

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROFILE

Lebanon City School District

Lebanon, Ohio

February 25, 2021



Prepared for the Board of Education



By
K-12 Business Consulting, Inc.
Dennis A. Leone, Ed.D.
Christopher S. Mohr, MBA

Lebanon City School District **Superintendent Search Profile Report**

February 25, 2021

This report presents the summary of seven (7) stakeholder focus group sessions that were conducted by K-12 Business Consulting, Inc. (K-12) through virtual Zoom Meeting forums in the district on February 18, 2021, and from 181 written Superintendent Search Profile Criteria Questionnaires that were received between February 5, 2021 and February 20, 2021, from various stakeholders. Once the Board of Education selected K-12 to conduct the superintendent search, the Search Profile Criteria Questionnaire was created in order to solicit input from various stakeholders in the community. The Board and administration reached out to a broad list of individuals for participation. In addition, a general community-wide invitation was generated to electronically meet with K-12 search consultants Christopher Mohr and Dennis Leone in order to discuss the characteristics in greater depth. Any stakeholder who had a desire to express an opinion was welcome to submit a search profile and personally talk with K-12 at the open community-wide virtual forums that were held. The information obtained through these sources, and summarized herein, should be used to assist the Board in identifying characteristics requested of superintendent candidates.

The Search Profile Questionnaire was made available to the district staff, identified stakeholders, plus all individuals who participated in the virtual focus group sessions. In addition to 181 internal and external stakeholders who returned written search profiles, there were 108 citizens, district staff members, and high school students who personally participated in the seven (7) focus group sessions that were facilitated by K-12 through virtual forums February 18. The results of the submitted search questionnaires are included in this report.

In accumulating the data used in this report, K-12 sought opinions, recommendations and general comments with respect to preferred candidate qualifications, characteristics, traits, and personal demeanor, as well as district strengths, challenges, issues and concerns which may have a bearing on the future leadership strengths for the next superintendent. At the request of the Board, K-12 sought the views of a broad range of individuals represented in the district to assist in the search process. It was determined that K-12 would report the findings to the Board without revealing the identity of any citizen, staff member, or student who provided information, thus equipping the Board with unbiased data to use as it proceeded to define the search profile for the next superintendent.

The Search Profile Questionnaire was used to provide a framework for reporting the information compiled by K-12. Broad themes were highlighted in each question area into six (6) response groups (school board members, administrators, teachers, support staff members, parents/community members, and high school students). Under each question in the report, the response group's common themes were identified. The first category entitled as "Consistent" summarizes comments which were frequently heard from all or nearly all of the response groups. Comments heard less frequently or only heard in a specific response group are listed under that response group. The responses noted as "Consistent" for any of the response groups are shown with the highest frequency first then descending to less frequently heard. It is important to note that the data compilation is not a scientific sampling, nor should it necessarily be viewed as representing a majority opinion of those interviewed in the response group.

K-12 would like to commend the Board of Education for its efforts to include many stakeholders of the school district in the development of the superintendent search profile. Many survey respondents and focus group forum participants expressed positive feelings about being involved in this process and the opportunity

to help shape the Lebanon City School District. We would also like to thank Treasurer Eric Sotzing for the professional manner in which all arrangements were made, including the dissemination of invitations and search profiles, as well as scheduling the virtual focus group sessions that made this profile possible.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

Question #1: What do you consider to be the two or three most significant strengths of the district?

CONSISTENT THEMES

- A strong community that has a good working relationship with the school district and has supported the school district and its students in many ways.
- Hard-working, dedicated employees who care about their students and their families, and support programs that address student diversity and equity.
- Effective, respectful working relations among district employees to properly address issues and challenges.
- Quality school facilities that district voters have supported with a backdrop of proper fiscal responsibility.
- The district's in-person Covid pandemic response has been exemplary and a model for districts to follow.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

- Community that supports and cares about the schools, facilitated by excellent, transparent communications from the district to parents and the community.
- Quality education from dedicated teachers who genuinely care about their students, families, and the community.
- Strong history of good fiscal management that produces one of the lowest per pupil costs in Ohio.
- With voter support, the district has been able to provide significant building repairs, additions, and upgrades so students and staff will have clean, safe facilities they deserve.
- Exceptional work, which has served as a state model, to provide in-person learning during the pandemic.

ADMINISTRATORS

- Dedicated, passionate, and caring staff that engages in the community and stays in the district long term.
- Commitment to develop relationships to address diversity and equity issues, while maintaining and enhancing quality, and student-centered academic offerings.
- Pride for the district from community and parents.
- A community that supports the district staff and students.
- Cohesive administrative team that works together to solve issues and improve education for students.
- Good working relationship with employee unions and open communication between administration and staff.
- Solid working relationship with community and staff to develop the in-person pandemic learning.

TEACHERS

- Strong, supportive community (with a small-town feel) that facilitates positive interactions and working relationships with families in a timely, consistent manner.

- Hard-working teachers who genuinely care about children and engage in effective internal and external communications.
- A commitment by all staff to work together to foster student-centered values and address individual student mental health and family needs.
- Quality professional development and training have benefited staff and students alike.
- High academic standards coupled with a commitment to engage in sound fiscal management.
- Freedom and administratively supported flexibility to develop new programs that are student-centered.

SUPPORT STAFF

- Amazing, dedicated staff that is willing to go above and beyond to support students in every way possible.
- Community support and a commitment to enhance a strong school-community relationship.
- Solid educational opportunities for all students, facilitated by teachers and staff who are committed to providing quality student-centered educational programs.
- Support for students with special needs in the form of therapists, materials, support staff, etc.
- Pandemic in-person instruction and support has been top quality.

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

- Excellent teachers, engaged parents, and strong community-school relations.
- Connectivity between the community and the school district. Strong community support.
- Real world preparation and a strong life skills curriculum, addressing equity and diversity.
- Covid-19 pandemic response has been superior to what other school districts have done.
- High school course offerings are strong, supported by improved technology.
- Solid extra-curricular activities supported by strong booster groups.
- Safe and quality school facilities along with strong fiscal management.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Community support of the schools.
- Personable, approachable staff members.
- Good coaches who are accessible and willing to assist students.
- Teachers who are effective helping students become good people
- Teachers who help student transition from high school to adulthood.
- The Covid pandemic challenges were handled well. It was appreciated that decisions were driven by facts which translated into students following safety guidelines which they saw staff members were also following.

IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING DISTRICT

Question #2: What do you consider to be the two or three most important issues facing the district?

CONSISTENT THEMES

- Future funding concerns, the impact on school programs, and the need to pass both a renewal levy and a new levy.
- Communicating the financial needs to voters.
- Comprehensively addressing the district's needs surrounding cultural diversity, equity training, student mental and the needs of families.
- Properly adjusting to future Covid pandemic issues and how the district will address the impact on student curricular and programmatic needs. This effort also must address the additional challenges of increasing special needs students and those in poverty.
- Specifically determining what the future potential enrollment increases may be as the result of new housing developments in the district.
- Initiating a transparent plan with specific goals to improve the diversity of the district's staff.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

- Future funding realities and the need to pass both renewal and new levies, coupled with pending growth.
- While the district has made progress to address cultural diversity and equity, more work is needed.
- Need to improve the lack of diversity of district staff.
- Need to continue to improve the district's curriculum so it will address the future needs of students.
- Managing funding as student population begins to increase due to new housing developments.
- Need to educate students and uphold the values of the community.

ADMINISTRATORS

- Future finances and having the dollars to support the special programs that the district has.
- Concern over reducing costs in the future and how such will adversely impact programs.
- Adequate resources to handle the potential growth in student population.
- Having more diversity with the staff.
- Outdoor athletic facilities are in dire need of repair.
- Having enough support staff to address that large number students on IEPs.

TEACHERS

- Future funding concerns, for both the renewal levy in May and a future new levy.
- Lack of diversity with the district staff.
- Large class sizes and properly addressing equity training, mental health, and the diversity issues facing the students and staff of the district.
- Some high school courses are restricting the enrollment of students wanting courses in music and the arts.
- Making all students feel challenged in the future considering Covid pandemic procedures.
- Increasing concerns surrounding the need to properly serve students with mental health and the effects of poverty on their needs.

SUPPORT STAFF

- Future funding issues facing the district, and dealing with future student growth, especially pre-school.
- The need to effectively communicate with voters about the total financial needs the district has.
- Future issues of families struggling due to the Covid pandemic.
- Supporting students who have fallen behind during the Covid pandemic.
- Continued diversity training.
- Staff morale.

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

- Address future funding problems and finding other funding sources.
- Properly educating voters pertaining to the total needs for a new levy.
- Addressing the expanding diversity issues and mental health needs of Lebanon students.
- Additional future growth in the district and its impact on student enrollment.
- Equally funding all extra-curricular programs.
- Lack of diversity among staff.
- Large class sizes throughout the district.
- Shortage of subs, keeping quality teachers, and paying them enough so they will stay.
- Supporting non-average students better with gifted programs.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

- More courses (like health care and life skills) are needed to get students ready for life and the real world.
- ACT preparation classes are needed.
- The high school needs better connectivity with colleges.
- Some students need more help to fill out college paperwork.
- Reinstating academic cuts that were instituted in years past.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW SUPERINTENDENT

Question #3: Please tell us your two or three characteristics that you think the Board should look for in a new Superintendent.

CONSISTENT THEMES

- One who is an effective, honest, quality communicator, a proven collaborator, and is a person who values developing meaningful partnerships between the community and the school district.
- An approachable, open-minded administrator who will be both visible and vested in the community and the school district.
- Demonstrated ability as a student-focused leader who will be committed to listening and supporting staff, parents, and the community.
- Able to effectively establish and maintain interpersonal relationships with community stakeholders.
- One who will advocate for collaboratively developing a fresh, new vision for the district.
- One who will continue to foster support and enhancement of the district's current in-person Covid pandemic response as well as the district's initiatives to address diversity and equity issues.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

- An approachable and proven quality communicator with strong interpersonal skills.
- One who can work closely with staff, parents, and stakeholders in a respectful and cooperative way.
- One who will become vested in the community, community events, after-school activities of the students.
- An experienced problem solver who possesses views that are in touch with the pulse of the community.
- One who will be visible in the schools and at school activities and shows that he/she is able to trust district administrators to do their job.
- Ability to advance the district through involvement with local and state influencers, as well as through the development of partnerships in the community.
- One who has strong verbal and written communications skills and is able to effectively use all forms of communications including phone calls, emails, and social media.

ADMINISTRATORS

- One who will be accessible, visible, collaborative, and vested in the community and the district.
- Able to establish and maintain relationships and partnerships with community stakeholders.
- A critical thinker and problem solver who values working together and not micro-managing others.
- Able to connect with staff and is interested in others individually while always being student-focused and sensitive to current efforts to address diversity and equity issues.
- A positive, forward-thinker who will listen to the ideas of others in a meaningful and thoughtful way.
- Has the capacity to empower others to bring new ideas to the table for consideration, but also is an administrator who is willing and able to make hard, visionary decisions and stand by them.
- One who has a variety of teaching and administrative experience and is able to "get the big picture."
- One who can balance operational management with leadership that provides constructive feedback and clearly shared goals.

TEACHERS

- One with integrity who is an open minded, transparent, honest, excellent communicator.
- A personable individual who will always be approachable and visible in the schools and the community.
- One who will be Lebanon strong and vested in the community, focusing on developing relationships.
- One with demonstrated leadership skills who genuinely listens to others and values collaboration.
- Capacity to balance the needs of students and the community with the needs of hard-working teachers who are in the trenches.
- One who will advocate for the district to have a future vision that is not just to “maintain what we have.”
- An administrator who puts students first and who possesses a commitment to equity and diversity.
- One who can seek non-traditional ways to fund programs as well as effectively lobby for and gain support for appropriate funding of our schools from voters.

SUPPORT STAFF

- A proven communicator who is personable, visible, flexible, and approachable.
- One who will have a priority to build trust and become involved in the community.
- Will foster transparent, positive relationships with staff and gain respect from others.
- One who is willing to try new ideas, shows open mindedness as well as a strong decision-making ability.
- Able to build relationships and collaborate with key players to balance the needs of our district.
- One who will have a great community presence and an ability to inspire staff.
- Willing to provide a long-term commitment to the school district and the community.
- Able to effectively continue the district’s Covid pandemic in-person response.
- Able to show commitment for inclusion of all individuals despite disability, race, or gender.
- Someone who will lead by example and truly listen to the concerns of others.

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

- Approachable, transparent, and effective communicator who will communicate effectively with citizens, staff, parents and students.
- One who will be committed to be an active part of the community and who will interact with stakeholders to develop partnerships.
- One who is strongly committed to putting students first and promoting a positive school climate.
- Ability to effectively communicate funding needs to voters and seek funding from other sources.
- Able to think out-of-the-box and provide new, fresh perspectives to make new families feel welcome.
- One who has levy experience.
- A person who will support all extra-curricular programs and not just football and athletics.
- One with Covid response planning experience.
- One who can uphold everyone’s rights and encourages inclusion for all, not just for some.
- One who will be a public figure, visible in the schools, and engaged with community organizations.
- Demonstrated success and experience as an administrator, with a history of supporting staff.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

- One who is an experienced administrator and able to offer the school district real world perspectives.
- One who is committed to be more involved and visible in the schools.
- A person who will be a part of the community and learn what is best for the school district.

SUPERINTENDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY RANKING

1 = MOST IMPORTANT TO **10 = LEAST IMPORTANT**

CRITERIA	BOE	ADMIN	TEACHERS	SUPPORT STAFF	COMMUNITY & PARENTS
Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, students and parents	5(tie)	2 (tie)	1	1	1
Effective at creating and a vision for the district	5 (tie)	4	4	3	2
Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum	10	10	9	10	9
Effective with both written and verbal communication	7	5	5	6	6
Successful experience as a superintendent	4	7	10	9	10
Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations	8	8	7	7 (tie)	7
Fiscal management expertise	9	9	8	7 (tie)	8
Effective organizational and management skills	3	6	6	4	5
Personal involvement and interest in the community	2	2 (tie)	3	5	4
A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills	1	1	2	2	3

RANKING OF TOP AND BOTTOM FIVE (5) IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS ALL GROUPS

1-5 MOST IMPORTANT TO 6-10 LEAST IMPORTANT

RANK TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS

- 1 A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills.
- 2 Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, parents, and students.
- 3 Personal involvement and interest in the community.
- 4 Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district.
- 5 Effective organizational and management skills.

RANK BOTTOM 5 CHARACTERISTICS

- 6 Effective with both written and verbal communications.
- 7 Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations.
- 8 Successful experience as a superintendent.
- 9 Fiscal management expertise.
- 10 Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum.

SUMMARY

The information gathered through surveys and virtual focus group sessions bear strong similarity across all groups with respect to the Lebanon City School District's strengths, issues and challenges facing the district, as well as the characteristics desired in the next superintendent.

The consistent themes expressed by groups and individuals about the Lebanon City School District's *greatest strengths* include: (A) A strong community that has a good working relationship with the school district and has supported the school district and its students in many ways; (B) Hard-working, dedicated employees who care about their students and their families, and support programs that address student diversity and equity; (C) Effective, respectful working relations among district employees to properly address issues and challenges; (D) Quality school facilities that district voters have supported with a backdrop of proper fiscal responsibility by the Board and administration; and (E) The district's in-person Covid pandemic response has been exemplary and a model for other school districts to follow.

The top *concerns and challenges* facing the Board of Education and the new superintendent in the future – all of which appeared on surveys received and were expressed during the seven (7) virtual focus group sessions – include the following: (A) Future funding concerns, the impact on school programs, and the need to pass both a renewal levy and a new levy, after the financial needs are convincingly communicated to voters; (B) Comprehensively addressing the district's needs surrounding cultural diversity, equity training, student mental health and the needs of families; (C) Properly adjusting to future Covid pandemic issues and how the district will address the impact on student curricular and programmatic needs.....this effort also must address the additional challenges of increasing special needs students in the district; (D) Initiating a transparent plan with specific goals to improve the diversity of the district's staff; and (E) Specifically determining what the future potential enrollment increases may be as the result of new housing in the district.

It quite often is difficult to capture all the characteristics that respondents were looking for in a new superintendent. It is certain that no one person could possibly embody all that was mentioned as desired attributes for the new superintendent. The clear majority of survey respondents and focus group session participants expressed the need for the new superintendent to be a person who has the following

characteristics: (A) One who is an effective, honest, quality communicator, a proven collaborator, and is a person who values developing meaningful partnerships between the community and the school district; (B) An approachable, open-minded administrator who will be visible and vested in the community and school district; (C) Demonstrated ability as a student-focused leader who will be committed to listening and supporting staff, parents, and the community; (D) Able to effectively establish and maintain interpersonal relationships with community stakeholders; (E) One who will advocate for collaboratively developing a fresh, new vision for the district; and (F) One who will continue to foster support and enhancement of the district's current Covid in-person pandemic response as well as the district's initiatives to address diversity and equity issues.

The consistent themes summarized above were either shared with K-12 during the virtual focus group sessions or submitted in writing on the surveys that were returned to K-12. The themes also closely matched the top five (5) desired superintendent characteristics of the new superintendent – in the eyes of the sub-groups that responded to Question #4 in the survey. (See top of page 9 above). It deserves noting that the superintendent characteristic described as “a leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills” was a desired characteristic ranked high by all of the sub-groups.

Five years ago, K-12 informed that Board that a great deal of concern existed within the school district about the downside to the district having student expenditures that rank among the lowest 5% statewide. This concern still exists today. While this distinction certainly demonstrates that the district has cut costs and has been fiscally responsible, the end result is that neighboring school districts are, indeed, continue to offer things that Lebanon used to offer to its student population, and these neighboring school districts also are able to offer higher wages to teachers. This reality is a fact the new superintendent may need to address.

The new superintendent should be visibly active in the school buildings and in the community. He/she must serve as a role model personally and professionally to staff, students, and parents. He/she must be someone who is sincere, approachable, and collaborative, and able to demonstrate trustworthiness and integrity. The new superintendent needs to value and enhance the district's significant in-person progress during the Covid pandemic, and its efforts to address the lack of diversity in the staff plus equity issues and mental health realities affecting the student population and their families.

We believe that the right candidate for superintendent will recognize that: (1) The Lebanon City School District is a close-knit community that is full of pride about the school district; (2) Parents, the community, and business professionals genuinely care about the school district and are willing to be involved; and (3) the district has well-established community values. This position will be of interest to the right superintendent candidates. We believe we will find the right potential candidates who have the attributes outlined herein, possess the skills and energy needed to address current and future issues expressed by survey respondents, and who will be happy to lead the district and the community into the future.

Respectfully submitted:

K-12 Business Consulting, Inc.