

Stakeholder Input Report for

***Riddle School
District
Riddle, Oregon***

submitted by



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EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT

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**Riddle School District
Riddle, Oregon
District Stakeholders Report, February 2026**

On February 5, 2026, Don Grotting conducted stakeholder sessions with a total of 38 representatives of the Riddle School District staff and community to gather input regarding the selection of the next superintendent. Participants included 4 administrators, 6 teachers, 19 invited community members, and 9 parents who later provided input through an online stakeholder survey. These sessions and survey responses provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share perspectives on district strengths, current challenges, and the qualities and characteristics desired in the next superintendent.

Outlined below is an Executive Summary of the major themes expressed by participants. Following the Executive Summary is a compilation of the combined input from all stakeholder groups in response to the guiding questions.

Executive Summary

Stakeholders consistently described Riddle as a close-knit, family-oriented rural community where relationships, pride, and support for children are central values. The district benefits from strong community partnerships, multi-generational family involvement, long-tenured and caring staff, small class sizes, and a culture focused on doing what is best for students. Participants highlighted strong extracurricular programs—including band, drama, and athletics—along with inclusive school environments that build student confidence and individuality. Stakeholders emphasized that the next superintendent must be highly visible, relational, and deeply embedded in the community.

At the same time, the district faces challenges common to small rural systems, including financial constraints, aging facilities, recruitment and retention of quality staff, and increasing student academic, behavioral, and mental health needs. Additional concerns include attendance, student engagement, homelessness, infrastructure maintenance, curriculum rigor at the junior/senior high level, and financial pressures related to the district's self-managed food service program. Stakeholders stressed the importance of strong fiscal management, infrastructure improvements, curriculum alignment, thoughtful pacing of change following a long-tenured superintendent, and enhanced communication across schools and the community.

The ideal superintendent is described as a transparent, trustworthy, and approachable leader who balances strong people skills with operational expertise. Stakeholders seek someone who understands rural education, is knowledgeable in finance, budgeting, human resources, and school law, and who will commit long-term to Riddle. The next leader should actively participate in the life of the community, support staff and students with needed resources, balance tradition with thoughtful growth, and provide steady, student-centered leadership.

COMPILATION OF ALL GROUPS

1. Tell us the good things about your community:

- Small-town, family-oriented environment with strong community pride
- Multi-generational commitment—families choose to stay, return, and invest in the community
- Close-knit relationships among staff, students, and families
- Strong support for schools from the broader community, faith-based organizations, and local businesses
- Welcoming, inclusive culture where people feel accepted and valued
- Staff operate like a family and collaborate well together
- Long-tenured employees who care deeply about students
- Student-centered mindset with a commitment to meeting diverse needs
- Opportunities for creativity and flexibility in teaching within a small district
- Strong connections between schools and community events, parades, and celebrations
- Free family events and visible community participation
- Community comes together in times of need
- New community center development and local partnerships supporting youth
- Access to outdoor recreation and desirable rural lifestyle
- Centrally located in Southern Oregon with access to coast, mountains, larger cities, and regional airports
- Convenient location along the I-5 corridor
- Low cost of living
- Stable enrollment relative to neighboring districts
- One-to-one student technology and recent safety/security grant funding

2. Tell us the good things about your school district:

- Small-town, family-oriented environment with strong community pride
- Multi-generational commitment—families choose to stay, return, and invest in the community
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3. What are the issues the incoming superintendent should be aware of as he/she comes into the district?

- Low socioeconomic conditions impacting students and families
- Rural poverty affecting student social-emotional well-being and behavior
- Generational poverty, homelessness, and absenteeism challenges
- Student attendance concerns
- Student behavior affecting peers and staff
- Students living outside of town creating engagement and participation challenges
- Local economic decline and job losses affecting enrollment and resources
- Enrollment decline and need to better market district strengths
- Financial uncertainty and budget limitations tied to state funding
- Food service program deficit requiring significant General Fund transfer
- Rising benefit and insurance costs
- Need to prioritize spending and maximize limited resources
- Aging facilities requiring repair, updates, or replacement
- Deferred maintenance and infrastructure needs, including middle/high school bathrooms
- Need to successfully pass a bond to address infrastructure needs
- CTE spaces (wood/metal shops) requiring modernization and equipment upgrades
- Need for updated technology and equipment for special education staff
- Recruitment and retention of quality teachers and staff
- Need for stronger Human Resources systems and support

- Leadership transition following long tenure of previous superintendent and need for thoughtful pacing of change
- Increasing student academic and mental health needs
- Need for stronger junior/senior high curriculum rigor and academic challenge
- Concerns regarding middle-to-high school transition preparation (Grade 6 to 7)
- Need for K–12 curriculum alignment and instructional consistency
- Clarification of roles and services provided through ESD partnerships
- Improved collaboration between schools
- More timely, transparent, and inclusive communication from the district office
- Creating opportunities that encourage families and graduates to remain or return
- Expanding career readiness opportunities and student programs
- Rebuilding or expanding after-school clubs and enrichment opportunities

4. What characteristics should the new superintendent have to be successful?

- Transparent, honest, ethical, and trustworthy
- Strong communicator and active listener
- Clear, consistent communication practices
- Visible in classrooms, schools, and community events
- Approachable, personable, and relationship-focused
- Willing to live in or fully integrate into the community
- Appreciation for rural culture and identity
- Collaborative leader who builds partnerships and empowers others
- Develops trust while maintaining accountability
- Works effectively with staff, families, unions, and the school board
- Seeks input and understands issues before making decisions
- Demonstrated trust-building within tight-knit communities
- Leads by example with integrity and respect
- Knowledgeable in finance, budgeting, and resource management
- Understanding of federal and state law and district policies
- Experienced in Human Resources, hiring, retention, and labor relations
- Understanding of special education systems and student supports
- Provides instructional leadership and curriculum direction

- Data-focused and student-centered in decision-making
- Experience with facilities planning and bond development
- Ability to manage multiple responsibilities in a small district setting
- Able to make difficult decisions and clearly explain the rationale
- Committed to long-term service and district stability
- Flexible, resourceful, and willing to “wear many hats”
- Compassionate, empathetic, fair, and unbiased
- Hard-working with a strong sense of integrity and follow-through
- Positive presence with enthusiasm, encouragement, and a future-focused mindset
- Committed to improving student outcomes, graduation rates, and career readiness

Riddle School District Stakeholders

Group: Administrators

Date: February 5, 2026

Participants: 4

What are good things about the community and district?

- Small town and family feel—Sense of community pride
- Inclusive environment—Superintendent can be involved at all levels and with all staff
- Tight knit community—many connections between and among the district and community
- Many activities for community and district—opportunity to be involved in many community activities
- Community supports the schools, district, staff, and students
- Outdoor focused area offering hiking, hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities
- Located on the I-5 Corridor providing access to larger cities like Roseburg, Eugene, and Medford in addition to the coast and mountains for expanded social, recreational, and access to other amenities
- Blue collar community with hard working people
- People work together for kids
- Town is building a new community center
- Staff care about kids beginning with the superintendent
- Accepting of all and very inclusive environment
- Other student transfer to Riddle for smaller education environment
- Generational community providing ownership and support for kids
- Low cost of living regarding housing
- Longevity of teachers and other staff
- Stable enrollment compared to other districts
- District just received a 500K Cops grant for security and safety
- One to one technology for students

What are issues and challenges the new superintendent will face?

- Low SES community and district
- Recruitment and retainment of quality staff
- The increase of significant behavior issues
- Central office needs help and Central office need revitalized and a confidential employee to be at district office full time
- Infrastructure Needs—Repair, updating, and replacement of buildings in the district. The district needs to pass a bond
- Addressing economic and budget issues due to state funding

- Food nutrition program needs to be evaluated as it is operating at a significant deficit in violation of state and federal regulations. The district is having to backfill, taking away funding from the budget
- Because many services are provided by the ESD like business, curriculum and instruction, title programs, etc., roles and responsibilities need to be evaluated and defined to ensure fidelity of services and programs
- Evaluate Health Insurance programs and costing to see if there may be better options

What qualities and characteristics do you desire in the next superintendent?

- Transparency, honesty, trustworthy, personable
- Ability to build quality relationships by having open communications
- Visible in buildings and activities both in district and community
- Someone easy to approach—relationship builder
- Evaluate an issue before acting
- Listening to all stakeholders and understanding an issue before acting
- Having grace and treating people and not the position
- Being able to make difficult decisions and explain why they were made and then sticking by them
- Great communicator
- Someone willing to always be accessible
- Knowledge of school business and budgeting
- Knowledge of special education and evaluating high percentage of special education students in the district
- Look at ways to stabilize and increase enrollment

Group: Teachers

Participants: 6

What are the good things about the community and district?

- Staff operates as a family---we are close knit and work well together
- People—Community and district look after the children
- Generational Community--There is a culture of people staying and returning to the community to live, volunteer, contribute, and raise children
- Great connection between the community and schools
- Being in a small district, teachers have the ability to teach multiple subject areas, be creative, and try new teaching strategies
- We have great Faith Based Support
- Strong connections between the district and community
- People feel supported and backed by their supervisors
- We have a welcoming community

- There are generational support and commitment
- Appreciation for differing opinions with no retributions
- There is a great emphasis on taking care of all kids and a commitment to provide resources
- District has a focus on diverse students and meeting their needs

What are the Issues and Challenges the new superintendent will face?

- District needs a K-12 curriculum evaluation and overhaul that will provide for consistent and scaffold curriculum and instruction from kindergarten through graduation
- Needs to be more inclusive communication, programming, and collaboration between schools
- Ability to be knowledgeable, evaluate, and provide direction for our special education programming. Appreciate district hiring a Special Education director
- Be aware of the financial and budgeting shortfalls facing the district
- One of the mills in town just had to permanently lay off 146 employees
- Infrastructure and maintenance issues---buildings need to be updated, repaired or replaced
- Student safety in district needs to be evaluated and addressed
- Better and more timely communication from the district office
- Addressing generational poverty impacting students and families
- Addressing equity and cooperation between schools
- Addressing mental health/behavior of students and staff
- Ensuring CTE programs, especially the wood and metal shops have updated infrastructure, tools, and other equipment to serve students
- Navigating and understanding small rural district issues
- Everyone know Everyone—Being aware of small town relationships and perceptions
- Recruitment and retainment of quality staff

What qualities and characteristic do you desire in the new superintendent?

- Willing to live, volunteer, contribute and be part of the larger community and district
- Empowers others resulting in distributed leadership with accountability
- A relatable people person who is approachable
- Leader trusting staff to do their job and then expecting and ensuring they perform—need more accountability for staff not performing
- A leader who is visible in classrooms, activities, and other operational aspects of the district and community
- Serious about addressing safety issues
- Communicates well and in a timely manner
- Has integrity and is trustworthy
- Has special education knowledge
- Has business and budgeting experience in prioritizing and utilizing all resources
- Having knowledge and experience with Human Resources

- Able to mentor and support professional development growth for staff
- Someone who is resourceful and has the ability to be part of a team in good and bad times
- Having follow through and great communication skills
- A trust developer exhibiting compassion, transparency, great work ethic, and willing to hold folks accountable when appropriate
- Understands and has knowledge and experience in special education
- Someone who will invest, commit, and be loyal to the district long-term
- Values CTE Programs
- Understands rural communities
- Wants to have fun and has a great sense of humor
- Understands and participates in the hiring process
- Respects the traditions and values of the district and community
- Ability to work well with the school board
- Humble superintendent---recognition is earned
- Taking the time to understand an issue from all perspectives and collaborating before making significant changes

Group: Community Members by invitation

Participants: 19

What are good things about the community and district?

- Small town feel with access to other larger towns and cities
- Multi-generational community—people choose to stay and come back to live, work, and educate their children
- Generational closeness
- Town has community stability and pride
- Town functions are well supported
- Community is family oriented
- Welcoming community
- Strong support from community to school district
- Logistically a good spot—weather, I-5 corridor, close to larger towns, amenities, the coast, and outdoor activities
- Habitat for Humanities---trying to build additional housing
- New community center being built to provide for community and district space
- Great faith- based support for students and families

What issues and challenges will the new superintendent face?

- Uncertain financial issues
- Infrastructure needs---ability to pass a bond to repair and replace buildings

- Important to have someone living in the community or be extremely adept to building trust and becoming part of the community
- Coming to a low SES community and County
- Homelessness issues
- Creating opportunities for students to stay or return to Riddle to work and live
- Addressing mill and other industry closures
- Addressing student absenteeism
- Marketing the great things happening in the district and community
- Addressing enrollment decline
- Addressing complacency and adding rigor and high expectations
- Ensuring the community values are reflected in the school environment

What qualities and characteristics do you desire in next superintendent?

- Think outside the box
- Collaborator and partnership focused
- Willing to help out and help others
- Be part of the community and build trust
- Make personal connections by reaching out to all stakeholders
- Knowledgeable of finance, business, and budgeting
- Someone mid-career—we want longevity
- Willing to be invested in district and community
- Prioritize spending and grow resources
- Have a vision and plan to increase academic growth
- Have Human Resource experience
- Be accessible and approachable
- Superintendent willing to listen to community
- Continue to work with city and parks
- Be transparent, ethical, and trustworthy
- Be a great communicator
- Continue to work with faith-based organizations
- Be flexible and willing to wear many hats
- Be politically neutral
- Would like superintendent to live in the community
- Be committed and invested to the district and community long-term

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS**Q1 Tell us the good things about your community. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)**

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	A caring school community culture and good, student-focused school board members.	2/10/2026 10:23 AM
2	Small, likeminded community.	2/9/2026 5:30 PM
3	This community is small and welcoming. We love our kids and like to see them participate in community activities.	2/8/2026 1:26 PM
4	Cleanliness, police presence and community events.	2/7/2026 2:57 AM
5	Close community like family. Supportive of schools and student success.	2/6/2026 1:34 PM
6	Small town,	2/6/2026 12:51 PM
7	I enjoy the free family events that the town puts on and the friendly people in they community	2/6/2026 12:29 PM
8	We are a small tight-knit community; think family. The community takes great pride in the different celebrations and events they put on. The school, businesses, churches, and other organizations all come together to celebrate. Riddle is centrally located in Southern Oregon to all things you could possible want or do. 1.5 hour in any direction will get you to the coast, mountains, or larger cities as well as regional airports.	2/6/2026 11:59 AM
9	Our community comes together when needed.	2/6/2026 11:59 AM

Q2 Tell us the good things about your schools. (This information is used to help us recruit quality candidates.)

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Small class sizes; staff has longevity in the District. Enrollment is mostly steady. Good, caring staff	2/10/2026 10:23 AM
2	Often have small class sizes and consistent staff and teachers	2/9/2026 5:30 PM
3	Both the elementary and junior/ senior high school are great, active with sports, and other activities outside of school and the school helps promote those things.	2/8/2026 1:26 PM
4	The band program is fantastic	2/7/2026 2:57 AM
5	Our school is small and inclusive. We value student success and work together to help them overcome their obstacles and meet their goals. The community of educators here aspires to achieve success in encouraging, motivating, and pushing students to be all they can be. We build confidence and promote individuality in our students. This is a great educational environment to be a part of.	2/6/2026 1:34 PM
6	Small enough most of the teacher know all the students	2/6/2026 12:51 PM
7	I've had kids in this school district for 15 years and have enjoyed the open communication and events for families	2/6/2026 12:29 PM
8	As a parent who has a child being a third generation in the district, students and alumni take pride in our district. The traditions built, the family that grows from K to 12. We have an amazing drama program, coaches that care about the kids, and community members who come to school events despite not having kids or family in the school.	2/6/2026 11:59 AM
9	Caring environment	2/6/2026 11:59 AM

Q3 What issues should the superintendent be aware of as he/she comes into the district? (This information is shared with the final candidates.)

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Long tenure, 20 years, of previous superintendent (passed away from cancer September 2025) may impede ability to invoke change - go slow with changes; Current self-managed lunch program requires a large (\$110K) General Fund transfer - will need to develop a new food services strategy.	2/10/2026 10:23 AM
2	Rural community with poverty issues that may affect children's social and emotional well being resulting in behaviors that may be hard to manage.	2/9/2026 5:30 PM
3	Attendance, the broad area what encompasses riddle and that many kids live outside of town. Staff need support. Kids need support and need encouragement to continue to be active in town events and parades!	2/8/2026 1:26 PM
4	Our junior/hugh school needs better curriculum and challenges the students and encourages them to seek further knowledge.	2/7/2026 2:57 AM
5	The bathrooms need work at the middle/high school. Also the SPED teachers need laptops to be more efficient and effective carrying out daily duties and supporting students, staff, and community with the best effort and care possible.	2/6/2026 1:34 PM
6	They don't prep students very well going from 6th grade to 7th at the high school	2/6/2026 12:51 PM
7	None that I can think of. I do miss the after school activities that used to be available like the cooking club.	2/6/2026 12:29 PM
8	Building infrastructure and maintenance has been put on the back burner too much. There are a lot of things that need to be replaced. There is complacency with some admin/staff that can deter growth, which is what is needed. For the size of the district, there seems to be a lot of unhoused students as well as students not seeming to want to be in school or involved in activities. Being able to grow our district to where students WANT to come to school or be involved. We need to look at ways to grow programs/resources for these students.	2/6/2026 11:59 AM
9	Student behavior and affect on other students and staff!	2/6/2026 11:59 AM

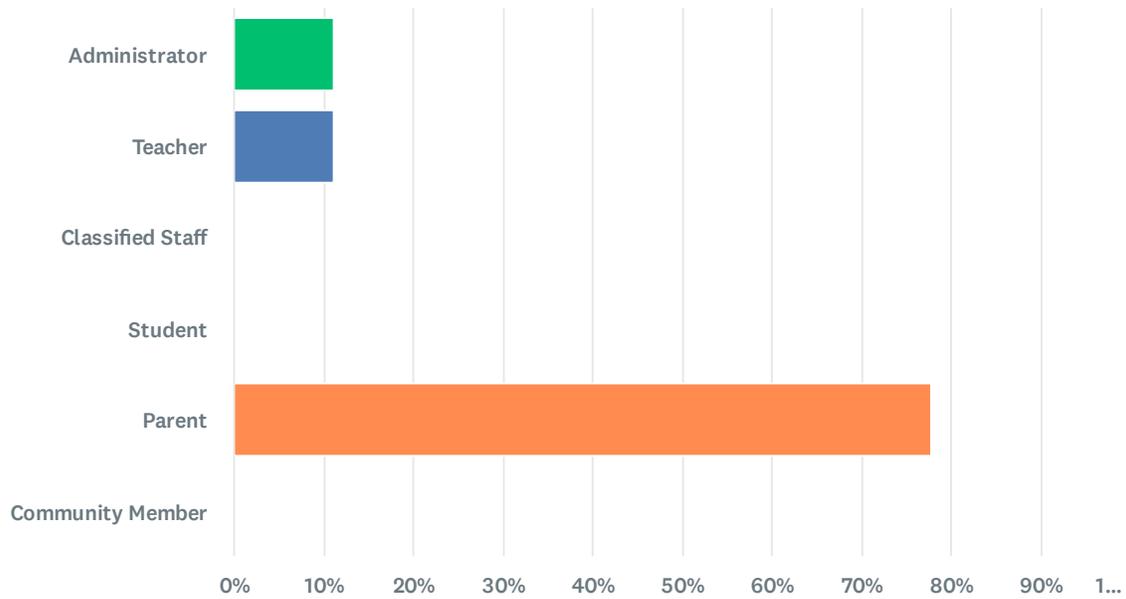
Q4 What skills, qualities or characteristics should the new superintendent possess to be successful here? (This information is used as we screen potential candidates.)

Answered: 8 Skipped: 1

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Good listener, good communicator, knowledgeable of funding and budgeting, knowledgeable of federal and State law, District policies, and develop a data-focused, student-centered approach to academic and social student success.	2/10/2026 10:23 AM
2	Awareness of social and economical issues present in this rural school district and the ability to deal with issues head on and not pass the buck. Ability and knowledge sufficient to support teachers and staff with resources to best support student success. Sense of community Care	2/9/2026 5:30 PM
3	Encouraging, compassionate, understanding and empathy for the many different students and community members in Riddle. They should be fair and without bias.	2/8/2026 1:26 PM
4	Enthusiasm for the future. Someone who takes pride in our youth as well as their own accomplishments. Someone who enjoys taking on challenges that others avoid. Making goals/suggestions a reality to improve our education system and community as a whole.	2/7/2026 2:57 AM
5	Kind, caring, responsible, detail oriented, able to manage stress, able to juggle multiple projects at once, good communicator, clearly expresses expectations to staff and students, will include themselves in student and staff activities, good leadership skills, possess knowledge of teaching and will help teachers be better educators, provide educators with opportunities to gain knowledge through trainings and leadership opportunities, allow teachers to take students on field trips when they ask, allow middle school special education teacher a new printer and new Chromebooks, support staff and students with encouragement, be willing to participate in school events/activities, lead us by example of how you expect us to perform, someone who is respectful and resourceful.	2/6/2026 1:34 PM
6	Communication is a big one for me.	2/6/2026 12:29 PM
7	Understanding of CBA's under the Oregon labor law and understanding union relations. Having knowledge of HR, hiring/retention as the HR is contracted out to the ESD and there are times you need to act on items now, not send an email and wait for a response/action. Ability to manage multi-hat roles. Strong relationship building in the district and the community. Being accessible to all, even the community. Track record of improving student outcomes, increasing student numbers, improving graduation rates. Growth of student competencies/programs. Ability to bring career readiness to students, courses/education that fit our district and needs. Clear, consistent communication practices. Experience with facilities planning and bond development. Demonstrated honesty and accountability. Appreciation for our rural culture and identity. Willingness to be a visible community presence and involved. Ability to create long-term strategic plans aligned to community needs. Demonstrated trust-building within tight-knit communities. Ability to BALANCE tradition with thoughtful change for GROWTH.	2/6/2026 11:59 AM
8	Kindness and knowledge of small rural school districts and communities We don't need big town energy we need rural energy.	2/6/2026 11:59 AM

Q5 Please indicate the stakeholder group you represent:

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
● Administrator	11.11%	1
● Teacher	11.11%	1
● Classified Staff	0%	0
● Student	0%	0
● Parent	77.78%	7
● Community Member	0%	0
Total		9