

Stakeholder Input Report for

**Waukee Community
School District
Waukee, Iowa**

submitted by

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EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT

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Waukee Community School District Waukee, Iowa District Stakeholder Input

Executive Summary

On March 7, 12, and 13, 2019, consultants Mr. Mike Billings and Mr. Lyle Schwartz and Mrs. Kim Antidel, conducted meetings with district stakeholders representing eight different groups associated with the Waukee Community School District. The consultants received input from approximately seventy-seven individuals in these groups. Input was gathered regarding the selection of a new superintendent for the Waukee Community School District.

Outlined on this page and the next two pages is an Executive Summary of the major themes expressed by the participants at these sessions. Following the Executive Summary is a compilation of all the input received from these groups and individuals in response to the four questions asked of each group and participant. The final section of the report will consist of responses by individuals who completed the online survey and responded to the same four questions.

What are the greatest assets of the Greater Waukee Community? (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Large city with a small town feel
- Outstanding amenities – something for everyone
- Very supportive of the school
- A lot of community pride
- Very safe community
- Great location – close to everything you'd need and want
- Diverse community and very accepting of that diversity
- Tremendous growth
- Proud of the historic areas (The Triangle, etc.)
- Progressive and vibrant
- City infrastructure is keeping up
- Community recreation opportunities (trail system, etc.)

What are the strengths/assets of the Waukee Community School District? (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Progressive and innovative
- High expectations for students and staff
- Achievement
- Wide variety of opportunities for students academically
- The APEX program
- Post-secondary and dual credit course offerings
- Strong building administration
- Quality facilities
- Multiple co and extra-curricular opportunities
- Strong support from the central office
- Outstanding teachers
- Collaboration between teacher, administration and community
- Success in all extra and co-curricular areas
- Waukee Foundation

What characteristics are most important in the next superintendent of the Waukee Community School District? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- Approachable and accessible to all
- Visible
- Engaged internally and externally
- High expectations for self and staff
- Relationship builder
- Trustworthy
- Honest
- Strong communicator and listener
- All about the students
- Servant leader
- Ethical with a high level of integrity
- Community and civic minded
- Visionary
- Understands Iowa school finance and law
- Open minded
- Experienced
- Progressive and innovative
- Transparent
- Strategic – a systems thinker
- Positive

What are the most significant district, community or state issues the selected person will face and need to deal with in order to be effective immediately? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- Trust issues
- Opening a new high school (and all that goes with it)
- School finance
- Student enrollment growth
- Staffing issues (ELP, ELL, etc.)
- District boundaries
- Growth in diversity
- Open enrollment

**Waukee Community School District
Stakeholder Input Form**

Name of Group/Individual: Compilation

Number 77

1. What are the greatest assets of the Greater Waukee Community? (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

Central Office Staff

13

- “The Triangle” (historic downtown – ice cream shop)
- Growing community with small town feel
- People are proud of Waukee and how its growing
- Education – higher level of residents’ education
- Best Chinese restaurant and business amenities – recognized throughout the Metro
- City is well respected and has a strategic plan
- Trail/green space system
- Business community/great partnership
- Good chamber and non-profits (charities and volunteers)
- A certain level of affluence in the community
- Strong parental support
- Diverse population (racially and economically)
- Level of Education of residents
- Wide variety of opportunities for community involvement, recreation, churches
- Access to thing within a 20-mile radius (entertainment etc.)
- Security of security and safety
- Not one town but all of Waukee
- Still feels like a small town – best of both worlds (small and big)

Administrative Team

31

- Parent Support
- High Expectations
- Growth
- Progressive/forward thinking community
- Level of Education of residents
- High variety of opportunities for community involvement
- Access to things

Cabinet

3

- Vibrant
- Lots to do
- Keeps growing
- Getting more diverse
- A welcoming community
- Something for everyone, church, civic organization, restaurant, entertainment, etc.

- Services and fun things will continue to grow and come to the community
- Endless possibilities for getting my kids involved and plenty of options for spouses
- Opportunity to _____ (fill in the blank)
- Close to higher education

Teachers

6

- Supportive of the school
- Ever growing and evolving, quality of school system is a draw
- Opportunities with a small town feel for a big town
- Becoming a diverse community
- Offers all types of housing for all types of residents
- Unpalpative energy

Non-certified Staff

1

- Growing Community
- Positive and supportive people

PTO, Boosters, SIAC, Boundary Committee

2

- Still feels like a small town
- Community celebrations
- Each elementary feels like a tight knit community
- High expectations and levels of achievement
- Appreciate the growth and expansion
- Very safe community
- Access to other cities and amenities
- Faith based is important and there are a number of congregations
- Great place to live in and near
- Location
- Larger city access
- Kids run free (safe)
- Professional community

Public

7

- Iowa nice
- Accept diversity
- Community is very connected and has same or more opportunities of other cities
- Small town feel but have great amenities and services
- Progressive
- Supportive of things district and city wants to do
- Location and connectivity
- Great internet connectivity
- City does good job of providing opportunities, parks, recreation, etc
- Bike paths and safe trail

- Safe town
- Impressed with emergency responders connect with kids and community
- Welcoming community
- Lots of opportunities for involvement, volunteerism, to get engaged
- Growth school district
- City has done a good job keeping up with the growth, infrastructure
- The small town feel, same boundaries for students

Students

14

- Peaceful
- Safe place to live
- Like how Waukee is a smaller community and access to Des Moines and area
- The triangle
- Modern and wide mix of opportunities, something for everyone
- Small town feel
- Close knit community and everyone knows everyone
- Lots of things to choose from, activities, volunteering, club teams, etc.
- Lots of parks, green spaces, pools and so on
- Like community activities and celebrations
- New hockey rink
- Small enough and good growth
- Access to services and so on
- Trusting community
- Lots of bike trails
- Plenty of corn
- Very pretty, sunsets and so on
- Room to grow
- Triangle Area- a lot of cool shops and see the history of Waukee
- Head of most of the schools (buildings, HS. Neat and nice, safe area)
- Small town but know most of the people -small town feel
- Opportunities- jobs, many places that hire students
- Good rec programs- community, great trails
- Activities are infinite can involve many
- La Cross is available (clubs)

2. What are the strengths/assets of the Waukee Community School District? (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

Central Office Staff

- All of the different sports offered and activity success at a high level (extra-curricular)
- Opportunities for students and parents
- Advance curriculum, and technology
- Entire personnel of each department are a strength
- Quality facilities
- Staying on top and ahead of the growth
- Put the students' needs first
- Strong partnerships between departments
- Summer feeding program (picnic and play – makes all feel welcome)
- Leadership is good
- District office has opportunity to mentor students or other in district (not required)
- Culture of change – progressive – evolving and getting better
- Explosion of ESL and Special Ed (great programs and students are coming here)
- Business partners help strengthen the district
- School foundation that helps supports (grants and scholarships)
- Farm to school grant is evolving

Administrative Team

- Parental support
- Instructional support
- Observation and evaluation cycles help support high expectations
- School Foundation
- People want to be here
- Relationships with the city, YMCA, fire, and police
- Culture of improvement
- Diversity, racial and economic, has ramped up and provides opportunities for students
- Ability to attract good people
- High expectations from students and parents
- Internal relationships are a strength
- Physical facilities
- High achievement in classroom and activities
- Preschool programming is excellent
- Parent and employee “give love” message is impressive
- Financially sound
- Emphasis on professional growth
- Support from district office and other areas
- Communication is good from central office to building admin.
- Think about the whole child (Leader in Me many opportunities)
- Offer a lot of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, something for everyone
- Proactive and responsive
- Looking ahead toward continuous improvement
- Expectation that the staff improves and are provided avenues to get better

Cabinet

- My kids are getting the best education possible
- We get the best educators and we hire the best, admin, teachers, etal
- Unmatched group of administrators, district office and building administrators
- Very collaborative administrators who work very well together
- Strong academics with great variety, ie APEX
- Very intentional in how we add and evaluate programs
- People want to work in an environment that challenges them
- Very high expectations
- Very mindful and thoughtful for diversity

Teachers

- Becoming a diverse community
- Quality education
- Students are motivated to learn, kind and welcoming to each other, especially new students, want to do well, positive
- High School offerings, college credit, APEX, at a high caliber
- Teaching staff and opportunities, care and concern for students
- Seriousness and passion for their work (teachers)
- Compassionate teachers, treat kids like they are the most important
- Innovative (evaluation system, individual classroom activities, APEX)
- Connections with universities for students to excel
- Standards based grading example of gradual changes,(Changes aren't made for the sake of change)
- Collaboration among teachers, collaboration across buildings, association and the administration
- "What is best for students" is the central theme of the district
- Always looking to improve
- Waukee Foundation (School) student scholarship and teacher opportunities
- Provides a variety of activities so students become involved so everyone has a place

Non-certified Staff

- Innovative
- Wonderful staff, leadership and administration
- Very positive
- Very engaged
- Schools are challenged with diversity
- Parent involvement is very high

PTO, Boosters, SIAC, Boundary Committee

- High expectations for learning and for kids to do well and need their needs
- Ability to achieve at high levels and still be able to be involved in a variety of activities
- Church night is honored
- Support from administration to allow balanced participation
- Good balance of academics and activities
- Standard high enough but not losing sense of community

- Teachers utilize the time they have well
- Leadership habits are focused on at some schools
- High enough level to get to do some cool high-level stuff
- Work great on building relationships
- Variety of opportunities throughout the district
- All activities are valued – fine arts, athletics and other activities

Public

- School is sparkly, it's all new
- Good base of teachers, young and innovative
- Progressive curriculum, keeping pace with technology
- Powerhouse in most sports
- Kids have a goal to make something of their life
- APEX
- Good community education program
- Do well in fine arts and all activities
- Teachers who connect with kids in different ways, meeting kids where they are and in innovative ways
- Progressive board, looking to expand opportunities for kids
- All bonds issues have passed first time every time
- Excellent staff, high level of training and professionalism, activities,
- Teachers go above and beyond
- Friendly administration and staff, staff makes a point to get to know students
- Opportunities for all levels of kids to excel

Students

- Lot of options and opportunities
- Lot of support for all activities
- Community of school is reflective of community as a whole, safe, etc
- Kids are open and accepting to all kinds of people
- Good support from teachers and support staff
- Everything is well structured and mesh well with others
- Professionalism
- Strong academics
- Good academic performance and success
- APEX
- Open to trying new things, progressive
- Open and supportive of new opportunities
- Great facilities -academic and activities
- Offers a lot of DMACC classes, dual credits
- Silver chord program, volunteerism and opportunities
- Being in activities feels like my second family
- Feel like we are genuinely cared about by staff
- Instructional coaches really help teachers
- Spend money wisely
- Modern facilities and instruction
- Head of most of the schools
- Opportunities for students to be involved

- School has baseball and summer programs, equipment school
- Good people who run the schools, (Mr. Flemming) relationships, caring people
- Teachers/administrators are caring
- Athletics are really great and involved, teachers care about athletics and adjust schedules, teachers encourage student involvement
- Music program is crazy good
- Resources support programs, state competition (attend and participate)
- Funding for programs are put to good use-lesson,
- Staff involved with coaching teacher/coaches
- Library is nice
- Weight room is nice, 8-9 building have their own facilities
- Teachers provide good instruction (Honors Program)

3. What characteristics are most important in the next superintendent of the Waukee Community Schools? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

Central Office Staff

- Approachable
- Transparent
- Communication
- Dynamic leadership
- Able to verbalize and vocalize the mission of the district
- Stand up for what is right, honesty, not pushed around
- Basic foundational knowledge
- Public relations
- Forward thinking
- Readily available
- Strategic thinker
- Put people in positions and trust – ability to delegate appropriately
- System thinker
- Willing to listen to the people who are doing the work
- Value people and don't pay attention to the title – make all in organization feel valued
- Service leader

Administrative Team

- Visible
- Collaborative
- Build communication and carry out vision
- Transparency
- Ethical
- High expectations
- Relationship builder
- Has pulse on community and school district
- Willingness to change as needed – progressive and adaptive
- Systems thinker
- Willing to make the difficult decisions
- Understands and can communicate effectively, when to listen, who and how
- Maintains focus on kids and servant heart
- Active legislatively and participates on the state level
- Support what is place and move things forward (honor past and current)
- Facilitator of creativity, not the creator
- Open mind and willingness to see what is great about Waukee
- Someone who is constant, has longevity and not a stepping stone
- Someone the team can get behind

Cabinet

- Servant mentality, servant heart
- Lead by example
- Trust me to do my job and will mentor me to grow

- Need a leader, role up sleeve, make decisions
- Shaking hands and kissing babies, building relationships
- Trustworthy
- Ethical and high integrity
- Others need to know that him/her is the lead learner
- Not a micromanager but be there for support, let cabinet do their thing
- Don't need someone to make a lot of changes, come in and let us do our jobs
- Don't get drunk off of growth and work on some of it each day, with different people
- Think strategically
- Know the present, look to the future
- Civic engagement with all entities
- To be the face of our district
- Able to work with boards and educate them

Teachers

- Accessibility of Superintendent to all levels of the district
- Retain interest-based bargaining
- Team builder
- Respects an already established contract
- Values a productive and respectful relationship with the union
- Builds positive and respectful relationships, sees the union as a partner
- Values shared decision making
- Build a vision for the growth of the district as well as keeping thought to maintaining current facilities
- Values employees and understands that employee treatment/working conditions directly impact student learning
- Trustworthy and transparent
- Relation builder and trust builder
- Builds leadership capacity throughout the district
- Delegate responsibilities but be the face and voice of the district
- Ignite positivity and passion about the district
- Versed in "interest-based bargaining"
- Respects already established contract (contract vs. handbook)
- Values a productive and respectful relationship with the association
- Involves teachers and groups in subcommittees (calendar, negotiations, teacher quality, etc.)
- Understands and values shared decision making
- Able to build a vision for the whole district (buildings and grounds etc.)
- Values employees and understands working conditions and how they relates to and impacts student learning

Non-certified Staff

- Good listener
- Very effective communicator
- Willingness to be open minded
- Someone who is visible and approachable
- Understanding of school finance

- Political advocate
- Knowledgeable - what will your entry plan be?
- Expectations are different than some staff
- Sense of trust and community building
- Understanding of what happened and how to move ahead
- Transparency
- Honor the good of the past and work to move us forward
- Construction experience would be helpful
- Experience with changing district boundaries – emotional enthusiasm

PTO, Boosters, SIAC, Boundary Committee

- Experience as a superintendent
- Passion for arts, even better if they have kids in the arts
- Collaborative
- Works with teachers and staff
- Maintains authority and maintains relationships in a good balance
- Use the human resources wisely
- Know that there is a community that is willing to work alongside them and use their wisdom
- Family type person
- Student centered
- Wisdom and some thick skin

Public

- Transparency to the community
- Transparency to the community
- Not above the law
- Open and Approachable
- Have best interest of teachers in mind
- Be the bridge between school and community and all parts of it
- Engaged in community as well as the school district
- Work well board and both have a voice and hold each other accountable
- Unifier
- Earn respect of staff and community
- Provide support to all programs and students
- Support district vision
- Proactive and strong
- Focus on our community first and do what fits our needs
- Experience as a superintendent
- Has a backbone to stand up to all patrons
- Good learner and grasp of issues
- Political advocate
- Someone who can present well and present the facts in a positive and clear way
- Someone who believes in public education
- Support STEM and the teachers involved with it
- Positive
- Good leader
- Kids at the center of every decision

- Multi tasker
- Experience with diversity- district is changing, inclusive policies
- Respect of staff- values staff and shows them respect
- Honors contract of staff
- Aware of what is happening in Iowa legislatively
- Communicate what is going on in the legislature
- Hire good people and keep good people around them
- Advocacy at the Iowa Legislature
- People person
- Enthusiastic about the district

Students

- Honest and trustworthy
- Transparent
- High Integrity
- Protector of school, fight for Waukee
- Good communicator and listener
- Someone who wants to get to know the students
- Visibility
- Have a presence in all aspects of school and activities
- Be the face of the district
- Someone who connects with students in all aspects
- Interacts with students
- Gets into all school buildings
- Listens to students
- Needs to work well with teachers directly
- Good relationships with parents and community
- Being progressive and open to changes
- Set goals and implement steps to achievement
- Surround him/herself with good people
- Good management skills
- Actually listen to students and their suggestions, all groups
- Organized
- Being good at informing district
- Respectful of all
- Should love his/her job – Passion for it
- Involved, meet students, go out and see students
- Responsible
- Have empathy for student issues
- Forward thinking and progressive
- Understand their role and use their role to create relationship- approachable

4. What are the most significant district, community or state issues the selected person will face and need to deal with in order to be effective immediately? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

Central Office Staff

- Rebuilding trust with parents, community, staff and students
- If out of state, know how this district, state, political system works
- History of the Waukee district
- School finance – drives everything
- The staff, central office, have worked hard to create a positive culture and wants it to continue. DOC committee is proud of what they have created and wants it to continue

Administrative Team

- Gaining trust – public, district and administratively
- Understanding of financial and legislative issues
- Major change with a new high school
- Continue to guide district with growth
- Working with a board that turns over
- Assist in cleaning up past issues
- Spotlight is on the district
- Set roots in the community for public perception, become a member

Cabinet

- We have four municipalities in our district
- Current and recent past issues shared in media
- Processes have been improved in the last few months to address real or perceived concerns
- Student growth
- Secondary growth and all that comes with it – second high school
- Board is going to have large turnover
- Board is right for board development
- Constant change

Teachers

- New branding for the district
- Lack of trust
- Results of Gallop Survey 59% of staff participated- sense of engagement is low as well as other data would be interesting
- Uncertain about stability at the leadership level, (district office)
- Transparency and communication at administrative changes and openings (is there a process in place)
- Sincerity in using staff feedback
- Level of perfectionism that is strong undercurrent

Non-certified Staff

- Opening a new high school
- What is the vision of the board?

- Building relationships with board members
- Where the focus of the community is...?
- What underlying issues have not been brought out yet?
- How my board works.
- How my cabinet works together?
- What parameters are there for making changes?
- What factors might impact growth trends?
- Have there been enrollment studies done?

PTO, Boosters, SIAC, Boundary Committee

- Boundaries of the feeders for new high school and middle schools
- Growth
- New high schools and issues related to that issue
- Don't want boundaries along 'have' and 'have nots' lines
- Some folks who live here grew up in small towns and have a small school mentality but we are not a small town anymore
- Helpful if they went to all choir concerts

Public

- Staff is spread too thin in some areas, ELP
- Disparity among programs
- Need to build trust, including among existing administration
- Feeling that some administrators and board members in the district can do no wrong
- Second high school
- New boundaries should not be the 'haves' and 'have nots'
- How do we create equity in the two new high schools
- Need to step back and not look at building so many schools in a year, use current resources as much as possible
- Growth and how to plan for it and deal with it
- Look at open enrollment in and out
- Lack of AP classes
- Lack of STEM opportunities
- Lack of CTE opportunities
- Keep small town feeling
- Keep focus on ALL KIDS
- Maintaining class size

Students

- Have a plan to connect to students
- Earn trust of students and all groups
- Be transparent
- Gain trust back
- Be aware that parents and community are going to be judging him/her closely
- Must be able to take criticism and deal with it and move the district forward
- Dig into current issues
- Be prepared to make a good face and reputation for Waukee
- Know there is division between community and district administration

- Some staff are stretched too thin, ELP
- Be aware that when there is a second high school, how are we going to keep community connection with both high schools and high schools between themselves
- Be aware boundaries and changes impact on families
- Understanding issues of a 9th grade student
- Lack of student motivation (stress, fatigue) for everyone
- Split high schools-and the process
- Communication about splitting the high schools (yet)
- Meeting the needs for incoming diverse population
- Staffing for ESL and AELP
- Recognizing and celebrating diversity with celebrations
- Making sure everything is equal at both high schools (equal opportunity)
- Awareness of all career paths including college
- Supports for Mental Health, social and emotional support

*Survey Monkey Results for Waukee Community School District
March 2019*

*(NOTE—these responses have not been edited,
they are printed as entered by the stakeholders)*

(86) Responses

Administrators

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Great place to live and raise kids
- Great caring community.

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Great teachers and administrators High quality instruction and innovation Caring and committed parents Focused and dedicated students
- Teamwork

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- A need for continued board training and professional development to get them on the same page regarding roles and responsibilities.
- Needs and support of ALL departments.

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- Integrity Credibility Willing to listen, but make tough decisions Strong communication Understands the unique dynamics with our growth
- Honest, helpful, Communication

Classified Staff

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- We have a small town feel (Iowa nice) with large town amenities.
- Waukee has managed to maintain a small town feel, even though they continue to grow.
- Community sticks together.
- Close to city, but small town feel. Safe. Lots of new homes. Great neighborhoods.
- We have people who don't borrow school property for personal use.
- A small community that is growing fast but wanting to stay connected with a family vibe.
- Great schools, growing number of recreational & community opportunities, great police.

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Our schools are in good repair and have a very welcoming feel. There are inspirational/guiding principles which are posted beside the sidewalk as you come up to the front doors. Once inside, you are greeted with a friendly and knowledgeable staff. The building is well organized. The walls are covered in students' art, photos of children, teachers, and staff, and motivational sayings. Classrooms have appropriate educational information and one can easily see what is being taught.
- Waukee hires quality teachers. Waukee schools stay up with the most current teaching practices. The atmosphere, at building level, is always welcoming, upbeat and encouraging.
- Parents have good opinion of building staff.
- Excellent quality education, APEX program, Great community support.
- Our teachers are good.
- They lead, inspire and support our children in a well rounded way, before & After school care, breakfast and lunch and learning education time - it is well rounded.
- School personnel are student-driven. Everything revolves around student education.

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- Waukee has long been recognized as a school with high standards and educational excellence. In the mid '80s, a school board member and I toured the school as our school board was considering implementing a talented and gifted program in Creston. We were so impressed with the faculty here and the forward-thinking processes. I am confident the recent audit and problems found will be addressed and procedures put in place to help prevent anything like this happening again. Although I am very disappointed in what happened, we will come out stronger on the other side.
- There's a sense of mistrust in the community of parents, for those in the upper level administrative jobs. The new superintendent is going to have to be completely open with the community and willing to work hard to regain their trust.
- Past and present issues
- Please don't "romance/bromance" staff from your buildings. Community is looking forward to improvement.
- Growth rate, Short-funded, Lawsuit issues,

- Be aware of all the scandals. Be aware that many in administration have done their best to cover up those scandals. People have jobs that shouldn't in administration.
- Keeping the growth of our district under-control with staffing and leadership.
- This is and has been the fastest-growing school district for a number of years. Change is always happening.
- Integrity should be number one. It hasn't been that way recently at district office, so we need to get back to that.

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- One who operates with transparency, is an outstanding communicator, experienced, and works well with all kinds of people.
- The new superintendent needs to be an experienced educator. They need to have a lot of experience in a classroom setting, and not just administrative experience. They need to be able to “see” things from all points of views, and not just the business side.
- Honesty, character, knowledge of District past and present, flexibility, open to suggestions from all with the ability to filter good and bad.
- How have you been transparent in your last position? How and how long will it take for community to trust Human Resources and District office? How do you feel about charitable giving of taxpayer funds?
- Leadership, has vision for the future, understands school finance, intelligent, understands educational programs, fair/equitable with employees, common sense, good character, excellent communication, transparency, accountability, caring, team player, honest, dedicated, positive, create good culture, inspiring
- Honesty. A sense of justice. Kindness.
- Experience and Servant Leadership would be well suited as we grow and structure the district needs. Understand who are and seeing ways to lead us where we need to go for the best interest in our children in the community.
- Ability to communicate, be transparent. Be a leader and stand up for what is right, even if it's not the popular decision. Ability to defend school district decisions to the public.
- Honesty, experience teaching, being a school-level administrator, sense of humor, organized.

Community Members

No Responses

Parents

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- There are a lot of passionate parents in our community who fight every day to ensure that our children are getting one of the best PUBLIC educations in the country.
- Education is valued by this community.
- Waukee is a great community that is like a small town with larger city amenities. I feel like the city listens to what the community wants. It is a great location with great parks and trails and a great quality of life.
- -Residential and commercial expansion -safe -many available resources -a variety of opportunities for connections
- Waukee is a fast growing community that still has a small town feel. One of the main factors that draws new families to our town is the excellent schools.
- Large suburban community that still has a sense of small town community.
- Kind people who are active and hard working, and contribute to the community in a positive way.
- Quality education, people who care, a sense of community
- Waukee is a community that takes a lot of pride in its schools. Parents are very closely involved and hold the institution to a high standard. Waukee also has a very caring and helpful culture. Neighbors help neighbors and try to make everyone feel welcome.
- community support and involvement
- Small town feel of Waukee with big town amenities.
- Great community enrichment/rec programs. Community on the rise. Dining, entertainment and personal services options increasing.
- Our community takes great pride in the product- the people we prepare for society. This should be our number one priority, create successful leaders who care about others. The amazing education they receive is just a bonus.
- They care about our kids, our teachers and our schools. They are giving by both support and by giving money to support different things for schools. They participate in charity drives. The community is involved and they want to be a part of everything. Great community.
- We care about kids and want what is best for them. We strive to provide the very best education for our kids! We also want our kids to be cared for as people!
- Welcoming, want what is best for students/children
- We are a rapidly growing community that seems to be attracting businesses who are locating here and hopefully are giving us tax dollars for our school.
- High parental involvement and engagement (especially at elementary level.) A community of growth and new development. High level of community support for our students - high attendance at sporting events and performances. Many generous community members who volunteer time and financial resources to help our school programs.
- Parents have high expectations for their kids and their kids' experience in school.

- Hard working. Family focused. Intelligent. Involved. Supportive.
- The community has high expectations of the district
- Parents are very involved
- Our community is full of people who care. They care about their children, about their community, and about the future.
- Waukee is a growing community that has three distinct advantages to anyone who desires to live here. It has a small town feel complete with a quaint downtown that offers local support and a friendly community. It has the neighborhoods of a typical suburban city with the advantages of many local restaurants and small chain stores. And it's a short 20 minute drive to downtown Des Moines which is a revitalizing city complete with almost everything you would desire in a larger market – shows, concerts, sports and more. Because of its immense growth so many people are not 'from Waukee' so moving in from some other area of the state or nation does not make you feel like an outsider. We're all transplants and therefore seek relationships and community with one another. Waukee is a very safe place and has good public services. It continues to seek new ways of developing – lots of 'new' entities which makes it an exciting place to live

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Passionate, hard-working teachers who go well beyond what's necessary to ensure our children receive a very high quality education.
- Fantastic teachers and associates that work hard and are extremely dedicated to their students.
- We have great facilities for our children to learn in. We have a great staff and administration in the elementary school we attend who has done a great job making this experience outstanding even with being on the overcrowded side until another school opens next year. As a parent I am not even aware of the overcrowding at this level because the school is run so well.
- -high parental involvement -available resources for students and supports for students - new and technologically advanced facilities -variety of programs (APEX, School to Work, etc)
- Waukee schools have a history of high academic achievement. From the state of the art new facilities to the excellent teachers and administrators who truly care about the students.
- Variety of classes and coursework available for students. Differentiation at all levels ensures that the students are met where they are and challenged to enhance learning for all.
- Educators/Administrators that know we can't only educate the head we have to include the heart "Give Love". Our schools truly care about each child. Teachers work as a TEAM to meet needs of not only low achieving children but those that exceed expectations (and everyone in between).
- Waukee schools hold students to the same high standards and are always looking for opportunities to help students grow. Teachers in the district care and are here because they want to be the best, not just be surrounded by the best.
- tireless and caring teachers
- Quality: people, opportunities (academically and activities), and facilities.

- Unfortunately, nothing is good about our school. No one is being held accountable to uphold a high quality of education and safety within our school.
- Large size allows for a plethora of opportunities not available in smaller districts. Fantastic teachers! Consistent communication combined with individual school initiatives give real feel for community.
- We have a top notch education in Waukee. They are continuing to learn how to best prepare our students to be successful citizens. Our teachers and administrators are the best.
- Great principals who listen to their teachers and staff. Teachers, staff and principals do everything they can to support kids and families. Our buildings are hands on and minds on when it comes to learning, building relationships and striving for what is best for our kids. Schools are inviting and encourage partnership between families and teachers/staff. Our schools are amazing because of the teachers.
- I can't say enough about our schools! They have high academic standards and they care about what is best for my kids!
- Teachers want what is best for kids, focused on learning
- We have highly trained and experienced teachers who are well versed in the PLC model, have many extra hours beyond bachelor's degrees, are committed, and are raising their own children in this district. There is a wonderful gifted/talented program in the Elementary schools (this needs to be improved and expanded at the secondary level) as we have many high level learners who need services.
- Committed staff members with a high level of professionalism. Many new facilities with state of the art equipment and technology.
- The teachers are held to a higher standard than most districts in the nation
- Family oriented. Friendly. Caring. Compassionate. Driven to help make a difference. Competitive. Growth mind set.
- The schools are striving to be the leader and role model for other schools
- Teachers truly seem to care however they rarely have the CORRECT and appropriate knowledge about dyslexia and appropriate remediation and accommodations.
- The staff and teachers are amazing in our schools. They have developed programs for the Waukee students that bring the students success in the classroom.
- There is no question that the very best things about our schools are our building administration and teachers. Our kids attend Maple Grove and our principal is simply fantastic. The school staff and support staff are incredible. And I know if you would poll a family from each elementary school, you would discover that each family would testify the same. Our family has been particularly blessed by the many options for student support – that is to meet and challenge our kids in their learning. Our ELP teacher is amazing and we are thankful that our children are met where they are at in regards to their academic development. We know they wouldn't have some/many of the same opportunities in other districts. Or at least not nearly to the same level. We also love that our school is a Leader In Me school. This program has given our kids – and many others – so much confidence that they can make a difference in this world. We see this playing out in many different ways in our kids' lives.

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- There is a sustained attack on public education currently happening in Iowa. There are national organizations' of lobbyists who represent pro-voucher and pro-charter school groups that are working with our legislators to convince Iowans that public money should go to private institutions. This is the antithesis of what Iowa stands for! We need someone with the courage to stand up to state and out-of-state powers that do not have the best interests of our children as a priority.
- There seems to be way too much familiarity and intermingling among the administrators, especially at the district office.
- There have been a lot of issues with the board and administration. The community is not happy and they have lost a lot of trust in the administration and the board. There is a lot of overcrowding which will continue to be an issue in the foreseeable future. The community needs as much input as possible to handle this the best way possible and not continually disrupt families' lives with multiple school changes. The issues caused by overcrowding vary depending on what level it is at, elementary versus secondary levels. This was a small district that is growing by leaps and bounds and the policies need to be in place to handle the issues of a growing district. The district due to past issues that went on for too long is going to be under a microscope by the community until trust is restored and beyond that time. The district has had a lot of issues in properly growing from a small district to one of the largest ones.
- -many years with lack of trust, lack of leadership, lack of communication, lack of transparency -lack of following policies & procedures and showing favoritism has led to a poor culture -lack of being consistent with consequences and lack of following consistent hiring procedures has also led to a poor culture -teachers are not held accountable for poor instructional practices or performance is not accurately represented on teacher Evaluation Model
- Make sure the focus is on the students and how best to prepare them for the future. Fostering a positive learning environment is paramount.
- As the school district grows it is vital that staff (both administration and teachers) are held accountable for following curriculum, getting grades in on time, responding to parents/students in a timely manner and addressing concerns (such as equipment at the APEX that doesn't have the correct venting to be used in the engineering department... it has been there for years and not used because no one has addressed the situation).
- 1. That there is a real problem with trust and transparency with regard to the school board and superintendent. 2. The on-going costs associated with the old COO.
- Boundary Committee made up of only parents and with a large number of people is a mistake. The committee is best made up of people that know the district well, whomever that is. Feedback can be given from the rest. Our teachers work hard, the most important thing we can do for them is hire the BEST administrators we can in each building that care about the well being of the staff as much as the students.
- Waukee is changing. It's becoming more and more diverse, and with that comes brand new challenges. We will start to experience more extremes in parent involvement, income disparity, and cultural differences. The district needs to anticipate these changes and adjust policy and professional development proactively instead of waiting for the problem to come up. Additionally, it's important that we pick a steady course. Too many

districts fall prey to popular changes and try to implement too many, too fast. This wrecks morale in both the student and teacher population.

- current community faith in board and administration due to past transparency and employee concerns
- Recent history - needing to regain trust of the community and the need to quickly move forward in a positive way. We don't have time to wait, with the growth happening in our district this person will need to step in and be ready to go as much as possible.
- We have so many issues! We need a leader who can identify & resolve these issues in a timely manner, and move our school district ahead of the rest.
- Odd branding issues as the school is called "Waukee" but serves students in four communities. Overcoming misuse of funds publicity. Balancing expectations when it comes to new schools and boundaries. School funding.
- We think the superintendent should address the concerns that have been brought to the attention of the community, but also educate the public on the process of education and how sometimes it is not appropriate to make accusations based on the limited knowledge they have about a school district. This is a great place to live and raise kids.
- Administration needs to listen to the teachers. Administration needs to support teachers. The teachers are the ones doing the work day in and day out and they know what is best for our kids. Listen to the teachers. Give more incentives to teachers than any where else because they are the ones who teach our kids and create a love for learning. We need to keep teachers happy. They are the backbone of successful schools.
- We have a strong history of providing quality education and programs for our kids! Our community craves leadership that cares about teachers and students and recognizes that teachers are working Hard every day for students. We are proud of our community and want what is best for the kids!
- Trust within administration is not always present
- Previous issues dealing with keeping people on staff who are breaking rules, favoritism/nepotism in hiring, and the rough transition that is happening by moving from a "small school" feel to a large district (growing pains).
- Community mistrust of district administration and school board due to perceived "cover up" of misspent funds and mistreatment of whistleblowers resulting in large financial payouts. As our district opens the second high school there is a real concern that the feeder system will result in "have" and "have not" portions of the district. The need to make adjustments in our school staffing as our student population becomes more diverse.
- Administrators act as though parents have all the power and, generally, will not make decisions that may upset a parent. There is a huge distrust of administrators and school board members. We assume there's always something being covered up.
- The media seems to have a negative bias toward Waukee. Things can be going amazing and they will only dwell on a negative story from Waukee. It's beyond obvious and ridiculous.
- Open communication and clarity.
- The school system is not readily equipped to handle children that are not neurological normal. This isn't just learning disabilities like dyslexia, but also children that are self harm or who or defiant or severe anxiety.
- Parents care a lot. Don't ignore the parent/guardians just because they aren't always at meetings. We hear what's happening, care about what's happening, and believe our

children are a valuable resource for the future that deserve better from the school board and district officials.

- The biggest issue a new superintendent should be aware of is the lack of trust that many of the parents/constituents have in the school board and current administration. I'm certain any candidate applying for this position will be well aware of the struggles of the district over the past 3 years, particularly the last 6 months. While there is much to be frustrated about regarding the handling by previous and current administration regarding the actions of the former COO and others, I think it is important that the incoming superintendent be aware of a group of parents/constituents that have been particularly negative, divisive, and at times flat out disrespectful to the school board and current administration. While I have my own opinions regarding the matters and handling of all that took place, there is a particular group of people who have taken it upon themselves to be 'judge and jury' when it comes to the school board and administration. Frankly, this disappoints me and makes me concerned about the attractiveness of the position. These individuals are a vocal group. They probably represent a majority opinion but the way they communicate is unhealthy and at times inappropriate. I would want the incoming superintendent to be aware of this. Not to cater to them. But to be aware. My concern is that some will seek election on the school board and that will be difficult for the new administration to work with. I would also want the new superintendent to be aware that in our six years in the district we have observed that Waukee parents have high expectations – maybe even unattainable ones. At times it seems that they can have too much sway when it comes to decisions. There's a bit of entitlement that can be unhealthy. Finally, the new superintendent needs to be aware of the importance of transparency and communication. While not catering to the noisy minority, it will still be important for the superintendent to have an ability to connect with the constituency.

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- The ability to bring a modern, professional, high-quality mentality to our school district. We are not a small town district anymore. The parents who live here are professionals who expect extremely high standards from our leadership. We also DEMAND transparency and accountability.
- Integrity. Someone without any connection to Waukee Schools.
- A visionary, great communicator, is not afraid to stand up for what is right and best for the district, confronts issues head on and does not bury their head in the sand when dealing with confrontation, is not afraid of the community they are serving and remembers what they are here for and whose interests they are representing, the children.
- -experience in implementing a systematic approach to inclusion, diversity and equity - experience in providing training for teachers in student Mental Health and Trauma Informed Care -model and enforce expectations and accountability -possess the ability to efficiently and effectively deal with conflict, difficult conversations and situations
- The ideal candidate will have a variety of experience as an educator and know the many challenges faced by today's teacher. They will be able to relate to all kinds of students and teachers and have a positive spirit. Someone who has some connection to Waukee's past would be a big plus as the traditions are what makes Waukee special.

- Personable & Transparent Have both teaching and administrative experience Someone who values academics, fine arts and athletics Someone who is forward thinking and student focused
- Someone who has been a teacher and will stay in touch with the needs of the kids. Someone who values mental wellness as much as academics.
- A strong leader, dedicated to staff, students, parents and the community (in that order). The new superintendent needs to share our vision and goals for the future. As a parent I believe it is crucial that the new superintendent support teachers, be transparent with the community and retain the high expectations we have for ALL students in the Waukee Community School District.
- Have knowledge of our district Has the respect of the administrators and teachers in the district Shares in the districts' philosophy of leader in me, responsive classrooms, as well as curricular instruction. Honest and transparent (does not sugar coat) Responds timely to things concerning the district Errors on the side of over communicating rather than under communicating
- - empathetic, but also demonstrating the ability to differentiate between compassion and condescension. - Growth-minded with an emphasis on staff culture. I believe Waukee is successful because the administrators work hard to cultivate a culture of honesty and integrity within the staff. That starts with the superintendent. - Community-oriented: Someone that knows how important the community is to the district and when it would be important to solicit community opinion.
- forward thinking in progressive district student-centered
- Open communicator Honest Understanding and embracing our community Someone from outside our district
- Vision - Set a clear vision for the WCSD and see it through. Leadership - know the best practices for maximizing achievements of the students and make sure students in the district are learning and achieving at a high level. Communication - take into account all viewpoints and communicate with everyone to ensure all needs are being met. Character - high moral capacity and ability to get the job done with respect and dignity. Make education a top priority so our school district can rise above the rest.
- Passion for educating. Ability to make tough staffing decisions when needed. Personable with good communications skills.
- Someone who has had multiple experiences in different areas of education. Prior experience in leading a school district.
- Listen to teachers Listen to kids Listen to parents Then listen to administration Schools are not a business. Schools are about people. Treat people well and they will always give 150%. Which in turn helps our kids grown and be the best they can be. It's a win-win situation.
- Honesty
- To be fair, ethical, and to be aware that teachers do best when not being micromanaged (as long as they have been proven to do a wonderful job).
- The ability to unite the community and help the district regain it's reputation following the recent fall-out in the news. The ability to see the big picture as our growth continues.
- Make good hiring decisions, then trust their employees to to do their job in a quality manner. Empower teachers. Allow kids to experience failure. Stress the importance of preparing kids for the road, as opposed to preparing the road for kids. While

obviously allowing parents to raise their own children as they see fit, put forward a vision for how the district will attempt to play their role in "raising" kids.

- Friendly and warm to all—our district houses the wealthiest of families and the poorest of families, all with extremely varied backgrounds. The new superintendent needs to make all of those students feel safe and loved. It starts at the top.
- a team builder
- The superintendent needs to be technologically savvy, empathetic, and a willing to learn.
- Great management, excellent leadership, fundraising, involvement in the community and involvement in classrooms beyond seeing who is the best and brightest, but also, just to get in there and see what's happening that's so great in a normal classroom.
- Integrity is number one in my estimation. After a difficult period stemming from the last two superintendents, integrity is a must. Along with that – communication and honesty. This new superintendent needs to be able to connect with people – that people know they are heard, valued, but not in charge. Probably some experience in rebuilding a dysfunctional system would be helpful. Someone who is not afraid of a challenge. Probably from the outside, the position is a ‘dream job’ – but there is must unrest and a ‘culture creator’ will be needed to reshape the image of the district in the community.

Students

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Low violence, high income

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Great teachers

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- Discrimination of political opinions

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- Doesn't waste money

Teachers

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Family orientated, growing, increasing opportunities
- Many resources Thoughtful, compassionate people Caring parents Invested in schools
- It is growing. Lots of new businesses coming. Good community partnerships and donations from businesses.
- Waukee is growing in diversity and understands the need to be truly inclusive and equitable.
- Our community is safe and is committed to making the quality of life higher as we continue to grow. It values education. It is supportive of our schools, teachers, and students. People are generally kind and generous.
- Supportive of the schools
- Highly educated community, who have high expectations for their students.
- We have lots of great students and parents.
- Waukee is great.
- Growing population - job security :) Diversity
- Good reputation Kind and caring people Family oriented
- Growth Opportunities Growth mind set
- There is a lot of growth and opportunity in the community. If you are a fan of change, you will love it! Waukee as a town has done a wonderful job handling the growing population. The city has many more wonderful things planned for the future in regard to parks and recreation. It's an exciting time!
- Education and schools are highly valued in Waukee
- In Waukee, there are great people!
- Waukee is a community that looks out for each other. Overall, they are welcoming and embrace all people.
- We invest in our education and trust our educators to lead the lead the way in our children's education.
- High achievement and accountability is expected. Most students and parents put education high on a list of priorities and are willing to support the educators.
- Waukee is a place where people help each other out. It has a small town feel, even though it is growing rapidly. Waukee is family centered.
- It's growing. Great schools. Safe neighborhoods. High quality activities for kids.
- Involved, supportive, technology literate
- Lots of highly educated parents who care a great deal about their child's education, with a growing mix of refugees and immigrants creating amazing diversity in some of our schools.
- Our community has a lot of opportunities (churches, athletics, museums, parks, etc.) for families especially being near the capital.
- Families are interested in their child's educational experience.
- Growing district with amazing students, teachers and parents!
- We are growing in population and diversity.
- Keeps up with growth and is able to handle all the changes; good schools; great community resources; people work together to continue to build unity; lots of activities for kids through the local library, parks and rec, etc.

- Waukee is growing quickly, businesses are moving in, and the area still feels safe. There are lots of opportunities for personal and financial growth in the area, and people feel that.
- Vitality of businesses . . . new businesses . . . seems to be careful consideration given to where/how/when to do new growth.
- Waukee offers small-town living with city amenities. Des Moines is 20 minutes away with the Civic Center, sports events, downtown Farmer's Market, eclectic and great restaurants, bars, and every type of leisure activity available. It is also affordable to live in Waukee or the DM suburbs.
- Our communities are safe, progressive, and growing fast. We look out for each other and each other's children. The majority of our community is well-educated and holds high expectations for our children, businesses, and schools.
- Growing community with lots of potential and new people moving to the area.
- The community is full of parents who value education and hard work; they understand that success doesn't happen overnight.
- I don't live in Waukee, Clive, West Des Moines, or Urbandale, but the best part about this community is the involvement of families in the learning process. Parents are a resource and usually make great partners in helping their student(s) succeed.
- Our parents and teachers and students are all amazing in their own way!
- I appreciate both the professionalism of the community with high standards of excellence AND the growing diversity of the Waukee area.
- A lot of growth. Close to the metro to enjoy things to do. Safe town to live in and to attend school. Plenty of room for growth. Easy access to I-80. A small town feel.
- It is getting to be a big city, but still has a small town feel. For the longest time the growth was really residential so it still feels small.
- Everyone values education here in Waukee. Neighborhoods are strong and very friendly. Neighbors watch out for one another.
- Clean streets, safe neighborhoods. Classic midwestern suburb.
- Family is important. Fun and lots to do in the area. Great places to live.
- Even though Waukee is growing rapidly, it still has a small town feel. People genuinely care about one another.
- Waukee is a place where people value the schools above all else. They move here specifically for that reasons much of the time and they believe in the teachers. They take time to partner with school teachers as well as admin in order to grow their children and families. Teachers, in general, feel supported by the community--they have our backs. The community is also young and vibrant with global views and perspectives.
- Waukee has many services close to home for our family.
- Growing with lots of opportunities
- Progressive Community-minded

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Amazing community support, high but realistic expectations, set students up to succeed
- Invested teachers, administrators Diverse backgrounds (families and staff) Strong academic curriculum Flexible, creative minds
- High expectations for student growth. Lots of extracurricular opportunities.
- High standards, preparing students to be leaders now and in the future, administration support
- The schools understand the importance of teaching the whole child and of valuing staff members as whole individuals as well.
- Our teachers are high-performing and hard-working. We collaborate. We hold our standards high. We embrace new learning, and we engage in difficult conversations -- at least in my building. Our students share these qualities as well. Teachers are generally given quite a bit of autonomy. We aren't required to teach the same way, just to the same standards. The Curriculum & Instruction team is top-notch.
- Great parent-teacher relationships Wonderful parent support for teachers
- The high expectations filters into the staff. We know we have high expectations put on us and work very hard to meet those.
- My building works very cooperatively. Teachers are flexible and work to do what's best for students.
- We have staff that is so caring and works hard everyday.
- Demand for excellence. Focus on student achievement. Extra -curricular activities are valued.
- Teachers care about students and families High quality instruction and education
- Endless opportunities Businesses willing to work with schools to provide experiences
- We have opportunities to grow in Waukee. We are inspired and encouraged by our colleagues to continue learning and to strive to always be the best teacher we can be. Many of us have open-mindsets knowing that change is and will always be occurring around us. We are able to reflect and adapt to continually work to meet the needs of our students. What would be the best part? Our students truly do come first! They are top priority and focus. It is exciting and a privilege to be a part of a culture that values the education and lives of the kids!
- - qualified, intelligent, and innovative teachers - hard working and promising students
- From what I have observed the majority of WCS D staff are extremely hard-working.
- Waukee schools are populated by talented and caring professionals.
- As a teacher in one of the Middle Schools, I can honestly say that our teachers care about each and every student. We look at the "whole" student and strive to find ways to make school a safe and welcoming environment to all kids not matter what their background is. We take into account the learning needs of each kid and work our tails off to make sure everyone is getting exactly what they need....both academically and emotionally. Unfortunately, many more kids are coming to us with mental health concerns and we work with them to make sure their learning environment supports them fully.
- Our teachers are encouraged to take risks. They are given freedom to do what they know is best for our students.
- The "culture" of Waukee is in all our schools. Staff have high expectations for students and do everything we can to help them achieve.

- The people. In addition, there is a strive to put students first and to provide quality experiences and learning for students.
- Innovative. Good community support. Lots of opportunities for students at the secondary level in athletics and the arts.
- Quality people, good instructors, people who care, beautiful facilities
- Amazing things happen every day in our schools. Teachers are highly trained and educated, both in their content and in taking care of children.
- Our families are invested in their children's education and support their schools. We have high parental involvement. We value diversity. We have high expectations for administrators, teachers, and students.
- High expectations for students; high achievement levels both academically and in extra curricular programming (athletics, fine arts, etc)
- Our students and teachers work hard.
- We have a strong faculty and our students are representative of the changes in our community.
- teachers are here because they know it is a great place to be; schools are aware and equipped to handle the growth of the community; each building understands the unique population within its area and strives to help each and every student succeed (it's not just about the numbers on test scores); schools are prepared and can support the needs of all learners; our schools have done a great job of using resources that best support each of its buildings; the administrators in each building work to make each place its own community in which both staff and students are able to learn and grow
- We have awesome programming. Arts, career development, STEAM (robotics, engineering, etc.). These programs are the backbone of this educational system and some of the reasons people look to Waukee for the quality, well-rounded education of their kids. These programs start and develop young, and that is a huge benefit to our students.
- Cutting edge. Mostly energized staff.
- Waukee Community Schools are very progressive, inclusive, (61 languages) innovative, (Waukee Innovation Learning Center for high school professional experiences) and dedicated to enriching learning for K-12 students.
- We have the BEST educators. Teachers care about their students and work tirelessly to provide students with quality learning experiences. Most facilities are new and updated. I can only speak for SMS, but the administration values their teachers and treats us with respect and care.
- Waukee schools maintains the best teachers and our teachers work very hard!
- Our schools are full of professionals who are dedicated to student success and give everything they have every day. Leaders who operate under the assumption that this is the norm will find success in building relationships with the teachers.
- Teachers are trusted. Administrators hold teachers accountable while providing resources, but they don't breathe down your neck. They are supportive of anything research-based you want to try in your room.
- All our schools have a common goal and strive towards that goal. I love that each elementary school has the freedom to reach that goal in their own way depending on their student population. The former superintendents gave freedom to our principals to make the best choices they see fit and I think that's a wonderful way to empower the superintendent's subordinates below them.

- Our curricular areas and extra-curricular groups are top notch. Teachers, parents, students, admin all work together cohesively for the most part.
- Good school district. Very supportive parents. Good facilities and equipment. Pay is competitive for teachers and administrators.
- Waukee is an incredible place where teachers are proud to work. The hardest part about what has happened in the past couple years was that we were constantly in the news for negative things, but none of it had to do with teaching and learning. I think teachers are ready for the entire system to be viewed as top-tier from top to bottom again.
- The schools create strong communities. For example, my kids attend Grant Ragan. Their staff is one of the closest I've ever seen. Their PTO is amazing and raises an incredible amount of money every year. I like the balance of autonomy the schools have but yet we are all Waukee.
- Enthusiastic teachers. The majority of students value education.
- Teachers respect and back each other. Principals respect teachers and their opinions. All want what is right and good for students.
- Our schools are high achieving and provide academic rigor for all students. Through differentiation they are able to meet the needs of ALL learners.
- Our WCSD community is people focused. It is clear that we invest in the humans that work here and attend school here. We are open-minded and willing to evolve our practices to ensure we all grow and become better people in the end.
- Our new schools are beautiful, and they provide many opportunities/activities for our children.
- Student-focused High expectations Caring

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- Public view is kind of negative Lots of press Huge growth happening Change within growth hurts, even if it is good and necessary
- Waukee is unique; it truly isn't like other districts. It has a message of inclusion, aspirational discomfort, and loving one another in big ways that cannot be lost.
- The public distrusts upper-level administration currently, as well as most of the school board. We are a large school that was a small school not all that long ago, and we still haven't fully transitioned some of our practices to match the larger environment. We aren't very good at systems. We tend to be very careful in how we discuss things -- to the point where the polished dialogue can feel fabricated and/or superficial instead of just thoughtful. There are so many gifted teachers that there are not enough opportunities for everyone to contribute/be a leader in ways that they desire. We don't fully utilize our talent pool.
- Some of the taxpayers feel they have been deceived and it will take time and open communication to rebuild trust.
- Waukee is one of the elite school districts in the state. But like all schools there are some issues that come with normal communities, but there are some that can be addressed and fixed. A superintendent needs to tell administrators to not let staff just go through the motions. The students know which teachers will challenge their thinking and which are easy, rote memorization classes. The overwhelming majority of teachers are excellent, and do not just go through the motions, but there are enough that others know who they are and they can be addressed. Also, they need to make sure administrators are

supportive and follow through with discipline. Staff are increasingly frustrated at the lack of discipline that is being allowed, and do not feel they have support of administration. Students know they can get away with skipping 3-4 classes at a time, wandering around the halls, and staff are frustrated at the lack of support. The new superintendent must be willing to direct administration to support staff with follow through on discipline.

- The name of the game at Waukee is change! We are very consistent in the fact that we are always changing.
- Staff is frustrated and need someone who cares about them.
- Collaboration between teachers and administrators regarding contract, calendar, professional development
- Financial issues Being mindful of teacher/family/student needs; putting people first
- Perception of community/public of Waukee Schools The watchful eye of the media and state when it comes to Waukee being a leader of education for the state of Iowa.
- There is broken trust amongst the school board, district office, and staff. This is something that will take more time to heal, and the person that steps into the superintendent role needs to know that this will not be an easy fix.
- - A severe lack of communication with staff (little, if any opportunities to give feedback on what's working and what's not--leads to climate and culture issues within buildings) - a lack of intervention support at the secondary level, specifically the high school - practices that foster systemic oppression of specific demographics - Corruption - lack of integrity from top administrative officials - lack of commitment to holding staff accountable for the high standards Waukee Schools is known for (both at the district level of administration and within buildings)
- As shown by events over the past months, nepotism has been a big issue within WCSD. What steps would the superintendent take to address this issue? Only 51% of WCSD staff are engaged, according to the recent employee engagement survey. What steps would the superintendent take to increase staff engagement? Waukee students and families are coming from increasingly diverse backgrounds (racial, SES, language backgrounds, etc.). Frequently, WCSD staff does not reflect the diversity of our students and their families. How does the superintendent view this issue? What would be their plan to address this issue?
- I have worked in several school districts but the top district administrators here are not trusted.
- Teachers are aware that there has been some "shady" things happening at district office and it has cause the moral to be a little low. It is frustrating to know that we are upholding good values and doing what is best for kids, while there is so much scandal happening in district office. This overshadows the good that we are doing each day. With the district continuing to grow, we want to know that the new superintendent and staff under them are listening to us. We are "in the trenches" each day and know what is happening in the classroom and building. We need a superintendent who values the input of teachers and has their finger on the beat of the district.
- The teachers are trusted. They are not micromanaged.
- Waukee has a strong and positive reputation, which we deserve. But there are some aspects that are hurting students. Most examples are anecdotes, but hear many stories of high school teachers and other school teachers who don't make the students do much, and students know it. They know the class is easy and/or proper teaching strategies are not being implemented. Overwhelming majority of staff are doing everything right, truly

putting the students' needs first, adding to Waukeez's positive reputation. But the new superintendent needs to directly empower administrators to hold the staff accountable and find out what their classes are really like. Then building administrators need to further follow through to see if the students are really being taught in the best ways. Discipline needs to be enforced; many times teachers feel helpless because there is no discipline and/or follow through. Students know they can get away with things because they see the staff have no support to enforce rules. Waukeez is

- The school district is growing rapidly. Everyone is feeling how much we are filling up, and new elementary schools are being constructed, as is the new high school, but the middle schools still need to expand to make room.
- Trust in District Office and the Board has declined due to handling of certain personnel issues. We're growing very rapidly and trying to lead in innovation while we do it.
- A bit of public distrust of current administration needs to be rebuilt.
- Staff is sick of learning about what's going on in the district (good or bad) through the news. Staff lost a lot of confidence in administration and the board starting in Feb. 2017 when they chose not to extend the CBA before the legislature stripped collective bargaining.
- There has been some mistrust with the District Office staff. We are growing more diverse and would like support with this area.
- 1. Our demographic is changing BIG TIME.....many more families from various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds than ever before. 2. Trust has been a concern between community, staff, and admin, and this needs repaired.
- The moral in our district is low at this point. We need to bring up our district in an authentic way.
- The city and the district are growing rapidly and with that comes challenges. The district is growing quickly and the current administration is not prepared with the experience needed for running a larger district.
- as we continue to try to understand the rapid growth, how can we maintain and exceed our high standards that have been held by our district for a long time; what systems are and are not in place to help all district employees understand how our district is and should be run (and how is this communicated to all who will need to know this information)
- Waukeez is a big school, and there are a lot of moving parts. We have programs that aren't offered anywhere else, and for that reason we are not like anywhere else. Waukeez needs its own, special processes/policies. What works in other schools doesn't necessarily work here.
- Distrust of administration. Not much shared decision making at any level. Top down feeling at most levels.
- The superintendent needs to be a leader. That means doing the right thing when it isn't comfortable nor popular. As well, the double standard of Waukeez needs to be eliminated. Whether you are popular, well-liked should not entitle you to do things of a moral turpitude nature in any manner, whatsoever.
- Our district is growing in many ways. In terms of population, we are becoming more diverse (cultures and socioeconomic) each year. As a whole, we need more training on how to be more responsive to our ever-changing student population. We are also growing as a district. With boundary changes and new buildings opening, all stakeholders have different opinions about what should be done. We need a clear, logical vision to help chart the course.

- Lack of transparency Teachers need to feel valued Need an over haul of procedures for how to handle certain situations - EX: After how many years does a building get new carpet or updated iPads. As we open new buildings I am not hearing about a plan for cycling back around to the old buildings for updating.
- I respectfully decline to answer this question; all candidates for the superintendent's job should seek to do their own research and draw their own conclusions before committing themselves to the interview process.
- I'm sure you already know of the PR issues. Beyond that, consistency between buildings might be something to consider. I have worked in three buildings, and the expectations do change based on the building.
- You cannot please anyone. We currently have a bad reputation, but this is the best district I've taught in (DMPS and here) by far. The professional development, teachers (vast percentage of them), and the leaders in this district are mostly amazing.
- There is pressure to continue to excel and grow and innovate. Waukee is watched by others around the state and is under constant scrutiny.
- Our latest administrative problems and turnover should be put upfront and made transparent. We are opening a 2nd high school in 2.5 yrs. (This is a big deal) The parents are very involved in the school. We are a very fast growing district and will continue to be.
- I am sure they are already aware of any issues that i might be aware of, I try to keep my head down and do my job, not get tied up in gossip or negativity.
- We need to be guided into a more urban type of district. Urban is not a bad word. Waukee is no longer the small Iowa town it once was. We are currently working to improve cultural proficiency but some of our systems need to catch up. We need to think about curriculum on a district level in the secondary schools. The elementary schools seem to have a systematic approach to curriculum whereas the secondary schools are more all over the place. The teachers need to be more valued. Period. The teachers are paid more here than other places but our insurance options are expensive. We have highly trained individuals and it is time that we are compensated accordingly. Without teachers this district would be nothing. How important will teachers be to you? Will you be a business leader, or a leader for the kids? If you're a leader for the kids then you will make the teachers lives and pay better.
- There seems to be a growing apathy among students regarding the need to push themselves academically. There is less urgency in the desire to acquire knowledge, often because many families are already successful and view education as important, but a high grade is expected and not necessarily "earned" bu the students.
- Always be fair to everyone and be aware of everything going on.
- We have been in the news quite often and need someone that is knowledgeable about what has been happening and can turn things around at the district level. We also need a superintendent that values low class sizes. Our class sizes are getting too large.
- The teachers here need to feel overtly appreciated and authentically valued. It goes a long way as they work very hard every day and find themselves up against a large, and often negative, societal stereotype.
- Growth and meeting the needs of all children.
- VERY LITTLE technology available to students. Trust is not there for leadership. Often times we function as a small school district - no consistency between buildings, grade levels, etc.

- Need for rebuilding trust

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- Flexibility Integrity Openness Honesty Willingness to be vulnerable- do the right thing even if it is unpopular
- Communication. Following through with that they say they will do. Hear all sides of the story.
- Good communication, willingness to "be visible"
- Wisdom, understanding, passion, purpose.
- The new superintendent should be able to build relationships and restore trust through openness and communication. Additionally, that person should be able to make tough decisions that may be unpopular but that are what is right/best. At the same time, I hope that this person also truly listens to students, parents, and teachers, being open to learning together. I think it is important for the superintendent to establish a good relationship with the teachers' association and see that we all just want students to receive the best possible education and working together makes that happen. I would love it if the superintendent were skilled at implementing systems.
- Be able to continue to build bridges between staff and community. Progressive vision Innovative
- Be willing to ask what the issues are. Sometimes staff is not asked to be honest because they don't want to hear their answers. Be willing to ask and then be willing to admit Waukee has weaknesses and address them.
- Flexible, empathetic, growth mindset
- Caring about staff, good communicator, not afraid to do what is right for students and explain their decision. Physically out in public and in schools so people know who he/she is
- Open-minded, outside the box thinker, desire to visit/spend time in classrooms living the life of the teachers he/she leads
- High morals Does the right thing to serve our district as a whole Conscious of financial needs and current state of our district Knowledgeable about how to increase staff engagement in our district.
- Relationship builder Honest Effective communicator Growth mindset Creative thinker Able to adapt to constant change
- We need a person who is morally and ethically responsible. Someone who is respected and trusted. We need a person who cares about the students and what is best for them. We need someone who is not going to strip away rights from both students and teachers. We need a person who values not only the core subjects, but all elective courses as these are areas where some of our struggling students absolutely thrive and excel! We need someone who is transparent with us and remains true to their word.
- Someone who values feedback, collaboration, and innovation from teachers and students Someone who integrates a systemic focus toward improvement and equality Someone who prioritizes regular reciprocal communication (as in, not just disseminating information, but sharing, responding to, and discussing information) Someone who shows integrity and a commitment to holding ALL staff members accountable for performing their job at the high level our community and students deserve

- Humility At the beginning-of-the-year all-district meeting at Lutheran Church of Hope, the former superintendent bragged about WCSD being "the best school district in the state of Iowa" Just a few months later she was forced to resign. Instead of hanging their hat on past accolades, I would hope that the new superintendent would focus on the many areas in which WCSD can improve outcomes for students, their families and staff.
- We need someone with a high EQ that can WORK with people and not micromanage or give too little oversight.
- They need to be open to change. Waukee is constantly changing with population and diversity as well as with educational practices. I think they also need to be relatable. They should understand that what looks good on paper sometimes does not work. I think they should also be honest and transparent as to why things are happening. For example, when principals or teachers are just "moved" out of a position and given another position in order for them to not be fired.
- A strong leader that cares about kids. Every decision made should be based on if this is what is best for kids.
- Be willing to confront teachers and/or administrators who are not holding the students to the high standards of academics or behavior we expect.
- Fairness, firmness, kindness
- Effective communication and transparency. Willingness to listen to the community and staff when making decisions. Prioritizing students and staff needs.
- Great communicator, positive, transparent
- Communication is huge! We want to learn things about our district from the district not the news. The superintendent needs to be good at collaborating with teachers, problem solving, not micromanaging.
- High integrity, open communication, hard-working, positive, values staff as whole people, and humble.
- 1. Willingness to involve staff in decision making, which starts by listening to the professionals who are working in the buildings every day....some really warped perceptions about what our district looks like in each building. 2. Understanding of how to build a positive culture among all constituents in our organization and community.
- Our new superintendent needs to be familiar with the needs of a district with increasing ethnic diversity and with the experience of running a growing district.
- an understanding of the history of Waukee (where we've come and the vision of where we want to be in the future); what strengths and weaknesses there have been in communication; strong leadership and an ability to grow and change as our district continues to grow and change; an ability to work and communicate with all stakeholders within the district and in the community
- I want a superintendent who is thoughtful, analytical, and understands that a school needs policies/systems that are easy to implement and thoughtful of all stakeholders. Good communication and an eye on the future is also important.
- A belief in the importance of caring for people. A willingness to engage with all constituents. Integrity. Genuine.
- Intelligence, well-educated with experience in the superintendency role, work ethic stamina, flexibility, great communicator (oral & written) maintains personal and professional values, and listens to staff, community, parents, and students alike.

- Preferably, the new superintendent would have experience successfully managing a large (growing) district. They would also have experience working with an urban/diverse population. The ability to continue treating teachers and administrators at the building level as professionals without micro-managing. (I feel like our current superintendent does a good job balancing being our leader at the district-level, but she lets the admin. manage at the building level.)
- Communication Transparency Visibility around the buildings Flexibility Empathy Realizing that teachers families come first Open minded Able to make final decisions in a timely manner Responding to emails/issues in a timely manner Not micromanaging others at DO Delegating duties as appropriate
- A successful superintendent will seek to take what is already excellent about Waukee and work to make it better; they will do so with transparency, with integrity, and with a logical priority list of stakeholders when it comes to making decisions.
- Be visible. Get into schools and get into classrooms.
- Have a thick skin. We have a lot of helicopter parents that will try to bully educators into their way or point of view, and that point of view or opinion is not always correct.
- I think the most important skills of the superintendent include the following 1) ability to communicate and be the "face" of our district. Strong verbal and non-verbal skills are essential. 2) the ability to make decisions in the best interest of stakeholders without getting involved in the politics of the community, 3) be the cheerleader and support students and teachers and groups
- Qualities of the new superintendent should include transparency, competent, well-versed in school finance, being visible in the community. I think some experience with a large school district would be beneficial.
- There is autonomy within the schools, but as we grow bigger there is also a need for some tight and loose. We have swayed from that to a lot of loose, many people feel like we need to have some consistency across buildings.
- They need to have many, many years as a teacher and also a principal. While they do need to be business savvy, they should be more student and teacher oriented. This person should be able to prove how they have changed with education over the years. How have they kept up with the ever changing world of education?
- The most important skill will be facilitating the growth of the district and the ability to find ways to say "no" to an expectant and maybe entitled public.
- Fair, friendly, people person, good knowledge of the classroom and all aspects of education.
- The superintendent needs to be kind, caring, innovative, and able to learn at a fast pace.
- Authentic, approachable, heart-focused, student and teacher centered, and personable. This person should not feel above anyone else but as an equal partner in this important work, routinely pulling on the strengths of many district leaders.
- Our new superintendent needs to be a progressive thinker, positive role-model within our community, visible in our community and schools, promotes our school district in a positive light, willing to change procedures even when it is not popular to do so, and most importantly, put kids as the top priority when making decisions.
- Trustworthy, teacher focused, transparent, willing to push back against things that are only done because they're already done (for instance - why do we still have only Mac computers that are much more expensive and harder to maintain???)
- Integrity Genuinely cares about people