



STAKEHOLDER SURVEY & FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

March, 2024

*Thank you to everyone who took the time to
participate and offer their feedback!*

As the Board of Education continues through the process to recruit and select a new Superintendent, part of that process included gathering feedback from various stakeholders. Two methods were utilized to gather feedback with the following results:

Focus Group Sessions

A total of seven Focus Group sessions were held to bring a variety of stakeholders together in an effort to work collaboratively to come up with answers to the following questions:

- 1) What do you believe are the strengths of the WRPS school district?
- 2) What do you believe to be the greatest challenges the District faces?
- 3) What leadership style and characteristics or attributes are important for the Board to look for as it hires the next Superintendent?
- 4) Share any additional thoughts/comments you feel might be helpful for the Board to consider as they select a new Superintendent.

The dates of these sessions were:

Monday, March 18, 2024	Business/Community Leaders (10:00 a.m.)
Monday, March 18, 2024	Staff Members (3:10 p.m.)
Monday, March 18, 2024	Staff Members (4:15 p.m.)
Monday, March 18, 2024	Parents (5:30 p.m.)
Tuesday, March 19, 2024	Students (During School Day)
Tuesday, March 19, 2024	Administrators (3:00 p.m.)
Wednesday, March 20, 2024	Community Members (5:30 p.m.)

A total of 49 individuals participated in the various Focus Group sessions, and the results can be found in the following pages of this report.

Survey Form

A Google survey form was also developed for staff members, parents/guardians, and community members to provide their feedback online. A total of 118 responses were collected with 49.2% coming from certified/professional staff members (including administrators), 29.7% from parents/guardians, 12.7% from community members, and 7.6% from support staff members. A copy of the results from the survey can also be found on the following pages.

FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

Results from each session held is provided below.

Business/Community Leaders

These Focus Groups were facilitated by Director of Curriculum & Instruction Roxanne Filtz.

Question #1

Let's consider the great things that are happening at WRPS. What do you believe are the strengths of the school district?

- Facilities – academic, athletic
- Support wide group of learners
- Community focused schools
- High level of involvement in the community from leadership
- Students have choice - academic/activity/enrichment
- WRPS support of students needs
- Lots for children to do
- River Cities High School programming
- Wide array of options
- Historical legacy of the District
- Community embedded - both Board and leadership is focused on being involved in the community
- Community groups feel the District is interested in collaboration
- Opportunities at all levels - especially high school with dual credits, electives, choices of trades vs. college
- Working on building leadership skills / career clusters
- Communication with parents via multiple ways is a strength
- Sharing community involvement with community
- Tenure of staff
- Transition between elementary/ MS / HS is smooth
- Staff ability at all levels to deal with class sizes/needs of students/needs of families (poverty, trauma, broken families, etc.)
- Usage of grant funds (playgrounds, secure entrances and sports complex/quadplex) - great community amenities
- Conversations with Supt/ and other staff and other building admin in district - very positive, responsive, supportive (esp. COVID challenges) great collaboration with parochial schools
- Transition from parochial to public school has been successful for students / enrollments
- PD opportunities offered to parochial schools through collaboration and inclusion has been strong - benefits all in community - hope for this to continue
- Leader embraces the parochial collaboration
- Collaboration, partnerships, transparency

Question #2

Nothing is perfect in any organization. What do you believe are the greatest challenges that the District faces?

- Funding
- Smaller enrollment due to family changes
- Community divide - undertone of mistrust encouraged by misinformation
- Mental health - students and staff members
- Staff retention
- After school activities - getting involved in something new/different - kids not interested in getting involved
- Issues with digital literacy (competency)
- Lack of accountability from parents for actions of students
- Buses w/cameras - vaping, behavioral issues - parents demand students get back on buses sooner...the accountability and how to balance the need of wanting students to be in attendance at school versus allowing things to slide
- Classroom behaviors of a few can impact the majority
- Student language - early learners using coarse language never heard before
- Social media / cyberbullying / student phone access
- Technology changes with AI - how to make it positive and functional/teach it
- Push past negative commentary and to damage control with negative situations
- Population changing - jobs not as plentiful
- How to adjust and afford things to keep positive programming
- Diversity/inclusion for students and families
- How to get a new Superintendent on board quickly and awareness of all challenges (inside hire vs. outside hire)
- Balancing academics vs. extra-curriculars
- Staffing -filling retirements/resignations - teachers not going into the field
- Maintaining diverse offerings of core vs elective (shrinking population - still have choice)
- Funding to meet staff needs/budgets
- Addressing mental health needs of students
- Self-care and supports for teachers and staff
- Act 20
- Social media - no break from it...kids, District, parents

Question #3

What leadership style and characteristics or attributes do you believe are important to look for as the Board hires a new Superintendent?

- Open communication to entire community and those without students in school
- Open minded
- A good listener
- Solution driven
- Not focused solely on a problem or getting mixed up in situation
- Strong, knowledgeable but not overbearing...not my way or highway person
- Participates in community building partnerships and getting vested with multiple clubs/groups
- Positive yet realistic view
- Resilient, compassionate
- Not afraid to be front facing to community and speak up about good & bad
- Understanding that rural, but not necessarily all agriculture - diverse, Hmong, SPED, poverty and high income
- Diverse backgrounds here - inclusive person with experience in this area
- Strong team leadership approach
- Willing to delegate
- Broad experience
- Emotional intelligence
- Dynamic individual
- Good listener
- Critical thinker
- Willing to immerse themselves in the community
- Not afraid to make a decision
- Connected w/peers - have a strong network
- Exhibit a spirit of collaboration
- Good EQ (Emotional Intelligence/Emotional Quotient)
- Understanding of institution's history/memory
- Can work with variety of students, parents - balance between having humility but able to advocate for community, District, kiddos
- Open door policy; collaborative
- Nice, honest
- Someone who can work to support other area schools/districts
- Balance need between answering to community and supporting staff and families

Question #4

Share any comments you feel might be helpful for the Board to consider as they select a new Superintendent.

- Be thoughtful about whether candidate aligns with WRPS goals to advance the District and its Strategic Plan
- Consider mentorship opportunities in the community to set them up for success
- Encourage Board to keep searching until right candidate is found -exercise patience
- Perfect candidate might not exist - have openness to all candidates
- Board needs to do homework - thoroughly check out performance, references & relationships
- Be honest, up front about District - no whitewashing but also not doom and gloom
- Having a community tour for final candidates recommended - to see whole community and no surprises later
- Have an exit interview for Craig - strengths he sees moving forward and challenges and what hurdles did he encounter when he assumed his role that might be helpful to avoid a similar circumstance
- Look beyond the paper resume - find the best person that embodies the qualities mentioned - doesn't always come through on paper

Staff Members - First Session

Question #1

Let's consider the great things that are happening at WRPS. What do you believe are the strengths of the school district?

- Opportunities for students to find their niche and pursue different career paths
- Facilities - especially at LHS with the upgrades
- Dedicated staff - particularly veteran staff members who bring a great deal of experience - retention of them through benefits such as OPEB
- Pro-education School Board - very supportive
- Emphasis and initiatives on mental health
- Strong student involvement in clubs, extra-curricular offerings and sports/athletics
- Successful grant writing that allows new programs to be developed; exploration of ways to find creative funding
- Reputation as a successful District doing its best for kids with many offerings; educational system a selling point for the community
- WRPS has GREAT kids!

Staff Members - Second Session

Question #1

Let's consider the great things that are happening at WRPS. What do you believe are the strengths of the school district?

- Mentoring New Colleagues program - provides great foundation for new teachers
- Communication put out by the school district - Craig's emails, *E-clips*
- Superintendent Cabinet - as a way staff to communicate and also through the notes created - staff are receiving helpful communication
- Professional Development days providing time for collaboration among grade levels, departments, and buildings
- DEU offerings and opportunities - and ability for staff to both sign up and create the classes where a need is identified (micro-credentialing is a great new offering)
- Retirement plan - OPEB offering
- WRPS has a very supportive School Board - like that they take the time for Listening Sessions with staff; they listen to professionals/admin to make decisions - trust that the admin does their job to bring the best recommendations forward - no conflict/discontent between Board/administration

Staff Members - First Session

Question #2

Nothing is perfect in any organization. What do you believe are the greatest challenges that the District faces?

- WRPS as a destination community for people to live and work here
- Lack of industry, opportunity
- Socio Economic demographic trends
- More pervasive behavioral issues that haven't been there in the past which are starting much younger in age, and for which no solutions have been found
- Staff retention
- Staff burnout
- Salary schedule improvements needed - DEUs are helpful, but a schedule similar to the step and lane movement of the past would be helpful and fair
- Having more staff member voice involved in working conditions
- Staff members not feeling valued/heard
- People feeling overwhelmed with all that is on their plates; all that is being asked of them - and all of the hats that teachers are wearing to service the whole child
- Increase in special education caseloads; increase in criminal type behaviors being seen
- Budget constraints
- Substitute shortage
- Many off-site students receiving services

Staff Members - Second Session

Question #2

Nothing is perfect in any organization. What do you believe are the greatest challenges that the District faces?

- Elementary buildings do not seem cohesive but more competitive...in competition with each other - equal expectations in terms of staff meetings, PD, clocking in/out for Aesop, classroom coverage expectations with Aesop process, unique mascots at each school, but eventually all become the WR Raiders...no community feeling
- Making sure all staff are treated respectfully, from kitchen staff to noon aides, to support staff members all the way up to the administrators - all should be treated and valued as a professional
- Giving more PD opportunities for all, including bus drivers, aides, etc. to build student rapport and provide consistency; training noon aides in SEL expectations/language
- Managing difficult/violent behaviors (clearing out a classroom because of one child's behavior), support staff members when this is occurring - adults and students are getting hurt
- Behaviors interrupting the learning environment for all - students running rampant in the building and adults feeling helpless, like they are unable to do anything about it
- Lack of innovation; what is different that sets WRPS apart from other districts
- Too politically correct - too afraid of community blowback or what individuals think to be able to move forward (ignore the limited number of naysayers and find a way to get the majority of individuals who are supportive involved)
- Social media / fake news

Staff Members - First Session

Question #3

What leadership style and characteristics or attributes do you believe are important to look for as the Board hires a new Superintendent?

- Person should want to be the face of the District
- Involved in the community; promotes the District - not just do their job at or from the District office
- Person should visit schools regularly; be seen and involved - at activities as well
- Someone who listens, provides feedback, and gives rationale for decisions made or directions taken so staff have an understanding
- A leader who is transparent
- Strong communicator
- Be a strong person with a backbone to stand up to naysayers
- Someone who can delegate and have others do their job without micro-managing
- Someone who is supportive of staff - has their back
- Someone who supports clubs, programs
- Someone who embraces the community and lives here; is invested here - has skin in the game
- An experienced person who has been in the role before
- Superintendent who is willing to tell parents about their role in accountability

Staff Members - Second Session

Question #3

What leadership style and characteristics or attributes do you believe are important to look for as the Board hires a new Superintendent?

- Someone who is genuine
- Someone who is approachable and friendly
- Someone who is involved and present in various buildings
- Good communicator
- Someone who knows kids and keeps current on practices for today's youth versus 30 years ago
- Innovative - thinks outside the box - strives to make WRPS a leader among other districts
- Trustworthy - if you say you'll do something, do it
- Honest and direct to both staff and parents
- Someone who is supportive and stands up for teachers
- Someone who is humble and admits faults when something doesn't go right or well - accountability for decisions or actions
- Someone who is open-minded and willing to hear new ideas
- Someone with a command on the business operational side needed, but also who understands we are people business serving kids, families, staff and the community
- Someone who is empathetic
- Someone who loves kids!

Staff Members - First Session

Question #4

Share any comments you feel might be helpful for the Board to consider as they select a new Superintendent.

- Find someone who will take care of staff - education is at a critical time where staff retention is a huge concern
- The person shouldn't plan to come in and totally upset the apple cart - highlight the positives and keep those initiatives going, and learn
- A creative thinker
- Someone who can analyze how special ed versus regular ed students are treated with respect to discipline matters, and what improvements might be needed to ensure success for all students
- Someone who is positive with a can-do attitude

Staff Members - Second Session

Question #4

Share any comments you feel might be helpful for the Board to consider as they select a new Superintendent.

- Superintendent should have a stake in the community - live here
- Don't necessarily hire internal unless the person absolutely fits everything that is needed for WRPS, or because it is easy to hire internal, or because you believe feelings may be hurt if an internal isn't selected
- Go with your intuition - if anything doesn't feel right or if something about a candidate seems off, don't hire...or, if they look mediocre on paper but you're blown away with what they say or how they appear to you or their references are amazing, take this into deep consideration

Parents

Question #1

Let's consider the great things that are happening at WRPS. What do you believe are the strengths of the school district?

- Strong, dedicated staff
- Variety of opportunities (courses, clubs, etc.) for all types of students
- Enforcement of expectations
- Communication and availability of information

Question #2

Nothing is perfect in any organization. What do you believe are the greatest challenges that the District faces?

- Community support (resulting from speculation of community members)
- Parent involvement / support
- Staffing - attraction and retention
- Increase of population below the poverty line

Question #3

What leadership style and characteristics or attributes do you believe are important to look for as the Board hires a new Superintendent?

- Consistency
- Approachable
- Community presence
- Considerate of multiple viewpoints but have strong convictions
- Balancing staff and parent needs
- Understanding of educational impact at state and national levels (funding, budgets, and legislation)
- Pulse on the community
- Ability to prioritize

Question #4

Share any comments you feel might be helpful for the Board to consider as they select a new Superintendent.

- Consider that the person is a leader at WRPS and a face in the community representing the District - build relationships in the community and be a collaborator
- Board should dig deep into the person being interviewed...will they understand the community; will they be a good fit here?
- Longevity is important - choose someone who isn't using WRPS as a stepping stone to something else ... and also don't choose someone who isn't motivated to stay
- Do not provide preferential treatment, but also don't be afraid to look internally either

Administrators

Question #1

Let's consider the great things that are happening at WRPS. What do you believe are the strengths of the school district?

- Supportive community and school board
- Great facilities in good shape, that are well maintained
- Students are successful post-high school, very prepared and leaders in their field
- Many great opportunities and a wide variety offered when compared to larger city high schools (athletics, co-curriculars, clubs, fine arts, etc.)
- Cohesive admin team and staff K-12
- Staff are leaders (DEU program)
- Each school has pride - while each elementary school is unique, it comes together at the MS/HS level
- Forward thinking
- Adapt to needs of students
- Decisions are student focused
- Nice job allowing staff to grow (PD offerings and staff opportunities unique to needs)
- Pride in facilities
- Strong options for parent involvement
- Good collaboration with community agencies
- Food Service program does a nice job offering healthy options
- Strong community involvement
- Community support from groups like Legacy, United Way, various Boards...
- Staff opportunity for voice and input
- Referendum dollars
- Ability to upgrade technology
- Comprehensive programs to serve diverse clientele (FAST, Playworks, Focus/backpack program, etc.)
- Inclusive curriculum acquisition process (CII /staff piloting/input, community)
- Caring, compassionate staff

Question #2

Nothing is perfect in any organization. What do you believe are the greatest challenges that the District faces?

- Attraction, recruitment, and retention of staff (professional and support - all levels)
- Student behavioral issues/needs
- Budget / sustainability
- Family needs - how to keep meeting the growing needs of the community
- Lack of trust between staff/admin
- Lack of respect shown amongst/between staff/colleagues
- Lack of time for admin to collaborate and do long term planning together
- Struggle finding appropriate programming to meet the needs of all students
- Maintaining staff morale
- Continuing with facility upgrades and constant maintenance
- Meeting needs of all families and students
- Staffing shortages and lack of quality candidates
- Substitute shortages
- Negative public perceptions of education
- Being a cohesive entity
- Inequities between buildings
- Community poverty / demographics changing which is creating more barriers impacting students

- Reduction in positive parent engagement / apathy
- Declining enrollment
- Increased mental health needs in students/families and lack of community resources to support this
- Elementary boundary structure and consideration of equity/number of students/special ed needs and poverty
- State not allowing districts to adjust budgets as inflation occurs
- Competitive salary to attract staff - staying competitive in this area
- Find a leader who understands collaboration and leads it
- Tell our success stories better in order to maintain and attract enrollment
- Supports for student behaviors - in school and externally (parents, community, city, county)

Question #3

What leadership style and characteristics or attributes do you believe are important to look for as the Board hires a new Superintendent?

- Puts kids first
- Cares about people (staff, parents, community) and respects them
- Collaborative
- Leader empowers me to do my job versus a manager
- Provides thoughtful feedback for us to grow
- Leading the vision of the District
- Understands District initiatives
- Approachable
- A learner
- Listens to understand, not listens to respond or react
- Follows the communication chain of command
- Trust your team
- Communicator
- Leading a learning mindset
- Create a balance of transparency on your stance with healthy vulnerability and room for reconsideration or growth
- Collaborative work with the admin team
- Empowering directors to lead collaboratively
- Admin team meetings facilitated for active participation versus passive consent
- Using adult engagement strategies
- Belonging, significance and fun
- Supportive and safe communication when issues arise
- Build admin team rapport
- Collaborative in words and action by being a learner together with the admin team
- Engage with the community in a shared vision of what we want our students to leave WRPS with
- Lead with a healthy dose of humility and understanding the strengths of the team are the strengths of the leader
- Innovative, willing to challenge the status quo in a respectful way, not just individuals but with a history of the buildings and the District
- Data driven to assist decision making including quantitative and qualitative data
- K-12 instructional leader who values the PLC process to support kids and staff in their growth
- Supportive of administration; has our back, follows chain of command and develops organizational trust
- Visibility in buildings, not just being there but seeking out authentic experiences and relationships
- A listener, someone who seeks input
- Distributive leadership, following chain of command and also policies and procedures as outlined
- Someone who articulates the “why” behind their decisions
- Someone who takes the time to process and look at all sides of an issue
- Personable and approachable

- Someone who can build and maintain a team both at the admin level and District level
- Someone who respects the history of WRPS
- Someone who trusts other leaders to lead
- Strong advocate for public education

Question #4

Share any comments you feel might be helpful for the Board to consider as they select a new Superintendent.

- Person should be encouraged /want to live in the community
- Administrators have gifts/talents to share - shouldn't always be an expectation (i.e., for courses taught after hours) but compensation should be considered
- Someone who respects a work-life balance and personal / professional life boundaries/limitations
- Do your due diligence to contact the district from where an individual comes from - maybe visit the district or reach out in any way possible to learn all that you can about the person's background/abilities
- If not a good fit, don't force it - consider an interim



*The Student Group was facilitated by
Associate Principal Steve Thayer.*

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH FOCUS GROUP SESSION - STUDENTS

March 19, 2024

To The Board of Education:

Thank you for giving our students the opportunity to share their voices. I understand that is not a possibility for all students in the State of Wisconsin, and I feel very proud and humbled that you would hear theirs. Much of our conversation centered around "the job" of a Superintendent because none of them had a clear vision of what the Superintendent actually does! After better understanding this, we turned our attention to character qualities our students feel are important for the new Superintendent to possess.

Our students were quick to point out they feel the Superintendent needs to be "fully committed" to our district. They want to see this individual live in our community and continue to see their whole family involved in the goings on of our schools. Our students really want to feel they can personally know the Superintendent, not just "know of" the Superintendent. They would love someone who is approachable and unafraid to give them time to talk and share their thoughts/feelings/hopes/dreams. They would love to see this individual in LHS during important times. They would love to see them show their school spirit by participating in dress up days, and attending assemblies. They understand this person cannot be everywhere at once, but they would love to see them more!

Our students would like you to know that there are some incredible things happening at LHS that our new Superintendent should know and be ready to share with us. These things include the incredible events that are, "going on all of the time!" Here at LHS, there is always a sporting event, fine arts event, or club meeting with tons of opportunities to, "bring the whole family to spend quality time together." "Our educational opportunities here are amazing!" one student shares. Students pointed out the diversity of educational opportunities to take tech ed courses, cooking classes, or AP classes, "so I can become a doctor if I wanted to." All of this is done with, "teachers who actually care about me and have an interest in my success." another student states. Our students want our new Superintendent to know about our facilities. "We have a beautiful building that feels like I am actually on a college campus with plenty of spots to study, work quietly, or hang out with my friends. I don't know for sure, but I don't think other high school kids have this!!" Many of them shared that they find it really "cool" that they all went to different elementary schools (Howe, Grove, Woodside) and even different middle schools (WRAMS and COA), but they can all be friends and have the same opportunities when they reach Lincoln.

They know that nowhere is perfect. When I asked what needs to be improved here in our schools they shared their thoughts on that as well. One student states, "We should be more unified in our school spirit. It would be nice if there was a way we could see that everyone is happy to be here including our Superintendent. You shouldn't feel like the odd one out if you participate." They think we (staff and students) can show better teamwork in making our schools a great place. They felt that their voice is encouraged to be heard, "but change is hard to come by from a student voice." They would also like the Superintendent to try and help solve the problem of smaller groups/clubs/activities being over shadowed by some of the larger clubs.

I ended our conversation by asking this question; "When you go on Spring Break this week to visit Grandma and Grandpa and they ask you to tell them about your school, what are you going to tell them? What makes you proud to be a Lincoln High School Red Raider?" and here are some of their responses.

- ◆ "There are so many resources available to us."
- ◆ "My education is really awesome!"
- ◆ "We have a good diversity of people and we are able to learn more about one another."
- ◆ "I have so many opportunities to try new things and find ways I can excel, even if I have never tried it before."
- ◆ "We give everyone a chance here."

I trust you will find this insight beneficial. I feel that this small group of students truly shared some of the most accurate information you will ever get about what is going on here at Lincoln and in our district (from their eyes). In a nut shell, our students want the new Superintendent to, "**Inspire people to do good things for themselves and others.**"

Thank you for your time and consideration of our students.

Respectfully submitted,

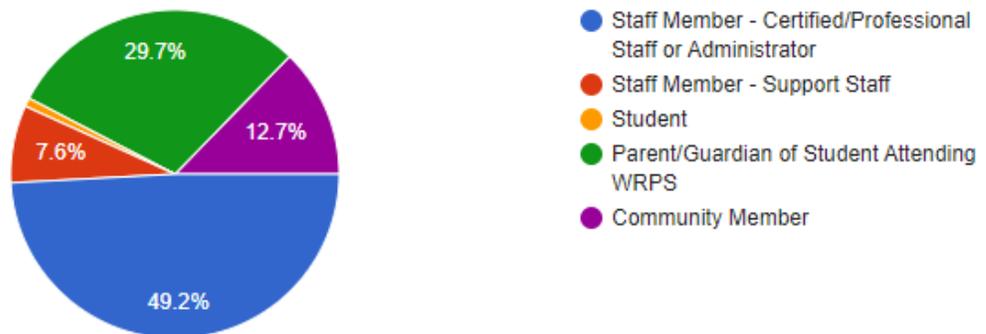
Steve Thayer
Associate Principal Lincoln High School
and Five Incredible LHS Students

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK - ONLINE SURVEY FORM RESULTS

The online survey form was open from February 29, 2024 through March 15, 2024. The following chart depicts the percentage of representation from each group that participated in the online feedback opportunity:

What role best describes the perspective you are sharing?

118 responses



Survey feedback results were batched together by common ideas to determine how often certain themes were mentioned in the responses. Those results are listed first in the next few pages and reflect the ranking of themes and ideas which collectively depict repeated thoughts on what was shared as being most important to those who took time to complete the survey.

The final results with complete and full responses then follow for the Board to review and gain the best understanding possible after reading each response in its full context.

**STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES
BATCHED BY REPEATED THEMES**

STRENGTHS of WRPS

72	Incredible, well-meaning staff members who love kids and want what is best for them - they are accommodating, kind, flexible, committed, hard working, supportive of one another, dedicated, highly qualified, passionate, creative, positive even when continually asked to do more, compassionate
43	Wide array and rigor in course options; excellent variety in co-curricular offerings/clubs - drama, art, world language, music, athletics, CTE/STEM
34	Programs that encourage every student to succeed; students are assisted in discovering their interests and path toward post-secondary pursuits, and programs are offered for academic, behavioral, social, and emotional learning and growth
20	Buildings, facilities, Performing Arts Center are excellent - modern, clean, well maintained, upgraded
14	Strong, supportive admin and good support from Technology/Curriculum/Pupil Services who are approachable, supportive of staff, and want what is best for kids
14	Strong professional development opportunities for staff to remain cutting edge and engage in best instructional practices; collaboration among staff; DEU opportunities and compensation
10	Technology is up to date and current - District supports innovation
9	Communication to families and staff members by email, phone, apps (District level and building level)
7	Safe buildings; safety is taken seriously
7	Community support of schools in multiple ways, including passage of referendum/funding of schools
6	Students and families come first - very student centered in decision making
6	Gaining more inclusivity, support for marginalized communities
6	Parents who care about their children and the education they receive; supportive families and schools that welcome parent involvement
6	Supportive Board of Education
5	State of the art outdoor sports facility (WR Area Sports Complex)
5	District is continually recognized as a "top notch" school district in Wisconsin; cutting edge of education; positive public image and good self-promotion efforts
5	Staff in District are forward thinking, flexible, progressive
5	Diverse students and families
4	Ability for students to earn college credits - partnerships with post-secondary institutions assist in this
4	Process for choosing new curriculum resources is transparent and involves staff, parents, community
4	Strong, comprehensive curriculum
4	District has a positive influence on community culture
4	District is responsive to the needs of children/families - social services / resource support provided to students/families as needs in community grow
3	Staff strive to hold students to high standards and expectations
3	WRPS serves a small, safe community allowing the ability to communicate with all residents - a great place to raise kids and staff are frequently involved in community events
3	Longevity and experience of staff members
3	Strong programming for students with disabilities and mental health issues
2	District engages all stakeholders in decision-making (i.e., curricular, schedules developed, staffing, sports, referendums, etc.)
2	Core curriculum
2	Elementary schools are one of the greatest strengths in the District, setting students up for success in their early years of education; schools are very family-oriented
2	There are many opportunities for community involvement in schools
2	There is immense pride for the school district
2	Local business and industry partnerships; connections with the community
2	Willingness to recognize shortcomings and focus on improvement, working together to address concerns
2	OPEB benefit to retain staff in a competitive labor market
2	Superintendent Cabinet to give staff members a voice that is heard
1	Staff is well compensated, but District must remain competitive
1	Good coaching staff
1	An awakening of the seriousness and long ignored diminished academic achievements of students, particularly in reading skills and comprehension
1	Progressive leadership
1	Clear calendars and information about school expectations
1	Staff retention
1	Quality Superintendent leadership; collaborative/supportive mindset of Superintendent with staff to establish positive relationships
1	Excellence in maximizing resources across all areas
1	Small class sizes at the elementary level
1	WRPS is a great place to work
1	District is transparent to the public
1	Shared leadership through District committees
1	Amazing students who have a lot to offer our community
1	Excellent RtI/Multi-Level Systems of Support (MLSS) in place that far exceeds neighboring districts
1	My kids are generally happy and feel supported

CHALLENGES of WRPS

33	Increased negative and inappropriate student behaviors and disrespect
33	Budget challenges in the future and potential negative impact which will make it difficult to maintain quality programming; possible need for referendums in the future; spending seems out of control - cut excess bloat
23	Teacher shortages / hiring qualified teachers / retention of staff - turnovers make it very difficult to establish cohesive, lasting relationships
18	Declining academic performance (math/reading); poor achievement and no focus for growth; low student motivation-more apathy; students need to be pushed harder to do their best - no babying; challenges exist to keep students engaged with a rigorous curriculum; more effort is needed to recognize the declining scores and evaluate causes and solutions
15	Small (but loud) number of uninformed, nonsupportive community members who undermine efforts with their negative, false accusations and who do nothing to support and grow the community; they are skewing the perception of the District, staff, and students - it makes it difficult to come to work
13	Parents unwilling to participate in child's academic, social, and emotional growth; disrespectful parents and a lack of parent support and accountability for child's actions - a plan to fix family/parenting issues is needed
12	Failure to hold students accountable with appropriate discipline consequences for misbehavior
11	Compliant students willing to learn are being negatively impacted by student disruptions and misbehavior - ALL students should have a safe learning environment in which to receive a free and appropriate public education; separate students when necessary instead of mainstreaming all
11	Public image of WRPS - our customer service attitude needs to change to customer education, telling our story; we are a learning institution filled with professionals who care about and are trained to ensure quality teaching and learning occurs; it is a battle to combat misinformation and get correct and accurate information circulating
10	Attack on public education; lack of support and funding from the public and government
9	Declining enrollment - District is losing students to homeschooling and other options
9	The political environment and differing/divided views; education is so politicized now and there is an inability for people to have true, respectful conversations even when they disagree
8	Changing demographics of the community causing higher needs and resources for students - staff are struggling with how to deal with these changes effectively
8	Administration hinders staff - more support from administration is needed; staff do not feel valued or heard; lack of accountability
8	Respect for staff - they should have less busy work required - staff burn-out is at a high and they are being overwhelmed by challenging student behaviors; staff have a sense of being "stuck" as they offer complaints but there do not seem to be any solutions
7	Too much on staff's plates - nothing can be done well and it is disheartening and overwhelming; people have become short on patience and somewhat unkind; toxic work environments are being developed and staff mental health is a concern
6	Bullying by students
5	Lack of substitute teachers and the ability to retain the ones we have
5	Fair compensation for staff; pay raises are limited
4	Holding people to a respectful decorum (kids, staff, community) for everyone's safety; lack of civility
4	Poor administration unwilling to hear all sides; unable to work collaboratively with people of differing backgrounds and opinions; unwilling to listen to problems teachers are facing day in and day out
4	WRAMS school culture/climate, negative behaviors, poor administration who doesn't lead by example or hold people accountable
3	Violence impacting school safety
3	Too much focus on the latest fad; not enough focus on basics
3	Academics growth and learning is not a high priority in the District Strategic Plan - add this as an objective; more objectivity is needed to plan and assess goals - establish SMART goals
3	Act 20 implementation
3	Low staff morale
2	Drugs
2	Keep schools open for in-person learning only
2	Educational/work climate improvements in order to retain staff - turnover is impacting staff and students
2	Crazy agendas like CRT and transgender issues; getting away from basic science - boys are always boys, girls are girls
2	Getting rid of "woke" atmosphere in classrooms; stopping the woke agenda
2	Bloated administration - a few administrators who are less than ideal
2	Keeping elderly/retired community members informed about school activities
2	Athletic programs are weak and non-competitive; District lacks strong coaches; WRAMS should have competitive programming and not just intramurals
2	Attracting teachers and families to the area due to a lack of community appeal and jobs; declining community
2	Community still negatively impacted by the loss of the paper mill - it is a dying mill town
2	Nepotism/favoritism; equitability among similar positions
2	Maintaining low class sizes so teachers can help all students reach their fullest potential (especially in schools with high free/reduced numbers, SPED students, and high behavioral concerns)
2	Staff who pull apart our buildings, creating controversy and discontent; everyone is too scared to stand up to them
2	People need to be held accountable for their actions
2	Human Resources and upper level admin have little concern for staff safety, retention, burn-out, or the amount of workload being experienced
3	Student mental health is a concern
1	Pushing social issues versus education
1	Parent concerns about the state of society and things kids must witness and deal with everyday at school
1	Parent belief that problems start with apathetic, uninvolved parents at home and kids with special needs or discipline issues who are required to remain in the classroom with other kids who care - a different school to learn would work better
1	Teachers are continually asked to do more and are not adequately compensated
1	Every possible tool will need to be identified to not just attract teachers, but also retain them through to retirement
1	Bullying by staff members to staff members
1	Increased mental health needs
1	Removal of agenda or politics driven policies
1	Requiring teachers to teach factual and accurate lessons, particularly in History
1	Preparing students for the real world; prepping them for vocational school and/or the trades rather than college
1	Overcoming Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) or other government directives
1	Students should not be allowed to dress like animals, cause distractions
1	Teach correct history; don't remove it
1	Teacher's Union
1	Litter boxes in school make no sense since animals don't attend school
1	Number of times police are called to schools to address issues
1	Social media

CHALLENGES of WRPS

1	Lack of student involvement in school activities
1	Athletic achievement and facilities have a great emphasis than academics and programs for learning
1	Spending money on non-essential versus education
1	Lack of focus on excellence
1	Data not used to drive teaching and learning
1	Community engagement is only appreciated when additional funds are needed
1	Stagnation in leadership is fostering complacency with outcomes
1	Safety and security protocols should continue
1	Gaps in knowledge about inclusion and belonging as well as best practices among some teaching staff
1	Continuing education for staff geared toward neurodivergent students and behavioral management; resources to keep caring staff safe; identifying staff unconscious biases and stigma which impede their ability to provide a holistic approach to education for students of vulnerable populations with various health disparities impacting their education
1	Internal cliques or groups (such as PTA or involving other activities)
1	Transparency in how PTA funding is used and fundraising concerns - bylaws, policies, minutes, and officer elections should be occurring
1	A few administrators have done a poor job getting to know their students/families - families don't feel welcome at the elementary school and this should be a priority
1	Special education resources, especially hiring for the needs that exist to ensure that IEPs and 504 plans are being met
1	Curriculum is outdated - needs changing
1	Implement more courses dealing with real life events (i.e., finance, insurance, work expectations)
1	Eliminate cell phone use in school
1	Late Start Mondays will negatively impact working parents
1	Accountability of the School Board and staff
1	Low wages for non-certified staff members
1	Inequality between schools and student experiences on a variety of levels
1	Enough time for teachers to prepare and prep lessons
1	Hire staff who are dedicated to the District and community, and who want to LIVE here
1	Emphasize unity - this is crucial to ensure all schools are aligned to support student progression from elementary, to middle school, to high school
1	Perception (good and bad) of different elementary schools to the public
1	Increasing banning of books
1	Being culturally acceptable versus morally right
1	Helping parents and the community to see that we are partners, working together to support children's learning
1	Consistency across District schools
1	Overcoming stereotypes and past notions of what "school" is like
1	Lack of certified library professionals to focus on literacy
1	Disconnected leadership
1	Culture - some buildings have negative staff with the loudest voices; we need to be solutions-based and not continually dwell on problems
1	District shows little flexibility around elementary versus secondary; while we constantly differentiate for students, structures tend to be based on secondary level which is more cut and dry, unlike elementary
1	Primary grades need more educational aides
1	Unify outside supports to fulfill needs through a clear vision and multi-year plan to support the work of our schools
1	Elementary staff could use more communication (and built in time for it) between grade levels and other schools
1	Too many things trying to be done at the high school level and nothing is being done truly well as it is a fix everthing - from behaviors to academics
1	Like teachers, administrators have so much going on that most of their time is putting out fires and rather than being proactive they are forced to be reactive
1	Staff and parents that lack an understanding of how our schools and district operate
1	Lack of common assessments in all curricular areas
1	Watered down PLCs occurring at some schools
1	Need to get back to working with families in a more collaborative manner
1	No positive culture/school/organizational spirit or support / camaraderie among staff
1	Leadership is unwilling to change with the times
1	Community members fed up with a variety of societal issues upheld by public education

QUALITIES and CHARACTERISTICS TO SEEK IN NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

29	Good, active listener to all stakeholders (parents, staff, students, community) - have an open door policy and listen to understand, not to respond
28	Compassionate, humble, friendly, patient, kind, understanding, thoughtful, accepting, welcoming, genuine desire to do good which is reflected in personality
25	Courageous, confident, strong and determined with the ability to stand up for the organization and decisions made; thick skin; takes accountability for decisions and actions and won't be intimidated by loud public voices or criticism
23	Stellar communication skills; clear, direct communicator with all stakeholders (staff, families, community); responsive and sharing all pertinent information
23	Manager and Leader - skilled at managing resources and at influencing, motivating, empowering, and inspiring people towards a collective vision and purpose which ultimately contributes to organization success; the person is a relationship builder, boosts morale, instills trust, unifies and is connection-focused
19	Strong and supportive advocate for teachers/staff, students, and public education
18	Collaborator - someone not calling all the shots
18	Out the door and on the floor leadership - someone willing to get out into all buildings and meet with staff and students, witness current challenges and experience wins as they are happening; experience highs/lows with staff; someone hardworking, reliable, and who values staff input
18	Approachable, genuine, personable, level-headed especially during conflict/pressure
13	Integrity, Honest, Ethical
12	Knowledgeable and experienced in education, preferably in all levels (secondary and elementary) and other areas (curriculum, special ed, HR, etc.)
12	Someone who can lead with respect toward all, even in disagreement
10	Open mind
10	Professionalism
10	Willing to remove all students not abiding by law/school policies/rules and come up with solutions to a growing problem of disruptiveness and bullying; hold buildings to discipline standards
10	Transparent in dealing with all stakeholders
10	Not a micro-manager or have their hands in every detail; person should be an effective delegator
9	Someone who values and models relationships built on trust with all stakeholders; good relationship-builder and collaborator with groups and organizations outside of schools; is active and involved in the community
9	Be positive and well articulated - focus on positive messaging
9	Informed decision-making based on facts and what is best for kids after considering all potential ramifications/impact, even when it is difficult
9	Hears all sides of an issue and not react to the first person they hear it from as absolute truth; don't make assumptions and jump to conclusions; curb quick or abrupt decisions and answers without first realizing possible impacts; think about how responses could be perceived; follow the chain of command and do not have a bias toward parents - defer to school staff and intervene only after the issue isn't resolved at the lowest level first
8	Lead by example; good role model
7	Fiscally responsible, budget experience, business/financial background, able to do more with less and make hard decisions to stay within the budget
7	Equitable to all stakeholders; understands difference between elementary and secondary; values everyone
7	Able to say "I don't know" or admit to mistakes and have a willingness to learn and be receptive to suggestions
7	Focus on and address low performance in reading and math and student academic achievement; successful, proven track record in advancing student growth and learning
7	Empower and trust employees to do their jobs that you pay them to do
6	Fair; Objective
6	Creative, out of the box thinker; innovative
5	Should not have a political agenda - be apolitical and keep politics out of schools; person should not be a politician
5	Strong common sense; logical
5	Promote teacher success; trust that they have the best interest of students in mind; be supportive of educators to all ends
5	Inclusiveness/equity for all - not merely understand diversity, equity and inclusion but "walk the walk" and embody the principles to serve all kids
5	Person of honor who is consistent and follows through on their word
5	Brainstorming problem-solver; solutions based person
4	Empathy
4	Trusts and respects others in District leadership positions
4	Holds parents accountable
4	Reside in and be involved in the WRPS community - long term commitment; dedicated and not a job hopper
4	Systems thinker - has a lens for the bigger picture; able to look at the District as a whole
4	Team player
4	Willingness and ability to accept constructive criticism
4	Someone who is reflective and thinks through feedback provided to them
3	Highly intelligent
3	Flexible, laid back, calm demeanor
3	Sense of humor
3	Someone who gets back to basics; core curriculum focus
3	Strong emotional intelligence
3	Discernment; pays attention; responsive
3	Listen and accept how parents/community feel about all the nonsense going on in schools; implement changes that are requested
3	Servant leader; calm voice of reason
3	Have a growth mindset
3	Hold poor leaders/supervisors/employees accountable for their actions
3	View for the future with an ability to plan both short and long-term goals; strategic planning experience
3	Appreciates and understands shared leadership
3	Values all employees
2	Put <i>relationships</i> with all stakeholders first
2	Represents and stands for and with students rather than the teacher's union
2	Charisma
2	Organized
2	Takes action; effective
2	No nonsense attitude; go-getter
2	Visionary
2	Focus on keeping schools safe
2	Promote a positive school culture and work atmosphere
2	Able to implement some semblance of order
2	Have strong understanding of the PLC/MLSS process with an ability to lead these initiatives forward, including Social Emotional Learning and Special Education

QUALITIES and CHARACTERISTICS TO SEEK IN NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

2	Knowledge of systems change methods
2	New, fresh perspective to the issues plaguing the District
2	Outgoing personality
2	Supportive of teachers' wages and health insurance; respects teachers
2	Conservative
2	Someone who will tell it like it is
2	Person should be able to build a collaborative leadership team and help that team, in turn, build collaborative leadership teams in each building
2	Not ego-centric or narcissistic; not arrogant
2	Someone who doesn't believe that only they have the right answer
1	Parental experience
1	Have ingenuity
1	Unbiased
1	Good moral character
1	Honest, respectful communicator
1	A detective at times to get at the root of problems and document
1	Willingness to host quarterly public forums with taxpayers
1	An actual leader who doesn't allow indoctrination
1	Private sector experience in business outside of education
1	Familiarity with curriculum, staff, buildings
1	Comfortable in public discussions
1	Preferably someone from the community, but with a fresh face
1	Someone who has credentials, but not a "Dr."
1	Data focused and able to analyze and interpret data
1	Make a greater effort to involve the community to make positive changes; make it easier to get concerns brought to the Board's agenda
1	Consider hiring from the outside for a fresh, new perspective
1	Willingness to bring diversity in opinions and perspectives to the table
1	Keep right wing propaganda away from schools
1	Keep actual history lessons being taught
1	Consider the uniqueness of each school and the individuals within it as important; every level within the District is important and should be treated that way
1	Prioritize preparation for college and career readiness
1	Empower teachers to run more strict classrooms; bring back order where there is chaos
1	Strong time management skills
1	Strong networking skills
1	Understanding of healthcare system operations and various government programs to advocate and collaborate for services impacting both students and staff
1	Someone who doesn't operate schools like a business and considers staff and students as merely numbers
1	Represents our schools and community with pride
1	Someone who appreciates the unique gifts of all
1	Focus on kids' learning to be successful adults - not support teaching what should be the responsibility of a parent/guardian
1	No show boating
1	Respects and appreciates the history of the District
1	Embraces the power of the committee system currently in place at WRPS
1	Rank the level of importance as follows: students, teachers, administration
1	Supports in-person attendance for students
1	Person who doesn't overreact when possible weather is coming and cancels school
1	Transformational style leadership
1	No "my way or the highway" mentality
1	Emphasis on Future Ready Framework
1	Someone who will find the facts and present them to the community, even if some do not like it
1	Shows no favoritism
1	Willingness to lead based upon principles that reflect values of District families (quality education, classroom/behavior management, parents as primary educator and influencing authority)
1	Independent person; someone with their own opinions, can back them up and doesn't care too much about "hurting someone's feelings"
1	Supportive of families and traditional values
1	Someone who is not so far removed from teaching that they've completely forgotten what it is like
1	Authoritative leadership style that is also open to the ideas of others when appropriate
1	Someone who can facilitate a better transition for eighth grade to the high school level
1	Person holds Director of Curriculum & Instruction and CII leaders to a higher standard, and expects common assessments to be created districtwide and for curriculum to be implemented with fidelity
1	Takes proactive approach rather than conforming to mainstream opinion
1	Aspires for WRPS to excel and set a benchmark for educational practices and extra-curricular activities within the state; strives for WRPS to serve as a model district for others to emulate
1	Allow free discussion of issues - do not take over and dominate the conversation
1	Not a dictator or back seat driver
1	Someone with a solid foundation willing to stand for what is right - not just culturally acceptable
1	Someone who doesn't just "manage" and takes an interest in what the leaders of the District do
1	Concerns raised are acknowledged and validated by the District's leader
1	Employee centric leadership style to help build positive workplace culture and support employee wellness; someone that sees value in building feelings of trust and embraces the concept that leadership isn't about having a title, it's about making a difference

OTHER THOUGHTS/COMMENTS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

Someone who will be out in the schools talking to parents teachers students not afraid to do the RIGHT THING even when it's UNPOPULAR
I believe that we need outside talent brought in. Due to the current issues plaguing some buildings, a new set of eyes and ideas to curb and stop the behaviors is dire.
You need to have a person who is open to hearing other opinions instead of getting angry if someone disagreed or even questioned him.
What we need is a strong leader, not person who blame's people who challenge him/her. Listen, listen, listen to the concerns of the parents in this district.
The new Superintendent does not need to be someone with all the latest and supposedly greatest educational credentials and ideas from some progressive university. Get someone with common sense and heart for kids.
Consider the applicants actual merits and their willingness to work with parents. Put the students education needs first.
Humility and the ability to truly listen and hear everyone in the community.
Perhaps reach out to local church and community organizations for candidates.
I would like to see someone who can relate to people, someone's who's easy to approach. Preferably someone who has kids in the system.
use the resources available to you, both locally, but also state and nation-wide, in order to find the best candidate possible, not the most convenient. make sure that you post the position in a wide so that your search can garner the largest pool of qualified and experienced superintendent candidates.
Have final candidates do building walk throughs as part of the interview process
Take a good long look at how some schools have been handling special education needs. As a parent, I have heard NUMEROUS complaints of children acting out in threatening behaviors, extreme disruption of classrooms, but our schools focus on these SPED children - what of the children that they are disproportionately affected by not appropriately dealing with extreme cases of disruptive and dangerous behaviors in our schools? EVERY child has a right to a high quality education, but often times it is vastly overlooked by the needs of special education children, that it is acceptable behavior to act out like that. This district needs a leader who can focus on that.
Wrams needs serious help, as a parent & coach whos spent less then two years in the district and is seriously looking into Assumption after the nightmare of dealing with Ginter who simply seems not to care about supporting any of her teachers, coaches or students including things like student athletes taking photos in locker rooms, sharing the photos as well as bullying that gets overlooked. When contacting the Super. in the past its been 'Ginter knows how to do her job' or 'Ill give admin a pass on that'
Get references and documentation that support their previous accomplishments for other school districts or improved metrics they focused on.
I hear about these larger school districts hiring superintendents with fancy degrees and titles. Those people are often looking to move on to something bigger, and are likely to not stick around. I am not interested in that. Rapids needs a down to earth, salt of the earth type of person for this role--someone who has maintained stability in prior roles. If there are any applicants who currently reside in Rapids, I think strong preference should be given to them, as long as they demonstrate strong values. Faith and family are important and should not be overlooked. These ideals tell a lot about how a person will lead.
Public schools are facing much criticism these days: DEI, LGBTQ, etc. How can we find a superintendent who helps to "fix" the poor reputation public schools have across our nation at the moment. Kids are being pulled out in droves.
Take a hard look at what is being taught and stop spending on social curriculum, non essentials. Get back to educational basics.. sadly the person needs to be the opposite of what we have now!
Craig had many great qualities; sad to see him leaving, but change is also good and should be embraced.
Ask the candidates their philosophies on the value of de-emphasizing how much of high school is geared toward preparing students for university. If any bit of their response suggests they see technical college as an option for kids who aren't as academically gifted, then I suggest the candidate be considered not fit for the job.
A real gifted and talented program would be good. Also I would like to see more focus on extracurricular educational opportunities at the middle school. So much of the district in general is sports related, more coordinated efforts around extra learning would be a big plus.
Don't be afraid to look all over for the very best
I'm sure you're all looking for your new liberal warrior to pave the way. You need to view this opportunity as a blessing and hopefully choose someone who is open minded and willing to learn about our community instead of what political party they side with.
I am not sure who is even applied or is qualified, but I do know that Brian Oswald would make a great candidate for this position.
Also, not sure what the process is for recruitment, but I think it was a great process to have a sampling of students, parents, educators, and administrators to have the ability to interview the top five candidates. This process was done for the LHS Athletic Director, and I feel it is important to have the opinions of everyone this individual is working for to gather their feedback.
We are losing a great Superintendent and you should do your best to find someone like him.
We have been very pleased with the current direction and values of our school district. We would love to see someone with a similar set of values and leadership.
Please take Craig Broeren's letter to heart - the district is fighting a war with people who hate public instruction
Someone who values transparency and communication as a two-way street (i.e., invites input from families; works to build a strong collaborative relationships between home, school, and community. ...Someone who'd for example would change the gpa in highschool so that it acknowledges when a student takes AP classes (the current system punishes students who take AP classes and don't have the best grades because of it. If they'd take regular classes, they'd have straight A's and a 4.0 but they chose to do advanced classes, take on more work and a harder curriculum. That should be rewarded, not punished)
Someone who puts parents back in charge instead of putting them on the sidelines with no say.
Someone who stops the double standards
Thank you for caring and reaching out for input from the WRPS community.
Please hire someone who can have difficult discussions respectfully with all parties involved and make decisions on what is best for our children.
A candidate who wants to make sure WRPS is a fit for them, one who comes in to listen and understand the history of the district to want to work with the stakeholders instead of a personal agenda. Our new Superintendent should be active in our community. Even if he/she doesn't reside here, the partnership between schools and community must remain strong and support one another.
I feel one important thing for veteran teachers for retention purposes is to keep the benefit where the district pays for the health insurance premium for 8 years. This is a major benefit that is keeping many veteran teachers remaining in our district.
Our new leader needs to be a great communicator like the current superintendent. You get a lot more buy-in from informed staff members. We are a lot more productive collectively than individually.
We live in a fairly conservative area of the state yet historically we've had strong support for our schools and educators. Our community continues to approve tax money to advance our district and make it a better more appealing place to raise a family. I hope that the next superintendent can continue to have the support of the community by committing to the advancement of our schools.
Someone who is super kind and can advocate for the community. To have as wide of a selection board as possible, not that a particular group/background dominates the selection process. To have the teachers also be able to select the new Superintendent. The teachers interview him, regardless of our teaching background.
I think we've been in a good direction with initiatives and leadership and someone with that same mindset and drive as Craig will be important to continue the good things happening.
Someone that delegates well, doesn't over step responsibilities all the characteristics that are hard to see during the interview process.
If potential candidates are coming from a previous school district. Past performance should be reviewed in depth, given the current climate of public education today.
They must be passionate about the long game of public education and be willing to be the VOICE of Public Education at WRPS.
Our candidates have a tough act to follow but as an elected board we entrust you to find the best candidate possible.
Pick someone who likes visiting the Early Childhood: Special Ed students and 4K students and has a genuine smile on their face throughout the visit. That is a sign of a compassionate individual who is sure to have students' best interests in mind. It just is.
I would really like to see someone who is a supporter of libraries and understands how integral they are to the success of our children. How we are grossly understaff in this area compared to others around the state and all the opportunities we are missing out on because of it! Thank you for allowing us the space to contribute our thoughts.
Please seek out a leader who cares about the entire school district and isn't hyper focused on what only interests him/her. Someone who can listen with high emotional intelligence who can coach, encourage, motivate, and is willing to become involved in issues to work together on solutions - not just decide what is going to happen and then expect everyone else to make it happen.
I feel like we might have some strong candidates within our district. But as well, looking for someone who wants to be a part of our community of Wisconsin Rapids for a long time.
Our superintendent needs to have more separation between him/herself and staff. When staff members are "buddies" with their boss going out to eat, drinking, boating, etc. they are given favors and are "protected." I would also like to see that the new superintendent's spouse is NOT a staff member. This has caused huge problems and favoritism. It makes it difficult to work with a colleague who thinks she is your boss and remains untouchable regardless of what unprofessional things she does just because her spouse is the superintendent.
Thank you for your work to gather input throughout this search for a new leader.

OTHER THOUGHTS/COMMENTS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

<p>It is important that the candidate have a strong sense of community and knows how to work amicably with all parties from school board, public, and parents to staff.</p>
<p>It needs to be someone who will hold current leadership more accountable while understanding that the future of education is changing. The individual needs to help support staff to stay in the field (incentives, equitable pay for those who were hired recently and now are being paid the same or barely above new hires who have less experience)</p>
<p>NOT Julie Kolarik</p>
<p>I think that the ideal candidate would have some existing knowledge of our district and our area.</p>
<p>I am looking for someone who is a leader by example. Someone who leads with a vision and encourages growth among all staff.</p>
<p>I have felt supported by Craig and would hate for a new superintendent to start villainizing teachers, which has happened in the past. Our district needs a superintendent who has the best interest of teachers at the forefront if we want to continue growing as a district. Our students receive the best when our teachers feel supported and valued. Teachers are here because we want to help students be the best they can be but more and more feel like the mountains we are being asked to climb are unrealistic and border-line abusive.</p>
<p>As teachers we teach the whole student. A superintendent needs to serve the whole district, from the principals to the noon aides and everyone in between. They need to be someone confident in conflict resolution with many branches of the school district, because lets face it. We cannot run our district when we only take care for one department.</p>
<p>I hope that your hiring committee will have not only board members, but also staff from various settings, including elementary and secondary teachers, support staff, and admin. I hope that you will take your time and find the right fit, rather than hire just anyone to have the position filled.</p>
<p>It would be good to have someone who continues to have a pulse on the community and the overall needs of the community. Willingness to be involved in areas outside of the District to provide a positive District presence to the community.</p>
<p>I think it would be great if the new Superintendent had both elementary and secondary experience - I know the chances of finding that are slim but I do think it would be a bonus.</p>
<p>We need someone who understands students are not misbehaving on purpose and are not just in need of a "good beating" (as said by our current Superintendent). We need someone who understands kids would do better if they could and that a lot of our students behaviors are actually a result of trauma and "beatings" they have endured/witnessed. We needs someone who can help heal our students, staff, and community.</p>
<p>Please select someone who truly understands education and the challenges facing public education. The focus needs to be on doing what is best for the students within the current constraints.</p>
<p>We need someone who can heal this district's staff and reinvigorate them as we go through this very bumpy stretch.</p>
<p>You got this!</p>
<p>I feel it would be helpful if the new Superintendent had a desire to live in the community.</p>
<p>Continued- I think for most issues, a parent calling the superintendent should first be asked if they've talked to the staff member involved. Most staff would love to work through problems w/ parents, & we should be treated w/ that courtesy and respect, and it should be enforced by the supt. (and CO in general)...otherwise, they're just looking to complain, & that's not good for staff morale, nor is it effective. I realize there are certain situations where going right to the top is appropriate, but it should not be the first step in the vast majority of cases. I think this would reduce complaining just to stir the pot, improve staff morale, & ultimately be more effective @ solving problems.</p>
<p>Find someone that understands that we live in a different time, and that many staff members can acheive the same amount, if not more, work done from home on days that would be considered acceptable to do so. A good superintendent would be someone that does reward teachers for their hard work and efforts, but does not discriminate the other staff by doing it.</p>
<p>I want to see administration go into classrooms, listen to the concerns staff have, see first hand what these issues are. Address the problems and follow through on expectations and consequences. We need better because our future is doomed if we don't.</p>
<p>It feels like our school district went on a spending spree the last 10 years to bolster the development of new facilities without the proper plans to properly staff and maintain additional square footage and equipment. Some programs and facilities don't get the attention they need as it seems more resources are funneled to the personal interests and goals of our administration.</p>

**STAKEHOLDER RESPONSES
UNBATCHED - Full Commentary**

STRENGTHS OF WRPS
Our district is responsive to the needs of children families and the community. WRPS puts children and families first. I believe our staff is well compensated and this needs to continue.
Buildings, facilities, Performing Arts Center, Drama & Music Depts, Athletics, Well-meaning faculty
The staff love kids and want what is best for them. They strive to hold students to high standards and expectations. The district also engages all stakeholders in decisions whether it be curricular, schedules, staffing, sports, referendums, etc... The process of choosing new curriculum resources is also held to high standards and staff is given opportunities to participate in this also. Once resources are piloted and voted on, community members are also invited to see them.
State of the art outdoor sports facility.
Buildings, PAC, Athletic Programs and some of the faculty
Some very good teachers
Self promotion
Teachers and other staff that care about kids.
There are some very good teachers
Serving a smaller area. Have the ability to communicate well with the residents of the community.
Continually recognized as "Top Notch" school district in Wisconsin. Teaching staff frequently involved in community events.
Rapids has nice facilities overall, a lot of great teachers, and strong academics and extracurriculars at the high school
upgraded facilities, maintenance of facilities, course offerings and options at middle and high school
An awakening of the seriousness and long ignored diminished academic achievements of our student, particularly in reading skills and comprehension..
-
Great programs where kids can find their interests while they are growing. Programs that encourage every student to succeed.
The elementary school system is one of the greatest strengths our district has to offer. Our children are set up for success in a host of different schools in their early years of education.
The teaching staff is wonderful!!
Communication to families by using email, phone, and phone apps. Clear calendars and information about school expectations. Principals with excellent leadership skills.
WRPS offers a wide range of classes at the high school, which will prepare our students for the future. Students can choose a path based on their interest and knowledge. I am proud that my children attend a district that is comprised of forward-thinkers, which will benefit them as they prepare for life after high school.
The teachers, coaches and some admin are wonderful & truly want wants best for the students
At this time I am not sure of our strengths as most things I hear are negative.
Safe and modern buildings. Lots of extra academic opportunities, and positive influence on the community culture. Incredible teachers and staff. Lots of opportunities for community involvement and immense pride for the school district.
WRPS provides a strong academic foundation and many opportunities for students to be involved outside of the classroom, especially at Lincoln. High school students have the opportunity to earn many college credits. There are so many great teachers in the district. The renovations at Lincoln are very nice, and we are lucky to have a beautiful PAC in our community. The quadplex is awesome as well.
Many opportunities for different kinds of classes.
Some schools/areas - longevity of some of the staff.
Staff retention, respect for teachers, gaining more inclusivity,
I like the job that Howe staff are able to help out children with learning disabilities. I have some friends with children like that and they say that their child does well there.
Spending money on non essentials vs education. Pushing social issues vs education.
Elementary level is very family oriented and strengths-based.
Safety is taken seriously.
Passionate and caring staff.
Extra curricular offerings
Core curriculum
Strong arts, athletics. Excellent communication through email
School
...
Great teachers who care about kids and quality education.
Strong curriculum
Nice new facilities
A great place to raise kids
Safe community
The district is safe, the facilities are kept in good condition and correctly sized for the enrollment. Teachers and administration are good to great.
Facilities
We've never had experience with any other districts, so I'm not able to compare or judge the strengths or faults with any certainty. As a parent, I'm worried about the state of our society and the things my kids have to witness and deal with everyday at school. I doubt these things are specific to WRPS.
I believe most of the parents in and around WR care about their children and their education. I also think most of the educators care as well. The problem lies with the parents who don't care and the system that lets whatever kid learn with the kids who care. That doesn't work. Kids who have special needs or discipline need different schools.
The variety of activities / opportunities the students have to do what they enjoy the most.
Progressive leadership; safe, clean and well funded classrooms/schools; a lot of progress in improving inclusivity over the years
The teachers who still come to work with a positive attitude even though they are continually asked to do more and are not adequately compensated.
Welcoming parent involvement!!! The district serves to support the parents and educate the students.
Many options for children, provides a safe and reliable school district that eliminates the need to consider private options that are inferior in other ways (e.g. requiring religious instruction)
professional staff's compassion and creativity

Facilities - wrps has access to great facilities like the PAC and athletic complexes as well as school buildings Program offers are great. Some teachers are passionate about teaching
WRPS has dedicated and qualified staff. WRPS offers a range of courses at the high school level for our students. The partnerships between WRPS and Mid- State, as well as the UW system is great.
As a parent of high school students I have appreciated the wide assortment of classes and opportunities that LHS has available from the variety of core classes and the apprenticeship programs, music opportunities, STEM classes, agriculture, gym and sports. The ACP center is very helpful for students too. When I have attended the teacher conferences the teachers have always been helpful and kind.
The teachers and staff care about our children, and for the most part do what is best for our children. There is very good communication, at both the district and school building level, to keep us all informed. The facilities are incredible after all the recent updates/changes. There are so many options for courses at the high school to meet the varied needs and interests of all students. Current technologies for students are up-to-date. Understand what teachers/staff go through and help as much as possible. The staff works together for the best interest of the kids. Putting students first and caring about their needs
Innovation. High standards for students. A multitude of options to help students prepare for whatever they choose to do after graduation. Amazing support for all district staff.
Our district honors collaboration amongst its professional staff members, and has worked diligently to build it into the schedule to honor the time needed. We also have careful consideration of new curriculum and we are selective based on student need. In addition, our district has a strong relationship with the School Board. This is critical when making decisions about policies and budget. WRPS works collaboratively with the staff, School Board, and administration to honor the commitment of its educators and adjust the pay to reflect the teachers' professional growth. Our district is willing to think flexibly in order to benefit students. vision for students. The teaching staff
The biggest strength of the school district is the dedicated staff. Van drivers, food service, secretarial staff, custodial staff, teachers, principals all share the same vision. That boils down to doing what is best for kids. I am amazed at what opportunities WRPS offers it's students. I am proud to work here!
WRPS is an innovative district. Often when it teachers attend trainings and conferences, it is evident that we are keeping up or ahead of the game in many of our initiatives that are best practice. Great educational experiences are offered.
Individuals care for students and doing the best for them, we set up meetings for staff so they can collaborate, we provide diverse programs designed to hit on a lot of student interests such as language, metals, music, video game club, programming, design, etc. Lots of teachers work at being the best in their fields. There are ways to advance your pay scale regularly. At the high school, there is a lot of support for staff when students are lacking in discipline. Support from the community with sports. Quality, passionate educators and Admin. Quality leadership at the Superintendent level. A collaborative and supportive mindset of Super. w/ Staff to establish positive relationships. Strengths of WRPS school district include: Supportive administration, frequent and open door communication between staff and building administration, and educators are encouraged to collaborate.
We care about students and their academic, behavioral, social, and emotional growth and are knowledgeable on how to ensure that growth occurs. Strong support of our students, a variety of classes to meet all student needs, staff/teachers who understand and work hard at educating our students, a school board who has always been supportive of our staff. Course offerings, staff Engagement, Collaboration, and Inclusivity
The administration and staff consistently demonstrate excellence in maximizing resources across all areas. We must continue to maintain a proactive and positive approach in our interactions with the community and students in order to fully leverage the potential of our staff and students. Our District is exceptional, and there is room for continuous improvement. We are fortunate to have outstanding facilities and a talented team within our organization. Parent involvement Parents who want to be hands on with their students learning Supportive coworkers smaller class sizes at the elementary level
We have a core group of staff that are dedicated to the improvement of the lives of students. We have a comprehensive curriculum and diverse co-curricular opportunities for students. Local business and industry partnerships and our partnership with Mid-State Technical College is a great asset to our District. The quality of the staff and educators. Communication, putting students first. WRPS is a place where people want to work! We are an innovative district that is always willing to research new things and wisely choose what will work best for our students. We are extremely transparent to the public. We recognize our shortcomings and work together to address those things.
Strong Professional Development opportunities; shared leadership - with teachers participating in much of the work - curriculum, district committees;
I believe that it is very student centered. Students are given MANY opportunities here that I never had the chance to experience. The variety of courses at the high school is incredible. From the board level, the OPEB incentive is a wonderful benefit for teachers and in this very competitive market for teachers and looming teacher shortages, we will need every possible tool to not just attract teachers but retain them to retirement. Very very hard working staff dynamic schools; students and families are very diverse
Hard working teachers who genuinely care about our students. Amazing students who have a lot to offer our community. Diverse families and interests. Strong communication at the elementary level with families. Extra curricular opportunities, family events, and connections with community organizations.
Teachers and support staff working in the trenches to meet student needs, a good deal of supportive families, community support which allowed for the referendum improvements We have a dedicated staff that want what is best for students. We also provide a lot of professional development for our staff to keep improving their practices.

<p>small town district</p> <p>The staff truly cares about others and their well-being. I believe that students feel safe at school and that they know of at least one adult they can trust in the buildings. We offer students the opportunity to work with reliable technology and we work hard to help them to use it safely. Having the Superintendent's Cabinet has given staff members a voice that is heard or at least responded to.</p> <p>Good communication among all staff.</p> <p>Technology is current and support is given in this area.</p> <p>Staff training is great!</p>
<p>Our schools do their best to put students first. There are times in which this can be challenging, but staff have the best interest of our students in mind in most situations.</p> <p>Strong staff, strong education, high school opportunities for all plans after HS</p> <p>The commitment of the staff. Even when there are difficult situations our staff continues to work to find answers.</p> <p>kind staff, flexibility, willingness to accommodate.</p> <p>Some strengths that I notice are that we have a strong focus on academics, while still putting the whole child first and understanding that their needs have to be met before quality instruction is valuable.</p> <p>There are still dedicated and quality teachers</p>
<p>I believe our current principals demonstrate excellent leadership qualities. Within the elementary schools, dedicated interventionists diligently work each day to assist students in catching up with their math and reading skills. Additionally, at my school, communication among all staff members appears to be exceptionally effective.</p> <p>A supportive school board is priceless.</p> <p>I believe that we have many passionate and dedicated staff that want to do their best for our students.</p>
<p>There are great opportunities available for all students. A majority of the staff are excellent and have huge hearts for students, families, and co-workers.</p> <p>Commitment of staff, diversity of our families and community, support of education</p> <p>Focus on improvement. We need to continue improving and growing in ALL areas.</p>
<p>The strengths of WRPS are its staff! Regardless of the role they play, the people at WRPS are hardworking, dedicated, and committed to the growth of the students.</p> <p>A quality education can still be maintained despite the many challenges we face</p> <p>Commitment to improving mental health of students (even if we are unsure exactly how to do so)</p> <p>The District has maintained OPEB benefits which I believe has helped us to retain the older/ more experienced teaching staff</p> <p>The superintendent's cabinet (a direct voice for teachers)</p> <p>The social services we provide as the need in the community grows</p> <p>The offerings for the students. There are amazing programs and opportunities within our district</p>
<p>WRPS supports diversity of all kinds. Students are the center of all decisions made, and every effort is made to do what is best for students and their learning.</p>
<p>It appears to be a forward thinking District and it is student focused. If there is a concern about students' academic or social well-being, there is usually something put in place to support those concerns. Academics is important and the Curriculum dept does a great job of using a detailed process to select curriculum that is transparent. Mental health needs of the child is also important and the Pupil Service dept is consistently providing a variety of supports and services to meet those needs. The tech dept keeps the district on the cutting edge when it comes to technology. Teaching staff is always looking for different ways to grow in the profession.</p> <p>WRPS schools are well kept and continue to try and change to meet the needs of students and families.</p>
<p>The district has very dedicated staff. The buildings and grounds are top notch. The leadership from the District (Central Office) leadership positions - Curriculum and Instruction, Pupil Services, Technology Department- is strong. They are approachable, up-to-date and definitely a positive to keeping our district at the forefront and making sure things are done correctly. We also typically have a supportive community.</p> <p>Our school district has always been on the cutting edge of education. We think progressively and want to move forward in many ways. We have a strong administration team, and fantastic teachers.</p>
<p>Professional development and curriculum leaders who are well versed in the who, what, and why of important and relevant changes. We have an excellent RtI (MTSS) system in place that far exceeds those of neighboring districts. We have some well-educated and highly experienced staff who could be a great resource for us all.</p>
<p>There are staff members who care about students. We try to include all walks of life. Variety of class options at LHS. Our facilities are outstanding in sports and arts.</p> <p>Excellent facilities, strong staff, access to updated technology for both staff and students,</p>
<p>I appreciate that WRPS has continued to support our marginalized communities. While there is still lots of work to be done, I recognize that districts around the state and country have put in place measures that further endanger our most vulnerable populations (LGBTQ+, students of color, etc.)</p> <p>Great Staff, Wide variety of opportunities for students, good public image.</p>
<p>We have amazing staff who truly try their best to get through to these kids. Teachers are working countless hours, before and after scheduled hours.</p> <p>Dedicated staff. Excellent curriculum and class offerings. A supportive school board.</p> <p>Togetherness, and a general care for students and the community</p> <p>I think our biggest strength is the staff. We have employees that truly care about kids and doing a great job.</p> <p>Hardworking teachers and school staff that strive to provide instruction and assistance to benefit our students with high quality in learning academics and positive/safe interaction with others.</p>
<p>Many opportunities for students in regard to class selection and extracurriculars. Assistance available for students who are struggling</p> <p>Support of sports programs and athletic facilities. AP class offerings and diverse co-curricular programs.</p> <p>Commitment from the staff.</p> <p>There needs to be better understanding of students. Not every student is the same and learns the same yes I know that there are special helpers and staff but not everyone can get accepted into that help.</p>

CHALLENGES OF WRPS
Declining enrollment teacher shortages
Bullying, violence, drugs, removing agenda/politics driven policies, requiring in-person learning, requiring teachers to teach factual and accurate lessons especially in history, preparing students for the real world and prepping them for vocational school rather than college, teaching the trades, making sure our students can read
Behaviors of stakeholders. Holding people (kids, staff, community members, etc...) to a respectful decorum is difficult but necessary for the safety of everyone...both physical safety, mental safety and educational safety. Bullying by students is at an all time high and no one seems to know how to help (even up to the superintendent) or how to keep the victims safe. Bullying by staff to staff is also at an all time high in some buildings. This needs to stop in order to keep good staff safe and working at WRPS...the turnover is hurting staff and students.
Bullying, declining academic results, declining enrollment,
Violence, Drugs, parents that do not care to raise children, crazy agendas like CRT and transgender issues. Children that are not at appropriate math and reading levels. Teach them correct history, don't remove it. Keep the schools open, in person learning only. The Teachers Union.
Very poor administration. Seems they are afraid to hear all sides. Can't accept that parents are extremely concerned with all the times the police are called to address issues with students. Failure to hold students accountable for their behavior and accepting the consequences. Drop every year in student populations. More and more parents going to home schooling.
Getting rid of the woke atmosphere in the classrooms
Bloated administration, too much focus on the latest fad with not enough focus on the basics. Lack of discipline—the students that are there to learn are constantly disrupted by those that are not cooperative.
Allowing the teachers to teach the students what they need. Not gender studies, race theory, etc. stop allowing students to dress as animals. Help them. Stop encouraging that behavior. It's distracting to the rest of the students.
Social media.
Baby Boomers have been a majority of school support/staff until recently. We are retired! Now our School Board has increasingly challenging task of informing general public of all school activities.
A few administrators who are less than ideal, some weak athletic programs
poor achievement, no growth focus on academic learning, athletic achievement and facilities have greater emphasis than learning and facilities programs for learning, lack of excellence, data not used to drive teaching and learning, community engagement only appreciated when additional funds needed. More objectivity needed to plan and assess goals. No SMART goals for district nor .. Academic growth and learning not a high priority in strategic plan for district. District needs a true strategic plan. Reading and math scores need to improve so that students are competitive in the classroom and beyond. Again, lack of focus on excellence. Stagnation in leadership fosters complacency with outcomes
Overcoming DEI and other government directives. These programs have harmed a generation of students. More effort is needed to recognize when test scores show a decline and recognize/reevaluate solutions and causes. Develop a 5-year plan to remedy such issues.
Keep moving WRPS past COVID/pandemic navigation, ensure academic progress as a main focus for WRPS, have safety and security protocol as a goal, student learning and growth needs to be an objective
My kids a generally happy at school and feel supported.
Middle school and on is the greatest challenge this district faces. We see such success as a district in the elementary years, but once our children reach WRAMS, they are thrown into the fire without help from that school's administrators.
I believe administration hinders the excellent teaching staff. Our teaching staff needs more support from administration to continue to offer their expertise!! Our teachers and support staff work very hard and I feel don't always get the support they need. I have been told this time and time again from various staff members. Something to continue to work on in the future?
Literacy instruction, gaps in knowledge about inclusion and belonging as well as best practices among some teaching staff, students who have challenging behavior and disrupt the learning environment.
The budget will look different in the coming years, and I wonder how the impact will be felt in the district.
WRAMS admin (Ginter, Ozwald) failing to lead by example for their students as well as failing to support the educators.
bullying and inappropriate student behavior
Continuing education for staff geared toward neurodivergent students and behavioral management. Resources to keep caring staff safe when interacting and working hard to meet the needs of neurodiverse students. Identifying staff unconscious biases and stigma that impede their ability to provide a holistic approach to education for students of vulnerable populations with various health disparities impacting their education.
Internal clicks? I have heard about this among parents more involved in the school PTA or other activities.
Transparency in how PTA funding is used and fundraising occurs. Maybe require a by-law and policies along with minutes and election for positions within the PTA.
Athletic programs are weak overall and not competitive. The district lacks strong coaches, especially girls basketball and volleyball. WRAMS needs to have more competitive athletic programs rather than intramurals for various sports. It is hugely apparent when those students do get to play other schools, as our athletes' skills are not as developed as a whole. There are a couple administrators who have done a poor job of getting to know their students and families. The students recognize this and don't feel recognized or appreciated. Families don't feel welcome at elementary school, and this should be a priority.
The political environment and differing/divided views. Keeping enrollment up.
Special education resources, especially hiring for the needs to ensure IEPs and 504 plans are being met.
Today's school economy is scary,
I believe the curriculum is outdated and needs changing. The older students need more courses on dealing with real life events such as finances, insurance, work expectations, credit as required courses. I also think there needs to be stricter consequences for students who are physical with another student. I do not believe that the middle and high school students need cell phones with them.
Education for our children. Focus on the basics to be proficient in English, math, etc.
Lack of civility, ability to work collaboratively with people of differing backgrounds and opinions
Mental health, bullying
Getting away from basic science. Boys are always boys, girls are always girls. Litter boxes in the school don't make sense since animals don't go to school.
Funding and need for referendums
Why would anyone think it's a good idea for school to start late on Mondays? My employer isn't going to adjust my schedule to allow me to get my kids on the bus late. How is this good for our community when parents can't work because school decides it a good idea to have coffee hour each Monday morning.
From what I've heard from various folks (people who work there, parents of students there, former students, etc.), I understand that Lincoln High School isn't all that great at disciplining disruptive kids. It makes for the prospect of sending my children there not all that appealing.
Declining enrollment
Loss of teachers
Attack on public education
Budget issues
Political Division
Lack of parent support
Attracting teachers and families to the area due to lack of community appeal and jobs

Financial challenges as always. Bad behavior and disrespectful students and parents. Lack of support and funding from the public and government
Image
Shortage of teachers, lack of student accountability, and the students of parents who should have never become parents. There is a real lack of discipline, and teachers have no authority to control their classrooms. The idea that there are elementary students who require full-time babysitters in the classrooms because of their disruptive behavior, is appalling.
Separation. As much as it isn't politically correct to separate kids for whatever reason, you need to. It doesn't benefit anyone to have it all mainstreamed.
WRAMS - My children do not attend there anymore, but the horror stories I hear about bullying, abuse amongst students and lack of accountability by administration at that school is horrible.
A small, but LOUD group of Rapids citizens that feed the rumor mill about our schools (with untrue info), and complain rather than support and grow our community. These people don't support progress or the beautiful diversity of our students. Of course there are some issues in the schools and some staff that need to improve, but the situation is not as bleak as this uninformed group would have you believe.
Unfortunately, I believe the biggest challenge are parents who let their kids get away with everything and not supporting the teachers. Also, our community still feels a little lost without the papermill.
Sorting through all the politics of education to bring quality education to the students that supports the values of our community.
Anti-community and anti-government attacks on the structure and capability of the school district, financial shortfalls, demographic issues with children/parents
not sure
Fulfilling the great program offerings - the sound great on paper but for the most part haven't been true
Pushing students harder to do their best instead of babying them so to make sure no one has hardship with learning and achieving
Discipline of students, accountability of school board and staff
The greatest challenge the district faces is combating misinformation. There are some things floating around out there that about the district or specific buildings that are flat out lies. It's a challenge to get the accurate information to everyone.
Keeping students engaged and the curriculum rigorous is a challenge, along with keeping and hiring teachers and adequate substitute teachers.
Funding and finding quality certified teachers. Current community and political divisions and the inability for people to have true, respectful conversations even when they disagree.
Behaviors
Impact of highly challenging behaviors of students on peers and staff.
Fairly compensating and retaining staff. Respecting staff and asking staff to do less busy work.
Funding. Time. Community support.
A big challenge that our district faces is retaining teachers. We have worked hard at both the district level and building level to provide ample support for staff who are new to WRPS. However, we are seeing a great number of teachers leaving. I also think that we have many staff members who feel "stuck," and offer complaints without having solutions. I feel that a large number of teachers are burned out and feeling overwhelmed due to the challenging behaviors that our students bring with them.
Not enough support from the public/community/families. Teacher/staff pay raise is limited.
Discipline problems with students.
I would say the biggest challenges ahead are - Budget and Student Discipline
Community support. A small percentage of our population is skewing the perspective of our school district, staff, and students
Hiring/retaining experienced staff members and educators. Low wages for non-certified staff members.
Getting community support, involvement, parent involvement, distractibility in students, students not wanting to learn or have the motivation to learn. Students not connecting with teachers who don't adjust their styles to the students. Support in departments that are not viewed as critical/not tested subjects- admin makes decisions for us sometimes, that largely affect us and scheduling, and we have no say in the matter whatsoever, even when this decision is not best practice for students, and leads them to having not as many opportunities as their peers who took the program before.
Act 20, budgets, community criticism
The group of citizens that like to complain on social media about WRPS is the greatest challenge this school district faces. Even when there is something positive happening in the district (i.e. improved test scores), this group of people try to find a way to turn the positive into a negative. Another challenge for the district is budget cuts.
Communication with the public on WRPS as a learning institution filled with professionals who care about and are trained to ensure quality teaching and learning occurs.
The inequality schools/students experience on a variety of levels.
Budget cuts, lack of support from community, lack of student involvement in school activities
Enough time for teachers to prepare and prep lessons, staffing
Budget...budget...budget: It is going to get tighter & making the smartest choices with our \$\$\$ that is possible. Efficient budget management is integral as we strive to make wise financial decisions.
LIVE HERE: It is important to prioritize the recruitment of staff who are dedicated to our community. If we want to cultivate a positive environment in Wisconsin Rapids, both within our schools and the community at large, for that to happen, staff needs to be invested in the community as well as the school district.
UNITY: Emphasizing unity within the District is crucial, ensuring that all schools are aligned in supporting student progression from elementary to middle to high school.
Behaviors in classrooms, that are preventing students from learning and teachers from teaching. Building admin who are not willing to listen to the problems teachers are facing day in and day out. Lack of subs.
Retaining high quality staff. Within my time of 1.5 years as a teacher I have seen 6 teachers retire or leave the classroom. This year it will be worse. It is incredibly hard to maintain relationships with coworkers that leave after 1 or 2 years.
How different elementary schools are viewed to the public. (good and bad)
Staff who may be reluctant to move away from the workshop model and embrace the new reading curriculum.
It sounds like a financial challenge may be coming in the future which is always a difficult situation. Beyond that, mis-/dis-information about education from the community poses a great threat. The candidate should be able to temper this situation.
Finding and keeping quality educators.
Teachers and therapists leaving the profession and school-based work by the droves. Retention of the wonderful teachers and professional staff that we do have. Acquiring funding to stay competitive in the market. The increasing banning of books.
Smooth Act 20 integration. Being culturally acceptable versus morally right.
Like all districts, the budget shortfall due to the state choosing not to adequately fund public education. It will be a challenge to maintain the quality of our programs when we are losing dollars.
Helping parents and the community see that we are partners - working together to support children's learning;
1. The impending budget cuts and its effects.
2. The increasing apathy of students and behavior issues.
3. Improving/maintaining strong academics and what is best FOR KIDS in a very politically charged environment.
Same as most school districts -- not enough staff to deal with the increase in disruptive behaviors
consistency across our schools

<p>The small group of community members who continue to undermine our efforts with negative, false accusations that are completely meritless. Overcoming stereotypes and past notions of what "school" is like. Lack of support for adding certified professionals in areas of great importance such as the library. We are extremely behind in technology integration, digital citizenship, and computer science. Our library professionals spend a majority of their time on tech "support" vs. integration, collaboration and professional development, leaving the literacy side of the library in trouble.</p>
<p>Families leaving the district due to issues, budget issues coming up, low morale, disconnected leadership</p>
<p>The culture- some buildings have negative staff that tend to be the loudest voices. We have to be more solution based and not just always dwelling on the problems all the time.</p>
<p>Student behavior, Nepotism/Favoritism</p>
<p>The lack of support from the community and those in power. Individuals who take time to work with the staff and students are rarely those who speak negatively about the district. The school district has been hit hard with negativity from many in the community which makes it difficult to come to work.</p>
<p>The district shows very little flexibility in thinking when it comes to elementary vs. secondary. We are constantly asked to differentiate for students, yet there's no consideration for how the two levels of schooling are different. Structures are often based on how things work at the secondary level because it's cut and dry, which is very different from elementary.</p>
<p>We need more substitute teachers. More educational aides are needed in primary grades. Class sizes need to be small so teachers can help all students reach their fullest potential.</p>
<p>Our students are bringing more challenges into our doors every day that are often times beyond our control. Building systems and supports to support our students and staff to lead to student success is still a work in progress and is the nature of education.</p>
<p>Each school has systems to work through this process to develop growth in all stakeholders. We need to unify our supports outside of our schools in our district to be supportive of needs and not directive in nature. We can do this together if we have a clear vision and a multi year plan is in place to support our work. As professionals we can move forward in our work and help our students reach their highest potential.</p>
<p>Budget, keeping staff, student behaviors</p>
<p>Growing education in a declining community.</p>
<p>funds, available teachers</p>
<p>At the elementary level, I wish that there was more communication (and built in time for it) between grade levels at the other schools, if it is expected that we are doing similar things with common assessments.</p>
<p>Moral of staff, lack up support for holding students accountable, behaviors at all levels of students, there are too many things trying to be done at the high school level and nothing is being done truly well as it is a fix everything from behavior to academics</p>
<p>Elementary schools face a significant hurdle with low reading achievement, especially among younger students. Another pressing issue lies in the recruitment and retention of top-tier educators, particularly in the realm of special education, including both teachers and aides. Furthermore, there's the ongoing challenge of managing children who display severe behavioral issues while ensuring a safe and inclusive environment that upholds the right to a free and appropriate public education for all students.</p>
<p>Budget, veteran teacher retention, substitute acquisition/retention/pay</p>
<p>How to continue to thrive while facing financial uncertainty, a sometimes combative political environment, the students still struggling from missed time during Covid, and cultural changes that have occurred in recent years and are affecting our students.</p>
<p>Staff and parents that lack understanding of how our buildings and districts operate. Staff that continue to pull apart our buildings, but everyone is too scared to stand up to them. Parents and community members that only see bad coming from the district instead of the staff members that are looking out to do the best for all students. Many of the parents we hear from are the parents that take the student's perspective and use it against the staff without viewing the staff perspective... again a huge lack of understanding and a feeling of being more powerful than the teachers and other staff.</p>
<p>Budget</p>
<p>Continuing to build a positive story for our community, relationships between all constituents</p>
<p>Dealing with the unique needs of our families and students</p>
<p>-Violent students being allowed to disrupt the learning of students ready and willing to learn, as well as eating up so many adult resources in a building.</p>
<p>-Lack of common assessments in all curricular areas.</p>
<p>-Principals not making sure teachers are following curriculum.</p>
<p>-Watered down PLC's occurring at some schools (principals are making different groups rotate in and out, impacting the impact and continuity of a single PLC group).</p>
<p>-Reduce Class sizes - - particularly at schools with high numbers of free/reduced lunches, SPED students, and high numbers of behavior concerns. We are not doing o.k. We are not able to meet student needs as the social/emotional needs keep going up.</p>
<p>Funding and community support are two big challenges, as they are with many districts.</p>
<p>Violent behavior from students in elementary - physical attacks on teachers and the appropriate response from admin</p>
<p>Maintaining quality education in the midst of teacher shortages</p>
<p>Maintaining quality teachers (preventing burn out/ providing good working conditions/ increasing the voice of teachers in both working conditions and academic decisions)</p>
<p>How to deal with the disruptive and dangerous behaviors of our special education population (the need to focus on the right to be educated for both the special ed population and the regular ed population. The impact of special ed behaviors on the regular ed learning is rarely addressed)</p>
<p>Budgeting, setting salaries. It blows me away that this year new teachers started at 43,000 and next year a new teacher will surpass '24 new teachers salary. Consider how long it will take that now 2nd year teacher to make even remotely what the new teacher is making? Not altering the salaries across the board shows that your current employees are not as valuable as those you are newly hiring.</p>
<p>The district faces big challenges with behavior, which also negatively impacts academics. A smaller, but growing number of students are causing big disruptions to learning and negatively impacting the learning environment for all. WRPS used to always be a respectful, kind place to be. That is not the case anymore, and I believe we need to get back to that place where ALL students learning matters equally. Those that cause the disruptions shouldn't get to take the learning time or safe environment away from the others. We are slipping in this aspect and it is concerning. I am also concerned about some of the community members who believe rumors about our schools being "bad."</p>
<p>Retaining staff and being able to provide appropriate supports to staff. The demographics have changed dramatically over time. There are many initiatives and supports that are in place, but with so much on everyone's plate it is difficult to see them through. This true for teachers and administrators. Teachers often have so much on their plates as far as their day to day workload, that it is often difficult to take the time to implement new learning/strategies. Administrators have so much going on that most of their time is putting out fires instead and being reactive instead of proactive. Everyone wants what is best for students, but when your cup is never full, it is difficult to give.</p>
<p>Right now staff complain about feeling overwhelmed and are not always treating each other with kindness. We need to determine how we can hold people accountable for their actions and foster collaboration. We also need to go back to working with families in a more collaborative manner.</p>
<p>We also have an increase in student behaviors - we need someone who will push admin to think outside the box and examine alternatives to suspension and expulsions to help students be successful at school. We could be doing more proactive behavior interventions.</p>
<p>Staffing, especially hard to find teacher certifications, subs and support staff. There is also a concern with equitability among similar positions, especially where favoritism is shown to some individuals from admin. In addition, there are more and more expectations put on staff, without providing extra supports for those expectations. Our student body make up has changed over the past decade; and we are struggling with how to deal with these changes effectively.</p>

Community understanding of what is happening in the district is not strong as the community has a lot of misinformation. We need someone who is strong enough to drown out those negative voices as they become the "face" of the district.
People in the community who are not held accountable for their words or actions and who have a significant need for factual information. Our "customer service" attitude needs to change to "customer education"; we are after all, an educational institution. The level with which we educate our students and community will be what determines the ultimate success or failure of our beloved Wisconsin Rapids area. Within staff there is very much a feeling that those within HR and upper-level admin have very little concern for staff safety, retention, burn-out, or the amount of work being required beyond the contracted work day.
Dying Mill Town. No culture/spirit in school. No support, no comradery among staff. Rapids is an ultra conservative town. We have a little over 50% on free or reduced lunch. WRAMS needs to keep revamping for discipline and rapport.
Overall budget, staff retention, grade 7-8 math scores, behavior issues, lack of parental involvement with the education process.
I agree with Craig that there are some people in our community--and unfortunately in our schools---whose sole purpose is to create controversy and discontent. It is not acceptable for certain buildings to take an attitude that they are so much better than others, and when that attitude is becoming prevalent, staff should be reassigned. We are ALL indirectly responsible for the well-being of ALL WRPS students. Making students feel like another school is scary is detrimental, and most staff who spout this have no firsthand knowledge.
1. Financial both in wage and daily operation. 2. Leadership not willing to change with the times and feel if something work 15 years ago, it should still work today. 3. Staff that are in higher positions not giving those below them the time of day for their concerns
There is zero accountability from families, we all know special needs and behaviors continue to grow each year and we address those needs within the school but there is little action being done in the home. There needs to be a better plan for the families on how to fix the issues we are dealing with.
Staffing (professional, support and substitutes). The budget and where the district is financially. Burnout and stress. A changing landscape that has politicized education. Student behavior issues (which leads to the burn out that results in staffing shortages). Staff not feeling supported by admin/toxic work environments. Mental health of staff and students. Poverty.
Staff burnout/shortage
We have a couple challenges. The most challenging is the mental illness and behavior of students. There seems to be more and more serious behaviors that impede the learning of that student and the students around them. There seems to be less parental involvement, and the staff at the buildings only can do so much.
I'm also concerned about the upcoming budget. Is spending being controlled?
Ongoing behavioral problems with some students that makes it difficult for classroom instruction, activities, and for their classmates to focus/complete tasks. Ongoing physically aggressive/violent/threatening behavior of some students that makes school an unsafe place to be for students and staff.
Behavior problems in the classroom. Parents who are unwilling to participate in their child's educational, emotional, and social growth. Teachers and aides are burning out more quickly than ever before and feel unsupported
Cutting excess bloat in wake of a budget deficit and declining enrollments. Attracting and retaining staff. Increasing number of home school families. Community members fed up with a variety of societal issues upheld by public education.
Stopping the woke agenda.
Not listening

LEADERSHIP STYLE AND CHARACTERISTICS TO SEEK IN NEXT SUPERINTENDENT
Flexible experienced listener responsive communicator puts relationships with all stakeholders first
Someone who gets back to basics, represents the students rather than the teachers union, someone fiscally responsible, someone who is willing to remove students that are not abiding by the law or school policies, someone who does not have a political agenda
Someone who has the talents of: discernment, empathy, organization, and ingenuity. Someone who can lead with respect, but who also can make difficult decisions, a detective at times to get to the root of the problem and document.
Open two way communication rather than the superintendent calling all the shots.
Strong with common sense. You need to get back to teaching and not babysitting. Remove kids that disrupt classrooms. Remove bullies. Hold Parents accountable. Stand for/with the students and not the teachers union. We have lost years and we must catch up. No politics allowed here. Get back to basics.
Keep our schools safe and in an atmosphere where students are learning and improving their standing as a productive district. Getting these students caught up in the basics of reading and math. Raise the rating for our district as currently it falls way behind other neighboring districts. Accepts how parents feel about all the nonsense that is going on in our schools.
Good public relations with groups and organizations outside of the school buildings. Be willing to have public forums with the tax payers at a minimum of quarterly.
No nonsense go getter—not a politician. Needs to focus on student achievement and some semblance of order—student safety and teachers able to teach without disruptive students in their classrooms.
To be an actual leader, not to allow indoctrination. Help to bring test scores back up where they need to be. Listen to the parents.
Has private sector experience in business outside of education.
Candidates need to be familiar with curriculum, staff, and buildings. Candidates will need to be comfortable in public discussions.
Preferably someone from the community, but is a fresh face. Someone who has the credentials, but please not a "Dr."
successful, proven track record in advancing student growth and learning, data focused and driven to promote both teacher success and student outcomes, servant leader, fair, objective, with a lens for the bigger picture, experience in curriculum development, data analysis, team player, accountable for decisions and actions, willingness to accept constructive criticism, transparent in dealings with all stakeholders.
The next Superintendent needs to make a greater effort to involve the community to make positive changes. Make it easier to get concerns brought to the board's agenda.
Have growth mindset, be positive and well articulated, focus on positive messaging and able to have constructive criticism, willing to bring diversity in opinions and perspectives to the table
Inclusiveness for all children. Keeping right wing propaganda away from schools. Keeping actual history and lessons being taught.
A good leader MUST lead by example - supporting their educators to all ends. It is when they fail to support them that it trickles down to the education aspects, the entire point of school, our children. Often this district rewards poor leaders with continued support, while said leaders fail to provide even the basic of defense for their subordinates.
Someone who not only looks at the district as a whole but considers each school and the individual that works within it a priority. Every level of our district is important and should be treated that way.
Knowledge of systems change methods, kindness, knowledge of financial management, ability to plan both short and long term.
One thing that I appreciate about Craig was his open communication to families. He kept us in the loop of anything concerning at the schools, or even if there was a snow day in the future. I truly felt that he wanted to partner with families. It is my hope that the next Superintendent will value communication just the same. I also hope that he/she will bring a new perspective for some of the issues that our district is struggling with.
A person of honor who leads by example & follows through with what they say.
Empowering teachers to run more strict class rooms. Bringing order back where there is chaos.
Out the door and on the floor leadership. Strong time management skills, outgoing personality. Strong networking skills. Understanding of the workings of the healthcare system and various government programs to advocate and collaborate for services for the district's faculty and students eligible for services and resources.
I believe we need a superintendent who values and models relationships more than anything—among staff, students, community members. A foundation of trust and relationships is crucial. Schools should not operate as a business where staff and students are merely numbers. A superintendent should appreciate all the unique gifts that people have, which will help teachers and staff alike to do the same. People need to feel comfortable approaching him/her, and staff should feel empowered to take the reigns to accomplish great things. I do not want a superintendent who micromanages every aspect of their district. We also need an out-of-the box thinker who can find new ways to solve problems.
A superintendent that sticks to focusing on kids learning what is needed to be a successful adult. Not focusing on teaching what should be the responsibility of a parent or guardian.
Students and their needs first closely followed by listening to their staff. A good listener and communicator with families.
Inclusivity, respect of teachers, no show boating, level of importance should be students, teachers, administration.
Willing to listen to parents and implement changes that are asked.
Someone with business or financial background. Believes in education so our children are proficient in Math, English, etc. A person who wants to see our children educated and in person attendance. Someone who doesn't over react when possible weather is coming and cancels school. The school staff needs to be working and children need to be learning.
Transformational style
Respect for all
Good role model
Conservative, core curriculum, strong common sense
Good communicator, has integrity and won't be intimidated by loud public voices
Common sense
Apolitical. Creative thinker. Dedicated (a resume that doesn't include a bunch of jobs/job-hopping/ladder-climbing). Sense of humor.
WRPS needs a leader who will advocate for all students, teachers, and staff. They will listen and make decision based on what is best for kids, prioritizing preparation for college or career readiness. They will not be afraid to stand up to those who have alternative agendas and will represent our school and community with pride. They will commit to long-term residency and involvement in the community. They will have a substantial background in education. They will not merely understand equity and equality, but actually "walk the walk" and embody the principles to serve all kids. They will follow through on their word, maintain transparency, be a servant leader and a calm voice of reason.
Someone who can do more with less. I doubt this area will see an influx of enrollment and money, so they will have to keep making hard decisions with finances they have. I think they have done a good job for our kids.
Strong and someone that takes action. Will be out in the community doing things
I feel that a person on the board or a person in this position should be a parent themselves.
This person needs to be unbiased. In every regard.
Craig will be hard to beat! Honestly, community involvement, stellar communication skills, professionalism, willingness to keep an open mind, and obviously highly intellectual.
Courageous - unafraid to state the facts clearly, even in high emotion/tension situations. Systems Thinker - able to see the forest, the trees AND how they're connected. Manager & Leader - skilled managing resources AND at empowering/inspiring people towards a collective vision and purpose.
Must have thick skin, not be afraid of outspoken parents and community members. Must be able to find the facts and present them to the community even if some do not like it. Must be personable and approachable.

Serves the community and parents, doesn't have his own "agenda" that he wants to push. Listens to the teachers and staff who must implement his decisions, but also willing to lead based on principles that reflect the values of our families...quality education, classroom/behavior management, parents should be the primary educator/influencer/authority
Find another Craig Broeren, basically...integrity, confidence, willingness to stand up for what is right and what is in the best interest of the district
welcoming/accepting; supportive of staff and students; understanding; articulate; thoughtful; open to ideas and constructive feedback; problem-solver
Independent person with common sense
Someone who has his own opinions, can back them up, and doesn't care too much about 'hurting someone's feelings'
Someone who's got academic achievements as a top goal
...
Conservative
I want to see a strong leader. Someone who isn't afraid to stand up and fight for what is right/best for our schools, staff and students. We need some committed to building relationships with those in the community and continuing the collaboration with agencies like the Library and Boys and Girls Club.
A leader who has great integrity and interpersonal skills. It is important that this person is supportive of families and traditional values.
1. Be approachable and level-headed. 2. Be a positive and involved member of our community. 3. Act in a manner that positively portrays WRPS. 4. Intelligent - consider all possible options when making decisions and fully understand the ramifications to all(students, families, staff and district) when making those decisions and be strong enough to make difficult decisions based on facts. 5. Good moral character - be a good, kind person.
Fun yet professional, outgoing, understanding, caring, positive vibes
A candidate that is transparent, listens to the needs of the staff and community, one who can take a stand and make decisions that are in the best interest of students and stand by those decisions.
Humble, kind, a good advocate for students and staff, a good advocate for education, and someone who is willing to listen.
Someone willing to get out into buildings and meet staff and students. Someone who can listen to both sides of a situation and come to a logical conclusion. Someone who will make an informed decision outside of attempted persuasion and then stand behind it. Someone who will tell it like it is. Someone who is transparent with what is going on. Someone who isn't so removed from teaching that they've completely forgotten what it's like.
The new Superintendent should have transparency and strong communication with staff, the community, and families. I admired this about Craig. I also feel that our district needs someone who will listen to concerns and bring solutions to the table. With the work we've done with equity, diversity, and inclusion, our new Superintendent should bring a strong understanding of these topics.
Someone who has some experiences in each building level (elementary, middle, and high school) is beneficial to understand the needs at each building level.
Someone who is able to deal with the discipline problems we are seeing which seem to be getting worse every year.
I would lean more towards an authoritative leadership style but is also is open to others ideas when appropriate.
It is important for our next superintendent to be active in community groups/committees. They should also be transparent and an open communicator. The new superintendent needs to be honest and tell staff and community "how it is" don't sugar coat, be respectfully honest
The new superintendent should be someone with an open mind, someone who cares deeply about the education of the students, and values the employees
Someone who is with the times, not afraid to make decisions or changes after consulting those involved, someone who can stand up for us in the face of overwhelming criticism/doubters. Someone who has their best interest in the teachers and the students. Provides opportunities for each and every student, and holds buildings to discipline standards for students. Someone who can facilitate a better transition for the 8th-graders to the high school: They have a lot of energy and don't take things seriously, and a lot of them get F's. Them and the sophomores have the most Fs at LHS, and discipline referrals. Someone who advocates for students and teachers, regardless of who they are/interests
Open-minded, willingness to work with and listen to staff concerns, "laid-back", compassionate, collaborative with staff and Admin. Supportive and advocate for our students and teachers.
I believe the school board should look for a candidate that has had teaching and leadership experience. The candidate should also have strong communication and relationship building skills, is a problem solver, and can manage money.
Must be able to be a team player and realize not the smartest person in the room, nor needs to be. Able to communicate in a positive and supportive manner, yet able to draw lines when necessary and have the support of the board in all instances.
Honesty, a view to the future, an real understanding of what schools do and what they need.
Excellent communication skills, transparent decision making, OUR students first growth mindset
Charisma, Open to change, and being present at the schools to understand not only the wins but also challenges the schools face
Strong personality that stands for what is right and just...with a commitment to ethical principles and fairness.
Demonstrates determination when faced with challenges from stakeholders, particularly when dealing with a small group of dissenters.
Takes a proactive approach rather than conforming to mainstream opinions.
Aspires for our district to excel and set a benchmark for educational practices and extracurricular activities within the state.
Strives for our district to serve as a model that others aim to emulate.
Hands on Superintendent who is willing to be active within all of the buildings.
The candidate should hear all sides of an issue and not react to the first person they hear from as if it is the absolute truth. Nor should they be biased towards parents. The candidate should defer to school staff and intervene only after that has not solved the issue and not micro-manage every issue. Candidate should allow for free discussion of issues and not take over and dominate the conversation.
Integrity, honesty and visionary leadership.
Someone with all the characteristics of Craig: Honesty, integrity, knowledgeable, compassionate, collaborative, brilliant leadership skills, articulate, experienced as a teacher, the ability to put people at ease, and a great sense of humor. Someone who can see the big picture, the trees among the forest, and definitely not ego-centric or narcissistic.
Someone who has a solid foundation and is willing to stand for what is right, not just what is culturally acceptable. Someone with integrity, honesty and confidence in who they are so when the tough decisions come, they are able to make a choice and stand by that choice.
I want someone who trusts and respects the people around them who are in leadership positions. I would love to work as an administrative team where everyone's opinions matter and all voices are heard. I also think we need someone who is willing to tell the story of the District because we do not have a public relations person who is in charge of that. I think most people who have a "sup" degree can be managers, but I want someone who takes an interest in what the leaders of the district do - not just manage. I would also like someone who is not afraid to say "I don't know" and is willing to continue to learn!
A leader - "Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the organization's success." A person who is a learner...willing to seek and acknowledge the ideas of others and not believe they have the only right answer. A person that will build a collaborative leadership team and help that team in turn build collaborative leadership teams in each building.

<p>1. Someone who understands and appreciates the shared leadership that has been part of this district for decades. The power of the committee system we have with CII and its subcommittees needs to be maintained along with the coordinators and chairs of those committees.</p>
<p>2. A good communicator with an open door policy. This is one thing I truly admire about Craig is he is a great communicator and gets things out there. He is not afraid to call school when the weather is iffy to allow parents to hopefully be able to make arrangements for weather days versus the last second scramble on an early morning call. He doesn't waffle about decisions and once decided it is stuck too.</p>
<p>Assertiveness but with open mindedness; someone who can admit that they don't know something but pledges to find someone who does; someone who visits classrooms and interviews teachers about concerns before even looking at what restrictions the budget may impose on whatever the problem is; someone who recognizes that just because research says _____, it doesn't mean that that research is God's word and should rule over all decision-making -- especially when the research was not done in OUR town with OUR students.</p>
<p>strong spoken; will listen to all perspectives prior to making assumptions or decisions; open and flexible to change or trying something different; will advocate for staff members consistently; no sugar-coating- will be direct in communication and share all pertinent information with staff members</p>
<p>Clear communication, follow through, emphasis on Future Ready Framework, an advocate for teachers, students and staff. Willingness to be "in the trenches" - to join teachers in schools to experience the highs and the lows. Desire to learn. Trust teachers as professionals to have the best interest of our students in mind. Won't cave under pressure, keep a level head during conflict.</p>
<p>Someone who can boost morale and instill a high level of trust, someone who cares about not only students but also staff members and the struggles they face daily, a problem solver and creative thinker, collaborator, one who empowers individuals to do the jobs they were hired to do and not micro-manage, someone who pays attention and will hold employees accountable when they are not doing their jobs, a person who is not power hungry or needing to control everything.</p>
<p>Open minded Great communicator Active listener Collaborator Equitable to all stake holders Visible in all buildings</p>
<p>Someone who is willing to address student behaviors and have consistent consequences for students who do not follow the rules. We need a student handbook that clearly states what the consequence will be for specific behaviors BEFORE the situations occur. We also need a leader to follow through with consequences for ALL students. Right now we have a handful of special education students with extreme behaviors that have no consequences. When other students see this, it does not motivate them to follow the rules. Then the problems compound. Some elementary students even brag that they are in special education so they don't have to follow the rules.</p>
<p>I believe that a district administrator should be a listener. The administrator should take time to hear what others are saying and be open to having conversations.</p>
<p>Another characteristic to look for is someone who is reflective. Someone who will think about/through situations and feedback they receive.</p>
<p>The new district administrator should have experience at both elementary and secondary levels. If that's not an option, I believe that it should be an expectation that the district administrator spend a significant amount of time at the elementary schools to understand how it is different from secondary.</p>
<p>Our superintendent needs to be organized. S/He must be good at communication with staff and the community in many different ways. S/He needs to be receptive to suggestions made by staff. Our superintendent needs to be visible and approachable in all buildings. S/He must show respect to everyone, even if there is a disagreement.</p>
<p>Ability to review our current systems and ask questions to understand where we are and work with staff to develop a vision to move the district forward beyond the strategic plan.</p>
<p>Supportive, Collaborative, and a listener by nature.</p>
<p>Willingness and ability to not only make the hard decision, but then be able to clearly and simply communicate why the decision was made.</p>
<p>Ability to unify and focus our work to allow for effective and efficient progress with the resources we have available.</p>
<p>Open, honest communicator, no nonsense attitude, compassionate, patient, yet strong goal setting ability</p>
<p>Hard working, connection focused leadership skills. A stronger commitment to transparency and equity.</p>
<p>genuineness, approach-ability, someone is has a genuin desire to do good and it reflects in their personality.</p>
<p>Effectiveness is the number one thing I can think of. I was only here with Craig as superintendent, I've never worked under another one. But one thing that I valued was that everything seemed to be done effectively and efficiently so that the majority benefitted from decisions.</p>
<p>It needs to be someone with experience, who will be honest and willing to make the right/good decision even if it is tough, someone who will hire qualified individuals not just hire from within, someone willing to collaborate with neighboring districts to provide the best opportunities possible</p>
<p>I highly value Craig's leadership approach. He is exceptionally responsive, attentive, and ensures that the school's concerns are acknowledged and validated. Craig's reliability and deep understanding of the school's dynamics resonate strongly with the staff members. Indeed, I believe that a crucial aspect of effective leadership lies in being closely connected to the pulse of the schools. I particularly commend Craig's handling of challenging behaviors within the school environment. Moving forward, I hope to see someone with similar qualities and insights assume the superintendent role.</p>
<p>One that supports teachers district wide. There is not equity between secondary and elementary buildings. If something is expected district wide, then it should be enforced to be done the same, district wide. Appropriate discipline measure at ALL grade levels, not just secondary. One that does not micromanage.</p>
<p>We need someone that can lead with passion and integrity, who will put the needs of our students ahead of all other things, and who will not stand in the way of our talented staff doing their jobs.</p>
<p>Someone who has empathy, but also a strong back bone to stand up for our district and teachers when the naysayers come out.</p>
<p>We need to have someone who understands the importance of relationships and personal connections. Someone who has experience with budgeting and is willing to be creative to meet the needs of the district.</p>
<p>Supportive of teachers and our wages/health insurance. Supportive of a safe working environment for all - teachers included. Holds director of curriculum/instruction and CII leaders to a high standard - - expects common assessments to be created district-wide and curriculum be implemented with fidelity.</p>
<p>The best administrators are those who have the capacity to make creative decisions while still listening to their staff.</p>
<p>I believe it is important to bring in someone from the outside (assuming they are a great candidate) who can add a new perspective to dealing with some of our persistant concerns</p>
<p>Absolutely need someone who wants to be the face of the District - will reside in the community, be present at community as well as school events</p>
<p>Someone with ideas for promoting public education. Someone who understands the current political situation and is not afraid to take on the naysayers.</p>
<p>Someone who cares about the employees as well as students. A huge chunk of our job is for students, I get that, but who is here for the teachers/aides/subs? Who is standing up for them and considering their job in the district.</p>

<p>You need to find someone who is a team player, someone who listens and wants to hear from staff at every level. You need to find someone who will go into schools and see firsthand what is happening, recognize the good, but also be a help in areas that need improvement or change. You need someone who has a positive outlook and believes that our schools can all be successful. Be careful about anyone who wants to micromanage, or have their hands in every detail. Your person needs to be a good delegator, and be able to speak to the community about things that are happening in our schools.</p>
<p>Number 1 is being approachable. Someone who listens and reflects on the answer to their response prior to giving it. This includes how something is answered and how it is/could be perceived by others. Someone who is going to be professional in all settings and not be driven by emotions. Someone who is empathetic and understanding to all staff (Admin, support staff, teachers, etc.). Builds and allows others to be leaders. Willingness to admit and take ownership for their own mistakes (no one is perfect). Ability to work with others even if there are differing opinions.</p>
<p>We need someone who can bring staff together and get them to collaborate. We need someone who has a strong understanding of MLSS/PLC and will lead us forward in our work in these areas. We also need someone who has ideas on how to help with equity issues in our district.</p>
<p>We need a superintendent who doesn't just hear, but actually listens and can respectfully have difficult discussions. When making decisions, they must elicit feedback from knowledgeable stakeholders and be able to reflect and analyze all information before making decisions, not just jump to quick decisions without realizing the possible impacts. They need to be fair, yet realize that all levels/buildings are not the same. Secondary cannot always function as elementary and vice versa. They need to be approachable and respectable, putting a good face forward to represent WRPS in the community. Above all, they need to treat everyone as a human being and keep the focus on our students.</p>
<p>Someone who listens to understand, not to respond. Someone who understands education from 4K on up and sees the elementary level as an important aspect of a child's education. Someone who has a strong understanding of PLCs, SEL and Special Education and can move these areas in our district. A team player who facilitates conversation among groups.</p>
<p>We need someone who is realistic and holds students and parents accountable. We need a person who cares about the staff working at all levels within the district. This person needs to have been an experienced teacher before becoming an administrator. We need someone who can listen to others and hear their thoughts without feeling threatened. This person needs to be able to see beyond the current fog and see what is truly best for kids.</p>
<p>Doesn't micromanage, trusts employees, highlights ALL areas in the district, SUPPORTS THE ARTS, has LINK or WEB training, charisma, positive, can be physically seen at buildings for positive reasons or just to say hi in buildings, all about rapport rather than data driven. Someone who will listen and we feel heard. Communicates well.</p>
<p>I believe the word leader is a key word, not manager, leader. Leaders do 4 things very well. Model, Remove Barriers, build a positive and collaborative culture, and inspire greatness. Managers are individuals that create an environment of do as I say not as I do, they create roadblocks, they create an environment in which they make all decisions, and they do not inspire one to become better but to be complacent. We need a leader and not a manager. We need a leader that understands the chain of command, empowers their direct staff to make decisions, and empowers them to be better leaders themselves.</p>
<p>I believe a collaborative attitude with staff is important. I think the new superintendent should avoid "staff politics" (if that makes sense). There are people who seek to ingratiate themselves to those in power, and I hope the person in power sees through that. I would also like a leader who establishes an expected approach to complaints from parents and community members rather than a "go ahead and call me" approach. While I know that Craig's intentions were pure with this policy, but I think we could solve more problems if parents were expected to first address the issue with the teacher, then the counselor, then the principal, and then CO unless it is a MAJOR issue. continued</p>
<p>Keeps staff well informed, leads by example, is not afraid to step on a few toes to do what is right instead of pleasing the masses.</p>
<p>Someone who is personable with staff and community members, honest and someone who follows through on their word and truly wants to make this a better school district academically and behaviorally so they can be good citizens in our community</p>
<p>In my opinion, we need someone with experience successfully running a district of this size. The ideal candidate is someone that is fiscally responsible, innovative, honest, transparent, and is willing to be involved down to the classroom level. In addition, it would be great if this person had an employee centric leadership style to help build positive workplace culture and support employee wellness. Someone that sees value in building feelings of trust, belonging and support district-wide and embraces the concept that leadership isn't about having a title, it's about making a difference.</p>
<p>Friendly, diverse, caring, well spoken, acknowledges input from staff</p>
<p>The one thing I like about Craig was that he was always very transparent. You always felt like you knew what was going on. The "my-way or the highway" mentality is never good. I believe a superintendent needs to have an open door policy, listen to the staff and then make an informed decision.</p>
<p>I would like to see a superintendent that does not micro manage the other administrators. You hired them in a position, and you should trust that they can make decisions, and they should be able to defend their decisions to the superintendent.</p>
<p>A superintendent should have a calm demeanor, and should be able to take criticism and handle themselves in a professional way.</p>
<p>Not a dictator or "backseat driver". Someone who understands that in order to supervise/make any decisions, he/she must see/experience their responsibilities in person, and value input from staff when decision making allows it.</p>
<p>Leads by example, professional, fair, compassionate, patient, understanding, thick skin</p>
<p>Someone less arrogant would be a welcome change.</p>
<p>Integrity.</p>
<p>I'm skipping this</p>

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION

Someone who will be out in the schools talking to parents teachers students not afraid to do the RIGHT THING even when it's UNPOPULAR

I believe that we need outside talent brought in. Due to the current issues plaguing some buildings, a new set of eyes and ideas to curb and stop the behaviors is dire. You need to have a person who is open to hearing other opinions instead of getting angry if someone disagreed or even questioned him.

What we need is a strong leader, not person who blame's people who challenge him/her. Listen, listen, listen to the concerns of the parents in this district.

The new Superintendent does not need to be someone with all the latest and supposedly greatest educational credentials and ideas from some progressive university. Get someone with common sense and heart for kids.

Consider the applicants actual merits and their willingness to work with parents. Put the students education needs first.

Humility and the ability to truly listen and hear everyone in the community.

Perhaps reach out to local church and community organizations for candidates.

I would like to see someone who can relate to people, someone's who's easy to approach. Preferably someone who has kids in the system.

use the resources available to you, both locally, but also state and nation-wide, in order to find the best candidate possible, not the most convenient. make sure that you post the position in a wide so that your search can garner the largest pool of qualified and experienced superintendent candidates.

Have final candidates do building walk throughs as part of the interview process

Take a good long look at how some schools have been handling special education needs. As a parent, I have heard NUMEROUS complaints of children acting out in threatening behaviors, extreme disruption of classrooms, but our schools focus on these SPED children - what of the children that they are disproportionately affected by not appropriately dealing with extreme cases of disruptive and dangerous behaviors in our schools? EVERY child has a right to a high quality education, but often times it is vastly overlooked by the needs of special education children, that it is acceptable behavior to act out like that. This district needs a leader who can focus on that.

Wrams needs serious help, as a parent & coach whos spent less then two years in the district and is seriously looking into Assumption after the nightmare of dealing with Ginter who simply seems not to care about supporting any of her teachers, coaches or students including things like student athletes taking photos in locker rooms, sharing the photos as well as bullying that gets overlooked.

When contacting the Super. in the past its been 'Ginter knows how to do her job' or 'Ill give admin a pass on that'

Get references and documentation that support their previous accomplishments for other school districts or improved metrics they focused on.

I hear about these larger school districts hiring superintendents with fancy degrees and titles. Those people are often looking to move on to something bigger, and are likely to not stick around. I am not interested in that. Rapids needs a down to earth, salt of the earth type of person for this role--someone who has maintained stability in prior roles. If there are any applicants who currently reside in Rapids, I think strong preference should be given to them, as long as they demonstrate strong values. Faith and family are important and should not be overlooked. These ideals tell a lot about how a person will lead.

Public schools are facing much criticism these days: DEI, LGBTQ, etc. How can we find a superintendent who helps to "fix" the poor reputation public schools have across our nation at the moment. Kids are being pulled out in droves.

Take a hard look at what is being taught and stop spending on social curriculum, non essentials. Get back to educational basics.. sadly the person needs to be the opposite of what we have now!

Craig had many great qualities; sad to see him leaving, but change is also good and should be embraced.

Ask the candidates their philosophies on the value of de-emphasizing how much of high school is geared toward preparing students for university. If any bit of their response suggests they see technical college as an option for kids who aren't as academically gifted, then I suggest the candidate be considered not fit for the job.

A real gifted and talented program would be good. Also I would like to see more focus on extracurricular educational opportunities at the middle school. So much of the district in general is sports related, more coordinated efforts around extra learning would be a big plus.

Don't be afraid to look all over for the very best

I'm sure you're all looking for your new liberal warrior to pave the way. You need to view this opportunity as a blessing and hopefully choose someone who is open minded and willing to learn about our community instead of what political party they side with.

I am not sure who is even applied or is qualified, but I do know that Brian Oswald would make a great candidate for this position.

Also, not sure what the process is for recruitment, but I think it was a great process to have a sampling of students, parents, educators, and administrators to have the ability to interview the top five candidates. This process was done for the LHS Athletic Director, and I feel it is important to have the opinions of everyone this individual is working for to gather their feedback.

We are losing a great Superintendent and you should do your best to find someone like him.

We have been very pleased with the current direction and values of our school district. We would love to see someone with a similar set of values and leadership.

Please take Craig Broeren's letter to heart - the district is fighting a war with people who hate public instruction

Someone who values transparency and communication as a two-way street (i.e., invites input from families; works to build a strong collaborative relationships between home, school, and community.

...Someone who'd for example would change the gpa in highschool so that it acknowledges when a student takes AP classes (the current system punishes students who take AP classes and don't have the best grades because of it. If they'd take regular classes, they'd have straight A's and a 4.0 but they chose to do advanced classes, take on more work and a harder curriculum. That should be rewarded, not punished)

Someone who puts parents back in charge instead of putting them on the sidelines with no say.

Someone who stops the double standards

Thank you for caring and reaching out for input from the WRPS community.

Please hire someone who can have difficult discussions respectfully with all parties involved and make decisions on what is best for our children.

A candidate who wants to make sure WRPS is a fit for them, one who comes in to listen and understand the history of the district to want to work with the stakeholders instead of a

Our new Superintendent should be active in our community. Even if he/she doesn't reside here, the partnership between schools and community must remain strong and support one another.

I feel one important thing for veteran teachers for retention purposes is to keep the benefit where the district pays for the health insurance premium for 8 years. This is a major benefit that is keeping many veteran teachers remaining in our district.

Our new leader needs to be a great communicator like the current superintendent. You get a lot more buy-in from informed staff members. We are a lot more productive collectively than individually.

We live in a fairly conservative area of the state yet historically we've had strong support for our schools and educators. Our community continues to approve tax money to advance our district and make it a better more appealing place to raise a family. I hope that the next superintendent can continue to have the support of the community by committing to the advancement of our schools.

Someone who is super kind and can advocate for the community. To have as wide of a selection board as possible, not that a particular group/background dominates the selection process. To have the teachers also be able to select the new Superintendent. The teachers interview him, regardless of our teaching background.

I think we've been in a good direction with initiatives and leadership and someone with that same mindset and drive as Craig will be important to continue the good things happening. Someone that delegates well, doesn't over step responsibilities all the characteristics that are hard to see during the interview process.
If potential candidates are coming from a previous school district. Past performance should be reviewed in depth, given the current climate of public education today.
They must be passionate about the long game of public education and be willing to be the VOICE of Public Education at WRPS. Our candidates have a tough act to follow but as an elected board we entrust you to find the best candidate possible.
Pick someone who likes visiting the Early Childhood: Special Ed students and 4K students and has a genuine smile on their face throughout the visit. That is a sign of a compassionate individual who is sure to have students' best interests in mind. It just is.
I would really like to see someone who is a supporter of libraries and understands how integral they are to the success of our children. How we are grossly understaffed in this area compared to others around the state and all the opportunities we are missing out on because of it! Thank you for allowing us the space to contribute our thoughts.
Please seek out a leader who cares about the entire school district and isn't hyper focused on what only interests him/her. Someone who can listen with high emotional intelligence who can coach, encourage, motivate, and is willing to become involved in issues to work together on solutions - not just decide what is going to happen and then expect everyone else to make it happen.
I feel like we might have some strong candidates within our district. But as well, looking for someone who wants to be a part of our community of Wisconsin Rapids for a long time. Our superintendent needs to have more separation between him/herself and staff. When staff members are "buddies" with their boss going out to eat, drinking, boating, etc. they are given favors and are "protected." I would also like to see that the new superintendent's spouse is NOT a staff member. This has caused huge problems and favoritism. It makes it difficult to work with a colleague who thinks she is your boss and remains untouchable regardless of what unprofessional things she does just because her spouse is the superintendent.
Thank you for your work to gather input throughout this search for a new leader.
It is important that the candidate have a strong sense of community and knows how to work amicably with all parties from school board, public, and parents to staff.
It needs to be someone who will hold current leadership more accountable while understanding that the future of education is changing. The individual needs to help support staff to stay in the field (incentives, equitable pay for those who were hired recently and now are being paid the same or barely above new hires who have less experience) NOT Julie Kolarik
I think that the ideal candidate would have some existing knowledge of our district and our area.
I am looking for someone who is a leader by example. Someone who leads with a vision and encourages growth among all staff.
I have felt supported by Craig and would hate for a new superintendent to start villainizing teachers, which has happened in the past. Our district needs a superintendent who has the best interest of teachers at the forefront if we want to continue growing as a district. Our students receive the best when our teachers feel supported and valued. Teachers are here because we want to help students be the best they can be but more and more feel like the mountains we are being asked to climb are unrealistic and border-line abusive.
As teachers we teach the whole student. A superintendent needs to serve the whole district, from the principals to the noon aides and everyone in between. They need to be someone confident in conflict resolution with many branches of the school district, because let's face it. We cannot run our district when we only take care for one department.
I hope that your hiring committee will have not only board members, but also staff from various settings, including elementary and secondary teachers, support staff, and admin. I hope that you will take your time and find the right fit, rather than hire just anyone to have the position filled.
It would be good to have someone who continues to have a pulse on the community and the overall needs of the community. Willingness to be involved in areas outside of the District to provide a positive District presence to the community.
I think it would be great if the new Superintendent had both elementary and secondary experience - I know the chances of finding that are slim but I do think it would be a bonus.
We need someone who understands students are not misbehaving on purpose and are not just in need of a "good beating" (as said by our current Superintendent). We need someone who understands kids would do better if they could and that a lot of our students behaviors are actually a result of trauma and "beatings" they have endured/witnessed. We need someone who can help heal our students, staff, and community.
Please select someone who truly understands education and the challenges facing public education. The focus needs to be on doing what is best for the students within the current constraints.
We need someone who can heal this district's staff and reinvigorate them as we go through this very bumpy stretch.
You got this!
I feel it would be helpful if the new Superintendent had a desire to live in the community.
Continued- I think for most issues, a parent calling the superintendent should first be asked if they've talked to the staff member involved. Most staff would love to work through problems w/ parents, & we should be treated w/ that courtesy and respect, and it should be enforced by the supt. (and CO in general)...otherwise, they're just looking to complain, & that's not good for staff morale, nor is it effective. I realize there are certain situations where going right to the top is appropriate, but it should not be the first step in the vast majority of cases. I think this would reduce complaining just to stir the pot, improve staff morale, & ultimately be more effective @ solving problems.
Find someone that understands that we live in a different time, and that many staff members can achieve the same amount, if not more, work done from home on days that would be considered acceptable to do so. A good superintendent would be someone that does reward teachers for their hard work and efforts, but does not discriminate the other staff by doing it.
I want to see administration go into classrooms, listen to the concerns staff have, see first hand what these issues are. Address the problems and follow through on expectations and consequences. We need better because our future is doomed if we don't.
It feels like our school district went on a spending spree the last 10 years to bolster the development of new facilities without the proper plans to properly staff and maintain additional square footage and equipment. Some programs and facilities don't get the attention they need as it seems more resources are funneled to the personal interests and goals of our administration.