

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROFILE

Northridge Local School District

Johnstown, Ohio

April 16, 2025



Prepared for the Board of Education



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Northridge Local School District Superintendent Search Profile Report

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This report summarizes findings from the Superintendent Search Profile focus group forums conducted by K-12 Business Consulting, Inc. (K-12BC) on April 3, 2025, and from written search profiles submitted by numerous stakeholders by April 7, 2025. Once the Board of Education selected K-12BC to conduct superintendent search, a Search Profile Assessment document was created to solicit input from various stakeholders in the community. The Board and administration developed a broad list of community stakeholders to solicit feedback and a general community-wide invitation to meet with K-12BC staff members to discuss, in greater depth, the search factors and desired new superintendent characteristics. Any stakeholder who desired to express an opinion was welcome to submit a search profile and personally meet with K-12BC at the focus group meeting and open community forum held in the district. The information obtained in this report was obtained through 114 assessment forms and 107 in-person conversations, which we summarized in this document.

The Search Profile Assessment form was readily available to the district staff, identified stakeholders, plus all individuals who attended the focus group sessions. In addition to the individuals who returned written search profiles, some stakeholders participated in interviews and focus group sessions facilitated by K-12BC. The results of the written Search Profile Assessment form are included in this report, along with several comments received in face-to-face discussions held at community forums.

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

A Search Profile Assessment form provided a framework for reporting the information compiled by K-12BC. Broad themes were highlighted in each question area and divided into six (6) response groups (support staff members, teachers, administrators, high school students, community members/parents/business professionals, and school board members). Under each question in the report, the response group's common themes were identified. The first category, "Consistent Themes," are comments frequently heard from all or nearly all six (6) of the response groups. Comments heard less regularly or only heard in a specific response group are listed only under that response group. The comments shown for any response groups are noted with the highest frequency comments listed first, then descending to comments less frequently heard. It is important to note that data compilation is not a scientific sampling.

K-12BC would like to commend the Board of Education for its efforts to include many school district stakeholders in developing the superintendent search profile. Many survey respondents and focus group forum participants expressed positive feelings about involvement in this process and the opportunity to help shape the Northridge Local School District.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

Question #1: What are the district's two or three most significant strengths?

CONSISTENT THEMES

- A wonderful student body.
- A tight-knit community with a strong sense of pride that has a good working relationship with the school district and has supported it and its students in many ways.
- Hard-working, dedicated employees who genuinely care about their students and families.
- Pride and Viking values: trust, leadership, communication, collaboration, accountability, integrity, and respect.
- Students who are well mannered and come to school ready to learn.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

- Strong sense of community, traditional values, and community pride.
- Professional, dedicated, and caring staff members who personally demonstrate pride and sacrifice pay/benefits to work for the district.
- Small district, which enables students to have opportunities for several activities.
- Teachers and staff are skilled and willing to fill various needs students have.

ADMINISTRATORS

- Quality student body.
- Tight-knit community that supports the district and fosters a sense of pride.
- Dedicated, caring district employees who go above and beyond their job description and put the welfare of students first.
- Fiscal management.

TEACHERS

- Wonderful students who are well mannered and an excellent student body.
- Students are hard working and want to learn.
- A supportive, close-knit community (with a small-town feel) and great families that facilitate positive interactions with the school district and its programs.
- Caring faculty and staff members who utilize best practices and who put students first, fostering growth and success.
- A commitment by staff to foster student-centered values and address individual student mental health needs and family needs.

SUPPORT STAFF

- Community support and a commitment to enhance a strong school-community relationship.
- Dedicated staff that actively supports students in every way possible.
- Wonderful student body.
- Strong parent involvement and volunteerism.

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

- Community support and positive relations with district staff members.

- Friendly hard working students and dedicated staff in the district.
- Opportunities for students, both academically and extracurricular.
- A small town feel in the community and schools.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Personable, approachable teachers who genuinely care about and develop good relationships with students; close teacher/student relationships and communication.
- Tight-knit community.
- Lots of activities for students to be a part of.
- A safe environment to come to school in.

IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING DISTRICT

Question #2: What are the two or three most important issues facing the district?

CONSISTENT THEMES

- Existing dysfunction amongst the Board and district leadership creates mistrust of the leadership team within the district and community.
- District organization chart should align with state law.
- Policies and decisions lack transparency to the stakeholders.
- Financial stability: the ability to provide competitive pay, keep quality staff members, and add student curriculum.
- Higher salaries in other school districts aggravate staff retention, turnover, and the recruitment of quality new staff members.
- Need to foster growth in the district's academic programs and course offerings.
- Improving the culture addressing a perception of some biased/unfair/unequal treatments.
- Improving communication, both internally and externally.
- Managing potential student growth resulting from Intel development.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

- Staff turnover and being able to attract and retain quality staff members financially.
- Lack of communication, trust and respect between the Board, Superintendent and Treasurer.
- Financial stability year over year.
- Improving transparency and establishing clear, consistent, and effective communications regarding the goals and objectives of the school district.
- District organization structure creating tension and communication breakdown that has resulted in community district in the board and central office administration.
- Managing potential growth in housing and students from the development of the Intel facility.

ADMINISTRATORS

- Poor relations between the top district level leadership.
- Absence of shared vision amongst the leadership team.
- Confusion as to who to turn to for decisions and clarifications.
- Too much turnover in building principals creates a lack of consistency.
- Financial constraints that prevent the district from paying more competitive wages and retaining staff.
- Knowing what the building budget is to work with to obtain items and services needed.

TEACHERS

- District organization chart causes confusion as to who to contact for clarification when needed.
- District level leadership's inability to work together has caused concerns and rumors in buildings about unfair treatment, unequal pay and allegations of nepotism and favoritism.
- Stability of building administration: there has been too much turnover at the building administrative level which impacts consistency in buildings.
- Developing a vision that will push academic rigor and hold students, staff, and administration accountable.
- Ability to attract and retain staff with competitive wages.

- Improving internal communication between buildings and district central office staff.
- Determining what future changes are needed to improve academic and programmatic improvements to meet students' needs better.
- Follow through developing district strategic plan and curriculum plans.
- Improving staff and student morale.

SUPPORT STAFF

- Lack of leadership and vision coming from the central office leadership team.
- Addressing staff recruitment, staff retention, and staff turnover, impacted by our lower wages.
- Fiscal accountability with transparent communications with the community.
- Concerns about unequal pay and experience credited for similar work experiences on classified wage tables.
- Appearance of favoritism and nepotism in treatment of staff.

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

- Conflict and distrust amongst the board, superintendent and treasurer is apparent to the community, staff and students.
- District organization chart does not align with state law.
- Need to improve transparency in decision-making and communication.
- Teacher longevity, staff retention, and administrator turnover.
- Improve school report cards.
- Concern over handling the potential of added growth in students from the technology developments occurring nearby.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

- The district organization chart does not meet state law.
- The lack of team work at the board, superintendent and treasurer level has created confusion and distrust in school buildings and the community.
- There is unequal pay for similar jobs performed by secretaries in our buildings compared to what central office secretaries are paid.
- There is a lack of response from the central office when concerns are voiced about equity issues of pay and nepotism.
- More courses, including AP classes, are desired.
- Expanding and improving the district's curriculum, including elective courses, is needed.
- Lack of learning resources.
- Need for future preparation and guidance from school staff.
- No disciplinary actions are in place for repeat offenders. Vaping detectors are desired in the restrooms.
- Improvements are needed with school spirit.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW SUPERINTENDENT

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

CONSISTENT THEMES

- A person who possesses the skill and will to work with the board, administration, staff, parents and community members to resolve the divisiveness in the district.
- An experienced leader who can provide guidance on policy development, organization structure and job alignment to clarify roles responsibility and chain of command.
- A leader who is committed to high expectations of others and recognizes the need to hold district staff members and administrators accountable.
- An unbiased person, willing to listen to all stakeholders, treats people with respect and responds to questions and data requests honestly and with transparency.
- One who is an effective, honest, quality communicator, a proven collaborator, and a person who values developing meaningful partnerships between the community and the school district.
- One who is a good steward of money and can adhere to a budget.
- An approachable, open-minded administrator who will be visible and vested in the community and the school district.
- Ability as a student-focused leader committed to listening and supporting staff, parents, and the community.
- An experienced administrator who can effectively establish and maintain interpersonal relationships with community stakeholders.
- An individual who will collaboratively develop a fresh, new vision for the district.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

- An approachable leader who will interact and communicate positively with the Board, staff, students, and the community while they stay in touch with district-wide day-to-day activities.
- A leader that can provide helpful conflict resolution for the board, central office leadership team and community members, so trust with district stakeholders can begin to be repaired.
- A visionary who will carefully consider the issues that will impact the district long term.
- A leader who will be visible, can check their ego, and can listen to input and effectively get everyone pulling in the same direction.
- An honest, approachable, proven communicator with strong interpersonal skills.
- Someone who will become vested in the community, community events, and after-school activities of the students. Needs to be familiar with smaller, rural districts, and can balance multiple roles.
- An individual who can help guide policy development and get board policy aligned to actual practice.

ADMINISTRATORS

- A leader who will be accessible, visible, collaborative, and vested in the community and the district.
- An administrator who establishes and maintains relationships and partnerships with district employees and community stakeholders.
- Someone who is committed to initiating improvements through data-based decision-making and teamwork.
- An energetic, flexible listener who puts students first and can promote the district's successes.
- An individual who understands special education, school law, funding, and best practices.

- A person who comprehends and appreciates and can work to rebuild community trust and support.
- A leader who is a good steward and manager of money.

TEACHERS

- A leader who will listen to people and have the ability to bring our community, staff, administration and board together.
- An experienced leader who can work to create a district organization chart that will work to provide clarity and transparency in the roles.
- An experienced administrator who values and accepts our school district and community traditions.
- A person who possesses a genuine commitment to supporting staff and bringing people together.
- An approachable person who will put students first and have high expectations for students and staff.
- Someone with a high moral character who is a transparent, proven, and quality communicator.
- A demonstrated leader who has integrity and who is both open-minded and empathetic.
- A person who will want to provide the district with solutions that are not simply theory-based.

SUPPORT STAFF

- A leader who will work to bring all our district staff and community together and fix the divisiveness.
- Someone with energy who genuinely understands the importance of the district's family atmosphere and community involvement.
- An excellent communicator who is personable, collaborative, visible, flexible, and approachable.
- An individual who will provide compassion to all and do what is in the best interests of students and staff.
- A person who will listen to staff concerns and address issues of unfair pay when data is presented showing that to be the case.
- One who will lead by example, inspire staff, and display a positive community presence.
- A leader who is willing to try new ideas shows open-mindedness, strong decision-making ability, and the ability to hold district employees accountable.
- A leader who can help manage district resources, so we maintain financial health.

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY

- A people-person who puts students first and brings people together, not against each other.
- A leader who can bring the district leadership team together and provide a plan to start developing community trust in the district and its leadership.
- A leader with the ability to lead the staff while holding staff members accountable and respecting the community's traditions. Will need to serve as a role model.
- An administrator who will be present in the community to build relationships with staff, students, and community members.
- A person who can bring transparency in the district and to the community when questions are asked and data requested.
- Someone who will foster an open-door philosophy but also ensure proper channels are taken when there are complaints from parents or staff.
- An individual who is an approachable, transparent, and effective communicator who will communicate effectively with citizens, staff, parents, and students.
- One with a sound economic and business background and an educational background.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

- A leader committed to being involved in the school district and visible at all school events.
- Someone who can help resolve the conflict with the district organization structure and resolve the conflicts that are happening with the board, superintendent and treasurer.
- A person who will respond to questions and data when asked by students and staff to look into something important to them like paying people fairly.
- A leader will treat all staff, students and parents with respect without fear of reprisal.
- A person who will be a meaningful part of the community and learn what is best for the district.
- An individual who can face difficulty in an unbiased way.
- One who is personable, optimistic, and advocates for everyone in the district to be positive.
- A leader who will be progressive and genuinely willing to question traditions, initiate needed changes, and implement desired modernization.
- Someone who any student, parent, or citizen will be comfortable approaching without being scared.
- A strong educational leader who displays transparency, honesty, trustworthiness, and a heart for doing their job.

SUPERINTENDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY RANKING

1 = MOST IMPORTANT TO **10 = LEAST IMPORTANT**

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

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

1-5 MOST IMPORTANT TO 6-10 LEAST IMPORTANT

RANK	TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS
1	Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, parents, and students.
2	Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district.
3	A leader who can help drive improvements in academic performance.
4	A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills.
5	Personal involvement and interest in the community.

RANK	BOTTOM 5 CHARACTERISTICS
6	Effective organizational and management skills.
7	Fiscal management expertise.
8	Experience in socially and economically diverse student populations.
9	Expertise in the design and implementation of instruction and curriculum.
10	Successful experience as a superintendent.

SUMMARY

The information gathered through surveys and focus group sessions bears substantial similarity across all groups for the Northridge Local School District's strengths, issues, and challenges facing the district and the characteristics desired in the next superintendent.

The consistent themes expressed by groups and individuals about the Northridge Local School District's *greatest strengths* include: (A) Wonderful students who are hard-working, well-mannered and engaged, (B) A strong, close-knit community that demonstrates pride, has a good working relationship with the school district, and has supported the school district and its students in many ways; (C) Hard-working, dedicated employees who care about their students and their families; and (D) Opportunities for students both academically and in extracurricular activities.

The top *concerns and challenges* facing the Board of Education and the new superintendent in the future – all of which appeared on surveys received and were expressed during the focus group sessions – include the following: (A) Ongoing stakeholder concern about the districts organization structure for business operations and potential nepotism; (B) The need to improve the working relationship between the Board, Superintendent and Treasurer; (C) Financial ability to provide competitive pay to keep quality staff members; (D) Staff retention, staff turnover, and recruitment of quality new staff members, aggravated by higher salaries in other nearby school districts; (E) Need to foster growth in the district's academic programs and course offerings; and (F) Improving district communications, with both internal and external stakeholders.

It is often challenging to capture all the *characteristics* respondents sought in a new superintendent. Indeed, no person could embody all the desired attributes of the new superintendent. The clear majority of survey respondents and focus group session participants expressed the need for the new superintendent to be a person who has the following characteristics: (A) An individual who can facilitate a positive working relationship with the Board, Superintendent and Treasurers office, and work to repair the district image and restore trust in the community; (B) A person who will be involved and willing to commit to the community;

(C) One who is an effective, honest, quality communicator, a proven collaborator, and is a person who values developing meaningful partnerships between the community and the school district; (D) One who is a good steward of money with creative problem-solving skills to increase funding; (E) An approachable, open-minded administrator who will be both visible and vested in the community and in the school district; (F) Ability as a student-focused leader who will be committed to listening and supporting staff, parents, and the community; (G) An experienced administrator who can effectively establish and maintain interpersonal relationships with community stakeholders; (H) An individual who will advocate for collaboratively developing a vision for the district; and (I) A leader who is committed to high expectations of others and recognizes the need to hold district staff members and administrators accountable.

The consistent themes summarized above were shared with K-12BC during the focus group sessions or submitted in writing on the 114 surveys returned to K-12BC. The themes also closely matched the top five (5) desired superintendent characteristics of the new superintendent – in the eyes of the sub-groups that responded to Question #4 in the survey. (See page 10 above).

The new superintendent must be visibly active in the school buildings and the community. The Board needs a new leader who will foster the development of positive and respectful working relationships among the Board members, administration, staff and community members in regard to the district as whole. They must help stakeholders move past the conflicts of the past and focus the district on the future so the district can deal positively with future challenges as they arise. They must also embrace the traditional “Viking” values that are evident in the district as well as the strong sense of school community that exists. The new superintendent will need to address concerns about staff turnover in the district and the ability to retain and attract quality new staff members with limited resources, while nearby central Ohio districts, which are more affluent, offer attractive career alternatives to staff. The new superintendent must be an administrator who is sincere, approachable, collaborative, and able to demonstrate trustworthiness and integrity in their dealings with all stakeholders.

We believe that the right candidate for superintendent will recognize that: (1) The Northridge Local School District is a close-knit community that is full of pride in the school district; (2) Parents and the community care about the school district and are willing to be involved; and (3) The district has well-established community values, and who are committed to working with school officials and district staff members to move the district and their students forward.

This position will interest the right superintendent candidates. They will see the district challenges as opportunities to bring the district and stakeholders together. We believe we will find the right candidates with the attributes outlined herein who possess the skills and energy needed to address current and future issues expressed by survey respondents and will be happy to lead the district and the community into the future.

Respectfully submitted:

K-12 Business Consulting, Inc.