

Arlington Central School District
Superintendent Search

**Focus Group
and
Survey Results**

By Focus Consulting Associates, LLC

Focus Consulting Associates, LLC

37 Saw Mill River Road
Hawthorne, New York 10532
(914) 220-7830

Vincent T. Beni, Ed.D
Managing Partner
VBeni@FocusSearches.com

Superintendent Searches, Board Workshops, Administrative Studies, Long Range Planning

SPECIFICATION DEVELOPMENT REPORT SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH Arlington Central School District

METHODOLOGY:

On November 2 and 3, 2009, two consultants from Focus Consulting Associates met with school and community groups which represent many of the major stakeholders in the Arlington Central Schools. The purpose of the meetings was to supplement information received earlier from the Board of Education, and to encourage direct, broad-based participation in the development of the specifications which will guide the superintendent search process. Participants were encouraged to share views and perceptions about the district, its leadership challenges, and about the qualifications and experiences to be sought in candidates for the superintendent's position. The meetings, attended by more than 150 persons, were also meant to provide the consultants with an opportunity to learn, first-hand, about the district through the eyes of those who serve and are served by it, and to gain a sense of the culture, traditions, and qualities which make the Arlington schools and community unique and special. This information is particularly helpful to the consultants in recruiting and encouraging candidates for the position.

Margaret Muenkel, Margie Flynn, and Melissa Erlebacher provided invaluable assistance in identifying, scheduling and extending invitations to these focus groups, for which we are most appreciative.

It is important to state that the process used was not intended to represent an in-depth analysis of the School District, nor was it meant to seek solutions to ongoing issues or problems. Rather, it was designed to gather general information regarding how the educational and lay communities view the current condition of the district and attempt to identify some of the district's challenges and expectations as they relate to and affect the superintendent search process.

MEETING FORMAT:

Focus Consulting conducted a planning meeting with the Board of Education on September 23, 2009. The Board began a process of identifying the groups and individuals with whom the consultants should meet, resulting in the following scheduled focus group meetings:

- Superintendent's Cabinet
- Principals
- Education Directors & Supervisors
- Central Office Support Staff
- Arlington Teacher Association Officers
- Arlington High School Students
- Two open Teachers Meetings
- Union Leadership
- PTSA Council
- Open Public Meeting
- Community Leaders
- Support Directors & Supervisors
- Open Staff Meeting

In addition, the consultants requested that the district print multiple copies of a form entitled "Input For The Search For A Superintendent of Schools" which was made available at all of the above meetings, was made available in advance of the meetings, and was on the District's web site. More than 100 persons took the time to complete the form. The tabulation of these forms is contained in Appendix I.

In general, the meetings and focus groups sought to elicit responses to three broad questions or prompts:

- What do you see as the “selling points” of the Arlington Central School District and the Arlington community that the consultants can use in recruiting candidates for the superintendent vacancy?
- From your particular district perspective, what do you see as the leadership challenges which will face the new superintendent of the School District?
- What do you view as the most critically-needed personal characteristics and background experiences of the new superintendent?

All of the data collected suggest that the School District “community” is very united in its views of the district, its challenges, and the qualities it seeks in its new superintendent. (This is not to say, however, that this unanimity exists with respect to every specific issue currently facing the school district where, in some instances, there are some differing perspectives.) Appendix II contains an unduplicated listing of the responses to the three prompts identified above, some of which were repeated through the multiple focus groups (reflected where the columns are checked showing the repetition of the comment in “some” or “most” groups).

As discussed at the September 23rd Planning Meeting, the next steps will be for the Board, at its November 24th meeting, to receive this report and adopt a set of specifications which can be used in advertising the vacancy in the New York Times, Education Week, on a variety of web sites, and in a letter which Focus Consulting Associates will send to a mailing list of more than 1,100 professionals throughout the country. In such publications, it is necessary to limit the specifications because of the constraint of space. While the consultants will use all of the input and data gleaned from the focus groups and questionnaire responses, as will the Board as it prepares to interview candidates, we would recommend the following synthesis of the input as to the desired qualities of the candidates be used for purposes of advertising:

Suggested Specifications For The Purpose of Advertising

- A visible instructional leader, willing to first become intimately acquainted with the Arlington Central Schools and community and then share a compelling vision and plan for the continued improvement of the district
- An exceptional listener and communicator, with outstanding writing and interpersonal skills, who has demonstrated the ability to build respect, trust and collaboration among all members of a school community
- An administrator who empowers others to carry out the District's goals but remains accountable for all areas of leadership, particularly financial planning and oversight
- An educator with significant leadership experience, preferably as a superintendent, in a high-achieving school community
- A proven educator, flexible and caring, who will passionately advocate for the learning needs of all students in the Arlington Central Schools
- A leader who believes in a broad learning experience for students and recognizes the importance of cultural arts

As we also discussed on September 23rd, we recommend that the Board authorize the use of a "minimum salary" as a part of the advertisement. It is our recommendation that the minimum salary be listed at \$200,000, plus regionally competitive fringe benefits.

We look forward to meeting with you on November 17th to discuss this matter further.

Respectfully submitted,

Focus Consulting Associates

APPENDIX I
SUMMARY OF INPUT INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH
(Comments are reported as written)

SURVEY ABOUT QUALITIES OF THE NEXT Arlington Central School Dist. SUPERINTENDENT IMPORTANT QUALITIES	ACSD NO CHILD	ACSD PARENT	ACSD TEACHER	ACSD SUPPORT S	ACSD ADMIN	ACSD PTA/SITE B	ACSD N/A	TOTAL
EXPERIENCE AS:								
SUPERINTENDENT	6	8	19	6	4	2	3	48
CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	3	5	5	2	2		4	21
PRINCIPAL	4	3	7	4	3	1	5	27
TEACHER	8	2	23	1	6	1	6	47
EXPERIENCE IN:								
PROVIDING LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING A HIGH ACHIEVING SCHOOL DISTRICT	7	12	15	7	5	2	7	55
HOLDER OF AN EARNED DOCTORATE		1	1				1	3
SKILLED IN:								
PUBLIC RELATIONS	9	5	15	2	4	1	6	42
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING	5	3	9	5	6	1	2	31
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	9	1	14	3	4		5	36
HUMAN RESOURCES	2	4	5	3	1		3	18
BUDGETING, FINANCE AND FACILITY PLANNING	9	14	20	9	4	3	8	67
SHORT AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING	9	7	13	4	6		5	44
PUBLIC SPEAKING AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	4	3	11	3	2	1	5	29
WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH AN ELECTED BOARD	5	5	13	2	3	1	4	33
THE POLITICAL/LEGISLATIVE PROCESS	6	6	9			1	4	26
TOTAL	17	16	36	10	10	3	16	108
Top Seven Choices								

P = Parent, T = Teacher, A = Administrator, PTA = PTA Member, SS = Support Staff, ST = Student, R = Resident; no child(ren) enrolled in District;
N/A = individual did not indicate role in the community/district.

APPENDIX I
 SUMMARY OF INPUT INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH
 (Comments are reported as written)

COMMENTS:									
<p>P: I think the most important quality is the ability to provide leadership in improving further a high achieving school district. Although Arlington is well regarded in the Dutchess County school systems, it is a far cry from competing with schools in NYC or select areas in Virginia and Maryland. I think we teach too much to the average or even below average. I think the state exam scores mean very little as a true measure of a student's knowledge and their ability to learn. I think we have a huge gap to fill for the students in the high achieving category. We are very behind in math, in particular. Students are taught to work the mechanics and not the conceptual elegance of math. It's really sad to see kids so young in elementary school lose interest in math. I'd like to see a magnet school in the Arlington School district. No Child Left Behind, has left our smart kids behind. They've suffer the most.</p>									
<p>and always will be, the students. A deep and abiding respect for the welfare of the children is paramount - the rest can be learned or qualified consultants brought in.</p>									
<p>T: The next superintendent should possess, like Mr. Pepe, a value for humanistic education that encompasses not just the "bare bones" of the "three R's." S/He should deeply value enriching experiences of art, music, theater, sports, and other activities are not extras, but in fact necessities. Arlington graduates need to become community members who are emotionally and creatively healthy as well as academically intelligent. In a country that demands more and more of its students, they unequivocally need a path by which to express themselves creatively.</p>									
<p>T: The next superintendent of Arlington Central School District must possess an understanding of the education process including (but not limited to) the importance of quality people and materials (both tools and in-service opportunities), adequate uninterrupted instructional and planning time, and adequate physical facilities to accomplish the goal. The superintendent should be able to mold Arlington into a community with equal opportunities for all students no matter which district school they happen to attend.</p>									
<p>P/S: I feel that one of the most important qualities the next superintendent should have would be to live in our district and have children who go to our schools.</p>									
<p>N/A: The superintendent should hold the knowledge and have the ability to problem solve the financial burdens that we face in the next few years. And with contracts needing to be settle fairly-a clear vision. (I don't believe that being a resident within the district should be a priority. There are too many other qualifications and concerns that should hold more value).</p>									
<p>R/SS: Integrity-it's a powerful position. A superintendent should have a knowledge of the communities w/in the District and a genuine concern for the taxpayers.</p>									
<p>T: The most important quality for our next Superintendent to possess would be a strong communicator - both listening and expressing. We will be working with reduced finances, a new ATA negotiation process, fewer resources and likely more students with significant needs. Our next Superintendent must be able to listen to all stakeholders and assist us in prioritizing "wants" and allocating resources to best meet our children's learning needs while respecting the economic climate. Despite making decisions that cannot please everyone, Mr. Pepe has a strong reputation for listening to individuals and respecting all thoughts and opinions which has brought this district together during challenging times. In addition to bringing his or her personal strenghts to the position, I would hope that our next Superintendent would have equal if not stronger communication skills.</p>									
<p>R/A: Having high standards for him/herself personally, professionally & for the District as s/he endeavors to bring a vision to fruition. -Must be supporter of/advocate for using the Arts as a vehicle for children to learn & grow to the fullest. -Must like teachers & understand from personal experience what their job entails.</p>									

P = Parent, T = Teacher, A = Administrator, PTA = PTA Member, SS = Support Staff, ST = Student, R = Resident; no child(ren) enrolled in District;
 N/A = individual did not indicate role in the community/district.

APPENDIX I
 SUMMARY OF INPUT INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH
 (Comments are reported as written)

R: The new Superintendent must be strong and not hired simply to save money.
 There is a group of people in LaGrange that only care about lowering taxes, hate the fact that teachers have a pension, and are negative about new people moving into the town. Sadly, this group speaks loudly. Talk to the parents of elementary students. They are the future of Arlington School District.
 Town politics are dominated by a small group who have had free reign for years.
 I have lived in the area for 30 years, taught at another school in the area, and chose Arlington School District. The district offers many experiences for young people. The primary and middle schools are warm, caring places where children thrive.

I believe this philosophy is very important:
 "The Arlington Central School District believes that safe and caring schools are critical for learning. In addition to learning academics, it is important for student to learn social-emotional skills that will help to treat their peers, teachers, and school with appropriate care and respect. Recognizing diversity and promoting respect is essential in helping students to resolve conflicts peacefully. Our vision is to help our students develop self-confidence, tempered with empathy and co

I have seen this at work in the school! So many kids love their School!

Yes, a superintendent must be a PR person, and money and people manager, but let us not forget professional education qualifications.

A: Bring this school district to the need of the 21st century especially in the areas of teaching a growing culturally diverse student population and technology. We are a good school district but we could be excellent. I would like to see an instructional leader bring us to award winning status.

A: To be able to effectively establish 1-2 district goals to be worked on. Then to help establish both long & short range plans to have these goals met & to effectively communicate these goals to all constituent groups.
 To help promote equality among buildings & grade levels.

SS: A superintendent should have a value system and be honest.
 A superintendent should have knowledge in other superior subjects. A superintendent should have hands on knowledge of our curriculum. A superintendent should know and meet everyone that works in the district. A superintendent should understand all aspects of the school district and how it runs. The new superintendent should be able to work with a large district and come up with ideas to alleviate tensions that can arise. I grew up in Arlington District and currently have family and friends that live in Arlington District.

T: To lead us through these very tough economic times, especially when we will be getting so little from the State & Federal levels.

P: Management of the budget to show value to tax payers and maintain high academic standards. For the size of the budget the current results appear to be low

P/T: The next superintendent should be a scholarly, compassionate humanitarian.

R/T: An understanding of the needs of children and their families - An educational leader

T: The superintendent should possess qualities that will enable and encourage teaching staff, support staff, and administrative staff to come together as a community and support and educate our students.

APPENDIX I
 SUMMARY OF INPUT INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH
 (Comments are reported as written)

<p>P/SS/PTA: The biggest challenge the next Supt. faces is balancing the budgetary (district & state) challenges with providing the high level of education the district has come to expect. Finding someone with a track record of keeping spending under control without stripping us to a bare bones curriculum is essential. Our children's education and our property values depend on it. One of the things that made our last Supt. so successful was his ability to communicate sincerely and his accessibility to the public. Agree or disagree, you know you can speak with him & be heard. I hope we do not lose this.</p>
<p>R/SS: Outgoing person. Approachable & all people and having a sense of humor.</p>
<p>T: I hope that the next Supt. would respect and advocate the fact that Arlington is a unique district within the County/State.</p>
<p>P/T: Good family values. They should have the children's future always in mind.</p>
<p>R/SS: I believe one of the most important qualities is that the superintendent should be one of clear vision and have the sense of equality.</p>
<p>P: I believe the most important quality the next Superintendent of ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT should possess is He/She should be required to keep the local school board informed, to educate them about issues that pertain to their district, and to guide them when appropriate so they are able to make decisions that are good for their district while keeping the district out of trouble with any of many entities. At the same time He/She must be able to work with,</p>
<p>R: Leadership in improving further a high-achieving school district. The realities are that this job requires a skilled manager, leader, business person, communicator etc. But we must remember that - above all - the superintendent is the leader of a SCHOOL and must place primary emphasis on maintaining the high quality of</p>
<p>T: The next Arlington Superintendent should possess the ability to provide a vision for the district that emphasizes the importance of creative thinking, the arts, problem solving, holistic learning and a commitment to fulfilling the needs of students and teachers. The next Superintendent should be able to recognize the truly valuable programs in Arlington... and keep the good things going. For instance, the visual arts program and ART Residencies.</p>
<p>R/T: Our superintendent should be a person who always keeps the students in the forefront of their mind. He/She must also be someone who is interested in educating the whole child, not simply interested in test scores or making the district "look good". He/She should recognize the importance of art, music, phys. ed, dance, home & careers, language, & other cultural & artistic subjects on student learning & development. We need someone, who can "think outside the box" & will not simply cut teachers & programs when money is tight.</p>
<p>county and state, as well as the needs of the district's students. Stamina is a close second.</p>
<p>SS: An ability to really get to know staff, students, and families on a personal level. I believe Mr. Pepe has been so well able to lead Arlington because he knew the climate, needs and personnel at each school, bus garage, administrative office, household etc. This allows even difficult decisions to be made in the best interest of those impacted, rather than simply fiscal concerns. A superintendent should be highly visible and easily approached.</p>
<p>whose children attend private schools. They pay taxes & have a right to be involved in communication. Also, how do you communicate with residents of ACSD with no children?</p>
<p>R/A: The ability to keep everything on an even playing ground. Keep all staff, teachers, employees feeling their value/worth and getting the community on board to support the districts efforts. The new superintendent needs to be a concerned community person. Arlington Schools are the focal point of this area and needs to have a leader who is in tune not only with schools but with the community as well.</p>

P = Parent, T = Teacher, A = Administrator, PTA = PTA Member, SS = Support Staff, ST = Student, R = Resident; no child(ren) enrolled in District;
 N/A = individual did not indicate role in the community/district.

APPENDIX I
 SUMMARY OF INPUT INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH
 (Comments are reported as written)

SS: I believe there are many qualities to look for in a new Superintendent for Arlington Central School District. The individual applying should be highly qualified and all references should be checked and re-checked before any decisions will be made. It is a costly process no matter how you look at it. There is money involved in hiring a recruiting or consulting firm and we do not need to waste money or time looking for an individual that has not tailored his education and career path to that of becoming a Superintendent. This person should be personable, have excellent references, a top notch educational background and be willing to work with administrators, teachers, staff, parents, students, the entire Arlington community. Arlington is a very large district with current issues which will need to be addressed and resolved. We need someone who is able to work with the community and communicate effectively with both state officials and community leaders to get the job done correctly. The individual should have the physical stamina and desire to work hard and not be afraid to lead us. Change is just part of what will happen no matter who takes over, however, we need someone who will stand by. The new Superintendent should have the desire to lead and be comfortable in the choices he will make. I feel strongly that if the applicant has had a personal goal. We need to feel comfortable that the committee will do everything in their power to appoint the best person for this position. The mission of improving all of our schools. I thank everyone for their efforts in this extensive recruiting process. The ultimate decision will certainly effect us all.

Arlington (it's tax payers) cannot financially afford "the best" in everything. Getting "the best" superintendent, who meets every one of those 15 important criteria, will cost too much. The money is better spent elsewhere in the budget. Our budget is already too large and top-heavy. Administrative costs need to be reduced. Don't break tax payers backs hiring someone we literally cannot afford there are a lot of people looking for jobs, hopefully there will be many applicants to choose from.

N/A: 1) the ability to recognize why the public moves to the area for the schools - what makes Arlington OUTSTANDING? VISION
 2) The ability to see the value in current programs that contribute to the reputation of Excellence in our district - THE ARTS!
 If budget cuts rape our current programs we will no longer be outstanding. Don't cut down these trees to save the forest. Visit the schools! SEE the teachers IN their classrooms. SEE the quality and KEEP IT!
 As a former resident of Arlington Central whose 3 children went through the district as well as a teacher for the district.

He says things from the heart and yet he can be tough & strong. He must be kind & look you in the eyes when he shakes your hand. He also needs to be artistic & love the arts. This is especially important for the district. We MUST find someone who will nurture and preserve the wonderful music, art & theater we have here.
 Other qualities: be a family man, stable, a long time resident of the community

T: We would like to see a superintendent who is a strong supporter of the arts.
 It's important that the new superintendent be engaged not just with high level administrators but with teachers and students.
 We would like to see the new superintendent have substantial experience in a large school district environment but we don't have any preferences for positions held or level of education.

T: The most important quality the next superintendent of ACSD should possess is the ability and courage to listen to the teachers.
 The teachers are on the front line of the education system and should be consulted on many decision pertaining to instructional policy. Furthermore, teachers should be involved in the budget process, particularly when cuts must be made. The next superintendent should value teachers' opinions even if these opinions may not be popular with taxpayers because the teachers know what works in the classroom. Sometimes it is easy to forget that we are here for the business of learning; not to run a corporation.

APPENDIX I
 SUMMARY OF INPUT INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH
 (Comments are reported as written)

<p>T: The Arlington School District is made up of students from diverse backgrounds (language, race, socioeconomic status, culture, etc). The next Superintendent should be able to reach out to the families of these students and help administrators and faculty incorporate the experiences of our diverse families into our daily curriculum. Furthermore, the Superintendent should have a critical awareness of how culture, socio-economic status, race, etc impact the way Arlington School district should educate its students.</p>
<p>awards. It is absolutely essential that the new superintendent share this enthusiasm for the arts and works to stress their importance and inclusion in the curriculum.</p>
<p>T: The next Superintendent should always have the best interest of our children in mind when making decisions and planning for the future. Mr. Pepe has done a great job as Superintendent. I hope we choose someone with similar qualification.</p>
<p>R/T: I think the next Superintendent should be a "hands on" superintendent. I have worked under several administrators, but I have found Mr. Pepe's hands on approach to be the best. He has a pulse on what is happening in the classrooms, what the needs of the building are, what our parent concerns are and he has the broad picture of the district. With his presence visible it makes him much more approachable. Involvement across the district also helps to put him in a more positive light rather than just someone who is always trying to put out fires.</p>
<p>A: Lead by example</p>
<p>P/SS: I feel that the most important quality should be to recognize and support and continue the social/emotional & behavior services that are provided to the students in our schools. This support enables the student to flourish more in an academic setting - some students have very limited supports in their home or community, and they truly need the reinforcement in the school to help them be successful. Continue with current level of support available to students and</p>
<p>P/PTA: Experiences in providing leadership in improving further a high-achieving school district. I want a superintendent for whom academics of the highest caliber is the number one priority, as opposed to extra curricular offerings and sports. Academic budget cuts should be last on the list in order to keep our district competitive. Also, a superintendent who is willing to be open-minded in considering the concerns of the public and parents at board meetings. We don't want to be venting only-we want to be heard and considered.</p>
<p>N/A: To be able to make decisions that place the needs of the students first and able to guide the staff, parents and BOE in that direction. The Superintendency is a very political position and unfortunately the politics often get in the way of doing what is best for the students. This should be our top priority-I think we lose this vision to better met the adults needs. A skilled negotiator who can redirect our priorities would benefit our students. The administrators were all very positive in our meeting. My hope is that our new superintendent provides support equally across the district. There has been a strong bias toward our high school with less involvement at the elementary level. I could count on one hand the number of visits the superintendent made to my building in the past 7 years. This was noticed by the staff. I hope for a more equal distribution of time and support (favoritism was obvious)</p>
<p>the wealthiest of districts and must be careful to behave in a manner that matches our financial reality, while also maximizing academic potential. The superintendent should be able to protect the academic good standing of our district without jeopardizing the community's support by placing undue burdens on them financially.</p>
<p>T: An ability to present district issues and vision to community members because the superintendent is the representative of our district. He/She should be a reflection of the overall goals of our district, and be able to present those goals in a positive manner to the public.</p>
<p>T: The most important quality is that the next superintendent should love students so well that he or she would build a school district that is worthy of his own children's attendance. The new superintendent should visit our schools regularly to be involved in all happenings.</p>

APPENDIX I
 SUMMARY OF INPUT INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH
 (Comments are reported as written)

R/T: The next superintendent should focus on student achievement in academics. Not “high stake” test results, but true literacy. Reading and comprehension are fundamental to student achievement in all areas. To this end, our next superintendent should be primarily supportive of a positive learning environment, an assortment of learning experiences and a variety of learning and teaching resources--including strong libraries and up-to-date technology.

I want our students to have a variety of experiences, both in the classroom and out. They need to be exposed to different styles of teaching and learning. They need to be well-rounded individuals whose talents are recognized, appreciated and given a chance to grow. However, they must first be literate. Our world is too complex to take everything they see and hear at face-value. To be successful citizens, they must learn to read and comprehend a variety of formats—the printed page, the digital page, the electronic medias (TV, radio, film, blogs, etc.) and to be able to analyze information and synthesize it for their own needs. Our students will need to be creative individuals who have a more world-based understanding than their parents and grandparents. Learning needs. Our superintendent has done an excellent job in offering our students opportunities. His vision of small schools within our very large high school has given mar

T: The superintendent should be supportive of the arts. Mr. Pepe has made significant improvements in the arts program in the district. It is my hope that our next Superintendent will continue to further his advancements.

two children in the ACSD. In addition to the qualities enumerated, I would like to see a superintendent who also has a strong working knowledge of Students with Special Needs and the Special Education Process. Specifically, the New York State Part 200 Students with Disabilities Regulations and the Federal IDEA Legislation (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.) With almost 1 in 5 students facing learning disabilities, this will play an increasingly important role in their academic success.

R/T: He or she must develop strong vision for the future of all students within the district and be willing to stand strong against outside interests who would define public education through cost analysis and/or a business model. Public education should be seen as an upside-down pyramid. The children are at the top. Those who directly work with the children are on the next level and everyone on the remaining levels are there to support the children and the professionals who work with them daily.

T: It should be someone who values the richness of teacher's skills and experience rather than dictating uniformity in teacher's lessons and assessment tools.

A: The most important quality is leadership. This covers a lot of ground, but a great superintendent is able to lead by: *Having a clear vision of where he/she thinks the district should go (in every aspect of a district's life). * Respectfully listen to the views of all constituents. *Being able to marry his/her own views with that of the constituents wherever possible. *Being able to communicate that married vision, or being able to respectfully communicate why the constituent's vision may not be followed. *Being able to motivate others to achieve the vision.

R/T: I hope that the search team will find a candidate with the same personal, professional and leadership qualities as Frank Pepe.

P/T: Frank was an excellent Superintendent. Please look for a person who will continue to lead us in a similar manner. Children as our focus, open mind, flexible, team work, creative, short & long range planner and inspirational.

T/A: To work effectively with a wide range of people and interest groups. To be skilled in working with faculty and staff. To have a passion for the visual arts and music, recognizing their importance in the full education of a child.

T: Empathy! A Superintendent for Arlington must recognize and attempt to meet the needs of all stakeholders in the educational community.
S/He must inspire, lead, support.

APPENDIX 2

Question 1

What do you see as the "selling points" of the Arlington School District that the consultants can use in recruiting candidates for the Superintendent vacancy?

	RESPONSE	SOME GROUPS	MOST GROUPS
1	Outstanding state and national reputation		X
2	Well educated, open, thoughtful and functional Board		X
3	Outstanding array of fine and performing arts programs		X
4	The arts program distinguishes Arlington district from the rest		X
5	High performing district; well rounded and cohesive curriculum		X
6	Great students		X
7	High level of professionalism among all employees; staff work above and beyond		X
8	High level of Integrity at all levels		X
9	High standards and expectations for students		X
10	Outstanding student achievement		X
11	Atmosphere of mutual respect		X
12	All employees are valued, resulting in high productivity		X
13	Solid administrative team		X
14	Strong teaching staff		X
15	Excellent work ethic of all staff		X
16	Supportive community that values education		X
17	Commitment to success of every child		X
18	History of positive labor relations		X
19	Tremendous pride in district across all employee groups and categories		X
20	High morale across employee groups		X
21	Commitment to transparency		X
22	Strong curriculum leadership		X
23	Administrative support of the Board; the board maintains a very strong policy role, but rarely interferes with administrative issues		X
24	History of community support of budgets		X
25	Compares very well to neighboring districts		X
26	Board sets positive tone throughout district		X
27	History of longevity of superintendents and administrative team		X
28	Collegial atmosphere		X
29	People seek to live in Arlington because of the schools		X
30	Many opportunities for students both within the school day and afterschool		X

APPENDIX 2

31	Active PTA support of district and budgets		X
32	Involvement of all constituencies in a budget process which has become increasingly transparent and encouraged public participation		X
33	History of public engagement	X	
34	A large district with increasing diversity which has enriched the environment	X	
35	Broad opportunities for all students	X	
36	Music and arts begin early in students' careers resulting in well rounded preparation	X	
37	Outstanding sports program	X	
38	Students believe they attend the best district in Dutchess County	X	
39	Excellent maintenance of buildings	X	
40	Cost effective decisions have been made	X	
41	Each school is like a family, the district is one big community	X	
42	Parents are welcomed in all buildings	X	
43	Schools are safe	X	
44	Excellent student staff ratios	X	
45	Strong teacher induction program	X	
46	Excellent working conditions; ability to attract high quality staff	X	
47	Grievances are rare and resolved early	X	
48	Highest concentration of Nationally Board Certified teachers in the county		
49	Inclusive philosophy throughout the district		
50	Support of staff to pursue doctoral level studies		
51	Geographic location is extremely desirable		
52	Balanced staff in terms of experience level		
53	Commitment to differentiated instruction in high school		
54	Structure/climate in place for success		
55	High School House System; large but personalized. Welcoming environment at HS with good orientation and peer mentoring programs in place		
56	Personalized attention provided to students through guidance and teaching staff		

APPENDIX 2

Question 2

From your particular district perspective, what do you see as the leadership challenges which will face the superintendent of the Arlington Schools?

	RESPONSE	SOME GROUPS	MOST GROUPS
1	Ability to keep district unified and maintain community support while under pressure		X
2	Ability to maintain outstanding arts in education programs that might be threatened by budgetary concerns		X
3	Ability to pass budgets and maintain current programming and ratios		X
4	Community concerned with high taxes, resulting in a difficult economic environment		X
5	Community concerns re: salaries and pensions		X
6	Concerns related to impact of potential midyear state aid cuts		X
7	Declining elementary population		X
8	Maintain uniqueness of each school while feeling like one district (Balancing flexibility with centralization)		X
9	Maintenance of aging facilities		X
10	Need to balance community expectations in economic climate		X
11	Need to continue to align curriculum across all schools		X
12	Need to increase minority staff		X
13	Satisfying demanding parents		X
14	Segments of community believe too much is spent on district		X
15	Shrinking availability of state aid		X
16	Size of district-challenge of visibility for top leadership		X
17	Upcoming negotiations/several contracts at up at once		X
18	Ability to maintain new administrative structure for curriculum support	X	
19	Addressing ongoing maintenance and facilities needs; too dependent on large referenda	X	
20	Challenge of dealing with 13 taxing entities	X	
21	Changing demographics resulting in increased diversity	X	
22	Completing HS capital project on time	X	
23	Define school based system vs central system	X	
24	Development of expanded opportunities for budget input and deliberation	X	
25	Disconnect between spending and reality	X	
26	High cost of administrative office lease	X	
27	Improve communication between HS "Houses"	X	
28	Key Central office retirements anticipated	X	
29	Lack of commercial property in district	X	
30	Maintain ability to attract quality teachers	X	

APPENDIX 2

31	Need for full day kindergarten	X	
32	Need for technology in classrooms	X	
33	Need to identify waste before touching people and program	X	
34	Need to improve academics	X	
35	Non AP classes need more student discipline to improve learning environment	X	
36	Potential redistricting, closing of a school	X	
37	Addressing the needs of young/new staff		
38	Begin foreign language instruction in earlier grades		
39	Bring back "Small School" initiative		
40	Control the availability of drugs at and near the high school		
41	Improve effectiveness of student government as a school policy making group		
42	Increase safety officers and patrol beyond school property		
43	Increase use of energy efficient equipment/systems		
44	Involve all grades in pep rallies to increase spirit		
45	More difficult to show gains in high achieving environment		
46	Need for broader use of technology in communications		
47	Need for competitive debate team		
48	Need for new and expanded Bus Garage		
49	Need to reach out to disengaged students		
50	Restore library hours for student use after school		
51	School coaches who are not teachers but local community coaches have conflict of interest		

APPENDIX 2

Question 3

What do you view as the most critically-needed personal characteristics and background experiences of the new Superintendent of the Arlington School District?

	RESPONSE	SOME GROUPS	MOST GROUPS
1	Experienced as a Supt. of Schools		X
2	High visibility; engaged in schools and community		X
3	Outstanding Public relations		X
4	Outstanding Board relations		X
5	A genuine interest in district and all constituents		X
6	Ability to manage a large district		X
7	Ability to maintain community feeling, inclusive philosophy		X
8	An enthusiastic supporter of the Arts		X
9	Ability to engage community in budget process		X
10	Good listener, accessible and responsive		X
11	Dynamic personality		X
12	Polished-a good public speaker		X
13	Ability to balance business and education		X
14	Respects and values staff		X
15	An educational leader		X
16	Ability to teach and lead all staff		X
17	Promotes diversity		X
18	Outspoken proponent of the arts		X
19	Maintains open door for all tax payers		X
20	Experienced as a central office administrator		X
21	Strength in curriculum, instruction <u>and</u> business		X
22	Collaborative leadership style		X
23	Openness, honesty and integrity		X
24	Experienced as a teacher		X
25	Skilled in collective bargaining		X
26	Skilled in short and long-range planning		X
27	Skilled in the political process		X
28	Upbeat and positive personality that enjoys full involvement		X
29	A leader who is respected		X
30	Easy to relate to, welcoming and friendly		X

APPENDIX 2

31	Appreciates and recognizes staff accomplishments		X
32	Focused on curriculum, instruction, accountability and implementation	X	
33	Ability to maintain consistent policy across district	X	
34	Strong connection with parents	X	
35	Advocate on state aid and other policy issues	X	
36	Ability to bridge gaps in the community	X	
37	Understands change process	X	
38	Comfortable standing up to unions	X	
39	Aware and proactive in response to community needs	X	
40	Early in career to insure longevity		
41	Ability to handle stress of the job		
42	Ability to delegate		
43	Understands, values, and uses technology		
44	Experienced as a school principal		
45	Encourages others to grow as professionals		
46	Not wedded to status quo		
47	Math and science background		
48	Ability to be challenging		
49	Believer in transparency		
50	Supporter of maintaining nurses in all buildings and understands the important role of nurses in the district		