruthlessly honest and truth teller
- Constructive and proactive in leadership approach
- Empathy
- Understanding of the nuances of the community
- Understanding of the dramatic changes in demographics
- Someone ready to embrace what GBSD is and fight for DEI issues
- Advocate for Newcomers

Is there anything else you would like to add or that we should know?

- N/A

High School Students

What are the strengths of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- REY Program and the small classes at REY
- REY has a full time social worker and wrap around services
- Teachers care and are understanding
- No judgment from teachers
- REY prides itself in group activities and relationship building
- REY staff is skilled at trauma informed care
- REY offers multiple ways to get credit towards graduation
- Adults at REY communicate openly with students
- Adults at REY treat students with love and respect
- Restorative practices are used at REY
- The district recognizes and celebrates students
- The district allows assemblies that celebrate other cultures
- High achieving students, high growth students, and highly involved students are recognized and honored.
- Many clubs for student engagement and involvement and engagement
- CTE pathways and college prep courses
- Many career related learning experiences
- Good friendships are developed between students
- Good relationships are made with teachers and staff
- Teachers are caring and kind and helpful
- District and schools provide opportunities for workforce readiness
- Opportunities for internships
- Opportunities for college visitations
- Many community partners and non-profits are housed within GHS
- Newcomers program is a positive program for GHS
- College focus, college and career pathways
- School is very involved, like family
- Listens to students
- Good job with 504 plans and IEP's
- Good supports, including after school
- Feel comfortable speaking to teachers
- Caring staff that respect students
- Strong departments
- Easy to create community
- Lots of offerings
- Schools is open to student feedback
- Staff is welcoming
- Good sports program
- Constantly updating what needs to be updated, culinary arts

What are the challenges of the Gresham-Barlow School District?

- School safety is always a concern
- More follow up is needed with restorative practices
- The resources needed to serve the marginalized are unavailable
- Need to hire more diverse employees to reflect the student demographics
- Food Service is bad and unhealthy
- There is fear and mistrust of youth in Gresham
- Students don't have a voice
- Many students don't have a trusted adult
- Some teachers and other employees in the district are racist
- Some students have poor relationships with teachers and administrators
- Some teachers and administrators ignore problems and pretend they don't exist
- Some teachers are simply unhelpful
- Clear and immediate communication with full transparency
- Everyone needs to practice and follow agreed upon safety protocols
- Vaping
- Attendance
- No SROs
- There seems to be a lack of transparency between some staff and students
- Large class sizes
- School safety in some of the buildings
- Lack of sensitivity towards some students in certain schools
- Equal recognition for all sports and programs with the media and highlighting
- Finances
- Hard to get involved in some clubs because they don't know about them, better communication so students are aware what is available
- Transparency and communication between students and administration needs to be improved
- Gresham and Barlow have two different cultures, feel high schools don't get along
- Lots of vaping in the bathrooms
- Some bathrooms or hallways are closed because of problems
- Security is an issue, need to do something about it
- Students feel there is a conflict or clashing between administration at Barlow and Gresham
- Need consequences for stuff
- Central office administrators need to be on same level as students, not a power thing
- Need to take things seriously, like the rules
- Students want SRO's in the buildings
- Some buildings are overcrowded
- Can't get certain classes because they are full
- Better flow of traffic in the hallway
- Talk a lot about an issue and fixing stuff but situations do not get fixed
- Bathrooms are constantly locked, need to fix the problem not just lock the bathrooms
- Boys and girls sports have different levels of support, same on social media
- Boys and girls locker rooms are not equitable

- Teachers have more to say to the superintendent but won't because they feel they will not be heard
- Teachers show favoritism towards some students while ignoring others
- Students feel they do not know what the superintendent does
- High school students feel the start time is too early

What characteristics are you looking for in your next superintendent?

- Visibility in schools
- Passion and drive for diverse students
- Servant leader
- Transparent
- Good communication skills
- Involve all diverse families
- Committed to GBSD
- Integrity
- Open-minded
- Bilingual
- Understanding
- Compassionate
- Ability to teach kids
- Creative thinker
- Kind
- Respectful
- Culturally aware
- Culturally responsive
- Calm and unflappable
- Confident
- Teacher experience
- Principal experience
- Unbiased toward schools, fair treatment for all schools
- Must understand the issues of GBSD
- Attitude of acceptance
- Must embrace the diversity
- Student focused
- Cares about all students
- Action oriented
- Able to adapt and be nimble as a leader
- Kind
- Respectful
- Growth mind-set
- Give 100% effort to GBSD
- Involved in the school
- Someone that will not baby people
- Cares about the well being of the students
- On same level as student, do not talk down to students
- Genuine empathy for students

- Good listener
- Personable and gets to know the staff
- Enforce and take action
- Step in and take action if things are not getting done or corrected
- Open minded, take student suggestions
- Not intimidating
- Can handle conflict
- Experienced
- Cares about students
- Involved
- Have fun
- Has a plan and carries out the plan, takes action
- Committed and wants to help the district
- Must earn the title
- Goal for the district
- Younger person that can relate to students
- Needs to be out and about
- Implement new systems

Is there anything else you would like to add or that we should know?

- N/A

Slavic Family Feedback *(received on 12/9/24)*

HCES (Russia)

1. [REDACTED] likes that the district and the schools host lots of events such as multicultural nights, open houses and other events where there is a lot of information provided for the families. She would like the next superintendent to continue providing the budgets for such events for the families.
2. [REDACTED] would like the safety to be increased in schools. In case of any incident that involves her students, she would like to know about the incident on the same day that happened and documentation sent home. She would like to see investigation of an incident and views of the cameras provided if needed.
3. She would like to see the next superintendent be:
 - Responsible
 - Attentive to details
 - Multitask
 - Friendly/kind
 - Polite

HCES (Ukraine)

1. [REDACTED] has no complaints, she likes the school that her child attends. She also stated that safety is very important and she appreciates that her child is safe.
2. She would like to see more groups/activities available after school for students.
3. She would like to see the next superintendent be:
 - Responsible

- To be have a heart for people/children
- To have determination,courage and be organized
- To have the ability to make the environment better
- To be able to recognize his/her mistakes

HIES and GHS (Moldova)

1. [REDACTED] (GHS student) and [REDACTED] (mom) like that the school is working on safety for students and staff. [REDACTED] also likes that you can make appointments to see your counselor (but the system is not working well).
2. GHS needs more counselors, there are not enough for the amount of students that attend GHS. Parking in GHS is very small and there is no parking for everyone. The bathroom doors do not close all day and you have a feeling like someone is watching you go to the bathroom.
3. We would like to see the next superintendent be:
 - Responsive
 - Kind
 - Fearless
 - Have the ability to listen to students
 - Make reasonable decisions

WOMS and HCES (Ukraine)

1. [REDACTED] has no complaints about anything in either of the schools. After the parent teacher conferences she is satisfied with the school and the teachers that are teaching her children. She stated that every teacher is trying to support the students in any way that they can and she is appreciative.
2. She would like to see after school tutoring available for recent arrivals/newcomer students that are learning English and are falling behind a little because of the language.
3. She would like see the next superintendent be:
 - Responsible
 - Friendly and kind but strict at the same time.
 - Polite

WOMS and EOES (Ukraine)

1. [REDACTED] stated that as a recent immigrant in the country, she has noticed that the schools support immigrants and their children. She also noticed that safety of the children in schools and on the bus is very important and is taken very seriously.
2. She is not sure on how everything works in the district/schools system and therefore has no suggestions.
3. She would like the next superintendent to be:
 - Humane
 - Responsible and competent in his field
 - To have a heart for children/love for children
 - Kindness/Friendliness

EGES and GHS (Ukraine)

1. [REDACTED] has no complaints about the schools or teachers. She commented that the teachers treat students with respect and understand students. She also commented that the kids come home happy and satisfied. Especially the younger child, after the war in Ukraine and just the unknown of moving to a different country has been very hard on her. She had a nervous tick and did not like school. This year, she loves school and it's a tragedy if she has to miss a day. She loves the school and the teacher. She also stated that the kids are happy with the school lunches and always excited to tell mom what they had for lunch.
2. [REDACTED] is worried about the safety in GHS. The unknown has her worried about her child in GHS. She would like to see changes in safety for students and staff.
3. She would like the next superintendent to be:
 - Humane/kind
 - Honest
 - Respectful towards staff and students
 - To be able to understand students

EGES and DMMS (Armenia)

1. [REDACTED] is satisfied with school for both of her students. They have no complaints about the school or teachers.
2. They would like to see more clubs available after school in elementary schools; like soccer, karate and such.
3. They would like the next superintendent to be:
 - Kind but strict

DCD (Ukraine)

1. [REDACTED] likes the friendliness of everyone in the school. Does not know the school system very much so does not have a lot of input.
2. The breaks between classes are short. They also would like to see tutoring available for students that are learning English.
3. She would like to see the next superintendent to be:
 - Kind, but strict at the same time
 - To be wise

NGES and CCMS

1. [REDACTED] stated that she does not know the system well. Her children are happy and that is the most important thing for mom.

HOES

1. Everything is okay in the school. Mom said that they are not familiar with the system.
2. They would like to see after school activities available and tutoring.
3. She would like to see the next superintendent be:
 - Kind
 - Respectful towards students