



MCPHERSON & JACOBSON, LLC

EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT

11725 ARBOR STREET, SUITE 220 ♦ OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68144 ♦ 402-991-7031/888-375-4814
FAX: 402-991-7168 ♦ EMAIL: MAIL@MACNJAKE.COM ♦ WEBSITE: WWW.MACNJAKE.COM

RAINIER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Rainier, Oregon

District Stakeholders Report, April 2024

Executive Summary

On April 4, 2024 Dr. Douglas Nelson conducted 8 sessions with different stakeholder groups associated with the Rainier School district to gather input regarding the selection of the new superintendent. Included were 3 groups of community members and parents, 4 employee groups and one group of high school and middle school students. Fourteen community members, 19 employees, and 18 students participated in the various groups for a total of 53 individuals.

Outlined below is an Executive Summary of the major themes expressed by the participants at these sessions. Following the Executive Summary is a compilation of all the input received from each of the groups in response to the four questions asked of each group. The final section of the report consists of responses by 48 individuals who completed the online survey, which ran from April 4 – April 9, 2024.

1. What are good things about the community of Rainier?

- Small, tight knit community with trust between individuals and other parents
- Everybody knows everybody
- Rainier Pride – pride in the town with sense of community within the community
- Community businesses are supportive of schools
- People really care and wants things done right, ethically and with integrity
- Compassionate, open and accepting community
- Good collaboration between churches, parents and volunteers
- Many long-term citizens and families
- Good location – able to get to airport, beach, mountains, shopping and connections to larger town opportunities
- Beautiful place to live with good fishing and many outdoor activities
- Schools are the center of the community
- Stability in pastors in churches and in city government
- Hard working, strong blue collar community with strong moral base
- Word travels fast with right information

2. What are good things about the Rainier School District?

- All schools and programs are on one campus – beautiful campus with trails open to community

- Schools are the heart and gathering place of the community with many non-parents attending school events and games
- Strong community support for students and their various activities with many volunteers
- Access and ease to communicate with and approach decision makers in the district with an openness to entertaining ideas and communication
- Great teachers and staff who care, are the backbone of district and in it for the right reasons
- CTE strong, developing and going in a great direction
- Lots of options and opportunities for students academically, leadership and extra curricular
- Sports are strong and very important with a high degree of involvement because of the coaches
- People are good and are welcoming and embrace the superintendent
- Finances are improving
- Good nutrition program with free breakfast and lunch available for all students
- Adoption of new curriculum is moving forward
- Consistent approach to behavior at elementary school
- Health Center for community on campus and gender neutral bathrooms at HS
- School board trying to do what's best for district

3. What are the challenges and/or issues that will face the new superintendent?

- Facilities are in need of repair an/or maintenance but there is not agreement on how to address and how to pay for fixes with issues too numerous for a summary
- Will need to know that it will take a while for people to warm up to and accept them
 - Hard feelings and lack of trust about past superintendents has set a tone
- False information spreads quickly with social media running rampant
- Everybody knows everybody
- There will be a new union contract with negotiations just starting
- Retention and turnover of staff because of lack of housing, poor reputation and low salary
 - Many staff do not live in Rainier
- Lack of trust for schools – trust and relationship building will need to happen
- Lack of support and hostile environment for marginalized students especially at MS and HS
- Many dysfunctional families with many students living with trauma
- Some teachers are apathetic and are not the right fit for courses being taught
- Behavior and discipline issues and lack of follow through at MS and HS creating negativity
 - Parents and community will not always accept accountability of student misbehavior
- Education is not always a priority for some and some parents are not always supportive
- Lack of resources within the community
- Many long-term employees stay, creating a stasis
- Many people have pulled students to homeschool because of lack of strong curriculum
- School board is not cohesive and does not have a true understanding its role
- Rigor and expectations at high school, and college and career readiness, need to be improved
- Strong support is on sports and not necessarily academics
- Lack of accountability for staff for upholding rules and policy
- School climate with students is low – students do not take pride in school
- Majority of community works outside the community
- Level of communication with nonparents needs improving
- Micromanagement of employees by superintendent

4. What are the qualities and characteristics you desire in the new superintendent?

- Is committed to Rainier to provide stability and consistency
- Is invested in and values all programs and areas within the school district
- Understands school finance and how to balance budget needs
- Experience in a rural setting so understand context and not have preconceived notions
 - Understands rural communities with generational trauma and economic struggles
 - Has a strong moral compass consistent with community's values
- Puts developing relationship as top priority and has a true open-door policy
- Is visible, approachable and involved in schools, programs and community
- Values inclusivity and knows how to provide a safe learning environment for all students
- Has lots of energy in working and networking with community partners
- Is a good communicator with strong listening skills, is transparent and follows through
- Able to hold staff accountable, has a thick skin, and can make hard decisions
- Has varied experience in public education with a strong instructional background, understanding of researched base curriculum and trauma informed teaching
- Has strong leadership skills, has the gumption to do what's right and trusts employees
- Has ability to make a full shift and make a major change; for example regarding discipline
- Has ability to bring people together making sure all stakeholder groups – internal, parent, nonparent and community – are included
- Has ability to establish a long term plan for facilities with experience passing bond measures
- Ability to understand role of social media
- Ability to create a strong team and build a positive culture maintaining staff morale