Tomorrow's Leaders Today
Northwest Leadership Associates

Easton Superintendent Search - Staff/Community Focus Groups

11/2/21 – 15 groups – 33 participants

School Board – 3 participants

Attributes:

- Positive/upbeat/friendly/outgoing
- Multi-tasker – can wear two hats and be effective and competant
- Visible/involved in school and community
- Can stand up to people – make decisions – holds people accountable
- Combination of Tim and Gary
- Has awareness and ability to handle challenging personalities
- Knows finances/budget - business sense/experience
- Creative – create a "destination" school
- Experience with small districts
- Documents – evaluates properly and objectively
- Education experience – teaching/administration
- Supportive of staff/there for students
- Facilities knowledge
- Experience in curriculum and strong on instruction
- Can connect with community
- Long term commitment
- Done a lot of jobs and dealt with challenges in other districts
- Focused
- Honest - good character
- Technology experience

Challenges:

- Size of district/school – declining enrollment
- People wear many hats
- Hard to find housing
- Job may be too much for one person
- Need ways to get people/families involved
- Better communication needed
- Board needs to focus together – specific vision
- Some people have been here too long
- Hard to meet all students' needs
- Teacher union challenges
- Curriculum/academics
- People do the same thing over and over
- Music/Arts/Student activities
- Continuation of outdoor activities
- Holding all teachers to same standards
- Environment/culture in school
- Student enrollment – reasons for leaving
- Small tax base
- Some strong personalities holding school back – getting better
- People think they can do whatever they want
- Remote Foreign Language – need more choices

Positives/Celebrations

- Area – geography – setting
- Family environment – Easton focused
- School has been here for over 100 years – K-12
- Attention given kids
- Small class sizes
- Personalization – kids and families
- A lot of people want to be involved
- Outdoor activities – resources
- Good comradery within groups of teachers
- Community engagement at certain events
- Turn-around kids
- Changing attitude with teachers union
- No problems like big districts – clicks/bullying/peer pressure
- Small community - everybody knows everybody - supportive
- Safe place – people take care of each other
- Kids all get along – upper grades support lower grades
- House for the new person is an option
- Dedicated teachers

- Programs – pre-school provided
- Good facility – good bones
- Relationship with CRSD

Teachers/Staff – 14 participants

Attributes:

- Creative – create a destination district/school
- Partners with community – visible and active
- Open minded-listens
- Can say what we need to do – follow through
- Sense of humor
- Communication skills
- Good grant writer
- Collaborative decision maker – staff voice heard
- Fair evaluator
- Doctorate not needed – gone through ranks – teacher, administrator
- Outdoor learning experience
- Fired up and ready to go.
- Supportive of kids and teachers – present
- Longevity in district
- Ideas on how we can get better

Challenges:

- Both roles – all wear many hats
- Creativity in programs
- Increasing the enrollment
- Curriculum 9-12
- PD for high school teachers
- Lack of subs
- Out of date textbooks
- Commute – living place
- Small school funding
- School spirit after COVID
- No feeder teams
- Can't offer traditional programs/activities
- Sports related transfers
- Positions not reinstated – no Art/Music
- Financial challenges
- Mask mandate – loss of students

- 6 preps a day for secondary teachers
- Two grade levels per classroom
- No CTE direction/funding
- Feeling a part of the of the community as a new Supt.

Positives/Challenges

- Strong community
- Opportunities – outdoor activities
- Get to know kids and families
- Easy to make a difference
- Cross grade support
- Teachers work closely
- Small size of classes
- Small staff – meet individual needs
- Possible housing development
- Archery team
- Know the community - tightknit
- Other staff members support
- Supportive of students
- One on one with students
- Mental health/counseling support
- Dogs allowed in school – social/emotional
- Good opportunities to truly make a difference
- Title I school
- All staff committed to school
- Good teachers who educate kids

Parents – 3 participants

Attributes:

- Communication skills
- Can "tell the story" of Easton
- Fosters enrollment growth
- Leverage strengths that school and community offer
- Someone who can open up world to staff and students – exposure
- Handle fiscal challenges of small district
- Hold people's feet to the fire – accountability

Challenges

- More rigorous standards for students and staff

- Not a highly welcoming community
- Multi generations in the school
- Teachers union – "tail wags the dog"
- Possible growth in the future
- Lose # of students because lack of programs
- Each staff member wears many hats
- Finances – cost of running smaller district

Positives/Celebrations

- Pre-school program
- Socialization of kids
- Not a lot going on outside of school – no pressure on kids
- Outdoor activities
- Small school – lots of 1 on 1 support
- Public school that acts like private school
- Help for SPED kids
- Fiber optics moving into parts of the district soon
- Pace of life
- Good educators
- Parent support
- Staff involvement with kids

Maintenance/Transportation Head and Business Manager – 2 participants

Attributes:

- Creative
- Good personality
- Communicator – confidential
- Guide on the side
- Good mentor for teachers and staff
- Credible with staff and community
- Gary Wargo type
- Has good staff relationships with all staff
- Visionary
- Quietly commanding – thoughtful
- Flexible
- Makes decisions – follows through
- Sense of humor
- Not offended easily – thick skinned
- Could live in district house or elsewhere

- Supportive of staff
- Handle fiscal challenges of small district
- Works well with board
- Active in community
- Either gender
- Not afraid of snow or driving in it
- Here for community - involved
- Good physical condition in mind and body
- Not a micro-manager

Challenges

- Location near I-90 freeway
- Office Manager on leave
- Some teachers more about themselves than kids
- Overstaffed
- Unrealistic class sizes
- Lots of snow
- A few teachers wear the leadership down
- Accounts payable being done by a sub
- Enrollment trend is down
- Remodeling new house
- Need for new students
- Why not make it a K-8 school? – 9-12 to CRSD
- Housing
- Male population of staff dwindling

Positives/Celebrations

- Family oriented – like a small family
- Pre-school
- Families and students greatly supported
- Centrally located
- New teachers and counselor are great
- Good fund balance – current financial position good
- Strong/involved Fire Dept. – car show in community
- Small size – community school
- All staff – good people
- Many planned developments in area- – students/tax base
- Support for outlying areas – in Cascade hills
- Older kids care for younger kids
- Quiet lifestyle
- Everybody knows everybody

- Good mix of kids

Paraeducators/PSE Union – 3 participants

Attributes:

- Supt. credentials – Teaching/Adm. experience
- Can separate personal from professional
- Courage to have hard conversations and do the right thing – follow-through
- Helps get balance of gender in building
- Knows quality instruction – academics
- Knows dynamics of the classrooms
- Good communicator – clarity of expression
- Knowledgeable/understanding – supportive
- Kind and fair
- Hard worker
- No ego
- Vision for the future
- Looks for solutions – outside box thinking

Challenges:

- Need to return from COVID – get family culture back
- Building needs to have a more positive culture
- Overcoming COVID issues
- Sports program/activity offerings need increased
- Retaining quality staff and students
- Community and parent involvement
- Programs need to start at Elem. level for kids
- Support for students getting involved
- Athletic Director
- Strong teacher personalities
- Gender balance in building

Positives/Celebrations

- Small class sizes
- 1 on 1 instruction and support
- Kids know all staff – staff know all students
- Belief that if "we build it, they will come"
- Partnership with Fire Dept.

Bus Drivers/ASB/Custodians – 4 participants

Attributes:

- Creative – thinks outside the box
- Professional – organized
- Can have fun – happy
- Multi-tasker
- Not worried about making decisions – follows through
- Professional behavior
- Fiscal strengths
- Can run all aspects of district well
- Longevity in district
- Experience at different levels
- People person – not condescending – good listener
- Accepts size of district and geographical challenges

Challenges:

- Making school special
- Snow
- Curriculum for older kids
- Connecting kids to "real world"
- Small staff – power struggles – individuals
- Teachers union leadership
- Not a lot of choices in curriculum
- Few extra-curricular opportunities
- Kids behind other districts
- Need to re-vamp K-12 curriculum
- Facility needs – school built 1962
- Limited housing options

Positives/Celebrations

- Small community – everybody knows everybody
- Teachers care for kids well
- Older building – well maintained
- Familiar with kids and family needs
- Good comradery with staff at times
- Location – outdoor opportunities
- Snoqualmie Pass/John Wayne trail/recreation area
- Snow
- Trails/snowshoeing/x-country skiing

Interim Superintendent/Dean of Students/Office Manager – 3 participants

Attributes:

- People person – open minded
- Willing to take on multiple jobs
- Creative
- Leads by example
- Positive and powerful
- Knows what's important and what's really important
- Makes school great – destination school
- Driven – hard worker – willing to get hands dirty
- Asks questions – willing to learn
- Sees big picture
- Instructional leader
- Quick learner
- Have to know what you didn't know
- Fair and stern
- Confidential
- Takes input and makes decisions
- Kind
- High standards
- Solution oriented - "Let's do things together"
- Understands every position
- Works with teachers' union
- Mentor - delegator
- Holds people accountable
- Discipline experience
- Familiar with Skyward/technology
- Multiple types of education experience
- Values mental health – social-emotional well being
- Understands graduation requirements
- Another Tim type
- High school experience
- Another Gary type
- Financially smart

Challenges:

- Extra duties for Supt.
- Making everyone feel equal

- Academic expectations and standards
- Recovering from COVID
- Fragile budget and finances
- Intense position
- Hierarchy with staff
- Teachers union seems to run school
- Expanding CTE program/offerings
- A lot of broken pieces to put back together
- Less talk – more work
- Focusing on kids, not adults – adult issues
- Communication to all staff
- Understanding community
- Lack of leadership in past

Positives/Celebrations

- Family oriented – home for kids and parents
- Staff is a family – work together
- Can do many things with kids and families
- Fire Dept. support
- PAC group
- Sponsorship and support from community
- Community resources
- Engagement of parents
- Education individualized
- Suncadia support
- Staff – team effort – good comradery most the time
- Good people – easy to get to know

Teacher's Union – 1 participant (scheduled meeting for Monday)

Community Members – 0 participants