

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROFILE



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FINDLAY CITY SCHOOLS

December 12, 2022

Prepared for the Board of Education



Dustin Miller, Ph.D. & Tom Ash, M.Ed.
K-12 Business Consulting, Inc.

Findlay City Schools

Superintendent Search Profile Report

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This report presents the summary of findings from the Superintendent Search Profile focus groups conducted by K-12 Business Consulting, Inc. (K-12) on Wednesday, December 7, 2022. Eleven (11) profile forums were held and 146 search profile questionnaires were submitted from various stakeholder groups. Once the Board of Education (BoE) selected K-12 to conduct the superintendent search, a Search Profile Assessment document was created to solicit input from various stakeholders in the community. Stakeholders were identified by the BoE in addition to a community-wide invitation welcoming individuals to meet with Mr. Tom Ash and Dr. Dustin Miller of K-12 to discuss superintendent characteristics. Any stakeholder who had a desire to express an opinion was invited to submit a search profile questionnaire and/or meet with K-12 at meetings held on December 7, 2022. Information obtained through these sources, and summarized below, will be used to assist the BoE in identifying characteristics of potential superintendent candidates.

The Search Profile Assessment document was made available to district staff, identified stakeholders, the community at large, and all individuals who attended profile forums. In addition to the 146 individuals who returned written and online search profile questionnaires, there were 171 individuals who participated in community profile forums facilitated by K-12. The results of the written Search Profile Assessment focus groups are included in this report along with comments received during these discussions.

Some individuals submitted questionnaires but did not attend profile forum sessions. We are also aware of some profile forum attendees electing not to submit questionnaires. While written comments are included in this report, some of the numerical responses in the Ranking section could not be included because those responses were blank or because items were not ranked with an appropriate numerical value.

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

The Search Profile Assessment document was used to provide a framework for reporting the information compiled by K-12. Broad themes were highlighted in each question area into several response groups (central office staff/administrators, high school students, teaching and support staff, community/parents, and Board of Education members). Under each question in the report, the response group's common themes were identified. The first category titled as "Consistent"

are comments which were frequently heard from all or nearly all 11 of the response groups. Comments heard less frequently or only heard in a specific response group are listed only under that response group. It is important to note that the data compilation is not a scientific sampling, nor should it necessarily be viewed as representing a majority opinion of those interviewed in the response group.

K-12 would like to commend the BoE for its efforts to include many stakeholders of the school district in the development of the Superintendent Search Profile. Many respondents expressed positive feelings about being involved in this process and the opportunity to help shape Findlay City Schools. We would like to thank Krista Miller, Interim Superintendent and Pam Harrington, Treasurer/CFO, for the professional manner in which all arrangements were made, including sending invitations, arranging for meeting space, as well as contacting and scheduling the forums that made this profile possible. We also want to acknowledge Justin Shank, Interim Director of Innovation and Technology, for his assistance with the district's web site.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

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

Consistent Themes

1. The Findlay City Schools community has significant pride in its schools.
2. Student and parents feel teachers and staff members are caring and attentive to individual learning needs.
3. Findlay City Schools has a small town family feel and a philanthropic heart for its surrounding community.
4. Students are provided a wealth of opportunities to learn and grow, both inside the classroom and out.
5. There is an overall feeling of kindness and care throughout the Findlay community that makes it a wonderful place to live and learn.
6. Stakeholders work together for the betterment of Findlay City Schools. There is a collaborative spirit throughout the community.
7. The safety of students and staff continues to be a top priority for Findlay City Schools and its community.

Board of Education:

- The community of Findlay City Schools cares about its students and staff and enjoys serving as partners in the education of their children.
- The school district provides a wealth of opportunities for students, both curricular and extracurricular, to engage their learning and growth in meaningful ways.
- Teachers and administrators actively work together to keep Findlay City Schools a wonderful place to learn and work.

- Although not considered a small school district, Findlay City Schools has a community feel where everyone looks out for one another.
- The safety of Findlay City Schools students and teachers remains a top priority.

Administration:

- There is pride in Findlay City Schools from students, teachers, and the community overall.
- Students have a tremendous amount of opportunities to embrace their learning in meaningful ways.
- Teachers and staff members are kind and care about the well-being of all students in Findlay City Schools.
- Findlay City Schools maintains a small school feel where students are supported in multiple ways.
- The focus remains on students and how to support their diverse needs.

High School Students:

- The teachers of Findlay City Schools are caring, understanding, and willing to go the extra mile to help students.
- There are a lot of opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, for students to dive into their learning and personal interests.
- The Findlay community is kind, caring, and supportive of its students.
- In addition to strong athletics and arts programs, Millstream gives an edge to Findlay students after graduation.
- Findlay City Schools is a positive place to learn, and students are accepting of each other.

Teachers & Staff:

- The Findlay City Schools community is overwhelmingly supportive of teachers and staff. This sense of community makes the school district a good place to call home.
- Students have several curricular and extracurricular offerings to maximize their learning and growth.
- Teachers and staff of Findlay City Schools care deeply for all students and prioritize individual support.
- Diversity throughout Findlay City Schools makes it a rich place to grow and should continue to be valued.
- Positive relationships among colleagues allows the difficult work of teaching to be manageable.
- There is a strong sense of pride among all stakeholders of Findlay City Schools.

Parents & Community:

- The Findlay community cares about its schools and is willing to be involved both in the classroom and out.

- Faculty and staff of Findlay City Schools are dedicated, work hard for all students, and have the respect of parents and community members.
- There is a family feel throughout the Findlay community, and people take care of each other.
- Findlay City Schools provides a wealth of opportunities for students to learn and grow.
- The school district has worked hard to implement important safety measures without losing the feel of a welcoming school environment.

IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING DISTRICT

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

Consistent Themes

1. Although Findlay City Schools holds a historically strong academic reputation, attention needs to be paid to current student assessment data and what measures are in place to ensure continued performance in all areas.
2. Like many school districts, a national political divide has created division over a school's place in society. Discussions on how controversial issues are addressed in schools need to occur in measured ways that allow diverse opinions to be heard and ultimately work to find common ground as a community.
3. School is a place for students to learn how to excel in the future as adults, both academically and socially. There is division surrounding current discipline practices, and these processes need to be evaluated in a collaborative manner moving forward.
4. Student and teacher retention continues to be a concern of all stakeholders in the Findlay community. An ongoing focus on how to retain strong educators and keep students from open enrolling to surrounding districts needs to be a priority of the next superintendent.
5. Fiscally sound decisions, continued transparency around financial conditions, and involving the community along the way will best position the district to secure additional monies as needed in the future.
6. Student and teacher well-being is paramount and needs to remain a clear focus of all district leaders.
7. The condition of school facilities range throughout Findlay City Schools. Clear direction on how to level disparities is important to all stakeholders feeling valued in their learning environments.

Board of Education:

- The academic strength of Findlay City School's needs to be a continued focus moving forward.
- Although Findlay City Schools has been fiscally sound and will remain so in the next few years, discussions need to take place so the district is positioned to secure new monies in the future.

- Turnover in the superintendency has become a distraction to the focus of Findlay City School's strategic plan. Consistency in this role will promote forward momentum.
- As Findlay's demographics continue to shift, fostering strong partnerships with all factions of the community will be important.

Administration:

- Academic performance as indicated through the state report card and other measures needs to be continually prioritized.
- A focus on teacher well-being is critically important to retaining strong educators throughout Findlay City Schools.
- Sound fiscal planning will be necessary to continue providing the level of education Findlay City School students deserve.
- Although communication can be challenging given the size of the district, consistent messaging should be prioritized to keep all stakeholders on the same page.
- Given the differences between school buildings, measures to address gaps need to be a focal point. There is a perception among some that certain areas of the community are valued over others.
- Elementary and high school facilities should remain a priority in coming years.
- In an ever-changing education landscape, professional learning for teachers and administrators is needed.
- The well-being of students continues to be a stressor for Findlay City Schools. All arrows need to point in the same direction to provide a quality learning experience for students.

High School Students:

- Although technology is available, students could benefit from a more streamlined approach to implementation in their learning environments.
- Student well-being is an ongoing concern. It is important for a caring community like Findlay to continue being supportive of the stressors students face both academically and personally today.
- Students would benefit from intentional planning around course offerings and programming for gifted students. Supportive learning that engages students at appropriate levels is key to student success.
- Safety and security should continue to be a top priority for all school buildings.

Teachers & Staff:

- Fiscal decisions need to be prioritized now to prepare for future financial concerns.
- Teacher retention will be important for Findlay City Schools to maintain the welcoming environment currently provided to students.
- Academic achievement should be the focal point of all initiatives.
- Although safety measures are being addressed, the well-being of students and teachers is key to provide learning environments that are conducive to learning.

- High school and elementary facilities are in need of attention and plans should be in place to keep these buildings in good shape.
- Certain factions of the school community have become distrustful of what is being taught in our classrooms. Lanes of communication need to be opened so an understanding can be reached moving forward.
- Student discipline is a complicated issue and one that needs to stay at the forefront of school district initiatives.

Parents & Community:

- Continued transparency in overall decision-making will be important to make sure the community feels a part of the Findlay City Schools and trusts those leading the district.
- Faculty, staff, and student retention needs to be prioritized. There is an overarching concern that individuals are choosing to leave Findlay City Schools for surrounding districts that hold stronger academic reputations or pay higher wages.
- Although some facilities are wonderful, continued attention needs to be given to high school and elementary buildings. It is easy to feel devalued if students are attending rundown facilities or teachers are trying to teach in less than ideal conditions.
- Findlay City Schools continue to be a desirable place to learn, but attention needs to be paid to slipping academic performance. Now is the time to address concerns before it becomes an issue.
- The community, in some factions, is divided over the place of school and how non-academic issues appear in that context. It will be important for the next superintendent to understand the complexities of these issues and work to bring factions together as one district.
- School is an important place for students to learn how to excel in the future as adults, both academically and socially. There are mixed emotions surrounding current discipline practices. These processes need to be evaluated in a collaborative manner moving forward.
- Student well-being needs to be continually prioritized.

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW SUPERINTENDENT

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

Consistent Themes

1. Findlay City Schools wants a superintendent who is kind, accessible, and visible throughout the district.
2. The district will benefit from a leader who respects the traditions of Findlay City Schools while also understanding that change and progress is key to continued success.
3. The next superintendent of Findlay City Schools should be a consensus builder willing to make fair and equitable decisions on behalf of all students and staff. Differing viewpoints will be a constant, but a skilled leader who can find common ground is key.

4. Findlay City Schools should have a superintendent who is an open and honest communicator and prioritizes the inclusion of stakeholders when major decisions are made on behalf of the school district.
5. A superintendent who will become invested and grow roots in the Findlay community is desired.
6. A strong, experienced leader willing to make hard decisions can support Findlay City Schools in a continued trajectory of success.

Board of Education:

- Findlay City Schools needs an experienced, visionary leader who can carry the newly developed strategic plan into the future.
- The next superintendent needs to be an effective communicator to all stakeholders and prioritize the importance of using several mediums to deliver information.
- The superintendent needs to lead collaboratively and support knowledgeable professionals in their work toward continually making Findlay City Schools a wonderful place to learn and grow.
- Simply stated, Findlay City Schools superintendent should be kind, inspirational, and promote the good of the district and community.

Administration:

- Due to the small town feel of Findlay City Schools, the next superintendent needs to be approachable, visible, and entrenched in the community.
- Findlay City Schools is full of dedicated teachers and leaders. These individuals should have a collaborative leader who prioritizes professionalism and will not micromanage good work already in motion.
- In a nutshell, Findlay City Schools deserves an experienced leader who can make unpopular decisions for the benefit of students.
- Findlay City Schools has a history of excellence. The next superintendent should value what has worked in the past and couple that with new, innovative practices.
- As a caring school community, the superintendent needs to be student-centered and understand that a “one size fits all” model does not work.
- It will be important for the next superintendent to be visionary and understand how to keep Findlay City Schools moving forward.

High School Students:

- Students would like to see a superintendent who understands what it is like to be a student today and make decisions accordingly.
- It will be important for the next superintendent to be caring and honest in his/her approach.
- A strong leader who can make difficult decisions will keep Findlay moving in the right direction.
- Collaboration is important when making decisions. Including student voices could help add currently unheard perspectives.

- A community with a small town feel like Findlay needs its superintendent to be visible.

Teachers & Staff:

- The next leader should be personable in her/his work with students, teachers, parents, and the community.
- As a community that prioritizes a small school feel, the superintendent needs to be highly visible in all aspects of the school day.
- Honest and transparent communication around all issues, especially challenging problems, will be key to build and maintain trust between the superintendent and school community.
- Findlay City Schools deserves an experienced, strong leader who can make difficult decisions.
- A visionary leader is needed who can create long-term plans that include both a respect for history and a look forward.
- A leader with a “work together” attitude for Findlay City Schools will allow room for diverse viewpoints to find common ground.

Parents & Community:

- Findlay City Schools needs a proven leader who is honest and trustworthy.
- The next superintendent needs to be an excellent communicator and transparent in his/her approach.
- Superintendents need to be visionary and articulate a path forward. The Findlay community needs someone to set a positive course and move the district in positive ways.
- Findlay City Schools should have a superintendent who embraces change but does not devalue the past.
- The community of Findlay is proud of its traditional roots and wants to be involved in the decision-making of its schools. The next superintendent should embrace parents as valued members of their children’s education.
- Consistency in leadership is valued by the Findlay community. The next superintendent should be invested in the work and choose to be part of the community.
- All communities face differences. A strong superintendent will be skilled in engaging differences and finding common ground.

SUPERINTENDENT CHARACTERISTICS BY RANKING

1 = MOST IMPORTANT TO 5 = LEAST IMPORTANT

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

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

RANK **TOP 5 CHARACTERISTICS**

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Ability and willingness to deal fairly with faculty, staff, students, and parents |
| 2 | Effective at creating and implementing a vision for the district |
| 3 | A leader with strong interpersonal and public relations skills |
| 4 | Experience with socially and economically diverse student populations |
| 5 | Personal involvement and interest in the community |

RANK **BOTTOM 5 CHARACTERISTICS**

- | | |
|----|--|
| 6 | Effective at both written and verbal communications |
| 7 | Effective organizational and management skills |
| 8 | Successful experience as a superintendent |
| 9 | Fiscal management expertise |
| 10 | Expertise in design and implementation of instruction and curriculum |

SUMMARY

The information gathered through surveys and interviews bears strong similarity across all groups with respect to Findlay City Schools strengths, issues, and concerns facing the district, as well as the characteristics desired in the next superintendent.

All groups and individuals expressed that Findlay City Schools *greatest strengths* include:

1. A wonderful community that cares deeply about each other and its schools.
2. A school district that provides meaningful opportunities for students, both academically and socially.
3. A school community consisting of dedicated faculty and staff that are willing to meet students where they are and support them forward.

The *top issues and concerns* facing Findlay City Schools Board of Education and the new superintendent in the future – all of which surfaced through profile forums and from individually submitted Superintendent Search Profiles – include:

1. Student academic performance needs to be a continued priority.
2. Although financially sound currently, a thoughtful plan needs to be developed to prepare for the need for additional monies in the future.
3. The condition of school facilities range throughout the district. Ongoing communication about leveling these differences needs to remain a priority.
4. Student and teacher well-being is paramount.

In reconciling the concerns and the characteristics sought in a superintendent for Findlay City Schools, the majority of respondents expressed the following:

The new superintendent should be committed and visible throughout the Findlay City Schools community, serve as a role model, be accessible, and exhibit trustworthiness in all aspects of the work. Findlay City Schools prides itself on being a close community where people know each other and take care of each other. It is important the new superintendent understands the community and becomes invested in it. The district wants someone who will stay with Findlay City Schools and the Findlay community for many years to come.

In addition to being invested in the community, we feel the next superintendent should be well-versed passing school levy and bond issues. It is clear from participant feedback that, although strong currently, financial well-being will hinge in the future on the successful passing of additional monies. It will be important for Findlay's next superintendent to hold the requisite skills to get to know the school community, understand how to construct a fiscally sound path forward, and work to bring constituents along in honoring the historical good work of Findlay City Schools.

Schools are a microcosm of the communities in which they reside. We would recommend the next superintendent possess a skillset to engage stakeholders in conversations around what role school plays in the Findlay community. As presently highlighted throughout other school communities, differing opinions about the education of children have created divisions among parents and schools. Due to the historical positive relationship between Findlay City Schools and its community, the next superintendent should develop channels of communication for parents and teachers to engage in meaningful conversations about the education of their children/students. The Findlay City Schools community stands together around their schools, and prioritizing conversations in this area will only strengthen that longstanding tradition.

Finally, we recommend that the next superintendent of Findlay City Schools possess a proven track record of academic success. It was clear throughout conversations with stakeholders that student performance is a concern. Findlay has a longstanding reputation of academic performance, but there is an opportunity currently to take the district to the next level. A superintendent with a solid understanding of instructional practice will be able to support school leaders and teachers through meaningful professional development, in addition to structuring a strong line of K-12 academic alignment with courses that stretch students over a continuum of rich learning experiences.

While not part of our original tasks, we would offer two additional recommendations. While we hesitate to offer suggestions that require additional work or funding, we think that these efforts could inform decisions into the future, and they have arisen from our focus group meetings with various stakeholders.

First, we would suggest a student survey (such as Panorama) which would focus on school climate and on school safety. The school climate would focus on student perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school. While the district has taken a leadership role in student safety, the evaluation of student assessment of those safety measures could inform future planning and preparedness.

Second, we would suggest an exit interview or survey for students who leave the district to enroll in other districts or community schools. Such data could be useful in future plans and could also provide information that would enhance and support the district's strategic plan.

Findlay City Schools serves a close-knit community that is proud of its schools. We believe that the right candidate for superintendent will recognize this and embrace being part of a rich tradition. There is no question that this position will be of interest to strong superintendent candidates. We believe we will find the right candidate who has the attributes outlined herein, who possesses the skills needed to address the issues and concerns expressed by respondents, and who will be happy to be a part of the Findlay City Schools community.

Respectfully submitted:

K-12 Business Consulting, Inc

