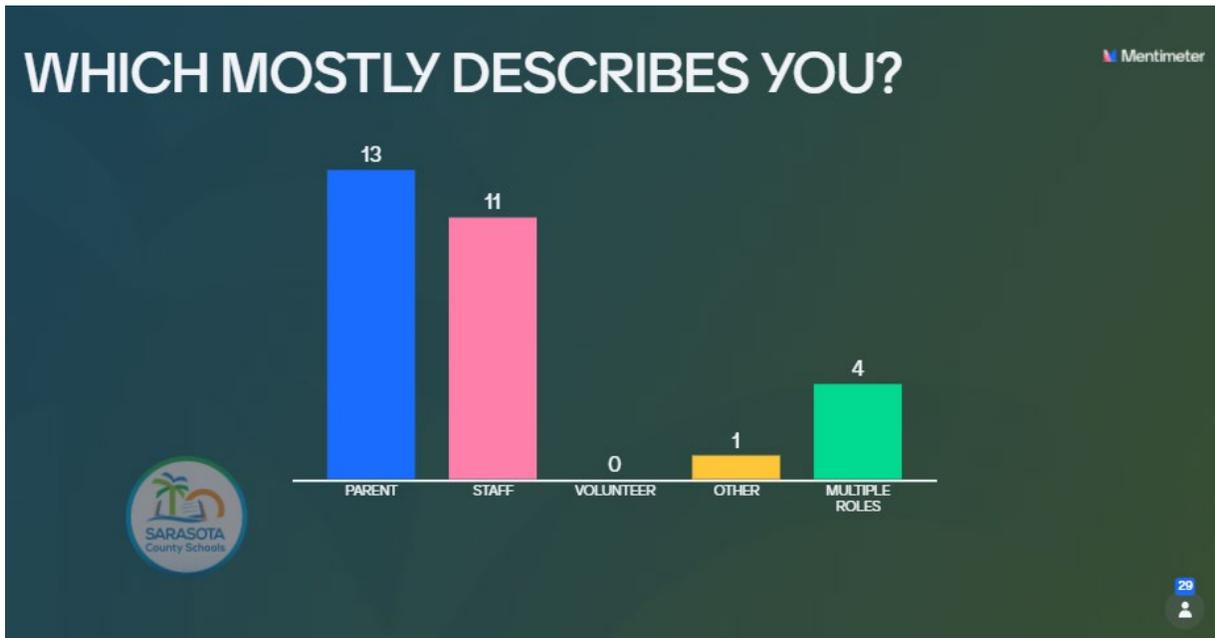


**SOUTHSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Principal Search Focus Group/Needs Assessment**

In preparation for the selection of a new principal for Southside Elementary School, a focus group and needs assessment was conducted on January 20, 2022 from 3:30-5:00pm in the cafeteria. The purpose of the needs assessment was to gather information about what is presently working well at Southside Elementary School; to identify traditions, programs and activities that should be preserved by a new principal; to describe some of the challenges that a new principal will need to manage and to compile a list of characteristics that staff members and parents believe the new school principal should exhibit.



focus group and 5 submitted written surveys from those who could not attend. This summary of the information gathered at the meeting will be posted with the job description for the principal position.

Sarasota County Schools Executive Director of Elementary Education, Dr. Brandon Johnson welcomed the participants joining both in-person and remotely on Zoom and explained the status of Southside Elementary School and its need for a new principal; Human Resources Staffing Administrator, Danielle Schwied discussed the hiring process and timeline for hiring a principal and Craig Maniglia and Mina Ajrab with the Communications Department facilitated the focus group. The survey system, Mentimeter, was used to capture group responses from participants. Additional feedback and information were informally captured and recorded. Mina Ajrab prepared this report based on all data compiled from the focus group and written surveys.

The participants in the focus group were asked the following four questions:

1. What's going well?
2. What traditions, programs or activities should continue?
3. What challenges should the new principal expect?
4. Describe the professional experience, leadership style and personal qualities the new principal should possess.

A summary of the responses to each question at the focus group is presented below. A complete list of character traits electronically recorded during the focus group are included as appendices to this report.

Question 1: What's going well?

Overwhelmingly, the respondents expressed current administration is doing a great job.

Below are other areas touched on:

- Teachers and Staff
- Supportive Leadership
- Supportive Parents
- PTO
- Garden
- Hands on Learning
- SSFA
- The Arts / Theater
- Academics and Specials
- Communication with Parents
- Family Choices Regarding PPE
- Accountability

Question 2: What school traditions, programs or activities should continue?

- The Arts
- ROAR
- Jog A Thon
- Holiday House
- First Friday Breakfast
- Veterans Day Program
- Book Parade
- Bring back Drama
- Farm to Fork
- Field Trips
- Winter Mart
- School Musical
- Clubs for Students
- Specials
- Staff Luncheons
- Go Gold Day
- School Musical
- Go Gold Day
- Foreign Language
- STEM Night
- Barnes and Noble Night

Question 3: What challenges should the new principal expect?

Some challenges that came up were timely communication, ways to boost teacher and the historic building challenged with the presence of pests. Others include:

- Some staff resistance to change
- Exhausted teachers / sub shortage
- Onerous parents
- Wide Socio-Economic gaps among students
- Parking / landlocked for growth
- Historic building challenged with rodents
- Staff shortages
- Timely communications
- Bullying

Question 4: What professional, leadership and personal characteristics of a new principal would best fit?

We posed this question in two parts about adjectives to describe the professional, leadership and personal traits needed in a principal. Top words were:

- **Approachable** (genuine, visible and innovative)
- **Supportive** (kind, team player and flexible)
- **Communicative** (empathetic, engaging and compassionate)
- **Fair** (ethical and genuine)

The appendix contains the brainstorm word cloud (4A) and the four priorities from each participant is contained in (4B)

Other:

There were some questions about the timeline of the hiring process and the next steps moving forward that were answered by Danielle Schwied, Human Resources Staffing Administrator.

Appendix:

4A. WHAT PROFESSIONAL, LEADERSHIP AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A NEW PRINCIPAL WOULD BEST FIT? (BRAINSTORM)

Mentimeter



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4B. WHICH OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS OF A NEW PRINCIPAL ARE THE PRIORITY? (YOUR TOP FOUR)

Mentimeter



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