

Stakeholder Input Report for

**Howell Mountain
Elementary School District**
Angwin, California

submitted by



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Stakeholder Input to the Search for a Superintendent

Executive Summary

Howell Mountain School District

Between March 18 and March 29, 2024, Dr. Daniel Moirao conducted one-on-one, small group and virtual meetings to gather input from various stakeholder groups to the Howell Mountain Elementary School District. An online survey was also available to all stakeholders in the Howell Mountain Elementary School District community. Input was collected from approximately twenty-one (21) individuals face-to-face and virtually. There were no responses to the online survey. Input was gathered regarding the selection of a new superintendent for the District using four consistent questions:

1. Tell us what is good about your community.
2. Tell us what is good about the District and the schools.
3. What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?
4. What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills one should have to be successful in this position?

In the executive summary are the major themes that emerged from the input and a few representative samples of raw data. The final section of the report consists of actual responses by individuals who completed the online survey and responded to the same four questions. These survey comments are reported unchanged with the exception of omission of vulgarity and individual names.

Executive Summary

1. Tell us what is good about your community.

Supportive community

- Allows us to support each other, being rural

Safe neighborhoods, people always present

- Tight knit, everybody knows everybody

Neighbors help neighbors as we experience disasters

- Resilient and connected (challenges, fires) we have bounced back.

2. Tell us what is good about the District and the schools.

Family oriented

- Size you know everybody, every kid, and every family
- We are small

The school has worked to get the school more community-centered

- Everyone works to help each other

Leadership is accessible

- Current Supt. has been a stable force

Lots of mental health support

3. What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming to this position?

Size, district this is a small community

- Small communities can be challenging (blood-related, young friends . . . adults).

Superintendent / Principal are two different hats, under one title

- Know about everything, SPED, Budgets, be willing to learn all quickly
- Because it is small people have to wear many hats

Understanding special ed in the district

- Student population we have students with learning challenges. Huge range of learning needs.

4. What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful in this position?

Establish partnerships and relationships with other districts

- Work with other districts to know the expectations of the HS
- Work with the St. Helena school district
- Collaborator (opportunities with Boys and Girls Club. i.e., vans to get students out safely if necessary)
- It is a big valley, but disconnected because of the size of the valley

Wear many hats

- All hands on deck, your hands
- Know taking on Superintendent and Principal roles, doing a lot more than may anticipate
- Wear many hats, facility manager as well

Want to be a part of the community

- Understands and is close to the community serving
- Involvement in the school
- Be courageous to meet the community

Communication with staff, parents, students, and community

- Good communication
- Tactful communicator, facilitating conversations

- Be able to listen to input from the community, staff, students
- Open to suggestions
- Honor where we are and build
- Ask for input, not just their way
- Willing to understand to deal with small school and small district
- Collaborator (opportunities with Boys and Girls Club. i.e., vans to get students out safely if necessary)
- Be courageous to meet the community

Stakeholder Input Report
Raw Data

1. Share with us what is good about your community

EDUCATION PARTNERS (3)

- A lot of focus on the school as the main outlet for children
- Mostly an adult community
- Hiking, biking, mountain climbing
- Supportive community
- The whole child is a common word
- Want kids to be happy, and challenged and to grow academically and personally
- Care and concern for children
- School Safety
- Kids can walk to schools
- Community gives back to school
- This is a very special community
- It is rural
- Allows us to support each other, being rural
- We are often forgotten about because we are in the rural area of the country, thus we start to rely on each other

CERTIFICATED & CLASSIFIED STAFF (14)

- Safe, Safe neighborhoods, people always present
- Small
- Rural
- Somewhat diverse, racially, ethnically, socio-economically
- Tight knit, everybody knows everybody
- Neighbors help neighbors as we experience disasters
- Love for natural surroundings
- We are in the forest
- Lots of close by places for collaboration
- Massive network of trails that connect, hiking, running, hunting mushrooms, bird watching, bicycling
- Large aqua floor
- Close enough for the arts, a large arts society
- Seventh-day Adventist community

PARENT LEADERSHIP/COMMUNITY/COMMUNITY ADVOCACY GROUPS (4)

- Resilient and connected (challenges, fires) we have bounced back. Overcome our setbacks
- Angwin is diverse socio-economically, and ethnically.
- Bilingual community
- Lots of collaboration in the community with other groups Boys & Girls Club, and College.
- Lots of untapped opportunities

2. Share with us what is good about your district and your schools.

EDUCATION PARTNERS

- Size you know everybody, every kid, and every family
- Angwin has gone through a transformation
- Current Supt. has been a stable force
- Howell Mountain is growing as compared to other communities
- Academics have improved
- Howell Mountain is more affordable
- Students are more academically prepared
- A former student is now a teacher at Howell Mountain
- People who care about the school and community
- They are a small tight community, everybody knows everybody, for years

CERTIFICATED & CLASSIFIED STAFF

- The district is our school
- We are small
- Leadership is accessible
- Mixed grade classroom, older help younger
- Different groups of students play with each other
- Buddy reading, older with younger
- Family oriented
- Collaboration amongst students
- Music and arts program
- Easy for parents to talk to teachers etc.
- Community is supportive i.e., Greenhouse, spaghetti feed
- Fundraisers are open to the community, and they support the students
- Teachers are awesome, good collaboration with staff, and relationships among staff
- The school has worked to get the school more community-centered
- Students are free to be themselves and celebrate who they are
- Accepting of individual preferences
- Students are less judgmental
- School has realized the importance of social-emotional learning (value of school)
- Consistency of messaging throughout the school
- Growth mindset
- Try to help students in need when they need them (i.e., get jackets and shoes for those who need them, make certain everyone goes on field trips)
- Parents are not burdened to purchase classroom supplies. Leadership has been responsive to our needs
- Boys and Girls Club after-school program
- Teachers can teach in their own style, not micro-managed. Teaching reflects who we are
- Responding in real-time
- Flexibility, i.e., how quickly we reopened during COVID
- During COVID picking up food etc. Quick to respond, flexible, hands-on
- Everyone works to help each other

- Some parents don't want to send students to middle school in other districts
- Kids can be younger longer
- Trust between kids and staff
- The superintendent provides dinner when we have to be here late
- Lots of mental health support

PARENT LEADERSHIP/COMMUNITY/COMMUNITY ADVOCACY GROUPS

- Sweet school
- Wonderful teachers, staff, families
- Lots of support here
- Healthy school, trying to grow and do better all the time
- A lot of change and a lot of effort to improve
- Because of the size of school 8th graders know kindergartners by name
- Upper grade read with lower grade level
- The parent community supports each other
- Emphasis on art and music
- Field trips, get students off campus both locally and outdoor education

3. What are the issues a new superintendent should know about when coming into the position?

EDUCATION PARTNERS

- Size, district this small.
- Superintendent / Principal are two different hats, under one title
- Know about everything, SPED, Budgets, be willing to learn all quickly
- It is about the person and willingness to do everything and keep an eye on the future
- Could get gobbled up in the day-to-day operations of running a school
- All hands on deck, your hands, at all times
- All one SELPA, who can carry which programs
- Still limited with combined grade levels etc.
- Resources are somewhat limited
- Because it is small people have to wear many hats
- Resources beyond money are limited
- Size of the district
- Understanding special ed in the district
- How to work with Pope, Calistoga, St. Helena
- Possible interdistrict transfers
- Sometimes students need a fresh start, hard in a small district. How do you partner with other districts?

CERTIFICATED & CLASSIFIED STAFF

- Student population we have students with learning challenges. Huge range of learning needs.
- Having two grades to teach can be difficult

- Don't have all the facilities, and resources (i.e., Teaching assistant). We need a little more support than we have now
- New TK implementation, younger grades. Will be seeing young four-year-olds (maybe 3 years old)
- TK may need its own area
- Infrastructure needs to be repaired (HVAC, new roofs) Maintenance needs
- The bond issue that didn't pass
- Fundraising
- Grant writing
- Sensitive to various economic backgrounds, make it equitable
- Small communities can be challenging (blood-related, young friends . . . adults).
- Staffing for classified, para-educators, secretaries, substitutes
- Pay is low for substitutes, all salaries are low
- Need for para-educators
- Split classes and diversity here. Some families leave school because students not challenged
- A majority of students not reading at grade level
- Hard to keep the community feel when families choose to leave
- A number of natural disasters in the last few years
- Attendance is a problem
- Having staff to check on students who are missing
- Don't have sports programs etc. How can we get it? Collaboration
- Lots of Hispanic families, not enough translators
- More students need mental health support

PARENT LEADERSHIP/COMMUNITY/COMMUNITY ADVOCACY GROUPS

- Diversity is a challenge. 50% of students don't speak English at home and in the same class. You have students reading at the ninth-grade level. How do you serve all levels?
- High performers are not focused upon. Resources aren't allocated to overachievers
- Not the resources to get all student's needs met.
- The bond did not pass, and now we need financial support
- Pre-K needs the resources. This will be a challenge as the students get younger
- Financial challenges

4. What are the characteristics, attributes, and skills the new superintendent should have to be successful in this position?

EDUCATION PARTNERS

- Rally the troops and get the work done
- All hands on deck, your hands
- Level of diplomacy
- It is a big valley, but disconnected because of the size of the valley
- Establish partnerships and relationships with other districts

- Recognize that students matriculate into other schools. In Howell Mountain they have several options
- Work with other districts to know the expectations of the HS
- Things in the valley are different than in a large district
- Importance of Agriculture
- Communicate to the valley
- Market the school to the local community. The education the school provides will serve the students well once they matriculate to the high school
- Know the K-8 environment
- Understand what it means to be Basic Aid
- Opportunities to think outside of the box
- Wear many hats
- Don't have all the answers and be willing to ask colleagues, as a thought partner
- Want to be a part of the community
- Understands and is close to the community serving

CERTIFICATED & CLASSIFIED STAFF

- Navigating the political environment in high school
- Work with the St. Helena school district
- Grant writing
- Fund writing
- Managing writing (specifically for arts and music)
- Communication with staff, parents, students, and community
- Open door
- Flexibility
- Be able to pivot
- Know taking on Superintendent and Principal roles, doing a lot more than may anticipate
- Hands-on
- Willing to step in
- Optimistic
- Lots of experience, know how to operate systems
- Supporting teachers and staff in their endeavors
- Work-life balance and appreciating that staff has a life beyond teaching
- Good communication
- Tactful communicator, facilitating conversations
- Be honest but be tactful
- Be transparent
- Be kind
- Non-condescending
- Humble
- Be flexible with your day
- Know how to delegate responsibilities
- Supporter, cheerleader
- Sense of humor

- Build camaraderie
- Be able to listen to input from the community, staff, students
- Open to suggestions
- Honor where we are and build
- Ask for input, not just their way
- Coffee talks
- No surprises

PARENT LEADERSHIP/COMMUNITY/COMMUNITY ADVOCACY GROUPS

- Think outside the box, to get resources
- Experience with grant writing, know what is available in terms of money
- Superintendent/Principal role
- Involvement in the school
- Go in and sub for the day
- Willing to go through the unique hassles of the area and keep students in school
- Small district experience
- Willing to understand to deal with small school and small district
- A creative out-of-the-box thinker.
- Able to plan ahead, i.e., we have had many power outages, thinking about how to get a generator
- The facility is rural, know about wells.
- Wear many hats, facility manager as well
- Collaborator (opportunities with Boys and Girls Club. i.e., vans to get students out safely if necessary)
- Working on professional development for teachers, Continue to elevate teachers
- Be in the classroom, know the school well, and know what is happening
- Be courageous to meet the community