



## Barron Area School District WI

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### New District Administrator Profile May 2, 2017

#### Introduction

This report presents the findings of the District Administrator Profile assessment conducted by *School Exec Connect (SEC)* on April 20, 2017. The Barron Area School Board of Education desired to have a better understanding of the school and community members' perceptions of the District as they begin their search for a new District Administrator. The Board requested *School Exec Connect* consultants Dr. Kenneth Dragseth, Dr. Antoinette Johns and Dr. David Vick to gather information from constituents regarding the strengths and challenges of the District as well as the characteristics, skills and attributes desired in the new District Administrator. Please find included a brief summary of the comments of people who attended focus groups, were interviewed individually and people who responded to the District's On-line Survey.

#### Participants

Eight (8) focus groups were held with: Administrators, Central Office Staff, Teaching Staff, Support Staff, and Bus Drivers. A total of thirty-eight (38) individuals were involved in the focus groups. In addition, an evening session was held for members of the community which was attended by fifteen (15) residents. All nine (9) District School Board members participated via a personal interview, phone call, and/or through the completion of a questionnaire.

#### On-line Survey

An on-line survey as posted on the District's website in three languages: English, Somali and Spanish. The on-line survey asked for respondents to self select from the following categories: Certified Staff, Student, Administrator, Support Staff, Community/Business member, Parents/Guardian (past or present). This survey was completed by twenty-eight (28) respondents.

Use of the Data

Due to the sampling methodology, this report should not be considered scientifically accurate. The on-line survey was intended to be completed only one time per email address. Respondents may have participated in both a Focus Group and the On-line Survey. The opinions set forth may not reflect the opinion of the majority of the staff or District residents. The judgments of what should be included in this report are those of the consultants based on the statements heard throughout the data-gathering process. The on-line survey results are rank-ordered and the Focus Group results are not rank-ordered.

Summary Report

The first summary presents the on-line survey summary. The next area is the summary of each focus group’s input and the individuals meeting with the consultants. The last item is the Profile for the District Administrator derived from all of the data and comments.

Thank you to those who took the time to respond to the on-line Survey or to attend one of the focus groups or individual meetings. The results of this report will assist the Board as they enter the next phase in the search for a new District Administrator.

Use of this Report

This report may be used in several ways:

- After reviewing the input from stakeholders of the District, the Board may modify and approve the attributes that will serve as criteria to be considered as candidates are screened and interviewed.
- The Board should review this report to become informed about the thinking of different constituent groups regarding the perceptions of those associated with the District.
- The Consultants will use this report as the foundation for screening and interviewing candidates who are well matched for the District Administrator’s position in this district.
- The Consultants recommend that this report be available to candidates for a better understanding of the District and its strengths and challenges.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Dragseth	Antoinette Johns	David Vick
President	Vice President	Associate

SCHOOL EXEC CONNECT Consultants

## ON-LINE SURVEY SUMMARY INFORMATION - 28 Respondents

All respondents completed only the English version of the survey

Demographics	Percent	Number
• Teacher/Licensed Staff	26%	7
• Administrator	15%	4
• Support Staff	19%	5
• Parent of Current/Past Student (last 5 years)	41%	11
• Community/Business Member	19%	5
• Student	11%	3
• Other	19%	5

### **Greatest Educational Strengths of the School District:**

• Dedicated and highly competent staff	48%	13
• Teacher quality	30%	8
• Understanding and supporting diversity in the district	30%	8
• Strong community pride in the schools	22%	6
• Child-centered schools	19%	5
• Athletic/activity programs	19%	5

### **Greatest Educational Challenges of the School District:**

• High quality facilities	42%	11
• Understanding and supporting diversity in the district	31%	8
• State financial support	23%	6
• Strong community support of schools	19%	5
• Athletic/activity programs	15%	4
• Class size	15%	4

### **Goals for the District to achieve in next three years:**

• Improving facilities	44%	12
• Maintain programs for all student achievement levels	33%	9
• Improve image of the school district	30%	8
• Focus on 21 <sup>st</sup> century curriculum	26%	7
• Assuring student well-being (emotionally safe, confident)	26%	7
• Improving staff morale	26%	7

### **Most Important Skills and Characteristics for New District Administrator:**

• Has warm people skills, approachable and easy to talk to	48%	13
• Is visible in the schools and community	33%	9
• Child-centered	33%	9
• Has a deep understanding of curriculum, instruction and how students learn	26%	7
• Builds a great team and brings out the best in others	22%	6

## FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Board of Education identified the following educational strengths/attributes for the District:

- Advanced programs in schools
- Connections with college in Rice Lake
- Hiring great staff
- Keep up with technology
- Infrastructure
- Dedicated staff
- Cohesive Board
- Majority of staff are incredible educators
- Supportive School Board
- Consortiums developed with other school districts – early childhood and mental health
- Community center
- Teachers and programs
- Close-knit family community
- Youth activities abound
- Great Board – transparency is in place
- Parks and park system
- Diversity
- Friendly place
- Involved community
- Sound finances
- Administrative team
- Support for the schools throughout all communities in district
- Maintain and seek out great teachers
- Open to new ideas
- Keep trying to find new or better ways to help children in need

**The Board of Education identified the following educational challenges/barriers for the District:**

- Declining enrollment; retirees remain in district
- High numbers of special needs students
- Low-income district
- Good paying jobs
- Money
- Long term commitment; being persistent
- Loss of staff and problems finding replacements
- Diversity – Somali population
- Construction work
- Getting information to the people
- Lack of support from other agencies

**The Board of Education identified the following goals for the school district in the next three years:**

- Improve facilities
- Continue with strong curriculum
- Maintain the quality staff
- Continue to see improvement in student achievement especially in reading and math
- Address the mental health needs of our younger children
- Revisit the referendum
- Keep status quo
- More students – more leave than come in
- Educational achievement (keep pushing upward; higher standards)
- Wisely use the budget surplus
- Increase test scores, especially math
- Diversity
- Grow offerings available for students
- Remain fiscally sound
- Continue renovations with facilities
- Acclimate to the district during first year
- Construction projects
- Develop long-term plan for the district (years 2 and 3)
- Raise the level of learning/improve test scores.
- Make Barron a school district that attracts people
- Continue work on mental health

The Board of Education identified the following characteristics/skills needed by the next District Administrator to be successful:

- Communicator
- Maintain financial stability
- Deal with Act 10
- Community oriented
- Open and honest dialogue
- Know the staff
- Trust is a must
- Experience
- Strong and positive leadership skills
- Treat everyone alike
- Transparency
- Live in district
- Visible
- Join civic organizations
- Develop positive relationships with the Board and community
- Integrity
- Outgoing
- Leader
- Ready to seek out new or different ways to do things

What questions /areas would you like the Board to ask the candidates as they select the District Administrator?

- Are you up to the challenges (pass a referendum)?
- What can you offer the district? Why do we need you?
- Why do you want to come to Barron?
- Describe student activities in your current district. (more than just sports!)
- Describe your thoughts concerning performance reviews of employees.
- Please explain how you can work with a community with such diversity.
- Tell us about your experience in working with nearby districts (i.e.: consortiums).

## **ADMINISTRATORS**

The Administrators identified the following educational strengths/attributes for the District:

- Creativity – we never give up
- Dedicated staff
- Allegiance to the Barron Community
- Hardworking staff
- Education-minded Board of Education

- Able to make changes
- Outdoor activities
- Close relationship with families
- Strong technology initiatives
- Community and resources available
- People of Barron School District

#### Challenges/Barriers

- Poverty
- Diversity
- County seat
- Establish a level of trust first
- Integrity

**The Administrators identified the following as the most important goals for the District to achieve in the next three years:**

- Increase core instruction at all levels, especially at the secondary level
- Focus on mental health – trauma-minded students
- Prevention – continue to start early with students
- Unite various factions in the community; keep different cultures together
- Good leaders needed (mentorship program)
- Acclimate to the district
- Return district to the status of the “go to” district in the area
- Conduct and pass a referendum
- Hire great people within the district

**The Administrators identified the following characteristics/skills needed by the next District Administrator to be successful:**

- Decisive
- None political
- Good decision maker
- Courage
- Honest; integrity
- Able to bring people together
- Vested in district
- Be vulnerable
- Willing to understand a variety of roles
- Be consistent with the enforcement of policies
- Collaborator
- Strong educational background
- Don’t take yourself so seriously
- Compassion/empathy for kids and staff
- Hear out a variety of opinions

- Give credit where credit is due
- Live in the district
- Willing to take risks

**What questions/areas would you like the Board to ask the candidates as they select the District Administrator?**

- Who is the most important in the school district?
- What kind of leader are you and what have you done to demonstrate leadership?
- What is courage to you?
- How have you been innovative?
- What is the greatest challenge you have faced and how do you get through it?
- How do you reflect on your actions?
- What does educational effectiveness mean to you?
- What process do you use for problem solving?
- What is your experience with 1:1 technology initiatives?

### **CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF**

**The Central Office Staff identified the following as the greatest educational strengths and attributes of the District:**

- Diversity
- Great school district
- Community rallies around issues
- Schools are the hub of the community
- Retirees stay involved in the community
- Technology usage is very strong

**The Central Office Staff identified the following as the greatest educational challenges/barriers for the District:**

- Diversity
- Meet all new diverse groups – Somalis, etc.
- Balance off open enrollment (more leave than come in)
- Remain competitive financially to attract candidates

**The Central Office Staff identified the following goals as the most important for the District to achieve in the next three years:**

- Get to know everyone....staff, community
- Acclimate new staff members, especially admin support

**The Central Office Staff identified the following as the most important characteristics/skills needed by the next District Administrator to be successful:**



- Communicator
- Make a decision and go with it
- Empathetic
- Compassionate
- Receive information and make a decision
- Respect various jobs in the district
- Understand maintenance of facilities
- Consistency
- Know the students, staff
- Approachable
- Team builder

**What questions /areas would you like the Board to ask the candidates as they select the District Administrator?**

- How do you make this district the “go to” school district?
- How do you help staff feel better about what they do? (staff appreciation)

### **CERTIFIED STAFF (Teachers)**

**The Teachers identified the following as the educational strengths/attributes of the District:**

- Demographics
- Cultural differences – Somali, Hispanic, Asian
- Diversity
- Very qualified and talented staff; work hard over and beyond
- Public administrative support of staff
- Willing to try new things
- Very community connected in the district
- Strong in special education opportunities
- Secondary options for students, such as A.P. courses
- Counseling services available in the district
- Award winning schools
- Strong performing arts programs
- Choices for students
- Technology
- Healthy financial state of the district
- Access to things in the community: school/community partnerships
- Dedicated staff – going beyond the norm
- Staff is allowed and willing to explore new things

**The Teachers identified the following educational challenges/barriers for the District:**

- Elementary – students with trauma; behaviors as a result

- Needs to blend various staffs in different levels
- Continue to distribute \$\$\$ fairly among all bldgs. – class size, ELS programs, etc.
- Diversity
- State budget
- Advocacy for funding
- District is a melting pot for student needs
- Facility issues exist (gyms, etc.)
- Trust needs continued work

**The Teachers identified the following goals as important for the school district to achieve in the next three years:**

- Hold people accountable
- Continue academic progress
- Support staff with special needs students
- Embrace online programs
- Maintain 1:1 with tech
- Develop a contingency plan for fluctuating enrollments
- Improve how neighbors view Barron
- Continue to increase trust between administration and staff
- Treat all employees the same – fairness issue
- Pass a referendum
- Continue to build support for ESL learners and staff
- Advocate for school funding
- Increase support for trauma students and families

**The Teachers identified the following characteristics/skills needed by the next District Administrator to be successful:**

- Desire a leader – people person
- Maintain priority on students
- Keep an open mind, especially in Barron
- Surround oneself with bright people
- Delegate authority
- Experience with multi-cultural families
- Maintain presence in buildings
- Open and transparent
- Vested in the community
- Honesty, fair, trustworthy
- Lack of fear to approach superintendent
- Open-minded
- Diplomatic
- Intelligent

- Visible
- Accountable
- Open minded
- Honesty; transparent
- Trust
- Builds a great team and brings out the best in others
- Live in district
- Support and expand choices for students
- Approachable
- Just be nice!
- Conduct professional discussions with staff and have the staff feel safe
- Show involvement in understanding best practices across the spectrum

**What questions/areas would you like the Board to ask the candidates as they select the District Administrator?**

- How do you plan to support teachers?
- How do you plan to attract and retain current staff members?
- What experience do you have concerning instructional methods used in classrooms?
- How will you advocate for the ESL students and staff?
- Describe your experience in dealing with high poverty, high trauma?
- How do you define success?
- What is the biggest mistake you have made and what did you do about it?
- Identify you biggest accomplishment.
- When you wanted to quit, what kept you going?
- Please share your experience with standards-based grading and report cards.
- How will you become vested in the community?
- How do you feel about investing in early childhood?
- Tell us how you have embraced the performing arts in your current district?
- What is your vision for technical education?
- How will you help grow the Barron Area School District?
- What are the key foundational issues for ESL learners? For Early childhood families?

### **NON-CERTIFIED STAFF**

**The Non-certified Staff identified the following educational strengths/attributes for the District:**

- Opportunities for student, particularly for high school students
- Variety of ethnic groups...diversity
- Special education programs

**The Non-certified Staff identified the following educational challenges/barriers for the District:**

- Diversity
- Staff morale

**The Non-certified staff identified the following goals as important for the school district to achieve in the next three years:**

- Review the failed referendum – need gym space
- More support needed for trauma students – neglected, abused, drug babies, etc.,

**The Non-certified Staff identified the following characteristics/skills needed by the next District Administrator to be successful:**

- Understanding of virtual education
- Creative to problem solve
- Honest
- Common sense
- Respectful
- Strong knowledge of all job duties
- Communication skills
- Need a leader, not a director
- Approachable
- Be a parent
- Visible
- Become vested in community
- Listener
- Sense of humor

**What questions/areas would you like the Board to ask the candidates as they select a District Administrator?**

- Describe your experience in running a referendum.
- How have you working with diverse populations?
- How have you developed staff morale in your district?
- How do you earn the trust of staff and community members?

## **BUS DRIVERS**

**The bus drivers identified the following educational strengths/attributes for the District:**

- Friendly people
- Small town close to big towns
- Restaurants/entertainment in nearby Rice Lake

- Outdoor activities
- Cost of living is low
- Good hospital
- Technical college in town

**The bus drivers identified the following educational challenges/barriers for the District:**

- Diversity of student body
- \$\$\$
- Limited industry in community
- Transportation – serve large area

**The bus drivers identified the following goals as important for the school district to achieve in the next three years:**

- Communication
- Accessibility to work force
- Visibility
- Become familiar with each department
- Aware of diversity of student body

**The bus drivers identified the following characteristics/skills needed by the next District Administrator to be successful:**

- Maturity
- Show compassion & respect for workforce
- Avoid vulgar comments (“potty mouth”)
- Give and take attitude
- Compromise
- Willingness to understand departments
- No micro-manager
- Experience
- Focus on education not just sports
- Student-centered learning
- Support bus drivers, especially In regard to student discipline

## **COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

**The Community members identified the following as the greatest strengths/attributes of the District:**

- Support of the community
- Facilities and services are available – state health system, parks and park system
- Great staff
- Diversity
- People care here in Barron
- Good place to live
- Kids can do a lot of things; activities and opportunities abound
- Ag community
- Mentorship program (a resident left resources to the district)

**The Community members identified the following educational challenges/barriers for the District:**

- Language barrier (due to diversity)
- Communities are quite spread out geographically
- Economic changes and challenges in a rural area

**The Community members identified the following goals as important for the school district to achieve in the next three years:**

- Become the best school district in WI
- Recognize diversity and incorporate it
- Connect school offerings with needs in the places of work
- Balance the ins and outs of open enrollment
- Promote the district
- Increase and improve facilities
- Maintain existing program, such as early childhood
- Sustain the outlying schools
- Develop better connections with colleges and area employers
- Connect past generation with new generation to help lead District into the future

**The Community members identified the following characteristics/skills needed by the next District Administrator to be successful:**

- Be open minded

- Demonstrate being community and civic minded
- Live in the district
- Be reflective and information decision maker
- Communicator
- Advocate of the fine arts and vocational education
- Trustworthy
- Positive
- Experienced
- Stay awhile
- Management skills – attract staff
- Savvy with school finance
- Approachable
- Admit you may not know everything
- Trust staff to take charge
- Progressive, forward thinking
- Traditional values abound in community
- Know the kids.....at their level
- Helps staff attain skills needed to do their jobs
- Embrace performing and visual arts

**What questions/areas would you like the Board to ask the candidates as they select the next District Administrator?**

- What are your skills and background to help you be an effective superintendent?
- What are you looking for in the community?
- When and how does learning take place?
- What is your most rewarding accomplishment in your career?
- How do you resolve conflict
- How do you judge a successful school district?
- How do you attract and retain quality staff? And students?
- Please review your background in school finance
- How would you present yourself as a positive role model?
- Students have portfolios. What would be in your portfolio as a superintendent?
- What admin support staff is needed for a district the size of Barron?

## PROFILE FOR THE NEXT DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR

### THE NEXT DISTRICT ADMINISTRATOR SHOULD BE A PERSON WHO DEMONSTRATES THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES:

Personal - Is personable, approachable, of high integrity, ethical, trustworthy, transparent and listens with an open mind. Possess a sense of humor.

Communicator - Communicates and listens effectively with staff, students, media and community.

Visible – Be visible throughout the District and is actively engaged in community life. Interacts comfortably with students, staff, parents and community members.

Team Builder - Builds a strong, close and productive working relationship with the School Board and staff. Fosters a positive climate of mutual trust and respect among employees and members of the community. Recruit, train and retain staff.

Instructional Leader - Is a curricular and instructional leader who understands best practices and research so that all students learn no matter their diverse needs, abilities and backgrounds.

Finance - Demonstrates an understanding of school finance and a long-term vision for fiscal stewardship and how to secure essential resources through coalitions, grants, levies, etc.

Decision Making - Models collaboration, strong problem solving skills, fosters teamwork and is able to reach consensus and make difficult decisions without being divisive within the school district and community.

Politically Astute - Is politically astute in advocating for students, establishing legislative networks and strengthening coalitions.

Administrative Knowledge - Has a working knowledge and experience with labor negotiations, federal and state education statutes, curriculum analysis and human resource administration.