

Summary of the process for the selection of the new Clarke Superintendent.

The legal responsibility for the selection of a superintendent lies solely with the Board of Education.

The Board spent time discussing what key criteria they wanted to see in the new superintendent. They decided on the following five.

1. Leadership/Management – A visionary and optimistic professional who has a growth mindset with a ‘Can Do’ approach to leadership and school improvement. An organized, efficient, and consistent person who uses time and resources wisely, makes decisions and understands how they impact the whole district, holds self and others accountable, motivates others, recruits and evaluates with the best interests of students in mind.
2. Communication – Individual who works to create trust and a positive culture/work environment through clear written and verbal communication, listening, collaboration, relationship building, and transparency with the ability to have difficult conversations.
3. Finance – A strong background in Iowa School Finance, and the willingness to use this knowledge to demonstrate vision and creativity in budgeting for ongoing growth in all areas of programming.
4. Strong Character – An individual with strong moral character, high integrity and trustworthiness, and who is ambitious and driven, humble and resilient, genuine and authentic, and loyal with a strong work ethic.
5. Visibility – A family-oriented, approachable professional who is visible in our school and community and who is vested in our students, their families, their activities, our schools, and our community.

The Clarke Board decided at the beginning of the process that they wanted input from several stakeholder groups. Those groups were students, teachers, support staff, administrators, and community members. The first time the stakeholder groups were involved was when they were asked for input on the following four questions.

1. What are the greatest assets of the Greater Clarke Community?
2. What are the strengths/assets of the Clarke Community School District?
3. What characteristics are most important in the next superintendent of the Clarke Community Schools?
4. What are the most significant district, community, or state issues the selected person will face and need to deal with in order to be effective immediately?

In addition to those who were in attendance in person, anyone in the district and community could provide responses to those question through an online survey. There were many who did respond to the survey. Board members were given a copy of the feedback prior to them selecting who they were going to interview.

There were nineteen completed applications submitted by the application deadline. The McPherson and Jacobson consultants reviewed all applications and compared them to the five identified key criteria that were desired in a new superintendent. The consultants called references who were listed on the applications. They also called a number of other people who were not listed but could speak to the applicants work and character. They also conducted internet searches to find areas of concern. Full background checks are completed after a person is selected.

The names of all candidates were shared with the board at a meeting on April 22. More detailed information was given on seven of the candidates that best met the key criteria. The Board then selected four individuals to interview and again chose to involve stakeholder groups.

Prior to the meeting with the board on April 22, the consultant met with those who were to serve as the chairperson for the stakeholder groups on the day of the interviews. The chairs were asked to work with their stakeholder group after they met with each candidate to do two things. The first was to list the strengths they saw for each person. The second was to list what questions they might have about each candidate. They were instructed very specifically not to rank the candidates. As part of the process, it is important to follow these directions carefully to prevent confusion and frustration about the use of the feedback by the Board of Education.

The interviews took place on Wednesday, April 28. All four candidates were present that day. They all were taken on a tour of the district and the community. Then they were met by student ambassadors who became their guide for the day. Each candidate had two students escorting each of the candidates from location to location throughout the day.

According to reports from the candidates and others, the day went smoothly. The feedback from the stakeholder groups was returned to the board following the last session. The board spent time reviewing all four candidates. They took the feedback from the stakeholder groups and it was read aloud in its entirety for all four candidates during their deliberations. Details of the deliberation cannot be shared because it happened in a closed board session. What is discussed in a closed session cannot be shared according to legal requirements.

It can be shared that some of the feedback was read more than once as they discussed the candidate's strengths and questions of each candidate. Ultimately, the board reached a decision as to whom they felt would be the best fit for Clarke Community School District. When the board came out of closed session, they voted 7-0 to extend an offer to Dr. Alan Dykens. He accepted the offer. A comprehensive background check, including criminal, educational and financials, has been completed by McPherson and Jacobson and it came back with no notations or concerns.