



USD 232 Board of Education
Official Minutes – Special Meeting

Administrative Office (35200 West 91st Street, De Soto, KS)

January 24, 2023

President, Mrs. Ashley Spaulding called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present. Board members and administrators present were as follows:

Board Members:

Rick Amos
Bill Fletcher
Danielle Heikes
Brandi Jonasson
Stephanie Makalous
Ashley Spaulding

Absent: Calley Malloy

Administrators:

Alvie Cater, Assistant Superintendent of Administration & Communications
Steve Deghand, Assistant Superintendent of Facilities & Operations
Wendy Denham, Board Clerk/Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
Carrie Handy, Executive Director of Human Resources/Elementary
Lee Hanson, Director of Special Services
Dr. Frank Harwood, Superintendent
Michelle Hite, Director of Curriculum & Instruction/Accreditation

The Board held a work session with superintendent search firm GR Recruiting (Dr. Dick Christie, Lane Plugge and Mark Evans). They reviewed results and analysis of the superintendent search stakeholder survey. Parents, staff members, students, community members, school board members and others participated in the anonymous survey. Dr. Christie said that overall, the survey results were very positive. The following slides were shared:

Overview of Study

- The Superintendent Search Survey was developed in collaboration with K12 Insight. It was open from January 5-17, 2023.
- It was distributed to the community through a public URL.
- The survey was also available in other languages, such as Arabic, Chinese (simplified), Haitian Creole, Japanese, Lorean, Russian, Spanish, Urdu and Vietnamese.
- Results do not reflect random sampling; therefore, they should not be generalized to all stakeholders. Rather, results reflect only the perceptions and opinions of survey participants.
- Data labels less than 5 percent are not shown in charts and graphs. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

- A separate report with all the responses to the open-ended questions was also provided to the Board.

Participation

There were 644 unique responses from the USD 232 community.

Describing the District

Survey respondents were asked, “What one word best describes how you feel about the district?” The top ten words given were as follows: Good, Proud, Positive, Great, Growing, Community, Satisfied, Excellent, Excited, and Hopeful.

Aspects of the District

A graph was shared showing the percentage survey respondents rated the quality of the following aspects of the district (Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor):

- Relationship with Families: Excellent – 29%, Good – 57%, Fair – 12%
- Relationship with the Surrounding Community: Excellent – 28%, Good – 56%, Fair – 15%
- Relationship with Local Organizations: Excellent – 22%, Good – 57%, Fair – 19%
- Communication: Excellent – 29%, Good – 47%, Fair – 20%
- Transparency: Excellent – 16%, Good – 42%, Fair – 32%, Poor – 10%
- Fiscal Management: Excellent – 20%, Good – 53%, Fair – 22%, Poor – 5%

Critical Issues

Survey respondents were asked to review a list of critical issues and select the top three that they feel the new superintendent should focus on and make a priority. Results are as follows:

- Staff Recruitment and Retention – 47%
- Teacher Quality – 37%
- College and Career Readiness & School Safety – 29%

Top Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Survey respondents were asked to identify three strengths and three areas for improvement of the schools, district and/or community. Results are as follows:

- Strengths
 - Small and Supportive Community
 - Strong Academics
 - Caring and Supportive Teachers and Staff
- Areas for Improvement
 - Equity, Inclusion and Diversity of Staff and Leadership
 - More Support and Increased Pay for Teachers

- Transparency, Accountability and Communication

District Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) serves as a proxy for public confidence in a school/the district and can potentially be connected to district growth. A positive score means there are more people promoting the district than detracting from it. Survey respondents were asked, “If you had a friend or family member moving to the area, how likely would you be to recommend they send their child(ren) to a school in USD 232?” The district received a NPS of 50.

District Aspects Impacting Net Promoter Score

A graph was shared showing the percentage survey respondents rated the type of impact the following aspects of USD 232 have on respondent scores (Very Positive Impact, Positive Impact, No Impact/Neutral, Negative Impact, and Very Negative Impact):

- Academic Support (e.g., curriculum adoption, academic programming, instructional resources, teacher quality and training): Very Positive Impact – 31%, Positive Impact – 53%, No Impact/Neutral – 9%, Negative Impact – 5%
- Student Support (e.g., behavior policies, student services and resources): Very Positive Impact – 23%, Positive Impact – 51%, No Impact/Neutral – 16%, Negative Impact 9%
- District Leadership (e.g., availability, visibility, communication): Very Positive Impact – 16%, Positive Impact – 47%, No Impact/Neutral – 25%, Negative Impact – 9%
- District-level Support Staff (e.g., responsiveness, courteousness, availability): Very Positive Impact – 18%, Positive Impact – 49%, No Impact/Neutral – 27%, Negative Impact – 5%
- Family and Community Engagement (e.g., visibility, support for community stakeholders, response to input received): Very Positive Impact – 16%, Positive Impact – 53%, No Impact/Neutral – 25%, Negative Impact – 5%
- Equity and Access (e.g., inclusive policies and procedures, celebrates diversity, focus on equity): Very Positive Impact – 10%, Positive Impact – 39%, No Impact/Neutral – 37%, Negative Impact – 10%
- Strategic Plan (e.g., aligns with community values and priorities, helps students succeed, consistent with district actions): Very Positive Impact – 16%, Positive Impact – 54%, No Impact/Neutral – 22%, Negative Impact – 7%

Leader Style

Survey respondents were asked, “Considering leader styles where 1 is collaborative and 7 is authoritative, which style leader would best serve USD 232?” A graph was shared showing 29% giving a rating of 3, 25% giving a rating of 4, 24% giving a rating of 2, 11% giving a rating of 5, 9% giving a rating of 1 and 1% giving a rating of 6.

Valued Traits of Great Leaders

Survey respondents were asked to select the eight traits (out of a list of 27) considered most important for the next superintendent to have. Results are as follows:

- Is an effective communicator, creating strong school and community relations – 62%
- Is a Trusted Leader who values ethics and integrity, by practicing moral authority – 54%
- Empowers others by promoting team strengths & students first approach – 47%
- Is accountable and responsible for actions – 47%
- Leads by example through honest practices – 45%
- Shows transparency by sharing the organization’s goals and challenges to promote staff engagement – 42%
- Makes strategic, high-quality decisions with big-picture lens, while managing district resources – 40%
- Knows stakeholders’ interests through listening and learning continuously – 37%

Dr. Christie pointed out that these traits will be discussed following the presentation and used to develop the profile for the superintendent search.

Areas of Expertise

Survey respondents were given a list of specific areas of expertise that different superintendent candidates may possess and asked to gauge, from their perspective, how much importance the Board of Education should place on each area. A graph was shared showing percentage of ratings (Very Important, Important, Somewhat Important, Not Important, and Don’t Know) in the following areas:

- Culturally competent and aware of equity and inclusion: Very Important – 48%, Important – 26%, Somewhat Important – 17%, Not Important – 8%
- Experience in a district with similar enrollment: Very Important – 28%, Important – 36%, Somewhat Important – 30%, Not Important – 5%
- Experience working as a teacher: Very Important – 62%, Important – 24%, Somewhat Important – 11%
- Experience working in public schools in this state: Very Important – 29%, Important – 30%, Somewhat Important – 25%, Not Important – 13%
- Has a doctorate degree: Very Important – 12%, Important – 23%, Somewhat Important – 34%, Not Important – 28%
- Has prior experience as a Superintendent: Very Important – 19%, Important – 31%, Somewhat Important – 36%, Not Important – 12%
- Knowledge of public education finance, operations: Very Important – 72%, Important – 22%

- Multilingual skills in languages beyond English: Important – 14%, Somewhat Important – 40%, Not Important – 40%
- Understands the dynamic and culture of USD 232: Very Important – 49%, Important – 36%, Somewhat Important – 12%

Strategy for Selection

Survey respondents were asked, “In choosing the next superintendent, which path or strategy do you think the Board of Education should take?” Results are as follows:

- Find a candidate who will stay the course and continue the good work of the current administration – 27%
- Find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the current administration, but who can make some necessary changes – 60%
- Find a very different candidate – one who is ready to take the district in a significantly different direction – 12%

District Interactions

Survey respondents were asked, “Within the last year, have you needed to speak with the superintendent, a district staff member, or a school staff member?” 69% said they have and 31% said they have not. They were then asked, “How strongly do you agree or disagree (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree) with the following statements regarding your interactions with the superintendent, a district staff member, or a school staff member?” Results are as follows:

- Easily found out who to contact: Strongly Agree – 44%, Agree – 46%, Disagree – 8%
- Able to make contact with the correct person: Strongly Agree – 49%, Agree – 47%
- Received a timely response: Strongly Agree – 42%, Agree – 44%, Disagree – 9%, Strongly Disagree – 5%
- Person spoken with was courteous: Strongly Agree – 49%, Agree – 43%, Disagree – 6%
- Received the right information: Strongly Agree – 40%, Agree – 44%, Disagree – 12%
- Received all information needed: Strongly Agree – 36%, Agree – 41%, Disagree – 16%, Strongly Disagree – 6%

Impact of District Interactions

Survey respondents were asked to rate the type of impact past interactions with the superintendent, a district staff member, or a school staff member had on how they feel about USD 232. 32% reported a very positive impact, 40% reported a positive impact, 10% reported no impact, 16% reported negative impact and 3% reported very negative impact.

USD 232 Community Survey – Open Response Trends

On the superintendent survey, question 16 asked respondents to “Please share any other thoughts about the district believed to be important for the Board and new superintendent to know.” Dr. Christie reported that 289 surveys included responses to this item and most included multiple comments. He said that generally the comments were positive and complimentary in nature of USD 232. As board members have received copies of all responses to this question, they did not review the trends.

Board members were in agreement with GR Recruiting sharing survey responses with candidates for superintendent.

Dr. Christie shared a letter from the De Soto Teachers’ Association (DTA) Leadership Team that lists practices that the Association would like to see continued in the district, areas in which the district has room for growth, and potential interview questions from the Association perspective. Emily Valdez, President of the DTA, gave permission to GR Recruiting to share this letter with candidates.

Dr. Christie, Mr. Plugge and Mr. Evans shared feedback they had received in speaking with district administrators about desired qualities for the next superintendent. The Board gave permission to GR Recruiting to share this feedback with candidates.

Dr. Christie asked the Board to review the traits again and provide feedback. After discussion, the following ten traits were chosen for the superintendent profile:

- Is an effective communicator, creating strong school and community relations.
- Is a trusted Leader who values ethics and integrity, by practicing moral authority.
- Empowers others by promoting team strengths and students first approach.
- Is accountable and responsible for actions.
- Leads by example through honest practices.
- Shows transparency by sharing the organization’s goals and challenges to promote staff engagement.
- Makes strategic, high-quality decisions with big-picture lens, while managing district resources.
- Knows stakeholders’ interests through listening and learning continuously.
- Builds strong diverse teams, promotes teamwork for all, and is committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Fosters creative and innovative practices in order to promote continuous improvement.

Dr. Christie reviewed the Superintendent Search Timeline that was approved by the Board in their December 10th work session. After discussion, the Board was in agreement with having superintendent finalists participate in a tour of the district given by an administrator and two to three students and meeting with small groups of administrators, certified staff and classified support staff.

Danielle Heikes left the meeting at 6:38 p.m. She returned to the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Dr. Christie confirmed with the Board where advertisements for the superintendent position will be placed, that the salary will be in the range of \$240,000.00, and that the district will reimburse candidates' travel expenses.

President Spaulding adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

February 6, 2023
Date Approved

Wendy S. Denham
Clerk, Board of Education

Spaulding
President, Board of Education