

**Montgomery County Public Schools
LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT
November 18, 2021**

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in October/November of 2021, for the superintendent position in the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when meeting with individuals and groups in either individual interviews, focus group settings or virtual meetings from October 21, 2021, through November 10, 2021, and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders between October 18-November 12, 2021. The surveys, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Forty-nine stakeholder interviews and focus group meetings were used to collect information regarding the strengths of the division, the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years, and desired characteristics in the new superintendent. The online survey was used to collect data relevant to ranking desired characteristics in the new superintendent as well as suggestions for prospective superintendent candidates. Data collected through the online survey were very consistent with the input of the stakeholder interviews and focus groups.

Participation

The number of participants in interview and/or focus groups sessions, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below:

Group	Personal Interviews or Focus Groups	Online Survey
Board	7	N/A
Administrators/Supervisors	82	152
Teachers	15	1028
Support Staff	2	252
Parents/Guardians	1669	1278
Community Members	32	128
Students	38	299
Total	1845	3137

The Board of Education members were individually interviewed. Many other central office administrators also received individual interviews. Different community members and groups were invited and participated, including the County Council members, Public Safety, former board members, former superintendent and many others. Open invitation community forums for parents, staff and community were offered at various times through virtual sessions with complete accessibility for world and sign language translation available. The response to the virtual forums was unprecedented with over 1,500+ participants on November 4th and 10th, 2021

The responses provided by the individuals and focus groups during the interviews are listed in two places: 1) “Summary of Consistent Themes. . .” which are listed on pages 6 of the report, and; 2) “Summary of All Reported Comments and Observations...” which begin on page 13. They are listed alphabetically with no attempt to prioritize them. Finally, a draft of desired characteristics for the new Superintendent, to be discussed with the entire Board on November 18, 2021, can be found on page 50. Separate documents will provide the Board with the statistical results and open-ended comments of the online survey.

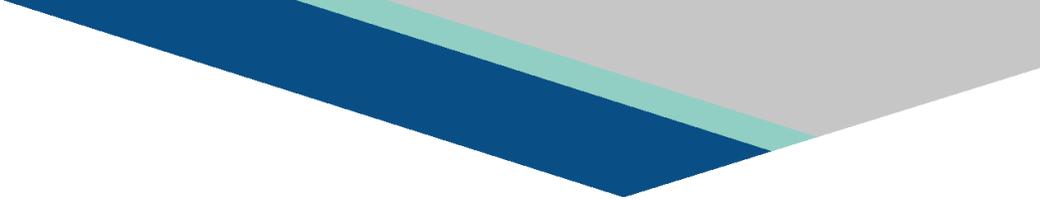
The on-line survey was offered in seven different languages. The 3,137 respondents on the on-line survey represent an excellent cross sampling of the different groups engaged with Montgomery County Public Schools. Teachers and students were well represented with 1,327 individual responses to the on-line survey. The on-line survey comparative statistical analysis, ranking desired characteristics sought in the new superintendent, amplifies the findings and themes from the focus groups.

It should be emphasized that the data from the focus groups are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. Items are included if, in the consultants’ judgment, they warranted the Board’s attention.

For many people, Montgomery County provides an ideal environment for living, working, and raising a family with access to cultural activities, restaurants, and a vibrant social life. Health care and higher education institutions are plentiful and proximity to the District of Columbia is also a plus of living in Montgomery County. Montgomery County spans a large geographic area and includes many cities and towns with urban density and yet has many rural areas of farmlands and horse farms.

Montgomery County has changed significantly in the last decade. It is now a majority minority county and income gap/disparity issues are continuing to increase. This divide along cultural, racial, ethnic, and socio-economic lines is an ongoing challenge for the community and the school district. The extreme diversity of MCPS is a highly rated strength yet also an extreme challenge to provide access to all for a world class education system.

Strengths of Montgomery County Public Schools



Montgomery County Public Schools is the largest of the 25 school districts in Maryland and 14th largest in the nation. It consistently is ranked in the top school districts in the nation. With operating and capital improvement budgets over billions of dollars, MCPS is recognized as a district that runs on well-defined business processes and standard operating procedures. The community strongly supports a robust school district and education is the number one priority of the citizens of Montgomery County, MD.

Every respondent spoke of the incredible strength of the diversity of MCPS and Montgomery County. The changing demographics continue to increase the number of immigrants, cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages of the citizens of Montgomery County. Another component of this diversity is the increasing numbers of families in poverty. As every respondent spoke with pride about the diversity of the populace, they also said it was probably the largest challenge for MCPS to provide a world class education system to this global tapestry of students and their families.

Many respondents spoke of how Montgomery County is a great place to raise a family. Many families specifically moved to Montgomery County for the education system. Multiple generations of families take pride that they attended MCPS for all of their school matriculation. The County Council and County Executive are supportive of maintaining the excellence of MCPS.

The MCPS staff is rewarded with some of the highest salaries and employee benefits for educators in the state of Maryland. Advancement opportunities for staff are numerous. Certificated employees receive numerous opportunities for mentoring and professional development. Staff see MCPS as a great place to work and speak about the quality and passion of their fellow employees.

MCPS provide its students with an academic program that includes numerous program offerings such as AP/IB, magnet programs, enriched studies, career and technical programs and many other advanced offerings. MCPS has been very focused on preparing all students for a four-year college matriculation, but in recent years there is a strong recognition that MCPS needs to increase and offer more career pathways other than college.

A final and important strength that must be noted is the staff. Participants in our interviews and meetings talked about the many dedicated, creative, caring teachers and staff in the schools. The work ethic of staff across the board, from central office to support services is recognized. And the professionalism and strength of Dr. Jack Smith who led the schools through some very trying and difficult days during his tenure is also appreciated.

Challenges

Perhaps because of all these strengths and all the resources and work that has been invested to address racism, equity and inclusion, the community is anxious for change or a fresh look. At this juncture people are tired of talking about these issues and want to see specific actionable plans with defined outcomes. Because what has been tried in the past is not producing the results sought in student literacy, academic achievement, minority hiring/retention, and parent engagement, new ideas



and approaches are desired. Providing equity of access in the increasingly diverse student body was a prominent point for almost every respondent. As one respondent said, MCPS instruction and curriculum for the last decades were well suited to students from high socio-economic backgrounds. But the increasing diversity and levels of income disparity have exposed how the current curriculum and pedagogy does not work for all students. Great school systems resist change to new approaches because their success seems to be sustainable. But many of the staff and community recognize that a new superintendent must have a compelling vision to provide the changes necessary to move MCPS to a new approach that serves all students. Many staff cited their own colleagues as being resistant to change and hoped that the new superintendent could provide the impetus and vision for change.

Recent studies of racism in MCPS have highlighted the issues of diversity and education. Staff training on implicit bias has been implemented, but there must be sustained initiatives in this area. Developing and implementing a comprehensive action plan to address these issues is a critical component to the continued success of MCPS.

The focus groups and interviews brought to light a number of concerns, many of which centered on the need for a clear, focused plan to address the serious, ongoing equity problems. The desire for creative problem-solving, innovation and collaboration are not just in regard to equity. As the district begins a new era, with a new superintendent, there are strong hopes for new solutions developed in a climate that is more open and respectful of divergent points of view. Too many respondents said that the central office is a bureaucracy that doesn't work or provide clear communication. Many went further to say central office staff either does not know what they are doing or are too far removed from the teachers and classrooms to be effective. There is also a strong desire to create a more collaborative approach with the central office that lets teachers, principals and all staff give input to the decisions that impact them.

Several respondents mentioned that the support of State and local government have allowed MCPS to maintain excellent facilities. However, growth and shifting populations have created a need for boundary and redistricting. Diversity and income disparity make these types of changes very difficult, but MCPS, the new superintendent and the Board have to provide a sound basis for the boundary changes, despite the expected resistance from parents and community members.

As school has fully reopened this fall, Montgomery County Public Schools, like other districts, will be dealing with the aftermath of a world-wide pandemic that impacted every school and every student. Many respondents talked about low morale and burnout of the staff from dealing with changing pandemic environment is a still looming issue. Many want MCPS to move on a fast pace to assess each student for learning loss AND for mental and emotional health. Trauma in students, staff and families is a reality of the pandemic and MCPS must provide resources to address these issues.

The pandemic has also increased the challenges of student behavior and that coupled with the removal of the SRO's is a challenge to ensure the safety of the schools. Several respondents were concerned that MCPS is one incident away from a tragedy and expressed a desire to reassess the removal of the SRO's in light of increase student behavior issues.

Desired Characteristics

Whoever is selected as the new Superintendent of Schools in Montgomery County will face many challenges. What characteristics does this community want in their leader? To succeed in this community, the superintendent must be strong and confident, but not arrogant. Montgomery County has a culture of citizen involvement and activism. People have high levels of education and deep beliefs and are not afraid to share them. The School Board is a diverse group with strong personalities, but work well in service to the district. This job requires someone with political skills who can deal with conflict and make tough decisions without alienating people. He or she cannot attempt to please everyone or expect universal approval. But ultimately, if decisions are made fairly, communicated honestly and based on the best interest of students, the superintendent can garner respect and support.

Montgomery also seeks a superb communicator who will expect that plans and decisions be made collaboratively and will require all system leaders to model respect and transparency. A new leader must develop trust. This is best done by being honest, approachable, visible and open.

The superintendent must also have experience with budgeting and financial management experience in order to maintain the fiscal support that the schools have enjoyed over the years.

Finally, unwavering commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is a requirement. Ideally, the new superintendent will have demonstrated success in this area and real passion for this work. If the School Board, school staff, parents and the community bring the same commitment to the table, and pledge to partner with a new superintendent as a new chapter in the history of the division begins, this could be a most exciting and productive era for Montgomery County Public Schools.

HYA cannot promise to find a candidate who possesses all of the characteristics desired by respondents. However, HYA and the School Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to address the concerns expressed by the constituent groups. We will seek a new superintendent who can work with the Montgomery County School Board to continue to provide exceptional education opportunities to all students and to fulfill the division's commitment to equity. The consultants would like to thank all the participants who attended focus groups meetings or completed the online survey. Also, we would like to thank all of the Montgomery County Public Schools staff members who assisted with our meetings and particularly thank Leslie Thacker for her efforts in scheduling and facilitating the myriad of on-line and individual focus group meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
Constance Collins
Brad Draeger
Lisa Flores

Consistent Themes to be Considered

Strengths

Diversity

The majority of respondents cited the diversity of Montgomery and especially the diversity of the MCPS student body as the number one strength for the district. There was a deep appreciation that this diversity is a valuable resource and wealth to the district. Many respondents went on to say it would also reappear as a challenge. MCPS has changed from a majority white school district where whites are only about 45% of the student body. The district is sensitive to the needs of teachers and staff with respect to their work with culturally, socioeconomically, and ability-diverse students, and has instituted professional development programs and community wrap-around services specifically geared toward advancing teacher and staff success with these students while concurrently meeting student/family needs.

Community Resources

The community cares, values and deeply supports a world class education. The tax base is strong, the state supports school construction and state resources to MCPS are expected to grow. The district's reputation allows it to attract great staff, but retention in the pandemic era has become an issue. But every stakeholder agreed that MCPS is rich in human and capital resources.

Curriculum Options and Academic Opportunities

The abundant curricular options and academic opportunities available to students of Montgomery County Public Schools was cited among stakeholders as a strength of the district. Specific options and opportunities that district stakeholders mentioned are: AP/IB, art, world language immersion, health education, IB, social/emotional initiatives, and Title I. In addition, MCPS had added magnet programs and certification programs that allow students to pursue career avocations beyond the traditional four years of college. All the rich offerings contribute to stakeholder belief that in Montgomery County, "all kids matter."

District Reputation

As the 14th largest school district in the county—MCPS is recognized as probably the best run large school system in the country. Operational practices are well in place, the school stakeholders describe the district as being "the jewel of the county." Beyond the county's borders, Montgomery County Public Schools is nationally recognized as a trend-setting, high-achieving district. In addition to its "world class academic reputation," among the initiatives generating this recognition is the district's Leadership Development Program – a sophisticated professional growth system which includes recruitment, development, peer review, evaluation, mentoring and coaching.

Diversity Initiatives

The district is sensitive to the needs of teachers and staff with respect to their work with culturally, socioeconomically, and ability-diverse students, and has instituted professional development programs



and community wrap-around services specifically geared toward advancing teacher and staff success with these students while concurrently meeting student/family needs.

Stakeholder Diversity

Stakeholder diversity found within Montgomery County and its public schools is regarded as a “strength” of the district in that it mirrors the world and affords students the opportunity for students to interact with other students who are culturally, economically, racially, and linguistically different from them. The district serves students and families from over 150 countries, speaking over 140 different languages. And, given the square mileage of the district, the district serves students from urban, suburban, and rural settings.

Staff

Montgomery County Schools’ talented and committed staff proudly render professional service to the district’s students and families, and are viewed by many as the “main strength of the system.” Staff are characterized as being passionate about students by consistently demonstrating care for them.

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

Achievement Gap

Perhaps the most pervasive issue conveyed by stakeholders is that of existing achievement gaps, particularly for Black, Latino and other students of color. In spite of the fact that district leadership has demonstrated a commitment to address this matter by implementing and supporting initiatives and partnerships designed to reverse the situation, the gaps continue to exist. And, as the consultants were informed, with a growing diverse population, there is concern that the gaps may widen. An extension of any achievement gap is how it can translate into an “opportunity gap” thus posing employment and economic barriers for students long after their K-12 experience.

Communication and Transparency

Stakeholders feel that there is a need for transparency in the way the district operates. Pandemics have created changing communications from week to week and sometimes day to day. Many parents are seeking basic information that should be easily available to them through a variety of recourses. Stakeholders expressed the desire to know how and why decisions are made at the Board and District levels and how they are communicated to the parents.

Diversity

Although stakeholders cited diversity as a “strength,” they also consider it as one of MCPS greatest challenges. MCPS is a “majority-minority” district described as being “brown and poorer than it was 15 years ago.” The consultants’ experiences with large virtual town halls conducted for this search process illustrated the challenges of diversity. The sessions were conducted in multiple languages and the response was overwhelming. The tenor of the comments were basic communication requests of parents from very diverse backgrounds. Parents were seeking basic information to assist their child’s academics. Other parents had concerns about food, transportation and before and after school activities. MCPS will have to develop a vision to address the diversity issue—but even more important is a communication and input strategy to allow the vast array of cultures and educational backgrounds to receive the information they need. MCPS must also build a communication plan to involve the diverse population to be involved in providing feedback to the district leaders. Stakeholders communicated the desire for the district to increase its understanding of, and sensitivity toward, students-of-color and different backgrounds. The expressed desires also seek district efforts to further provide opportunities that will enable all students to experience the highest levels of academic success.

Economic Disparities and Inequities

Stakeholders assert that “disparity of income levels throughout the county leads to disparities in services in the schools.” For example, stakeholders informed the consultants that some schools in the district are “resource rich” while others struggle to provide necessary supplies and equipment needed for effective teaching and learning. The inequitable distribution of district resources, whether perceived or actual, is something that the new superintendent will be expected to address and reverse.

Governance and Administration

All school boards have come under criticism in response to the pandemic. The MCPS Board is no exception, but the MCPS Board has provided leadership that allowed virtual learning and a return to be executed better than most districts. There are communication issues related to bureaucracy between the staff of the Board, the Board, and the rest of the central office staff. Everyone is working hard with vision—but the multiple layers of the organization create obstacles that need to be reduced.

Central office staff also received criticism for layers of bureaucracy and for most of the staff not having been in classrooms teaching for many decades. Communication and collaboration also were desired improvements for the Central Office staff.

Student Concerns, Issues, and Needs

Whether it be concerns addressing student safety, sexual orientation, or social/emotional needs, stakeholders contend that the district has neither adequately nor sufficiently done all it could to respond to these matters. Stakeholders assert that as the number of students (especially students of poverty, from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and/or language diverse) enrolling in Montgomery County Schools continues to increase, so will the need to have safety nets and programs in place to respond to student concerns. Safety on buses and in school buildings, as well as bullying (in school and via cyberspace) are concerns that were frequently mentioned by stakeholders. A somewhat different expressed concern was that of student start times with stakeholders pushing for a change in start times to better respond to studies that purport the benefits of a later start time for high school students.

Pandemic Recovery

All respondents talked about learning loss from the impact of the pandemic. Parents especially are concerned about learning loss recovery strategies. They want MCPS to assess the learning loss in their student and provide school and home resources to address the issue. An even stronger request is for MCPS to do more for the mental health and social emotional health of the students. Parents and staff say students need to be assessed for trauma and other mental health issues and a comprehensive and adequately staffed response is needed immediately.

Workforce/Staff

Increased collaboration with the unions of MCPS was expressed by many of the union leadership respondents. The hope is a new superintendent will meet and truly collaborate with the unions to help move MCPS to a better workplace.

Desired Characteristics

Accessible and Visible

The most common desired characteristic for superintendents is visibility and accessibility. The community of MCPS realizes that daily, weekly or even monthly school by visits in MCPS is not practical. But staff, parents and students want clear and transparent communication from the superintendent and from the central office staff.

The new superintendent must make themselves accessible to all citizens of Montgomery. Various forms of town halls—in person and virtual were desired so that citizens and parents can directly have contact with the new superintendent.

Administrative Style

Repeatedly, stakeholders express their belief for the next superintendent to be collaborative with all stakeholders, including unions and to understand the value in engaging staff, parents and the community. The next superintendent is expected to work with the Board in setting the tone and direction for the district.

Culturally Sensitive, Responsive, and Values Diversity The new superintendent must have a proven track record of being culturally sensitive and responsive. The candidates should have extensive experience in a diverse educational environment

Effective Communicator

Beyond being an effective communicator, the superintendent should have a charismatic style that builds immediate trust with all constituents. Stakeholders expect the superintendent to be an outstanding communicator (verbal, written and listening), realizing the significance of communicating openly and directly with all constituents. In the best of all worlds, stakeholders desire a superintendent who is bilingual or multilingual.

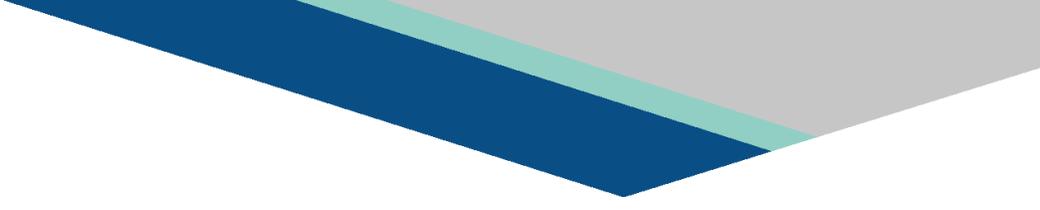
Personal Attributes The most frequently cited attributes are the desire for the superintendent to be politically savvy, and possessing the ability to develop and maintain strong, cooperative working relationships with the Board and city, county and state political officials. Honesty, transparency and a passion for students were also high on the list of attributes.

Professional and Educational Experience

MCPS stakeholders want an educator with a demonstrated record of success as the district's next superintendent. S/he will have a record of success as a classroom teacher, principal, and central office administrator. The experiential portfolio of the selected candidate will be replete with evidence of successful work in: demographically-similar districts, closing the achievement gap, and managing large budgets.

Relationship Builder

Building strong relationships with all constituencies was probably the most cited attribute by all



respondents. The relationships need to be transparent, honest and welcoming to the entire diversity of citizens, parents and students of MCPS.

Student Centered

Stakeholders indicated that it is imperative for the superintendent to be student-centered because students are at the core of the district’s existence. “.

Supports and Respects Teachers., Principals, and Staff

Stakeholders desire a superintendent who supports and respects teachers and staff and the service they contribute to students, the district, and community. Stakeholders believe that someone who has walked in the shoes of a teacher will truly understand the expectations and challenges teachers and staff face as they seek to perform their duties.

Visionary

In essence, stakeholders desire a superintendent who can “build a strategic, shared vision that can be effectively communicated and operationalized through measurable actions.” The selected individual should possess a vision for what excellent education can be (beyond the traditional).

Summary of Consistently Reported Themes Montgomery County Public Schools

Strengths

- Dedicated and involved parents
- Diversity—in all forms
- Division-wide equity initiatives
- Expanding academic enrichment and advancement opportunities
- Outstanding programs and opportunities for students
- Strong fiscal and community support for schools
- Teacher quality, staff quality

Challenges

- Diversity--expanding equity work
- Hiring and retaining staff, especially teachers and administrators of color
- Lack of sufficient progress in closing gaps in student literacy and academic achievement; need for increased parent engagement for students of color and students in poverty
- Lack of staff collaboration that includes principal, teachers and parents in planning and decision-making
- Providing increased career pathways that include quality, available Career and Technical Ed programs
- Resistance to change, innovation, new perspectives
- Safety--Transitioning from having SRO's to new security plan

Desired Characteristics

- Budget and finance experience
- Communicator who can build relationships and trust in a diverse community
- Creates and retains a collaborative work environment where divergent perspectives are valued without fear of reprisal
- Deeply committed to diversity, equity and inclusion; relentless in seeking improvement in this area
- Instructional leader who can guide the system in development of more rigorous and relevant instruction for all students
- Political skills to navigate successfully in a diverse, activist community
- Strong and confident enough to deal with conflict and make tough decisions
- Transparent and open
- Visionary, optimistic about the future of public schools

Stakeholder Responses by Group

*All responses are alphabetically ordered without ranking
/ = multiple responses of the same comment*

MCPS Board of Education--October 14-October 20, 2021 (7 participants)

Strengths

- Acknowledge difficulties and step forward with solutions
- Annual meeting with state officials
- Approachable, supportive local government
- Diverse community, cultures, races, poverty/wealth, housing//
- Education is a priority /
- Engaged parents //
- High expectations/
- Highly educated parents
- Progressive community
- Resources//
- Size of district
- Stable, mature BOE
- State commitment to fund schools well
- Steps forward with solutions
- Talented community
- Volunteers

Challenges

- Black, Latino students not performing at high level
- Black/brown kids in high achieving schools not doing as well as peers
- County redistricting
- County revenues not in good shape
- Crisis of culture-entrenched, dogmatic thinking in CO
- Diversity//
- Engaged community evaluates, watches
- Expensive to live here
- Housing patterns make balancing schools difficult
- Identify 'where we are' and 'where we want to be'
- Increase student population
- Juniors, Seniors not encouraged to consider MCPS in education
- Lack of confidence due to poor communication*
- Lost academic focus
- Lots of change
- Lots of change
- Low morale and frustration*
- Managing high expectations

- Mitigating learning loss*
- Need closer work with Montgomery College
- Need to fill BOE seat
- Need to grow our own
- Need to increase student population
- Need to listen and engage people
- Need to operationalize what community has to offer
- Racist audit is occurring and not all onboard
- Recovery from pandemic//
- Staff, student wellbeing
- Strengths are our challenges
- Strong labor presence
- System in turmoil
- Tear down bureaucracies
- Trust
- Utilize expertise of others

Characteristics

- Able to tell MCPS story
- Acknowledge errors without patronizing mindset
- Aligned with constituencies
- Can relate to all levels of organization
- Clear expectations
- Collaborator
- Communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders///
- Confident but humble
- Connect with people in trenches
- Courageous
- Creative thinker
- Current in research
- Data driven
- Effective proven track record
- Evaluate programs before funding
- Experience working in large system
- Growth mindset
- Hit the ground running without ‘throwing out baby with bath water’
- Inspirational
- Manager of personalities
- Not a “know it all”
- Person of color/
- Prevent large crisis
- Relationship builder/
- Students at decision making table

- Truth teller/
- Value community and student contributions
- Values outside expertise
- Willing to engage in difficult conversations

MCPS Central Office Administration (35 participants)

Strengths

- 3 strong unions
- A lot of good systems—ways to support teacher and the means to support schools
- Ability to collaborate with higher ed, all students
- Academically high achieving
- Affluent and needy are here and how do you bridge them
- Audit works with PTA's and superintendent in partnership to help students
- Best kids are in MCPS/
- Board of Education—very supportive of staff work—collaborative partner
- Budget reflects investment in each child
- Can be as much or little as you want—for school, for work, for raising a family
- Care about how we rank in nation
- Career advancement opportunities for students and staff/
- Clear vision
- Commitment to equitable outcomes
- Commitment to PD
- Committed workforce
- Community believes in public education and provides the resources for public education/
- Community partnerships, advocates///
- Community-school connection
- Consistently been innovative—addressed our challenges
- Consulting teacher program
- Continuous improvement model is well implemented
- Could be very attractive to an aspiring superintendent
- Creative
- Culture of PD
- Cutting edge work in education
- Data driven
- Data driven decisions
- Desire to be on cutting edge
- Destination system
- Development of Teachers and leadership/
- Devoted and intelligent staff—good teachers, good administrators, good support staff/
- Differentiated resources for schools with greater needs
- Diverse
- Diverse staff and knowledgeable in their respective areas

- Diversity is strength//////////
- Diversity of workforce—more progress needed/
- Dynamic opportunity is available—even the ability to challenge the status quo
- Evolving demographically—system is embracing the change
- Excellent schools and extracurricular activities
- Exciting and diverse careers can be grown here
- Extremely talented staff members
- Focus on equity
- Geographically diverse and attractive
- Good relationships with State DOE
- Good reputation
- Great programming//
- Great staff
- High achieving district—highly organized
- History of excellence
- Humble enough to know when we need to change direction
- Innovative
- Innovative
- Large scale—robust, rigorous forward-thinking community
- Largest County in the State of Maryland
- Leadership development
- Leading and progressive school system/
- Longstanding reputation—with excellent outstanding educational outcomes/
- Many different communities
- Near DC
- Open minded in embracing ever changing world
- Opportunity for growth of superintendent—national level
- Our students need a higher quality
- Political support
- Premier opportunity for a career education
- Principal independence in running schools
- Professional development is very strong
- Professional learning is strong/
- Progress monitoring to ensure high expectations and equity/
- Properties hold their value
- Recognize/value language
- Relationships are valued—and committed to good schools and good curriculum
- Resilient active parent base
- Resilient and active parents
- Resourced very well
- Resources are deep—county commissioner supports a great educational system
- Respect for teachers
- Rich history

- Rich perspective, rich talents and rich opportunities
- Safe place to raise families
- SEL and whole child/
- Size—14th largest district in the county
- Staff are willing to change and grow
- Staff has tremendous passion for education for all children
- Strategic
- Strategic plan
- Strategic planning is backed up by resources
- Strong commitment to kids from the entire staff/
- Strong, committed, dedicated leaders
- Student BOE member
- Student voice in decision making/
- Students who self-advocate at grass roots level
- Superintendent has a good relationship with unions
- Support of anti-racist practices
- Top notch district operations
- Very talented staff—schools and central office staff/
- Vision and expectations are high
- Washington DC and the nation is focused on MCPS—great place to learn all aspects of being an educational leader
- We do have a very active community—can be a strength if leveraged well
- Wealthy county—many resources for the schools/////
- Welcoming community—all access for translations is provided
- World class education—bars are set very high/
- Worldwide diversity —embassy to refugee with everything in between

Challenges

- 1500 international students registered in the last two months—more than 75% qualify for ESOL
- 3 superintendents in 8 years
- 50% of parents of MCPS work in the governmental areas
- Ability to have deep knowledge of the work—down to the level of student and school level
- Achievement gap/
- Active community advocacy on the students we already serve well—we need to close the gap and not step on the toes of the advocacy group
- Active parent community don't speak for all
- Additional social and emotional needs with trauma cases due to pandemic
- Affluent don't think about Title 1 schools
- Agricultural
- All aspects of leadership must be at high quality—MCPS is very unforgiving leadership not of one but of many
- Anti-racist audit—hiring—discipline—interacting with families that don't speak
- Attracting a diverse teacher workforce to a high cost of living area

- BOE rubber stamps initiatives of CO
- Budget
- Budget and staffing will shift back to normal constraints
- Budget will be short over the next few years
- Challenges of diversity—improving the outcomes of challenged students—racial and socio-economic group
- Changing dynamics of the student demographics—including everyone not going into a four-year college—more offerings are needed for the non-college bound
- Clarksburg is the largest virtual academy enrollment—many Asians are afraid to come to school—52 elementary students are enrolled
- Clear performance targets are needed in all areas
- Clear vision is needed—and using research data to create and check the progress of the vision
- Collaboration
- Coming out of Covid
- Communication amongst staff—due to size—is difficult and needs to improve
- Communication needs to be infused into every superintendent’s message
- Competing interests need to be unified
- Competing interests need to be unified
- Competition between silos can be damaging—cross office approach is needed
- Continued focus on race and equity with recent audit
- Contract negotiations on backs of kids
- Convey the culture through all leadership positions
- Cost of living
- County has supported the school system for many years—it will need trust to continue
- Courageous conversations needed
- Curriculum is not fitting the current student population—intervention/fixing is the wrong approach—design success for all students into the curriculum
- Data as a flashlight not a hammer
- Data emphasis was lost after Weast and it never really came back—we need to focus MCPS back on school and student data
- Different MCPS communities than 20 years ago.
- Differing communities—differentiating resources—people need to see and feel the equity
- Difficulty with last superintendents so suspicious
- Disconnected data systems
- Diversifying and maintaining staff
- Diversity
- Diversity
- Diversity is beautiful but hard to address all the family needs
- Divided community stretches back to Weast red/green zones—MCPS continues to be two communities—experienced superintendent is needed to handle this divide
- Dog and pony show
- Don’t do good job serving the neediest
- Don’t initiate a lot of change until MCPS stabilizes from Covid

- Embassy/government proximity creates its own challenge
- Equity and diversity challenges for decades—incremental moves—but not much progress
- Equity—diverse and poverty is increasing—are we adjusting our practices to embrace the new demographics
- External stakeholders—very vocal parent communities—they want what they want—superintendent will need a strong vision to not be pushed around
- Failure to get to instruction during Covid when both needed
- Funding and lack of students
- Funding for facilities will be a challenge
- Get rid of learning centers for middle schools
- Getting students back post-pandemic
- GT parents are bucking any changes to the GT program
- Haven't gotten community behind resources needed
- High level admin didn't budget or advocate for true needs of county
- How to you do not sit on your laurels but make a great system better
- Huge system—22,000 employees—hard to come in to rally the troops
- Influential people believe they are influential everywhere
- Knowing the understanding of student voice—they need to be given input into the decision-making process
- Large County—much movement—staffing and services are a challenge
- Large school district—hard to make changes stick
- Latino's especially need attention
- Learning loss/
- Listen to people in trenches
- Losing AA middle class boys
- Low morale before Covid
- Many leaders left
- Many of our systems were created for a different—central office is not designed for collaboration or connectedness to schools
- Many students are not returning to school, extracurricular activities, etc. Getting students to engage back in school needs to be a priority
- MCPS does not serve all of its students well—response to changing community is from a deficit approach—new superintendent needs more than lip service
- MCPS functions as down county and up county schools—we should be one district
- MCPS has a tarnished image—how do we get it back
- MCPS used to function at the national level—we need to return to that innovative top district of the nation
- Move from 'GT' to 'acceleration' disliked
- Narrowing the focus of our work would be better for us to achieve higher goals
- National staffing shortage of educators—especially SPED—78 vacancies
- Navigating a district this size—both students and staff—staff needs good leadership to perform at the highest levels
- Need all businesses to support district

- Need anti racism, system of trust
- Need to articulate and establish clear vision
- Need to focus on instruction/PD for success of all students
- New leader must figure out how to support the staff and make them feel whole.
- No trust in MCPS
- Non-diverse teaching staff
- Not healthy place for adults
- Not staffed well in CO for size of district
- Older regimes at the top are circumventing new approaches to the organization
- Our progressiveness is not as good as we think
- Pandemic recovery—it seems to go on even though it was supposed to end/////
- Pandemic/Covid recovery—community vitriol—it makes it seem like we did nothing right
- Pandemic—covid 19—there are many challenges for schools and staff
- Pandemic—how to navigate learning loss—how to keep students Covid safe
- Pandemic—treat this as measuring assets rather than measuring deficits
- Partnership with teacher education system—higher ed needs to do more to get teachers to get to “yes” for all students
- People recently hired don’t know what they don’t know
- Perceptions of people who don’t understand the audit will have to be addressed
- Political dynamics of MCPS—County Council involved
- Political position too often rather than what’s best for kids
- Politics—MCPS has high intensity
- Poverty
- Professional development and hiring a diverse workforce
- Public relations-perception vs reality
- Purchased curriculum—is not serving the teachers, community, and students very well
- Putting out fires
- Reactive rather than proactive so chaos
- Refocus on core mission
- Removal of SRO’s
- Reputation has slid down in last 7-8 years
- School security teams—who supervises and ensures there is consistency between buildings
- Schools perceive that central office is a bit of a mess—more collaboration for schools is needed
- Second rung of leaders (Chiefs) have little good leadership and management experience—too many middle school principals
- Serve many masters and we rarely say no
- Serving the quiet voices is extremely important
- Sharing of info after decisions made without staff input
- Sheer size of MCPS creates a challenge
- So many new people in administration we really don’t know what we are doing
- Some MPCS hires don’t understand how to communicate in such a large system
- Staff are stressed out—morale and care of staff needs attention
- Staff is not empowered and support for staff is selective and not encompassing

- Staff morale in buildings and CO/
- Staff shortages
- Staff shortages
- Staff with fixed mindsets—good at curriculum—but they are not reaching all students
- Staffing in all positions is critical to the future of MCPS
- Staffing will be a challenge—many higher-level leaders are leaving
- Student discipline will be a challenge—superintendent needs savvy
- Students need to understand the structure and especially connect to the leader
- Students of color do get missed in magnet, AP and IB programs
- Students want to see leaders and staff they can connect and relate to as a student
- Study circles—parents, students and teachers talk about race
- Teacher and staff turnover—lack of subs
- Tension around boundaries-segregation/integration of schools (“don’t move my child to poor school”)
- Tons of resources but not all used well
- Too many leadership changes—we’re losing quality
- Toxic and chaotic—but this is throughout the US
- Understanding the student experience through Covid
- Very divided district—morale is very low
- Very engaged community—parents—community at large—media—Washington Post, etc.—all are interested in what we do well and what we don’t do well.
- Very strong unions—a blessing and a curse—unions did not have a good experience with old regime on covid—more repair with unions is needed
- Very transient population—wide socio economic
- Very wealthy and very poor—need to serve all students equally
- Vocal and silenced parent groups must be equal in receiving communication and services
- Voices of others need to be a part of the work
- What happens when ESSA funds gone?
- White flight and middle-class blacks leaving district for private schools because their children’s needs are not being met
- Work/life balance for the entire workforce is determined at the superintendent level and their direct reports
- Working relationships between unions and MCPS

Characteristics

- Ability to bring a bifurcated set of parents together
- Ability to connect students with technology
- Ability to put equity at the forefront of all initiatives
- Ability to slow things down
- Ability to staff MCPS—good teachers and place they want to work
- Able to think through decision making and include others
- Acknowledge multiple families staying in one home/apt
- Approachable

- Ask: WHAT DO OUR KIDS NEED NOW vs 20 YEARS AGO
- Authentic
- Authentic exhibition of empathy
- Balance funding cliff
- Be a problem solver
- Be able to say what they don't know—and show an ability to find out the answer.
- Blueprint does not address all groups
- Broad knowledge of everything but the ability to tap into expertise of staff for the details
- Broad thinking
- Build trust
- Calm
- Can get people to gravitate toward you and the mission
- Can handle media inquiries
- Can't be afraid to lead a big system
- Charisma
- Clear vision and communicator to central office—even the basement
- Clear, short informative communication
- Collaboration
- Collaboration—especially engaging the quiet members of the staff and community
- Collaborative
- Collaborative
- Commitment to district and connected to it
- Commitment to transparency between CO leadership and schools
- Communication at the forefront
- Comprehensive plan to build trust in district
- Confident
- Continue to promote MCPS as a good employer
- Create a presence with community in a large organization
- Culture and climate needed to accept mistakes for effort
- Deep stamina—Don't waver to special interests
- Deep threshold for dealing with the issues of the large superintendency
- Deep understanding of MCPS
- Diplomat to keep BOE out of headlines re negotiations to protect BOE
- Don't drain all historical knowledge
- Don't forget the support staff—someone who can inspire all—not just the teachers
- Ears to the ground—can they identify challenge issues
- Educational expertise is needed
- Effective, regulator and inspiring communicator
- Empathetic
- Empathetic
- Empathy, sympathy- and deep knowledge of knowing the needs of students and their families
- Engage with the community
- Enlist and do not polarize community

- Evidence of creating structures of support for staff and district initiatives
- Evidence of hiring good people—not just hiring friends and nepotism
- Evidence of policies that improve morale and improve the work environment
- Experience in midsize/large district
- Experience with diversity
- Experienced SUPT; can't lead if you have not done it
- Experiencing thinking and generalizing across a large district
- Fearless
- Flexible—visionary—experienced
- Focus on students and not self
- Focus on T&L and what's happening in classroom
- Forward thinking/
- Foster high levels of collaboration and assemble an effective team
- Go beyond buzzwords
- Great communication skills—leads by example—compassionate—recognize the value of all employees
- Great superintendents don't wait for a crisis but are proactive with safety
- Healer
- High touch leader—in the schools
- Hire people who are experienced to do the work
- Honest
- Honest (no lies of omission)
- Honor diversity
- How to get 5-6k students back
- How to set up structures for collaboration
- How to speak to divided community without further alienation—we need a uniter
- Huge change is not needed—shore up the foundation—hold on to your great ideas until they will be met with successful implementation
- Immediately engage community members
- Infuse education from national landscape methodical
- Innovative
- Innovative
- Instructional leader
- Instructional leader
- Integrity—character
- Interests of bargaining groups and desire for increased \$\$
- Internal/external communication
- Know and understand the needs of the students, families, and community—this is a delicate balance
- Knows the system—don't come in cold
- Labor relations
- Lack of arrogance
- Large district experience with 30k employees

- Lead with inspiration
- Leadership that develops those around you—one superintendent can't do it all
- Level 5 leader
- Leverage others to move work forward
- Listen to all coalitions
- Listen to experts who surround you, Student voice, impoverished families
- Listen twice as much as speak
- Listener
- Makes tough decisions
- Micro/macro concerns
- Multi-cultural candidates would be welcome
- Multi—cultural staff and parents need to be included in the process—especially of the superintendent
- Must be hands on with their cabinet members—too much doing their own thing has happened
- Mutual respect
- Navigate political landscape
- Needs some level of ego
- Not afraid and can handle adversity'
- Not afraid of challenges
- Observe before making changes
- Open door policy
- Open minded
- Open to disparate views
- Open to innovation
- Open to listen
- Parents working 3 jobs and not heard
- Passion for the mission not just the position
- Personable—connect to people—not just to the work
- Political savviness
- Politically savvy
- Problem solver who can work with other community and governmental leaders
- Provides stability, hope, trust
- Psychological safety is a desire for staff at MCPS—new sup needs to provide a safe haven for expression of other thoughts
- Receive constructive feedback
- Reflective not reactive
- Resides in community and is a part of it
- RESPECT FOR ALL
- Respectful and personable
- Risk taker
- Sense of humor
- Sense of purpose--sense of command
- Significant experience—especially with being an

- Solution oriented
- Someone attuned to social and emotional research
- Someone who listens—adults and students are struggling—somebody needs to hear all their concerns
- Someone who understand stability rather than change—especially in the central office
- Someone with vision—how to listen and then implement the vision
- Stable leadership over time
- Stand by their conviction—well respected
- Stand in front of parents and say what’s the right thing to do
- Stay focused on academic results—let the other “stuff” stay secondary to academic achievement
- Strategic
- Strategic visionary
- Strategic//
- Strategist
- Strong communicator
- Strong delegator
- Strong, dynamic and values various points of view
- Superintendent aware of the diversity that take us into the mantra of an urban district
- Surround self with people who don’t think like them
- Teacher and Principal experience//
- The Sup must speak about the brand of MCPS.
- Thoughtful
- Trust
- Trust those who surround you
- Trustworthy
- Understand finance and speak confidently about budget
- Understand work of CO
- Understands budgetary impact of new state blueprint
- Understands MCPS and not coming to rid district of programs
- Understands racial and socio-economic diversity. Equity must be embedded.
- Understands that this is a “different” place
- Use data as a flashlight rather than a hammer
- Value of data must be embraced—and take a stand—don’t try to just be liked—back up your staff
- Value opinions of others
- Values diversity
- Virtual academy allowed to continue?
- Visionary
- Visionary
- Visionary—surround themselves with a variety of opinions and expertise to honor the different opinions—validate the vision with research and connect the vision to staff and community
- Willing to trust

- Willingness to trust colleagues

MAACP (7 participants)

Strengths

- Brainstorming sessions preaching to the choir
- Communities are supportive, active, and involved—they help the superintendent stay accountable
- Least experienced and high turnover in Title 1 schools
- Well resourced, especially for accountability

Challenges

- Asian parents' lawsuit for dropping universal testing for admission to magnet programs being joined by MCAAP
- Build on the assets and trusted partnerships of the disadvantaged communities
- Change the heart
- How do you represent people who are not in the room?
- Implicit bias training already had a track record of not working
- Lack of agility to change—even if there is a desire to change
- Lesson plans and the process of groupthink needs to change
- Loss of leadership recently—but it might be a good thing
- Many MCPS initiatives are optics
- Privileges of adults are baked into union contracts and MCPS policies—sometimes the unions act as anchors to improving the system
- Problem solving where there is no problem
- Results based accountability—not practiced in MCPS
- Shiny programs that don't move the needle forward need to change to programs that provide opportunities for disadvantaged students
- Teachers of color can be more punitive on black and brown students
- Too much talk about admiring the problem—we need to action on the solutions
- Very segregated schools by geography—informal power base in most schools that is usually white
- Where is the follow-through on the training of cultural and disciplinary issues?

Characteristics

- Ability to implement—with a track record
- Advocate for black and brown community—invite them to the decision table
- Best practices—long term sustained
- Contract is important with incentives for staying and the option to release
- Current interim knows what is going on—we will lose a lot of time if we must change—she was smart to ask for organizational commitment
- Don't just talk about the brown and black problems
- Environment is not ready to accept a leader of color—but is there any other choice

- Familiar with the community
- History of accountability—track record of improving achievement
- Management and accountability—are teachers, principals, and central office practicing measurements that change student academic improvement
- Multicultural building principals to give a vision to all communities
- One hit wonder—not needed—need long term commitment to vision and sustained change
- Proven track record of solutions for achievement gap and the historical aspects
- Someone with a skill set to manage change
- Stability and consistency with strategies for equity accountability
- Transparency
- Where do they spend their time—Board meetings, etc., but change needs to happen at the operational level—drive incremental change operationally.

MC Planning Commission (5 participants)

Strengths

- Diverse county—but very well-educated with a lot of diversity.
- Growth will be about .6%—not great growth but enough to keep planning for the future
- Unbelievable financial resources. No resource need goes unmet.

Challenges

- Divergent economic conditions
- Friction on actual construction—MCPS tends to not look at the long-term view
- Managing expectations for facilities
- Master plans and reservation for school sites through regulatory processes.
- MCPS has been slow to adopt to the changes
- MCPS has weak governance at the top, not exerting little if any control of influencing the future
- Reluctance to pursue alternative school design. MCPS needs a broader view of what a school is
- Schools are part of community building. MCPS has not been willing to buy into that concept.
- Schools are slow to deal with the urban issues and have not really developed good urban schools

Characteristics

- Curriculum, safety, diversity, create the need for an urban experienced Superintendent
- Demographic data could be better coordinated between planning
- Sup needs experience in facilities
- Superintendent is in the real estate business. They don't have an appreciation for land and the impact of real estate.

November 1, 2021 Town Government Elected Official (1 participant)

Strengths

- Educated people want to live in Montgomery County
- Educated population
- Incredible demographic diversity—158 languages spoken
- Low-income schools—high parent engagement
- Most of the people don't appreciate the quality
- One of the most attractive jobs for creating long-term change
- Public officials at federal, state, and local level all support education for economic engines
- Quality of teachers is very high
- Resources for kids—museums, culture, and other institutions
- Skill based opportunities for the non-college bound are abundant
- Top facilities

Challenges

- Most parents have graduate degrees.
- Parent engagement is a challenge--Principal was bullied out of a job by the parents
- School Board quality is vital to the future of state/town/country

Characteristics

- Don't create conflict
- Media and diplomatic expertise are needed—must be relatable
- More public relations—than running the place—policies are set by SB—how good is the superintendent and putting together the right team and leading it.
- Understands that leadership is better than micromanaging a system

MCPS Student forum (38 students)

Strengths

- Advocacy for students is very strong
- Communication is very strong
- Diverse language and culture
- Diversity with excellent programs and opportunities
- How diverse—embraces you and trains you for citizenship
- Lots of programs and student opportunities for participation
- Many more resources—even by MD standards
- Many students from many different backgrounds
- MCPS does try to hear everyone—including this meeting
- Other school systems look to MCPS for setting the standard—we need new superintendent to understand this role
- Sense of community
- Students and staff are passionate for change

Challenges

- Asian racism for Covid

- Bathroom behavior—Tik Tok challenges
- Bathrooms are overcrowded
- Better accessibility for programs that conflict with time scheduling
- Better communication is needed—dispel rumors

Characteristics

- Closing the achievement gap
- Communication skills///
- Courage to deal with issues—SRO's, Asian hate, etc.
- Covid transition back to school has been hard on some students—workload, mental health, etc., students need to be able to take a break
- Covid—we still need to prevent ill
- Embrace student diversity through celebrations of diversity
- Experienced with large size and diversity
- Fights in schools are becoming an issue
- Foresight of issues
- Hall passing time is very short—one-way hallways—2 minute and 4-minute passing time is too short
- Health curriculum—better instruction on mental health—health curriculum advisory committee
- History curriculum
- Involvement in schools—address issues in schools
- Listening the students is the most important part of their of job
- Managing large counties—need to
- Many ESOL students are
- Many issues seem to be lost in the bureaucracy
- Many students do not know or understand the role of the superintendent
- MCPS graduate and a younger person
- Mental and environmental issues—MCPS needs to contribute more to sustainable environments
- Mental health of staff—especially teachers—child care for teachers and other staff would be helpful
- More diverse school staff
- More realistic—quiet during a fire drill—realistically we wouldn't stay calm
- Open minded—someone who wants to hear from students
- Pearson standardized testing
- Proactive—not just the skills
- Profanity—inappropriate language has been said to students with no reaction
- Progressive views for bettering the school systems
- PSAT or SAT prep is not offered—this puts many students at a disadvantage
- Racially diverse
- Relatable to students
- School funds—school store—not many students participating or purchasing
- School overcrowding is causing switch of schools with long distances

- School visitations would help the
- Sensitivity—can be overdone—moderation-resilience is an important
- SOL students—and refugees are overcrowding our schools
- Student behavior and student participation
- Student behavior needs to improve
- Student voices must be incorporated into the decision-making process
- Takes pride in equity and decision making
- Transportation is a challenge with late busses and crowding of children
- Vision for students’ staff and everyone

Principals and administrators -MCAAP (25 participants)

Strengths

- All staff are strong and committed
- Balance of systems within organization
- Clear vision
- Commitment to achieving equitable outcomes
- Commitment to PD growth
- Community partnerships
- Connections of community with schools
- County program for sped students
- Culture of caring
- Dedicated leaders
- Differentiated resources for schools with greater needs
- Diversity of students/staff
- Focus on whole child
- Great partners at Title 1
- High standards for all schools with some flexibility
- History of excellence
- Leadership development program
- Progress monitoring to ensure high expectations and equity
- Resources
- Strategic plan
- Student BOE member
- Support of anti-racist practices
- System of communication

Challenges

- Curricular decisions handed over to vendors
- Diversity
- Diversity within schools (economic)
- Embrace diversity...hold up success of the past
- holding onto institutional practices

- Lost too much due to politics
- Morale low across all stakeholders
- Moving to minority-majority system
- Must identify what super high kids need to be supported
- Need balanced voice
- Need for curriculum
- Need greater county focus on impoverished
- Parents don't trust the system
- Provide opportunity of specialty schools over to other schools/students
- System can't handle much more change
- THE PUZZLE IS BROKE...WE NEED TO BRING IT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN
- We are responsive to change but it has been excessive
- Weather a challenge in rural areas

Characteristics

- Able to identify what's important
- Can handle pressure of learning loss and can move us forward
- Care about how we rank in the nation
- Clear and deliberate communication of goals
- Collaborative
- Commitment to public schools as a resource for everybody
- Current needs have changed
- Data driven
- Decisive
- District budget is high in investment in each child
- Educated, involved, diverse parents
- Education is important
- Embraces diversity of communities
- Excellent schools (extracurricular, SEL)
- Executive level skills to manage a tremendous organization
- Extensive family support
- Get us back to providing excellence
- Hardline but respectful leader
- Has the back of principals
- High standards
- High value on whole child
- Hire principals who understand what it's like to be in classrooms
- Listener
- Lived the Elem, MS, HS levels

MCCPTA (45 participants)

- Open mindedness around adapting to an ever-changing world
- Open to conflicting views

- Outstanding student body
- Principals have independence in running schools
- Recognize and acknowledge the contributions of all members of the organization
- Reflective
- Resilient and active parent base
- Resources
- Staff dedicated and accepting of students
- Staff interested in PD
- Stand up for core values

Strengths

- Strong communicator
- Utilize strengths of those here
- Wealthy county
- Work/life balance

Challenges

- “Individuals with lifetime appts” regardless of performance
- 2 kinds of administrators: 1-those who recognize we have something to bring to the table and 2- those who only Kristen because they have to when they don’t want to
- Advocacy groups in county must be brought to table
- Appreciated local schools, but NOT CARVER because no outreach to parents
- CO doesn’t have nots of eyes/ears on the ground
- Communication is biggest challenge with English speaking and those who have another language
- Community is responsive to data but we don’t see the data
- Community should be able to rank candidates
- Data not published and not shared in transparent way
- Difficult to attract teachers teaching high level courses
- Difficult to navigate
- Hemorrhaging of talent through reorganization
- Huge system with a lot of challenges
- Lack of intent in sharing information which is meaningful, parents are kept in dark
- Large CO bureaucracy
- Learning loss
- MCPS is reactive
- Most educated county in the nation but not appreciated and acknowledged
- Multicultural community
- Must be able to address heavy weight at top of organization
- Need a communications team
- Need to support and educate teachers to support IEP students
- No equal access for all
- Not addressing top 20% of special needs and 20% of top students

- Not attracting outside talent but placing internal people in positions
- Not enough done for students with disabilities
- Parents are not a part of the hiring process
- PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITY NEEDED
- Recruitment, retention, equity redistribution meeting was chaotic because of lack of trust
- Recurring theme of one size fits all does not work
- Size- we are too big so don't react to crisis well
- students, staff traumatized after Covid
- Transparency
- Union is powerful but willing to work
- We are not respected

Characteristics

- Action oriented to address trauma
- Can no longer rest on laurels
- Communication plan
- Fix issues from Covid fallout
- Fresh perspective to cut away things that are no longer effective
- Integrity
- Integrity of process
- Magnet for attracting outside talent
- Stand up to internal/external stakeholders
- Supt must know how to advocate for MCPS through legislature

Support Staff (2 participants)

Strengths

- Attracts well educated workforce
- Community pride and involvement
- Dedicated, loyal workforce
- Diversity
- Internal, external Resources
- Size of district

Challenges

- "People fall in love with their own magical thinking"
- Bureaucracy is a challenge
- Creating committees to create a committee
- Disconnect with new families and need to educate them about district
- Inequalities of wealth/no wealth
- Lack of creativity for new problems
- Lack true collaboration
- Leadership needs to hear and receive hard things

- Meetings just to meet
- Practices and terminology do not permeate the organization
- Reputation of district does not reflect the reality of district
- Talk about problems and not solutions
- Those making decisions have not been in classrooms for decades
- working class, immigrant families

Characteristics

- Accountability
- Committed to high quality personnel in every Dept
- Equity cannot be an initiative only
- Make the district “A DESTINATION DISTRICT”
- Respect the work of SEIU leadership which goes beyond MCPS
- Transparent
- True collaborators
- Understands and respects value of all system employees
- Views unions as partners

MCAAP Executive Board (15 participants)

Strengths

- Administrators—strong, committed in schools and central office
- Biotechnology—strong eco system to connect with businesses
- Building blocks are in place—connection of the blocks is needed
- Class size reduction initiative
- Community partnerships
- Content specialization leads to expertise in many areas—collective intelligence
- Diversity racially—socio economically
- Engaged associations—we want to work in collaboration with the superintendent
- Government corridor
- Great programs and special tracks
- High expectations—evaluation process sets the standard high—support for novice teachers and principals
- High prestige as a school system
- Innovative—trying many new things
- Kids of color of 70%--used to be majority white
- Partnership with Health and Human Resources—very advanced in mental health and social awareness
- Post-secondary partnership with K-16 partners
- Principal, assistant principals all benefit from development and mentor programs, common practice, data analysis
- Process and SOP
- Quality of schools—MCPS children can succeed in any school

- Rated in the top of all school districts in the nation
- Staff is outstanding
- Technology leapt forward through the pandemic

Challenges

- “Blueprint for Excellence”—huge challenge for implementation
- “Let us lead”—there are levels of micromanagement that don’t value middle managers
- Achievement data has plummeted
- Achievement gap—a working and coordinated construct with resources to close the gap is needed
- Central office staff has been cut to bare bones
- Clear communication of a vision is not clear—central services is not always included or allowed to be given input
- Continuity is needed
- Elementary stature is not recognized—promotions and staffing at the high levels of leadership are not represented by elementary experienced administrators
- Equal to equitable—needs a larger picture
- Harness technology to address the achievement group
- Lack of psychological safety—many people new to positions have fear to misspeak or mistakes
- Last minute or 24-hour turnaround requests is not a good way to manage
- Magnitude of the work
- Many competing interests—how to do you truly collaborate with all these different voices
- MCPS “likes to smell themselves”—any new ideas or change is met with great resistance
- Morale is low
- Staff cuts at central service—impacts across the school system, including schools—lack of representation—schools sometimes feel they are not being heard
- The Board and the County Council requests always seem to get a fast “yes” rather than “let us analyze that and see if that is feasible”

Characteristics

- Ability to leverage relationships with staff to achieve the common vision
- Analytical skills—drop ineffective programs—focus on programs that work
- Being visible
- Budget experience with large expenditure allocations
- Charismatic
- Experience—magnitude of the work
- Focused on the missions and troops
- Leadership
- MCPS is heavy at the top
- Not demeaning to staff—utilize the strengths of staff for decision making
- Polished—excellent large public speaker—to convey a vision
- Reflective leader—have people close to them who push back
- Relationships—understanding their strengths and their weaknesses

- Self-driven
- Successful experience as a principal
- Three unions—must be able to understand and values the collaboration and shared decision making with the unions
- Weast was engaged with the budget details

Montgomery County Council Members (8 participants)

Strengths

- 14th largest district in the nation
- Creative solutions would be celebrated here
- Educated workforce
- Education is the number one priority of most citizens
- Great facilities for each and every school
- Great place to live---high quality of life—talent pool of parents, students and staff
- High standard of excellence—helps with recruitment of teachers
- MCPS has tried to handle the issues of the pandemic
- More schools have been renovated than not
- More than 50% of the county budget goes to schools
- Opportunities
- Strong and engaged parent infrastructure
- Strong collaborator with County government
- Strong commitment to the diversity and many outreach programs are in place
- The ability to improve the MCPS school is great
- Tremendous reputation nationally
- Tremendous sense of community—most if it comes from the schools themselves

Challenges

- Achievement gap and language barriers
- Boundary studies—how to we navigate the issues of segregation
- Change in governor—Montgomery County never benefits from state distribution
- Communication—came to light during the pandemic—not just what is happening—but why was sometimes lost
- How do we address and adapt to the changing demographics of MCPS?
- Immigrants without formal education
- Income gap is widening in the county
- Learning loss
- MCPS does not pivot well
- Mental health, safety/security, child abuse, meals for children—so many issues that are high priority
- Preparation for 21st century skills need to focus on economic and entrepreneurial focus
- Rapidly changing kindergarten classes

- Recruitment and retention of staff—many are leaving—recruitment needs to increase—and we need to address the work/life balance for staff
- Redistricting—boundaries need to be finished
- Relationship with unions needs to improve—stressors on educators
- Schools are slipping a little bit
- Segregation—housing patterns impact school
- Six new County Council members from upcoming elections
- Social emotional needs of children have to be addressed—violence is up—and student achievement will suffer until that is solved
- Some communities feel they don't have access to high performing schools
- The list of challenges is long—but not insurmountable
- Very reasonable teacher union president—not a maverick and willing to collaborate

Characteristics

- A partner rather than the extreme
- Ability to deal with staff morale and burnout
- Approachable and humble
- Articulate a clear vision—everyone doesn't have to be happy
- Clear compelling vision for the school system
- College preparation should not be the end all—trades/certifications and other career paths should be celebrated—college is not the only path to success
- Come out of the pandemic through strong relationship
- Communication—false communication is spread faster and wider than accurate information
- Continue collaboration
- Culture of high expectations
- Effective manager of the day-to-day operations
- Familiar with the players in the system—or the ability to become familiar
- Foster trust and respect
- Gravitas
- How to do you translate it into actions
- Innovator—but not Elon Musk
- Invested in building relationships—cabinet must be very strong
- Recruitment of great staff needs to be a priority
- Relationships—innovative decisions are made through informal relationships—so many leaders in MCPS
- Slow and steady—need a long-term leader—this is not a turnaround
- Support for teachers and administrators

Former School Board members (3 participants)

Strengths

- Very diverse

Challenge

- 75% of citizens don't have children in the school
- Advocate for the budget to serve the needs of children
- Analysis of programs would help address bloat
- Articulate a vision for families and staff
- Bilingual education is critical for all students
- Communicating at the state level
- Education is the key to future of any country
- Fear of going outside
- MCPS is situated at the capital of the US—global center
- MCPS of 2021 is very different that the MCPS of 2020
- MDOE and Annapolis have to be in a working relationship with for budget and resource support
- Middle managers have blocking cynicism to new superintendents
- Partnerships have a difficult time breaking into the hierarchy of MCPS
- School naming does not reflect the diversity of the County
- Singapore is a world model for class
- Size is a huge issue
- Socio economic disparity—those students need support
- Technology could be a tool for closing the achievement gap
- Top management positions need to be more diverse
- Very fewer doers in MCPS-

Characteristics

- Ability to advocate at the state and local government level
- Advocate for advanced and future technology
- Attentive to fight back against adversity
- Commitment to diversity
- Committed to equity and diversity of the county
- Committed to human resources development
- Communicator
- Development of talent
- Engage with the parents and the students
- Former Board Members—former staff-willing to assist but we remain as an untapped resource
- Innovation will be important
- Strategic thinking and approach

MCEA-Nov 8, 2021 (15 participants)

Strengths

- Diversity
- Great place to live
- Great reputation
- Location near capitol

- Million people in county
- Respect for teachers
- Respects, values education
- Rich history
- Well established system
- Well qualified teachers

Challenges

- Affluent area doesn't think about Title 1 schools
- County budget and decision making
- Diversity
- Expensive to live here
- Fail to engage all stakeholders
- High level administrators who don't take care of true needs of county
- Influential people who believe that they influence everywhere
- Lack of trust
- Negotiated contract must be honored by management

Characteristics

- "Can turn around titanic"
- "Student centered but staff concerned"
- Action driven planning
- Been in classroom longer than in admin
- Continuing with internal/interim candidate is a problem
- Get resources out to schools
- Hands on in schools and surprise visits
- Integrity
- Knowledge of ESOL and resources to those schools without these services
- Knows how to create stability in an organization
- Leave CO to see what's happening
- Need fresh set of eyes
- Out front with the WHY OF CHANGE
- Someone from outside willing to say..." This is not how we're doing business anymore"
- Someone who's balanced
- Support 21st century education
- Trust
- Vocal in support of all unions
- Well versed in all programs and how to use them
- Willing to make hard statements about diversity

Community Forum—October 30, 2021 10:00 am - 12:00 pm (24 participants)

Strengths

- Great place to live and great place to raise a family
- Many parents care
- MCPS is very inclusive
- Parents care about equal access to all
- Student activism is very important and should be retained
- Very involved parents—committed to making students succeed

Challenges

- 50,000 students are in poverty
- Administrators and BOE's response to parents needs a large culture change—too much litigation against parents and families—especially in special education
- Board and MCPS are not collaborative
- Board of Education has silenced parents and shut them out of the process
- Board receives input from a small set of parents—system does not reach out for input—Board responds only to the squeaky wheel
- BOE members are obstructionist
- Closing achievement gap must also keep the average kids motivated and challenged
- Closing the achievement gap by dumbing down the top, eliminating the GT program—this is not a good approach—push the lower group up—but not at the expense of the top
- Confronting the widening achievement gap
- Control of speakers at BOE meetings—silencing parents and violating parents' 1st amendment rights
- Jerry Weast one a case at the Supreme Court—he beat parents down over IEP rights—this mindset is anti-parent and wrong
- Josh Starr was removed because of the Board—he wasn't given enough time to lead
- Kids were shut out of school—plummeting challenges
- Many parents don't have the time, or don't have the language to advocate for their children—they need to be included
- MCPS higher ups couldn't understand why I was advocating for other children—it's a mindset that needs to change
- New superintendent should not be chosen until the next election
- Parents have felt a loss of leadership from the Board
- Reservations about interim superintendent—summer school shortening to three weeks was disaster
- Some parents have been silenced
- Standard deviation is huge—the spread is huge for student achievement
- Teachers have expressed frustration with communication
- Top-down leadership is not being received well by school staff—central office is out of touch with today's classrooms
- Trust and communication must improve—much has been lost
- Very active parents are a privileged voice that improves many schools—but it creates disparity

Characteristics

- Ability to listen to parents and be accessible
- Be an active and committed member of the community
- Hired by the Board—but they must have their own independence to change the direction of MCPS
- Honesty and integrity—all the potential in the world
- Listen to staff and advocate dialogue between school staff and central office staff
- Must advocate for all multi-cultural staff and parents
- Not be litigious—let’s work to find common ground
- Open communication with teachers and students
- Superintendent should live in the county
- Visionary leader to take the challenge of plummeting achievement

Community Forum November 4, 2021 7:00-9:00 pm (1000+ participants)

Strengths

- Cutting edge initiatives
- Great place
- Magnet schools are great and caring—teachers are willing and involved
- Mom wanted her daughter in public school
- One of the most diverse counties in the nation
- Robust professional development
- Staff has been great
- This focus group is wonderful—you’re listening to all the voices
- Very dedicated teachers and parents
- Very friendly school system
- Well-rounded curriculum and many cultural experiences

Challenges

- Accurate history—we are not teaching a world view of history
- Achievement gap between neighborhoods—affluent neighborhoods allow more students to succeed///
- Add staff
- After school tutoring would help many students
- AP/IB courses are not representative of the student body
- Aware of special education laws and how to create an inclusive environment for all IEP students
- Bilingual education K-12 //
- Bring books back to the classrooms
- Broken trust in the system
- Cell phone in schools
- Citizenship—should be taught—online world safety should be covered for good digital practices
- Communication post pandemic needs improvement—parents need more resource material to help students close the learning loss
- Counseling—students need more assistance with mental health—it should be more proactive

- Discipline and accountability—Seneca Hill has been in the news for unruly behavior—students want to feel safe
- Disconnect—special education, gifted and talented—MCPS needs to better respond for repeated issues—especially for parents who can't advocate themselves
- Do not teach ideologies—teach our children how to think
- Dress code—too much skin is showing
- Equal and equitable health care should be provided for students at risk
- Equal opportunity is not offered everywhere—i.e., Germantown
- Expand the dual enrollment program
- Facilities—some schools in affluent areas seem to get more maintenance and renovation than the less affluent communities
- Food is cold—food also smells bad
- Food—parents willing to pay more—quality of food—my children came home with stomach aches //////////////
- Grading system—50% is given on any assignment even if there is nothing turned on
- Help the children where they are with their needs—support groups would help address these issues
- High achieving students feel pushed—but students in the middle—SPED Ed, immigrants and ESOL students are not getting pushed
- HS students need more organized activities
- Inconsistencies between schools—MCPS needs to make the school offerings and teaching more consistent amongst schools
- Incorporate data into the student's curriculum from K through 12
- Increased staffing is needed for SPED supervisors
- Instead of complaining about the food—teach the children to make their own food
- Lack of bus drivers—especially buses for special program students
- Losing students because of Covid
- Lunch money—food service personnel don't treat the children very well
- Math needs better instruction—with assessments for their ability
- MCPS needs a stronger security system—should have armed guards on the campuses
- MCPS needs to provide before and after school supervision of children
- More after school programs for enrichment should also be offered
- More resources for parents with IEP's
- More support for mental health—more counselors are needed—students not
- My daughter is texting me in school—she is not being pushed
- Need more cameras in schools
- Need more world languages—such as Swahili
- No required course for AA – we'd like to see that as a required course
- Parent with student with non-verbal special needs was not treated well—parent was threatened with loss of transportation—parent wrote to the superintendent—teacher was not reprimanded
- Parent/teacher conferences are too short—parents need more opportunity to interact with their child's teacher

- Parents need more resources such as learning packets from school—parents feel disconnected from their child’s classroom because of the lack of books, paper and the MCPS commitment to technology learning
- Psychologist are overworked
- Responsibility and financial education should also be taught
- School disparity in achievement and opportunities
- Security of children—especially on the bus—son was dropped off at the wrong location
- Smaller class sizes would let students get more attention
- Some teachers are very boring
- Special education retired certified teacher—willing to come back to work
- STEM education—why isn’t there more cursive—why aren’t there more books—why can’t I get assignments when my child is sick
- Student health and wellness—students need more sleep—later start times are needed for high school bell times
- Students are being passed on in elementary even though they are not reading at grade level
- Students are getting punished—even though they are 18 and sometimes they are punished for things they didn’t do the deed
- Students must be taught to think independently—writing and reading are the key along with critical thinking skills
- Teachers and principals must be held accountable
- Teachers don’t have enough time—they move too fast and even though children ask questions the teachers move on
- Technology addiction is a looming issue that MCPS needs to try to address
- Unblock the cool math games for students in the schools
- Uniforms for students would equal out the socio-economic differences
- Virtual academy—parent concerned about it continuing and has program concerns
- We need to change the culture issue—accountability—a culture of inaction needs to change
- Why are special education children bussed outside of the district to Baltimore—MCPS should offer the program within MCPS
- Why can’t we keep the superintendent?
- World language—virtual world language program—there are some ineffective teachers—the student might need to repeat the class so they don’t have to butt heads with the same teacher

Characteristics

- Ability to budget
- Be responsive to the needs of the constituents
- Better lunches at school
- Good human resource skills
- Good relationships with legislature
- Great data background would help
- Life experience in a diversified county
- Outside the state of MD and a track record of academic standard
- Special education background would be outstanding

- Strong, decisive and ready to take the bull by the horn
- Successful at implementing and executing
- Willing to listen to parents and students

Community Forum- Nov 10, 2021 7:00-9:00 pm (509 participants)

Strengths

- Area is rich in natural resources, that can be leveraged for student learning
- Community - overall student families are highly educated and engaged in the district
- Community sense of “we’re all in this together”
- Diversity of school district — great ethnic, language, socio-economic diversity
- Diversity of surrounding community
- Extra-curricular activities have been widely available in the past
- Great opportunity to move together as “one” Montgomery County
- Mask mandate is good and keeping kids safe
- MCPS has always had a policy of inclusion for students with special needs
- MCPS is a huge platform - be bold with this platform
- Size of MCPS is a strength and not a weakness - fertile ground for creative solutions Community offers strong transit options
- The school district and larger community have always been on the cutting edge of policy development

Challenges

- Accessibility - deaf students and families of deaf students need better access to district communication and resources
- Accessibility - more resources to our Hispanic community to enable them to be more involved in their kids’ education
- Accessibility - need more availability for Spanish translation services
- Accessibility - not all interpreters are not certified, lowers the accuracy of interpretation and service
- Accessibility/Technology - concern about internet accessibility for the deaf, most videos are not closed captioning, too often need to remind to add closed captioning
- Accountability - need more transparency about who is responsibility
- Accountability - sometimes MCPS doesn’t provide enough central district direction to the larger body of schools, too afraid of the “one-size-fits-all” pitfalls, such that not enough direction is provided
- Accountability - too much of a catch phrase, responsibility needs to be assumed by leadership
- Communication - all those pointless emails are a waste of space and time
- Communication - need more transparency in sharing information about school incidents and district financials
- Communication - there are so many different messages and information from MCPS that is not clearly communicated

- Communication - we need better, clearer communication re. special education Pre-K through secondary
- Communication - with student family's needs improvement; not PTA dependent
- COVID - every candidate should be asked if schools should have reopened sooner, and if they answer no, then disqualify the candidate
- COVID - it's here to stay, need leadership that can walk us through what a new mask-less normal looks like... lots of shared sentiment on this comment
- COVID - mask mandate needs to be relaxed
- COVID - masks are terrible, the last year was a complete loss, depression grew
- COVID - politicians are acting out of fear, parents need more say
- COVID - take it seriously, masks are helping in keeping our children safe from the virus
- COVID - The Superintendent must let parents decide what's best for their kids!!! Covid vaccine and face masks should be OPTIONAL
- COVID - vaccine policy mandate should be removed
- Culture - district and larger community needs to return to place of greater tolerance and acceptance of all our different viewpoints
- Culture - focus on educating kids with facts and don't try to politicize the system or force their own political views upon our children
- Culture - need to get back to principles of education... and the principles that our country was founded on: tolerance and acceptance of different ideologies
- Culture - school is not a place to push political or religious environment
- Culture - too many gender pronouns, should not be incorporated into mainstream usage
- Diversity - cultural sensitivity training should be required and implemented to all staff and not just for few new teachers
- Diversity - MCPS should teach respect for other cultures and not demeaning, teach to embrace their own heritage culture and not be embarrassed by it
- Diversity - recruit more staff who speak other languages beside the 6 now, reach out to underrepresented groups
- Diversity - staff should reflect the students' populations
- Diversity - teachers need to better reflect ethnicities of students in the classroom
- Families - need more parental supports
- Families - parents and guardians are the customer and students are the end users, which requires a shift in how the district operates
- Families - parents should have more freedom to decide what is best for their students
- Instruction - academics are paramount
- Instruction - all schools need to be brought up in ranking system, so that every school is a good school for kids
- Instruction - curriculum changes too often
- Instruction - curriculum needs to better prepare kids for the future
- Instruction - Evidence of Learning Report is valuable tool, all parents should review
- Instruction - getting kids back on track should be the main priority
- Instruction - homework should be tougher

- Instruction - increase not lower standards and expectations for students
- Instruction - math curriculum is not rigorous - need more STEM collaboration to bring up rigor
- Instruction - MCPS needs to offer African American studies
- Instruction - MCPS needs to prioritize learning world languages much earlier - beginning in the elementary grades
- Instruction - more magnet programs needed, with maintained high standards for students
- Instruction - more outdoor activities
- Instruction - need more comprehensive improvements across the board in schools, look at root causes for underperformance and data to see how/where to make improvements
- Instruction - need more teachers for afternoon tutoring, and extra classes for the day to go until 5pm
- Instruction - need to return to ethos that teaches students that if they work hard, they will be rewarded
- Instruction - need to return to textbooks, where students are not just one click away from a video
- Instruction - needs to be more data driven, prioritize plan to address pain points
- Instruction - not enough time in the day for schools to address all student need issues, therefore need to focus on learning and academics
- Instruction - reevaluate/train the teachers for “virtual academy!” The virtual academy teachers are not at the same level as our MCPS teachers
- Instruction - schools need to focus on learning and on closing COVID learning gaps
- Instruction - students are bored, homework is not challenging enough - need more academic rigor
- Instruction - students are falling behind academically; literacy rates in some grade levels are at 50%
- Instruction - students need extra support with virtual learning
- Instruction - there are more than 300 teacher vacancies, students are being taught by substitutes
- Instruction - too much driven by teachers’ unions, should be able to remove staff that are incompetent and no longer focused on what’s best for kids
- Instruction - we all need to step up in serving students
- Instruction - why are there such big gaps between schools in the ranking system?
- need recess time for middle school students (student input)
- Safety - address violence that is occurring in multiple high schools - safety needs to be a bigger priority
- Safety - bullying in schools needs to stop and students needs to stop bringing weapons to school
- Safety - more attention to the dangers of bullying in the schools
- Safety - need to keep students and schools safe - early investment in mental health, conflict resolution, restorative justice, and other strategies for reducing violence.
- Safety - need to teach conflict resolution, how to deescalate conflict (not with political or religious agenda), this will help to keep people safe

- Safety - school safety needs to be of greater priority
- Social-emotional - mental health is important for every student - there are kids who are depressed, feel socially isolated, and/or are bullied - this needs to be addressed
- Social-emotional - Need to better actively engaged with students who have less access to health care, sometimes an obstacle to learning
- Social-emotional - socialization and oral face-to-face communication should be prioritized in COVID recovery, especially important for English Language Learners
- Social-emotional - socialization, especially after COVID isolation, is important for all students
- Social-emotional - students should be given more breaks between classes, not only for physical rest but also electronic rest
- Special Needs - can't treat students with IEPs as an afterthought in day to day or in response to pandemic
- Special Needs - more help for children who have speech problems
- Special Needs - need greater program services for students with special needs
- Staff/Teachers - more counselors needed in schools
- Staff/Teachers - need to listen to teachers' union, enlist the union as a partner - schools are desperately understaffed, and problem is getting worse
- Staff/Teachers - not just kids, staff also need COVID recovery support to get back on track
- Staff/Teachers - promptly remove any chronically ineffective teachers, specifically in elementary schools
- Staff/Teachers - we need more substitutes
- Transportation - need more staff/bus drivers
- Transportation - school bussing situation is horrible and needs to be addressed

Characteristics

- A parent who understands what children are experiencing
- Ability to move MCPS past COVID
- Ability to seek out and implement evidence-based solutions
- Able to navigate complex bureaucracies and yield influence within the county
- Able to work with external stakeholders, governmental partners
- Accessible - present and engaged with faculty and students
- Accessible - present and engaged with larger community
- Accountability - assumes responsibility for the bad and shares credit for the good
- Administrative Style
- Always seeks opportunities to grow leadership within the district and community
- Can provide more direction to schools - so much resting on the shoulders of principals without support from district
- Celebrates diversity
- Clear focus on education and able to provide clear direction to schools
- Commitment/dedication
- Communication - good listener and clear communicator

- Communication - honest and direct with student families, esp. with regards to COVID
- Communication - transparent with information
- Community empowerment - interested in revolutionizing the culture of our district, so that more power sits with students and their families and less with the unions
- Critical thinker - able to merge data and information and make a decision
- Culturally competent
- Experience and skill in helping children deal with climate anxiety
- Experience delivering on equity
- Experience establishing a progressive curriculum
- Experience in designing and facilitating service learning and reflective thinking
- Experience in systems analysis - ensure that IT is what it should be
- Experience navigating complex bureaucracies
- Experience promoting reading curriculum that supports dyslexic students
- Experience with Title I schools
- Financial acumen - ability to track and ensure that dollars are reaching students
- Forward thinking leadership - strategic in their thinking to release the brilliance and creativity of students, so that they can answer the challenges of tomorrow...this sentiment repeated often with strong emphasis on preparing students for the future
- Freedom fighter - understands that there are true threats to our individual freedoms
- Global view when it comes to problem solving, i.e., look at regional resources for addressing transportation/bussing challenge
- Inclusive
- Instructional background
- Leadership capability to drive policy across the district
- Logistics expertise - knows how to coordinate and get things done
- Must understand that they serve the parent community, and through the parent community the students - parents remain primary decision-makers
- Natural leader
- No PhD in education - we need a different skill set at this time - more management
Understands and can address teacher retention issues
- Prioritizes teaching critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and expands access to foreign language and dual immersion in the schools
- Proven track record closing opportunity gaps
- Proven track record developing curriculum/instruction/support that will prepare students for the ever-evolving future
- Proven track record ensuring that 3rd graders are reading on grade level
- Proven track record serving students with special needs
- Resource Connector - seeks out, connects others with, and fosters the sharing of resources
- Respects diversity
- Respects individual rights and freedoms and does believe in forced mandates or forced quarantines for healthy unvaccinated student
- Responsive

- 
- Students first mentality, who will place social emotional wellbeing at the forefront
 - Superintend needs to live IN Montgomery County
 - Supportive of teachers in adapting curriculum and responding to differentiated needs of students
 - Track record of working cooperatively with teachers' unions
 - Understands and can address zoning issues and constant development
 - Understands student supports that are needed
 - Values a focused emphasis on the basics of education over social-emotional supports
 - Values diversifying the teacher work force and has expertise to do so
 - Values Maslow before Bloom - if basic needs of students are not met, they will not be able to respond to academic tasks that are placed in front of them
 - Well-versed in national and local policies that contribute to mental health of students

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Superintendent of Schools Desired Characteristics

After seeking input from its Board members, parents, staff, students and community via focus groups, interviews, and an online survey, the School Board of Montgomery County seeks a strong educational leader who possesses the following characteristics:

- Budget and finance experience
- Communicator who can build relationships and trust in a diverse community
- Creates and retains a collaborative work environment where divergent perspectives are valued
- Deeply committed to diversity, equity and inclusion; relentless in seeking improvement in this area
- Instructional leader who can guide the system in development of more rigorous and relevant instruction for all students
- Knowledge of unique aspects and needs of middle schools
- Political skills to navigate successfully in a diverse, activist community
- Strong and confident enough to deal with conflict and make tough decisions
- Transparent and open
- Understands the need for career pathways that include quality Career and Technical Education
- Visible in schools and in the community
- Visionary, optimistic about the future of public schools, can lead and inspire others toward a more just and hopeful future where all children reach their potential

With regard to leadership experiences and accomplishments, the successful candidate:

- Is or able to be certified as a Maryland superintendent
- Demonstrates a solid track record of increasing responsibilities and success
- Experience and success improving educational outcomes for students of color
- Has experience as superintendent or cabinet-level leader in a diverse community
- Doctorate preferred