

Focus Group Responses – Staff **Lewis-Palmer School District 38**

Date/Consultant: Thursday, January 24, 2019. Randy Zila

1. TELL ME A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY. WHAT WOULD I WANT TO KNOW IF I WERE CONSIDERING MOVING THERE?

- Conservative
- Distrustful of district admin
- Uniform
- Vocal
- Changing demographics, growth
- Suburban and rural – long standing members were ranchers
- Retired and active military
- Want clarity and information
- Lower socio-economic group moving into area
- Likes face to face communication, high social media profile – these two things have different perspectives
- College educated
- High expectations of district
- High achievement
- Fiscally conservative
- Long standing generation here fighting resentful of change but maintain high standards in school
- Large number of residents don't have kids in school district
- New community members don't understand history
- Expect builders and developers to pay for education
- Component of charter schools vocal, active
- Beautiful area
- Caring people

2. WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S STRENGTHS?

- Dedicated and experienced staff
- Retention is high, staff are loyal
- Highly talented, great students
- Engaged families
- Majority of parents are supportive
- Vocal minority is not supportive and doesn't trust district – also very intimidating to quiet majority
- A lot of faith and trust by building principals and central office admin in staff
- Lean, great admin group
- Cohesion between admin and teachers
- High level of support and care of students by all staff
- Pride in being part of school district
- Students graduate and return to teach
- Lots of opportunities provided to students to meet their needs
- Safe place
- Well connected schools

- Respectful
- Strong financial reporting system
- Not a lot of dollars – able to do much with less money
- Strong reputation
- Beautiful area
- Take care of each other
- Students have a lot of support collectively

3. WHAT ARE THE DISTRICT'S CHALLENGES OR AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT THAT THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT WILL HAVE TO ADDRESS?

- Vocal minority is growing in attacks - intimidating
- Overcrowded
- Funding
- Conservative
- Difference between communities and developers and communicating with school district
- Communicating accurately to people who live here but don't have kids
- Attracting new staff
- New teachers can't afford to live here
- Lot of retirements – not replaced by new staff
- Salary lower than neighboring district
- Potential new board
- Middle school relatively new used as elementary school, parents want this to remain as is
- Need to pursue MLO
- Reactionary decisions without long range plans
- Bridging the gap between charter and public
- Misinformation in competition with one another
- Morale is changing
- Poorly funded district
- Communication – vocal minority not well informed
- Very politicized elections
- Pressure to maintain high performance for teachers and students
- Mental health needs
- Need to hire 2 new principals (out of 8)

4. GIVEN YOUR DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE CHALLENGES YOU'VE IDENTIFIED, WHAT QUALITIES AND/OR EXPERIENCES DO YOU BELIEVE ARE ESSENTIAL IN A NEW SUPERINTENDENT?

- Good communicator
- Educator
- Strong educational background – teacher through admin
- People person – get energy from people here, students, teachers, admin, parents
- Stand and protect people here
- Negotiator – bring people together
- Experience with passing MLO

- Student centered focus
- Not afraid of conflict
- Coach and mentor administrators
- Instructional leader
- Visionary – treat people with kindness
- Problem solver
- Varied PK-12 perspective
- Recognize and navigate site based management
- Experience with Colorado school funding
- Successfully navigate - charter and public schools
- Thick skinned

5. IF YOU COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE TO THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

- Visible in community
- Build relationships
- Know people in schools
- Have a mentor
- Stand up for what you think is best for kids
- Thick skin
- Unite school board
- Value – show appreciation for people working hard here
- Rally your people
- Good listener
- Know kids