



Community Profile Assessment

Dalhart Independent School District Tuesday, November 20, 2012

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings of the *Community Profile Assessment* conducted by Mr. Butch Felkner from the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) on Tuesday, November 13, 2012 for the board of trustees of the Dalhart Independent School District (DISD). The consultant met with students, administrators, faculty, school board, community, and support staff to collect the data.

The *Community Profile Questionnaire* was made available through the district, on the Internet, and from the consultant. 43 responses were received from the internet and 52 participated in the group profile sessions.

The first objective of the Community Profile sessions was to make sure that everyone in the community had the opportunity to participate, and that objective was accomplished through advertising, letters, and announcements. The second objective was to receive responses from a cross section of the community. Though some of the responses may be duplicates, we believe the 79 responses should yield that cross section.

In developing this assessment, the consultant sought general comments on preferred candidate traits and qualifications, district strengths, issues, and concerns that could bear on future leadership requirements and influence the selection criteria for the next superintendent of schools. Those findings are included in this report for the board to use as it defines the leadership characteristics and selection criteria used in identifying the next superintendent.

Under each group, the comments heard or provided with some regularity are listed randomly in no particular order. It should be emphasized that the data is not a scientific sampling, nor should it necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of a group. Items are included if, in the consultant's judgment, they were repeated by a sufficient number of respondents to warrant the board's attention.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Mr. Delbert Dodds and the district administration for organizing the arrangements for the visit, to those with whom I met for their cordiality and responsiveness, and to all of the respondents whose concern for their school was evident in their comments.



Community Profile Assessment

Dalhart ISD Profile Sessions Tuesday, November 13, 2012

Students: 11:00am – 12:00pm – 15

Strengths:

- Family oriented
- Teachers are willing to spend extra time with students
- Supporting a whole different variety of activities
- Pride in the district
- Offers numerous sports and activities
- Organized district
- Issues arise and the school board works quickly to resolve the issues
- Small town atmosphere

Issues / Concerns:

- Financial concerns
- Drugs
- Academic scores
- Curriculum based classes – students don't feel prepared
- Need a recapture for students who fail – seems a lot of students are failing classes
- Level respect for teachers

Professional / Personal:

- Vision of educational excellence
- Attempt to get closer to the students on a professional level
- Positive attitude
- Enthusiastic
- Accountability
- Someone who promotes positive student behavior
- Sets high goals for the school district and assist them in achieving them
- Strong leader
- Understand the struggles of the district
- Come from a district similar to Dalhart
- Good manager
- Someone who works well with others and has innovative ideas
- Visible on campuses
- Models high integrity
- Integrating technology into the daily curriculum
- Someone who easy to talk with
- Someone who sees the importance of both academic and extracurricular activities
- Has short term and long term goals for the district



Community Profile Assessment

Ability to interpret both educational and financial aspects of the district
Open to new ideas not set in their ways

School Board: 12:00pm – 1:00pm – 7

Strengths:

Strong professional administration
High quality teachers
Community support
Student involvement
Demographically we have a positive future
Tremendous potential
Good fiscal
Strong school board on how well we work together
Students
Facilities
Safe clean environment
Tax base is amazing for a community this size
Growth
Good partnership with city leaders

Issues /Concerns:

Growth
Maintaining staff
Academic performance
Vocational training
Fostering a culture of excellence
Tired of hearing “this as good as we can do” – “we could do worse”
Holding staff accountable
Attracting and retaining new teachers
Replacement of several staff – possibility
Possible tax situation

Professional / Personal:

People person
Firm in decision making
Not afraid to work outside the box
Integrity
Trustworthy
Accountability
Able to demonstrate authority
High expectations of staff
Passion for students



Community Profile Assessment

Genuine enthusiasm for the job
Ability to mentor staff
A leader not a director
Independent thinker
Oversight of administrators
Vision to see potential – keep it in front of staff and people
Vocational
Communicator
Iron fisted
More involved on campuses
Chain of command
Aware of Texas school laws
Honesty
Strong family values
Good Christian man/woman
Loyalty to past district
Not a job hopper

Campus Administrators: 1:00pm – 1:45pm – 11

Strengths:

Community support
UIL academics
Peer intervention at lower grade levels
Financially sound
Effort to keep students up to date technology
Board support
Family environment throughout the district
Facilities are good

Issues / Concerns:

Test scores
Demographics
Transportation
Lack of funding
Communication
Attracting and retaining personnel
Lack of substitute teachers
Bilingual issues

Professional / Personal:

Effective communication
Christian faith



Community Profile Assessment

Approachable
Strong curriculum knowledge
Visible at community and district events
Business minded
Negotiator
Ability to make firm decisions
Has technical exposure – expertise would be nice

District Staff: 1:45pm – 2:30pm – 7

Strengths:

Good Christian leadership
Elementary school – good administration
Good strong board
Hard working teachers
Staff cares for kids
Caring for one another – small district
Helping kids who struggle with reading – reading intervention

Issues / Concerns:

Weak in math and science
AYP
Campuses that don't improve and nothing happening to improve
Curriculum alignment
ESL / Dyslexia
Turnover in personnel
Hard to get people to Dalhart and then keep them

Professional / Personal:

Get us to where we need to be AYP and academically
Able to make hard decisions
People person
Someone academic minded
Strong leader
Strong moral character
Compassionate
Takes care of the district employees
Cares for kids
Involved in the community and school district
What's right for one is right for everyone
Strong backbone
Earns respect
Flexible



Community Profile Assessment

New ideas – think outside the box
Technology
Someone able to balance sports and academics
Able to deal with changing demographics
Working knowledge of curriculum

Open to the public: 2:30pm – 3:15pm – 1

Strengths:

Image of caring from top administration
School board works well together and does what's best for kids
Strong teachers – who go above and beyond

Issues / Concerns:

Finances
Balance between sports and academics
Academics is very weak
Administrative campus issues

Professional / Personal:

Caring and support for the kids and community
Someone not afraid of confrontation
Effective decision maker
Strong Christian role model
Trustworthy
Confident

Teachers / District Staff: 3:15pm – 5:00pm – 6

Strengths:

Faculty
Well qualified teachers
Small community support
Progressive in technology

Issues / Concerns:

Lack of commadore
No vertical alignment
Lack of communication
No incentives to stay
No interface to support to accept the technology
No growth as fast as technology is growing
No consistent discipline

Campuses do not follow handbooks

Attendance

Kids are not coming to school

Grading policy is not consistent

Ignorance of today's children – same old teaching methods

Discipline needs to be followed by the book – no consistency

Safety in the schools

Drugs on campuses

Campuses are growing

Demographic changes growing – more low socioeconomic kids coming in

Teacher pay

Do not have a good salary base

Lack of transparency when it comes to the budget

Under pressure to meet state and federal standards – dealing with those issues

Lack of direction from the top

AYP

Lack of vision

Some teachers are told there is no money for resources

Not enough resources in math and science to accomplish the job

Technology is very insufficient

Professional / Personal:

Aggressive

Someone who is interested in higher level performance

Strong manager

Accountability

Someone who reflects the moral standards of this community

Someone who can make the hard decisions

Visible on campus and in the classrooms

Creative thinker

Visionary

Strong leader

Someone who is technology savvy

Able to address needs and issues

Integrity

Prideful

Allows us to have our traditions

Keen business sense

Someone able to retain quality teachers

Able to look at increasing teacher pay

Teaching experience

Experience at all levels is preferred

Able to look at educational research when you make a decision

Someone who can address the attendance problems and transportation to school



Community Profile Assessment

Mentality of transparency

Open to the Public: 5:00pm – 5:45pm – 5

Strengths:

Growth in the district
A group of creative and strong teachers
Large group of parents to participate going untapped
Diverse economy for a rural district
Strong elementary campus leadership

Issues / Concerns:

Culturally changing demographics
Adapting to the changes and the kids from different cultures
Still stuck in the way we have always done things
Some teachers push back on change
High influx of Hispanic population
Secondary campuses low performance
Lower standards for everyone
Education is not a priority as it use to be
Conflicting demands teachers have to meet
College bound kids are not being addressed and those that are not college bound
Lack of vocational options
Address parents in their role to help with their children
Overall community education effort

Professional / Personal:

Leads by example
Strong work ethic
Diplomat
Approachable
Person who can think outside the box
Innovative
Someone who can – “not because we have always done it this way”
Firm
Able to work with industry
Able to strike a balance between sports, academics and arts programs
Business background
Good Christian
Personable
Strong leader
Able to make the tough decisions
Work toward more parental involvement
Improve academic performance



Community Profile Assessment

High expectations

Open to the Public: 5:45pm – 6:45pm – 0

Strengths:

Issues / Concerns:

Professional / Personal:

Online Responses: 43 – (many of the online response are duplicates of what has been mentioned in the profile “live” sessions. Listed below are comments which, in my opinion, warrants your attention)

- Overcoming the lapse at DJHS, academically and administratively
- I believe that we are satisfied with what we have accomplished and what we are doing instead of looking for ways to improve. Why are we satisfied with being ok or average instead of pushing to be number one?
- I believe that our district also struggles in the area of communication. This goes for not only the lack of communication within the district, but more importantly with the communication with the community. I feel that our community has no idea what our district is doing. This lack of knowledge has led to some tension in the past that possibly could have been avoided had the proper communication taken place.
- I think our district really struggles in the area of technology. We have several teachers that want to do more, but yet they are not able because we do not have the technology needed to allow them to do what they want. Our motto is “preparing students to be responsible, productive citizens.” Technology is needed for our students to be productive in a future society and I feel that we a failing to follow our own motto.
- Our teacher turnover rate is extremely high. While most of this cannot be avoidable I still feel it is a major issue that needs to be looked at and addressed.
- We need to set goals for the staff and expect and help them to attain those goals.
- Dalhart has two campuses which have not met adequate yearly progress, one campus for multiple years. They appear to keep doing things the way they always have. Why is this tolerated?
- Athletics are given way too much attention.
- It is important to have a school system that is excellent to attract new businesses and people to our community.
- The Junior High Campus. I have children who are in the 6th grade and I am so disappointed in the lack of teaching going on. These children have been disciplined in Elementary and Middle School and when they get to Junior High

they are expected to do the work with little or no teaching. I am also upset with the way that situations are handled, such grading policies. A teacher should not be able to place a zero in the grade book as a place holder until he/she receives the grade. As a parent when I look at the portal and see that my child has 4 zeros only to find out that by the end of the week, he has 100's. The teacher should come up with a system of using an M or something that does not average into the grade.

- My biggest concern is the lack of vision, the goals we have for the future and a plan to achieve those goals. I believe our district has become complacent with survival mode and the attitude of "just getting by." We need strong instructional leadership to demand academic excellence.
- We are a rural, Title I district, we should be eligible for many grants and funding.
- Minority and migrant student success in school
- Change from 3A to 4A under new qualifications



Community Profile Assessment

Summary:

Overall, the participants were in concert relating to their views on the strengths and concerns of the district and community, as well as, the qualifications of the new superintendent.

There were 43 online respondents which is about average for a district the size of DISD. For the most part, responses were consistent with those in the focus group sessions.

Several issues or concerns were repeated by most groups. Probably the most common comment was the need to address the academic performance issues on secondary campuses. Other top concerns ranged from technology, future finances, curriculum alignment, teacher salaries, retention of teachers, and technology.

It should also be noted that among the focus groups, the participants were very confident in the district's ability to move forward with the selection of the right individual. A very supportive attitude prevailed at all the meetings with the concerns being presented in a very professional and positive manner.

It should be noted that every community has diverse expectations and desires. No individual is ever able to meet or address all the expectations of a community regardless how homogeneous the community might appear to be. Therefore, the board should not build up expectations that it will be able to find someone who excels in or even possesses all of the criteria. The task that the board and TASB faces is to find someone with many of these desired skills, characteristics, experience, and the personality necessary to address the opportunities and challenges awaiting the next leader of the Dalhart school district.

Respectfully submitted,

Butch Felkner
TASB

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The superintendent, as chief executive officer (CEO), is accountable to the Board of Trustees, which expects the CEO to be the education leader of Dalhart ISD. The Superintendent works closely with the Board of Trustees to develop and implement policies and programs designed to carry out the district's mission.

In concert with the staff, students, and the community, the Board of Trustees has identified certain characteristics and qualifications as highly desirable in a Superintendent:

- Is an effective communicator with superior interpersonal skills who can make and defend difficult decisions that are best for students and the district
- Is an effective delegator who empowers staff members to carry out their responsibilities independently while remaining knowledgeable and accountable for the district's overall progress in carrying out its mission
- Is a motivational leader who is attentive to staff morale, and has a proven ability in building an effective management team engaged in collaborative planning, problem solving, and decision making
- Superb knowledge of exceptional curriculum skills and practices
- Knows school financial management and state funding laws
- A successful record of improving student achievement with a changing demographic student population
- A strong business management ethic
- "People" person who communicates effectively and can motivate staff and students to excel; a team player
- Able to work in partnership with the Board of Trustees and build a climate of candor, mutual trust, and cooperation
- A person of integrity, unquestioned moral standards, personal ethics, vision and visibility
- Committed to Dalhart ISD for the long term and demonstrates active involvement in the district and community