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LAKE FOREST SCHOOL DISTRICTS 67 AND 115

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

Boards of Education

New Superintendent Profile

**Lake Forest Districts 67 and 115
New Superintendent Profile
March 1, 2011**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lake Forest Elementary District 67 and Lake Forest High School District 115 Boards of Education wished to have a better understanding of the opinions of district stakeholders as they begin the search for a new Superintendent to replace Dr. Harry Griffith, who will be retiring at the conclusion of the 2011-12 school year. The Board requested that *School Exec Connect* consultants, Linda Hanson and David Clough, gather data from members of the district and the communities regarding the greatest strengths and challenges of the districts, the most important priorities for the new superintendent and the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess. The resulting *New Superintendent Profile* presents a brief summary of the responses of the 147 people who attended focus groups or mailed their responses and the 488 who responded to the survey that was available on the Districts' websites. Focus groups were held with high school and elementary school parents, APT groups, foundations, teachers, support staff, administrators and community members. Due to low numbers, the D67 middle and elementary staff were combined into one report, as was the D67 and D115 support staff. There were two community focus groups. Their responses were combined into one report. Information gathered in the combined Boards' focus group provided the template for the online survey questions.

Due to the sampling methodology this report should not be considered to be scientifically accurate. The online survey could be completed only one time per computer. Some respondents may have participated in both a focus group and the online survey. The opinions set forth may not reflect the opinion of the majority of the staff, parents or district residents.

The judgments of what should be included in this report are those of the consultants based upon the frequency of responses heard throughout the data gathering process. Negative comments regarding individuals, if any, were not included. The focus group results are not listed in any order of rank or priority.

Survey Demographics

K-8 Parents (public)	147
High School Parents (public)	110
Parents (private)	3
Community/Business	40
Student	15
High School Staff	62
K-8 Staff	93
Shared Services Staff	7
Administrator	10
Shared Services Administrator	1

The survey analysis near the end of this report will take into account the opinions of the collective groups surveyed.

This report may be used for several purposes. First, after reviewing the input from members of the District and after considering their own input, the Boards should modify and approve the attributes below that will serve as the criteria to be used as candidates are screened and interviewed. Second, the Boards should review this report to become informed about the opinions of the different constituent groups. Third, the consultants recommend that this report be shared with the new superintendent for a better understanding of the Districts and their issues.

Following is the consensus of the attributes, skills and characteristics that the new superintendent should possess. It is assumed that all candidates will be individuals who exhibit good character, can be trusted and act with integrity.

**SCHOOL DISTRICTS 67 and 115
ATTRIBUTES DESIRED IN THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT**

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- **Possesses a strong academic background, is knowledgeable about curriculum, instruction and how students learn and is dedicated to the education of the whole child.**

- **Has financial acumen and understands school district finances.**
- **Is an excellent and effective communicator who listens carefully, writes well and speaks articulately.**
- **Makes effective and firm decisions after gathering appropriate data and input from others.**
- **Is a team builder with high expectations who demands accountability, hires well, delegates effectively, works collaboratively and develops trust.**
- **Is a personable, transparent and approachable leader who develops productive relationships with the School Boards, parents, staff, students and community members.**
- **Develops a spirit of cooperation among the three districts that participate in Shared Services as well as with the area private schools and neighboring school districts.**
- **Is comfortable with himself/herself and has the strength and poise to work effectively within the School Districts' communities.**
- **Is a visible leader who knows the community and appreciates the culture and traditions that exist, yet has a compelling vision for the future that can be strategically implemented.**
- **Is a creative problem solver who is innovative and reaches beyond educational practice in seeking solutions.**

Thank you to those who took the time to respond to the survey or to attend one of the focus groups. Special thanks to the many in the Districts who helped with the organization of this extensive data gathering process. The results of this report will assist the Boards as they enter their search for a new superintendent of schools.

Respectfully submitted,

David Clough and Linda Hanson
School Exec Connect

CONSTITUENT FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

DISTRICT 67 APT (25)

- 1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?**
 - Strong community and parent base
 - Two different districts to oversee
 - Stable and dedicated staff; experienced and motivated staff
 - Few factors interfere with the focus of the job
 - Great kids
 - Community committed to excellence without neuroses of some high achieving districts
 - Excellent facilities
 - 67 Spirit Foundation: raises \$200,000 to \$250,000 for enhancing programs for K-8 students
 - APT, strong groups that identify school programs, volunteers, room parents and other support for students (funded by 67 Spirit Foundation)
 - Shared services
 - District is forward thinking and on the cutting edge of technology and curriculum
 - Administration is stellar; effective
 - The situation isn't broken, doesn't need to be fixed
 - Financial stability with most funds coming from local property base

- 2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?**
 - Committed parents who want answers and action; parents who are sometimes overly involved
 - Need to strike a balance between sharing information and holding needed information to get work done
 - Complexities of running two districts
 - Sometimes comfortable with our success and status quo; don't always have drive to go to the next level
 - Tough economic times
 - Lack of diversity in ethnic groups, socio-economic levels and special needs populations
 - Special education lacks inclusion models
 - New superintendent gives parents opportunities to push their agenda
 - Comparisons of new superintendent to current superintendent, a long term successful superintendent

- 3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.**

- Communicate the districts' priorities and set reasonable expectations for achieving them; Take the time to say "here's why" on issues that need clarification
- Continue to partner with parents; educate parents as to what is the school responsibility and what is the parent/community responsibility
- Build a fan club! Meet people, walk the hallways, be visible to everyone from kids to community members
- Focus on kids' social/emotional wellness; continue the community effort around this topic

4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honesty and ethical behavior.

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Builds and retains strong teams
- Can stand his/her ground in the face of competing agendas and aggressive personalities
- Has an excellent financial understanding
- Is professional in appearance, communications, and interactions with others
- Is steady and committed to longevity; understands these are destination districts
- Works well and is comfortable with a smart, educated business and parent community
- Is a charismatic person who engages easily with all levels of the school community from kids to business presidents
- Is comfortable and savvy working with and in a high flying community
- Has humility and is not afraid to ask for help; is open to feedback
- Is creative and resourceful; can problem solve in out-of-the-box ways
- Is committed to the whole child including the arts, academics, physical and special needs of children: this is the schools' mission

DISTRICT 115 APT (24)

1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?

- Parental Involvement - the administration has created opportunities for involvement
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Up to date curriculum and best practices
- Vision - including the school district as a whole
- High performing students
- Shared Services - has helped financial accountability yet maintained uniqueness
- The district appreciates and supports the APT

2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?

- Limited finances
- Teacher salaries are #1 - lost some flexibility financially
- There is a community feeling of highly paid staff
- Lots of very strong and opinionated stakeholder groups exist in the community
- Strong administrative team - needs to be managed
- Shared Services can be a challenge
- Top heavy administration in the district offices
- Awareness and knowledge of the other feeder schools

3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.

- Academic support systems
- College counseling
- Understanding the fiscal situation
- Parental and student involvement in policy and curriculum development

4. Describe the most important characteristics/skill the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honesty and ethical behavior.

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Listens
- Communicates
- Understands finance - can project down the road
- Is politically astute
- Maintains the culture
- Is a skilled and savvy leader
- Manages in a friendly and approachable way - open minded
- Is a big picture person
- Is aware of district demographics
- Can take ideas
- Is a strong public speaker
- Can work with surrounding districts
- Can coach those around him/her
- Includes the kids
- Can make decisions
- Is diplomatic
- is well educated
- is empathetic

1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?

- Parental involvement
- High expectations - accountability expected
- High achieving students
- Excellent curriculum meets the needs of special ed. and gifted
- A strong sense of community
- People are willing to step-up and support things
- Strong Foundations result in resources available to teachers
- The prestige of the community
- Strong business support
- Amount spent per pupil
- Very established community - not transient

2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?

- "Very" involved parents.
- There are some strong loyalties to the outgoing superintendent
- Understanding the Shared Services concept
- Need to understand that District 67 and District 115 are separate entities - e.g. the District 67 Foundation serves only D 67
- The transitions between districts can be difficult

3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus on in the first year.

- Teacher contracts
- Budget issues
- Getting the pulse of the parent community
- Ongoing challenge of the three districts and Shared Services
- The curriculum needs to be even more consistent
- The transition between the elementary and the middle school
- Emotional wellness - the bullying issue needs to be addressed

- 4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honest and ethical behavior.**

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Is financially astute
- Is open and approachable
- Delegates effectively
- Listens well
- Is visible
- Hires well
- Is powerful but not power hungry
- Understands and has experience working with social and emotional issues

District 115 Foundation (9)

- 1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?**

- Highly competitive
- Wealthy community
- Involved parents
- The Shared Services approach
- Excellent teachers
- Great kids
- Facilities are in good shape
- Highly educated parents
- Lots of business and corporate support
- Lots of partnerships
- A positive time in the district - lots of stability
- Good relationships between staff and administration
- Staff and parents are open to change
- Open communication

2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?

- Parents can be overly involved
- The complexity of the Shared Services agreement
- Finances
- An increase in struggling families in the community
- The North Chicago situation - possible closure and transfers
- The lack of interaction with the private schools
- The strong personalities in the community
- A strongly traditional community

3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.

- Building and monitoring the relationships
- Keeping the school system competitive
- Listening - lots of it - communication will be critical
- Learn before making changes
- Technology needs integration across campuses
- The relationship with the teachers - needs teacher "buy-in"
- Visibility - will be a challenge to keep same visibility as the current superintendent

4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honesty and ethical behavior.

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Has the ability to forge and build relationships
- Is strong and assured. Has presence. Knows what to say and when to say it.
- Instills confidence in others
- Is a good public speaker
- Is financially savvy
- Is creative
- Delegates with skill - yet is an educational leader
- Truly loves being around kids
- Is invested in the community
- Is not threatened
- Is visible
- Has superintendent experience

District 67 Parents (6)

- 1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?**
 - Teachers are excellent; responsive to parents; open to feedback
 - There is a commitment to teaching the whole child
 - High standards and high expectations on the part of all
 - Innovation is embraced; administrators are innovative
 - Kids are well prepared and get into good colleges
 - There is an opportunity to find ways to teach in more depth and have less coverage
 - The community is wonderful; close to Chicago; has the lake
 - High level of parental involvement
 - This is the ground floor for 21st Century skills – could be exciting
- 2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?**
 - Pressure on the North Shore to succeed is intense; high burnout
 - The curriculum concentrates on high test scores, not love of learning; too much emphasis on tests
 - Parents can be demanding
 - The District is not always amenable to change
- 3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.**
 - Understanding the budget; financial picture
 - Learning the politics and understanding where the real authority lies in decision-making
 - Getting to know the quality of the teaching staff in a hands-on way
 - Successfully negotiate teacher contracts that take a careful look at all provisions
- 4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honesty and ethical behavior.**

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Is personable and interested in all aspects of the District.
- Is accountable to the parents.
- Is innovative, reaching out beyond education to find new ideas and best practices.

District 115 Parents (5)

1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?

- The students in this community are wonderful
- There is an opportunity to make a mark, especially in the area of global learning
- There are many development opportunities here
- The community is caring and works well together
- The resources are plentiful to support important changes

2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?

- The town can be stuck in tradition and satisfied with the status quo; the challenge is to move the district forward in needed ways while working within this environment
- We need to move from a traditional school model to an multi-dimensional school district that is steeped in information technology, focused on global learning, and uses best practice instructional methods i.e. project based learning
- The community is comfortable teaching to the test; we are missing the potential of our children by not using instructional methods that teach deep understanding rather than coverage; teaching to the test actually lowers the bar and does not promote higher levels of learning

3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.

- Assess the community and how good and needed changes can best be made
- Find ways to unleash the amazing potential in this community
- Work for real transparency that promotes a "we" and a partnership throughout the community

4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honesty and ethical behavior.

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Is knowledgeable about best practices, global learning, instructional technology and can bring these ideas to the district
- Appreciates the traditional, but has the ability to innovate and move the district forward without creating chaos
- Is savvy and can work with multiple constituencies
- Can admit when wrong and accept responsibility for mistakes
- Values transparency in decision-making

District 115 and 67 Community (19)

1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this district?

- Why wouldn't you want to come here?
- High performing District
- Stellar fine arts and sports
- Not so reliant on state funding
- Lots of good administrators
- High value on quality education
- Great material to build on; the K-12 experience is terrific
- The community. There are great people; numerous executives and businessmen and women.
- Lake Forest schools are in a 'good situation'. There are amazing facilities, excellent teachers and wonderful parents.
- The small size of the schools is a virtue. Teachers are able to engage students; students are able to participate in multiple events, activities. (a football player can also be a violinist)
- The full experience, whole-child approach to learning
- Kids are happy here
- Location: Lake Forest is unique as a community in character and location
- This District is poised and ready to really launch into a new level of success in every way- it's a great opportunity for a new leader
- Building renovations and buildings over all are a terrific asset
- Strong and cohesive Boards of Education
- The level of care the teachers extend to our kids is extraordinary-especially at the high school level
- The teachers are dedicated, talented and here all the time

2. List your District's greatest challenges/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?

- There is a significant group of people, a vocal minority, that has been excluded by the current administration. They need to be honored and brought into active involvement.
- Very traditional culture - people who have lived here a long time
- Very traditional curriculum
- Things are nice on the outside - but not always on the inside. Need to look beyond the surface
- The community perception - lots of administrators
- Some financial challenges
- The Shared Services can be a sticking point
- There is a lack of transparency
- The Costco fiasco
- The superintendent's salary and retirement pension have divided some
- We are doing well, but we could be getting better results
- More academic challenge is needed at every level; students could be more successful.

- Middle school needs to challenge students more and motivate students to accept greater challenges
- Not enough students are taking the most challenging courses
- We need to focus more on the experience of school and make sure students are actively engaged and transformed by their years in school (not just memorizing facts and figures)
- We need to work out a plan for the financial challenges coming ahead; cost reductions need to happen over the next several years and we will need someone to guide us through tough decisions while maintaining a focus on the right priorities

3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.

- The need to manage and corral spending; protect resources in these challenging financial times.
- The lack of rigor at the middle school
- Look at the curriculum across the grades
- Immerse themselves in the District - be visible and meet with all groups
- Being transparent
- Pull together a representative group from the community and create a 3-5 year plan.
- Create clear goals and share them with the community and let them know how to measure success. Let them/teach them how to evaluate the success of the district; let us evaluate whether or not we're getting our money's worth. Many people feel like they're not getting their money's worth. We don't mind paying as much as we do for education but we'd like to be confident that we're getting our money's worth.
- Be open/seek alternative points of view.
- Review current practices related to "QUEST" and other ability grouping programs. This seems to be an outdated practice.
- Make resources more transparent. Parents shouldn't have to dig to get basic information and access to services, resources and programs for kids.
- The Advisory Program could be better and needs to be reviewed.
- Create a plan to target cost reductions; create a 3-5 year financial plan.
- Be familiar with The Race to No Where and its implications in this district
- Create greater emphasis on the 'whole child'
- Review money spent on tracking and testing and make sure we are getting the biggest bang for our buck
- Develop a 3-5 year outcomes assessment program

4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honest and ethical behavior.

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Is a really strong educator who can set the tone
- Truly involves the parents
- Is a well rounded administrator who is an educational leader
- Sometimes can jump channels in who they hear from
- Develops a spirit of cooperation amongst the three districts
- Is a good listener
- Is experienced
- Has the ability to evaluate programs and people
- Can look past what money can buy to challenge and inspire
- Loves to learn and loves to see kids learn
- Can dig in when needed
- Is passionate about kids
- Has an educational vision
- Is cutting edge but also possessing wisdom
- Is an external candidate; we need a fresh start
- Cares about all levels of students and parents (not just the most powerful or useful to the District)
- Does not focus on broad generalities, but rather has specific understandings of events and priorities
- Does their homework; wants the challenges inherent in this community
- Is experienced and energetic, full of life; with the “best years of their career to offer the District and not just the last years of their career”
- Cares about the community and education and should want everyone to be involved and not exclude anyone
- Is a true educator who pays attention to curriculum and what kids are truly doing in classrooms.
- Must be willing to address substandard leaders
- Must have good management skills
- Must have a motivating personality; the kind of leader people want to work for
- Empowers others; able to get others to care more about what they do and get the best work out of them
- Is stern but fair
- Creates a learning community for parents
- Respects the need for parents to be more involved and to teach other parents
- Is a good budget manager
- Has the courage to make difficult decisions and do ‘the right thing’ regardless of consequences
- Is transparent about decisions made and communicating them; and encourages the rest of leadership team to be transparent
- Motivates teachers to do what’s best for kids
- Advocates for students

- Can come in and lead now; who does not need to be coached
- Will listen to and learn to understand the community
- Values all of our kids; Quest; Special Education
- Has the wisdom to know what is educationally sound vs. a passing fad
- Will invite participation from the community and develop a plan. What are we doing? What are the measures? Give us a plan.
- Has experience in teacher negotiations
- Is up to date on instructional technology

District 67 Teachers (12)

1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?

- Excellent and collaborative staff
- We care about the students
- Nationally acclaimed for student achievement
- Harry has set the bar quite high
- The community supports education
- Involved parents with high expectations
- Wonderful resources
- Strong emphasis on professional development
- Allows creativity and academic freedom

2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?

- Some tough negotiations are ahead
- Things have become more top down
- There is a lack of a district-wide vision
- At times we lack clarity - trying to be everything to everyone
- Finances are becoming more limited
- It will be concerning to see cutbacks in staff and services
- Opinions are not always valued due to demanding parents
- The shared services and the dual school boards will be a challenge
- Some believe the high school is the main focus of the superintendent
- The salary differential between D. 67 & D. 115
- The mission of the high school and the elementary seem very different
- There is sometimes a lack of coordination between the elementary and the high school (e.g. fine arts)
- Some confusion as to whether Deer Path is a junior high or a middle school
- Parents can want to get involved too soon - want everything solved right now

3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.

- Develop strong communication especially between D.67 and the high school

- Help us to truly get to know the new superintendent - to feel his/her presence
- Dealing with the salary differential between the two districts
- Focus - decide what we can do - we can't do it all
- Need to understand the culture that is here without becoming a part of the culture
- Be visible and develop strong relationships
- Develop trust with all stakeholders
- Research unification of D. 67 & 115

4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honesty and ethical behavior.

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Can communicate with and manage district parents
- Is humble and takes the time to listen
- Is able to deal with the pressures of the job and the community
- Is open minded
- Develops trust
- Keeps the emphasis on the classroom, even with declining resources
- Tells parents, community and staff the same thing
- Takes time to learn the value of what goes on here - not just make immediate change
- Shows support for all of the school's programs
- Will fight for us
- Has had experience as a teacher
- Is child centered
- Will be here long term
- Is mature and experienced
- Accepts diversity
- Is a problem solver

District 115 Teachers (6)

1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?

- The staff is excellent, well educated and loyal
- Excellent students
- A one school district, therefore, the policies and procedures are consistently applied
- People truly care about the kids here
- High expectations
- Parents are highly involved
- The administration has our back in terms of intellectual freedom
- There is no culture of fear here
- A collegial culture
- Teachers feel valued by the administration
- Lots of history in this place
- The administration is not legalistic
- The creative side is valued

2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?

- The very high expectations of the community
- Sometimes parents are overly involved
- Many parents are the top person at their work so they are used to skipping steps - will go right to the superintendent with a problem
- All changes here have to feel like they are blending in
- Previously - 13 years ago - was lots of enmity between the staff and superintendent. Today is totally different. Don't want to go back there
- Can feel the difference between east side, west side, Lake Bluff

3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.

- Listen
- Don't make promises
- Meet every person in the school
- Live up to the level of expectation that has been set
- The new person will be severely scrutinized by everyone - need to be prepared
- Especially listen to the high school principals - you can learn a lot

- 4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honest and ethical behavior.**

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Can effectively communicate with the community
- Is someone who will be on our side
- Leads not manages
- Lets you do your job
- Has a positive attitude
- Has political moxie
- Is vision oriented
- Is an ambassador of the school to the community
- Has financial acumen
- Puts people first
- Knows everyone by their first name
- Can be the anchor during times of change
- Is an entrepreneurial leader

District 67 & 115 Support Staff (6)

- 1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?**

- Excellent academic reputation
- Strong financial resources in the community
- The staff is excellent - people excel in the jobs they do
- The district has had good financial management
- Generally, the communication is good
- The college acceptance rate is near 100%

- 2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?**

- The economy
- Determining how to cut costs without affecting kids
- Support staff does not believe that there is good communication with them - e.g. no information on compensation until you see a raise or no raise on your paycheck
- The lack of parity between the D.67 and 115 support staff. D. 67 is unionized and received a 5% increase while the high school received 0%
- No structured evaluation

- Things in the community are changing - more students on free and reduced price lunch than before
- Non-resident students attempting to attend LFHS
- Finances are going to be more of a challenge

3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.

- Seeing that everyone is represented and that all receive adequate communication
- Needs to be more of a focus on support staff and communicating with them regarding salary and benefits
- Don't make unnecessary changes - don't fix what isn't broken
- Sit down and listen to all of the stakeholders

4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honesty and ethical behavior.

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Can say no when needed - has some backbone
- Can shine the light on others rather than just on themselves
- Has good financial sense
- Has a sense of humor
- Is a good listener
- Is visible and is present at many school events
- Participates in the community
- Is consistent in their behavior and actions

District 67 and District Level Administrators (10)

1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to this District?

- There is a rich history of high student performance with a national reputation, and not just in academic areas
- This is a caring district no matter where you are in the hierarchy
- Recent renovations to the high school facilities are wonderful
- There is a sense of community here; a family feeling in the District
- Administrators are innovative and always looking for new ideas and better processes
- Careful thinking supports change
- Parent involvement is high; parents are smart, educated and interested in their schools
- The community is financially supportive and gives generously as witnessed through Spirit of 67
- Parents and staff members never leave the community or they move back for the schools

- Not hyper focused on testing; interested in multiple ways to look at student success
- The Caucus system is sound
- There is financial stability

2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?

- Parental involvement while a plus, can be demanding, vocal
- Sustaining and moving forward in the Shared Services structure
- Financial challenges of the times
- Easy to maintain the status quo; need more emphasis on 21st Century skills
- Person will need to manage two different boards
- NSSSED (North Shore Special Education District) has a challenging fee structure and we may be looking at providing our own service

3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.

- Establish relationships throughout the District
- Engage in successful negotiations
- Continue to lead the forward momentum

4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honesty and ethical behavior.

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Trusts staff and does not micro-manage them
- Can see the big picture as well as the small details
- Is visible, interested in what is going on in all areas of the District
- Challenges staff to be great
- Is collaborative and listens to others, but stands behind decisions and takes ownership once they have been made
- Is honest in telling people where they stand

District 115 Administrators (16)

1. List your District's greatest strengths and attributes. Why would a new superintendent want to come to the District?

- Strong academics and supportive parents
- Strong staff and administration
- Available resources
- History of success
- Have maintained academic freedom - teachers are encouraged to inspire students

- Students enjoy lots of freedoms
- The facility is excellent
- Interactions are set-up to allow individualization
- The need programs are in place - AP, ACT, RTI - not a lot that needs to be done
- Staff enjoys the trust of the principals and the superintendent
- What's best for kids is what drives things
- Large degree of collegiality, concern and understanding for one another

2. List your District's greatest challenges and/or barriers to success. What should a new superintendent know before he or she accepts this responsibility?

- We are in a good place right now - the challenge will be to make it better
- Finances are tight - it will be a problem to come into the community and say that we need more
- There is a need for a technology plan. There have been many improvements but technology has been on the back-burner
- The unique responsibility of being the superintendent of two different districts
- The parents are strong and involved - at times that can be a challenge
- In the past we have had some blurred lines between the superintendent and the principal - we need to see these roles stay clearly defined

3. List the most important areas for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first year.

- Getting to know the community is vital
- Being visible
- Strong public relations - involvement with Rotary, churches, the city, etc.
- Maintain the ties between the schools and the city
- Understand the two school boards
- Guiding the Boards to keep a productive focus
- Getting to know the feeder districts and private schools

4. Describe the most important characteristics/skills the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful, assuming honesty and ethical behavior.

The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Listens and learns the culture before making changes
- Is flexible and not rigid
- Can maintain strong communications
- Can understand the politics of the community - is politically savvy
- Has experience with both elementary and secondary schools
- Can deal with all kinds of people - even the prickly ones
- Has a passion for this job
- Truly puts students first
- Wants to develop the talents of the people who are here

- Is not a one man or one woman show. Use the talents of the staff and community
- Has a sense of humor and can laugh at herself or himself
- Can deal with the challenging parents

DISTRICT 67 & 115 CONSTITUENT SURVEY

The information reported here is the collective responses of all groups who participated in the survey. Again, a reminder that this was not a scientific survey and the responses collected may not reflect the thinking of constituents in Districts 67 & 115. The results below are rank order by the comparative strength of responses on the survey. The response percentages indicate those who rated this item on the scale of importance as either a 7-8-9-10.

1. Please indicate to what degree you believe each of the following statements is a SRENGTH of the school districts.

- Enthusiastic community that values education (90.1)
- Talented and dedicated teachers committed to student success (84.3)
- Good financial resources (80.6)
- High expectations of sophisticated and supportive parents (80.5)
- Excellent state of the art facilities (79.7)
- Students well prepared for the next level of their education (77.7)
- Strong up to date technology for student learning opportunities (75.8)
- A clear focus on student achievement (74.2)
- An articulated, quality k-12 curriculum (68.7)
- A forward looking vision (66.1)
- A commitment to educating the whole child (64.9)
- A positive approach to problem solving (59.0)
- Opportunity to work with people who encourage innovation and creativity (57.4)
- Unique configuration of two districts that share services and resources (56.7)
- Partnership with civic and governmental groups (54.1)
- Stakeholders opinions are welcomed in the Districts' decision making process (45.2)

2. Please indicate to what degree you believe each of the following statements is a CHALLENGE for the districts.

- Parents sometime advocate for their own children rather than for the good of all (70.3)
- Educating the whole child balanced with educating for high test scores (66.0)
- The need to move from "very good" to "great" (59.3)
- Maintaining focus on student's social/emotional wellness (58.5)
- Lack of diversity (58.4)
- Communication and transparency with stakeholders (57.4)
- Retain and attract quality staff (55.3)
- Tax caps restrict income for future budgets (54.9)
- Teaching 21st century skills (communication and collaboration; creativity and innovation; critical thinking and problem solving; and information, media and technology) with the curriculum (53.9)
- Keeping up with technology (53.9)
- Majority (80%) of District residents do not have children in school (45.2)
- Meeting the requirements of No Child Left Behind (21.9)

3. Please select the top THREE areas where you think the new superintendent should focus in the first two years.

- Communicating a clear agenda for parents, staff and the community (52.1)
- Recruiting and retaining top quality administrators and staff (46.7)
- Infusing 21st century skills into the standard curriculum (41.7)
- Developing an efficient management structure for delivering k-12 curriculum among Districts 65, 67 and 115 (39.8)
- Developing a shared vision among all stakeholders (33.6)
- Creating an air of transparency (31.7)
- Learning the culture of the Districts (27.6)
- Learning about and solidifying the current Shared Services structure (16.0)
- Building partnerships with civic and governmental entities (4.6)

4. Please choose the top FIVE attributes that you believe are most important for a person to be successful as the superintendent of the Districts 67 and 115. The new superintendent should be a person who:

- Is knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction with a deep understanding of how students learn (62.2)
- Has an inspiring vision for the future of education and can practically implement this vision through a long range plan (61.0)
- Has excellent communication skills: speaks and writes articulately and listens carefully to others (58.5)
- Is a team-builder who motivates and brings out the best in others (54.3)

- Is creative in problem solving and collaboratively uses others' thinking and input for decision-making (52.5)
- Has financial acumen and understands the business side of the Districts' management (44.6)
- Is a strong decision-maker who uses data and information and includes all voices in the process (42.6)
- Has warm people skills; is easy to talk to and is approachable (33.5)
- Is politically astute and can interact with different stakeholders about multiple agendas (26.4)
- Has the ability to understand and develop meaningful community partnerships (17.8)
- Is visible throughout the community; is well known and active with local officials and civic groups (10.7)
- Has an executive presence that exudes confidence (5.4)