

## CHAMPLAIN COMMUNITY FORUM 1/30/2020 (59)

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**Your responses to these questions help us recruit quality candidates.**

### **#1: What makes your community a good place to live?**

- 1 Neighborhood schools
- 2 Strong sense of community
- 3 The wide diversity of people
- 4 Vibrant small city - festivals, races, family friendly events
- 5 College town
- 6 The lake
- 7 Good school district, BCL program, Maker's space at school, farm to school program
- 8 Local food and drink
- 9 Healthy, active lifestyles
- 10 Sense of community, people care
- 11 Quality of life
- 12 Community-minded, everyone cares
- 13 access to outdoor recreational activities
- 14 Economic and political engine of the state
- 15 There is an opportunity for people to access politicians and voice their thoughts
- 16 Vibrant arts culture
- 17 Thoughtful leadership process in many levels of our government
- 18 Engaged electorate
- 19 there are many cultural opportunities due to proximity to Montreal and Boston
- 20 Good track record of approving of school budgets
- 21 There is an international airport here
- 22 City is committed to improving our infrastructure.
- 23 Historically, Burlington voters have been supportive of schools
- 24 In 10 minutes, you can be in the country
- 25 Has an urban center in a suburban setting
- 26 Good hospital
- 27 Amazing farm-to-table culture that engages with the community
- 28 Bike path; access to outdoor recreation
- 29 Graduates do well.
- 30 Parents want good things for their kids but are realistic about expectations
- 31 It's physically beautiful
- 32 Becoming increasingly bike friendly
- 33 There is a sense of history in the area
- 34 Politicians are accessible in a down to earth kind of way
- 35 Connections to the universities (UVM, Champlain)
- 36 The sidewalks get plowed

- 37 There is not a competitive environment for high schools/few private schools
- 38 A lot of people here have deep community roots and come from families who have lived here for generations
- 39 Burlington is the big leagues in Vermont; it is a great place to live and work with an exceptional quality of life
- 40 Strong queer community.

## **#2: What makes this a good school community - for Students and Staff?**

- 1 Strong family involvement
- 2 Magnet schools are an asset
- 3 Strong teaching staff
- 4 Grassroots nature of school - community members help out with a lot of engagement
- 5 The diversity makes BSD unique in Vermont
- 6 Neighborhood schools build community
- 7 Many opportunities for students
- 8 Schools have good synergy and collaboration with wrap-around services.
- 9 Good pay for teachers.
- 10 Engaged students. Student voice is valued.
- 11 Flexibility for students within the system; taking care of all kids
- 12 Innovative for the potential for more
- 13 Community, neighborhood schools.
- 14 Music programs
- 15 Magnet schools are an asset
- 16 Community partnerships
- 17 Exposure to diversity, many kinds. Racial, gender, ability, socio-economic
- 18 Theater and drama program
- 19 Most people send their students to neighborhood/public schools
- 20 Incredibly caring and kind community
- 21 Faculty has a strong community of support
- 22 Easy for families to get involved
- 23 There are community schools-many of them are in walkable distance
- 24 After school programs are great.
- 25 Kids can walk to local schools or take public transportation
- 26 Great preschool program, EEE
- 27 Librarians amazing. Enrichment activities.
- 28 A culture of innovation...in pockets
- 29 Burlington has a culturally diverse population which exposes kids to diversity that they would not experience in other schools in VT
- 30 High school has good track record of student going onto post-high school programs
- 31 Burlington Tech Center has good reputation of programming
- 32 Classes (regardless of grades) interact
- 33 Schools leverage their immediate local area

- 34 School board is dedicated and hardworking, communicates well.
- 35 There is some choice for schools - not just limited to local.
- 36 There are ton of amazing teachers and staff
- 37 There are ton of volunteers
- 38 Very good communication from the district & schools
- 39 Burlington is highly coveted as a place to work and live; therefore they have neighbors and colleagues for many years
- 40 There is racial, ethnic and socio-economic diversity
- 41 There is a strong union that protects salary and benefits
- 42 High school offers a wide range of programming
- 43 After school programming accommodates working parents
- 44 District finances have been well managed for the past few years

**#3: What are the issues a new Superintendent must know as they come to the district?**

- 1 Community involvement can be intense
- 2 Some groups in the community need to be engaged
- 3 A little knowledge can be a dangerous thing (parent involvement). Can overpower other voices. Only voices are the upper, educated class. How to figure out how everyone has a voice.
- 4 Wide array of needs and lack of resources
- 5 Schools provide many social services
- 6 PBL controversial in our district. Lots of questions around that. How to best serve students move into higher education. Transcripts not well understood.
- 7 There has been a lot of change in leadership in the last few years
- 8 Governance is an issue. School Board changes all the time. AOE interaction is different in every community. A lot of local control.
- 9 Huge disparity among non-white students receiving a significantly higher levels of punishment than their white peers.
- 10 There needs to be a new Burlington High School; the bond passed but work has not commenced
- 11 There is always an overwhelming need of services when kids enter the district.
- 12 Because of diversity, there is a language barrier to overcome when the district and schools are communicating.
- 13 Big changes in special education funding. Students with IEPs aren't getting what they need already.
- 14 VT is the 7th highest taxed state in the nation; Burlington is one of the highest taxed cities in the state; people are suffering from tax fatigue
- 15 Need for improved coordination between High School/Middle Schools for curriculum. Example: mandated HS freshman Earth Science that has significant overlap with Middle School coursework
- 16 Our policy (4500) is not legal. When can hands be on, when off, when can constraints be used, seclusion, etc.
- 17 The state, as a whole, is grappling with proficiency based grading

18 Need for improved communication/coordination between departments at the HS  
19 Complication around implementation of state mandates; teachers and parents  
are confused about them

20 In high school, the shrinking number of honors classes, gaps in schedules.  
21 Burlington is a very political city, need to be aware of the multiple facets that  
need to be recognized and kept in balance.

22 Both Central Office and the campuses need better oversight.  
23 Guidance issues from the past few years.  
24 College fact sheet hasn't been accurate the past few years.  
25 The High School renovation project is currently estimated above the bond-  
approved amount.

26 Need for enhanced physical security at schools  
27 The superintendent is required to live in the school district so that he or she has  
skin in the game

28 Transgender students feel some discrimination (elementary and middle)  
29 The middle school foreign language program is severely lacking, and absent in  
the elementary schools

30 Teacher morale is low for many teachers due to lack of engagement and  
transparency. They don't feel valued or heard.  
31 Parents choose alternative, out-of-school programs because opportunities are  
not being provided in the elementary schools

32 Television is used for programming for a surprising amount of time.  
33 Athletics: We don't have the kind of programs, performance, or leadership that  
we should have. Include athletic directors just as you would teachers in  
curriculum and learning.

34 Burlington is a very political city, need to be aware of the multiple facets that  
need to be recognized and kept in balance.

35 Need to look hard at the entire K-12 curriculum  
36 The super should be aware that there is a new guidance counselor team at the  
high school, and ask why

37 Burlington Technical Center and BHS are competing for dollars  
38 Some schools allow kids to have access to their cell phones during class time.  
39 District operates in silos. No alignment or synergy with the good things or bad  
things so things get addressed at the higher level. System thinker is needed!

40 "Initiative Fatigue", lack of holistic approach to new programming  
41 Proficiency-Based Learning is a hot topic in Vermont, especially Proficiency-  
Based grading. Implementation at BHS was lacking, was not done consistently.  
42 Culture around our schools, don't move teachers around. Teachers were  
disempowered. Give teachers a voice in the work and to where they will go.  
43 There could be greater infrastructure/personnel to support quality instructional  
practices in all subjects

44 Aging buildings. Some bathrooms have no sinks (Champlain).  
45 BHS has had a rough few years, especially in terms of changing leadership &  
guidance department.

- 46 Shrinking student population and the VT population (taxes to support schools).
- 47 There have been a lot of changes in leadership over the past few years, especially in principal positions.
- 48 No clear vision for teacher Professional Development
- 49 Climate surveys that were recently done indicated staff, teachers, and parents showed many areas to work on. Questions were terrible too.
- 50 Special Education at BHS needs an assessment
- 51 State aid for schools is dwindling
- 52 The Agency of Education is concerned about our district and there have been / are multiple investigations.
- 53 Student teacher ratio in elementary schools is very high
- 54 Parents/community members are opinionated
- 55 Recent history in the district has been rocky in terms of district leadership
- 56 District has history of turmoil
- 57 Racial conflicts in our schools and how they get addressed.
- 58 Role of police in schools. Level of involvement. Which children?
- 59 Lots of tension seen among staff all the time. What does this demonstrate to students?

**#4: What skills, qualities, characteristics will the new Superintendent need to be successful?**

- 1 Understanding of proficiency-based instruction, PLPs and a willing to support and lead
- 2 Ability to have difficult conversations around race, inequality, culture
- 3 Willingness to support teachers and staff, listen to them and to lead
- 4 Previous superintendent experience is essential
- 5 Ability to manage resources and be transparent about choices
- 6 Be prepared to work in a district going through a major capital plan
- 7 Each school is a unique community center within a larger ecosystem
- 8 Willingness to learn about magnet schools
- 9 knowledgeable about the various ways students and staff self-identify
- 10 If something is not working, ability to address problem and make change
- 11 transparency and communication skills are important
- 12 knowledgeable about policy governance
- 13 Ability to leverage community partnerships
- 14 Data-based decision making
- 15 Sense of humor
- 16 Ability to meet the needs of students with disabilities
- 17 Aware of the various programs that support families, ie. Parent University
- 18 Experience with technical education
- 19 Skilled in SEL and trauma-informed educational practices
- 20 Good listener.
- 21 Ability to make decisions.
- 22 Leader.

- 23 Understands equity.
- 24 Needs to be internally focused: how can we get systems aligned, be in the schools, talk with teachers, high expectations, holding everyone to the same standard.
- 25 Willingness to learn
- 26 Someone who can bring in a sense of calm and stability
- 27 Follow through.
- 28 Community builder who involves students, parents, faculty, and all stakeholders.
- 29 Someone who works well with our school board.
- 30 A learner themselves.
- 31 Stability and willingness to stay long term. Not just a stepping stone. Committed to our community.
- 32 Come with core beliefs with what education means while also taking the time to understand our community and our values.
- 33 The super must provide appropriate educational opportunities for a wide range of abilities
- 34 Creative problem solving and the courage to stay when something isn't good.
- 35 Good communicator both written and verbal with ALL stakeholders internal and external.
- 36 Excited about students and learning
- 37 Facilitate a more inclusive hiring practice and ability to sustain and maintain an inclusive staff
- 38 Advocate for strong academics for all students.
- 39 A manager and a leader who understands how districts change
- 40 Knows how to ask for help and support
- 41 Confident enough to delegate and trust their managers/staff can execute
- 42 Well spoken in crowds but also 1on1
- 43 Good facilitator of broad communication
- 44 Focused on growth going forward; not looking backward
- 45 Focused on engaging and creating allies across the community
- 46 A good politician for working with people outside the district, and a good manager within the district
- 47 Knows education
- 48 Effect positive change with excitement, energy and verve
- 49 Respect for classroom teachers and building principals
- 50 Ability to build morale / social capital
- 51 Must be resilient
- 52 Better help getting kids into college. Tests to take, courses, no guidance, no rides to tests or college fairs, the application process.
- 53 Understands and promotes excellence in education. Meets every kids at where they are.
- 54 Encourages collaboration
- 55 Being charismatic would help
- 56 Someone who is visible in the community

- 57 Prior super experience mandatory.
- 58 Thinking about education for global citizenship
- 59 Good experience in dealing with diversity issues and programs