

Community Conversation Minutes
September 18, 2019
7:00 p.m.
Middle/High School Commons

Board Members Present: Jack Lothian, David Ripple, Dianna Woss, Kristi Granberg and Karolyn Nelson

Administrators Present: Ms. Ali Bond

Staff/Parent/Community Members: Approximately 20 people in attendance

Jack Lothian started the Community Conversation around 7:00 p.m. The following are the table notes taken from each table:

Jack Lothian's Table:

- 1) Experience as an administrator is important, but so is classroom experience
 - a) They should know both sides of school
 - b) Not crucial if the candidate is a great fit
 - 1) Must do great vetting of potential hires
 - c) Longevity is important - don't want turnover
 - 1) Keep the warmth/feel of our school
 - 2) Bring the fun
- 2) Skills
 - a) Be able to communicate with everyone
 - b) Curriculum development
 - 1) Don't change what's working
 - c) Have a good presence
 - 1) Fun to be around for the kids
 - 2) Approachable for adults
 - d) Know some school finance
 - e) Be trustworthy
 - 1) Teachers know they will be treated as professionals
- 3) Character traits
 - a) Personable
 - 1) Have charisma
 - 2) Be approachable
 - b) Experience
 - 1) High school experience (classroom)
 - c) Community building
- 4) Interview team
 - a) Teachers
 - 1) Reps from each school
 - 2) Experienced teachers/staff
 - 3) Shouldn't have the principals (candidates) involved in choices
 - b) Parents

- 1) More than one
- c) Community member
 - 1) No connection to a student or staff
- d) High school students
 - 1) Does it become awkward?
 - 2) Maybe only have seniors on panel
- 5) Other
 - a) Social/emotional needs should be addressed
 - 1) More demands - takes away other options
 - b) Teacher turnover has risen in the last couple of years
 - 1) About $\frac{1}{3}$ of staff left/retired
 - 2) Need teacher retention
 - c) Make school fun
 - d) Project based learning
 - e) Too much testing
 - 1) Do we really need 3 MAPS tests each year?
 - f) Make sure focus is on academics, not athletics
 - 1) Continue the balance we currently have
 - g) More electives
 - 1) How can we improve/increase
 - h) Small community feel
 - 1) Someone warm
 - 2) Have to build that community (doesn't just happen)
 - 3) Must believe in this community
 - i) Need to find a balance of tech vs. traditional
 - 1) Students still need tactile learning (textbooks)
 - j) Teach life/study skills
 - 1) Job applications
 - 2) Taking notes applications

Dianna Woss's Table:

1. Experience importance and types
Not essential. Is important especially in a K-12 district. Don't want someone looking to step stone to advancement but seeking longevity.
2. Skills
Experience in k-12 district. Some administrative experience. Good PR. Community involvement so known outside the school. Visibility in community. Leadership and organizational skills. Sense of humor. Personable. Good communication skills. An active listener. Trust worthy. Problem solver. Pragmatic. Passion for life and education.
3. Personality traits
Approachable. Open minded, sense of humor, outgoing, good communicator and listener, Team player. Ethical. Integrity. Values fairness. Hands on. Seeks feedback and others opinions.
4. Stakeholders and interview
Teachers. Parents. Community and district residents. Student.

5. Important that new DA will live in district or nearby. Supportive of teachers and staff. Values longevity. Open to trying some alternative education forms like the Danish schools. Support nature as a classroom. Consider life skills and nature awareness important. How to handle stress. Prefer not from within the current staff and need new energy. Focus on rigor of academics especially math and science. Clone Dr. Anderson.
6. Serve in interview process volunteers
Karin Barbi, Kendra Janski, Ami Wasiski, Mary Sorenson, Meg Sorenson

Dave Ripple's Table:

Much of the sentiment expressed at my table mirrored the survey analysis. I had two senior staff members and a building principal present. Later we were joined by a younger staff member, another administrator and a parent with their high school student. The consensus was that a new DA should have many of the personal attributes often attributed to Dr. Anderson. Self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses was discussed, and how important it is to have good people in place around one's self as DA.

One observation was that a DA should have a very positive attitude and give off an aura of confidence that is calming and steadying. (Again, this is a quality attributed to Dr. Anderson.)

Visibility within the community and especially in both schools is very important for a new DA. There was a question about whether the Board could require a DA to live within the District.

The view was expressed at my table that the Board will need a vision for the District that would dictate the level of experience required in a new DA. Experience would be somewhat to very important, but experience as a District Administrator was not necessarily critical. Experience at the District level was important but could be in a role other than DA in a larger district, for example. Comments at my table indicated the most important quality would be that a new DA should be comfortable wearing "a lot more hats" in a small district than might be expected in a larger district, and should be a good fit in the Williams Bay culture in particular.

Background in School Finance was not the most important quality, but there was some concern expressed about talk of big-ticket budget items looming on the horizon that a new DA will likely have to deal with; i.e., parking lots, science wing and school expansion plans, any additional maintenance on middle/high school in the future.

Interview process and timeline were discussed. A couple of people remembered interviewing previous DA candidates at tables grouped by staff, parents, and community members. Candidates rotated to tables round-robin style. There was a suggestion that perhaps one or two students be included in the Interview committee. And there was also a suggestion to explore including former students who are now productive adult citizens.