

Stakeholder Input Report for

**Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified
School District/Sierra County
Office of Education
Loyalton, California**

submitted by



11725 Arbor St., Suite 220
Phone: 888-375-4814/402-991-7031
Email: mail@macnjake.com

Omaha, Nebraska 68144
Fax: 402-991-7168
Website: www.macnjake.com

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MCPHERSON *MJ* JACOBSON, LLC

EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT

11725 ARBOR STREET, SUITE 220 ♦ OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68144 ♦ 402-991-7031/888-375-4814
FAX: 402-991-7168 ♦ EMAIL: MAIL@MACNJAKE.COM ♦ WEBSITE: WWW.MACNJAKE.COM

**Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District/Sierra County
Office of Education
Loyalton, California
District Stakeholder Input**

Executive Summary

The following are the comments given to the consultant from the staff/community/parents/administration over a two day period with six separate sessions. The + indicates that this comment was given at least three times during the total meetings held in the communities.

Stakeholder Input
Reported as received from each Stakeholder Group

Question #1- Tell us what is good about your community:

- Community embraces each student
- Best place to raise children-+
- We have a “focus on our children”
- Very good community programs for all students
- Great outdoor activities/recreational activities/hunting & fishing-+
- We have all four seasons to enjoy
- Not traffic issues (except cows crossing the road sometimes)
- Tight community and are bonded to each other-+
- Everyone knows each other
- Beautiful place to live -+
- “High Sierras” are amazing-+
- You can get back to nature and the environment
- Creative opportunities for everyone
- Very strong ag community
- We are in a “bit of a time capsule of the past”
- We are really a “true community”-+
- We are only an hour away from large communities/cities
- We have very safe communities-+
- The entire community comes out to the high school graduations-including those who do not have students
- Great mountain bike opportunities
- Great senior center
- Students and children feel that they have multiple parents in our communities

Question #2- Tell us what is good about the District and the schools:

- The schools and community are an extended family +
- Very few cliques in our schools
- Every student has the opportunity to be on a team or participate in school activities+
- The schools are hubs for our communities +
- The community supports fund raisers at our schools
- Many grant opportunities at schools-especially
- the “Sierra Schools Foundation” +
- Small class sizes
- Good field trip opportunities for our students
- Good resource center for students
- Many aides in the classrooms to help teachers
- Our staff get along well with each other +
- “Learning Landscape” opportunities for K-6
- Very supportive parent organizations
- High graduation rates
- Lots of public donations to our schools +
- Very hard for a child to “slip through the cracks” +
- District and schools usually responsive to parents and communities
- Strong FAA program
- Very professional teaching staff
- Veteran teaching staff
- Very involved community in our schools +
- Teachers know all the students in the school
- Students get “personalized Education”

Question #3 – What are some of the issues a new Superintendent should know about when coming to this District as Superintendent?

- Lack of housing for families
- Hard to get some services such as grocery stores, banking, gas, etc. +
- We have two separate communities that need to work better with each other +
- It is a long drive to reach all parts of our district
- We need better communication between schools and our parents and community +
- Lack of administrative leadership position at Downieville
- Poor communication and tech support from tech person +
- We are a very rural school district and community and new Superintendent needs to both know and appreciate this +
- We need better support from the Superintendent for our school leaders
- Our school board members need to be much more visible at our sites. activities, and in our classroom +
- Lack of strong discipline at our high school and no follow through or consequences for students +
- Our high school needs more structure and organization
- Feels like each school site and level are in their own “silo” and need more coordination between them.
- No music program in our schools +
- Lack of storage in our classrooms and schools
- We need to improve our playing fields as students get injured on our fields
- We have a “culture of mediocracy”
- Some problems at our school just seem to be ignored
- We need to close the campus and bring back the lunch Program +

Question #4- What are the characteristics, attributes, and experiences the new Superintendent should have to be successful in this District?

- We want someone who wants to live in our district and enjoys our communities _+
- We need a Superintendent who can say “NO” +
- Needs opt to have good communication skills +
- Has a calm and logical approach to problem solving
- Transparent
- Values what we have done and takes us to the next level
- Knows how to resolve political and small town issues +
- Respectful/Honest/Integrity/Sincere
- Sense of humor
- Able to delegate
- “Visionary and not reactionary”
- Can articulate our district mission and goals to the communities and staff +
- Is much more visible in our classrooms, school activities and in our communities+
- We want a Superintendent who wants to stay here for a long time
- Open minded and open to new ideas
- Not afraid to get “their hands dirty” and pitch in
- Approachable
- Has a thick hide
- Has experience in Special Ed and Budget issues
- Has Superintendent or high administrative experience
- Someone who cares about not only academic student progress but also emotional and social skills of our students
- Understands adult education issues
- Create a better and more effective student recognition program
- Someone who supports vocational education
- Can create a friendly environment in our schools
- We need a Superintendent with energy

*Survey Monkey Results for Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District/Sierra
County Office of Education
July, 2019*

*(NOTE—these responses have not been edited,
they are printed as entered by the stakeholders)*

66 Responses

Administrators

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- The community is very tight- knit and highly supportive of education in the schools. A foundation was formed of community members to fund items that are not covered in the budget. As a farming/ranching community there is great importance placed on "being a part", being present and there when needed.

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Many times the community will financially partner with the school district to purchase things that are needed to create the best possible learning environment. The schools are sensitive to the concerns of the community and respond to them in partnership. Collaboration is essential as all staff members wear many hats to keep this highly tuned machine all moving in the same direction with the common goal of continuity across all spectrums of education within the county.

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- There is some push back when new things are introduced. Allowing ownership of personal growth within the staff is key to building relationships. Micromanagement will alienate at lightning speed. Maintenance is a historical problem that was just starting to get under control and needs to be kept on top of. Storage space is a premium on the DO and elementary campus.

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- Micromanagement will alienate at lightning speed. Trust your team to do the best work and they will. Guide, lead and encourage all staff members to continue to grow professionally. Have strong collaborative skills and be willing to use them when partnering with the various community organisations and agencies that make this community and school district awesome. Exceptional budgeting skills and willingness to pursue additional funding sources to move the district out of deficit spending, while continuing to move forward with the educational goals and strategic plan that has been developed.

Classified Staff

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Our community is very tight-knit and family oriented. The people that live here pour into our community and wear many hats. Giving and serving is an essential part of living here.
- Our community strength is in its caring for each other. Being there for those in need.
- It is a safe loving environment for young people to grow up in. We have core values that have changed with the times.
- Small, caring, conservative, peaceful, supportive, family oriented ,rural

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- We have an incredibly dedicated staff who are willing to go above and beyond in many areas. They have many roles and carry a lot of responsibilities with a positive attitude.
- The good thing about our schools is the dedication to the students at every level.
- Small school size enables staff to watch out for any at risk behavior. The staff has known most of these kids since birth so they have a vested interest in the success of each child.
- Small class size. Teachers care about their students, supportive of independent study students, alternative continuation school with high success rates

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- Staff management, professional development, and overall low morale. Inclusivity is an issue, there is a reluctance to serve all students equally.
- Downieville has very little to no administration on site that can deal with staff issues. Student issues are barely dealt with as well. This really needs to change.
- Downieville has been let down for several years and the morale among the staff and the community is low. Downieville needs a voice in the district that is separate from the Superintendent who can not serve the interest of our school and the whole district. It does not work. We need at the very least part time principal-teacher who can support the school site in Downieville.
- Small town politics.. low income area...

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- Investing in our schools and community. Solid leadership qualities is a must. Lead by modeling expectations. Passion for education and improving our school/community relationship. Most of all, understanding the value of our students and having the desire to provide them with the best academic experience possible.
- It would greatly help if they were from this area or familiar with a small county and the diverse needs of this county.
- Open and honest. Faithful and committed to standing up for our teachers and aides.

Community Members

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Passionate, dedicated , loyal. Its family
- You know your neighbors, and as a whole they care and watch out for you and your children. Many community organizations support school programs and offer scholarships to graduating students.
- Second smallest populated county in California. Close knit communities thriving on volunteerism and tourists.
- the volunteers
- Our communities are remote and rural which provide a unique opportunity to be an inclusive and bonded community. Each community is self resilient and most have grown up together and known each other like family over the years.
- Small, quiet, conservative, trusting.
- Small, everyone knows everyone (almost). Little crime. Lots of open space and outdoor recreation. Can send a kid to the store without worry.
- Everyone know everyone, there is a lot of support.
- We're a small, rural community close to Reno and Lake Tahoe yet we support local businesses and encourage local school and community events.
- Rural high family values, not inclined to abide by big city ways
- It is a rural community. Rural communities are built on relationships -- not on business-style organization. You can tell what is important in these communities by looking at the notices in the Post Office. Meeting notices, etc. are posted on the bulletin boards, where you can look, if you're interested. Births, deaths, relational-type stuff is posted on the Post Office door, where everyone will see it. Anyone who serves in these types of communities must understand this basic fact of our life, and be willing to engage appropriately.
- Everyone knows everyone... we count on each other... your arch enemy will be digging you out of the snowbank.
- Downieville is now a small community that "thrived" during the Gold Rush and for many years after; however, with the absence of jobs for young people, the population has changed. Our school has suffered enrollment due to this lack of year-around jobs. 30-40 years ago we had an operating gold mine (Best Mines), a lumber company (Cal Ida), a large Forest Service Station, a P.G & E. crew, etc. Now we depend upon recreation for jobs, i.e. mountain biking, camping, etc. Many locals are retired and many homes have been turned into VRBO's. There is a high percentage of community support for the school - many "older folks" with no students in school attend the school functions, from board meetings to basketball games and fund raisers.
- Our community is community minded and strong. We pull together, especially when there is a need. We are in close proximity to so many gems and treasures.

- Our community is best supported by our locals who have lived here grown children here, it takes a community to raise a child and I entrusted my children to this amazing valley and the people who love it! It's peaceful on a Sunday morning, and people rally around people in need, even when they aren't directly connected to them. They are connected to someone who is, so they jump in and show love and support.
- Nice people, pretty place to live.
- close knit, supportive community
- - Friendly, hard-working community - Strong volunteerism - Naturally beautiful surroundings - Affordable housing - Quick access to shopping and entertainment in Reno - Slower pace - Welcoming churches - We get to live where others only vacation.
- The people! This community supports its schools and each other.
- We live in a beautiful area in the Sierra Nevadas with easy access to outdoor beauty, lakes and hiking yet within 45 minutes to Reno and Truckee.
- Rural values, attitudes, commitment to community
- The first name basis everyone is on with each other there aren't really strangers in the valley

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Amazing , only thing i would really want to change is give the middle school back to the kids. 6th straight to high school is tough.
- Teachers truly care about the students and their future. There is a friendly atmosphere of mutual respect in the classrooms.
- Schools have great ratio student to teacher, small schools, small classes and lots of community support.
- the teachers
- I believe the schools staff are very welcoming and have an understanding of our population.
- Student to teacher ratio, low incidence of bullying.
- Community involvement, strong agriculture department, good staff, lots of student opportunities beyond the borders of our valley.
- Students get individual care. We accept all students as they are, including those with special needs.
- Our schools are a top priority. We celebrate the arts and science and we support our schools with our foundation and with volunteers. We have a prized Future Farmers of America program and take advantage of our location with Learning Landscapes.
- Smaller, every student knows all others, small class size

- Speaking for Downieville School: it is a place where the students at every grade level are engaged in and invested in each others' education and lives -- across all grade levels.
- They are small classrooms, students receive more individual attention, we know the issues affecting their lives...the schools are part o the village..
- The low enrollement has resulted in "combination classes"; however, most teachers have made this work since the 1940's. The smaller classes give students, both elementary and high school, the benefit of receiving an excellent education. Elementary teachers even have aides for a portion of their day since they teach combination classes. Many teachers have used the aides to enhance and extend their students' learning. The community, as mentioned in No. 1 is very involved in supporting the school/students.
- Our schools, are good, but can be better. We need to strive to hold all stakeholders accountable from DS, teachers, staff, parents and students. We have programs that are good, but can even be better.
- The teachers and staff are usually invested and a true part of our community. They raised their kids here, or have lived here as a child themselves. We are seeing kids come back to be part of that. They continue to do quality work for our children because of the love for our area despite the lower salaries.
- They still exist.
- small enough that teachers know each student and family
- - Committed, excellent teaching staff - Positive leadership - Support for extras from The Sierra Schools Foundation - Long-term senior project program - High percentage of graduates attending post-secondary schools - Strong extracurricular programs - Superior technology use in classrooms (all 7-12 students given Chromebooks; all teachers use Smartboards with Apple TV projects being put in place) - School gardens projects - Award-winning FFA program
- Caring staff and well rounded curriculum. Love the garden and the way integrate local history.
- We have great schools with dedicated teachers and the rare opportunity to bond with students because of our smallerl class sizes. Our staff is talented and qualified in many different subject areas. We offer AP classes and great athletic programs at our high schools.
- Personal, generational, safe, clean, nurturing
- The schools selection of A.P courses is phenomenal and the majority of the teachers care about the kids

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- Brass tacks.. One person has shown passion and earned a respect level from staff, parents and most of all kids. We have a high college rate because of her. Megan Meschery is the person you need
- - Maintenance issues. The last superintendent promised a soccer field--never happened. There's a mound of dirt behind that field that should be spread. The football field needs to be redone--it's dangerous. Locker rooms in the high school need to be gutted and redone. LHS lockers and flooring need to be replaced. LHS needs new windows--the wind blows through the cracks. - Music. We need a music program. The Sierra Schools Foundation is willing to help support the hiring of a teacher. Studies show that math and science scores increase with the study of music.
- Everybody knows everybody..everybody has opinions.. there are no secrets in the county... the post office knows all...
- the need for more sports, and sport teachers
- I believe the candidate should be extremely aware of the Sierra County populations and rural lifestyle. With out this knowledge, a candidate with a large city mindset with quickly alienate and offend our families in Sierra County.
- Most teachers and staff are concerned hard working, some just want to complain, Newcomer parents want to spend school funds as if tax over rides were commonplace and acceptable
- Never enough money. Hard to recruit because few want to live in small communities with limited amenities. Sometimes hard to meet state requirements that were developed for large districts in more populated areas.
- Some parents are raging, and they will mutiny if they do not like you.
- We need qualified, certificated teachers. We value an open door policy and need a full-time, hands-on superintendent who is invested in and appreciates the community.
- A group of new parents that want to control the schools to reflect their ideals, big city ways
- While there is the east/west divide in the county, there is also a divide politically and socially. This evidences itself in what we want our children exposed to in the schools. For those like myself, we want our children taught the realities of climate change, the importance of immigrants to our communities and the nation, the dangers of unchecked gun availability, the historical inequalities in this country toward women, indigenous people, people of color, people who are "different". We want them to begin now to accept their responsibilities in the life of our communities, state, nation, and world.
- We have great people living here, most often the problems come from the parents more than the kids... so don't take it personally
- Due to the size of the district and the fact that there is a school in Sierra Valley and one in Downieville, he/she must divide his/her time to assist both schools. Community members would like to see a superintendent be involved with both communities as much as possible. Just because Downieville has fewer students (approximately 50) there are

needs, i.e. teachers must be supervised and they need support with students who have special needs and who have disciplinary issues.

- Complacency can happen and does in some instances. Think there needs to be a report card accountability yearly on teachers and staff. We have great teachers, but some are not feeling the support of the DO.
- Lower budget to work with. I don't like the wording of the question..."comes into the district" we need to hire from within because a strong sense of community is so important. Also not being able to pay these teachers like we wish we could, promoting from within would be nothing but a moral booster for those who work in our district, and they need every little bit of that!
- So many problems. No discipline, kids running the schools and the downieville school is out of control.
- he needs to be engaged with his community
- -Loyalton High needs improvements: flooring, new windows, new lockers, updated bathrooms, signage - We need a superintendent committed to living in our area. We do not want a commuter.
- Small communities... small town issues.Politics etc.
- We are a small district and you will get to know the students and staff well. You should be involved in local activities and move to the community.
- Funding challenges, willingness to embrace this lifestyle.
- The horrible vape and Tobacco culture at the schools.

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- They need to know how this valley works. Be from here, stay here not just be a stepping stone.
- In the decades we've lived here, we've had some really nice superintendents . . . oh, and one crook who went to prison. We need a leader--someone who can identify problems, identify a process to fix the problem (like a nonexistent soccer field) tell the business manager to find the money, and tell maintenance and admin to make it happen. There's been a lack of vision for many years. The superintendents run scared about money--when even recently there was nearly a 100% reserve. Fix up Loyalton High School--that would improve morale there tremendously with students and parents and make them proud of where they go to school. We need a superintendent completely vested in our community--willing to live here and be a part of the community. We want someone with VISION, courage and the leadership ability to make change happen.
- Be open to all communication, participate in community activities, friendly, gracious, tough skin, secure, confident, it's not personal except it is...your worst critic will help you dig out of the snowbank..
- currently lives or has lived in a rural area

- Our candidate should have a deeper understanding of the local population. Someone who may be local with experience would be ideal. But someone who has a grasp on the frontier rural lifestyle of both Downieville and Loyalton is a MUST!!
- Be committed to running a fiscally sound district not bending to the pressure of the few. Remember who pays taxes
- Community minded, open to learn, great work ethic, multi-tasker
- Locally invested. Hands on and approachable. Technology minded. Growth Mindset. Wants to live here with family.
- Strong leadership who appreciates the charm of a small community and makes a commitment to our students.
- Not be pressured by the new comers, stick to the basics. We have raised more successful kids per cap than most city schools
- While the administrative skills are important, it is equally (or perhaps more) important for the superintendent to be engaged with students, staff, parents, and community in person. We don't need an "office" superintendent. We need someone who is willing to mingle -- to patiently listen -- to be actively involved with the people.
- Calmness, community minded, focus on finding the solution not the problem. an important part of education is learning how to work/live/deal with people who may be difficult.
- Teachers need to be observed in the act of teaching and "good" teachers want this - they want to know what they are doing that is effective and what they can do to improve. Therefore, a superintendent needs to have the time and skills to do this frequently if there is no principal at the school. In addition, they need to support their teachers by helping them with "difficult" students who not only have learning disabilities, but also behavior issues. Mentoring and guiding teachers is key. As a retired teacher, who subs at the Downieville School, I am going to "check" Community Member in No. 5 because I am not full-time at the school. I taught in the central valley of California and mentored many teachers over the years.
- Honesty, integrity, the rules that govern the district be applied, as well as to be able to communicate effectively with all. To be part of the community and to live here. To not just be a job, to have this job as a passion.
- A strong sense of community/stakeholders, business sense, how to run and budget. The necessary credentials required, experience teaching, coaching, fundraising, to have an understanding of the whole picture and respect of their peers and colleagues. The desire to live in and be part of our community... not only them, but their family.
- Involved in the community, friendly, consistently shows up for work. **MUST BE A RESIDENT WHO DOESNT LIST THIER ADDRESS AS LOYALTON ELEMENTRY. DOES NOT HIDE TEACHERS WHO ABUSE STUDENTS IN THIER PREVIOUS DISTRICT. Cannot be a current teacher or admin of the district.**
- passionate about education
- - Vision and courage to dedicate funds to major site improvements - Insight to study and understand our unique budget challenges, not just rely on others' input. - Respect and

understanding of rural school issues - Willingness to seek out other funding sources so our students are competitive post-graduation - Dedication to attend events such as a senior banquet or play or Christmas program

- The superintendent needs to be a good listener, fair minded and supportive of staff. Parents and staff need to feel heard and respected.
- Be willing to work with the school board, be dedicated to improve the community and our schools. Be energetic and enthusiastic about our schools and support the great teachers we have.
- Local, established educator. You are never going to find a long term leader from any candidate who does not have ties to this valley. So tired of being a steppingstone district or getting the leftovers after more desirable locations have been filled. Let's create a legacy and hire from within.

Parents

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- We are a conservative community that share a belief of wholesome family values and upstanding moral conduct.
- This community, county helps each other. Very tight
- Very involved community groups and partnering agencies that support our students.
- We are small and take care of our community.
- We are a close, conservative community that values the family and honest work.
- We are small, rural and close. It's important to have an administrator that understands the importance of being involved in the community.
- We are a small town community where we know each other, are for each other, and are very much involved in the things that are important to us.
- Small and self sustaining.
- Small town values and respect. participation in community event and supporting families and children from here.
- This is a close family style community where everyone helps everyone. We need someone who knows this community and is familiar with what is needed.
- Low population. Lots of outdoor activities, camping, hiking, fishing, biking, ect..
- Civic minded, especially those who live and work here. Sometimes, those who work far away have a difficult time attending and supporting events, school, etc. Hoping more jobs become available here.
- It's small, mostly quiet, and great kids.
- Our community is very close and supportive. We have the ability to come together quickly when someone is in need or an issue arises. A large part of the community has grown up in some part of Sierra County or close by or has spent their childhood visiting surrounding areas. The people who live here have a deep understanding of hard work and preservation. They strive to build a strong future for their own children while still maintaining the things that make this county unique. I grew up in a larger city so when I came here I was surprised but the authenticity of the people who live here. The "good 'ole boys" still live here, a handshake seals the deal and you can always borrow a cup of sugar from your neighbor or someone in the neighborhood. It may sound cliché but whoever takes the superintendent job should have an understanding of what it takes to be inside a community like this because these strong values are what have kept this place so special. Additionally, the fact that one half of the county resides in forest and canyons and the other half is made up of agricultural lands also plays a role in how the schools teach and the programs each side chooses to offer.
- Our community is a small, intimate, hands on group. Everyone must pitch in and play multiple roles. There is a place for people's talents to be used in one way or another.

- We live in a beautiful place. Every season is unique and stunning and provides wonderful opportunities for recreation. It's affordable and close to larger towns for entertainment, shopping and culture. It is a wonderful, safe area to raise children in. There is so much to do for an outdoor-oriented person or family. Our community is tight knit, and full of caring people. We help each other when things go wrong. We celebrate together when things go right. We all work hard and share our love for rural living. You can count on your community here. This is a wonderful place to raise children, where opportunities to explore, live simply and live in a rare rural environment in California.
- Our community is very close and everyone is concerned about the education of our children.
- The community is close-knit and much of the town is involved with the school. It's very charming, rich in wildlife and history.
- Our community is close knit, where everyone is willing to lend a hand.
- It is a small, tight community where most people know each other. This allows us all to participate in raising the community's children and to feel empowered to help make decisions.
- People are willing to help when they know there's a need.
- Small community, which allows for unique intimate relationships between parents, teachers & administrators that is not afforded to larger communities
- Small rural conservative community.
- Both the east and the west sides of Sierra County are full of people committed to their public schools and supportive of one another. The community is a close one that celebrates its rural and mountain heritage and nurtures its children as the keepers of that heritage.
- Tight knit, strong sense of rural roots, caring people.
- Kids need resources to help get good paying jobs,
- Beautiful, agricultural, high mountain valley, small town community with generations of families whom have stayed in the area.
- We are a small, rural community with great people who are willing to put their time in to make things happen. We're close to Lake Tahoe and Reno.
- We have a nice quiet farming community. Everyone know each other and our kids are involved in numerous things together.
- Small town atmosphere allowing for a tight-knit community.

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- The parents are a large part of volunteering at the schools and play a significant role as the secondary educator in their child's education.
- Very focused and driven.. kids, parents and staff work well together.
- Our staff and teachers turn out very competitive, confident students ready for the next step in their lives.
- The school loves each and everyone of its students.
- A number of our community population has graduated from the very schools we are concerned with a fight for. Our teachers and school staff is small town connected, and very invested in their school, their students, and the well being of their community.
- Small and self sustaining.
- Small classroom ratios. Hands on teaching.
- With small schools these kids are very tight being together for basically 12 years. Staff have the ability to know each child and there needs easier then in larger districts. We need someone local who is aware of the staff and the students to have the trust and respect of the district, it's staff and students.
- Small classroom sizes. Close community.
- We have schools that are all unique,
- Small classrooms, great teachers.
- Our schools have recruited many teachers that grew up on either side of the county. The teachers know the children and the parents well and have a strong understanding of what is needed for their schools. Additionally, they strive hard to make the school atmosphere as educational and fun as possible while tailoring it to what children in a rural location need. Often times out of their own pocket when the district cannot fund extras. We are equally lucky that the Sierra Schools Foundation was formed to support any needs not being met as a result of restricted budgets. As a result the school has received; temporary contracted teachers, some of which have turned into long term positions, field trips to amazing locations, classroom supplies (3D printers, soil PH monitors, ceramics equipment, film and photo equipment and STEM based supplies) and better funded senior projects allowing our students to expand their minds and be more creative. On top of all of this our principals and school admin are supportive and knowledgeable in all areas and work well as a team.
- Small classroom sizes, high speed internet for online classes to make up for what we lack, all students make the team, art to FFA to coding, safe environment
- We have small class sizes, dedicated teachers, great administrative leadership. Parents have power and opportunity to be involved and effect change. School children can experience the wonders of a natural landscape. Our Ag program is strong, sports are strong and our STEAM programs are growing. Our teachers, admin and leadership are resourceful, tenacious and loving. Our leadership is generally responsive to community voices and needs. The Sierra Schools Foundation offers substantial grants to ensure

that 21st Century learning and educational experiences for rural students are not out of reach. With small class sizes, it's almost like a private school!

- We have a few dedicated teachers.
- The teachers care about each kid. It is a small school, but a large family.
- We have smaller classes than in many areas of California. Teachers are part of the community and know both the students and the families they come from. This allows more personalized teaching catered to each student.
- The teachers and principals know the students individually and genuinely care about each of them.
- Again, as with the community, pits schools are small. Class sizes average 25 students. As far as public schools go, this is comparatively small. Parents are fortunate to have personal relationships with teachers & administrators. I believe this is an asset to our children's education as they are known personally & don't get lost in large class sizes.
- Small schools, lots of sports opportunities. Lots of parental volunteers.
- The school community has many arms of support for kids, from parent organizations to its local education foundation to all of its excellent and dedicated teachers and administrators. The schools are extremely safe and every student can count on at least one trusted adult on campus. There is a strong push to support students in their connection to the land and to their mountain/rural roots, but we have great teachers and advisors who help students follow their college or career dreams. Lots of support!
- Strong teachers who care, amazing elementary school teachers.
- Small school but good kids need resources of larger schools to compete in college selections
- Caring teachers, small classrooms, great high school FFA program and vocational learning in wood shop. Strong, all-season youth sports. Supportive families.
- Our district is close knit and working hard to make sure our students have the very best of what they need for a high quality education. Sierra Schools Foundation is a wonderful support for our district.
- Having small schools is definitely an advantage for us. Our children are able to have more opportunities than most kids in bigger schools. I am very happy with our FFA program that many schools in our surrounding areas no longer provide. It gives the kids real hands on experiences that they can use in real life.
- Small class sizes allowing for more individual support.

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- The next superintendent needs to be one of a more hands on approach especially concerning the special education department. A pattern of abuse within this department should never be one of acceptance from any candidate no matter where they have served in this capacity before. They need to be fully vetted and lawsuit free from their employment regarding abuse concerning children. If there is a history of said abuse for

any candidate as noted above this should be a deciding factor to automatically disqualify them.

- We need a local candidate, someone that is here and plans to stay. Someone already respected.
- Ø Downieville School needs structure in the for of a principal or Vice Principal that is here at least three or four times a week. The teacher in charge does not work . The teacher in charge takes away from that teachers ability to stay engaged with their students and they do not have control over other teachers. Ø The district as a whole needs an administrator that recognizes the geographical and organizational differences between the Loyaltan and Downieville Schools and is equitable and representative to all concerned. Ø The Superintendent needs to be accessible to everyone and needs to be involved in the community. Living in the area would be a tremendous benefit. Ø There are differences in the schools and trying to have both schools on the same schedule and calendar is not necessarily the best way to go.
- We live in a small town and have very different children with all kinds of needs.
- The community is concerned about the scholastic agendas pushed by the state and the state overstepping the boundaries and rights of the parents.
- We need a superintendent who is involved with the community and is approachable.
- I believe our schools are in a transition right now where a lot of teachers are retiring, and it's in the best interest of the schools to offer incentives for fresh, excited and motivated teachers.
- This is a small conservative community that does not embrace the direction most California schools are taking. We want to stick with the basic fundamentals of education and educate our children to be productive hard working members of the community. Giving the students the tools and hands on experience in life time goals.
- Being part of this community is very important. Understanding the needs of all Of our students and how to address them. Giving our children the same opportunities that larger schools have. Letting our students have a variety of electives and credential teachers
- A superintendent needs to be familiar with the district, the staff and the students. The focus that has already been set in these kids. How this community works. They would be much more successful if they were local and aware and respected coming in. There are qualified candidates here that the students, staff and community respects.
- Parents don't care for core curriculum. Parents want family taught ethics out of the class room, kids don't need to learn about gender roles they should be learning more math and science. More creative ways to get parents involved in making choices in which books are used in the classroom. Make sure teachers are not feeling burn out in their job and that they have to tools they need to teach.
- The schools are focused on academics only and not on trade. It has been touted the number of LHS graduates attending college. I want to know the number that has completed their degrees. Several go for one or two years and then drop out. APS classes are small and these are the students who usually do not need additional help and yet other classes have over 20. Do not like how grades got blended and freshman were taking sophomore classes. Not appropriate for grade appropriate studies. Need to evaluate all

employees and make sure they are doing their job. Ask students at the LHS what they would like. If we listen, we can learn and if they felt like they are taken seriously they may try harder. Would like to see work experience brought back and encouraged to learn life skills.

- I'm not sure of many issues. The only one I see is some of the teachers may not be in the right fit of teaching for their teaching style.
- There are several issues that the new superintendent should be aware of and work to overcome:
 1. We need accountability in our finance department to ensure that our funds are being spent wisely. Since this is a rural county our schools suffer from not having enough money. The budget is severely restricted and the schools have not received enough support for hiring quality teachers, teacher program support and funding supplies and field trips. Additionally, maintenance on buildings should not be deferred if the funding is there to support it and all contracts considered for work should be awarded after a minimum of 3 bids have been received and carefully reviewed. Though this is a board issue, I feel that the previous superintendent made too much money for that position and that the applications should be carefully considered in this case as well. A reasonable amount of money should be paid for this position so that we can put the money back into the schools for our children.
 2. We are slowly building on this but we need more support for early intervention. There are so many children with disabilities and behavioral issues that we really need to focus on meeting their needs and offering programs that support them and take the stress off of teachers trying to teach a classroom of children. As of last year, this program has taken a forward step but needs to be at the forefront of the new sups mind when seeking funding and hiring aids.
 3. The technology departments needs to be reviewed. Our children have access to chrome books, which is amazing, but they are all too often able to access websites that are inappropriate for school use and use of children in their age group. Additionally, the director of this department is often seen off of school campus performing other personal activities during hours that I believe he is getting paid for. In areas where the district's money is being spent their needs to be greater accountability for duties performed and more campus oversight.
 4. As mentioned in #1, we need to be hiring quality teachers that have the desire to stick around on a more long term basis. In order to do so, it would be great if out of area packages were considered to make the job more desirable to a teacher filling the position. If there was incentives for a teacher to take a job in our rural community we might receive more qualified candidates. I also feel that better advertising would assist with this. Outreach to graduates with brochures highlighting why living here is ideal may assist with this.
 5. Last, there hasn't been enough support for the Downieville School, other than in the last year. They have lacked a full time principal and are in need of someone filling this seat who can provide support and guidance. This is a small school but should not be overlooked.
- Our district has lacked supervision and leadership. Our principals and other district admin have had to carry our superintendent, doing what he should have been doing. He didn't understand our community and what it needs, or put the energy in that we desire.
- Our district clings to a culture of mediocrity. That "good enough" is enough. Our district lacks vision and motivation to look for inspiration. Our district's culture can be subtly sexist and do not always equally afford women the same opportunities and recognition as men. Women often do much of the background work while men take the credit. There is

a lack of diversity and a lack of respect for the diverse perspectives. There is a lot of complaining that doesn't always lead to solutions, vision and action. Our district leadership often has ideological underpinnings that distort their decisions. Objectivity is not always a virtue and unchecked personal bias permeates decisions at times. That said, with the right person with a progressive vision, skilled, inspired leadership and diplomacy we can overcome these obstacles and issues for the betterment of our schools, and school children!

- Children being allowed to do whatever they want without consequences. Teachers allowing children to curse in class. Bullying. Teachers putting children's lives in danger on field trips.
- One challenge every school faces is meeting the needs of each student. It's a small school, but each class is well populated with multiple grades, and most individual students are at significantly different levels of skill. While there are practices in place to keep students from falling behind, over-achievers, especially in middle school math, are not progressed to advanced levels, but are asked to tutor or assigned other busy-work.
- We have a high number of students who come from difficult family situations. This is a lower income region and we wish to provide as much enrichment to the children as possible. I do not think we need someone to come "into" the district. It would be wonderful to find someone who is already familiar with the district.
- We desperately need to invest in more comprehensive learning options for students who are emotionally disturbed or have special needs. The policy for difficult children has thus far revolved around having them leave the county. Not acceptable.
- Be prepared for the community to take an interest in the decisions & discussions that a superintendent would be responsible for. We are unlike larger communities in that parents & staff are quite involved in issues at the administrative level
- We are a small conservative community with common goals and beliefs. We want to see a constant presence of our superintendent. Should be a local person.
- The superintendent should be aware that the community is very aware of how hard he/she works and how dedicated he/she is to the community and to the goals of the district. He/She should know that we have high expectations for our students, teachers, site admins and district admins and if he/she works hard for us, we will work hard for him/her. We DO NOT want a figure head that floats above the fray.
- Lots of recent turn around at the high school level, teachers retiring early, lack of strong leadership at LHS, the district made a huge mistake not hiring from within a few years back. The technology department is quite unfortunate, with an inept coordinator. My child's computer broke in January and it was never fixed. His son is the TA and he frequently alters servers, creates inappropriate network printer names and changes security/filters with no consequences. You will most likely see the tech coordinator out doing his lawn care business during school hours, and teacher are in need tech support.
- Variety of kids both under educated and ahead of their grade need resources to focus on both sets of students so that no one is left behind
- Need strong leadership, innovative ideas and local support to programs.

- It is important to the parents of students in this district that the candidate be willing to live in our district. It is important that the candidate understands the constraints facing our small district.
- We do have a lot of lower income families... the volunteering aspect with many of these families is not there. There are a small handful of parents who are willing to jump in and help. This handful of parents are involved with every volunteer program we have, unfortunately a lot of these parents are of the older kids and there are not a lot of help in the younger children generation.
- Several teachers are sub-par teachers but not addressed due to good old boy system.

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- The ability to listen, absorb and consider the concerns and ideas from the parents/community and to not put their own agenda ahead of what the community needs. Since this is in part a leadership role the candidate must possess excellent communication skills to staff and public leading by example with an open door policy. One example, better communication regarding agenda's at school board meetings in turn this may boost parental attendance.
- They have to know everyone involved and share the same focus.
- Engaged, accessible, support students teachers and staff.
- The candidate should be someone who can handle living in a small community. And well versed with different kinds of students.
- Good, clear, open communication. Someone who holds people (including students) accountable. Someone who upholds similar values as the community. Open-minded to parent input.
- They need to be knowledgeable about our county, live here and make themselves available to both the east and west side schools equally.
- I really desire to see someone local to our community, who knows the people, is invested in our community and it's population, and has a small town heart and desires to see our schools succeed, flourish, and evolve into its potential.
- Local person who understands this is not just an easy pay check in a small district.
- Caring, fighting for our children's needs and concerns. So someone who understands the dynamics of a small community.
- As stated before, it is simple.. There are qualified applicants right here in the district. It would be in the best interest of all involved to choose someone we can trust and respect and hit the ground running knowing the district already. Trusted by the community and the district and more importantly the students.
- The person should be approachable. It would be great if the candidate actually had children school aged where they relate better to the parents they work with.

- To have a back bone and follow the rules, regulations, etc. and not make excuses. To live here within the county with his or her family. To become a part of the community and be vested.
- Great leader, knows how to listen, think and then react to the decisions he has to face.
- The new superintendent should have a deep understanding of rural counties and the needs and issues that they face. Our schools struggle more so than others since the population base is on the moderate to lower income side. We need a strong advocate that is here for the long term and is willing to live full time within the county. Ideally, local preference should be a huge consideration when selecting the new superintendent since their personal knowledge of living in our rural county will assist them in making decisions appropriate for our schools. If not local, then someone who has firsthand experience in rural schools. We also need someone who is willing to outreach to locals for support and commentary when needed. Who is willing to spend 5 days a week, normal work hours, in equal parts of the county. They need a strong business and financial understanding and should be well versed in school policy. They should also be sensitive to local's needs and supportive to the teachers. It would also be helpful if they had previously been a teacher or school administrator since they would have better knowledge of what it takes to do those jobs.
- The superintendent should live locally, be physically and emotionally present, invested in our students and our area, be hands-on, be an exceptional leader, be extremely proactive on all fronts, be accountable, be energetic, and prove they will inspire!
- **THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT MUST BE LOCAL.** We need to hire within and reward the hard working community locals, rather than opting for the outsider "shiny penny" our district leadership is sometimes attracted to. We must hire someone who understands the unique position, politics and environment of our rural area. They should ideally be a teacher and someone who has administrative experience, but who is also hungry, motivated and inspired. We do not need a candidate who is using our area as a stepping stone or retirement opportunity. We need dedication and commitment. We need someone with a vision and educational philosophy. Someone who will effect much needed change. A leaders who is committed to growth, progression and moving forward. We must hire someone who will not accept mediocrity!!!
- Strong morals. Willingness to change even when met with resistance. Willingness to meet parent concerns with empathy instead of disdain.
- Patience and diplomacy, while effectively taking the lead and supporting a strong budget item for field trips and other outside experiences for the students. The teachers are used to taking the lead in the school and are effective, which can be a huge asset to the superintendent.
- They need to be willing to listen to many different perspectives.
- Be willing to partner with local agencies and nonprofits. Be active in getting to know students and their families, recognize the amazing work of the teachers and principals and celebrate them regularly. Do not be quick to take punitive measures against struggling families, build on their strengths instead.
- Personal communication skills, community involvement, fair & objective.

- Needs to understand the core values of a rural communities. We are very different than most countries in California. We need a local person who cares about our students, teachers and schools. Not s person just looking for an easy pay check. We need someone who is hands on a present. Not just an occasional visitor.
- Dedication to rural and remote schools Understands and supports both the east and the west sides of the county. Great communication skills Respectful of all members of the community Positive and friendly Genuineness and authenticity - not a politician. Open-minded and inclusive Able to make tough decision for what's best for kids Able to balance the budget without hurting kids.
- Someone with understanding of our strengths, rural needs. Someone who is local and has built their career supporting this district, who understands it completely and considers the needs of our unique students.
- Fair professional understanding but not “small town local favor focus “ treat everyone the same Forward thinker move the school into the next generation and improve test scores and recruit better staff
- Solid background experience in the education field. A person familiar with how small towns function, preferably a local with a commitment to the area. It would be nice to see more visible participation and approachability at school functions. A willingness to make tough decisions for the betterment of school morale and discipline of students. (For example, strict use of digital devices on campus.)
- The new superintendent should be willing to be present and all sites. He or she should be willing to walk through classrooms and see what is happening in the school, frequently. He or she should be willing to speak with parents and hear concerns.
- I think we need someone who understands how small towns work. In a small town new ideas are not always welcomed, we need someone who can help improve our schools by bringing in new programs and ideas to help our kids grow, and be able to do it by gaining the communities support. Someone who is energetic and passionate about what they do.
- Knowledge of small town atmosphere. Ability to break through and shake things up. Don't let teachers run the school, strong administrators needed.

Students

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- The community helps the school and the students.

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- It is small but it is a fun place to be.

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- Nothing

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- Be at every Community event Regarding school and district

Teachers

Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- Our community is small and loyal to those that have put in time and love to the people and children.
- Hard working middle class families. Community is struggling with economic problems as the tax base is close to nothing, We need more community participation to bring new businesses and growth to Loyaltan
- Small, rural community. Those that are involved are really involved.
- Our community is small and looks out for one another. We are loyal to those that put time and love into it. This community is a place people come back to to raise their families. It values hard work, tradition, and family. This community cares about their kids and the education they receive. They support local endeavors, businesses and love to live here.
- Quiet, no busy highways or traffic, beautiful scenery, lots of outdoor adventures, tight knit community
- I grew up in this community and I wouldn't trade it for the world. I moved away for 9 years to attend college but always knew I wanted to be back in the Sierra Valley. My family and friends are in this community and we have more families moving here and wanting to move here. Being small is a blessing and we need to be grateful for that everyday. Sierra Valley is gem that needs to be respected by all who live/work/visit here.
- Community=family
- Close knit Hard working Compassionate Volunteer based Parents of school age children interested and involved

Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

- We have the Sierra Schools Foundation that helps fund many amazing things for our schools, we have quality curriculum, and we have a bond and a relationship with our staff and admin. Who has led us all year in professional development and has encouraged us to grow as educators.
- Very dedicated teachers, So far class sizes have been kept low so students benefit from the teaching. Having aides in the primary grades is wonderful but there is also a need in the upper elementary grades. There is a warm friendly feeling in the schools. There is pride everywhere,
- Just like any school, there are some very strong, dedicated and loyal teachers. There are great programs that take place.
- Our schools have a group of dedicated and loving teachers. They are small in class size and provide aides in the grades tk-3, which is huge!! The students are not just considered one teachers each year, but all of ours every year. Our school encourages personal responsibility, respect for others, and fosters a love for learning. Our school grows kids that care abut each other, know the value of hard work, and work hard to achieve their

goals. They know that all kids learn differently and the school works hard to meet each student at their individual needs. This school is a special and unique place! Wouldn't want my kids anywhere else.

- Small tight knit group of staff, personable instructional time with our students. Lots of community support for fundraisers, activities and anything else we need.
- I attended the Loyaltown Schools from preschool to my senior year. I am still friends with those that I went to preschool with and still have relationships with my past teachers. I work in this district now and I feel so blessed to be part of this district. I feel that being small - I am able to be a better teacher. I don't feel lost in a sea of teachers and administrators. We get to know what are students need and we work hard to give them the tools they need to be successful all around - academically, socially, and emotionally. We need a leader who understands this aspect of our schools. Having someone who understands our community and schools needs is so important. Being small we can stay "old school" but because of the work and dedication by some of our leaders we are using technology in our classrooms, updating curriculum, and our students are going on awesome field trips and gaining amazing experiences.
- Individual education
- Dedicated staff in elementary and jr/high schools Small enough to truly give students one on one attention Parental involvement and volunteers

What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

- We tend to get caught up in hiring a “shiny” penny that costs a lot of money and doesn't understand us. Don't overlook the talent and ability we already possess in our district! Please!
- The emotional and personality of the students is very diverse. The child should come first and then the curriculum. Lifestyles and families are very different from 10 years ago. Classroom management is essential. Consistency is vital in order for learning to take place. Special Ed classes have been improved to meet the needs of the students.
- There should be more involvement from the top and more accountability. More support from leaders and a presence at our schools is needed.
- We need a superintendent who is a leader that is involved and present in our schools. This has been lacking for years. Someone who will walk through our schools and the kids will know them by name. Someone who is involved in the happenings at our school and is excited to be a part of it. This in turn will encourage the same type of leadership throughout all staff. Some staff are a little scared to change or push themselves to evolve their skills. They need encouragement and support to do so. Someone who supports our principals vision for our school and encourages her and supports her. Our principal has worked very hard to create a school that has a strong team, confident students, and provides all students with their individual learning needs. She has brought many new and great things to our school. The last several years I have watched her not be as supported as she should be, but she still leads us with great encouragement and support.

- These are small rural and remote tight knit communities. The district is spread out geographically which creates travel difficulties and communication difficulties between the sites. In the past there has been "rivalries" of sorts between the two schools but in recent times there has been great lengths made to create a more cohesive bond, but that being said it's important that the smaller school still be recognized and given priorities of time, energy and resources to help them be successful. Leadership is very much needed on a regular basis at the smaller school to facilitate proper instruction and communication between the sites and for moral and student and staff support among themselves and the community. We have also had an influx of special needs with our student populations that require more dedicated staff and services to provide all that is needed for the best education for our entire student populations.
- There are "small town" dynamics that can occur in our district and we need someone who can handle those situations. The teachers want to feel heard and supported and so do the administrators. At times I think there is lack of support from the top down which then effects the students which are the most important pieces to this puzzle in education. We need a leader who listens to the teachers and their needs. There has been a lack of support and presence in schools. When the parents and students see the superintendent - it creates of feeling of support and leadership for all. The teachers feel supported because they know their leader cares and wants to be part of the schools. Presence is huge!
- Small district with diverse needs
- Our school security/plan is lacking and we are behind in getting it up to date Elementary school needs an intercom system

What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

- First and foremost, he/she should like children. He/she should be open to suggestions from those in the trenches (the teachers). He/she should be willing to try these suggestions how to make the learning process more successful. An ideal superintendent should have classroom experience on both levels (elementary and secondary) He/she should be willing to spend some time in classrooms where he/she has had no experience.
- I would like for the new superintendent to be a participating stakeholder in this community, in this school district. This person needs to participate....not someone who sits behind a desk.... I would prefer someone who is local. If not local, then someone who is willing to move his/her family here. This should not be a stepping stone district. He or she needs to be approachable. Someone who is willing to listen to ideas with an open mind. Someone who is comfortable and confident. Most importantly, someone who is in it for the students.
- I feel strongly that the new superintendent should be a local candidate. Someone who has dedicated years of hard work and interest into our district. Someone who knows the teachers and the students and knows how we function and what our unique needs are. I feel our new superintendent should be someone who has already proven themselves to be invested in our community, our students, and in our teachers. The new superintendent should be enthusiastic and excited. I want them to plan on being involved in the schools and with the staff, not just a ruler over them. I want the new superintendent to have a

standard of excellence, Someone who encourages professional development, and pushes us outside of our box. More than anything, this person needs to understand rural living and live within the community as their main home.

- Ideally someone who has lived here currently or previously. if not, then a person who prefers super small communities and has experience in those types of districts. We need someone who is willing to take students needs and make those a priorities instead of politics and state testing scores. We need someone who views education as something we need to help instill a love of for students. We need someone who is dedicated to the success of ALL students regardless of their backgrounds, strengths or weaknesses and skill levels. We need someone who views growth mmindset and social/emotional needs as just as important if not more important than academic learning. We need someone who understands that a student has to have their Maslow's Heirarchy basic needs met before they can focus on their higher academic goals of learning. We need somone who isn't afraid to stand up for the students and parents regardless of what others think or be swayed by being politically correct. We want someone who is going to act, not just do lip service. We want someone to work with the community and parents but also hold them accountable to be sure their students are in class and working hard.
- We need a leader who -honest -present -assertive -open minded -experience in the classrooms -inspiring (attitude from the top will always trickle down to the bottom) - INVESTED - someone who understand/lives/lived in small schools and communities.
- Approachable
- Either locally based, or willing to make themselves and their families local Willing to visit classrooms on a regular basis Willing to make themselves known to staff Expect excellence (and communicate that clearly) from board members, administrators, and teachers