

# **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROFILE**

**Oakwood City School District**

**Oakwood, Ohio**

**December 12, 2022**



**Prepared for the Board of Education**

**By**  
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**Oakwood City School District**  
**Superintendent Search Profile Report**

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This report presents the summary of findings from the Superintendent Search Profile focus group forums conducted by K-12 Business Consulting, Inc. (K-12), on November 21 and 29, and from written search profiles submitted by numerous stakeholders. Once the Board of Education selected K-12 to conduct the superintendent search, a Search Profile Questionnaire document was created in order to solicit input from various stakeholders in the community. The Board and administration developed a broad list of community stakeholders to solicit input from as well as a general community wide invitation to meet with K-12 staff members Deb Campbell and Frank Forsthoefel in order to discuss, in greater depth, the search factors and desired new superintendent characteristics. Any stakeholder who had a desire to express an opinion was welcome to submit a search profile and personally meet with K-12 at the open focus group forums. The information obtained through these sources, and summarized below, should be used to assist the Board in identifying the desired characteristics of superintendent candidates. K-12 had 107 participants attend and give input at the focus group sessions and collected 232 survey questionnaires.

The Search Profile Questionnaire form was made available to the district staff, all stakeholders through the district website, plus all individuals who attended the focus group sessions. In addition to the individuals who returned written or online search profile questionnaires, there were stakeholders who participated in interviews and focus group sessions facilitated by K-12. The results of the written Search Profile Questionnaire form are included in this report along with several comments received in face-to-face discussions held at community forums.

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

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

K-12 would like to commend the Board of Education for its efforts to include many stakeholders of the school district in the development of the superintendent search profile. Many survey respondents and focus group forum participants expressed positive feelings about being involved in this process and the opportunity to help shape the Oakwood City Schools. We would also like to thank Traci Hale, Director of Community Relations and Laura Sauber, Treasurer/CFO for the professional manner in which all arrangements were made, including the dissemination of invitations and search profiles, as well as scheduling the focus group sessions that made this profile possible.

## **STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT**

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

### **CONSISTENT THEMES**

- Oakwood Schools have high academic standards with a tradition and reputation of excellence.
- Oakwood Schools enjoy high levels of community support.
- Oakwood Schools have highly trained, dedicated, caring and professional staff.
- Oakwood Schools enjoy strong engagement and involvement from its parents.
- Oakwood Schools offer many and varied opportunities for students, including academic and extra-curricular, that strive to meet students' individual needs.
- The City of Oakwood is a small, walkable community.

### **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS**

- The district enjoys high academic success/achievement.
- Oakwood Schools are fortunate to have dedicated teachers and staff that are committed to students.
- The district has motivated, caring students.
- Oakwood Schools enjoy broad parent and community support.
- Oakwood Schools offer a wide variety of academic and extra-curricular options for students.
- Parents in Oakwood are involved in their schools.
- Oakwood is a close-knit community.
- Oakwood Schools promote excellence in all areas.

### **ADMINISTRATORS**

- Oakwood Schools have highly professional, motivated, and dedicated staff.
- The district enjoys much community support.
- There is a strong culture of learning in Schools where growth is valued.
- Family involvement is high in Oakwood Schools.
- Oakwood Schools have students of high quality.
- The district has strong curriculum and instruction with many course offerings for students.
- Oakwood Schools have been fortunate to have historical levy support.

### **TEACHERS**

- Oakwood Schools have high quality, caring and dedicated teachers and staff.
- The district receives high levels of community support.
- The small size of the district and community is valued.
- There is a strong connection between teachers and parents; and parents are highly engaged in the schools.
- Oakwood Schools have a tradition of excellence and high academic rigor as shown by high test scores.
- The student/teacher relationships are strong and positive in Oakwood Schools.
- There are many opportunities for students.
- Oakwood Schools are blessed with hard-working students.
- Professional development is encouraged in Oakwood Schools with strong vertical cohesion between grade levels.
- Oakwood Schools have abundant resources and has traditionally received strong levy support.
- Oakwood staff receive strong support from administration.

### **SUPPORT STAFF**

- The district has highly professional, dedicated staff.

- There is a strong sense of community in Oakwood.
- Oakwood offers many opportunities for students.
- The City of Oakwood is a small, safe community with multiple generations as residents who partners with the school district.
- The district implements a strong curriculum that has academic rigor supplemented by abundant resources.
- There is a strong sense of care for students and families within the district.
- Special education support is strong.
- Communication is improving.

### **PARENTS AND COMMUNITY**

- The academic rigor, quality of education, high academic standards and strong curriculum are strengths of Oakwood Schools.
- Parental involvement and support for the schools is incredibly strong including PTO and volunteer opportunities.
- The district is blessed with outstanding teachers, counselors and support staff that care for students, are highly trained and are of high quality.
- There is a strong sense of community support for and involvement in the schools.
- There is a tradition of excellence in the highly rated Oakwood Schools.
- Oakwood Schools enjoy small class sizes and favorable student/teacher ratios.
- The district strives to meet students where they are and attend to their individual needs.
- Oakwood is a small, walkable community where families are involved.
- There are varied opportunities for students including many course offerings (arts, music, theatre, career technical, extra-curricular).
- The district is implementing Social Emotion Learning and Diversity Programming within its schools.
- Oakwood students are high quality and involved in their schools.
- The programs to assist students with unique learning needs are strong (gifted, special education).
- There continues to be growth in the transparency of communication from the district.
- The financial support, tax base in Oakwood is strong which provides necessary resources for the schools. There are opportunities for private funding sources including the Oakwood Foundation.
- There are strong, dedicated leaders in Oakwood Schools.

### **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

- Oakwood Schools have high academic achievement among its students.
- There are great, caring teachers in Oakwood Schools.
- Oakwood is a small, walkable city with a strong community feel.
- There are many opportunities for students including academic clubs, arts, specials, and athletics.
- Athletes are supported in Oakwood Schools.
- Recess and lunch are positives in Oakwood Schools.

### **IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING DISTRICT**

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

### **CONSISTENT THEMES**

- There is a division in the community because of differing political views negatively impacting the school system.

- Consistent, transparent communication from the district is an opportunity for growth.
- There are polarized views regarding the EDI/SEL initiative in the district and the impact of this in the classroom.
- Meeting the needs of all learners along the educational continuum, specifically special education students, remains an opportunity for growth for the district.
- School funding, appropriate resources and aging facilities remain a challenge for the district.
- The mental and emotional well being of students and staff should remain an area of focus for the district.

### **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS**

- There are divided perspectives within the community translating into differing goals for the district and can potentially distract the district from its mission and strategic plan.
- There is a need for improved special education programming and oversight.
- Oakwood students are coming to school with increased social/emotional challenges.
- The district needs to continue to positively engage with supporters.
- There are increased expectations from state and federal policies.
- There is a potential for tax fatigue which could hamper the district providing appropriate resources for the schools.

### **ADMINISTRATORS**

- The future financial support and corresponding community levy support will continue to be a challenge.
- The demographics of the students are changing in Oakwood.
- There is a perceived distrust of the schools among some parents.
- There is a cost of responding to conflicting agendas within the community that is impacting the schools.
- Aging facilities
- The social/emotion well being of students and staff continues to be a growing concern.
- A challenge persists in balancing the communication to the community.
- The district needs to continue to adapt to the future in the interest of students.
- Managing social media

### **TEACHERS**

- Aging facilities
- There is an opportunity to improve the communication between the Board/District to building staff to alleviate the perceived disconnect.
- Staff morale is low and an opportunity for growth would be to celebrate and build trust with staff.
- There is concern about high amount of district office administrative staff, specifically in the finance department, especially when building staff has remained flat or reduced.
- There is a community divide that has caused the district to lack continuity and goal focus.
- There is an opportunity to increase support for students requiring special assistance (a growing need) such as intervention and special education.
- There is no defined SS, Science or Writing curriculums.
- Class sizes are increasing.
- Lack of dedicated collaboration time.
- There is too much focus on EDI/SEL in the district.
- Maintaining the educational core/excellence remains a priority.
- There is an enhanced focus on gifted programming.
- Lack of lunch supervision at HS/JH lunch
- The new grading scale remains an area of concern among some.

## **SUPPORT STAFF**

- There is a divisive political climate in the community impacting the schools.
- There are increased parental expectations on the schools.
- Communication, including the rationale around decision making, is an opportunity for growth.
- There are differing perceptions about what is and what is not being taught in the schools.
- The tax burden on the community continues to be a challenge.
- There are some (mis)perceptions about the economic status of Oakwood residents.
- Aging facilities and space
- There is a negative view of the Board of Education among some.
- Promoting inclusion and equality remains an opportunity for growth.

## **PARENTS AND COMMUNITY**

- There is a division in the community because of differing political views negatively impacting the school system.
- There is the belief that certain political agendas are impacting what is being taught in the schools, what resources are being used and what views teachers are imparting to students.
- There are polarized views on the district's SEL/EDI initiative.
- The diversity (lack of) students and staff continues to be an area of concern.
- Meeting the needs of all learners, and providing the necessary resources (including guidance), remains an opportunity of growth for the district.
- Transparent communication from the Board and district administration is an opportunity of growth for the district.
- School funding, aging facilities and attending to the Master Facility Plan remain areas of growth.
- Lost instructional time and a renewed focus on academic excellence remains a challenge.
- Attracting and retaining high quality and diverse staff is an opportunity of growth.
- There is a perception that trust from some parents in the schools is waning and that overly vocal parents/community members remain a challenge for the district.
- Improvement is needed in special education program and oversight.
- The mental wellness of students and staff remains a concern.
- Bullying, homophobia, antisemitism remain a concern.
- There is the perception that some of the Oakwood traditions are dwindling and need to be restored/maintained.
- There is a concern regarding lack of accountability at the administrative level.
- There is a need for the district to be more responsive to working parents and changing family dynamics.
- A clear vision for the district (The Why) is an opportunity for growth.
- School safety will always remain a concern.

## **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

- The physical space within the schools is an opportunity for growth.
- The political conflict within the community is impacting the schools.
- There is a lack of community involvement and feel within the schools.
- The advisory time in the high school is an opportunity for improvement.
- There needs to be a revised process to inform student about the college application process including the pros and cons of the ACT vs the SAT.

- There is much academic pressure on students.
- There needs to be improved communication to students about opportunities outside the classroom including clubs etc.
- Meeting the needs of all learners is a continued opportunity for growth.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW SUPERINTENDENT**

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

### **CONSISTENT THEMES**

- A highly skilled communicator who will engage with staff and community members. This person should listen, clearly relay messages, and inspire others by his/her words.
- Someone with high expectations for students, staff, and the community who can bring new programs and take calculated risks to make our district great.
- A dedicated, experienced leader who engages with and unites our schools.
- A leader who recognizes and appreciates the diversity in Oakwood and is committed to inclusive practices.
- A strong leader who is visible in the classrooms and community while building trust.
- A servant leader who is open, honest, humble, and flexible.

### **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS**

- A strong leader who is forward thinking and can guide us in pursuing new ideas and proven practices.
- Someone who is an excellent communicator to all groups within and outside of Oakwood Schools.
- A servant leader who is open, honest, humble, and flexible.
- A person who is a creative problem solver willing to take calculated risks in order to improve the district.
- Someone who will collaborate with all parties and guide our administration and the district to excellence.
- A leader committed to equity.

### **ADMINISTRATORS**

- A kind, dedicated, experienced leader who will engage with staff and community members.
- Someone who is highly skilled in communication and will strive to inform everyone about our schools.
- A transparent leader who can articulate a vision for the district.
- A leader who is approachable, open to communication, and able to collaborate with staff and community.
- A person engaged with students and staff who makes decisions that will lead to their success.
- Someone who set high expectations for staff, students, and administrators while serving as a mentor and example of excellence.

### **TEACHERS**

- A strong leader who is visible in the classrooms and community and builds trust with people.
- Someone who is excellent at communication (both speaking and listening) and who's words send a clear, concise message to everyone.
- A person who will put student's needs first and strive to keep Oakwood excellent.
- Teachers would like a courageous leader who is approachable, collaborative, and transparent.

- Someone who seeks to understand the community, appreciates the uniqueness of Oakwood, and engages with students, staff, and the community at large.
- A leader who can unify people and lead by example.

**SUPPORT STAFF**

- Support Staff would like a leader who is involved with the staff, students, and community. Someone who values this unique place.
- A friendly, approachable leader who is visible in our schools and the Oakwood community.
- It is important for our leader to be a good communicator always giving a transparent message.
- Someone who is personable, humble, and strong in their leadership style.
- A leader with experience as a school superintendent.

**PARENTS AND COMMUNITY**

- A leader who appreciates the diversity in Oakwood and is committed to inclusive practices.
- Parents and community members want someone who is an excellent communicator who will listen, clearly relay messages, and inspire others by their words.
- A person who will have high standards and expectations for staff and students. He/She will strive to make Oakwood Schools the best while always keeping the focus on our students.
- Someone who is forward thinking, evaluates the district, and advocates for changes needed to ensure excellence.
- A unifying, healing force in a deeply divided community who will listen then lead without bias.
- A strong, dynamic leader who is empathic, compassionate, respectful, and trustworthy.
- A person who is comfortable engaging with students, staff, and the community.

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

- A strong leader who can withstand the pressures of a demanding community.
- Someone who is kind, respectful, and flexible.
- Students would like a leader who brings new ideas to the district.
- A person who is an advocate for diversity and equality.

**SUPERINTENDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY RANKING**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>BOE</b>	<b>ADMIN</b>	<b>TEACHERS</b>	<b>SUPPORT STAFF</b>	<b>COMMUNITY &amp; PARENTS</b>	<b>H.S. STUDENTS</b>
<b>1 = MOST IMPORTANT</b>			<b>TO</b>	<b>10 = LEAST IMPORTANT</b>		



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

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

**1-5 MOST IMPORTANT TO 6-10 LEAST IMPORTANT**

**RANK**

**TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS**

- 1 Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, parents, and students.
- 2 Strong interpersonal and public relations skills.
- 3 Effective at creating and a vision for the district

- 4 Effective with both written and verbal communications.
- 5 Personal involvement and interest in the community.

**RANK BOTTOM 5 CHARACTERISTICS**

- 6 Effective organizational and management skills.
- 7 Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations.
- 8 Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum.
- 9 Successful experiences as a superintendent of schools.
- 10 Fiscal management expertise.

**SUMMARY**

The information gathered through surveys and focus group sessions bear strong similarity across all groups with respect to the Oakwood City School District’s strengths, issues and challenges facing the district, as well as the characteristics desired in the next superintendent. The consistent themes expressed by groups and individuals about the Oakwood City School District’s *greatest strengths* include:

- Oakwood Schools have high academic standards with a tradition and reputation of excellence.
- Oakwood Schools enjoy high levels of community support.
- Oakwood Schools have highly trained, dedicated, caring and professional staff.
- Oakwood Schools enjoy strong engagement and involvement from its parents.
- Oakwood Schools offer many and varied opportunities for students, including academic and extra-curricular, that strive to meet students’ individual needs.
- The City of Oakwood is a small, walkable community.

The top *concerns and challenges* facing the Board of Education and the new superintendent in the future - all of which appeared on surveys received and were expressed during the focus group sessions – include the following:

- There is a division in the community because of differing political views negatively impacting the school system.
- Consistent, transparent communication from the district is an opportunity for growth.
- There are polarized views regarding the EDI/SEL initiative in the district and the impact of this in the classroom.
- Meeting the needs of all learners along the educational continuum, specifically special education students, remains an opportunity for growth for the district.
- School funding, appropriate resources and aging facilities remain a challenge for the district.
- The mental and emotional well-being of students and staff should remain an area of focus for the district.

It quite often is difficult to capture all the characteristics that respondents were looking for in a new superintendent. It is certain that no one person could embody all that was mentioned as desired attributes for the new superintendent. The clear majority of survey respondents and focus group session participants expressed the need for the new superintendent to be a person who has the following characteristics: (A) A highly skilled communicator who will engage with staff and community members. This person should listen, clearly relay messages, and inspire others by his/her words. (B) Someone with high expectations for students, staff, and the community who can bring new programs and take calculated risks to make our district great. (C) A dedicated, experienced leader who engages with and unites our schools. (D) A leader who recognizes and appreciates the diversity in Oakwood and is committed to inclusive practices. (E) A strong

leader who is visible in the classrooms and community while building trust. (F) A servant leader who is open, honest, humble, and flexible. The themes also closely matched the top five (5) desired superintendent characteristics of the new superintendent – in the eyes of the sub-groups that responded to Question #4 in the survey. (See top of page 8).

The new superintendent will need to be visibly active in the school buildings and in the community. He/she must embrace the traditional values that are evident in the district as well as the strong sense of community that exists. It will be essential for the new superintendent to be a critical listener and a person who can build trust and unity. Communication by the new leader must be frequent, honest, open, and transparent. The next superintendent must understand educational excellence and strive to break down barriers that prevents excellence from happening. The new leader must be an experienced administrator who is sincere, approachable, and collaborative, and able to demonstrate trustworthiness and integrity.

We believe that the right candidate for superintendent will recognize that: (1) Oakwood City School District is a close-knit community that is full of pride about the school district; (2) Parents and the community genuinely care about the school district and are supportive of the students; and (3) The district has provided quality education for years in the Dayton area and is recognized nationally for excellence. This position will be of interest to the right superintendent candidates. We believe we will find the right potential candidates who have the attributes outlined herein, possess the skills and energy needed to address current and future issues expressed by survey respondents, and who will be happy to lead the district and the community into the future.

Respectfully submitted:

K-12 Business Consulting, Inc.