

**LEADERSHIP PROFILE FOR
PRINCIPAL
CHARLES BARRETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

January 28, 2020

1. Purpose

This LEADERSHIP PROFILE defines the specific attributes for the next principal of Charles Barrett Elementary School. The profile reflects the input from several stakeholder groups to include staff, students, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members and the community residents. Applicants and selection panels will use this profile to assess the candidate qualities of the position.

2. Introduction and Background

The Alexandria City Public Schools initiated a search for the position of principal of Charles Barrett Elementary School in the summer of 2019, to replace the principal who had been in the position for ten years and who left for a similar position in a school district in central Virginia.

We gathered information for the leadership profile from the community using an online survey and focus groups with staff, parents, and community members. The online survey was open to the public and available in English and Spanish. The survey requested participant comments about strengths of the school, challenges facing the school and qualities/attributes desired in a new principal. The online survey was open from June 21, 2019 through November 13, 2019.

In December 2019, separate focus group meetings were held with the Barrett PTA and staff to provide another opportunity for input using the same format as in the online survey. Those attending were asked to follow-up with written comments to further focus their thoughts into the three most important in each area.

One last large group opportunity for input—a Community Focus Group session—was offered on January 9, 2020 at the school. Those who attended any meeting were also invited to send individual thoughts/comments to the search coordinator via email. Feedback was also sought through a follow-up staff session and feedback from student government officers in January, 2020.

The majority of the feedback provided was through the online survey with approximately 130 parents and staff members responding. The PTA focus group was attended by 9 parents and/or family members while approximately 20 staff members provided input at their group sessions. In many cases, staff members indicated they were speaking for their team/grade level/subject area colleagues who had met prior to my meetings to provide group input to the process.

As there were no requirements for participants to provide personal identifying information, there was certainly overlap and duplication through the various means provided for individuals to offer their comments. There were, as will be evidenced later, several consistent themes throughout the various modes of response. It is also important to note that parents, staff and community were very much “on the same page” with their comments.

It is important to note that the data provided are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be construed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups providing feedback.

As search coordinator, I have reviewed the comments made through the various modalities offered and provided a summary of consistent themes in a concise manner to support the application, interview and selection process for the new principal. This report, by its nature, cannot include all comments made. However, the detail of all feedback is available and will be maintained for an appropriate period of time.

The search coordinator intends to meet the challenge to identify individuals who best possess the skills and traits sought by the school community. This successful candidate will be one who, through the interview and selection process, is determined who best fits the leadership profile. Ultimately, the selected principal will be a school leader who can provide superior educational, social and personal outcomes for students, staff, parents and the community.

3. Consistent Themes from the On-line Survey and Focus Group Meetings

Strengths of Charles Barrett Elementary School

- Caring, supportive, welcoming school
- Staff
- Instructional program to include specific programs and partnerships (CETA, PBIS, EL, etc.)
- Diversity
- Engaged community
- Openness

Challenges for Charles Barrett Elementary School

- Resources—people and funding
- Diversity of needs of students and community—to include trauma informed care
- Consistency of student expectations
- Avoidance of micromanaging
- Administrative turnover

Desired Personal Qualities/Attributes of Principal

- Open and Approachable
- Genuine
- Caring
- Confident

- Facilitator/Collaborator
- Flexible
- Patient
- Enjoys children
- Fair
- Understands work/life balance
- Personable

Desired Professional Qualities/Attributes of Principal

- Previous experience as elementary teacher and building administrator
- Understands educational trends, research/data, instruction and best practices
- Child focused
- Advocate for children
- Trusts staff
- Good communicator
- Strong and supportive leader
- Good listener
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Respectful of others
- Passionate and inspirational
- Problem solver
- Visible in the school and community
- Holds high expectations for all

4. Sample Comments from Online Survey and Focus Group Meetings.

The following statement from a parent serves best to summarize the thoughts and feelings of many who provided input indicating that the successful candidate should truly embrace the entire community, both at the school level and beyond.

“Someone who not just wants to be a principal of a school but one who wants to be principal of OUR school.”

This sentiment for a principal who fits Charles Barrett community resonated in the feedback from the on-line survey and focus groups as shown below.

a. Online Survey: June-November 2019

- FUN, kind and decisive.
- Need a super star.
- Someone who can maintain consistency of systems/programs.
- Visionary and can promote a positive learning atmosphere.
- Manage growth and support increased diversity.
- An advocate for the school and community.
- Good listener.

- Respectful, responsible, charismatic and polite.
- Someone who understands the dynamics of our district.
- Ability to earn trust and confidence of students, staff, parents and community.
- Supports teachers—we have a great staff.
- Approachable, involved, experienced and inspirational.

b. Staff Focus Groups: December 12, 2019 and January 16, 2020

- Child focused, respectful and holds high expectations of students.
- Trusts staff, supports staff and doesn't micromanage.
- Five plus years of experience as an elementary school administrator.
- Good listener and strong communicator.
- Passionate, calm, patient, caring and confident.
- Knows educational trends and committed to strong, useful professional development.
- Not afraid to get in and do what needs to be done—hands on—no job too small.
- Strength in working with kids academically, socially and behaviorally.
- Has sense of humor and understands work/life balance.
- Facilitator, collaborator, problem solver.
- Visionary—sees the big picture—but also able to implement and manage the day to day.

c. PTA and Community Groups: December 12, 2019, January 9, 2020 and January 22, 2020

- Loves kids and the community.
- Smart, savvy, thoughtful and personable.
- A leader not just a manager.
- Open, approachable, honest and fair.
- Genuine, trustworthy and dynamic.
- Practices servant leadership.
- Encouraging and empowering.
- Commitment to and engagement in the school and community.
- Knowledge and experience with differentiated learning and special needs/EL students.
- Makes good hires/good judge of character.
- Responds and follows-through.
- Bi-lingual is a plus.
- Provides safe environment and keeps order but with love.

d. Feedback from students via Student Government—January 17, 2020

- Serious but fun when appropriate.
- Someone with a lot of experience.
- Friendly.
- Strict but in a nice way.
- Open minded.

5. Instructions to Applicants.

A candidate should use this profile to make a self-assessment and determine how she/he best fits the qualities sought by the school community. These characteristics should be reflected in the content of the application. Should the applicant be selected for an interview, that candidate must demonstrate these qualities in the screening process. Generally, a strong principal should demonstrate leadership and management skills, inspire trust, and build support in the school and across the community. We seek a principal who can do adapt these qualities for the Charles Barrett community.

6. Closing.

The leadership profile outlines the qualities, characteristics and attributes that the community seeks in the permanent principal. Written applications will be screened using this report as a guide. Selection panels will also use this report during the in-person interview process of top candidates.

As your search consultant, I extend my thanks to all participants who provided feedback via the online survey and focus groups. Your time, effort and care are most appreciated. We look forward to the selection of the next school principal.

Sincerely,
John Porter
School Principal Search Consultant
Department of Human Resources, ACPS