



**Mansfield Public Schools  
Superintendent Search - 2015**

**Leadership Profile Report**

**Appendix B:  
Focus Groups Meetings  
Data Charts**

**May, 2015**

# Focus Groups Data Report

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF FOCUS GROUPS PARTICIPANTS

In addition to collecting data via the online survey, the consultants invited Mansfield employees and community members to participate in focus group meetings which were conducted on April 27, 28, and 29, 2015. Participation in a focus group was strictly voluntary.

The focus group participants included: (1) school faculty and staff from the middle school and three elementary schools, (2) district and school-based administrators, (3) central office staff, (4) parents, (5) Mansfield Town Council, (6) Mansfield Human Services and Youth Services Directors, and (7) senior citizens.

The chart below provides an overview of the focus group attendees clustered into the categories that represent the target audiences of the focus group meetings. A total number of ninety-seven (97) people participated in the focus group meetings.

Categories of Participants Attending Focus Groups	Number of Participants in the Category	Percent of Total Number of Focus Group Participants
District and School Administrators	6	6%
Middle School Faculty and Staff	14	14%
Elementary School Faculty and Staff	19	20%
Central Office Staff	6	6%
Middle School Students	19	20%
Mansfield Town Council	6	6%
Mansfield Parents	20	21%
Human Services and Youth Services Directors	2	2%
Mansfield Senior Citizens	5	5%
<b>TOTAL PARTICIPANTS:</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100%</b>

## METHODOLOGY

The focus group meetings were designed to bring participants together as members of a specific category of stakeholders, e.g., parents, students, administrators, faculty and staff, district office staff, and town officials. Persons who attended a focus group meeting could have been categorized into more than one of these broad groups; however, no identification of participants beyond the general category of the intended group meeting category was attempted for the purposes of collecting focus group data. In that Mansfield is a relatively small community, some participants could have been both school employees and parents, for example, or town residents and school employees.

The focus group meetings ranged from 45 to 60 minutes to accommodate schedules of the participants and to avoid interruption of the instructional day. The consultants, using a PowerPoint presentation, began each focus group meeting by introducing the search firm and consultants, explaining the intended purpose of the meeting, reviewing protocols for data collection, and providing a set of guiding questions to be explored in the discussion. Participants were asked to respond to the broad questions presented in the next section.

### Focus Group Discussion Questions

- 1. What are your district's greatest strengths and why would a new superintendent want to come to Mansfield?**
- 2. What should a new superintendent know about your district's greatest challenges and barriers to success before accepting the responsibility of leading this district?**
- 3. What are the most important leadership attributes and personal characteristics that the new superintendent needs to possess to be successful in Mansfield?**
- 4. What is your vision for the Mansfield Public Schools?**
- 5. What additional comments do you have?**

Following completion of all of the focus group meetings, the C.E.S. consultant (Dr. H. Kaye Griffin) and her assistant (Matt Engelhardt) compiled and organized the data generated in the focus group discussions. The responses, as shown on the following pages, represent the thoughts, ideas, and comments of those persons in the school community who chose to attend the focus group meetings and are written in their original form dictated by the group participants.

The C.E.S. consultant recognizes that opinions and ideas of some subsets of the school community and the Mansfield community-at-large population are not represented in the information/data collected in the focus groups. Therefore, the consultant recommends that additional efforts be made in the future to hear from more voices in the community, particularly in regard to the challenges facing the school district and the educational experiences of all the students.

## Mansfield Focus Group Participants' Aggregated Comments for Question #1

Focus Group Category	<i>What are the school district's greatest strengths and why would a new superintendent want to come to Mansfield?</i>
<b>District and School Administrators Participants = 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools are student-centered and put the needs of children first</li> <li>• Education is a priority for the community</li> <li>• Students are creative, curious, kind, and eager to learn</li> <li>• Parents are strongly supportive and highly involved in their children's education and school activities</li> <li>• Staff are dedicated and committed professionals focused on supporting the positive growth and development of the whole child</li> <li>• Staff members are experienced and experts in their content areas</li> <li>• Prekindergarten to grade 8 district offers a strong sense of community</li> <li>• School community fosters collaborative connections with all stakeholders</li> <li>• Connections exist between the school district and local universities</li> <li>• District provides strong special education support services</li> <li>• A diverse student population exists, in many different respects(culturally, socioeconomically, historical, multinational)</li> </ul>
<b>Middle School Faculty and Staff Participants = 14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our music programs, language programs, enrichment programs, and athletics are awesome! The breadth of programming is unique and worthy of support</li> <li>• Systemic focus on excellence</li> <li>• Adults working in district seek the same excellence that we strive for our students; we work with amazing, devoted professionals</li> <li>• We get the resources that we need and if we lack them, we will find ways to meet their needs (i.e. individual students will get instruction time/scheduling to facilitate their needs</li> <li>• Community support is very strong – parents, taxpayers, parent organizations</li> <li>• UConn and ECSU provide important resources</li> <li>• Students take learning seriously and enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• Culture of support for all students with a focus on the whole child – kids have places to go where they feel respected, connected, and valuable</li> <li>• Curriculum goes beyond the test and students have clear guidelines, with cross-disciplinary teaching and collaboration</li> <li>• Positive climate and an invested staff</li> </ul>
<b>Elementary School Faculty and Staff Participants = 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated and highly skilled staff</li> <li>• Historically, great relationship between the school district and a supportive town</li> <li>• Small schools create a family feel – everyone gets to know students very well and it's very hard for kids to get lost in the shuffle</li> <li>• Early identification of special needs students</li> <li>• Well staffed – kids get plenty of support through teachers, paraprofessional / paraeducators, specialists, and more</li> <li>• Rich and diversified curriculum of programs – art, music, languages, and more all possible because of a supportive tax base</li> <li>• Specialists are supported when they seek out professional development opportunities</li> <li>• District supports para-educators in going to workshops and conferences – professional development opportunities outside the district</li> <li>• Affiliation with UConn and a highly educated, diverse community dedicated to education</li> <li>• Family involvement in the schools</li> <li>• Historical support for the education budget</li> <li>• High standards for the people who work here as well as student achievement</li> <li>• Award-nominated schools, including Goodwin as a Blue Ribbon nominee and Mansfield Middle as a past Blue Ribbon School winner</li> <li>• PreK - 8 system with a good breadth of programming</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socioeconomically and culturally diverse population in the community</li> <li>• Good access in schools to modern technology</li> <li>• Students are eager learners who embrace new knowledge</li> <li>• Majority of community is open-minded</li> <li>• Experienced, highly qualified teachers and staff who are very committed to the district and have a passion for teaching and learning - willing to lead, create, and be part of moving the district forward</li> <li>• Largely supportive community that values education</li> <li>• School district values the education of the whole child</li> <li>• Diverse student body</li> <li>• UConn and ECSU are assets to the community – resources include interns, student teachers, grants offered to Mansfield staff</li> <li>• Small neighborhood schools</li> </ul>
<p><b>Central Office Staff Participants = 6</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community really cares about education and will support education financially</li> <li>• Shared services between town, board, and RSD 19 (custodial, maintenance, technology, fiscal, and public works)</li> <li>• Staff is professional, strong, capable, passionate, and caring at all levels</li> <li>• Great students who for the most part are engaged and want to learn</li> <li>• Connection to UConn and ECSU</li> <li>• Very diverse community with lots to offer different cultures; a good blend of people from all over the world</li> <li>• Town and the board work collaboratively and provide a strong team environment at all levels</li> </ul>
<p><b>Middle School Students Participants = 19</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local, all schools are nearby</li> <li>• Lots of options like music, art, tech education, sports, etc.</li> <li>• Share a town with UConn – provides some advantages</li> <li>• Schools offer a good education to students</li> <li>• Advanced math programs for students</li> <li>• Most teachers are very experienced</li> <li>• Band, orchestra, chorus – the arts are strong</li> <li>• Many options for foreign languages (Latin, German, Spanish, French)</li> <li>• Extracurricular activities are plentiful</li> <li>• Good lunch choices in cafeteria</li> <li>• Lots of good equipment to use in gym class</li> <li>• Teachers challenge us to do well</li> <li>• Academic support for students who need it</li> <li>• Good amount of hands-on activities</li> <li>• Late transportation provided for afterschool activities</li> <li>• Lots of sports teams with good resources and fields</li> <li>• Facilities and fields are well maintained</li> <li>• Educational field trips enhance topics</li> <li>• Students have option to attend courses at E.O. Smith High School</li> <li>• International exchanges with China and Germany</li> <li>• People in town are generally friendly and connect with others</li> <li>• Healthy atmosphere</li> <li>• Guidance counselors and peer mediation groups are helpful</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mansfield Town Council Participants = 6</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is a community that is hugely committed to education</li> <li>• Noted for having a very good special education program- draws families to town</li> <li>• Quality of the classroom teachers is extraordinary and teachers are very involved with the students - knowledgeable about content, techniques, pedagogy</li> <li>• Warm classroom environment, especially at elementary level</li> <li>• Very diverse community with a university as a main employer ; people come here from all over the world</li> <li>• Broad scope of educational levels (from very high levels to typical of any community) and socioeconomic diversity</li> <li>• Breadth of the education program, including foreign languages, enrichment programs, and more</li> <li>• Parents are strongly involved in the school system</li> <li>• Great maintenance of the schools – they look wonderful and people love them</li> </ul>

<p><b>Mansfield Parents Participants = 8</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of the teachers, para-educators, staff, and administrators</li> <li>• A good contingent of parents who are very involved in positive ways to support the schools and fight for the school system; parents raise money to support educators’ needs</li> <li>• Partnerships with UConn – various programs and faculty, such as Neag and many more</li> <li>• Plenty of good academic and extracurricular activities provided to Mansfield students, such as an award-winning robotics team</li> <li>• Capacity for untapped potential – resources exist that have not yet been utilized</li> <li>• Rural, town, and city – a great blend</li> <li>• Small class sizes and small schools</li> <li>• Compared to neighboring towns, school system is well funded</li> <li>• Town has reputation for quality special education services – special education students are well integrated and included</li> <li>• Occupational therapy, speech therapy, and physical therapy all provided to students who need it in general as well as special education</li> <li>• Enrichment programs at all four schools are very strong with good teachers</li> <li>• Mansfield schools have superior teachers with vision for each child – want each child to reach full potential</li> <li>• Administration supports teachers as well as students</li> <li>• Strong resource of very high per-pupil spending (when allocated appropriately)</li> <li>• Location – Ability to have strong opportunities with the universities and the community</li> <li>• Strong internship and teaching relationship with UConn, resulting in more adults in the classroom</li> <li>• Strong sense of community, including smaller classrooms and schools and a wide variety of programs to engage students</li> <li>• Small class size which is so important in the early years – teachers can know children individually</li> <li>• International diversity within the community – kids from all over the globe in a small rural pocket of Connecticut</li> <li>• Town has historically been committed to the school system, which is a draw to families into the community</li> <li>• Two new elementary school principals, offering chance to help rebuild the climate</li> <li>• Various programs for students of all grade levels – great depth and breadth of the programs</li> <li>• Success and achievement of students goes beyond academics- broad range of indicators and range of second language choices</li> </ul>
<p><b>Human Services and Youth Services Directors Participants = 2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town invests a great deal in education – as an education community, we very much value schools and educational services in Mansfield</li> <li>• Ideal district for a hands-on candidate</li> <li>• UConn and ECSU connection is very beneficial – great pool of student volunteers who serve our children</li> <li>• Rural character of community allows parents more involvement, which the schools and town foster well through different activities</li> <li>• Future school renovations and improvements provide an opportunity for a superintendent eager in taking on that role</li> <li>• Great school administrators, teachers, and staff</li> <li>• Excellent interface and shared services between the school system and the town (i.e. social work services)</li> <li>• Good staff retention rates – easy to recruit good teachers when vacancies are available</li> <li>• Opportunities for quality extracurricular activities and educational field trips as the result of a major university in our community</li> <li>• Principals make themselves accessible and class sizes are small</li> <li>• Special education students are well served and staff is well equipped to handle special education</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mansfield Senior Citizens Participants =</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UConn is a strength</li> <li>• People move to this community because of the quality of education</li> <li>• Teachers work as a team and education is above and beyond what is offered in other communities</li> <li>• Individual teachers are a strength</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

## Mansfield Focus Group Participants' Aggregated Comments for Question #2

Focus Group Category	<i>What should the new superintendent know about the district's challenges and barriers to success before accepting the responsibility of leading this district?</i>
<b>District and School Administrators Participants = 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for a cohesive and consistent curriculum development and review plan</li> <li>• Meeting professional development needs</li> <li>• Keeping up with modern technology is a challenge</li> <li>• Facilities are outdated</li> <li>• It's a challenge to maintain a progressive budget while taking tax increases into account</li> <li>• Changing demographics and our need to grow and respond to their individual needs</li> <li>• Meeting state and federal educational mandates</li> <li>• Prioritization of increasing number of educational initiatives</li> <li>• There is a need to foster greater articulation with E.O. Smith High School and the communities that it serves</li> </ul>
<b>Middle School Faculty and Staff Participants = 14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum can be disjointed as the result of a good level of autonomy from classroom to classroom – horizontal and vertical alignment challenges exist</li> <li>• Professional development scheduling needs to be equitable and relevant to all participants</li> <li>• Administrative trust must be reestablished within the community</li> <li>• Changing demographics impact students and learning on a daily basis – need to know how things are changing so teachers and administrators can prepare accordingly</li> <li>• Fighting the trend of reducing scope of program to focus solely on test – we've been successful, and despite the expense, it has been well worth it</li> <li>• Facilities are inefficient and outdated</li> <li>• Five consecutive years of flat funding</li> <li>• Class sizes in some grades have grown too large</li> <li>• Larger class size limits ability to support individual students and compromises differentiation– smaller classes would benefit students of all abilities</li> <li>• We would like to retain our history of smaller class sizes resulting in excellence of education</li> <li>• Articulation and curriculum coordination from the middle school to the regional high school</li> </ul>
<b>Elementary School Faculty and Staff Participants = 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning curves with new state and federal initiatives</li> <li>• Curricular demands have increased with insufficient support at times</li> <li>• Unions and associations present challenges at times of negotiations and trying to meet needs while maintaining equity</li> <li>• Professional development needs of specialists and para-educators seem to be secondary to planning or options-ns for teacher PD</li> <li>• Specialists are used to “cover classes” instead of taking part in professional development opportunities</li> <li>• New superintendent must restructure professional development model to achieve focus, consistency, and equity</li> <li>• Collaboration time is lacking and is needed and essential</li> <li>• Political climate in the community has changed – a split now exists on budgetary issues and there is a lack of trust in government that is challenging the governance model</li> <li>• Aging infrastructure – talking for a long time about need for new buildings</li> <li>• Fiscally conservative element in town is a vocal minority against any educational spending, including budget, capital purchases, and new infrastructure</li> <li>• Scandal of past superintendent has tarnished the school system and hurt its reputation, including school employees shocked about what transpired</li> <li>• Fluctuating population with school age enrollment on the decline – implications for programs, staffing, redistricting, and even whether to close a school</li> <li>• Board of Education seems to lack direction and could use some guidance in regard to roles and responsibilities</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of curriculum consultants presents a huge challenge to teachers, who benefitted from support of previous consultants – future implications for student achievement</li> <li>• Staff morale is dropping with teachers under continuous pressure, with the added stress of what happened with past superintendent</li> <li>• Need a fresh perspective after many years of being an insular school system, but change does not come easily</li> <li>• Declining status as an ideal or elite school system</li> <li>• Some areas of curriculum have not been reviewed and adjusted for a long time, while other areas are frequently changing</li> <li>• Curriculum initiatives are frequently added – clarity of direction is needed</li> <li>• District professional development goals require review and consideration</li> <li>• Board has vision, but no specific goals have been articulated or formulated with staff input</li> <li>• New superintendent will have to work very hard to restore town-wide faith in school system – position will require considerable public relations success</li> <li>• More cohesion needed between the schools</li> <li>• Financially maintaining the breadth of the programming that the district offers</li> <li>• Leadership has been constant for many years and a new candidate will face barriers related to precedents</li> <li>• New administrators in almost every building – presents mentoring challenge for new superintendent</li> <li>• District infrastructure – decisions pending how to move forward regarding number of schools and renovations</li> <li>• Very strong opinions on both sides of the neighborhood school argument</li> <li>• Gap between transition from elementary/middle school to regional high school – must be able to cooperate with other members of RSD 19</li> </ul>
<p><b>Central Office Staff Participants = 6</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trust may be an issue (community-wide and within the district)</li> <li>• Disappointment in what transpired with the last superintendent</li> <li>• Buildings are old, outdated, and in need of renovation or rebuilding</li> <li>• Small but vocal group within the town that is relentless with criticism and opposes budget</li> <li>• Difficult balance between maintaining a historically rural community with a growing university town, with implications for the town and the schools</li> <li>• Socioeconomic diversity – significant pockets of poverty</li> <li>• Finding a workable administrative model to support curriculum</li> </ul>
<p><b>Middle School Students Participants = 19</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Larger classes are tough for teachers to help individual students (ex: math class with 29 students)</li> <li>• Students struggle as the result of too many students in a classroom – causes students to get frustrated and give up</li> <li>• Track team does not have an actual track – forced to run on pavement</li> <li>• Running short on available bus drivers; buses are often late as the result of taking on too many routes and are overcrowded; runs get canceled as the result of driver shortage</li> <li>• Gym scoreboard is broken, floor and bleachers not up to standard</li> <li>• Bathrooms are not as clean as we would like (possibly students not respecting the area)</li> <li>• Money is sometimes spent unnecessarily and we don't solve the problems that we should (ex: bought two flat screen TVs instead of repairing the boys bathroom)</li> <li>• Students not allowed to use courtyard at any time</li> <li>• Special education program has weaknesses</li> <li>• Recently, meeting was held to consider budget cuts to arts programs – students protested and programs were saved</li> <li>• Issues of vandalism, including lockers, bathrooms, and murals</li> <li>• Discipline is sometimes lacking</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mansfield Town Council Participants = 6</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some residents question to value of per pupil spending – census going down but costs are going up</li> <li>• Building of one, two, or three new elementary schools or presenting other alternatives – will be a fairly immediate challenge</li> <li>• Diminishing student population and diminishing state revenues, which provides a challenge</li> <li>• Test scores are a concern and should be higher – new superintendent must learn why scores</li> </ul>

	<p>aren't higher and ensure that all students are getting the education they deserve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparable towns (population and proximity-wise) have school systems with better test scores yet spend less on education</li> <li>• Town is unique because of our unique demographics – more than half of residents are UConn students</li> <li>• Demographics are hard to interpret – economic and educational demographics are not linked the same way as other communities, and we need a better understanding of them</li> <li>• Must understand about facilities and the physical operations of a school</li> <li>• New superintendent will be well aware of situation surrounding predecessor – they should expect a significant amount of scrutiny</li> <li>• Regionalization (i.e. linking K-8 schools) has been discussed and the new superintendent needs to be able to contribute</li> <li>• Children in the “middle” tend to get lost – the students with minimal needs (special education) are not getting the attention they need</li> <li>• Board of Education needs to be more involved in school policy and the new superintendent will be challenged by increased supervision</li> <li>• Conversely, superintendent will have to do more to engage the board in understanding roles and responsibilities of the board and the superintendent as a governance team</li> <li>• Articulation between our school system and RSD 19</li> <li>• Must possess knowledge on contract negotiation and unions – we have a collaborative relationship with our unions and we need someone to uphold that</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mansfield Parents Participants = 20</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendent must rebuild trusting relationships with the community and municipality</li> <li>• Aging facilities – three new elementary schools are needed</li> <li>• Parents want to be heard by the new superintendent and the chain of command, as well as have the new superintendent reach out the parents who are not involved</li> <li>• Must engage the international community to increase parental involvement and bridge cultural differences</li> <li>• More support and outreach necessary for lower income families, including building a better relationship with youth services</li> <li>• New superintendent must be aware of impact of UConn's rapid growth</li> <li>• Inertia must be overcome so new vision can be achieved – “time to stop resting on our laurels”</li> <li>• Constant budget battle – must be able to sell the budget to the community and Town Council</li> <li>• Professional development must support teachers and provide them with the tools they need</li> <li>• There needs to be a balance between funding and organization of professional development based on philosophy of quality PD</li> <li>• Leader must be able to unravel issues related to professional development, including staffing and scheduling</li> <li>• Teachers should have a voice in what professional development opportunities are available</li> <li>• Must have a superintendent who earns trust of the teachers and is not just seen as an administrator – demonstrated success in teaching as well as administration</li> <li>• Maintaining well-rounded, comprehensive programming that our students enjoy instead of focusing solely on testing</li> <li>• Professional development that includes non-core subjects and doesn't tailor to testing disciplines</li> <li>• Comfortable and confident in challenging preconceived notions of Common Core – doesn't panic</li> <li>• Inequitable access to special education services</li> <li>• Forming and sustaining relationships with parents as equal members of the team for PPTs, IEPs, and 504s</li> <li>• Coordinating and collaborating with RSD 19 and Ashford/Willington for improved vertical curriculum articulation</li> <li>• Rebuilding trust with the community and being transparent</li> <li>• Communication from the individual schools and district to parents</li> <li>• More outreach necessary and parents must be able to understand district priorities</li> <li>• Opportunities to leverage/merge efforts between schools and chances to work collaboratively</li> <li>• Moving away from standardization of what's happening in classrooms – sharing of best practices</li> </ul>

	<p>and innovative ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must continue to recruit and retain good teachers</li> <li>• Teachers need to be able to meet and collaborate without taking away from time with students – while protecting teacher time, there must a strong commitment to coaching and teaming</li> <li>• Declining school population and implications for maintaining programs</li> <li>• Special education programs and policies need to be addressed and improved – individual needs are not being met</li> <li>• New leader must be able to learn where the real strengths are and what needs improvement - see beyond the façade especially in terms of special education and diversity</li> <li>• Collaborating with districts within RSD 19 (Willington, Ashford, etc.) as well as Mansfield’s role</li> <li>• Professional development must include embedded coaching, autonomy and teacher-driven choices</li> <li>• Consider working with superintendents of sending school districts within Region 19 to create and mutually fund a shared director of curriculum and collaborate with Region 19</li> <li>• Parents would like more understanding about the Common Core and other initiatives and whether/how they should be supported, as well as how teachers can be better supported in the classroom</li> <li>• Standards must be prioritized with obsolete curricula removed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Human Services and Youth Services Directors</b> <b>Participants = 2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community pain issue surrounding previous superintendent - trust needs to be rebuilt</li> <li>• School buildings are outdated</li> <li>• Regional high school creates transition and continuity issues</li> <li>• College community is mobile and transient – language barriers, harder to meet special needs for shorter term students as well as access to those services (i.e. transportation to services and school activities outside of school hours)</li> <li>• Socioeconomic divide exists that impacts services</li> <li>• Long tenure of previous superintendent set a precedent and new superintendent will have to appreciate that influence</li> <li>• Superintendent will have to take on several different functions as the result of lack of administration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mansfield Senior Citizens</b> <b>Participants = 5</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spending per pupil is highest in the state and we are still being asked for increases</li> <li>• STEM program needs to be considered</li> </ul>

## Mansfield Focus Group Participants' Aggregated Comments for Question #3

Focus Group Category	<i>What are the most important leadership attributes and personal characteristics that the next superintendent needs to possess to be successful in Mansfield?</i>
<b>District and School Administrators Participants = 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative and trusting educational leader</li> <li>• Responsiveness to communications (emails, phone calls, face-to-face meetings)</li> <li>• Ability to advocate and communicate on behalf of the district, keeping in mind the many places people seek information; strong public relations skills</li> <li>• Responsive to the needs and concerns of the individual buildings</li> <li>• Nurtures growth and development of individuals, fosters a caring learning environment</li> <li>• Continues tradition of being visible in schools and a strong participant in school-related events</li> <li>• Leader who is actively involved in Mansfield community, professional organizations, and state level organizations (i.e. SDE)</li> <li>• Organized, detail-oriented leader</li> </ul>
<b>Middle School Faculty and Staff Participants = 14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectful of and listens to teachers/administrators and educational experts</li> <li>• A collaborative rather than top-down approach</li> <li>• Experienced teacher who understands the realities of the classroom</li> <li>• Smart, focused on developing the whole child rather than just test scores</li> <li>• Finding a healthy a balance between state initiatives and maintaining success</li> <li>• Respectful of parents and community input and involvement in schools</li> <li>• Involved with statewide organizations to have a wider scope of options</li> <li>• Willingness to work with unions to solve issues – willing to meet on a regular basis to meet challenges before they become too great</li> <li>• Inspirational leader who is visionary and prepares us for the challenges to come</li> <li>• Intelligent leader</li> </ul>
<b>Elementary School Faculty and Staff Participants = 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative – veteran district staff is accustomed to working with administration rather than being dictated to</li> <li>• Has a vision of where the school system can be in the future</li> <li>• Focused on the future – the town and UConn is changing and the new superintendent must be prepared</li> <li>• Administrative core and faculty and is aging and the new superintendent must prepare for change in personnel</li> <li>• Directive but flexible – must be able to defend reasoning and work with staff</li> <li>• Good listener but decisive – there are strong opinions in town that want to be heard</li> <li>• Good sense of humor</li> <li>• Must consider whether the assistant superintendent position should be reinstated</li> <li>• Trust in your staff – rely on the institutional knowledge of those who have experience in Mansfield</li> <li>• Supportive</li> <li>• A leader and facilitator for professional development, supporting a shared decision-making model and design</li> <li>• Visionary and articulate</li> <li>• Understands that quantitative data isn't the only reflection of student achievement</li> <li>• Ability to develop, redevelop, and manage curriculum, valuing disciplines beyond the Common Core</li> <li>• A good listener</li> <li>• Significant teaching experience in various types of school districts</li> <li>• Understanding of the whole development of the education process</li> <li>• Responsive leader for responsive classrooms – listens to all stakeholders</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to make informed decisions</li> <li>• Good sense of humor</li> <li>• Approachability – we are a small schools system and interpersonal relationships are very important</li> <li>• Visibility and involvement in the Mansfield community</li> <li>• An honest person of integrity</li> <li>• Decisiveness</li> <li>• Someone comfortable with reviewing and challenging the status quo</li> <li>• Articulate</li> <li>• Good listener</li> <li>• Ethical and honest</li> <li>• Value shared decision-making</li> <li>• Makes the children and staff in the district a priority rather than personal advancement</li> <li>• Child-centered decision making that goes beyond mere test scores</li> <li>• Knowledge about child development and that people do not learn in the same way – looks at people and not just numbers</li> <li>• Experience in central office administration</li> <li>• Teaching experience (PreK – 8 preferred)</li> <li>• Visibility</li> <li>• Know children and their families, as well as the teaching staff that works for them\</li> <li>• Values community surrounding neighborhood schools</li> <li>• Fair</li> <li>• Good public relations skills</li> <li>• Out-of-district candidate preferable – new perspective is needed</li> <li>• Measures success through the achievements of teaching and learning</li> <li>• Committed for the long term – we are not a stepping stone to other districts (commitment to excellence will take time)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Central Office Staff Participants = 6</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open and objective</li> <li>• Big-picture thinker while paying attention to smaller details</li> <li>• Sense of humor</li> <li>• Approachability</li> <li>• Team player – especially in a shared community model</li> <li>• Good listener and communicator</li> <li>• Strong leader</li> <li>• Confident to make and support difficult decisions</li> <li>• Teacher/leader who can both lead and teach their staff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Middle School Students Participants = 19</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be down to earth and be able to connect with students</li> <li>• Patient with students and teachers</li> <li>• Committed to their job</li> <li>• Nice and approachable so students are comfortable speaking with them</li> <li>• Have a sense of humor</li> <li>• Strict when necessary</li> <li>• Smart person – approach problems with the ability to solve them</li> <li>• Willingness to listen to student ideas</li> <li>• Open to new ideas and suggestions from all</li> <li>• Able to think quick on their feet – responsive to any situation</li> <li>• Responsible</li> <li>• Past experience in a job similar to a superintendent (principal, teacher, etc.)</li> <li>• Able to get things done</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mansfield Town Council Participants = 6</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremely articulate and intelligent, balance being knowledgeable with accessibility and warmth</li> <li>• Ability to connect with every stakeholder group in town including parents, teachers, administrators, and children</li> <li>• Experience working with shared services and with an extremely diverse student population (upward of 25 different languages spoken at home)</li> <li>• Teaching experience – some consider it critical that they have taught in a classroom</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of personal integrity</li> <li>• Ability to communicate with different constituent groups, including the town council</li> <li>• Someone who treats everyone equitably and fairly</li> <li>• Doctorate preferred</li> <li>• Seek someone ready to make a long-term commitment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mansfield Parents Participants = 20</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethical</li> <li>• Pro-teacher</li> <li>• Successful and sustained teaching experience</li> <li>• Involved and present daily in the schools</li> <li>• Must make decisions based on what is best for student growth and development as learners and as people</li> <li>• Not test-driven; do not teach to the test</li> <li>• Visionary – can stand up with new ideas, unafraid to push and tap the potential in Mansfield</li> <li>• Approachability and can see all sides of a situation</li> <li>• Willing to share responsibility and trust others, hire good people and avoid micromanagement</li> <li>• Up to date with research and professional literature (and listen to people who are) and use it to make decisions</li> <li>• Trustworthy and trusting of others</li> <li>• An effective communicator</li> <li>• Ability to follow through on requests, information, etc.</li> <li>• Ability to secure outside funding, including grants</li> <li>• Significant teaching/classroom experience (elementary and middle school) or teacher leadership</li> <li>• Believe in the importance of play and the role of play in the classroom and learning</li> <li>• Past history should be significant</li> <li>• Honest response to questions asked by the whole community – teachers, parents, boards, etc.</li> <li>• Accessibility and approachability</li> <li>• Understands that best practices are not one size fits all, but are contextual</li> <li>• Willingness to make tough decisions and be open about reasoning</li> <li>• Recognizing student and teacher leadership and how they can be brought together</li> <li>• Nuanced and supportive</li> <li>• Creative thinker</li> <li>• Compassionate, flexible, encouraging of positive climate, building leadership capacity for teachers and students, outside the box thinker</li> <li>• Encourages a welcoming climate for children and families on a day-to-day basis, welcoming parents into the schools and not just during events</li> <li>• Protected time to have boots on the ground in the schools – willingness and commitment to being a regular presence in the schools</li> <li>• Willingness to have tough conversations and present a united front</li> <li>• Good meeting facilitator</li> <li>• Values accountability and follow-through</li> <li>• Committed to own professional development and presenting it to the community</li> <li>• Takes complaints seriously and reviews the school climate</li> <li>• Ability to listen and hear all sides of the story and understand who is telling the truth</li> <li>• Respectful of parents’ complaints and willingness to follow through and explore further</li> <li>• Values and encourages experiential learning</li> <li>• Transparency</li> </ul>
<p><b>Human Services and Youth Services Directors Participants = 2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to build bridges with all stakeholders in the community in the best interest of children</li> <li>• As an education community, degrees and credentials will be a priority</li> <li>• Experience with building projects</li> <li>• Flexible, able to solve problems, creative thinker</li> <li>• Approachability</li> <li>• Team builder with the principals in Mansfield as well as other RSD 19 administrators</li> <li>• Accountability and answerability – how to manage resources</li> <li>• Patience</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Educator, someone who will work well with others</li><li>• Ability to develop leadership and get the best out of people</li></ul>
<b>Mansfield Senior Citizens Participants = 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Travel allotment should be strictly set and respected</li><li>• Honesty and integrity as a person</li><li>• Not afraid to look into the future</li><li>• Educated and experienced</li></ul>

## Mansfield Focus Group Participants' Aggregated Comments for Question #4

Focus Group Category	<i>What is your VISION for the Mansfield Public Schools?</i>
<b>District and School Administrators Participants = 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressive learning environment that engages students and staff as participants in ever-growing global world</li> <li>• Well supported and organized learning community</li> <li>• Celebrate uniqueness of individual students</li> <li>• Mansfield believes in, and strongly supports, breadth of programming for all learners</li> </ul>
<b>Middle School Faculty and Staff Participants = 14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a leader in regionalization as budgets in surrounding towns fall apart</li> <li>• Become a model for peer middle schools to follow</li> <li>• Collaborate with other districts and learn what they do well and what we can do here</li> <li>• Maintain or heighten our level of excellence and be provided with the resources we need (support staff, budgeting, professional development, etc.)</li> <li>• Support the needs of lower income students so that they come to school ready to learn, including supportive programs for parents</li> </ul>
<b>Elementary School Faculty and Staff Participants = 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain the small school feel where administration knows the teachers and the children</li> <li>• Physical infrastructure of schools must be addressed – 1950s schools are trying to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century</li> <li>• Transition to new assessment (SBAC) model, maintain the integrity and quality of the opportunities for students</li> <li>• Current struggle to find balance between data-driven decision making and comprehensive program is resolved</li> <li>• Be a model school system for others to follow, especially considering proximity to UConn</li> <li>• Regain status and glory as an exemplary public school system</li> <li>• To be innovative and be recognized as such internally and externally</li> <li>• Developed leadership potential within the faculty</li> <li>• Feeling that we are making a difference for the students in the district</li> <li>• Instill a love of learning in children and have them emerge prepared for what comes next</li> <li>• Maintain high expectation for all children and staff</li> <li>• Students continue to love learning and enjoy coming to school</li> <li>• Prioritize character education and development as well as other educational goals</li> <li>• Maintain value of educating the whole child and recognize the impact of the arts</li> <li>• Maintain breadth of programs and enrichment</li> <li>• Facilities must become more state-of-the-art</li> <li>• Teachers and staff members who feel valued, supported, and not overwhelmed</li> <li>• Solid decision-making that is research-based</li> <li>• Large increase in technology – Mansfield currently lacking</li> <li>• Cohesiveness between the three elementary schools</li> </ul>
<b>Central Office Staff Participants = 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressive public school system in terms of education provided</li> <li>• Energy efficiency and continuing to be a green community (including buildings)</li> <li>• Some are in favor of investing in one state-of-the-art elementary school</li> <li>• Modernized middle school</li> <li>• Update the curriculum to work with the Common Core and beyond</li> <li>• Maintain breadth of programming (arts, enrichment, and comprehensive programs)</li> <li>• Some would like the district to consider expanded regionalization and other viable options for addressing school budget and facility issues</li> </ul>
<b>Middle School Students Participants = 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air conditioning on school buses</li> <li>• Bigger libraries in the elementary schools</li> <li>• Updated locks on lockers to prevent burglary</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replaced lockers with more modern lockers and more space between</li> <li>• More money toward the arts programs (visual and performing)</li> <li>• Internet connection needs to be improved</li> <li>• Better printers, including more color printers</li> <li>• More teachers who are less strict with students</li> <li>• Bus drivers that can handle problems on the bus and have a sense of direction</li> <li>• Bus service from elementary to middle school</li> <li>• Teachers need to be harder – some are too easy and don't follow through on discipline</li> <li>• Upgraded student auditorium, including modern seating</li> <li>• Bathrooms in the portable classrooms; access to portables in general</li> <li>• Indoor walking space to portables from the main building</li> <li>• Larger servings in the cafeteria – we're growing and need the nutrition</li> <li>• Enough Chrome Books for everyone</li> <li>• Water fountains in the portables and more functioning fountains in general</li> <li>• More opportunities for students to go outside</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mansfield Town Council Participants = 6</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to evaluate and improve the educational environment for Mansfield students</li> <li>• System functioning in buildings that meet the needs of the system – equitable space for all students, able to make continuing technological progress, be less expensive to operate and maintain</li> <li>• Respectful of people's ability to support high costs of education – must consider the middle class</li> <li>• Continued ability to provide education in the arts, languages, and social sciences– more than just a STEM focus</li> <li>• Schools continue to be a major attraction to town, contributing to real estate values and bringing people into the community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mansfield Parents Participants = 20</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would like to see involvement with the UConn School of Engineering, which has a math component; Communication between the superintendent and the expertise at UConn and beyond</li> <li>• Modern facilities that keep the small school system in place</li> <li>• Updated technology</li> <li>• Better transition from middle school to E.O. Smith, aligned with Willington, Ashford, and Mansfield – continuity among the different members of RSD 19</li> <li>• Being a separate district from the high school</li> <li>• Superintendent in touch with RSD board and bring it together with the local board</li> <li>• Mansfield as a model for other districts to follow</li> <li>• Mansfield strengths recognized, advocated, and promoted</li> <li>• District that can recognize and embrace academic diversity and differentiates instruction accordingly</li> <li>• Continue to embrace a broad curriculum</li> <li>• Student-driven district that makes decisions based on what is best for students</li> <li>• See children continue involvement with Youth Services even after they enter E.O. Smith and during their time at the high school</li> <li>• Allowing children to be individuals – unstructured play, inquiry-based and experiential learning, and autonomy, learning through play</li> <li>• Fostering of student and teacher leadership skills – broad definition with many forms of leadership</li> <li>• Play and executive function needs to be brought back to elementary schools</li> <li>• Students love learning and see themselves as capable learners</li> <li>• Build on student self esteem and recognize that students learn in different ways and that teachers must provide differentiated instruction with their efforts supported</li> <li>• Broad, exciting activities that provide chances for learning from all parties</li> <li>• Student-centered and individualized learning</li> <li>• Community that serves as exemplar to others by investing in our staff and professional learning, based on values that the community prioritizes</li> <li>• Consistent peer-to-peer and teacher-to-student mentoring in all schools</li> <li>• Cultural and international cultural competency – ability to take an antiracist approach to learning and the learning taking place of all levels</li> </ul>

<p><b>Human Services and Youth Services Directors Participants = 2</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every child is prepared for school before entering school system – whole community’s responsibility to ensure that no student falls through the cracks</li> <li>• Collaboration with town, organizations, and programs that serve children and can pool resources</li> <li>• Continued collaboration on sensitive information within the shared services model to ensure the children’s needs are being met</li> <li>• Continued dedication to kids-first mentality</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mansfield Senior Citizens Participants = 5</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversion to a new computer system</li> <li>• Standardized curriculum sponsored by the federal or state government</li> <li>• Quality above and beyond and advancing along with the times</li> <li>• Positive interactions between students and teachers</li> </ul>

## Mansfield Focus Group Participants' Aggregated Comments for Question #5

Focus Group Category	<i>What additional COMMENTS would you like to share?</i>
<b>District and School Administrators Participants = 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional comments</li> </ul>
<b>Middle School Faculty and Staff Participants = 14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fresh ideas needed that support what we already do well here – someone who can think outside the box</li> </ul>
<b>Elementary School Faculty and Staff Participants = 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difference between skill and capacity building through professional development and using PD time for curriculum writing</li> <li>Despite criticism, it is a research-rich and very supportive faculty and staff</li> <li>It is a pleasure to work here</li> <li>A very good school system</li> <li>Constantly feel we can do better and strive to improve</li> </ul>
<b>Central Office Staff Participants = 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools superintendent take on some functions that would normally be assigned to other administrators (transportation, food services, business services, etc.)</li> <li>Town has a proud history of strong leadership that we would like to see continue</li> <li>Wonderful town to work for with a great administration; very well supported and collegial</li> </ul>
<b>Middle School Students Participants = 19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional comments</li> </ul>
<b>Mansfield Town Council Participants = 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional comments</li> </ul>
<b>Mansfield Parents Participants = 20</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit a diverse pool of candidates</li> <li>Must rebuild trust with the community</li> <li>Doesn't necessarily need prior experience as superintendent</li> <li>Thoughtful search and not one rushed through to get someone in place immediately</li> <li>Search committee needs to ask questions to candidates about how they would use data effectively to drive decisions</li> </ul>
<b>Human Services and Youth Services Directors Participants = 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional comments</li> </ul>
<b>Mansfield Senior Citizens Participants = 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No additional comments</li> </ul>