

AGENDA

**Addison Central School District
ACSD Board
Special Meeting
Wednesday, March 1, 2023, 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm
208 Charles Avenue, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

All students will reach their full academic potential and be prepared for success as engaged citizens.

OUR MISSION

To provide an innovative, rigorous, and supportive educational community that inspires a passion for learning and cultivates empathy and responsibility.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

Link to join Webinar

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81633568651>

- A. Call to Order Upon Reaching A Quorum
 - 1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff
- B. Public Comment
- C. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of February 13, 2023
- D. Report of the Board
 - 1. Action: Approve Sabbatical Side letter
 - 2. Action: Approve Sabbatical Request
 - 3. Superintendent Search Update
- E. Other
- F. Adjournment

***Public Comment Guidelines:**

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
ACSD Board
Board Meeting
Monday, February 13, 2023, 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm
48 Deerfield Ln, Middlebury VT & Virtual Connection**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

All students will reach their full academic potential and be prepared for success as engaged citizens.

OUR MISSION

To provide an innovative, rigorous, and supportive educational community that inspires a passion for learning and cultivates empathy and responsibility.

In Attendance

Barbara Wilson; Brian Bauer; Ellen Whelan-Wuest; James Malcolm; Jamie McCallum; Jennifer Nuceder; Joanna Doria; Lindsey Hescoock; Mary Gill; Mary Heather Noble; Steve Orzech; Suzanne Buck; Victoria Jette

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82045646293>

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching A Quorum

Meeting called to order at 5:33 p.m.

1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators and Staff

ACSD Administration and Staff present: Peter Burrows, Superintendent; Caitlin Steele, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; Nicole Carter, Director of Equity and Student Services; Heather Crowley, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent; Will Hatch, Director of Technology; Matthew Corrente, Director of Finance and Operations (remote); Emily Blistein, Director of Communications & Engagement (remote); Michaela Wisell, Co-Principal of MUMS; Mike Dudek, Co-Principal of MUMS; Connor Young, Music Teacher at MUMS.

2. Public Comment

Rebecca Kerr of Shoreham made a statement, wanting to know why her children are not receiving the academic services they are supposed to receive.

B. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of January 23, 26, and 30, 2023

Note for the record: Jen Nuceder abstained from a vote for the minutes of January 30, 2023. Lindsey Hescoock abstained from a vote for the minutes of January 26, 2023 and January 30, 2023.

Motion to approve the minutes of January 23, 2023; January 26, 2023; and January 30, 2023.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: James Malcolm Status: Passed

C. Approve ACSD Bills

James Malcolm presented the ACSD Bills as follows:

Read on January 30, 2023:

Payroll: \$3,951.46

Payroll: \$865,012.04

Payroll: \$736.67

General Fund: \$1,361,204.71 (Note: ~\$400K is teacher retirement, ~\$500K is health & dental)

Read on February 13, 2023:

General Fund: \$273,383.51

Payroll: \$868,277.60

James Malcolm also noted that the Finance Committee had recently met with Matt Corrente to review the 2nd quarter report, and that everything looked to be on track and in order. Steve Orzech mentioned the committee's discussion regarding unspent money from unfilled positions -- and whether it might be beneficial for the Board to consider spending some of that money toward recruiting teachers and staff outside of our standard catchment. He is concerned about student needs not being met as a result of unfilled positions.

Barb Wilson also expressed concern about the impact on students, and wondered if the District should consider spending some of this excess on summer programming.

Motion to approve paying ACSD bills as presented.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Barbara Wilson Status: Passed

D. Middle School Presentation

20 min

Michaela Wisell welcomed the Board to MUMS and introduced Connor Young, Music Teacher for MUMS, and the MUMS Jazz Band. The band played a few songs for the audience.

Mike Dudek introduced the MUMS Student Ambassador program with a video presentation, and described the student activities happening this week as a part of Winter Carnival. The MUMS Student Ambassador Program is led by MUMS counselors Darcey Wijsenbeek and Elizabeth Burrows.

Questions from the Board:

Mary Heather Noble asked about changes that have been made over the past academic year, and how those systems have impacted the atmosphere at MUMS. Michaela Wisell described the working groups that have been focused on climate and culture at MUMS, as well as the changes that were made to the team structures to encourage smaller teams for improved teacher/student relationships. She noted the biggest change has been being able to welcome students, families, and visitors back into schools, as well as the efforts to incorporate joy back into the MUMS experience via dances, activity nights, and other social events. She also said having a Dean of Students to focus on the climate and culture at MUMS has been beneficial. Mike Dudek mentioned the positive work of the newly formed Friends of MUMS parent group, which has been instrumental for coordinating events and activities through fundraising and community partnerships.

Mary Heather then asked about ongoing challenges at MUMS, and what needs continue to persist. Michaela and Mike both said the largest challenge is scarce resources within the

community to provide services to students and families that are really struggling. This is not just a MUMS problem, thought -- it is community-wide and nation-wide. They are having to develop creative ways to serve student needs, and are also always thinking about how to ease the transitional time at MUMS for students, as they move from elementary school into high school environments.

Barb Wilson asked if the MUMS community has suffered from the vacancies. Mike responded that they have felt lucky to have their classroom teacher positions filled, but that the largest need is for one-on-one paraprofessionals to assist with students on plans.

E. Report of the Superintendent

Peter Burrows reported that central office is finalizing the academic calendar for the '23-'24 year. He noted that the weekend traditionally regarded as Columbus Day is being changed to Indigenous Peoples Day holiday -- a move that is happening in several Districts across Vermont.

Peter updated the Board on the hiring process for the new MUHS principal. They are setting the hiring committee, which will be led by Jay Nichols of the Vermont Principals Association. The position has been open for 1.5 weeks, and will remain open into early March. The hiring committee will distill the applicant pool down to a finalist, which will be presented to the Board in April.

Peter also provided a quick update on the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) that is being developed within the District. The group has passed bylaws with the goal of finalizing the SEPAC to support teachers and parents with special needs students. Central Office supports the group -- this is a common occurrence in other states.

Peter also mentioned that several MUHS band and choir students represented ACSD at Districts down in Bennington.

Questions from the Board:

Barb Wilson asked if it would be possible for the SEPAC to provide a presentation to the Board, and also serve as a resources to parents like the one who spoke during public comment.

Lindsey Hescocock asked if Central Office could consider reducing the number of early release days, as these are challenging for working parents. Peter acknowledged the difficulty, but noted the importance of this consistent time for teacher collaboration and professional development -- the District needs to work with the community at large to develop solutions to a broader child care problem. Lindsey also asked about the timeline for transitioning students from elementary schools to MUMS and MUMS students to MUHS. Michaela Wisell provided the schedule for the "moving up" process, which is beginning soon.

1. Discussion: Addison County Middle School Program

20 min

Nicole Carter provided a presentation on the Addison Consortium Program -- a collaboration between ACSD, MAUSD, and ANWSD to provide out-of-district special education programming for students with significant needs. The existing program serves 12 high school students (4 from each district), and the Districts hope to open a middle school version next year -- they still need to find a location, which has been discussed at recent Facilities Committee meetings. The Facilities Committee asked Nicole to provide the Board with some context.

Nicole described the program in the context of general education classrooms and highly individualized programs -- ACP serves students who struggle in regular classroom settings

and need special instruction on how to manage in the general education setting. Students receive services and have modified immersive instruction to meet their IEP and academic goals. The costs of staffing and operating the ACP are shared between the three districts -- which ends up significantly reducing costs of providing out-of-district services for those students, since they do not have to travel to Burlington and beyond to enroll in other program locations. In general, costs to send qualified students to receive services outside of ACP can range from \$50,000 - \$200,000 per student -- plus additional transportation costs. The annual tuition for ACP is \$34,768.

Questions from the Board:

Victoria Jette asked about the magnitude of need -- are the 4 spots available to ACSD enough? Nicole responded that ACSD has more students in need than we have space for. Mary Heather Noble asked what is currently happening with those students -- Nicole said some of them are being sent outside the county, and some have individualized services. Barb Wilson asked if it makes sense to build out a larger program if it saves so much money -- it depends on the number of students we have with these needs, and how well the ACP serves them, but the financial benefit is compelling. Barb also asked how the consortium measures the ACP's success -- Nicole noted that the success of the program is measured against the students IEP goals, and whether the program is helping them to achieve the goals.

Brian Bauer asked if Nicole had connected with the program served out of Otter Valley -- she has. Mary Gill asked if there is a similar program planned for elementary school students -- can we address significant needs at an earlier age to make these students better prepared for a general education classroom at middle school and high school ages? Nicole responded that for elementary schools, the solution is usually to resource the school instead of removing children to a different setting (e.g., the Wellness and Learning Center at Mary Hogan School). The reason is that it is best for students and families, as removing them from their school has different social & emotional impacts.

Jamie McCallum wondered if the required use of "least restrictive environment" makes it less likely for students to be identified as needing and receiving special services. Nicole explained that the identification of a disability that requires accommodations is a separate question & process. The Federal policy around special education is to do as much as possible as close to the general education setting -- and that removal from that setting is a sort of last resort. The ACP is meant to be fluid, to allow students to participate and then return back to the general education setting with appropriate accommodations.

Joanna Doria asked if students currently enrolled in programs outside of Addison County might be pulled out of those programs if the middle school ACP opens up and has space. Nicole said it depends on whether the current system is working well for the student -- it would not be likely to pull services that are working. Lindsey Hescocock asked about the general student population and the impacts on them? What part of the process ensures preservation of the learning environment for the other students in the classroom? Nicole explained that the accommodations and enrollment in out-of-district learning are determined by the needs of the special education student. Solving for impacts to peers is part of the equation, but that is not the determining factor.

Mary Heather Noble asked about the duration of enrollment for an ACP student. Nicole estimated about a year. Victoria provided a recap and put Board members on notice that the facilities committee would likely bring questions regarding program location to the full Board in the near future.

F. Report of the Board

1. Action: Amend Article 14

45 min

Victoria Jette reported the latest updates with respect to amending Article 14 of the ACSD Charter, including the Board's recent (that day) of a letter from an attorney representing Save Our Schools, LLC -- the letter asserts that the ACSD Board has an obligation to warn the content of the January 2023 SOS petition for a vote to allow the voters of ACSD to decide whether to amend Article 14 to include either a Town vote or District vote prior to any school closure. Victoria noted the timing of the letter, but said that the executive committee was able to consult with attorney Chris Leopold about it. Victoria reported that Chris still felt the Board prior decision to refuse action on the SOS petition was legally sound, and that it could proceed with voting to amend Article 14 if it chooses.

Ellen Whelan-Wuest asked for clarification regarding the decision to proceed with a vote -- is it because of the attorney's disagreement with the legal arguments outlined in the letter or that the letter is addressing a separate issue? Mary Heather Noble responded that her understanding from Chris Leopold is that he has considered the letter and that the Board's decision not to act on the SOS petition was still valid and has legal justification.

James Malcolm made the point that there are two different legal opinions of the matter -- the letter from SOS threatens legal action, and sometimes this is what happens in a conflict that can't be resolved. He personally feels the Board's justification is sound. Suzanne Buck noted that Chris Leopold brought up the fact that the statute that provided a 4-year moratorium on school closures after unification is no longer in effect -- the legal authority to close a school falls to the Board and can't be taken away. It is a statutorily provided right. Mary Heather Noble also mentioned Chris's observation that the petition itself proposed "either or" language to voters that is not typical. Most warned questions are a yes or no format, so the structure of the language itself is not considered best practice.

Jamie McCallum asked if this was a conversation with the attorney or whether the executive committee had received anything in writing. Victoria explained that there was only time to have a conversation because the SOS attorney's letter came hours before this board meeting. Barb Wilson wondered if it would have made sense to have a full Board participate in a legal brief during executive session. Joanna Doria echoed Barb's comment, noting that past conversations with the attorney having to do with the Charter change has also occurred with the Executive Committee when it could have happened in Executive session of the full Board. Mary Heather noted that this has been true for the most recent discussions around a charter change, but that she believes the full board has also discussed legal questions around charter change in executive session in the past.

Victoria Jette then asked Suzanne Buck to present the two motions that the Ad Hoc Committee created. Suzanne first read the language of the current Article 14, and then read the two options to amend Article 14 -- first to include a District vote, then to include a Town vote in addition to the existing supermajority board approval required to close a school. Suzanne noted the changes proposed in each option.

James Malcolm asked which Board members served on the Ad Hoc Committee -- Suzanne Buck, Joanna Doria, Mary Heather Noble, Steve Orzech, and Barb Wilson. Lindsey Hescock asked for clarification on whether the Board needed a majority or a supermajority to pass an amendment to Article 14 -- Victoria responded that it would just require a majority Board vote.

Barb Wilson made a motion to adopt the language to amend Article 14 to include a Town

vote. Joanna Doria seconded. Barb read from a prepared statement, explaining that her support for this amendment is grounded in democratic accountability. She believes that consolidation has resulted in dilution of democratic participation in schools, and has distanced schools from the community. She believes requiring a Town vote will counterbalance this impact. She spoke to the perception of communities not wanting to relinquish local control, and argued that town members simply want to ensure that their children do not become casualties in the process of closing a school -- there is real concern about the educational and social/emotional impact to children in these communities. She is particularly concerned about the impact to children with special needs. A Town vote helps to ensure that small communities have the leverage to ensure that any negative impact to their children will be addressed. She also cited Peter Lynch's recent Letter in the Addison Independent.

Jamie McCallum spoke in support of adding the Town vote -- He also appreciated Peter Lynch's op-ed. A town vote is not an obstacle, rather it is an opportunity for the Board really engage with the people most impacted by a school closure. This is a responsibility the Board should take very seriously, and having a governance structure that forces the Board to do that will hold it accountable to the community. It will force the Board and community to identify mutually beneficial options. He also mentioned equity, and that not having a Town vote flies in the face of what the District claims to value. Equity is about having a voice. These decisions disproportionately impact towns -- therefore those towns should have a larger say in the decision. It's a principle.

James Malcolm spoke against adding a Town vote, as he has in the past. Act 46 was put in place for many reasons; one of the things it did was to remove the financial and legal structure of town-based schools. Unified districts have one board and are responsible for all of the educational resources in each of its member towns. He cannot get past the idea of codifying a way for one town to have control over a decision that is legally the District's -- this is undemocratic. It used to be that schools were funded by their towns and town voters had control over the budgets, boards, and curriculum, but this has changed. Some may not like it, but this is the fact. No town should be able to decide whether or not to close a school that they're not even financially responsible for. The District electorate has authority over the District's budget and board membership, so it would only make sense to have a District-wide vote if any change is made to the charter.

Joanna Doria spoke in support of adding a Town vote with a prepared statement. She countered the argument against based on the District's fiscal responsibility, noting that the District electorate already has the means to influence decisions regarding this responsibility - which is through the budget vote. But she believes the matter of school closure should be decided by the impacted town voters to put the voices of the most impacted and vulnerable at the forefront. She argues for working with communities as a partner, not as an authority -- and believe this will help to address some of the misconceptions and trust issues that exist. She believes that families want what's best for their children and their neighbor's children. We have to trust our towns if we are to ask for their trust in return. All but 2 districts in Vermont have a town vote in their charter (though some have sun-setted), and in this context she does not think having a town vote in our charter asks for too much. It's what we need to do to restore

Ellen Whelan-Wuest also spoke in support of adding a Town vote. She does not agree that no town would agree to close its school if it is also presented with a vision of the benefits to offset the loss to students. She acknowledged that some may never vote to close their school, but really believes that most will have an open mind if people are given something to vote for. She believe that people care about their kids and other's kids. Voters already have

authority over many board decisions: bonds, budgets, etc. This is what holds the Board accountable to be very thoughtful about their planning and decisions. The voters of this District are thoughtful and engaged -- if you are working with an electorate like this, you can have confidence that if you show up to a conversation with a well-thought plan, voters will show up the way you hope they will. It is accountability for the best plan for every child in the district, and accountability to communicate it that plan to achieve the intended outcome.

Mary Heather Noble spoke against adding the Town vote. She appreciates everyone's thoughtful arguments, but she cannot support giving a Town decision-making authority over something that is financially and legally the District's responsibility. It seems that proponent of a town vote do not trust that voters in the rest of the District also expect a compelling argument about a proposed school closure -- that they also expect facts and figures and valid information before supporting the closure of a neighbor's school. There is a mutual distrust contributing to this conflict -- she believes that we can work through that if/when the time comes to have an actual conversation about school closure. But it should be a District decision. The authority to decide is statutorily given to the Board. She believes much of the SOS activity is to make ACSD ACSU again, with a return to local control. We are not ACSU anymore. We are a unified district with a single budget and an electorate that is responsible for approving that budget and filling these board seats. So if this Board decides to share its decision-making authority about school closure with the electorate, it must be the electorate of the district. Mary Heather also pointed out inaccuracies in the statistics presented in Joanna's statement about the number of districts that have a town vote and noted that the Board should be advocating for the voices of students and families whose needs are currently not being met because resources are spread too thin.

Mary Gill spoke out against the Town vote, noting that the most democratic thing to do would be to open the decision up to the District electorate. She agrees with James Malcolm and Mary Heather Noble.

Steve Orzech spoke at length against the Town vote, stating that such an amendment would be going backward. Some of the town schools we currently have are not equipped to provide a modern education. History has shown an evolution from the one-room schoolhouse to town schools, and the evolution continues to a unified district. Some of our town schools do not even have enough students to justify a full time principal. These are hard decisions being made by the District, and involve a lot of emotion. He complained about SOS using emotion to spread deceptive information, and stated that some ACSDs Board members have been placed by SOS to champion its cause. The District has to provide more services to address increasing student need -- and this is not being acknowledged by some. He also suggested that some people in the smaller schools may be motivated by the desire to keep their children out of more socioeconomically/racially/ethnically diverse schools. This remark prompted a response from Jamie McCallum -- and a brief but tense back-and-forth ensued. Mary Heather Noble called for Point of Order. Victoria asked to let Steve finish. Steve continued, again implying SOS's manipulation of emotion when the decisions need to be based on real data. He thinks it is irresponsible for the school board to surrender this decision making authority. SOS won't stop until it gets what it wants. He thinks only a board majority should have the authority to close a school.

Lindsey Hescoock said she has struggled with this choice. She sees valid arguments on both sides. She is troubled by the lack of trust. There doesn't seem to be trust that all the district voters would want the same information that a town would want before closing a school. She thinks it might be harder to convince the entire district about a proposed school closure. She, as a voter, would want to have a say in the decision so that she could advocate for neighbors in another town. She thinks we will all have each other's backs. But there is still something

that makes her want to allow for a Town vote. She just wants to make a decision and move on -- we are spending too much time on this.

Suzanne expressed that she has talked with many others in the community. People were saddened when Ripton left, but the rest of the member towns supported their choice. And when Ripton returned without a required without needing a vote from other member towns, some people felt slighted. There was an imbalance in the decision-making there. Suzanne is also concerned about the fact that the Board has spent time and resources on this issue, which is taking away from the time and resources we spend on the things students need now. She is very upset that we have not been talking about our students. We aren't even proposing a school closure and we have spent all this time on this issue -- this takes dollars away from students, takes resources from special education. We need to be talking about education and student achievement -- that is the crucial work of the board. How are we spending our resources for students and is it working? She can only support a District vote, not a Town vote and the majority of people she's talked to either support a District vote or not change.

Steve Orzech then made a motion to amend the motion on the table (Town vote) to remove the supermajority of the board required to close a school and replace it with a seven member board majority. The motion was not seconded and did not proceed.

Brian Bauer spoke up to express his belief that the letter from the SOS attorney has validity, and that he questions whether the Board should vote on amending Article 14. He will abstain from the vote.

Jen Nueder voiced her opinion that she does not believe a town vote is appropriate because ACSD is a unified District. Victoria called the vote on Barb's motion to add a Town vote: 4 Ayes; 6 Nays; 2 Abstentions. The motion failed.

Ellen Whelan-Wuest made a motion to amend Article 14 to add a District vote. Mary Heather Noble seconded.

Barb Wilson made a motion to amend the motion on the table (District vote) to add language that would require a supermajority of the electorate vote to approve a school closure. Joanna Doria seconded. Mary Heather and James Malcolm asked for Barb to define supermajority of the electorate. Barb defined it as "3/4 of the voting district electorate." Barb and Joanna spoke in support of this proposed change to balance the impact of Middlebury's large electorate. James Malcolm, Mary Gill, and Mary Heather spoke against the proposed change, noting that it is inconsistent with existing voter threshold and imposes an impossible obstacle for the Board to be able to manage its resources. Lindsey Hescocock noted that last year's budget passed by over 75%, suggesting that the community has supported other questions the Board has posed by this margin. Mary Heather said this is not the same kind of vote and a rather unfair comparison.

Victoria called a vote on Barb's motion to amend the District vote motion: 6 Ayes; 7 Nays -- Victoria Jette voted Nay to break the tie. The motion to require a supermajority of the electorate failed.

Steve Orzech then made a motion to amend the current motion on the table (District vote) to remove the supermajority Board approval and replace it with a 7 member board majority. James Malcolm seconded.

Ellen Whelan-Wuest cautioned against this change, arguing that doing so would sow much more division in the community. Mary Heather agreed, though noted that in concept it would

simply make it easier to take the issue of school closure to the electorate, which is what community advocates seem to want. But she worries that it wouldn't be interpreted this way, and does not reflect the compromise she has been hoping for. Barb does not support removing the supermajority of the board required to approve school closure. She believes the Board should wrestle the issue before taking it to the voters.

Victoria called a vote on Steve's proposed change to the District vote motion: 2 Ayes; 11 Nays -- the motion failed.

Victoria then called a vote on Ellen's motion (adding District vote to Article 14, as presented).

Joanna Doria asked if it was even okay for a majority of the Board to decide to remove a supermajority Board requirement. Suzanne Buck replied that a supermajority is only required to approve closing a school, and this matter is not being put forward. Victoria again called a vote on the motion to amend Article 14 to add a District vote: 8 Ayes; 3 Nays. Brian Bauer and Victoria Jette abstained.

Motion to amend Article 14 of the ACSD Charter as presented by the the Ad Hoc Committee, which states: An affirmative vote of ten (10) members or more of the Addison Central School District Board of Directors and the consent of the Addison Central School District electorate shall be required to approve the closure of a school. Prior to holding a vote on whether to close a school, the Board shall hold at least three (3) public hearings regarding the proposed school closure(s). At least one (1) of the public hearings shall be held in the town(s) in which the school(s) is (are) located. Following the public hearings, the Addison Central School District Board of Directors shall give public notice of its intent to hold a vote on whether to close a school, stating the reason for the closure, which shall include identifying the impacts of school closure and mitigation strategies, at least ten (10) days prior to the vote.

If the Board votes to close a school, a binding referendum to that effect shall be submitted to an annual or special meeting for approval by the voters of the Addison Central School District. The school closing shall become effective only if approved by a majority of the electorate voting by Australian ballot. The votes shall be counted and reported by towns, but shall be commingled and approval of the referendum shall require a majority of all those voting.

Move: Ellen Whelan-Wuest Second: Mary Heather Noble Status: Passed

2. Action: Accept Superintendent's Resignation

2 min

Peter Burrows made a statement of gratitude for his 10 years of work as ACSD's superintendent. So many people care very deeply about students and their communities, and want to make their schools stronger. It is hard for him to leave but feels that it is the right time professionally.

Jen Nueder, Steve Orzech, Victoria Jette, and James Malcolm each shared a few words of gratitude and best wishes for Peter. The Board applauded his service.

Motion to accept Peter Burrows's letter of resignation.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Suzanne Buck Status: Passed

3. Discussion: Superintendent Search

30 min

Mary Heather Noble provided an update to the Board on the status of the Superintendent Search process. She and Emily Blistein have worked with Dr. John Gratto of McPherson & Jacobson, LLC to schedule and advertise several stakeholder forums to receive community input on the preferred qualifications for the new superintendent. Input can be provided via survey (available in multiple languages), in person, or with virtual meetings. The meetings were organized by stakeholder group per Dr. Gratto's recommendation, but all are welcome to attend any meeting that works for them.

The next meetings are:

Feb 15th @ 11:15 a.m. -- virtual

Feb 15th @ 3:30 p.m. -- virtual

Feb 15th @ 5:00 p.m. -- virtual

Feb 16th @ Noon -- virtual

Feb 20th @ Noon -- in-person at 208 Charles Ave.

Feb 27th @ 4:00 p.m. -- in person at Mary Hogan

Feb 27th @ 6L30 p.m. -- in person at Shoreham Elementary

The information has been posted on the ACSD website, and has been communicated via District-wide email, weekly principal emails, an ad in the Addison Independent, on Front Porch Forum, and paper flyers posted at all ACSD schools, town offices, post offices, libraries, rec centers, and other high-traffic community bulletin board areas.

Mary Heather said that Dr. Gratto will compile all stakeholder input into a written report and deliver to the Board at a special Board meeting scheduled for Wed, March 1st at 5:30 p.m. He will also lead Board members through the Nominal Group Technique to help the Board identify its own preferred qualifications. This will help the Board craft an accurate job posting that reflects the ACSD Board and Community's priorities. She asked Board members to use the "Finding the Role" worksheet to think about their own individual preferences and bring them to the meeting on March 1st.

Ellen Whelan-Wuest asked how many participants we expect at the forums. Suzanne Buck reminded Board members that they are not supposed to attend the Forums -- these are for the community and we will have our own process. Lindsey Hescocock asked for clarification on the meeting schedule. Emily Blistein also provided some details on the process that MUHS students will use to submit their input, and spoke to Ellen's question about community participation: Dr. Gratto said a few hundred people have attended these types of forums in other Districts he has helped.

4. Policy Revision

Lindsey Hescocock asked if additional language could be added to the policy to require verbal notification prior to the written notification described in the definition of "notice." Peter Burrows explained that this policy is required by legislation and was written by the AOE. It also requires procedure documents to be written, which will provide those details. He does not recommend putting additional detail into this boiler plate policy document -- the specifics are best placed in a procedure document instead.

Motion to amend Policy C10: Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students as proposed in the meeting materials.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: James Malcolm Status: Passed

a. Amend C10: Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying of Students

5 min

G. Other

Lindsey Hescoock made a note about abstaining from the vote to approve meeting minutes for January 26 and 30, 2023.

H. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Motion to adjourn.

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Mary Heather Noble Status: Passed

Total Meeting Time: 2h 2m

*Public Comment Guidelines:

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.

SIDE LETTER OF AGREEMENT

This side letter is entered into between the Addison Central Educators Association and the Addison Central School District and is otherwise subject to all the terms and conditions of the Master Agreement between the parties, covering the school years 2021–2024 .

Until the parties negotiate a successor agreement, the parties agree:

1. One sabbatical shall be granted for the 2023-2024 academic year under the current language of the master contract. Given the lack of specificity of access and criteria within the current sabbatical language, both parties will endeavor to revise the sabbatical language to provide clarity and equity to all staff.
2. This side letter of agreement will not be considered status quo and the parties will be required to agree to terms for a successor agreement between the association and district pending the outcome of negotiations.
3. This side letter of agreement shall not be construed as a past practice and shall not be admissible in any future grievance. It shall have no binding precedential impact.

Addison Central Educators Association

Date

Addison Central School District

Date

*****[To get your own editable copy of this template, click here.](#)*****

This resource contains two items: [a blank worksheet](#), and one sample for a [policy director role](#).

Figuring Out the Role – Worksheet

Being crystal clear on the role is key to recruiting top talent. Use this worksheet to develop the competencies a top candidate must have. This list can also be translated into a job description.

1. Define the role

I am hiring for the following position: _____

The 3-5 major areas of responsibility (i.e., the most important, time-consuming “buckets of work”) include:

-
-
-

Specific things this person would be doing now:

-
-

2. List your must-haves, nice-to-haves, and not-haves

What does it take to do the role well? Clarity here is essential. Think about the skills, knowledge, and qualities this person needs to have. Distinguish between “underlying” traits (such as critical thinking or work ethic) and “teachable traits” (such as how to use a particular software program). Separate your list into must-haves (see [examples](#)), nice-to-haves, and not-haves. Note: not-haves aren’t negative qualities or “deal-breakers,” but rather skills that aren’t essential to this role, so you don’t need to test for them.

Must-haves	Nice-to-haves	Not-haves
<i>Skills and qualities you will not compromise on and must test for</i>	<i>Skills and qualities that are a plus, but not a requirement</i>	<i>Skills and qualities that you will not actively screen for</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

Pause here and do a bias check. Did you list any must-haves that might exclude great candidates? Examine your [PTRs](#). Focus on the competencies required to do the role.

3. Draft a one sentence profile of your ideal candidate:

Figuring Out the Role – Sample

State Health Care Now: State Policy Director

Areas of Responsibility

- Build and maintain relationships with key actors in state—policy makers, NGOs, industry execs, leading experts on the issue, and constituents
- Lead implementation of state advocacy agenda—current activities include three major programs and one annual conference
- Supervise 3 state-based project staff, 2-4 consultants, and 10-20 volunteers
- Monitor legislative proposals and trends
- Serve as a member of the organization’s leadership team

Specific things this person would be doing now

- Call Joan at Citizens United and convince her ED should speak at their state conference
- Manage development of c4 voter guide—get input from national team members and from allies; oversee communications team process to make sure on track
- Let lobbyist know we’re not renewing contract, without burning bridges
- Sit in on health care caucus retreat and give input on legislative strategy

Must-haves	Nice-to-haves	Not-haves
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relationship-building: able to connect with individuals and build alliances among wide range of players in the state. Works well with diverse or marginalized populations; can bring in allies across diverse communities ● Results-orientation: has a track record of achievement and producing results (rather than getting immersed in process), perseveres despite obstacles ● Project management skills: stays on top of multiple projects, plans backwards, anticipates obstacles, identifies and involves stakeholders appropriately, uses resources wisely ● Commitment to social justice & racial equity: recognizes role of race, gender, and other identities in shaping health disparities, is driven to improve conditions, and proactively learns re: race, equity, and identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issue familiarity: prior knowledge of or experience in healthcare policy ● Legislative experience: this would be good to have, but we’ve seen that we can teach the general approach ● Writing: should be good enough to send emails on our behalf, but doesn’t need to be stellar—policy papers and testimony will be drafted by national team; will work with communications department on reports and media/outreach products ● Strategic thinking: will be an important helper in spotting opportunities and thinking of smart ways to move our issue forward, but ED will drive Policy Director’s work in setting strategic direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public speaking/charisma: we will use ED and/or allies for most major public appearances ● Research skills: should become able to monitor trends and be fluent in healthcare policy and related issues, but can rely on research and reports from our analysts and outside sources

One-sentence profile

Relentless, results-oriented person who excels at building relationships and at managing complicated projects to advance equitable public health legislation.

NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE TO IDENTIFY PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

February 14, 2023

Step One: Silent Generation of Ideas

Each Board member will list on a sheet of paper the characteristics, qualities, or skills the new superintendent will need in order to be successful in the Addison Central School District and community.

Step Two: Round Robin Recording of Ideas

Each board member, in turn, will state the first item on his or her list. These attributes or skills will be typed and displayed on a screen for all to see and numbered sequentially. The process continues until all the ideas are recorded.

- If someone gives an idea that is also on their list, cross it off.
- Likewise, if they think of something more, they may add it to their list at any time.
- This is simply a listing of ideas.
- Discussion of the ideas will occur in a later step.

IDEAS: *(these are just examples to demonstrate the recording of ideas)*

1. Experience with data driven decision making
2. Leads active community engagement
3. Knowledge of VT state and local laws and state funding
4. Instructional leader and expert
5. Approachable disposition
6. High-cultural and emotional intelligence
7. Demonstrated ability to supervise building level leaders
8. Dedicated to rigorous academic achievement throughout the district
9. Experience negotiating union contracts
10. Demonstrated experience in addressing the achievement gap

Step Three: Clarify and Combine

- Is there any need to clarify any ideas? If so, the person who stated the idea elaborates on the meaning of it.
- Combine like ideas

Step Four: Ranking of Ideas

- Each board member is given five Post-It Notes.

- Each board member selects their five most important items - writing the number of the item (which is displayed on the screen) in the middle of a Post-It Note and circling it.
- After each board member has selected their top five items, they must choose their top 5 attributes and arrange their Post-It Notes in order, one through five.

Step Five: Round Robin Recording

Each board member, in turn, will state the number of their number one item.

- A number 1 will be put by the number of the item given by each board member.
- The process will continue with numbers 2, 3, 4, & 5 until all the numbers are recorded.

Step Six: Identification of Top Criteria

The item that receives the greatest number of votes is the most important criterion.

The item that receives the second most number of votes is the next, etc. If two or more items receive the same number of votes, add up the total and the one with the lower total is more important.

Step Seven: Reporting and Recording

The top five criteria are rewritten into complete sentences or phrases by the facilitator. These criteria and attributes will be put in the district brochure and application materials.

SKILLS: *(these are just examples to demonstrate the recording of ideas)*

1. Strong instructional leadership skills based upon extensive teaching experience
2. Strong, collaborative, empathetic, enthusiastic leader
3. Knowledge of the needs of all students and experience with closing the achievement gap
4. Strong cultural proficiency; able to lead the implementation of an equitable culture and climate
5. Strong financial acumen
6. A strong communicator
7. Results driven based upon data; strategic problem solver.

*Survey Monkey Results for
Addison Central School District
February 2023*

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

120 English Responses

Administrators

What makes your community a good place to live?

What makes this a good school district for students and staff?

What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about when he or she comes into the district?

What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need in order to be successful?

Community Members

What makes your community a good place to live?

- Low crime, good schools, friendly people, easy commute, involved citizens
- Rural, not too crowded. It's my roots. Family lived here 6 generations, I built and own my own home/ land with privacy. Small enough to have impact in work, community etc.
- A small knit community that so far is reality safe. A place with access to our beautifully natural resources.
- Middlebury is an attractive retirement location for active seniors with walking, hiking, biking, XC and downhill skiing, golf, and Lake Dunmore and Lake Champlain located within a half hour drive. Middlebury College has entertaining sports, lectures and a vibrant art museum. It is also source of jobs for families living in Addison County. Government services include the county court, sheriff, regional planning commission for the county, Elderly Services and the Tri-Valley Transit headquarters. Porter Hospital and two retirement communities Eastview and The Residence at Otter Creek make this an attractive location for retirees to thrive as they age. There is train service to New York City and buses several times a day to Burlington and Rutland.
- The town of Middlebury and each town within ACSD are unique. Our new superintendent should become well acquainted with these towns and their schools. Our superintendent should commit to helping each of the schools and staff within these schools continue, and if necessary improve upon, the services provided to their students. One size does not fit all students within our district and bigger isn't necessarily better.
- It's aesthetically beautiful, it offers many supports for families who need assistance, and it's not a city.
- Middlebury offers many positive aspects that bring together a wide range of socioeconomic households. The quality of life here is good if you enjoy rural environments. I believe we offer strong social services and offer a network of support for those in need. Our infrastructure is mostly updated and well maintained. Our children can have a sense of independence and freedom due to practically no crime and a tight-knit community. Our schools are welcoming and try to reach the many various types of learners. Middlebury has a robust amount of public transportation especially given our size and rural environment. Our local economy is filled with independent small businesses where the owners maintain deep roots and live within our community. We have a strong and vibrant agricultural community where local businesses have been within the same family for many generations. Understanding the value in this is vital. We have decent healthcare services in our immediate area - and world class services in Burlington, Vermont and Hanover, New Hampshire, both a relatively easy drive away. The housing market in recent years has become a bigger concern as it is pushing out middle and low income families due to the rising housing costs (so that is a growing issue for Middlebury).
- The town welcomes new people and we help and support each other. There is a cohesiveness, a respect for each other even when we disagree on issues. The town loves and cares for its children. Town loves and cares for its school.
- our school our community members the volunteer fire department our location
- I believe that the small scale of our towns enable us to care for each other and listen to each other.

- This is a giving community.
- It is a small town where people care for each other. It is without the congestion of larger places. It is on a human scale.
- Weybridge is quiet, friendly and tolerant.
- The fact that it's in Vermont, so beautiful landscapes, no billboards, outdoor recreation year-round. Also, so many people here are generous with their time and energy.
- People are kind and trusting. It has amazing natural resources and places for recreation.
- Small towns; farm communities; Middlebury College; helpful community members

What makes this a good school district for students and staff?

- High quality education standards, well staffed and high quality teachers, competent administrators, parent involvement
- Right now I question if it is a good district. There is a huge discrepancy between have and have not. I believe people are settled and their community and can't see past town boundaries... we don't treat every child equally...
- Having local elementary schools within each town, allowing for local children and community members to be independent.
- Middlebury Union High School with over 500 students is largest high school in Addison County and northern Rutland County. It has a strong college placement record for the top 50 students but the IB program is not serving the bottom 50% of students as well as Vergennes High. The voters have supported school operating budgets better than other schools in the county. Local communities especially the smaller towns believe their elementary schools are above average (which is not true in all cases especially for students receiving free or reduced lunch).
- Our school populations are manageable. Student to teacher ratios are enviable. The schools within our district are generally well maintained. Students are safe both within the school buildings, but also outside of school. ACSD is a caring community with many resources to help families in need.
- Right now it isn't. I stopped teaching and didn't renew my teaching license because I would never teach in this district as it currently stands.
- Middlebury offers high-quality education (NOTE: this was true before the IB program was implemented as well); and MUHS offers good support for students, regardless of background and/or abilities. I feel MUHS creates a safe and positive learning environment that fosters a sense of community. I can't speak to the staff side as much but it certainly appears to offer opportunities for professional development for our educators - seeing that Wednesday 1/2 days are dedicated to this idea. MUHS is fairly effective with communication between families and the school. It seems to be improving.
- The town appreciates and supports its school and the teachers and staff who work there. The school is extremely important to the town. Most of the people in the town want to protect and improve the school for its children.
- being able to go to school in their own town and community small student to teacher/staff ratios allow connections to be made and relationships to deepen
- Opportunities for outdoor education. Community schools.

- Right now, not much. Many good teachers have left. Many poor have stayed. Our kids deserve better.
- The teachers in the small towns know the students and their families well, and can relate to students on a personal bases.
- Family and Town support for Weybridge teachers, kids, administrators and neighbors.
- Citizens generally support public education, at least in theory. There are some wonderful teachers in our schools.
- We have always has a strong school system.
- This district has a good reputation. There are access to a variety of opportunities.

What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about when he or she comes into the district?

- The crazy zealots trying to keep all the schools open, even the tiny irrelevant ones in the name of "community control". It really hurts the students across the district
- The politics are horrendous- there seems to be an assumption that new to the community know what's best for the community- they've bought into the idea of small tightknit caring town schools with little to no regard for expense, waste, structure...
- Complex behavior issues with children in schools today. Supporting all teaching and letting them have some freedom in their teaching methods and curriculum.
- A local group Save Our Schools is committed to keeping all elementary schools open no matter the cost. A member of the group has filed a lawsuit to get the superintendent's emails and recently has threatened to file a lawsuit to give the voters in each town in the district the right of minority veto over a decision by the school board to close the local elementary school.
- There is an overwhelming desire by residents within the less populated towns of the district to keep their local community schools operational. Local schools are the heart of these small towns. Consolidation of school governance has left small schools disenfranchised.
- Teachers and board members have been leaving the district. Teachers feel like they have no voice in the district and no authority in the classroom. The I. B. Program was shoved down our throats and many people are unhappy with it. It is a big reason so many teachers have left the district. It's a mess.
- First and foremost, the new superintendent needs to understand our community and population. People often mis-read Middlebury as a place for wealthy, elite college faculty and professionals. However, Addison County is a rural community as well and one of only two major agricultural areas in our entire state. Many of us love and value this. We must not remove ourselves from this important and rich culture (we do not want to contribute to a society that is getting further and further removed from understanding and appreciating local agriculture and rural lifestyles).. We are NOT another suburb of Burlington and we are NOT a wealthy ski/vacation type of town. An appreciation of the blue collar agricultural aspects of our region make it essential that our new superintendent provides the appropriate educational opportunities to ALL of our community. I really think this is essential to what makes Middlebury unique and special. I hope our school board will take this aspect into consideration. In respect to actual programming I hope the new superintendent is aware of... The IB program at MUHS

certainly has some benefits but I question it's value when very few students actually do the full diploma, IBDP. It is unacceptable for something so labor intensive and expensive to serve so few. I (along with many many others) find it a mismatch for our community. Our school likes to promote "multiple pathways and certificates" as options (of course) but most in the community feel our AP classes served our students very well, were more inclusive and much less expensive! Here are some challenges with the IB program at MUHS. First, it's a very high workload: The IB program is designed to be rigorous I understand but it definitely leads to high burnout, which can have a negative impact on our students academic performances and well-being (even among the most academic). My student received the full IBDP and passed the internal and external exams but I must say the amount of work did not match the support given by the faculty (who are still learning how to work within this program). It was not a positive experience overall. And, if a student needs to have a part-time job while in school then this program is prohibitive. MUHS has limited resources that an IB program requires to function for the benefit of all interested --such as specialized textbooks, laboratory equipment, and high level STEM and math. This creates a financial burden for our rural school, and also limits the IB program's accessibility to students who do not have access to these resources. The IB program has a strict set of requirements that students must meet in order to graduate making it inflexible for various interests. Teachers need specialized training in order to teach the courses effectively. This has been a challenge for some in our school, as we lack essential resources & staff to provide this training. Also, I feel MUHS doesn't have a good metric to evaluate how our students test on the external exams for their HL classes. Much of the material was never taught in some of the classes. Science classes in particular have always been a weakness in our school. I think the IB program offers many benefits for students, including a challenging and rigorous academic program that prepares them for college and beyond. However, if MUHS is going to continue the program then we must be prepared to address these challenges in order to ensure that students can succeed in the program and equally as important, that students can succeed if they aren't enrolled in this program. Again, as far as colleges go -- students from MUHS have always been competitive for some of the best colleges and universities in this country -- well before the IB program.

- The amount of mistrust that many voters in the ACS D feel toward the District Board and the Superintendency. Many in the small towns feel that we were deceived about what consolidation was for and what the actual goals of the Board and the Superintendent were when we entered into the Act 64 consolidation process in this District. Many in the small towns feel that the consolidatin process is destructive to them and their town and their school. There is divisiveness between the largest town and the smaller towns. The people of the largest town have repeatedly been given a message from the Board and the Superintendent that most of the problems in our District are caused by the small towns' schools, which, they are told, are draining money and resources away from the largest town. Part of this deceptive message is that all of the children across the District are being deprived of important services and resources because of the existence of the small town schools.
- IB is not contributing to equity -- it consumes more resources than any other program and serves fewer; other needed programs have been cut, like DO and Alt Ed -- what about those kids?

- We need to improve our opportunities for non-academic education (i.e. trades). Communication between board and the community needs to be improved - better listening and less hostile dialogue.
- There is an agenda in the school that is causing divide. We need a superintendent who can get our education system back to the basics. The current material is dividing our children.
- This is NOT a suburban district. Do not treat the towns uniformly; each has special attributes and needs that need to be respected. Each town supports its students in a manner and style that reflects the strengths of that town. It is NOT one size fits all.
- The recent history of poor communication by the ACSD Board to parents and communities and hasty decisions being made about students without the parents and townships full knowledge. Confused messages from the ACSD superintendent .
- The intransigence of some residents in smaller towns when it comes to facing the realities of declining elementary school enrollments. I lived in one of those towns 30 years ago, and appreciated the cozy atmosphere at the school my child attended there, but that coziness is incompatible with adequate educational resources (grade-level teacher expertise, special education, school nurse, on-site administrator...) when the entire student body wouldn't fill a single school bus.
- Some schools have had massive turnover rates. The community shares concerns for the academic success of our students and was devastated to see so many highly qualified, veteran staff leave ACSD to teach in other districts. The pandemic was not the cause but did crack open huge flaws in current leadership. Tax payers want to know why only a few kids graduate with IB diplomas and the actual cost of IB each year. There should be a fiscal analysis to see if the costs are worth it when compared to student outcomes at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. What about for underprivileged children? It feels like the school system is not being honest with the community.
- The IB programming makes it difficult for students to access trade programs at the career center. This funnels students to the liberal arts college path. More efforts need to support access to technical education. I am also concerned about the inequity of any tracking imposed by the IB programming. For example, can students actually change their trajectory in high school if they didn't access the required proficiencies in middle school? I'd appreciate it if the board/superintendent is more transparent about the budgeting for IB as well as how many students are accessing it. What is being done to support students who IB excludes? Many community members are concerned about smaller schools closing.

What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need in order to be successful?

- Patience, clarity, leadership model instead of command and control model, respected educational and administrative credentials
- Healthy Ego. Ability to represent all not the noisy few. Ability to lead, guide and stay the course! Communication skills need to be jargon free.
- Listen don't dictate. Compassion for all kids not just those looking to go on to higher education. Be present in all schools and classes and communicate with the teachers and hear their concerns and or suggestions

- A strong, inspiring leader who makes data-driven decisions, can create a consensus among district voters to support large bond issues to update school facilities, is respected as a teacher's coach (similar to the recent MUHS principal).
- The new superintendent must observe and listen before making changes. He/she must be transparent, gain trust and not be afraid to admit to mistakes.
- Listen to the teachers! Be transparent. Be honest about how things are going. Treat your teachers and staff like they matter. Don't come in with an agenda!
- Just as I mentioned in the last question, the new superintendent needs to really understand our community and population very well! There is an interesting paper perhaps the search committee will look over before hiring and interviews begin. **It is titled: 'Perceptions of Rural Superintendents on Factors Influencing Employment Decisions'** <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1269628.pdf> It seems pretty clear that many superintendents come to rural, resource tight communities to gain experience and use it as a stepping stone for better paying jobs in suburbs and urban areas after gaining experience. Therefore, we need to look for a superintendent with a true vested interest in Vermont and an appreciation for and understanding of agricultural communities. In addition and more obviously of course we need someone with strong leadership skills so they can effectively manage, set goals, inspire and motivate our district and employees. Strong communication skills are a must! Financial responsibility is prudent. Knowledge of education policy and a collaborative mindset essential. They must be able to build strong partnerships to ensure our district is working toward its goals. They must be able to adjust to changing circumstances and make quick decisions when needed. Successful superintendents must be able to think ahead and anticipate future challenges and opportunities. They must be able to develop a long-term vision for the district and communicate that vision to all of our community in an upfront and HONEST way. No one appreciates a surprise. I'd prefer someone who exhibits empathy and offers a strong work ethic. Essentially, a successful MUHS superintendent must have a broad range of skills, qualities, and characteristics.
- Needs: -to have a constructive agenda, not a destructive agenda; -to understand the values and needs of the people and students of the small towns; -to not be Middlebury-centric; -to have actual teaching experience in public school classrooms with public school students; -to have been a member of a teachers' union, preferably, or at least understand the functions of and the benefits of union membership to the teachers; -to be well-educated; -to understand what local democracy is -- it is not oligarchy or rule by decree; -to understand that the small towns need to have the right to elect their own Board representatives.
- Someone who is connected to what is happening in classrooms -- all of them. Someone who values community and sees small schools as an asset, not a liability. No politics!
- Good listener. They will need to understand that Vermont has a unique sensibility. What works in other places will not necessarily work here. Changes are accepted but not without empirical evidence that it will improve outcomes.
- A uniter. Some who gets back to just teaching the basics. The rest will fall in line.
- The ability to respect and listen to individual towns; the ability to empower staff and not dictate to them; the ability to truly understand and value the merits of small town living.
- Patience, ability to listen without judgement and to not take things personally, acceptance and understanding of rural ways and people.

- Classroom experience. Deep understanding of effective pedagogy at all levels. Respect for teachers' specialized knowledge and skills. Ability to listen to and communicate with all kinds of community members.
- A leader who will advocate for all the people in the community, not just the wealthy ones. Someone who can tell the truth and rebuild our schools and trust within the community.
- Transparency; aware of the surroundings & farming communities; connect with families; explain the purpose for IB; visibility (in our communities and schools)

Non-Certificated Staff

What makes your community a good place to live?

- Being a small community with abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- Jobs
- Our community is a good place to live when there is a sense of security, cooperation, a great educational system, and an overall feeling of community unity and support.
- I feel safe in my community, I feel that the people in our community care about and watch out for each other, and come together when there is a need.
- A community rich in resources both Natural and planned. A place where people pitch in to help others in need and a place where one feels that one's voice counts.
- Plenty of meaningful ways to engage children in the community, a small town full of diversity.
- An ideal community to live and work as we are a college town, but also rural with close proximity to Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains and New York's Adirondacks.
- Focus on local. Lots of community offerings. Friendly people. Nature!

What makes this a good school district for students and staff?

- Being a parent and a teacher in the ACSD district allows for a unique perspective. From a parent perspective, the district offers students access to a top quality education with teachers that really care and are committed to the needs of their students. From a staff perspective, we put the students first. Additionally, the district offers students a wide variety of pathways towards graduation to fit the needs and interests of students. Our students are pretty awesome too!
- Openness
- We are a good school district for students when we have experienced staff that have control over their classroom environment and are supported by the administration. We have multiple opportunities for students to excel whether scholastically, in a learned trade, or even on the sports field. The student numbers are low enough where staff knows the individual students well.
- The integrity and quality of the school Faculty and staff. The well maintained buildings and the upbeat atmosphere.
- Priorities placed upon academics, a sense and appreciation of the global community at large, equity, and health and wellness of students and staff.
- I'm not sure it really is, right now. I believe it is time for different leadership and a different direction due to the recent rise of violent behavior in all of our district schools.
- The wide variety of academic offerings, not to mention the IB curriculum is a huge plus. Small class sizes and personalized attention and a wonderful working relationship with Middlebury College, too.
- Caring, dedicated staff. We have resources.

What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about when he or she comes into the district?

- Consideration needs to be given to the equity of the IB program, along with costs to the district. Our district has battled over closing smaller schools for several years and this issue will not disappear. The district will need to reexamine closure of small schools, as it is also an equity issue in terms of how the district allocates its money and resources. The aging infrastructure of the school buildings without funds to repair or replace the buildings is also of concern.
- True face
- The new superintendent needs to know that we have quality, seasoned teachers that are overwhelmed by the amount of pressure that the IB curriculum is placing on them.(Can you imagine how a young, first time teacher must feel?) He/she needs to recognize that at the elementary level the huge importance of students having a good foundation of the basics. Teachers need to be allowed to educate without the continual heavy pressures of IB.
- The conundrum regarding small rural schools in light of fiscal responsibility balanced with the needs and desires of the smaller communities.
- See the above answer. I realize this is a bigger issue than just district-wide. The classroom behavior and staff discontent is happening nationally. But there are management models that now exist that show there are ways to help this turn around. I do not believe IB is beneficial where this is concerned. Indeed, it seems to be sending kids at the HS level spiraling under the pressure. I don't think our current Superintendent took into consideration the enormity of IB. He instead only thought of the prestige it might accord him to have introduced it. His planning lacked complete follow-through and now that ship has sailed. Please tell me what was wrong with the system that was in place before he arrived?
- Facing the challenges of _____'s "unease" within the district, and the possibility of other elementary schools that might need to close due to low enrollment, the sudden loss of _____ and the community still dealing with the aftermath of the pandemic
- We need a change. The kids are struggling. They are reaching developmental milestones later and are desperately in need of more opportunities to learn basic life skills. We need more SEL, more play-based learning, and more professional development for teachers in these areas. Academic and IB requirements must be reduced in order to achieve this. Teachers need time and support to make this shift.

What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need in order to be successful?

- Our new superintendent needs to be present and in tune with the needs of the district. As a teacher I would prefer a superintendent who has a vast array of hands on teaching experience so that they can better understand the needs of the schools and students as well as staff.
- Honesty
- The new superintendent needs to be organized, can be a strong advocate of the staff and how they operate on a day to day basis, be able to have open conversations without staff having a fear of retribution, can communicate and make parents and staff feel heard, hold

students and behavior to high standards. Mostly, operate for the better of the community and not a personal agenda.

- Someone who listens, who is authentic, who is a great problem solver, someone who knows how to utilize their staff members potential, someone who is all in and committed to making our district hum!
- One for whom self care and wellness is a priority and by extension, recognizing that priority for others. Compassionate. Genuine interest in and appreciation for the members of this community. High academic standards and a desire to foster a curiosity and wonder for this world that we share. Holding an unwavering commitment and protection around a vision for the excellence and wellness of this school community. And to also be diplomatic, a listener, a peacemaker.
- The ability to make big decisions that will benefit the district while perhaps also being willing to suffer through less popularity in the process. There are many people who are not willing to change their approach or teaching methods to adjust to the new classroom climate. This is making things worse, and we need strong leadership who are not only willing to "go into the trenches", observe and hold these educators/administrators accountable, but also support these valuable staff members with providing the professional development to help set them up for success.
- Ability to deal with a broad range of constituencies, some of whom are never happy and always wanting to be "difficult". We serve a population with highly educated college personnel to rural farm families, the next superintendent needs to work with all types. Will also need to have a complete grasp of IB.
- We need a community organizer - someone who can connect with both parents and staff in order to bridge gaps. Schools cannot continue to be successful if more and more students come to school dysregulated. Parents need support and information on how to solve conflict, coregulate, manage screen time, and otherwise support a healthy development. I hope our new superintendent will be a trusted by families of all socioeconomic statuses to promote positive change overall.

Parents

What makes your community a good place to live?

- - small town feel + access to everything you need - supportive community members - people have a good civic mindset and get involved - natural landscape to enjoy for views and activities - beautiful surroundings all year round - trail around middlebury (TAM) - Middlebury College - Snow Bowl - 20 mins from town - Lake Dunmore - 20 mins from town - Lake Champlain - 20 mins from town - Burlington - 40 mins from town
- Places where the intersection of the public and private come together. Creating a space for natural community building to occur.
- We show up for each other. We check up on each other. We are always, always here for each other.
- Safety Local connection Community
- Great resources and availability of things to do. Good schools coupled with a supportive community is key.
- Neighbors helping neighbors, personal investment in the place we live and in the people who live here.
- Many opportunities for children to engage in fun activities and extra curricular activities.
- A caring and supportive community.
- High quality of life: beautiful surroundings (mountains, lakes, rivers, towns), farm fresh food (including award-winning cheeses and beer), open minded and pretty tolerant folks. When there's a problem or need, people really step up to set things right.
- It's a small tight community yet it's diverse and comprised of many that are highly motivated and involved in local issues.
- Beautiful environment with lots of outdoor recreational opportunities
- Diversity, the mountains
- Loving caring community members who want nothing but the best for our students. Personally raising my children here in nostalgic, I was born and raised here.
- Local school builds a strong community, beautiful scenery, rural setting.
- Small, caring towns in a beautiful setting. If you like the outdoors, this is a great place. Middlebury college offers many events typically not found in a town this small.
- Middlebury College adds a great deal to our community through its engagement and cooperation with our town, our school district, our county, and our state.
- Small schools, relationships with neighbors, Friendly community.
- Small town life and rural community. . .knowing your neighbors and being able to enjoy outdoors and activities that are provided by in a farming community.
- Its small, a lot of people know a lot of people.
- Accepting and warm community members, great after school and recreation programs, excellent education
- It's safe, and rather small, inhabited by a large percentage of people who care about the well-being of others and accountability. What the community might lack in cultural or financial resources, it attempts to make up for with kindness, cooperation, and educational support for each individual student.
- Having opportunities for everyone to connect on similar levels helps make our community special.

- The honesty and trustworthiness of those who live here. The depth and variety of their knowledge and cultural experiences. Its small scale. Living in the midst of the northeast's most diverse opportunities for outdoor activity. Being surrounded by artists of every sort.
- We live in Vermont where people want to live and work. We have found a place where we want our kids to grow up and find themselves. We look for opportunities for our kids to belong and be part of something.
- Safety and cohesiveness.
- Outdoor activities Healthy food Farms
- Friendliness, generosity and kindness of residents. Strong schools that attract and retain families that prioritize their kids' education. Active outdoor living supported by the natural beauty, gravel roads and access to the mountains.
- Honestly, not much. This school district has sapped the Jody of learning from both my kids. The obsession with assessment and complete dearth of basic education happening at the middle- and high-school are horrifying. This community is fractured, like the rest of the country and what little cohesion we have is undermined by a school board that, for years, put lower property taxes (which is not even their charge) ahead of providing the best and highest quality education for all children. Apart from the terrible weather, which none of us can control, Middlebury also has a housing affordability crisis, a struggling downtown that has so much potential but little to no vision for it to reach that potential. Why is this even a question for the search?
- Things to do for the kids and great school
- It's closeness; people generally know and respect and look out for one another. And, of course, the beauty of outdoor opportunities.
- WHATDOES THIS QUESTION HAVE TO DO WITH FINDING A SUPERINTENDANT
- The communities in Addison County genuine, people care about their neighbors and there are a lot of opportunities to be an active member in events as well as social gatherings. The schools are the heart of many of the small towns and there has been a wonderful drive to make our communities more engaging and welcoming to small children
- The safety of the towns, healthy food options and art and sports availability. Access to the college libraries and sports centers. The skiing and friendly neighbors.
- Diversity and inclusion Respectful and responsive neighbors
- Family friendly, beautiful scenery
- Kindness and a willingness to help our neighbors. A welcoming vibe. The natural beauty of Vermont. Wonderful, varied activities for young children.
- The beautiful rural surroundings juxtaposed with quaint suburban and downtown environments.
- Middlebury and the surrounding towns comprise an idyllic, beautiful, and peaceful place to live, with a combination of privacy and community which can, at best, bring people together in helpful and supportive ways. There are a lot of people here who care deeply about education and school which often makes for a successful culture of learning.
- Parent involvement, community connection, shared desire to see students successful in their academic endeavors, citizenship, recreation opportunities, dedicated teachers

- Helping hands, small town vibe with many first class amenities, Middlebury college, good school system, kid-friendly
- People really care about each other. Elementary school in particular (we are at Mary Hogan) is a far kinder experience than it was in the 1980s.
- People care about each other. It is small and walkable.

What makes this a good school district for students and staff?

- - Small schools offer something indescribable and invaluable for children and families - teachers seem to really support one another - good relationships between teachers and families
- We've had consistently leadership from the superintendent and our schools that are strong have had consistent leadership over a number of years. Our more challenged schools have seen repeated turnover of leadership.
- This is our first year in ACSD and I'm not sure yet why it is a good district.
- The small, rural nature of the Middlebury area is one of its strengths. Small elementary schools in each of ACSD's feeder communities offer distinctive programming, supportive environments, and close relationships. Before the 6th grade was shifted to the middle school, these 6th graders had opportunities to lead in meaningful ways at their elementary schools. And before the 6th grade was shifted, the middle school was not overcrowded or understaffed and was a place where adolescents matured in a supportive, healthy environment. Our elementary and middle schools were strengths in our community prior to the departing administration's move to weaken them; acknowledgement of and investment in these strengths would help make the Middlebury area a better place to live. At the high school level, two strengths are the Hannaford Career Center and Middlebury College. Prior to the adoption of the IB system, high school students were easily able to take advantage of opportunities to learn across the diverse offerings at both institutions because the high school ran on a semester system. Now, taking coursework at both the high school and career center is very difficult to schedule – and nearly impossible to accommodate for students who enroll in the IB diploma program. This tends to homogenize the student populations at both the high school and career center. The college is also a unique asset. When the high school ran on a semester-based schedule, advanced students were able to audit classes at the college, and seniors could even take courses for credit. Now, high school scheduling makes taking advantage of this community strength extremely difficult. Finally, a forte of the semester-based system was the opportunity for all students to develop interests through extensive offerings; if they were fascinated by math, or the arts, they could build intensive, robust concentrations in those areas. A return to the semester system would allow our schools to profit from the truly exceptional values of these local institutions.
- Close knit school communities. Personal student/teacher/parent relationships.
- Everybody is accepted.
- Safer environment Quality teachers Career/Technical Center options Competitive Pay scale for teachers
- Not much right now. There's too many things not going well.
- Options, opportunities and wide assortment of people who care.
- Honestly I think our district is failing our students right now in many ways.

- Teachers who care and work hard to support their students.
- High quality teachers, staff and coaches who are passionate about their field of interest and want to help kids. Our kids get individual help — they are not a number here.
- Students can attend local elementary schools that are based in the community they live. Class sizes are small and teachers play a vital role in the community.
- There are many wonderful, dedicated, caring professionals in the school district
- Small schools
- Caring people who all want the same thing. A safe educational place for our children to grow and learn in a smaller environment than most other places which offers more of a human connection vs a larger populated area.
- For elementary - the small schools. For High School - the career center.
- While there are huge disparities among the students, compared to other school districts this is a rather homogeneous student body with many problems typical for other districts not present.
- Many Middlebury College graduates stay in the area; some of them teach in our schools. Our schools are home to the children of College faculty and administrators. And our outgoing Superintendent brought us to the International Baccalaureate curriculum, which is helping to bring equity across our elementary schools, offers integrated learning at all grade levels, and creates the opportunity to graduate with an IB diploma, which is recognized by colleges across the world.
- Small schools, small class sizes, parental involvement.
- I can not speak for the staff, as the recent wave of resignations and loss of staff makes me believe the last administration did not support, develop, and manage the staff appropriately. For the kids, however, this is an amazing community with lots of support. It can have the advantages of the amazing opportunities that come with living in a rural community, plus the advantages that come with being in a college town, such as the arts and athletics. One special note, is the relatively small class sizes for the elementary level that is afforded by the small rural community elementary school. I think this is a real benefit to kids.
- I'm having a hard time thinking of something good about it.
- There seems to be a culture of kindness and concern for overall mental, emotional, and physical health. Most of the staff truly care about the educational needs of the students. The mission of the IB curriculum supports more critical thinking, analysis, topical application and relevancy to current society.
- Equity. All students should have access to the services they need in order to be successful. And all staff should be given the same.
- All of the above, providing that our schools facilitate interactions between students, teachers, staff, and local citizens. This area is blessed with a multitude of entrepreneurial, medical, and religious experts as well as an abundance of other highly educated citizens. Our school ought to be an extension of this extraordinary community. Our students can learn from and be stimulated by countless fellow residents. Let's incorporate what they can offer into K-12 schooling. Let's make this school district our school district, because all of us play roles in educating our students and feel that we are part of the school system, not merely sources of financial support.

- We have smaller schools so our kids are not spending hours on a bus. We want the small school experience in elementary school and a bigger school experience when they move on to MUMS and MUHS.
- The people especially a good base of teachers and staff.
- Variety of educational opportunities in high school
- The IB program. Generally engaged parent community to support students and staff. Proud history of academic, athletic and college placement results.
- It is not. The faculty and staff turnover is an indictment of the current leadership, though it is not clear whether the outgoing superintendent (good riddance to him) is mostly to blame or the board. I hope it is the former, as _____ was the epitome of mediocrity who refused to step in and lead during difficult times. This predates the pandemic when he bungled and so poorly handled the gun scare at the middle school in fall 2018, or the matter of allowing a sheriff's deputy ride on the school bus *armed*. These incidents alone demonstrated a person in charge without leadership. And he really showed his true colors during COVID when he promised remote education for people who didn't want to get sick with a deadly virus and did absolutely nothing (other than send long-winded contentless word salad emails) to deliver on that promise. These questions presume that we are hiring a new superintendent to come into a strong a functioning system. This is a misrepresentation of reality. In fact, what i hope is that you find someone with strong leadership qualities, who puts KIDS, TEACHERS, and LEARNING first and does not capitulate to budget squeezing nonsense from the board. We need someone to come fix the mess that was created. Not someone who will be wooed with lies about what a "good district" this is. Give me a break.
- Teachers are caring and making it fun for the kids
- Small, personalized classes for the most part. The public is very passionate about schools (this can be both good and bad for an administrator!).
- OUR GREAT TEACHERS BEFOR IB
- Opportunity to have smaller schools with genuine relationships and connections between the teachers and children as well as supportive parents school board and PTO feels
- It has a strong emphasis on wanting to cultivate and create opportunities for cultural diversity while providing emotional and social development .
- It has a strong emphasis on wanting to cultivate and create opportunities for cultural diversity while providing emotional and social development .
- Wonderful teachers Committed respected staff
- The teachers
- Family participation, a focus on education and supporting students no matter their needs.
- I'm not sure. I appreciate how much the community rallies around sporting events in the fall such as football. The IB program has been terrible for our district.
- Unlike many small towns in Vermont, Middlebury is home to a prestigious institution of higher education which means that this community contains many families with a high level of education who are heavily invested in local schools, teachers, staff and students. ACS D students and staff here generally have a lot of support and backing from the community and the College.
- parent support, energetic students, community involvement and support

- International Baccalaureate, coordinated curriculum across schools! Resources in the community. Lots of potential for a thriving career center.
- If used properly, the college can be a resource. This being said, the town/district is NOT an upper-middle class college town (as one might first think).
- I used to think that we had a FABULOUS school district and I no longer believe that. Teacher burnout is at an all time high, and there is a good deal of attrition and a problem with retention. Discipline is a major concern.

What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about when he or she comes into the district?

- - history of mistrust between teachers/staff and administration - current administration has overfocus on control; scared of true collaboration and the messiness that might bring - lots of tension and confusion over IB; teachers seem unhappy with the admin requirements and families don't see the benefit it brings - Focus on IB underscores concern that many community members have that our school system has focused too much on the "elite" at the expense of the majority and especially the most vulnerable. - Tension around school closures; passionate views on all sides. - Act 173 will take enormous effort to implement well - Growing movement of parents who are concerned with the way ACSD has handled special education - Historically has had a passive School Board with very little oversight or policy; but that seems to be slowly changing. - MUMS (middle school) still finding its feet after pandemic and transfer of 6th grade
- That small towns feel threatened and cheated by Middlebury and in order to move forward in a healthy manner school closure needs to be off the table until respectful understandings are reached.
- Equity among all elementary schools. Making sure all ACSD students have the opportunity to have the same academic and extra curricular experiences despite what town they love in.
- The IB system is ill-suited to our small, rural community. It has ignored and, in fact, erased many of the strengths of our community's schools. The IB program has removed the diversity and depth from our curriculum, greatly eroding student choice and options. It is expensive and demanding of resources: I is a top-heavy program that becomes especially so in a small district, forcing us to invest in salaries for paper-pushers who ensure we've dotted IB's "Is" and crossed IB's "Ts" rather than investing in excellent teaching staff, strengthened programming, or mental health support systems that we desperately need. IB has furthermore lured some of our strongest faculty from teaching to these IB administrative roles. The IB curriculum is far too easy through middle-years, ill-preparing students for the rigor and volume of work accompanying the upper-years courses. Many 11th and 12th graders feel overwhelmed and hyper-stressed as they attempt to rise to the new level of demands. Additionally, the IB grading system is excessively complex and impenetrable. It's evident that even teachers don't understand the system; the application of grades has been uneven and therefore unfair. Our small, rural community will never be able to attract and retain the quality of faculty that well-established and high-performing IB schools in major cities across the globe are able to. Our students are therefore graded, both on their transcripts and in the DP senior-year testing and projects, on a universal basis against IB students with far superior preparation,

placing our children at a distinct disadvantage that is reflected in lower grades and scores. ACSD's next superintendent should focus on genuinely assessing the IB system and its suitability for our population, based on input from students, parents, and staff. If it is failing our community, it should be dismantled. Our selection of a superintendent should not be predicated on perpetuating a curriculum that was adopted in haste or for misguided reasons; we should not hamstring our future by imposing a constraint that our candidates must have experience in and commitment to doubling down on the IB system. Above all, our next superintendent should be someone who will be dedicated to our small, rural community and offering the best educational opportunities to our children, taking advantage of our strengths and being mindful of our limitations. Our next superintendent should not be someone who intends to use our small school system as a stepping-stone to a bigger school district, title, or paycheck. The direction in which our next superintendent leads us should be motivated by improving this community rather than his/her prospects.

- Schools are a hot bed topic for communities. Hearing directly from people with kids in the schools, who have had kids in the schools and who are tax payers with no kids in schools is important.
- Special educators are running on fumes. If the high school adds a section to each teacher's load (like going from 5 to 6), I will unfortunately resign because it isn't worth staying to do more work for the same — or nearly the same — salary.
- IB vs the reality of what coursework options best serve the majority of the student population
- That this community is extremely segregated. The towns each have an identity and the way the schools are set up exacerbates the divide. The IB program and lack of special education in the district is unbalanced. I think it was all very well-intentioned but it hasn't played out well at servicing all students. The new person needs to have experience with a district that maybe incorporates IB but ALSO has a strong special education department, a regular curriculum and an alternative education program. This district is just way too small to have brought in a curriculum that only caters to 10% of the student body. I think we need somebody who comes from a much larger district that isn't run like these tiny Vermont schools. Innovation, creativity and thinking outside the box are what is going to get us out of this mess. We don't want somebody coming in with an agenda. I think bringing in a new person from a state that provides special education to their students differently would be very eye-opening. We need new fresh ideas!
- Low morale amongst staff. Inequity for outlying schools. No support for outlying schools. Staffing and subbing shortages as well as high turnover rates.
- Lack of diversity amongst teachers/staff. Class sizes too large at Mary Hogan. Ineffective discipline in the classroom. Students with intensive behavior issues being prioritized over the other students, which allows behaviors to continue to disrupt the learning of other students and also leads to physical harm and emotional harm. The way this has been addressed in the time I have had a child at ACSD is highly ineffective. School year is too long, snow days need to be built in to the calendar instead of being made up because parents have already had to pay for camps/childcare which the child may not even be able to attend due to make up days. Finding ways to make school a joyful place. There is a lot of talk about belonging but not much being done for the kids who still don't feel like they belong.

- The new superintendent needs to dig deeply into the ways that IB has impacted the quality and responsive education that was at the heart of ACSD years ago. Therefore, digging into the data is an important step. If the district claims to be "data driven," then the new superintendent needs to analyze the data since the adoption of IB in order to understand the extent to which IB has impacted ACSD. The new superintendent needs to know the data and be able to answer some essential questions: How many kids are graduating with an IB diploma? Is IB having the desired effect on the student body as a whole, not just those who thrive on rigor? How have the IB requirements driven the schedules at the schools? How has this impacted student learning and social emotional learning? As a school community, have we considered how IB impacts some of our most vulnerable students? How has IB impacted student engagement due to requirements imposed by the IB? Exactly how much is IB costing the taxpayers? Has the previous administration been transparent about these costs? What steps can be taken to ensure transparency and accountability? Is the cost of IB worth the outcomes? Our new leader needs to know that teachers and community members deserve to be heard. For example, certain decisions were made about MUMS in the last two years that negatively impacted the quality education that used to characterize this school. I have had several children go through that school, and the difference between now and ten years ago is dramatic. The school is unrecognizable now compared to what it used to be. As I understand it, the current superintendent did not heed any of the warnings outlined by teachers and concerned parents. Somehow, many highly skilled teachers left MUMS and this district in the last two years. Whose fault was that? Was there anything done to respond to the exodus of these teachers? (Important to note: those teachers became highly skilled as a result of professional development paid for by this district and its taxpayers. Now they have taken their expertise elsewhere to benefit children in other districts. That reality deserves reflection, contemplation, and action.) In summary, it is essential that the new superintendent understand how previous decisions impacted the quality of education at our schools. As a former educator and a parent, I do not not feel that my children are safe in ACSD. Negative student behaviors are not being addressed, and this is impacting the teaching and learning in ACSD. My child is afraid to go to school some days and refuses to use the bathrooms because she is intimidated by students. She knows that students are not being held accountable for the vandalism they commit, and this makes her afraid that it will get worse. Teachers have expressed significant concerns that the climate and culture in their schools prevents them from teaching their students. The buck stops with the superintendent. Also, is there a protocol in place in case of an intruder in any one of our schools? Have the faculty practiced this protocol? Most importantly, the new superintendent needs to know how essential it is to ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY MISTAKES THAT ARE MADE. To be an effective leader, one must demonstrate humility and lead with respect for all stakeholders.
- MUHS will be filling a position for principal. Hannaford Career Center will have a new Superintendent starting in the fall. The district serves a socio-economically diverse group of students and families from homeless or food insecure to families that have two parents on faculty at Middlebury College. MUHS is still getting its footing with I.B. As a parent and alumnae, I wonder about the fit of I.B. model with our school and there is a healthy amount of discussion in the community as to whether or not I.B. is working — whether it is really serving students or adding any noteworthy benefits.

- Many schools are struggling with student behaviors that are disruptive to the entire school on a daily basis. IB is not always the best choice for everyone even though it was forced on everyone. Many teachers and other educational staff members are leaving or have left because they feel like no one is listening to the issues at hand or addressing them in a productive way.
- There are many: 1. Lack of communication and support to staff and parents from the current superintendent. 2. Pushing through projects that benefit only a small percentage of the population, and doing so without having all the necessary resources together to do so. 3. Employee retention. 4. Not following required and recommended guidelines from Vt Dept of Education. 5. Failing to put extreme priority on additional resources for struggling students and staff due to dangerous staffing shortages.
- the culture of VT. How large the district really is, it could take 45 minutes or more to drive from 1 corner to another not everyone lives central in Middlebury. The recent history of town succeeding from the district. How to education has really changed in the past few years especially since covid
- IB is the main issue. It canceled many programs schools used to provide equitable education. Special education, alternative education and programs that helped a specific population of students with social emotional problems. Schools are recreating the wheels and there's no sound structure or systems in place. We've wasted a lot of tax payers money on IB which is not a program designed for the greater population of our community. It also has not been implemented properly, regardless if it had been it's still a waste of time and money.
- Difficulties at MUMS, transitioning to IB program, desire of parents to keep local schools open.
- IB is a great idea but it seems like our district and the student population is not large enough to provide enough offerings. Also, the focus on IB has significant negative impacts on students who require more support. High school drop out rates have increased as a result. Even for "high achievers" there are unwanted impacts. The very rigid schedule of IB prevents students from exploring college classes or offerings at the Career Center. In addition, the question of school consolidation has not been solved and will , in combination with the IB focus, prevent needed attention to underserved parts of the student body. Bussing is an ongoing issue as well as a lack of alternative learning offerings. If we want true equity, these issues will have to be addressed.
- The sixth grade was moved to the Middle School last year, making it overcrowded; there have been discipline issues there which have yet to be resolved. There is plenty of room for the sixth grades in our elementary schools. This move was misguided, contrary to research on the benefits small schools, and against the wishes of many in our community, and should be reversed.
- Addison county has a broad range of residents from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Many residents live and reside in Addison County. Employees of ACS D feel comfortable sending their own children to school here. There is an emphasis on having well-rounded students and the opportunity to participate in sports and other extra-curricular activities is important.
- Our district finally has a unified, coordinated curriculum, not only vertically from k-12 but also horizontally in each grade level. This is huge progress, and while we should

always have deliberate conversations about curriculum in order to improve and grow, it's a mistake to try to undo that important work.

- 1. They must listen to the rural communities, most just the population center. 2. The previous administration had issue with staff resignation, retention, and development. That is going to be a major issue they will need to solve. 3. Despite the IB program, the previous administration saw a reduction of student test scores.
- That kids and parents run the schools, not the administration. This is a problem. If kids can't behave, more needs to be done faster. I don't care if they are black, white, lgbtq +, Hispanic, from money, or have no money. That's not a reason to act disrespectfully to anyone or anything. It makes me sick how they get away with stuff these days because everyone is afraid of them, and their parents.
- Teacher compensation, teach planning and prep time, non-essential duties assigned to teachers
- There is a lack of diversity here in VT and unfortunately still remnants of racism. It's important that traditionally marginalized students and their families feel uplifted, supported, and included. Because our state is closing so many rural schools, it is overwhelming the capacity of larger school systems like Middlebury. The schools are not big enough, do not have the adequate staff and faculty needed to support these irresponsible school closures. The new superintendent needs to advocate for smaller, rural communities- examine possibilities of redistricting to shift more students into the rural schools, where there is more personal attention for students, not visa versa.
- IB has really torn this district apart. While it is a great thing, lots of teachers have reported feeling unsupported. And worse, it has made the divide between the elite teens/families and everyone else bigger.
- Our new superintendent must be alert to any sign of prejudice, bias, or racism and take active steps to overcome such impulses among students, faculty and staff. S/he must make certain that the schools treat everyone equally and gently.
- We are fractured- we have been put through the ringer with the last superintendent. He has put towns against each other and has put this district behind in learning and opportunities for our children. We were not prepared for COVID and left our children behind and have not caught up. Us trying to make IB work has not given our kids the educational goals that they need to move forward in their education. We are behind in state education goals with no process to allow students and teachers make strides towards meeting expectations.
- Discipline and safety in the schools is at an unacceptable level. The school no longer has a learning environment. Not a poor learning environment, but No learning environment. Numerous good teachers have transferred or resigned due to poor leadership and no support.
- The IB program is very different than a more traditional model. The manage bac app is difficult For parents to navigate. There are significant tensions between students and between students and staff.
- The rollout and implementation of the IB program has been very fraught. There are serious concerns as to whether a program of this nature (especially the DP program) is appropriate for a district our size - we simply do not have the staffing depth nor size of student body to offer the range of high-quality courses to make the DP program effective, and it is very resource-intensive. It was the pet project of the previous superintendent and

a new leader needs to have an open and honest look into whether it is a sustainable and effective model for the full range of our students. Obviously we have a challenge with our elementary schools in terms of having more schools than needed for enrollments. There are board members and people in the community who believe that it's more important to maintain the number of schools in each town rather than have them all be efficient, effective, and equitable. A superintendent needs to be able to make the case for the scope of our district and its facilities on educational grounds, not based on historical models or town identity.

- There appears to be a retention problem beyond just the Covid effect on teachers and school staff. Lack of housing for staff.
- * IB is a poor educational system that deprives students of learning and churns them through a meat grinder. We need to go back to the previous structure. * There aren't enough teachers. In 2021-22 there was a mass exodus of teachers from the middle school and some significant losses at the high school as well. The numbers may have been recovered (I'm not sure) but all I see are constant subs and unqualified ones, at that. The teachers that are still there are overworked and under-supported. * The merging of the elementary school has been disastrous and just plain folly. People love their local schools. We are a small, spread out, rural district but for some reason the board refuses to simply acknowledge this constraint and work within it. All of these efforts to shoehorn a model that doesn't work has alienated and angered parents. * The merger at the middle school was done abruptly with no supports and no plan for contingencies. What a disaster! * The quality of education at the high school is lacking. My kids aren't learning basic things. I am stunned and horrified on a daily basis that basic facts about the world, history, science, grammar, literature are simply not in the curriculum. Why are there no textbooks? Why do my kids come home with piles and piles of disjointed worksheets? I can't even help them with their learning because it is all in the ether without a textbook. * The IB grading system requires an advanced degree just to understand (I have an advanced degree and can barely) The organization of management is, well... disorganized. Students don't get quality feedback. Grades are dumped into a confusing website without commentary or clarification. Forget me not understanding it — my kids don't! And they are top students.
- Teachers leaving _____ because of the principal. Some teachers are giving pink slips for sticking up students that need aides at _____. Removing a classroom teacher out of the classroom for 3 months to get a learning center up running in the middle of the school year.
- 1) Certainly, the tension around small school closure. 2) The ongoing debate about whether or not IB is working for all. 3) In many ways, we like the school communities we have. Someone from outside should not come in and try to turn us into something else. 4) We need someone willing to fight for resources.
- **TO GET RID OF IB**
- The consolidation of schools, the impact of the consolidation of six graders into the middle school, IB Curriculum at the high school and the communities just like for that, the lack of quality in special education services particularly pre-K. And equity for services and resources between schools in our district
- There is a stark difference between the locals who live in poverty and those who have more opportunities. It is a very sensitive issue and much of it centers around the fact that

many would prefer to have a more flexible and autonomous direction with their education - the locals don't like too much change. Many thrive on work experience and find it difficult to relate to leaders who are only academically driven. Especially for families that are academically challenged. An innovative leader who understands implementing unique and inspiring learning possibilities that also respect and can take into consideration the respect of the working life would bode well. One emphasis that may want to be explored is getting our high school kids more involved with the college. Going back to being able to take more classes there and integrating opportunities for students would fair well for the entire town. There is an outdated holding pattern with the traditional 4 year high school experience at MUHS and at times it can still feel like it is stuck in a bad 1980's movie. While the middle school moved several years ago with the idea that there would not be enough room for students over a 15 year period, I personally believe it did a huge disservice by separating from the high school never mind the huge cost it entailed. The district needs creativity and progressive bound education. With educators that are not afraid to teach outside of the box, including getting outside to teach a class- moving away from stark outdated desks and poor cafeteria foods. The surrounding grade schools fair greater as education facilities than does the middle and high school. Too many private businesses being hired and not enough trust in the educators themselves. People holding position of power should have had some time in the classroom. This community suffered greatly for many years with leaders who never spent time in an actual classroom and that is essential for any good education facility.

- Aging population Difficulty in attracting families to county due to housing shortage
- 1) some excellent teachers were pushed out because of the IB program. 2) students are not getting as much learning time as they used to for things like math, because of IB
- That what used to be the "crown jewel" of Addison County (MUMS) needs help, and more administration is not the answer. It needs more teachers and appropriate space for all students.
- The IB program is terrible and should be scrapped immediately! We lost so many good teachers because of it, the students and parents hate it.
- Unfortunately the ACS D has become a highly politically charged environment in which to lead. There are many in our community who, over the past several years particularly since the pandemic when everyone's emotions completely unraveled, have struggled to be willing to hear hard truths about their schools and communities such as the unsustainability of financing incredibly small schools at the expense of the education of all students in our district. Recent years have also seen a clear trend toward splintering our unified district and moving back toward an SU organizational structure. Similarly, many in our community have wrongly come to villainize the exceptional International Baccalaureate program taught in our district based on an insistent and uninformed misunderstanding/misperception of the curricula as expensive and time-consuming. It is evident there are vocal members in our community who wish to completely dismantle this exceptional program based on their misheld beliefs, an approach which, if it succeeds, will compromise the excellent education of all of our students. The next superintendent needs to be prepared, for the sake of our students, to defend the IB curriculum and the Diploma Program in what is sure to be an upcoming coordinated attack.
- IB program, staff turnover, financial limitations, school closure conversations

- Culture clash, poverty, divide among our rural schools, behavioral challenges
- IB is divisive, as is the issue of consolidation. Where can we compromise, and what should we divest ourselves of? Social class plays a huge role in ACSD divisions (this --as elsewhere-- often masquerades as fights over "community" and "tradition"). Who is benefiting and who is most impacted by investment in IB and physical infrastructure, as opposed to other initiatives/student supports?
- Get rid of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. It's expensive and adds undue stress on the students and families. It's caused a lot of students to drop out
- Teacher burnout is at an all time high, and there is a good deal of attrition and a problem with retention. Discipline is a major concern. The idea behind the IB was to help all learners, but only the top 1% have benefited from IB.

What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need in order to be successful?

- - Good communicator - Confident in leadership enough to welcome discussion, debate, and messiness. - Knowledgeable about special education so they can provide leadership to district - Proven track record of family engagement in meaningful ways (e.g., have they helped establish parent advisory councils for Title I schools or special education? how have they worked with them) - Belief in the role of a school board as the entity that provides vision for district and that holds superintendent accountable. - Proven track record of collaborating with teachers in meaningful ways so that their voices are heard and can influence important decisions. - Knows how to work with families -- e.g., when they're unhappy about something, not just assuage them, but actually engage them in meaningful ways to find resolution. - Effective in setting tone and expectations among staff through leadership and respect.
- Able to listen to stakeholder needs.
- Open direct communication. Transparency in decision making. The ability to connect with all ACSD communities and making an effort to make those connections. Learning about the uniqueness of each ACSD town.
- Open and calm.
- Center what teachers consistently advocate for when it comes to supporting students. We are not a high school who is l
- 1) Understand and advocate for the diverse student and family community that they serve 2) ability to juggle many tasks with grace/ wear many hats 3) Engage with the student and parent population routinely and inquire of their needs and inquire of areas of improvement 4) create an empowering and positive culture
- No ego! Compassion, understanding, inquisitive. We need somebody who sees the inequities and isn't afraid to admit mistakes.
- New superintendent should make an effort to be IN schools, give staff opportunities to voice concerns and issues, look at equity or rather inequities across the district, recognize that EVERY town/school is different as the communities for each are vastly different, more appreciation efforts, less demands of MORE time, energy, etc. on an already fatigued staff/faculty.

- Willing to really disrupt the status quo and think outside the box. I also think hiring a person of color for this position would really help the district with diversifying staff, addressing issues of racism and making the curriculum better for students of color.
- Possess strong problem solving skills, ability to listen and act (not listen and ignore). Have the ability to work collaboratively, courage to act and make decisions even when it might impact your political aspirations, put students first, invite community to be part of the problem-solving, have a community approach (schools no longer can exist without the direct and purposeful support of the community), support teachers and listen to them, set aside regular time to be present and visible, take responsibility for mistakes made, have humility.
- • A clear communicator who is an active active listener who values community input (the tradition of town meeting is vibrant and highly regarded in Vermont) • a student focused, school faculty/staff supporter who meets the school where they are — spending time to assess and identify our strengths, skills, resources, and our needs.
- Visionary, empathy, unselfishness,
- Great communicator Passionate and compassionate Respectable leader Experience required to do this job Have an understanding of the unique educational circumstances within Addison County & Vermont schools.
- Open minded, listen to all people from different walks of life,
- Lots of patients. Understanding small knit communities.
- Good at listening to varying points of view, able to negotiate and compromise, understands the importance of supporting staff while creating a safe and engaging learning environment for students.
- Open and inquisitive mind. Ability to listen and to actively seek out the voices of community members who are typically not heard.
- I would appreciate a superintendent who will promote education the engages each student where they are; too much teaching is leaving people behind while not challenging others. We should consider more tracked courses in the middle and high schools that would give our strongest students more opportunity to work at their own pace.
- Awareness of and concern for students with a wide range of life goals- from remaining in Addison County to work on the family farm to traveling abroad for further education; and many scenarios in between. Understanding of and concern for students who require special education and regular education intervention. Leadership skills and the ability to make decisions while taking into account the population of the county and feedback from community members.
- 1. Someone who can create an environment that support, develop, and retain of staff.
2. They must listen, respond, and support the rural communities. 3. I would prefer to see some come in who wants to be a long term member of the community, not just use this school as an stepping for the next opportunity. 4. Experience.
- Please excuse the expression... But a set of balls, male or female. Have the capability to stand up and demand order in the schools.
- Decisive, open minded, creative solutions, able to make tough decisions for the greater good

- The new superintendent will need fortitude, the ability to listen and honor the needs of the community at large- not just the majority and Not be swayed by money and politics. Also, the strength to advocate for the teachers.
- Solid, open communication is a must. Many people felt _____ was selective and perhaps dishonest in his communications
- This community needs a leader who thinks outside the box, who takes risks to help students want to learn and to develop confidence. We need someone who will bring talented, well-traveled, and learned members of the community into our schools. Someone who is comfortable and capable at reaching out to members of the community and persuading them to join in the process of educating our children.
- We need someone with experience- not just a good looking resume. We got burnt of the last one! I would like to see someone with special education background and able to have financial responsibility for the upcoming MUMS and MUHS bonds that we are facing.
- Leadership
- Calm, assertive mediation. Empathy for racial tension with an understanding of the background of the town. A myriad of communication skills. Efficient communication through email to the community,.
- Personnel management: this has been a major weakness of the current superintendent, leading to lots of attrition and inadequate staffing models, especially at MUMS. Leading with evidence and data: tough choices need to be made about facilities, curriculum, staffing, etc. It should be done based on information and evidence. Community understanding: while we are a college town with pockets of wealth and privilege, we also have very significant numbers of poor students and deep class divides. Balancing those facets of our divided community takes a leader who tries to work across these gaps, rather than pushing to make our schools fit a more homogeneous upscale community.
- Recruiting and retaining quality staff that can help realize the objectives of the IB program. A commitment to the importance of extracurricular programs for the development of complete students and the life lessons and character building clubs and athletics can provide.
- LEADERSHIP. Fearlessness to stand up to the board and the state when necessary to support teachers and students. We need a superintendent who will speak clearly and frankly with parents, not send incomprehensible word salad emails that contain zero information. We need a superintendent who doesnt hide behind a communications director. We need a superintendent who will make decisions driven by best practices in education and child safety and who will share their reasoning with parents in a frank and sincere way. We need a superintendent who cares about this community and not one who will use this position as a stepping stone toward another job. In short, leadership, communication, and education.
- Listen to the parents and teachers when there is an issue at the school
- Humility, an openness to listening to varied constituencies, should be an excellent teacher (and not just a career administrator), should want to live in VT and be part of this community, collaboration with the excellent ACS D team already in place.
- WILLINGNESS TO GET RID OF IB

- And equity for services and resources between schools in our district. Someone that is a good listener is reflective makes decisions for the greater good that are fair and equitable to all.
- Humor, approachability, diverse and clear communication skills, an understanding of both privilege and underprivileged lifestyles and a compassionate heart with a driving desire to move things ahead, past the outdated 80+ year old education system that is still in place and not really serving anyone .
- Ability to make schools center of entire community life Engaging families, businesses, elders in the school life especially in advance of shutting a school - the town people needs to have reasons to visit the larger schools - county wide arts athletics events to attend - magnet after school programs at Mary Hogen - soccer, dance, clay class, etc for kids as well as community members - art classes for adults pickle ball indoors at Mary Hogen in eve
- 1) understand that teachers are the best resource and 2) know that Vermont is a very non-diverse state and kids who grow up here may therefore be more likely to grow up with racial prejudices (via lack of experience with people different from them). The new superintendent needs to be able to tackle this head on in order to support ALL students. When students of color suffer, all students are affected, whether they know it or not.
- An ability to listen and think outside the box. A desire to work for ALL families, ALL students and ALL staff whether or not IB is a goal for a particular student.
- Able to listen to community members and not just an echo chamber of woke administrators. The focus should be on teaching the basics not social justice.
- The new superintendent should have the capacity to listen, inspire, and garner trust from community members, teachers, staff and students, but also to stand strong in the face of the headwinds created by those whose goal is to dismantle the hard but necessary work that has been accomplished over the past decade; he or she must be prepared to protect our district from efforts to revert to the unsustainable manner in which this district was run prior to unification and IB.
- Visionary, communicator, able to serve all students and programs, listener, problem solver, inclusive
- Someone willing to get their hands in the work at the ground level, but who also is visionary and can help sustain the good work of the last district in ACSD. Someone who values where we are in the work. We're not interested in blowing up what's working. This person should observe, hear all sides, seek information that goes deeper than the loudest voices
- Putting the needs of ALL ACSD students first, not just those whose parents/caregivers have the loudest voices/come to the table with the most socio-economic power.
- Finding a replacement curriculum for the IB program.
- Good listening skills! Able to work effectively with multiple constituents-parents, teachers, students, board, community, etc.

Students

What makes your community a good place to live?

- It is close together
- It's welcoming and close-knit.
- the diversity in our community. people of all races and color, one of my best friends is a Chinese transfer
- MUHS is a good place to go to school because it has a great, safe and fun community, and has both amazing nature and trails. Also cool new gym.
- It has low crime rate and great housing as well as scenic places to live or travel around. Also there is no really bad students here and the school is pretty calm besides the amount of homework we get.
- The beautiful scenery the college and McDonald i guess if you like that idk if you do but who knows maybe you chill like that.
- i dont know
- The natural beauty of the land here.
- people to talk to and hang out with.
- It is very boring so nothing bad happens
- Nothing
- Good question
- It is close together
- I do not like my community

What makes this a good school district for students and staff?

- Not ManageBac
- There's a small community- you know everyone, and as a result, this district feels personal and connected.
- the inclusive community
- It's pretty chill. Most of the teachers are happy, so that's good, and the students are ok too.
- yes because the school is near a lot of places it has a large gym wrestling room as well as some of the other places like the career center as well as good counselors and people to talk to or hang out with.
- 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊 This school district is good because it has the biggest grouping of schools in one area for a long time around. So if you like annoying middle schoolers than head over here 😞😞😞😞😞😞.
- its a nice community
- The fact that we have a very close community here.
- not a ton of kids in the school. so kids can get help when they need it.
- I dont like the school but some people are nice ! 😊😊😊
- No shootings
- Also good question
- Not ManageBac

- I epic new gym

What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about when he or she comes into the district?

- People yelling slurs in the hallway
- There's a deepening divide between the have and have-nots, which is reflected in a school setting (huge divide in behavior and students' work ethic).
- that kids in our district are simply put just terrible. i have lived in 8 different states and schools and each one were better then this one, but my dad is retiring so we have to live here. if it were up to me i would move out of this place just because of the students
- Not enough snow. I mean there's enough to ski, but not enough to make a snow fort.
- that some people may not agree with him or like him at first, but eventually it will be easy for you to get along with people. as well as ants or other critters in the school like a bat in the gym or water pressure problems
- Some people in this school are not epic gamers they try and sabotage the real G's in this school, dont trust the teachers they want a bunch of raises. **YOU NEED TO LET THE STUDENTS COOK.**
- i dont know
- The last superintendent wasn't very liked by most students and parents that I have talked to.
- some people do not have enough rizz. 😞 😞 😞
- A lot of people vape in the bathroom and it makes me uncomfortable 🙄🙄🙄
- there is too much monkeying around-need to stop-vape party in da school bathroom=not ok
- Nothing new
- People yelling slurs in the hallway
- everyone is white

What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need in order to be successful?

- People skills and listening instead of yelling
- Compassion, knowledge, a deep understanding of our community, flexibility and excitement to serve the community.
- someone who gets to know students on a person lvl and is fun to be around.
- You are gonna need a 10th degree Black belt in judo, or you're not gonna survive. Also the skill of card tricks to bamboozle the attackers before you escape.
- To be resourceful and get along with teachers and other students
- You need to have W rizz but do not rizz up the students. If have have chill vibes and are the biggest bird you will succeed and get mad bread.
- they need to be nice
- - Confidence -Able to communicate well - Caring - Selfless - Having the schools best interest in mind, not your own
- be able to understand and listen to peoples problems. 😞

- Please be respectful and kind to students and teachers ! 😊😊😊
- Love all people. except for THE PEOPLE THAT VAPE IN THE BATHROOMS!!!!!!
- I don't know 😊
- People skills and listening instead of yelling
- i deal with white kids

Teachers

What makes your community a good place to live?

- Middlebury is a place with numerous resources that provide quality experiences close to where the students of our district live. There are many options for walking field trips and opportunities for hands on learning outside the classroom.
- Small population, but also somewhat diverse
- Location and people
- Good local businesses, college interaction in the town, lots of outdoor activities available throughout the year
- This community is a good place to live for a variety of reasons; paramount is the clear desire to care and connect that is evidenced by many of the people who live here.
- An engaged and vibrant school/community where all stakeholders are listened to, have input, and are valued.
- People are kind and welcoming. There are activities for people of all ages.
- a place where people care about each other
- The connection we have with Middlebury College...Midd Arts, swimming, student teachers. Walking distance to many resources: library, college, woods.
- Access to clean air and water.
- The community events, our access to the outdoors via TAM, great schools.
- There are a lot of opportunities in the community.
- The access to the outdoors and healthy food. Neighbors helping neighbors.
- Rich cultural offerings, and people who care about the earth, the land and the people.
- It is safe, people know each other, quaint, good services & shops,
- The community is supportive of our teachers and schools.
- This part of Addison County has a lot of pride in it's small towns and their history (both recent and recorded history). This area is beautiful and we have a lot of opportunities for lower-cost recreation in the summer and winter. This means lots of lakes to swim for cheap or free, places to cross-country ski or skate for free, and a local downhill ski slope that makes skiing accessible for many more families than in other parts of the state. Middlebury College has a large presence here which has lots of positive effects. People intimately know their neighbors here. We also have multi-generational communities. These are both good things in general, but does sometimes mean that conflict can stir a larger storm than in more insular communities.
- ACSD offers a wide variety of opportunities for someone who has a family, loves the outdoors and enjoys a rural lifestyle. My town/community in particular offers lakes, mountains and farmland.
- We live in an area that supports education. Vermont is a wonderful place to live and raise a family.
- I believe our communities are good places to live because of the natural beauty, the economic stability, the social capital many of us experience, and the citizen government in our towns and at the state level.
- As a small community, neighbors know and care for each other. There are lots of outdoor activities. People support local agriculture.
- Kind people who want all to be successful

- Dedication and support from each and every teacher, school counselor, administrator, community member, and trusted adult employees/volunteers.....
- This is actually an incredibly expensive place to live and there is a severe lack of affordable housing and childcare. It is safe, yes, but lacking cell phone service, road upkeep, and high quality healthcare.
- Safe, inclusive, positive
- Vermont is a beautiful place with great people. Most of us feel very safe living here and appreciate the landscape, physically and metaphorically. The community is supportive and tries to offer great opportunity for younger kids, but really needs to work on opportunities for teens, beyond athletics.
- Its deep sense of caring, commitment, and collaboration.
- Small town feel, strong sense of community-supporting our neighbors.
- Lots of outdoor rec opportunities. Good neighbors
- Good people who are there for each other not looking out for themselves first and foremost. Community supports for those who are in need.
- It is a small town but has a lot to offer. People are very involved in town organizations and community events. People love this town and want to make it better. There is lots of love for outdoor activities and nature conservation.
- I don't live in this community. I believe Addison County to be a warm community with a mix of highly educated people and locals who offer skillsets needed for the community to run well.

What makes this a good school district for students and staff?

- There are many resources available for families and teachers.
- Small population, but also somewhat diverse
- At the moment, it is not a good district for staff. One of the worst one I have been a part of.
- Teachers are dedicated to students and working through many challenges. We have several elementary schools in our district, which all have very different school "personalities". Our district has sports options, club options and activities for children outside of school through the Rec Center.
- This district is fortunate to have a community of parents and educators who both care deeply about the wellbeing of the children who live here.
- Where strong preventive programs are in place to support students and their families versus applying the "bandaid". All schools are severely understaffed in all departments. It is evident and obvious that all staff and personal need a substantial increase in pay. This is the only way to attract and keep a full and qualified employees.
- Teachers are hardworking. They have a technical center with some good programming.
- We are committed to doing good work. We are intelligent professional so please respect us.
- Connection with kids and faculty. We are starting to focus on literacy! It has been a missing piece for a long time. Starting to make a change to meet the needs of some of the most challenging social emotional students.
- Connections to community partnerships, like the college.

- Talented teachers and staff
- The staff are who make this a good school district for students. The support of the community is what makes it a good district for the staff.
- Pay for staff Small class sizes
- Mix of small schools and large schools. Caring, dedicated staff. Engaged parents.
- Staff: Pay and healthcare Students: There are some teachers and staff that give 200% of themselves to ensure their students have a quality experience
- The staff is very supportive of each other and the students.
- We have many skilled and veteran teachers, though we lost a lot of them during and after COVID. I teach in 3 of our rural elementary schools and I would say that each school has a culture of putting students first. Teachers definitely care deeply about our students and families.
- This school district is great for students who are in smaller class sizes(in some school). The goal behind small class size is to provide each student with a rich educational experience where all of their educational needs are being met.
- The district has resources and uses them appropriately. They support teachers, students, and families.
- I have always thought that this is a good school district for students and staff because of the emphasis on academic achievement, our professional partnership with Middlebury College, a solid choice of extra curricular activities, and the Career Center.
- Low student:teacher ratios, support for school budgets and programs.
- Small knit community
- Said above.....
- The district has good funding but students generally struggle to keep up with their out of state peers and there is a rampant lack of motivation amongst students in the middle and high school.
- Good communication, the faculty are good people that want what is best for the students, smaller class sizes give teachers the ability to build connections with their students
- We have a group of dedicated and hard working staff members who want to do their best as professionals and for the students they teach.
- I'm not sure I'd use the word "good" at this point. There are pockets of good. Systems need to be reformed or actually designed. Teacher training and time is focused on IB, where it needs to be focused on content and skill development (as it fits in with IB?).
- Very caring staff who aim to support each student to do their best.
- The community is very supportive of the schools.
- The sense of community makes this school district a good place to work.
- Adopting the IB curriculum is a plus, in my opinion. People who work in this district truly care about kids and their well-being. People are tied to this community and want what is best for making it a good place for children.
- Our district used to be a standout in the State for high performing students. It was highly competitive to prospective employees. It is no longer held in that regard. If anything, I think our district has a reputation of being destroyed by current leadership regardless of articles he helped write to the paper about his accomplishments.

What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about when he or she comes into the district?

- Our district has amazing children who, due to circumstances outside the school's control, have many social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Many children are not ready to access academic learning, yet there is a constant push to move on in our curriculum to meet deadlines that do not align with what our students truly need to succeed.
- Equity remains a major issue. Economic status, language proficiency, and lack of alternative supports to support SLIFE students all hamper student progress in populations with the greatest needs.
- We are failing the children and our community.
- Student behavior and management systems around this seem to be an important issue for us right now. Students and staff need to feel safe at work. Students who need more than a traditional school experience to help them manage mental health/behavior/trauma/neglect need alternative spaces and programs that address those needs. There is also a varying degree of teachers and staff who are (or not) on fully on board and invested in the IB program for our students at all levels. I feel our population, our demographic, our student and family needs, do not make up a learning community that fits best for IB. It takes up a lot of collaborative teaching team time, it takes away autonomy in teaching, it costs money, it just doesn't feel like a good fit for me, as a teacher of a primary grade and my students, or my school and its needs. I need to feel like my focus can be on early foundational skills for young learners. Writing and creating IB units with the collaborative teams can sometimes feel like trying to shove a square peg into a round hole.
- He or she needs to know that this district contains a complex demographic and that the efficacy of our current instructional model/program (IB) should be questioned as the best model for serving this district's learners. As one who has worn the hat of both parent and educational and educator for more than twenty years - my experience is that our district is doing a poorer job of meeting the needs of all learners than we were 8-10 years ago. This failing reaches beyond the pandemic's impact. A disproportionate amount of resources (money, personnel and professional development) are being invested in IB at the expense of other need areas. We are losing too many learners. Our students need more emphasis on foundational skills and a broader range of learning opportunities that match who they are as learners. Most of the district's professional development over the past 5 - 7 years has gone to IB. Very little has happened in the area of mathematics or literacy; even less in the area of social studies and science content. Additionally, we need a system of tiered social/emotional supports that rivals that of our tiered academic supports and that embodies professional development in this area for all adults who interact with children.
- Listen to the needs of all of the employees. Support educating students.
- We used to share our amazing academic data and we haven't seen ANY student data in years. We have it, but it is not being release in its raw form. Teachers know the data is concerning and relate the decline to more than the pandemic because we stopped seeing the data long before the pandemic happened. The data would tell us if the IB program is effective. Teachers have repeatedly asked to revisit and reassess the effectiveness of the IB program and it has not happened. There has been massive turnover because teachers feel their voice is not heard. This is bigger than "the pandemic was challenging

for teachers” Support staff have huge inequities in pay building to building. Staffing has become a major issue due to the reasons above. Some schools are stabilized and some are not. Mary Hogan is in crisis due to lack of humane leadership. Teachers are knowledgeable and willing to work hard. Student behaviors are a priority. We do not have systems in place that work and teachers and regulated students are becoming casualties.

- MUMS broken so got to hire a new principal and fix that. Support teachers at MUHS
- Most people do not like IB. It cost too much and our scores are poor. We have personnel who are paid to just work on IB and paperwork...they are never in the classrooms, rarely with teachers, and never with kids. All of our PD is focused on IB and just starting to have a focus on literacy and math is not even touched upon. Middlebury has changed a lot. Kids, families, curriculum, faculty have changed a lot in the past 10 years and the district seems to be holding onto what the town used to be and it is not the reality. We do not have systems set in place to support students who struggle in the classroom. The social emotional needs are great and yet the demand of what we teach is just as demanding. IB is a resource drain when we could be using the funds more effective given what our community needs. The turnover rate amongst teachers is significant! I am deeply sad over the colleagues who have moved on. We have an unbalanced faculty which is challenging. Veteran teachers are trying to do the heavy lift of supporting younger teachers and that is hard!
- We are not meeting the health needs, or the educational needs, of all students. Students need more access to counselors and therapists. Teachers are NOT counselors, stop putting social work duties on the shoulders of classroom teachers who are already maxed out.
- Staffing shortages are a major issue. We need tiered systems. We need to be able to build units around our literacy programs and focus less on I.B.
- The lack of any kind of real diversity on staff. The lack of real connection between the students in different schools and grades. The need to see that all students can access meals regardless of family need.
- There are a lot of broken pieces in the district including equity with staff, lack of services to students, lack of administrative support, blindsided by administrators, lack of sharing information with stake holders.
- Our middle school is currently not following best practices for young adolescents: classes are too long (80min), TA is too short (7min!), time to move and get outside is minimal, and students are not well-nourished. Our students need access to good healthy brain food. Our school needs structure. We need caring but firm adults to monitor our hallways. Please ban cell phones and go back to computer caddies as opposed to 1-to-1 chromebooks. Teachers need more prep time!
- Vermont is not just a rural "hippie" state. We have many of the same issues and problems with our educational systems as other states. The difference is that we have the people, the power, and the creativity to change the direction that education is taking and be a model for the rest of the country. Instead of trying to be like other states with a drive for high academic scores on standardized tests, we could go back to the basics and create healthy, socially and emotionally strong human beings who will excel as good citizens in school and adulthood, and be able to save humanity.
- Students have individual, unique needs. More educational options are needed to serve them—ie not every student is ready to study Spanish in third grade; specific programs are

needed to address needs of students with intellectual disabilities and those with emotional/behavioral needs; there are severe staffing shortages in some areas and subs are nearly impossible to find—this makes the work extremely stressful and causes teachers to leave

- IB. There are a number of positive changes due to IB, but (at the MYP and DP level) there are many, many issues. Administrators at the central office suggest they understand, but they have not lived in our schools and do not fully understand. We can have discussions about what is working and what is not working, but they need to be open to the idea of moving away from IB may be the best issue. IB seems to work on their end (the administrators'), but it falls short in serving our students...which is what an educational system is really about.
- This part of Addison County has an economically diverse population, because of this, there are a lot of conversations where people have a hard time understanding their neighbor's perspective. People here believe that this part of the state and country is special and they are sometimes suspicious of models that come from other states. By the same token, we have many families who are relative new-comers to the community. That tension, between "Real" Vermonters and transplants, is also another one where conflict and perspective-taking is difficult. Our last superintendent came from outside of Vermont and I have heard, over the years of his work in our district, many comments about how "he didn't know how we do things here." That's not necessarily a bad thing, but it's something that a new person will need to contend with.
- The incoming person needs to know that IB has fractured our teaching and learning community in many ways. The DP program caters to a very small, elite group of students. The educational needs for the majority of students in our community are much greater than the what they are getting because of this resource allocation. In my opinion, around 20-30 students are enrolled in the DP program which will lead to a certificate. This certificate program benefits students who would apply to the top 1% of all students—such as Ivy League and NESCAC schools. IB DP program should be a choice for those that are interested, but so should AP courses. I would like to see the MYP and PYP go away in ACSD. The Alternative Education program should be brought back, and there should be an emphasis on trade skills in the PAHCC. Our community needs all of these programs(or similar) in order to meet all of the needs and interests in our district...not just the needs and interests of the top 1%. IB is not a research based program, and in fact our units do not address many of the CCSS and NGSS standards that are being taught nationally. Quite simply, our students are not being taught what they need to be taught in order to be college and work ready. COVID was a major event in these student's lives, but the lack of explicit instruction of foundational skills is a major contributor to the low test scores. The unit writing in the PYP was done in a way that felt random. There is not a research based scope and sequence to any of the PYP units. It was written by teachers...not vetted by researchers.
- IB is not serving the needs of students. It does not meet the need of students that struggle and it seems to cause a high level of anxiety in the top students. There is a need for alternative programming for K-12 We have no multiple pathways for students until 11th grade. We need them at a much younger grade before students are disenfranchised.
- I think the new superintendent needs to be fully aware of the mixed feelings about our status as an IB World District. My sense is that there is not 100% buy in from faculty,

and my understanding is that there are some other programs (like music) that may have suffered with the schedule shift. I also think that the past administration in the high school did not fully embrace the diversity of programs offered at the Career Center. We should be firming our partnership with those programs.

- There are concerns about whether the value of the International Baccalaureate licensure is commensurate with the financial and professional development investment being committed to it. There has been a lack of transparency around the annual expense of ACSD paying the IB non-profit corporation to have its (IB) label. Some of us wonder how the "hard budgetary decisions" coming after ESSER funds run out might impact teachers and staff who work day in and day out with students, if the district continues to pay the salaries of multiple IB leaders, professional development around the IB and the annual dues associated maintaining IB authorization. This feels of particular concern at the elementary level, where the investment in training teachers on basic reading and math skills instruction has been lacking due to the focus on IB. Also, potential closure of small schools will be an issue
- IB. Waste of time, resources and money not designed for our population
- Racism, Misogyny, Hate, Bullying, suicidal ideations, the need for more "student supports", etc., etc....
- Some schools are more rural and have lower funding. There is a suburban versus rural dynamic and the numerous elementary schools feed into one middle school where racism as well as high differentials of achievement and economic status play a major role in dividing the school community.
- IB, people want to feel heard, alternative program.
- While it is a beautiful place to live it is also a hard place to live. It is expensive and provides limited jobs. And due to the college we also have a very economically diverse demographic. We do have those that are suffering from addiction, homeless, poverty, barely making ends meet, lack of support and while we do what we can to serve the needs of the community we aren't successful in meeting the needs of all our students. All our alternative education programs were dismantled without a plan of how best to serve those students in the general classroom. I am also not sure that IB is meeting the needs of most of the students. While IB has so many great qualities, its pace and content doesn't reach a significant amount of the students. We don't offer much in the way of alternative learning for students that need it, therefore they struggle and create struggles for the classroom. We aren't looking at ways to meet all the students. We often only look at how to meet the needs of IB and standards. Many kids are struggling with IB and the pandemic effects just compound this. I honestly feel like I was a better teacher and prepped kids for moving on before IB. Also that Vermont is a pretty sheltered place, but that doesn't mean we are without our racial and bullying issues that rock our children's lives.
- 1. The transition of 6th grade to MUMS continues to create inequities and inefficiencies for many. 2. Teacher training and time needs to be shifted back to content and skill training (in the context of IB). 3. Vertically aligned evaluation systems need to be created to help support and monitor effective teaching and administration. 4. A creeping, subtle self-censorship is affecting texts and conversations in some areas of the district. Despite the creation (and not yet adopted?) materials selection policy, what's deemed appropriate is open to adult biases. Teachers and administrators need to engage in

awkward conversations about bias in unit design and implementation. They need to discuss where supports are needed in the face of community challenge. And, supports are needed--and publicly stated--so that students can engage in honest, thought-provoking learning.

- -Feeling of division between the "Middlebury" kids and the kids from rural towns. -IB... what data do we have to evaluate its effectiveness and its value? Is it worth the investment? We need to be really transparent about this. -At the secondary level, we need to expand our options for students who are not on the "college track"-we need more flexible pathways in grades 9, 10 in addition to expanding those available for 11-12 (career center classes are not enough). -We have a severe shortage of school counselors. Let's make them school staff so we have better chances of recruiting and retaining qualified people. Their salaries through CSAC are not livable. -We are seeing the effects of COVID not just as an increase in the need for mental health supports but also an increase in the need for academic support. What's the data on the number of special education or 504 referrals? How does it compare to pre-COVID? To pre-IB?
- Not everyone is happy with the IB program. We would like to evaluate the IB program and decide if it is meeting the needs of the majority of our community.
- Not having the buy-in from all district teachers that IB is a good use of funds, nor a program that our students need. Those numbers are supported by the percentage of students that graduate from the DP program.
- Everyone has too much on their plate. Admin at Mary Hogan are pulled in a million directions dealing with severe social/emotional/behavior issues. Teachers give large portions of their time to dealing with extreme behaviors. A lot of resources go to this. I don't think the school admin has done a good job of "selling" IB curriculum to staff. Many staff do not like or even understand what IB really is. All the small schools being part of one district is a huge challenge. They take large amounts of resources for a small amount of students, but local communities feel very fiercely protective of their little schools.
- Teachers and community members have been asking to see data that shows the International Baccalaureate is effective. We do not have any. Teachers want IB gone. Many teachers have left because of this. Community members have moved their children out of the schools because of it. We now have now have a large cohort of brand new teachers. There is a huge number of families who are not served well by IB and do not have the privilege of moving their children. They are silent and trying to survive the system and their children are not learning to read or compute at a basic level. Ask to see the data. I think it borders on criminal. The leadership team has placed IB above everything else and made it impossible for concerning voices to be heard. There is accepted gaslighting behavior. Administration writes glossy newsletters and keeps up a bright and cherry social media page and our academic data has tanked. The community members who have children in the system know this. Affluent community members are the only ones well served by IB. That said, the number of students achieving the IB diploma is appalling. Our dropout rates and behavior problems have also increased. Many behavior problems go unreported because of frequency and lack of time or staffing to actually write them up.

What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need in order to be successful?

- Relevant teaching experience in working with a variety of students. Focus on what our students need and how the district can best support teachers and staff, as well as respect for our limited time with students.
- Ability to listen as well as actively engage with community from all backgrounds (not just Middlebury Town). Commitment to equity. Flexibility in implementation of initiatives. Transparency. Follow-through. Willingness to get one's hands dirty.
- A backbone
- A listener, a problem solver who takes into account the voices of his/her staff, someone who doesn't take on too much for our district (let us get really good at something!), works well with the Union reps for our schools
- The new Superintendent will need to lead in a manner that demonstrates his awareness of and response to the highly diverse needs of the student population he and his district employees serve. It is imperative that he or she honors the individuality of the individual communities while fostering a level of consistently high expectations for both instruction and learning.
- Be a strong advocate for students, families, and all educational staff.
- An ability to form intimate groups of staff to hear actual concerns and stories from inside our buildings. Things that work and things that do not. An ability to assess how to navigate a path forward with staff in leadership positions that are not the most qualified for the position. Someone who can address administrators who's approach is unhealthy and not best for children. Someone who prioritizes reading skills at the elementary level. Someone willing to assess the IB program and it's effectiveness (both in cost and overall student success) and is capable to make changes based on the outcomes. Someone who tells the truth. Someone who advocates for all students and their families, not just our most privileged ones.
- a person that can listen to those teachers with experience and then make positive change based on what is best for students & teachers
- Listener Strong with setting up systems Someone who doesn't have an agenda
- Democratic decision making. Compassion. A self-awareness of their own class, gender, sex, race, and power and how that impacts their relationships with others.
- Open-minded, level headed, team player, systematic, organized, communication skills, and hopefully has had teaching experience.
- The person hired for this position needs to own the decisions they make, to share in the successes and failures, and to listen to the staff regarding what is and is not working. Their agenda must match that of the people they lead.
- A good listener, follow through, supportive of their staff, look at what's best for the students and staff and make decisions based on that.
- Caring but firm. Aware and supportive of RPs but able to meet our students where they are (in need of discipline.)
- A new person from outside the school district with independent thoughts. Someone willing to throw out the "old," and start over with a priority for social-emotional skills, less screen time, and an outdoor educational philosophy. The new superintendent needs to have an appreciation for, and participation in, outdoor activity.

- Ability to listen, to attract new employees, to truly want equity for all students including those who are not able to access IB curriculum, to recognize employees for their good work (not when they go “above and beyond” by spending their own time and money, but when they work efficiently yet effectively reach students)
- Open minded, good listener, good communicator.
- A successful superintendent will need to have a lot of empathy and vision. Empathy to be able to hold the different perspectives in our community; and vision to guide our district in a productive direction. An excellent superintendent is an active listener and who will value parent input without undermining teacher expertise. A superintendent also needs a thick skin and to know that how people feel about things is usually more important than what the facts of the situation are.
- The new superintendent needs to be a good listener. He or she needs to be able to take in information without already having their mind made up. This district is in turmoil right now on many levels. It would be a great start if the new superintendent started by listening to the teachers and staff that work directly with students each day. We are the ones that can have the most impact on student learning. We are the ones who see students struggling and can have an immediate response if given the proper training. Our many years of PD focused on IB has resulted in poorly trained math teachers, poorly trained literacy and science teachers. New teachers coming into our schools don't have a rich background in reading instruction. Our PD needs to be focused on that instead of looking at ATL's. The new superintendent needs to rethink the roles of the PYP, MYP and DP coordinators. They should be 50% in the classroom. We have a teacher shortage right now, and some of our best, most qualified teachers are IB coordinators....not in the classroom. The new superintendent needs to re-evaluate the supervision structure in our district.
- I think we need someone who is open-minded, has a vision for the future, understands what it is like to be a teacher in today's world, and someone who has a focus on our students that struggle.
- The new ACSD superintendent needs to be patient, compassionate, and humble. It will take time to become acquainted with all the stakeholders, and to continue the process of coming back together after Covid. I also think that in a rapidly changing world, any leader should be resourceful and flexible.
- It would be fabulous if the new superintendent had experience as a classroom teacher or were willing to spend a day as a substitute teacher to see what kinds of challenges teachers face in the classroom! Many children struggle to follow the expectations at school, and I don't think administrative leaders grasp the depth of the problem. The new superintendent will need to balance the needs of an economically disparate population. There is a large gap between those who are highly educated/financially stable and those with few resources and little investment in the school system. The new superintendent should look closely at CSAC (Counseling Services of Addison County) and note the severe needs for mental health support in our community, as this need heavily impacts our schools.
- Patients
- Recognize the enormity of the task at hand.
- Flexible, understanding of real issues teachers face in the classroom, and open to auditing the IB to potentially move away from that system.

- Personable, student focused, someone who has experience working in school (ie. teaching), flexible and patient.
- Be open-minded about curriculum needs of our students. Be a positive and approachable leader Willingness to adapt and change to meet the needs of our demographic and professionals View themselves as humble Someone with years experience as a teacher and admin Be willing to explore new curriculum or alternative curriculum to help reach the kids whose learning isn't best done at a desk and through reading and writing Trained in Understanding the effects poverty and trauma has on development and family dynamics Experience with a wide demographic population Knowledge of curriculum programs that really do meet the needs of the students (beyond IB)
- Skills: diplomacy, collaboration, systems design, Qualities: compassion, honesty, open-mindedness (all the IB Learner Profile traits!), deep learner & thinker, understanding the different needs of rural and "urban" school structures, the ability to learn--with a dose of humility
- -Great communicator -Open and transparent -Great listener -Willingness to be in schools regularly, not just for the special occasions, to really get a sense of what is happening and what students and staff are doing (the success and the challenges) -willing to critically examine the different IB programs in an inclusive and transparent way
- Someone who is not only willing to listen, but someone who is willing to consider making changes even if it is against what they previously thought to be the best solution.
- Good communicator, has been a teacher in their past work. Showing teachers that they have full support of the superintendent. Doing what is right for the kids comes first. No personal agendas.
- Personable and manage a lot of different points of view about what the direction of the school should be. Need to have a clear vision and work to communicate that vision to all stakeholders. Solution oriented to solve some major challenges when it comes to staffing shortages and student behavior needs.
- To be willing to be courageous. Standing up to IB will be difficult with current members of administration and the Central Office team. People will lose jobs because of this. These positions have come under scrutiny because they are highly skilled teachers making more money than many teachers and NOT working directly with students at a time (post pandemic) when we need them the most! Schools will also have to be closed. Someone will have to make the hard call. I think our district is suffering from the forceful integration of the IB program. Teachers are not valued by current leadership and I feel like we need someone new to ACS D to lead us through a recovery and rebuild... SO the new hire will need skills required to do that. I think the new superintendent will need to be skilled at sorting through a lot of information and determining what is accurate and what is embellished. I hope they talk to the Teacher's Union, small groups of teachers and families who are struggling within our community.

COMPILATION OF STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS REGARDING THE ADDISON COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT POSITION

(2/21/2023)

1. What makes your community a good place to live?

TOP THEMES:

1. The area is a nature lover's paradise with many outdoor recreation opportunities.
2. There is a strong and vibrant partnership between the school district and Middlebury College.
3. There is the feel of a small town with the feel of being a neighbor but there are the amenities of a large city.
4. The community supports the school district and wants it to do well.

ACTUAL COMMENTS:

1. Lots of access to nature, sports, and outdoor activities
2. Middlebury College
3. Strong sense of support for education bolstered by Middlebury College
4. There is a small-town vibe enhanced by Middlebury College
5. Vermont is a good place to live—near lakes and forests; people move here because there are no weather catastrophes
6. Middlebury is an incredibly progressive community-people are involved politically
7. We're surrounded by farms and agriculture businesses, farm to table
8. The people who live here are good people
9. There are many social activities within each of the towns e.g. vibrant theater companies, music scene
10. Kids have many opportunities
11. There is a hospital in town
12. Amtrak is here.
13. There is a strong connection to the college; phenomenal, very eager to engage with the school and community.
14. Partnerships with the college and local businesses
15. There is a strong sense of community.
16. The community is striving to improve all aspects of the community
17. Close proximity to the mountains, Middlebury Snow Bowl, Lake Champlain/ a nature lover's paradise
18. TAM trail around Middlebury maintained by Middlebury Land Trust
19. Town Hall Theater and filmmakers' festival
20. Every person in the community can find kindred people
21. There are many opportunities for kids to pursue their passions
22. Middlebury College provides an atmosphere of pursuing knowledge.
23. There is the feel of a small town with the feel of being a neighbor but there are the amenities of a large city.
24. There are terrific opportunities for people who love nature.

25. The community wants the schools to do well.
26. ACSD is almost always granted a tax increase by the taxpayers. The budget has passed for about 25 years in a row.
27. Middlebury College provides many cultural opportunities
28. There are many outdoor opportunities—the national forest, Lake Champlain
29. The people in the community are engaged; they possess a strong moral fiber
30. There is a homespun feeling about Addison County.
31. People are known by others rather than being a number.
32. There are sufficient amenities that are found in more metropolitan areas—bookshop, restaurants, an awesome college.
33. There is a wonderful natural surrounding area.
34. There is a love of the outdoors and the multiple outdoor resources.
35. A smalltown feel where people support each other.
36. People have an independent spirit with a can-do attitude.
37. The Middlebury Snowbowl is amazing.
38. The public is community-minded and engaged in many current issues. They show up at events.
39. Porter hospital is an awesome resource. It is filled with high-quality people who choose to live in the community.
40. There are many outdoor opportunities.
41. It is a great place to retire because of the hospital, the college, and two Continuing Care Retirement Communities.
42. Addison county is close enough to Chittenden and Rutland counties for people to commute to. Middlebury is also the county seat.
43. It is a beautiful natural environment.
44. There is a mixed social economic background with resources for academics and the arts e.g. Town Hall Theater
45. There are many services for the elderly along with many community support services; more than what people would expect
46. There is a welcoming of diversity in terms of ethnic backgrounds and LGBTQ
47. People are friendly to each other; most people know each other.
48. The schools have a mix of kids—professors kids, farmers' kids, and many others
49. There is a history of the community supporting the school budget. Public education is highly valued.

2. What makes this a good school district for students and staff?

TOP THEMES:

1. The teachers are staff are committed professionals and dedicated to the success of students.
2. There are many extracurricular activities for students which enhance the curriculum.
3. The school is an International Baccalaureate School K-12

4. Class sizes in the community schools are small, enabling students to have much individualized attention.

ACTUAL COMMENTS:

1. There is strong support for the schools
2. There is a good balance between salaries and cost-of-living
3. The staff and teachers are amazingly willing to collaborate for the greater good
4. There is a strong student to teacher ratio
5. IB World schools is an important part of our identity and engages kids in really meaningful work
6. Many staff and teachers have their kids in the schools
7. There are many options for students e.g. there are many sports opportunities for High School students
8. There is strong parental involvement
9. There is good work around student agency and voice
10. The IB program, although controversial, is positive for students and attracts some students to the district.
11. The educators are inspired.
12. There are really good community partners such as parents and community organizations.
13. The teachers and staff are quite knowledgeable and committed to children even when things are hard, always trying to provide the best for children.
14. There is a wide variety of extracurricular activities for students e.g. a bass fishing team, a theater team, countless clubs, (Best Buddies, Unified basketball) etc. to support kids of almost any interest.
15. The social media pages are strong and well-followed. Check them out to understand the many different activities occurring at the schools e.g. Instagram and Facebook.
16. There is a level of respect among students, staff, and the community.
17. The district is small; there is an opportunity to know students and staff out of the classroom as well as within it.
18. The administrators are open to new ideas. Historically they have been open to innovative ideas.
19. There are many resources for students—many resources for students.
20. Teachers feel incredibly supported i.e. with material resources
21. There are great teachers, dedicated and passionate about what they do
22. The school-community is resilient.
23. Teachers are visionary and want to be involved in positive change. They have the energy to do so. Very few are complacent.
24. There is strong community support for the schools and the importance of education.
25. The teachers are highly effective and really care about students.
26. The salaries of teachers are mostly competitive with area schools.
27. Teachers are community members and care about both the school and community.

28. Parents care about teachers, the schools, and the community.
29. Parents feel supported by teachers.
30. Teachers feel supported by parents.
31. There are many outdoor opportunities for students.
32. Students participate in events that are hosted by Middlebury College; there is a symbiotic relationship with the school and the college.
33. There are small community schools at the elementary level. That small school environment enables much caring for and attention to students.
34. The IB program engages kids in inquiry and problem-solving. The IB program is K-12 and develops global citizens.
35. The culture of the schools is creative and organic; all relationships are very personal. It is a tight-knit community. Teachers and administrators communicate personally rather than with form letters or emails.
36. As the largest district in the county, the District offers many benefits to its employees
37. There is a wide variety of course offerings
38. The principals know the kids and staff; large enough to have lots of opportunities for students but small enough to know everyone.
39. There are levels of excellence in academics, athletics, and the arts; kids go to top colleges from here.
40. There is a strong college placement rate for International Baccalaureate students such as in Ivy League schools.
41. Teaching is not just a job for teachers; they are highly motivated with a sense of calling.
42. The central office supports the schools and employees well. Employees are free to take risks, even if they fail if they are working in the best interests of students. Employees feel safe.
43. There are both large and small elementary schools ranging in size from 39 to over 300. 6 of the 7 elementary schools have under 100 students.
44. There is high community support in each of those towns for their community schools.
45. The district is small enough to enable changes to be made quickly to effect student change for example, during the pandemic, people quickly figured out how to make things work. There is an “all-hands-on-deck” attitude by all employees.
46. Class sizes are low.

3. What are the issues that a new superintendent needs to know about when he or she comes into the district?

TOP THEMES:

1. The IB program is controversial. While many support it, many do not and question its relevance for students who may not be college bound as well as its cost.

2. Many administrators have little experience within the school district and there has been a high level of turnover among administrators throughout the district as well as teachers at the middle school.
3. There is an ongoing staffing shortage throughout the district, compounded by the general labor shortage as well as unattractive salaries, especially for support staff.
4. The district has many small elementary schools. Many people favor keeping them open because they are integral to the community while others favor closing them because they are not cost-effective.

ACTUAL COMMENTS:

1. The whole district is an International Baccalaureate district; it is controversial for some. Some people still do not understand it or why it is needed. Not everyone understands how it is beneficial to their children.
2. Rising costs for education/tax burden, the cost to educate students
3. There is about \$111 million in deferred maintenance
4. There are 6 rural schools and 3 central schools in Middlebury
5. There are ongoing conversations about consolidating schools
6. There is declining enrollment combined with declining funding from the state
7. ACSD is poised to lose much funding
8. There is a staffing shortage—custodians, paraprofessionals, nurses
9. Inequities in staffing needs to be tackled
10. There is pushback on the International Baccalaureate program
11. The community is fractured regarding local politics
12. Some people perceive a lack of transparency from the central office; that is felt through various populations
13. There is a history of personalizing problems rather than solving them; there is a level of privilege that comes with this community.
14. Comparatively, ACSD is a phenomenal school district compared to many districts in the state.
15. Change in VT is hard; people don't do well with change
16. The housing market is tight
17. The district has been through substantial change in the last 10 years; move slowly when initiating change.
18. There is a small town culture.
19. Elementary schools may need to be closed and they are close to peoples' hearts; their identity is tied to their school.
20. The whole district is an International Baccalaureate district.
21. There is a wide variety of students and needs.
22. New principals will be in place at the high school and in Ripton effective with the new school year.
23. There are always insufficient resources for all of the budgetary needs.
24. There is discord about IB within the community and the schools.
25. The new super should know about the history of consolidation in the district.

26. There is continual discussion about closing or not closing the small schools.
27. A facilities master planning process was completed by a consulting company within the last 3 years. The new super should become familiar with it.
28. The high school principal recently resigned. He was well-loved by people but no one seems to know why he resigned in the middle of the school year.
29. The middle school consolidated in the 2021-2022 school year resulting in smaller elementary schools.
30. There is work to be done in the middle school regarding the 3-grade (vs. 2-grade) model.
31. Some community members are not in favor of 6th graders being in the middle school.
32. There was a third to a half exodus of middle school teachers in 2021-22 because many teachers were not onboard with the changes that were made. Many teachers felt unsupported by the administration at the time.
33. The middle school is working better this year.
34. There has been nearly a whole Board turnover in the last 2 years. (The Board members' terms are two years).
35. Most principals are new in the last two years. The middle school principals are new in the last 3 years. (There is a co-principal model in the MS.)
36. There have been four Business Officials in the last 7 years.
37. There are "two-sides of the tracks" within the district. The new super should understand that and serve all students and community members, not just the Middlebury College clientele.
38. Addison County has a unique culture. It would be best if someone understood it before becoming the superintendent.
39. There is an appetite in the community for visionary leadership.
40. People are spending energy being critical, suspicious and scared. It would be nice to harness that energy in a more positive direction for students.
41. The new superintendent must look at everything with a new set of eyes. Someone who can evaluate everything with an objective view e.g. the IB program, the issue of consolidating schools or not; why is there turnover in administrators, etc.—See # 3.
42. He or she must be willing to make hard decisions (after listening to diverse viewpoints) and stick by them AND be transparent about the rationale for decisions.
43. There is a need to rebuild trust between the high school teachers and the superintendent.
44. Elementary teachers want to be heard by the central office and want to have a larger role in developing direction for the elementary schools.
45. Be willing to spend time in the schools. Listen to teachers and staff on a regular basis. Seek their opinions on issues.
46. The new super should be really open to soliciting the advice of people who have lots of experience in the elementary school, especially if he or she does not have elementary experience.
47. It would be nice if the superintendent had experience as an elementary teacher.
48. Let people with knowledge/experts in their area lead change that affects them.
49. Be willing to break down barriers that hinder people from doing their jobs.

50. There is tension about the value of small elementary schools versus the rising cost of staffing them—the school closure issue.
51. There is difficulty in staffing positions, particularly paraeducators.
52. There are curricular challenges at the Middle School and related staffing challenges.
53. A large number of students score below proficiency in math and verbal metrics
54. Many of the senior members of the school board will not run for re-election.
55. Many of the administrators (HS Principal) are short timers; there is little institutional memory.
56. The IB program is controversial and not supported by all both because of its perceived benefits and cost. Some parents do not see the benefits of the IB program for their children.
57. Some teachers feel like the IB program puts an administrative burden on them as well as many training requirements.
58. There is an undertone that the district is moving in elitist direction rather than serving the whole population of students. That feeling is associated with the IB program.
59. The potential for school closure of small elementary will be an issue for the new superintendent. People are passionate about both sides of the issue.
60. Wise use of resources will be an issue for the new superintendent e.g., the impact of Act 173, facilities, the IB program, special education.
61. A small-town, local-control attitude may be shocking to someone who is not familiar with it. People are passionate about many issues.
62. The high school is attached to a career center which provides many opportunities for students.
63. There is a history of some teachers not having a good relationship with administrators based upon moves of teachers without their consent.
64. Faculty and staff often feel like they are not included in the decision-making process.
65. Teachers and parents did not feel included in the process of the middle school configuration last year.
66. A large number of the Board will turnover in March of 2023.
67. Candidates who are running are part of the “Save our Schools” coalition. They want to preserve an elementary school in every town. Many people view them as destructive or adversarial. They throw fits when they don’t get their way.
68. Staffing shortages is a continuing problem.
69. The district is on the 4th Business Official in the last 10 years; 3 in the last 4 years.
70. Last year almost 50% of the Middle School staff left probably because there were three new principals in the last year, 6th grade was added to the building with only 2 new teachers, and the schedule was not built based upon the needs of the students. There was a lot of down time for the students which resulted in behavioral issues by students.
71. The new staff at the Middle School is positive and working well.
72. The behavior of children post-pandemic is not as good as it was beforehand.
73. There has not been a consistent and thoughtful approach to Social Emotional Learning. The SEL services need to be integrated. Their services are fragmented. The providers have a hard time keeping up with the needs.

74. The academic rigor of the IB curriculum is not accessible to the lower third of students. That is usually the group that acts out. And, many of those students show up at the high school as disengaged students.
75. 75% of more the teaching staff are not comfortable with IB and do not see it as in the best interest of all students.
76. A significant majority of the high school teachers are marching in the same direction and have bought into IB.
77. Beyond the top 50 students in the high school, the remainder of the students are not well-served.
78. To support the success at the high school, there needs to be more consistent success at the elementary schools. The elementary schools reflect their own local cultures. As a result, they have different student outcomes. There needs to be a unification of the curriculum offered at each elementary school.
79. There needs to be more districtwide collaboration about the curriculum. That would help unify the curriculum.
80. In fact, there needs to be more districtwide collaboration about many issues. Opportunities are offered but people don't participate. Then they cry that their input was not considered.
81. There are mixed grade classes at most elementary schools.
82. Most employees feel like they have too much on their plates. People are given strong verbal support, but the staffing shortage results in people often going above and beyond in the work that they do.
83. Because there is usually just one section of classes at the elementary schools, teachers often do not have the opportunity to engage in professional collaboration with their peers. It is even more difficult if someone is teaching a mixed grade class.
84. A living wage in this area is \$24 an hour but paraeducators are paid \$18 an hour. They should be better compensated.
85. Substitute teachers are paid better than paraeducators. Paras should be paid better to attract more of them.
86. Recent actions (and advertisements) offer higher salaries for paraprofessionals and custodians.
87. Affordable housing within the district is scarce.
88. There is distrust or disconnect between administration and staff.
89. The district is ready for team-building work.

4. What skills, qualities, and characteristics will the new superintendent need to possess to be successful?

TOP THEMES:

1. The new superintendent must be a highly effective listener to diverse perspectives before making decisions. Then, the superintendent must be able to explain the rationale for decisions clearly and effectively.

2. Since there is a lot of turnover of Board members, the superintendent must be able to work effectively with inexperienced Board members to follow through on issues such as the Long Range Facilities Plan.
3. The superintendent must be highly visible and willing to engage with personnel in the schools as well as the school community.
4. The superintendent must be a genuine and effective bridge builder-among the schools, with the central office to the schools, and within the various communities within the school district.

ACTUAL COMMENTS:

1. They need to know the people they are working with—internally and in the community
2. Strong people skills
3. The ability to weave the community together/to help others find connections and common ground
4. Do not be an elitist and communicate clearly that you are not one.
5. Familiarity with physical plant issues. Experience in that arena would be very helpful
6. Be direct in providing feedback; live at the 30,000 foot level while being able to dive down to the 5' level
7. Someone who can articulate and have the ability to have difficult conversations
8. An educational and intellectual leader
9. Direct experience as an educator or building administrator
10. Someone who is flexible and a good listener and understands about student services
11. Someone who can make decisions and handle not being liked
12. Be consistent and clear in behavior-alignment of words, deeds, and practices
13. Someone who has a general understanding of rural communities in VT or is willing to learn
14. Be willing to admit you don't know something
15. Be humble and open to various points of view before making decisions
16. Help us as a community to build agency in finding answers to issues.
17. Embody the 10 attributes of the IB Learner Profile
18. Provide evidence that they have influenced change in an organization
19. Someone who has done work around anti-racism and equity and poverty awareness
20. Someone who can process minutiae and legalese and translate it for ordinary people.
21. Enable the smaller schools to have a voice and not be monopolized by the larger schools.
22. The super needs to be able to understand the needs of a wide variety of talents and abilities of all students, not just the IB students.
23. Mentoring new principals at the high school and Ripton will be a necessary skill.
24. A background in IB, awareness of the benefits of a career center education, and teaching experience is important.
25. Understand the needs of kids pursuing careers from trade school to Princeton.
26. Be a strong, clear, efficient, transparent, communicator.
27. Be a problem solver.
28. Be highly visible; boots on the ground. Be an ordinary presence in the schools.

29. Strong skills in budget development and management.
30. Strong personal character
31. The ability to listen in a genuine and empathetic way.
32. Communicate intentions as clearly as possible.
33. Be tech savvy.
34. Be transparent about the cost of the IB program and the resultant effects of those expenses. There is a feeling that it is not.
35. Be able to break down the barrier between the Central Office and the schools. Structure and implement a central office that supports the schools and is perceived as doing so.
36. Be willing and able to communicate the benefits of the IB diploma and how it benefits all students.
37. Figuring out how to implement Act 173 well.
38. Strong communication skills regarding all of the issues listed above.
39. Be willing to be maligned for making decisions that will offend some people.
40. Experience is going through a construction bonding-process and be well-versed in facilities.
41. Have a strong understanding of special education so that he or she can provide leadership on it.
42. Possess a track record of successful parent engagement and bringing parents into the decision-making process.
43. Be skilled at working the Board of Education that facilitates communication and who believes that it is the Board's job to hold the superintendent accountable.
44. Be public in the goal-setting process.
45. The new super should be very skilled in the construction process.
46. The person needs to be able to work well with a geographically dispersed district.
47. Be an authentic listener and respond genuinely rather than politically.
48. Possess a fresh perspective.
49. Encourage collaboration among schools and among different departments and groups.
50. Affirm the work of staff members by showing up at their meetings.
51. Get out of the office and visit people where they work.
52. Possess strong emotional intelligence and a sense of humor.
53. Invite people to a higher level of collaboration.
54. Be able to finish the long-range facilities plan.
55. Communicate clearly about the rationale for decisions.
56. Be able to lead the Board in making decisions with collaboration from the stakeholders involved.
57. Be able to resolve which schools will stay open.
58. Be able to connect locally and think globally—whether the issues are IB, closing schools, changing demographics, national trends, etc.
59. Be down to earth and able to connect with people from all walks of level.
60. Be academically astute.
61. Be a coach that players want to play under.

62. Prior IB experience would be helpful, particularly if they could find solutions to the concerns posed by students, parents, and teachers.
63. Be a bridge builder between the administration and staff.
64. Create a feeling of support among staff and the schools that “we are all in this together.”
65. Allow staff to take risks and allow them to fail.
66. Use data to make well-informed decisions. Report that data in a way that people understand so that people will support the schools.
67. Be an excellent listener to learn the history of issues from different perspectives and be willing to understand perspectives from both sides of the track. It will take proactive work to understand the perspectives of people who may not be inclined to participate in community forums or surveys.