

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PRENTICE
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Monday, February 26, 2024 - 6:00 PM
Prentice School Library

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by President Erickson at 6:00 PM.

Board members present: Adams, Blomberg, Erickson, Gierman, Gladson, Gruber, Isaacson, Palmquist and Pierson.

The following questions were asked of each of the candidates for the for the position of District Administrator.

Questions from Board, Staff and Community

Thank you for meeting with us today. Keep in mind we have 1 hour for this interview, keeping each answer to 5 minutes or less will give us time to get through all the questions.

1. What would you like the community and district to know about yourself and your family?
2. What attracted you to the Prentice School District? How do you see yourself becoming part of the community?
3. This position currently includes other duties such as transportation coordinator. Due to the size of our district many of our staff wear several hats. What, if any, special skills would you be willing to utilize/take on in our district? Examples include: elementary principal, Special Ed director, disciplinarian, bus driver.
4. What is your experience with budgets, grant writing, revenue limit worksheets or other school financial elements? Describe the process you would use to create and manage an annual budget.
5. The board desires a candidate with strong leadership and communication skills while also being able to take constructive feedback. How would you rate yourself in these areas or what is your leadership style?

6. In light of the current budget deficit and impending operating referendum, what are some examples of ways you would plan to increase funding and reduce spending, especially if the referendum fails to pass?
7. **(STAFF)** The community and staff are more likely to trust new leadership that is transparent. What specific policies, practices, or procedures would you implement to establish trust and transparency
8. **(STAFF)** Fostering a collaborative climate and culture is important to the teaching staff. Give specific examples of how you have fostered a spirit of collaboration in your past positions or practices you would implement here in order to foster a spirit of collaboration in our school district.
9. **(COMMUNITY)** Do you have a procedure to ensure staff are following protocols and meeting expectations? How might you handle employees that need to be disciplined? When do you think an employee's actions should be made aware to the board?
10. **(COMMUNITY)** What do you feel is the administrator's role in supporting special education in the district, and can you please describe any experience you have in working with special education staff to ensure compliance and quality programming?
11. Do you have any questions for us?

Erickson introduced Mr. John Humphries who is currently the school psychologist in Antigo.

Question 1:

John started with a degree in microbiology. He volunteered as a tutor in the Madison area which got him into teaching. He has done special education, school psychology. He has worked with suicide prevention programs. Describes himself as a lifelong learner. He has 2 sons both out of college and loves to be in the Northwoods.

Question 2:

He has been focusing on the superintendent positions again. Likes smaller districts feels they are more flexible and closer to the classroom. Had been a superintendent in Thorp which is a small rural district. He likes Prentice's 9 member board. As reflected in meeting minutes he has read likes the interaction between board members. Has friends in the area that speak highly of the district. In speaking with CESA they gave a good review of Prentice. Feels people in the district are genuine. He has been politically active which has hurt him with some boards. Likes to dig in and help kids.

Question 3:

Has a special education license and a school psychologist. He has subbed as principal in the past. Has worked with residential treatment centers. He has been told that he knows what he's doing regarding curriculum and enjoys that. Has been a Title 1 coordinator. Believes in a good core curriculum.

Question 4:

Has managed budgets over the last 20 years. He has dealt with a special education budget that is larger than the districts entire budget. He is Executive Director of the Associate Equity & Funding group (AEF). As director he has looked at the revenue limits and met with legislators in regards to. Has worked with school boards on budgeting. While he was at Thorp had worked with the referendum they ran. He has done grant writing. Ran for State School Superintendent in Wisconsin where he had to ask people for money. Has worked with revenue limits. Start to plan out projecting 3 - 5 years in the future. As the school year closes the budget is solidified. Is knowledgeable as to where monies can be moved in the budget thru the year. Its about project, solidify, approve and monitor.

Question 5:

Leadership style is to lead by example. Expects feedback from the board good or bad, feedback is critical. Is experienced in using data, in Thorp communicated with the board and staff weekly.

Question 6: Knows if the referendum should fail can go back and run again in August or November. For example can look at class sizes especially in the High School can't afford to run a class with only 6 students enrolled. In the Title 1 program implementation plan was to be able to code staff salaries to save money. Use the laws and rules as best you can to comply. Over time has paid a lot of attention to finances.

Question 7:

Transparency is good but not in all situations such as disciplinary. He has an open door policy. There is trust and collaboration with his principal. Doesn't like keeping secrets from people. Works hard to trust his staff. Plays heads up ball wants to know how people are feeling.

Question 8:

Collaboration starts with the focus on working together. Collaboration can be gradual change doesn't have to be immediate. As in the position of special ed in Antigo works on how not to have referrals into the program if the student doesn't need it. Prevent entering a student in an IEP if not needed.

Question 9:

Evaluation and Observation. Procedure working between him and principal. Philosophy is to work with an individual before they get to step 5. Support people steps in the disciplinary process. Communicate with the board president to decide for example when to have a special meeting, full board communication or communication with the community.

Question 10:

Has been in special education now 20 years. He's been director in 4 -5 districts. Has presented at special education conferences. It's not just about compliance its the need to help all students. Helping disabled kids helps all kids. Need to compare IEP students

with other students and analyze the data. Need to reach out to parents of students with disabilities. Special Ed is about consensus, all together to get what's needed. Strive to make the Prentice District the best it can be.

Question 11:

John asked what if the referendum doesn't pass?

Per Erickson will be looking at making changes. Possibly run for less dollars on run as non-recurring. Would like to run it again in August.

John asked what if the referendum does pass?

Need to restore the Fund Balance to the proper level. Repairs such as roof project HVAC replacement. Possibly institute Board Docs to open up to the community.

Possibly contracting out policy rewrites and documentation.

The interview concluded at 7:00 PM with John thanking the board for the opportunity to interview. John then handed out a 1 page document titled "Q & A Regarding John Humphries"

The meeting paused until 7:28 when the Zoom interview began with Keith Crispell, Keith was in Colorado.

Question 1:

Keith was grateful be given the opportunity to do a Zoom interview. He stated he is a dedicated professional. The last 30 years he has only been in 2 school districts. He has a strong midwest work ethic. He has family members in Wisconsin. Education goes beyond the classrooms he has been involved in outdoor programs with kids. He is a rural person at heart not afraid to roll up his sleeves and get dirty.

Question 2:

He's looking for the ideal location to get back to the home area. His wife had previously taught in Tomahawk. He likes to be visible in the community and is currently an Elks Member.

Question 3:

In the rural setting he understands the wearing of many hats which is what he has been doing at his current school. He did drive a school bus when he was in Necedah years ago. Believes discipline is a shared duty.

Question 4:

Currently collaborates with their Chief Financial Officer on a daily basis. Their successful audit was just completed. In the past years has presented a balanced budget. He has done grant writing. Currently looking into building housing for staff in his district. Attracting teachers in the very competitive market is a challenge. Neighboring state is able to pay higher salaries. Colorado has a different funding mechanism than Wisconsin. He also is doing a track project in Colorado.

Question 5:

Under leadership there is a strong emphasis on coaching, mentoring and leading by example are his strengths. Communication can never hit 100%. You can't rely on one method of communication. Needs to be seven different times seven different ways. Constructive feedback is always welcomed. Where he is at has a formal annual review with his board.

Question 6:

Possibility would be to explore a 4 day school week. 110 districts in Colorado are currently doing that. Saving there would be on things like transportation and energy. They are experiencing teacher shortages there also.

Question 7:

Trust is a big thing it is something you earn. He does weekly updates for his board and staff. Puts a newsletter out to the community. Is a champion for student engagement and getting out. Understands in a rural setting schools the hub of the community.

Question8:

Personally likes to get out of the office focusing on students and staff. Likes being visible in the classroom. When you see something great going on let them know. Does staff celebration like for example when someone gets their masters degree.

Question 9:

Gets out to do walk thru's with his principal. Anything that should crop up with a staff member lets the board know. Uses staff reviews. In past have been instances when he has had to put people on administrative review. Improvement plans are implemented when needed.

Question10.

Special Ed experience is not that vast. Had a situation where they couldn't fill a special ed position. They used a group like CESA in Wisconsin to meet their students needs.

Question 11.

Keith asked what is the strength of the district?

There is an excellent staff here at Prentice. Have not had any major issues like some districts. Facilities are modern and top notch.

Keith asked what is student enrollment doing?

Enrollment has been declining as most schools in the state. Unpredictable where the future is going fo be, hoping that we have stabilized.

Keith asked what is the prediction on the referendum success?

Erickson said seems like closer to the school more yes farther away need to focus on.

Thinks it will be close just don't know.

Keith expressed sincere gratitude for the interview. Asked what's the next step?

Erickson said there is on more interview tomorrow night. After that interview the board will go into closed session to discuss. Erickson will let Keith know what direction things are going after tomorrow. The interview concluded at 8:02 PM.

Erickson thanked the audience for attending, reminding there will be one more interview tomorrow night.

Motion Blomberg, second Gierman to adjourn. Carried

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Darrell E. Pierson, Board of Education Clerk
