



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Association of
California School Administrators
(ACSA)

December 30, 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the *Leadership Profile* assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in November and December 2021 for the new Executive Director of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in virtual focus group sessions and from the results of the online survey completed by ACSA members. The survey and focus group sessions were structured to gather input to assist the ACSA Executive Committee in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new Executive Director (*Desired Characteristics*).

Additionally, the consultants collected information regarding the strengths of the Association, some of the challenges and issues that it will be facing in the coming years, as well as the professional experiences/qualifications and the personal characteristics/traits that the new Executive Director should possess. This information supported the results of the online survey data regarding the strengths of the Association and the leadership profile characteristics desired in the new Executive Director. This information is summarized in the following sections of this Executive Summary: *Strengths of the Association, Challenges and Issues Facing the Association, Professional Qualifications and Experiences, and Personal Characteristics and Traits*, and input from the focus groups is detailed in the *Summary of Comments from the Focus Group Sessions*.

Participation in Focus Group Sessions

Virtual focus group sessions were scheduled between November 29th and December 13th specifically for the following Leadership Groups, Committees, and Councils as well as sessions for ACSA Staff.

Leadership Groups

- Board of Directors
- Leadership Assembly Members
- Region Presidents
- Region Vice Presidents for Legislative Action

Committees

- Co-Administration
- Equity

- Retirement
- Small School District
- Urban Education

Councils

- Adult Education
- Business Services
- Career Technical Education
- Classified Educational Leaders

- Curriculum, Instruction and Accountability
- Early Education
- Elementary Education
- Human Resources
- Middle Grades Education
- Secondary Education
- Student Services and Special Education
- Superintendency

To maximize input from members, additional sessions were scheduled on December 14th-15th that included representatives from multiple Leadership Groups, Committees, and Councils. Approximately 125 individuals participated in a focus group session. The input from the focus group sessions is detailed in the *Summary of Comments from the Focus Group Sessions*. It should be emphasized that the data 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.

The *ACSA 2021 Executive Search Survey* and the draft of the *Desired Characteristics* are provided under separate cover and are meant to be stand-alone complementary pieces to this *Leadership Profile Report*.

HYA and the Executive Committee of the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Board of Directors intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most the qualifications, experiences, and traits required to meet the needs of the Association.

The search team would like to thank all the participants who attended a focus group session and/or completed the online survey and especially Kristy Tinsley, Executive Assistant & Board Liaison, who assisted with our virtual meetings and distributing the online survey.

Strengths of the Association & Challenges and Issues Facing the Association

ACSA is a unique umbrella organization representing and advocating for over 17,000 administrators in all parts of a very diverse state and who represent diverse views. This diversity is both a strength of and a challenge for the Association. As a result, the statements listed in the following sections mirror this diversity.

The Strengths and Challenges are organized into categories with representative supporting statements from the focus group session input. Detailed responses are included in the *Summary of Comments from the Focus Group Sessions* section. Both the categories and the statements in the categories are organized alphabetically, not by priority. There is some crossover between categories and some statements may appear in both the Strengths and Challenges.

STRENGTHS of the ASSOCIATION

(SR) indicates the statement was perceived as a strength in the survey.

ADVOCACY

- Amplifies the voice of the profession at the local, state, and federal levels by fully leveraging the influence of educational leaders. (SR)
- Engages actively with State agencies and departments regarding COVID-related issues.

- Has established partnerships with other associations and organizations to advocate for education.
- Is proactive in advocating, influencing, and supporting legislation that benefits students, schools, districts, and members through the work of an outstanding Governmental Relations team.
- Is proactive in identifying and engaging stakeholders around current and emerging educational issues. (SR)
- Raises the Association’s reputation as the authority on education issues and as an influential spokesperson at the local, state, and federal levels. (SR)

COMMUNICATIONS

- Communicates timely and relevant information on critical issues to members and effectively uses multiple communication tools.
- Engages actively with State agencies and departments regarding COVID-related issues and communicates timely and relevant information to members.
- Publishes two outstanding, peer-written publications.

MISSION, VISION & STRATEGIC PLAN

- Establishes a positive, proactive, and forward-thinking direction for the Association focusing on the needs of the members and in concert with the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan.
- Focuses on student achievement while also supporting the needs of members.
- Uses the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan to advocate for equity, inclusion, and diversity.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE

- Adapted rapidly to the constantly changing situation to provide members with timely and relevant information.
- Worked closely with the Governor, Legislature, and State agencies to provide input on legislation, policies, and regulations that impacted students, schools, and members.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Ensures the content of its professional development offerings remains relevant to changing member needs and professional issues. (SR)

- Pivoted during the pandemic to continue and enhance professional development opportunities in a virtual environment.
- Provides members access to convenient, ongoing development opportunities that reflect the latest trends in professional learning. (SR)
- Provides opportunities to develop leadership skills through participation in ASCA leadership roles.
- Provides professional and personal networking opportunities.
- Provides support to members through coaching and mentoring programs.
- Supports administrators through outstanding professional development programs that include both in-person and virtual presentations through a multiple formats.
- Uses the expertise of members, Committees, and Councils to develop, design, and deliver professional development programs.
- Uses the infrastructure of the Association (e.g., Charters, Regional, Committee, Council, Board of Directors) to communicate with members and solicit input from members.

CHALLENGES and ISSUES FACING the ASSOCIATION

ADVOCACY

- Being the premier organization and a driving force for education in California (i.e., THE voice for education).
- Connecting and partnering with similar associations and organizations to advocate for educational issues.
- Continuing to focus on and enhance efforts to ensure equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- Maintaining and enhancing a student-centered focus.

ASSOCIATION INFRASTRUCTURE

- Connecting and partnering with similar associations and organizations to provide professional development opportunities.
- Developing a unified organizational voice while engaging, listening to, and honoring the diverse views, opinions, and needs within the Association.
- Drawing on the knowledge and expertise of all Committees and Councils to shape Association positions and initiatives while providing greater opportunities for Committees and Councils to interact on issues of mutual interest.

- Evaluating and updating the professional development opportunities.
- Evaluating the organizational changes made in response to the pandemic and determining which to keep (e.g., virtual professional development).
- Identifying and addressing staff turnover; attracting and retaining staff; and building a cohesive team.
- Supporting Charters and Regions in a post-pandemic environment.
- Understanding that the diversity of the Association requires different solutions to the same issues (i.e., one size does not fit all).

MEMBERSHIP

- Attracting and retaining members, especially new and younger administrators.
- Evaluating the membership dues structure.
- Identifying the needs of members in the post-pandemic environment.
- Maintaining the membership database and providing up-to-date information to Charters and Regions in a timely manner.

POLITICAL

- Navigating the political environment actively while aligning advocacy and initiatives with the Mission and Vision without becoming political.
- Planning for the impact of declining enrollment and funding.
- Supporting members with resources and legislation to address the divisive political rhetoric, challenges, and threats that members face on high-profile issues and decisions.
- Working to remove education from the center of the political debate and focusing on student achievement.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCES & PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND TRAITS

The *Professional Qualifications and Experiences & Personal Characteristics and Traits* are derived from the focus group comments and the survey responses. They are presented alphabetically, not by priority. Detailed responses are included in the *Summary of Comments from the Focus Group Sessions* section. Similar statements may appear in both the Professional and Personal categories. (SR) indicates the statement was perceived as a desired characteristic in the survey.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS and EXPERIENCES

ACSA is seeking an Executive Director who

- Assesses educational trends and policy issues accurately and effectively; synthesizes the information; identifies and implements solutions; and communicates the information to members and other stakeholders. (SR)
- Assists the Association in adapting to a “new normal.”
- Builds coalitions, collaborations, and partnerships to achieve the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Goals.
- Builds positive and supportive working relationships with all stakeholders.
- Communicates a clear, compelling vision for the future of California education and ACSA. (SR)
- Demonstrates the political and analytical skills essential to working effectively with elected and appointed officials at the state and national levels. (SR)
- Encourages, listens to, and honors divergent views in the decision-making process.
- Has a proven history of success with organizational management, especially in human resources and finance.
- Has an understanding of and experience with the educational and political systems in California (SR) and has a seat at the table in Sacramento.
- Has experience and involvement in ACSA.
- Is a strong, politically astute leader who can push back and represent a diverse membership on a myriad of challenging issues.
- Is an effective communicator who speaks appropriately to all audiences on the critical issues in education.
- Is visible, accessible, engaging, and encouraging at local, regional, and state events.
- Possesses a breadth and depth of educational experiences in different settings in California with superintendent experience desired.
- Understands the needs of and supports the new generation of administrators.
- Utilizes inclusive leadership, leads from different positions, and empowers others to lead.
- Values, supports, and encourages staff.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS and TRAITS

ACSA is seeking an Executive Director who

- Admits failure, manages it, and learns and grows from the experience.
- Balances work and personal life.
- Creates a climate of trust and mutual respect to ensure stakeholders are welcomed, valued, engaged, and motivated. (SR)
- Embraces, promotes, and embodies equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- Establishes credibility and trust with members through one's actions.
- Has a sense of humor and maintains a positive attitude.
- Holds self and others accountable.
- Is a charismatic, energetic, respected leader who people want to follow.
- Is a courageous leader who is willing to take risks and own the decisions
- Is a forward-thinker who anticipates, plans, and follows through.
- Is an active listener who is open-minded, respects diverse viewpoints, and can disagree respectfully.
- Is an empathetic, caring, affirming person.
- Is an innovative, visionary, fearless leader who operates with a change mindset and brings new ideas to the organization.
- Is authentic, transparent, possesses integrity, and instills trust.
- Motivates and inspires others, and serves as a cheerleader for education.
- Possesses a strong moral compass and does what is right.
- Possesses excellent communication skills and knows how to communicate with different audiences.
- Possesses strong people skills, engages and values people as individuals, builds relationships, and builds capacity in others.
- Represents the diversity of California.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

The structure of the focus group sessions was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. Participants were asked to respond to six (6) questions):

- What does ACSA do well? (Strengths)
- What organizational challenges will the Executive Director need to address? (Challenges & Issues)
- What professional experiences and/qualifications should the Executive have? (Professional Qualifications and Experiences)
- What personal characteristics and traits should the Executive Director possess? (Personal Characteristics and Traits)
- Is there anything else that you would like to share?
- Is there someone that you suggest we contact regarding this position? (Due to the confidential nature of the search process, these names are not included in this report.)

Summary of Comments from the Focus Group Sessions represents the breadth and depth of comments from the sessions. The comments represent the breadth and depth of input the search team received. Exact duplicate comments were deleted, but similar comments were included to present variations on the topic and appeared in all groups. Some comments appear as both Strengths and Challenges depending on the participants' point of view. Language has been standardized to facilitate the reading of the document.

Focus Group #1 Summary - Participants

- Adult Education
- Career Technical Education
- Co-Administrators
- Early Education
- Elementary Education
- Middle Grades Education
- Secondary Education
- Small School Districts
- Urban Education

Strengths

- Advocates for members, students, and schools with a very strong Government Relations department
- Assists members in getting involved in ACSA
- Creates networking opportunities/Builds connections
- Dealt with/continues to deal with pandemic related issues without getting caught up in the political issues/taking a political stance
- Engages and supports members through the organizational structure/ Promotes relationships within a hierarchical organization structure
- Has opened meetings up to members (e.g., lunch meetings, Superintendents' meetings)
- Hires high-quality people

- Holds effective Leg Action Days
- Incorporates technology into networking, professional development, and communication (effectively shifted in response to the pandemic)
- Influences the Legislature and other government agencies, especially in response to the pandemic (e.g., strong Governmental Relations team)
- Is open to outside ideas
- Keeps members aware by breaking down information in a timely, relevant manner, which is especially true of the Government Relations department/Provided update information to address pandemic-related issues
- Offers appropriate legal advice and support
- Offers high quality professional development (“a great deal of time, effort, and thought goes into planning these events”)
- Offers multiple opportunities for professional development (“impossible not to access professional development”)
- Provides legal support and services so members feel secure in their position
- Provides networking opportunities (“group of experts on the same topic)/Promotes collegiality through networking at regional and state level (especially important to Adult Education)
- Provides networking opportunities that allow members to see the big picture as well as similarities and differences across regions
- Provides ongoing communication through various methods (e.g., publications, Lunchtime broadcasts, updates) to keep the members informed
- Provides opportunities to build one’s leadership through roles in ACSA
- Provides resources and information as needed
- Provides scholarships for students
- Provides support to administrators (e.g., professional development, legal, information)/ Stepped up support for administrators in recent years
- Publishes two quality publications that provide both quick and in-depth information and are relevant because peers write them
- Recognizes outstanding administrators through the Administrator of the Year program
- Solicits input from members on issues/Receptive to input from the field/Provides opportunities for members to be heard on issues
- Supports Charters (support from executives, staff, and volunteers)
- Switched to and supported virtual professional development quickly and effectively
- Willing to take unpopular positions on issues

Challenges/Issues

- Addressing budget issues and the impact on services/programs for members and the cost of membership
- Addressing burnout leading to resignations/retirements
- Addressing the impact of declining student enrollment on districts and budgets
- Addressing/providing support to deal with ongoing and new pandemic-related issues

- Advocating for appropriate funding for all programs and services
- Advocating for policies/practices that allow administrators to do their job (“their hands are often tied”)
- Advocating for students, schools, and members in the Legislature
- Advocating with the Legislature to provide appropriate support to deal with pandemic-related issues
- Allowing members to be heard without having to shout/Encouraging diverse viewpoints
- Analyzing the turnover of staff/Attracting and retaining staff
- Appreciating, motivating, and supporting members in the face of challenges (e.g., increased workloads, isolation due to pandemic restrictions, compensation)/Balancing the needs of both students and adults in the post-pandemic environment
- Attracting and retaining high-quality educators
- Attracting, welcoming, and engaging new administrators into ACSA
- Balancing members’ needs with political and social justice advocacy without losing sight of either
- Balancing representation of and support for all segments of the organization
- Building on the current momentum
- Building partnerships with the labor organizations (e.g., CTA, CSEA) to present a unified front for education
- Challenging the status quo
- Communicating in a clear and transparent manner at all levels of ACSA regarding purpose and intent/Communicating with members in a timely manner with pertinent information
- Continuing and expanding online presence to communicate with members
- Continuing to advocate for diversity (e.g., within ACSA, within schools) with attention to all other issues
- Dealing with the political issues generated by the pandemic that impact education
- Dealing with the politics/political issues in education
- Developing a common understanding and a common ground for action to ensure the organization is moving in the same direction
- Developing an alternative high school diploma
- Developing cultural proficiency among members
- Developing new leaders in a growing vacuum of leaders
- Developing, communicating, and supporting a vision for education and ACSA’s role in education
- Enhancing its voice for small school districts
- Enhancing the use of technology to support networking
- Ensuring all segments of the educational system receive their fair share of the revenue
- Ensuring appropriate support and resources for legislative mandates
- Ensuring equity and access for all students
- Ensuring meaningful input from the field on new legislation that impacts schools and districts
- Ensuring sufficient staffing – both teachers and administrators
- Evaluating/assessing the current situation and planning for the future/Expanding its response to critical issues (e.g., diversity, funding, poverty, staffing)
- Focusing more attention on site administrators

- Including and engaging Charters, Regions, Councils, and Committees meaningfully in the decision-making process/Providing equal input
- Increasing and integrating technology in the organization and schools
- Increasing opportunities to participate in ACSA
- Involving/engaging classified management in ACSA/Broaden the focus beyond certificated management
- Maintaining focus on education issues while dealing with political and social issues
- Opportunities to grow and expand services and influence in other areas (e.g., not fragmenting the organization)
- Preparing for re-entry into the post-COVID environment (e.g., “the new normal”)
- Promoting diversity
- Providing social-emotional support for administrators and school boards who are being “beat up” emotionally
- Providing timely, relevant, and useful information on critical and emerging issues (e.g., COVID, legislation, political challenges)
- Rallying support for administrators, especially new administrators
- Reducing the disconnect between the Legislature and schools (“Money isn’t the only issue. Need to build capacity. Need to incentivize people into the profession.”)
- Representing an organization with very diverse demographics and issues (e.g., urban vs. rural, small vs. large, low-funded vs. well-funded, student demographics, site administrators vs. district administrators)/Serving diverse needs of an umbrella organization/Balancing services
- Serving as a “front facing” Executive Director
- Soliciting input from the Councils and Committees/Increasing interaction between Councils and Committees on related issues
- Staying proactive, not reactive/Anticipating issues and planning in advance
- Supporting the needs of all administrators/ Supporting site administrators
- Tackling STRS regulations that limit talent acquisition (e.g., Windfall Elimination Provision) and employing retirees.
- Toning down/managing the political rhetoric (e.g., CRT, dealing with the pandemic) and focusing on educating students
- Turnover of staff (“change is not bad, but the organization loses the history”)
- Understanding the issues and challenges of the diverse groups in ACSA and presenting a cohesive approach
- Understanding, supporting, and protecting the role of Adult Education in the TK-12 education/Ensuring Adult Education funding/Adult Education is an important part of TK-12 education

Professional Experiences/Qualifications

- Advocates for education
- Approaches issues with an equity lens
- Being at the table for schools and members
- Builds on the current momentum
- Builds working relations with teachers and CTA
- Commands respect of colleagues as a leader

- Communicates effectively with members, partners, external organizations, and the public
- Compresses the organizational hierarchy to work efficiently and effectively
- Creates value for members in terms of membership dues
- Demonstrates strong leadership skills with a preference for California experience
- Embodies a “students first” approach
- Embraces, promotes, and lives the Mission, Vision, and Goals of ACSA
- Embraces, promotes, and models diversity and equity
- Engages and involves others in the work of ACSA
- Experience at multiple levels and in multiple types of positions in multiple types of communities
- Experience dealing with the political challenges (e.g., pandemic-related issues, declining enrollment, budget, public opinion)
- Experience with policy development and legislative advocacy
- Focuses on student achievement
- Grasps the “big picture” and understands the details
- Has a record of proven leadership (not necessarily as a superintendent)/Has achieved real, meaningful successes
- Has dealt with pandemic-related issues (“has lived it”)
- Has experience working with professional organizations, preferably ACSA, dealing with issues, staff, and members/Involved with ACSA/Served in ACSA leadership roles/Understanding of and experience with the structure of ACSA
- Has implemented new and innovative programs
- Has proven history of credibility with administrators
- Has walked in our shoes/ Walked in the shoes of administrators
- Hires the right people
- Is familiar with the California educational system
- Is on-the-ground and out-in-front regarding critical issues
- Is politically savvy
- Knows, understands, and has experience with the educational issues facing schools
- Moves fluidly between constituencies
- Planning for the “new realities” and “new normal” of the post-pandemic environment (e.g., the impact on students, staff, schools)
- Possesses a breadth and depth of educational experiences in California in different positions (e.g., classroom to district office) and different settings (e.g., small to large districts, rural to urban districts, low wealth to high wealth districts) with superintendent experience desired
- Possesses an exceptional understanding of all aspects of the system, especially financial issues
- Possesses credibility with and respect of superintendents
- Possesses diverse, well-rounded leadership experience in California education
- Possesses executive level experience in an organization, not necessarily in education
- Possesses recent California-based leadership experience
- Possesses recent professional experience/expertise with equity, diversity, advocacy, professional development
- Promotes innovation

- Proven history of guiding an organization
- Proven history of success in different roles and settings
- Strong background/experience in governmental relations
- Supports site administrators
- Understanding of Governmental Relations
- Understanding of how students learn (e.g., learning theory)
- Understands and has experience with the California educational and political systems
- Understands the challenges of representing diverse districts (e.g., rural/urban, small/large, poor/wealthy, declining/growth enrollment, changing demographics, English Language Learners, integrating technology)
- Understands the divisions that the pandemic has created and has experience massaging the issues
- Understands the issues facing California education (e.g., budget, demographics, fires, COVID, declining enrollment, staffing)
- Values, supports, and engages staff
- Willing to look at issues through a different lens
- Willing to make the hard/unpopular decisions that need to be made in the interest of education

Personal Characteristics/Traits

- “Can do” attitude
- Able to maneuver in whatever realm he/she is operating (e.g., Governor’s office in the AM and 3rd grade classroom in the PM)/ Knows how to conduct himself/herself in different environments
- Able to say “I’m sorry”/Admits mistakes
- Action oriented
- Actively engaged
- Advocate
- Approachable/Accessible
- Authentic/Real (e.g., not lip service)/Down-to-earth/Genuine
- Big picture person
- Breath of fresh air
- Build relationships
- Can build relationships
- Champion for education/students
- Change agent (“not afraid of change”)
- Charismatic (“wows you”)
- Collegial
- Commands respect
- Communicator
- Compassionate (e.g., can lean on for support)
- Connects with people both professionally and socially/Relatable/Relates to people
- Effective
- Empathic
- Energetic/High energy
- Engaged in the work/Committed
- Engages others
- Experienced
- Has walked in our shoes
- In the know/Knowledgeable/Up to date
- Inclusive
- Inspires/motivates people to follow (“You want to go with this person.”)/ Pumps up people
- Integrity
- Knowledgeable (has answers), but not afraid to ask for assistance/input
- Knows and engages people
- Leads by example

- Lifelong learner
- Listener/Listens
- Lived in multiple communities
- Makes a difference
- Models leadership
- Open to new ideas/Open-minded/Openness
- Optimist (“glass is ½ full”)
- Organized
- Passionate about education and students
- Person of character
- Personable
- Politically savvy
- Possesses a leadership style or aura/Has a presence
- Proactive (doesn’t sit on things)
- Professional
- Rallies people to action
- Realist
- Relevant
- Respected/Respectful
- Responsive Innovative
- Sense of humor/Can laugh at self
- Solutions oriented
- Straight shooter, even if it’s not what you want to hear/Truth teller/Doesn’t sugarcoat things
- Student-focused/Student-centered
- Supportive
- Team-builder
- Understanding
- Values others
- Visible
- Visionary/Plans for today and beyond
- Walks the talk
- Wants the job/Committed to ACSA

Focus Group #2 Summary - Participants:

- Human Resources
- Classified Educational Leaders
- Equity
- Curriculum, Instruction, & Accountability
- Business Services
- Student Services & Special Education
- Superintendents

Strengths

- Advocates for what is right for education/Actively advocates on educational legislation
- Advocates on major educational issues that impact students and staff
- Became more inclusive in relation to California’s diversity
- Builds connections/networks/partnerships
- Came together with labor partners to review decisions and policies during the pandemic
- Communicates timely, relevant, useful information to members using multiple communication methods/Has expanded and enhanced communication to address critical issues/Provided timely and useful information to address pandemic-related issues (e.g., constantly changing regulations and policies)
- Creates opportunities for Regions and Councils to interact on issues
- Engages members in local, region, and state activities and opportunities for leadership
- Engages with and is accessible to Sacramento decision-makers/Staff housed in Sacramento near the Capitol

- Enhanced ACSA's presence in Sacramento/political arena during the pandemic
- Focuses on equity and access issues
- Has an amazing and strong Governmental Relations team to advocate for ACSA's positions
- Joins with other educational management partners to take positions on issues
- Navigated pandemic-related issues effectively and efficiently in a flexible manner (e.g., provided members with timely and relevant information)
- Offers high quality professional development (e.g., Symposiums, Summits, Academies, webinars) ("a great deal of time, effort, and thought goes into planning these events")
- Offers Legislative Action Day to connect members with legislators ("a highlight for many members")
- Opened weekly Superintendents Council meetings to all superintendents/Provided timely communication opportunities for discussion and questions on critical issues
- Pivoted quickly and demonstrated flexibility in uncertain times (i.e., constantly changing regulations) so that schools could respond to pandemic-related issues
- Proactive advocacy played a pivotal role in establishing direction and policies regarding pandemic-related issues
- Promotes education with the "One Voice" campaign
- Promotes equal access for special education students
- Promotes professional and personal relationships within a hierarchical organizational structure (i.e., networking)
- Provides many networking learning opportunities (e.g., virtual lunch meetings, webinars)/Provides networking
- Provides value for one's membership dues (e.g., legal assistance, mentoring)
- Publishes two quality publications that provide both quick and in-depth information and are relevant because they are peer-written
- Reaches out to members
- Recognizes students with Every Child Counts Symposium ("has been significantly improved")
- Responded and provided feedback to state agencies regarding pandemic-related guidelines and regulations
- Solicited greater input from administrators in the field
- Staff provides a personal touch/ Timely response from a great staff
- Stepped up its advocacy with the Governor's Officer, Legislature, and CDE and on pandemic-related issues and state budget/Has a strong Governmental Relations team
- Supports Charters (support from executives, staff, and volunteers)
- Supports members (e.g., professional development, legal support, advocacy)

Challenges/Issues

- Adapting to the "new normal"
- Addressing never-ending issues in and challenges to education
- Addressing staff turnover (loss of institutional knowledge)/ Attracting and retaining staff/Building a strong leadership team

- Advocating for education with the Governor's Office, Legislature, CDE, and other state/federal agencies
- Attracting and retaining members, especially newer/younger members
- Balancing political and social justice advocacy without losing sight of either or the focus on students
- Being available and present for members
- Being member driven, which is an issue in smaller regions
- Being the voice of education in the public dialogue
- Broadening efforts to include and engage all members, Councils and Committees equally
- Building upon the networking that developed in response to the pandemic
- Communicating the purpose and intent of the Association's efforts at all levels (e.g., charter, region, state) in a clear and transparent manner
- Communicating with members in a timely manner with pertinent information/ Enhancing the flow of information to all members
- Dealing with political viewpoints on the opposite ends of the spectrum while providing quality education for all students
- Enhancing legislative advocacy at local, state, and federal to support policies that promote the achievement of all students
- Ensuring that the Association continues to have the ear of the Governor and Legislature
- Ensuring that the voice of superintendents is heard
- Finding balance between interests of superintendents and other administrators in the Association (e.g., the number of superintendents compared to the overall membership)
- Focusing on curriculum and instruction to ensure equal access for all student
- Helping districts address the personnel shortages
- Listening to and hearing the issues of all members no matter their position
- Making ACSA more accessible and relevant to site level administrators
- Promoting the value of membership
- Providing the space for people to do their work
- Providing a representative platform to discuss and advocate for quality education
- Providing mental health assistance (e.g., everyone is carrying a heavy load)
- Providing more than lip service to equity issues/Fully committing to the equity movements (i.e., making the hard decisions)
- Providing support for administrators to effectively meet challenging parents and the public at board meetings and other school/district meetings (e.g., managing conflict)
- Reaching out to and engaging all 17,000 members
- Selling the benefits of ACSA membership to non-members
- Serving as a "front facing" Executive Director
- Supporting ACSA staff to support members
- Supporting the diverse needs of all administrators
- Transitioning out the pandemic to the "new normal/new reality" while balancing diverse and often competing interests between districts as well as within districts
- Understanding that it is not possible to fully replicate successful people/Need to work within the person and system
- Understanding the diversity of California and the impact on schools

- Understanding who and what drives the organization
- Unifying the diverse segments of the Association to serve as one voice for education
- Using input and feedback from Councils
- Using internal knowledge and expertise of members to inform and drive decisions (e.g., draw on the knowledge and expertise of business

administrators; would lead to more dual ACSA/CASBO members)

- Utilizing Business Services members for information to inform decisions (e.g., the impact of changing starting/ending times on the whole system)
- Working with the Governor’s Office and building stronger connections

Professional Experiences/Qualifications

- Ability to reshape the educational landscape
- Achieved real, meaningful success
- Avoids creating tension/Reduces tensions
- Brings diversity to ACSA
- Builds capacity in others to address equity and access issues
- Builds confidence in ACSA
- Builds professional relationships and connections
- Builds stakeholder buy in to change the culture/Moves the Association forward
- Commands respect of colleagues as a leader
- Compresses the organizational hierarchy to work efficiently and effectively
- Demonstrated leadership capacity to achieve results, preferably in California
- Demonstrates strong leadership skills that drive achievement
- Engages and involves stakeholders
- Establishes priorities and uses available resources and/or generates new resources to meet the priorities
- Evaluates the current situation and plans necessary changes while honoring traditions (i.e., goes slow to go faster, farther)
- Experience as a superintendent or another high-level district position in

California due to the complexity of California’s issues

- Experience developing and implementing a Strategic Plan/Experience writing, implementing, and evaluating plans
- Experience with different types of districts and understands the concerns in each type of district
- Experience in multiple roles (e.g., teacher to superintendent) in various settings (e.g., geographical, demographic, funding, large and small districts, urban and rural districts)
- Experience in the political arena and understands the political realities/Is political and can “play in the sandbox”
- Experience in the educational system or related field
- Experience in working in situations that have placed him/her in direct contact with students, especially special needs students (e.g., more than a district or county office position)/ Understands and supports Special Education
- Experience of successfully working with state government
- Experience with the many changes in recent years and the current issues (e.g., pandemic-related issues, funding, new regulations)

- Experience working in diverse and economically disadvantaged districts
- Has a proven record of success
- Has a track record of proven leadership (not necessarily as a superintendent)
- Has diverse leadership experience (e.g., North vs. South, small vs. large, urban vs. rural, low wealth vs. high wealth, demographics)
- Identifies areas for improvement and commits to making the improvements
- Is at the forefront of educational conversations
- Is Bilingual, Spanish preferred
- Is focused on equity and access/Can address these issues and push for improvement
- Is out-in-front and on-the-ground regarding critical issues/Leader who is the forefront
- Knowledge of and experience with ACSA's operations, services, programs, and strategic plan)
- Knows how to build and lead teams
- Knows the political players and has the political connections/relationships to influence/drive decisions in Sacramento (e.g., Governor's Office, Legislature, CDE, other State agencies)
- Listens to/considers all viewpoints before making decisions
- Looks at the impact of issues/decisions on students
- Possesses an equity focus
- Possesses recent professional experience/expertise with equity, diversity, advocacy, professional development
- Prioritizes goals
- Promotes innovation and creativity within the organization
- Pushes back on the Governor and conveys the impact of decisions on students, schools, districts, and members
- Recognizes the value and expertise of Council and Committee members
- Seeks win-win solutions/Ability to compromise
- Stands up and is a voice for education
- Student-focused
- Supports work at the local level to meet the needs of the local members while operating within an Association (e.g., recognizes one size doesn't fit all)
- Takes a balanced approach on issues/Represents the members on issues
- Takes a proactive approach to issues
- Understands the organizational and political nuances
- Understands and takes the broader view (i.e., the big picture) on issues and the understands the implications of decisions on students and schools
- Understands organizational structures and operations
- Understands the fiscal ramifications of running schools
- Understands the issues facing California education (e.g., budget, demographics, fires, COVID, declining enrollment, staffing)
- Values taking new, different approaches/strategies to problems
- Willing to change programs and practices to promote improvement

Personal Characteristics/Traits

- "Able to walk on water" and "fight off unreasonable forces" (e.g., "the usual traits")
- "Member driven" mindset
- Ability to change
- Accessible

- Acknowledges/recognizes people
- Approachable
- Articulate
- Avoids tensions
- Brings diversity to the Association
- Builds capacity
- Collaborative
- Commands respect
- Committed
- Communicator
- Compromiser
- Confident
- Consensus builder
- Credible
- Empathetic
- Experienced
- Genuine/Real
- Helps others learn
- Inclusive
- Innovative
- Knowledgeable
- Leader
- Learns from failure
- Life-long learner
- Listener
- Manages conflict
- Open to diverse points of view
- Perseverance
- Personable
- Polished and sophisticated
- Politically savvy
- Proactive, not reactive
- Results driven
- Sees multiple perspectives
- Self-aware
- Solutions-oriented
- Stickiness
- Super-person
- Supportive
- Team-builder
- Understanding
- Values others
- Willingness to change

Focus Group Summary #3 Participants

- Board of Directors
- Leadership Assembly
- Region Presidents
- Region VPs for Leg Action

Strengths

- Accessible to Sacramento decision-makers during the pandemic
- Adapts services and programs (e.g., professional development, meetings) to the changing environment, especially during the pandemic
- Advocates for and supports members with a strong Governmental Relations team/Engages in meaningful, effective legislative advocacy with a strong Governmental Relations team (“Has paved the way for what is good for kids”)
- Advocates for equity, inclusion, access, and diversity
- Advocates for students and schools with a great Governmental Relations team/“Is the voice for students”)
- Advocates to protect administrators in the field
- Allows members to be as involved as they wish (e.g., provides the opportunities)
- Becoming more inclusive
- Bridges issues to build common ground among diverse members and districts

- Builds capacity and creates advantages and opportunities for members who choose to participate in ACSA
- Builds members' leadership capacity through relevant, meaningful professional development programs (e.g., Symposiums, Summits, Academics, Institutes, Webinars) and opportunities to lead within the organization/Develops future leaders and moves careers forward
- Builds relations between Charters, Regions, and State ACSA
- Collaborated with labor partners to review decisions on pandemic-related issues
- Communicates effectively with members through various means (e.g., lunchtime webinars, email, evening chats, publications)/Communicates relevant information in a timely manner
- Developed a stronger advocacy and greater influence in Sacramento and Washington, D.C./Known more to the Legislature through an effective Governmental Relations team/
- Develops legislation and policies to support students and schools through the Governmental Relations team
- Develops resources and talking points on critical issues (e.g., pandemic)
- Enhances efforts to solicit input from members on issues
- Established a direction and asked Charters to align their efforts with the state direction
- Expanded its influence during the pandemic
- Includes students as a major focus
- Inspires and welcomes members/Inspires members to go the next mile
- Is a strong voice for education at both the state and national level
- Keeps members informed on legislation
- Listens intently to the different needs, concerns, and viewpoints of a diverse membership
- Offers virtual professional development that enhances members' access
- Offers outstanding professional development/trainings (e.g., Symposiums, Institutes, Academies)/Offers the powerful Women's Leadership Summit
- Opened weekly meetings to Superintendents Council to expand communication on and discussion of issues
- Pivoted and showed flexibility during the pandemic and provided timely, relevant information and guidance
- Promotes camaraderie and friendship through networking opportunities
- Provided care packages for those participating in the 2020 virtual Summit (i.e., nice personal touch)
- Provides high quality ("better than everything else"), meaningful education/professional development
- Provides immediate access to high-quality resources
- Provides members with timely and relevant information on issues
- Provides mentoring and coaching for members
- Provides opportunities for networking especially in areas where there are few administrators
- Provides opportunities for personal and professional growth
- Provides professional development opportunities that are relevant and help prepare administrators for new positions as well as enhance existing knowledge and skills

- Recognizes, celebrates, and highlights success (e.g., Administrators of the Year, Every Student Succeeding)
- Serves as a voice for educational leaders
- Solicits input on issues from members
- Staff is caring, supportive, responsive, and provides the personal touch
- Supports and promotes equity and

access

- Supports building both professional and personal connections/friendships (i.e., networking)
- Supports collaboration and networking through the work of Councils and Committees

Challenges/Issues

- Acknowledging not everyone is on the same page regarding political issues and finding a common ground on what is best for students
- Acknowledging that subgroups (e.g., CALSA, CAASA) have formed to have a safe place, embracing them, and partnering with them/*Different viewpoint*: Understanding the needs of these subgroups and meeting those needs under the umbrella of ACSA)
- Addressing educational needs of students, staff, and families in the post-COVID environment (“the new normal”)
- Addressing STRS-related issues (e.g., ability to attract staff, employ retirees)
- Addressing the unique and diverse needs in each part of the state
- Advocating for legislation to deal with threats to administrators
- Advocating for students
- Allowing retirees more involvement in ACSA
- Analyzing staff turnover/Attracting and retaining staff/Building a cohesive team
- Assisting districts in filling vacancies (e.g., credentialing issues, STRS issues)
- Attracting and retaining members/Addressing declining membership
- Being recognized by others as “the” educational leader in California
- Believing that all students can learn

- Building back morale/Feeling good again
- Building on the strengths, knowledge, and expertise of Councils and Committees
- Building partnerships with and exerting greater influence on colleges and universities to better prepare and support teachers and administrators
- Building upon the foundation and momentum that has been established and continuing to move ACSA forward
- Clarifying and aligning the roles and responsibilities of Councils and Committees within ACSA
- Communicating information in a timely manner throughout the organization (i.e., downline members)
- Continuing and enhancing advocacy on the state and national levels (e.g., having the ear of the Governor)
- Continuing the focus on equity, inclusion, and diversity
- Creating an environment in which Councils and Committees can interact, share information, and work collaboratively on common issues (e.g., breaking down silos)
- Dealing with the political realities of divisive public dialogue regarding education/Dismantling or combatting the negative public opinion/mistrust of education

- Developing early buy-in from members of the Leadership Assembly
- Developing training and action plan templates to assist Regions reaching out to and serving members
- Developing trainings to address the lack of operational/managerial skills and knowledge in new administrators
- Developing, supporting, and retaining new/young administrators /Engaging younger administrators/Demonstrating the relevance and value of ACSA membership (e.g., engaging members before they need legal support)
- Driving educational change in collaboration with other organizations/associations
- Embracing and promoting equity (i.e., much has been done, but can't let up/need to maintain the focus)
- Engaging and partnering with other organizations to speak with one voice for education
- Enhancing legislative advocacy and developing new methods to advocate
- Enhancing mentoring for new members
- Ensuring a clear understanding of roles of staff and members (e.g., content/actions vs. delivery systems related to professional development)
- Ensuring access to professional development in all Regions of the state
- Ensuring members can express different opinions on issues, that their viewpoints are heard, and that they are included in the decision-making process
- Evaluating and adapting the infrastructure of ACSA to meet present and future issues/challenges
- Examining the different dues structure for assistant principals and principals as well as other administrative positions
- Exploring ways to support principals and assistant principals around the state who do not feel appreciated or safe
- Filling big shoes while recognizing that there will be change in style
- Finding new ways of bringing meaning to ACSA
- Finding the appropriate balance for the voice of superintendents in the Association
- Focusing on the impact of declining student enrollment on schools and districts
- Getting in front of issues and reacting proactively, not reactively
- Having a clear understanding of the responsibilities and roles of those serving in ACSA leadership roles
- Helping administrators deal with the increasing expectations and demands leading to stress, burnout, resignations, and retirements
- Holding professional development activities in different areas of the state (e.g., holding the Women in School Leadership Forum in the North again)
- Identifying the reasons for staff turnover/Attracting and retaining staff
- Identifying what ACSA needs to do to move to the next level
- Increasing the participation of members in meetings (e.g., virtual meetings increased participation)
- Increasing the organizational focus on equity
- Keep ACSA growing and supporting administrators in the state
- Leading in the post-COVID environment
- Maintaining virtual access to professional development as ACSA returns to in-person professional development
- Making ACSA the premier educational organization
- Navigating crazy times (e.g., COVID, CRT,) while promoting quality education for all students

- Navigating how to get everyone on the same page while recognizing and honoring differences of opinion
- Paving the way for new ideas/Eliminating potential barriers or challenges
- Planning for the transition from the pandemic to the post-pandemic world and balancing the challenges (e.g., educational, political, health, economic)
- Preparing administrators to handle the operational management component of administration
- Preparing the next generation of leaders
- Preparing to address the next challenges (e.g., vouchers, declining enrollment)/Forward-thinking
- Proactively shaping public opinion on public education
- Providing and advocating for increased legal protection for members (e.g., new challenges created by COVID)/Providing greater opportunities for retirees to participate
- Providing information to members through multiple communication channels
- Providing members with a direct line to ACSA Board and staff
- Providing timely information to Regions (e.g., Streamlining, cleaning up, and updating membership databases)
- Recognizing that districts have different needs and are receiving different resources/Ensuring the equitable distribution of resources
- Recognizing the diverse needs and views in ACSA, but advocating for education with a unified voice
- Reconnecting with ACSA with AASA (i.e., California is the only state that is not an affiliate of AASA)
- Recruiting and retaining members
- Recruiting, supporting, and retaining administrators
- Re-energizing members
- Re-establishing connections/partnerships/affiliations with state and national professional organizations (e.g., ASCD, AASA) and actively engaging with these organizations
- Reflecting and acting on what is needed to promote diversity
- Refreshing and updating the Academies
- Removing barriers to collaboration within the organization
- Serving as “the” voice of education in the face of negative public opinion regarding schools and challenges from segments of the population
- Streamlining organization processes
- Stressing the importance of membership (“Membership Matters”)
- Supporting and retaining leaders in challenging times
- Supporting doing what is best for students and education
- Supporting administrators at all levels in facing challenges including actual threats
- Supporting women serving as high school principals
- Taking ACSA to the next level/Building the Strategic Plans/Building on the momentum
- Understanding and adapting to the new reality
- Understanding, connecting, and addressing the diverse needs/challenges of the members, charters, and Regions (e.g., rural vs. urban, small vs large, low wealth vs. high wealth districts, demographics) while providing a unified vision and voice
- Unifying diverse and different needs into one plan of action (“One Voice”)

- Updating the content of Academies to reflect the current realities (e.g., LCAP, CRT, COVID) and incorporating adult learning theory
- Working with a challenging political atmosphere (e.g., responding to

negative public opinion/dialogue regarding education, dealing with implementing COVID-related regulations, addressing the political diversity in communities)

Professional Experiences/Qualifications

- “Great leaders come in all shapes and forms”
- Advocates for students, schools, members, and education
- Balances hard work and personal life
- Bases decisions on what is best for students/Student-centered
- Breaks down barriers between General Ed and Special Ed
- Brings a proven track record of working for/with needy students
- Brings diversity to the position/Represents the diversity of California
- Builds coalitions and collaborative partnerships in Sacramento (e.g., the Governor, Legislature, CDE, state agencies) and professional associations and organizations
- Builds coalitions within the Capitol and with other agencies
- Committed to the long-term success of ACSA/ Committed to leading the Association for the long-term
- Communicates a strong message for education
- Embraces and promotes equity, inclusion, and diversity both inside and outside of ACSA
- Employs highly effective communication practices/Possesses strong communication skills in various media
- Establishes credibility with members
- Executive leadership experience (CEO, does not have to have been in

- education, if the experience translates to education)/ Experience leading like organizations (degree not necessary)
- Experience as a superintendent (e.g., breadth and depth of knowledge and experience, has worked with boards, in different roles, in different types of districts)
 - Experience as a superintendent (okay if the person is a former superintendent)
 - Experience as an educational administrator, preferably as a superintendent and a site principal/Educational background or degree in education/Has “boots on the ground” experience of the members/Has “walked the talk” - teacher, principal, superintendent
 - Experience developing and implementing a strategic plan
 - Experience in education in multiple positions (i.e., knows the various roles), superintendent experience desirable, but not required
 - Experience running large, complex organizations
 - Experience with fiscal oversight and managing a budget
 - Experience working in and overseeing a variety of roles/areas (e.g., classroom, site, Personnel, Curriculum, ESL, Special Needs, Business Services, political advocacy, Board relationships)/Has sat in

- different chairs in different types of districts)/Has breadth and depth of educational experience that prepares him/her to understand all aspects of education (e.g., Business, Human Resources, Educational Services)
- Focused 100% on an equity framework
 - Gathers input from stakeholders before making decisions
 - Has a 30,000-foot view of ACSA, pre-school through Adult Education
 - Has a keen understanding of the critical issues impacting most members/Laser focus on the Mission, Vision, and Goals of ACSA
 - Has a place at the political table in Sacramento and a good relationship with the Governor (e.g., Able to pick up the phone and speak with the Governor)
 - Has a strong business sense/mindset (e.g., experience as a CBO)
 - Has a track record of successes
 - Has a track record with second language learners (SLL)
 - Has educational CEO experience
 - Has the credibility of members
 - Has walked in our shoes
 - Helps members get outside of their comfort zones
 - Is 100% focused on an equity framework
 - Is a voice for students
 - Is at the forefront of the educational conversation
 - Is bilingual, if possible
 - Is empathetic towards students with special needs
 - Is focused on equity/can address race and other areas needing improvement
 - Is not at the end of his/her career
 - Is political and can “play in the sandbox”/ Is on top of governmental issues
 - Knows what to advocate for and not ask for unrealistic things
 - Leads from different positions (e.g., doesn’t always need to lead from the front)/empowers others to lead
 - Listens to divergent views in the decision-making process/developing plans
 - Looks at the impact of issues/decisions on students
 - Opens doors/Removes barriers to success (e.g., not a road blocker)
 - Operates with a change mindset
 - Partners with organizations and businesses that can generate revenue for operational expenses
 - Possesses a 30,000’ view of education and ACSA, but translates ideas into action
 - Possesses knowledge of/has relationships with statewide agencies (SDE, Special Ed, Governor’s Office)
 - Practices inclusive leadership, not top down
 - Prioritizes goals and implements plans to achieve the goals
 - Provides stability to the organization
 - Pushes back on the Governor and talks about the local impact of state decisions and actions
 - Serves as the voice of students/Student-centered
 - Shapes leaders to achieve the Mission and Vision
 - Solicits input from members
 - Speaks “our” language
 - Supports diversity (i.e., has promoted female leaders and persons of color)
 - Supports greater collaboration between general education and special education
 - Supports proactive, preventive service to support students
 - Talks with and influences governmental leaders at the local, state, and national levels

- Track record of successes
- Understands and has experience in the political arena/Knows Sacramento and Sacramento knows her/him/Understands the political realities of Sacramento
- Understands and has experience with governmental and legislative issues
- Understands the diverse issues districts face based on size, geography, and demographics and works to support districts
- Understands the dynamics of working with a board and staff
- Understands the needs and desires of the new generation of administrators
- Understands the role and challenges of administrators at all levels
- Understands the role of the Executive Director
- Values and supports staff
- Visible and accessible at local, regional, and state levels
- Welcomes, encourages, and listens to divergent viewpoints/Ensures divergent viewpoints are heard and considered
- Works to increase membership
- Worries and is anxious about the future of ACSA

Personal Characteristics/Traits

- Accessible/Approachable
- Accountable/Holds self and others accountable
- Active listener
- Adaptive
- Admits failure, manages it, learns, and grows from the experience
- Advocates for education
- Affirming
- Alive/Exciting
- Anticipates and plans
- Applies new information to old practices based on data
- Appreciative
- Articulate
- Articulate public speaker
- Authenticity/Believable/Real
- Avoids tensions/Reduces tensions/Manages conflict
- Balances hard work with fun
- Big picture person
- Bilingual (Spanish preferred)
- Brings fresh views/new ideas
- Broad-minded
- Builds capacity in others
- Builds relationships
- Builds trust/Trustworthy
- Calculated risk-taker, but know the boundaries
- Caring/Cares about people as individuals
- Charismatic
- Cheerleader for the profession
- Collaborative
- Commands respect/Respected
- Commands the room
- Common touch with everyone
- Communicator/Uses different communication styles/Knows how to communicate with different audiences
- Connects with regions from different areas of the state
- Courageous
- Creates teachable moments
- Creative
- Data driven
- Data-driven decision maker
- Direct, but polite with people
- Eliminates barriers
- Embraces diversity
- Empathetic
- Encouraging
- Energetic/High energy

- Engages people/Draws everyone in especially those on the edges
- Equity champion
- Fearless
- Focused
- Follows through
- Forward-thinking
- Good human being
- Grasps new ideas quickly
- Growth mindset
- High EQ, not just high IQ
- Holds courageous conversations
- Holds empathetic conversations
- Holds high expectations and holds self and others accountable
- Honest/Honesty
- Honors members (i.e., “who we are and what we do”)
- Humble/Isn’t a “I’m the right person”
- Inclusive/Not a top-down leader
- Innovative
- Inspires/motivates people to action
- Integrity
- Interacts well with multiple constituencies
- Interesting
- Is out there, but not reactionary
- Kind
- Knowledgeable
- Laser focused leader
- Learns from others
- Listener
- Makes people feel comfortable and valued, no matter the position they hold/Knows who you are
- Meets and greets people/Warm and welcoming
- Moral compass
- Motivator/Rallies people to the cause
- Open-minded/Open to diverse viewpoints
- Optimistic
- Passion for the job and for ACSA
- Peaceful
- People person
- Person of Character
- Personable
- Polished and sophisticated
- Polite
- Politically savvy
- Positive attitude
- Possesses a change mindset
- Possesses a common touch
- Praises people
- Present in the moment
- Proactive
- Problem-solver
- Rallies people to the Vision and Mission
- Recognizes and honors the success/achievement of others
- Reflects the demographics of California/Brings diversity/Person of color/Super woman/woman of color/LBGQT
- Relates with and to all people/People want to know him/her
- Relationship builder/Relationships oriented
- Respected/Respectful
- Results driven
- Sees multiple perspectives
- Sees the big picture, anticipates the future, and plans accordingly with a student-centered focus
- Self-aware
- Sense of humor
- Servant leader
- Shares vulnerabilities
- Stands up for the underdog
- Student-centered moral compass/ Loves kids
- Supportive
- Supports, values, and represents the diversity of the membership (e.g., LBGTQ, Asian Pacific Islander)
- Team builder/Team player
- Thankful
- Thinker/Thinks ahead/Thoughtful

- Tough skinned
- Validates people/Values everyone whatever his/her position is
- Visible
- Visionary leader/Pushes the envelope
- Walks the talk, talks the walk

Focus Group #4 Summary (Makeup Sessions) - Participants

- Region Presidents
- Region VPs for Leg Action
- Board of Directors
- Leadership Assembly
- Human Resources
- Classified Educational Leaders
- Equity
- Student Services & Special Education
- Business Services
- Curriculum, Instruction & Accountability
- Superintendents

Strengths

- Adapts services (e.g., professional development, meetings) to the changing environment due to the pandemic
- Advocates for equity and access in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.
- Advocates for students, district, and members with an outstanding Governmental Relations team
- Advocates to protect administrators in the field
- Balances the cross-section (e.g., geographical, size, demographic) of different interests and needs under one umbrella Association
- Builds connections and community (i.e., networking), especially in response to the pandemic
- Builds connections and line of communication with the Governor, Legislature, and state agencies
- Builds greater connections state-wide among administrators by providing state-wide platforms platform for discussions
- Builds professional and personal friendships through networking/Builds relationships within and outside the Association
- Communicates relevant, useful information in a timely manner to members
- Connects/partnership with other educational organizations/associations (e.g., CSBA, SSDA, Capitol Advisors) on critical issues
- Develops legislation and policies to support students, schools, districts, and administrators
- Engages Councils and Committees to provide input on specific issues and/or policy development
- Engages in legislative advocacy with a strong Governmental Relations team
- Establishes a positive, proactive organization direction with the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan
- Establishes networks for job alike administrators to share information, learn from each other, discuss issues, and grow professionally
- Focuses on equity, inclusion, and diversity while addressing the disparities between schools and districts and in education
- Has the uncomfortable conversations regarding what is happening in education

- Is in front of the pack on legislative issues due to a strong Governmental Relations team
- Is proactive with legislation and policies/Influences the Legislature
- Listens to members
- Looks ahead to identify upcoming issues and plans
- Mentors/coaches members with experienced members
- Offers outstanding professional development (e.g., Symposiums, Summits, Academies) that inform and inspire members/Offers a range of professional development opportunities
- Pivoted quickly and effectively to address COVID-related issues (e.g., information, training, resources. assistance) including advocacy with the Governor, Legislature, and state agencies
- Pivoted to meet the challenges of the pandemic while continuing to provide information, services, and professional development to members
- Promotes and supports positions on Equity, Access, and Inclusion through the Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan, and the work of Councils and Committee at the local, regional, and state level
- Provides current, relevant, and useful information
- Provides information and resources (e.g., best practices, policies) to address pandemic related issues/Members shared resources on the webpage
- Provides opportunities for members to advocate with local legislators (i.e., Leg Action Day)
- Provides professional and personal networking/ Promotes collegiality and fellowship
- Provides support for administrators when needed on multiple issues, not just legal support
- Provides update on legislation (e.g., lunchtime webinars, email blasts, special topic workshops)
- Reacts quickly to situations and provides useful information
- Recognizes members through awards programs
- Responds quickly and professionally to calls from the field/Staff is readily available and responsive/Responsive and supportive staff who meet the needs of members
- Served as a backstop during the past 18 months by providing information and connecting with key decision-makers in Sacramento in its advocacy role (e.g., LAO, CDE)
- Shifted effectively to virtual professional development
- Strives to include all members
- Supports administrators in different positions with job alike/Is a unique umbrella association
- Supports administrators with professional development, resources, information, coaching, and networking/Provides support of new superintendents/Offers all new administrators a mentoring program
- Uses the Councils and Committees to speak to the work of administrators
- Works with leaders in Sacramento who are developing and implementing policy

Challenges/Issues

- Addressing charter school issues (e.g., oversight, governance, leadership)
- Addressing staff turnover/ Identifying the root cause of staff

turnover/Attracting and retaining staff/Building a team

- Addressing the divisive, partisan state and national cultural battles/Listening to and seeing all viewpoints on issues
- Addressing the political environment (i.e., education is being used to fuel the political dialogue around numerous issues), but focusing on what is best for students
- Advocating and partnering with other associations/organizations because ACSA can't go it alone
- Advocating for policies that work for students
- Analyzing the internal structure of the Association
- Articulating a confident vision of ASCA to members
- Articulating a positive message in a post-pandemic environment
- Assisting districts address staffing shortages
- Being inclusive and doing what is right for students
- Being inclusive of, valuing, and providing access for all members in a large patchwork quilt association (i.e., umbrella organization)
- Being more proactive in promoting stances positions on Equity, Access, and Inclusion
- Being the driving force in California education
- Bringing calm to the Association during the transition period
- Broadening the scope of the current work
- Building relationships with the Governor, Legislature, and CDE while using tact and grace when there is not agreement on issues
- Building the internal team/ Valuing staff
- Changing the way we do things in schools/Adapting to the changing educational environment
- Crafting a learning recovery plan for all students to ensure student achievement
- Dealing with the tug of war between the Governor and Legislature to ensure the outcomes are the best for students
- Embracing change, but in a calm, organized manner
- Engaging non-active members (i.e., ghost members)
- Expanding the capacity of the Association
- Filling big shoes
- Focusing on curriculum and instruction issues/Dealing with the political challenges to curriculum
- Maintaining virtual professional development and meetings as the ACSA returns to in-person events to provide greater access to more members
- Maneuvering through the political environment without excluding members who hold different views
- Observing, listening, and evaluating the environment before making changes/Developing a 90-day plan
- Offering the olive branch to other educational associations/organizations to bring people together for the common good (i.e., "cutting through the politics")
- Planning for the budget realities when the funding returns to normal
- Planning for the impact of declining student enrollment, which will impact membership
- Prioritizing student achievement as the #1 goal
- Prioritizing work among so many critical issues
- Providing administrators with the tools/resources to implement legislative policies

- Recruiting high-quality administrators to the professional
- Serving as the statewide voice of education
- Strengthening the organizational culture
- Supporting districts and administrators with the implementation of universal TK (e.g., funding, staffing, organization, facilities) and the impact on pre-schools
- Supporting districts and administrators with the reorganization of Special Education to provide services to students/Building connections with the new agencies
- Taking positions on issues even when there is not 100% agreement on an issue
- Understanding and planning for the fact that schools' current funding levels will decrease will in two years
- Understanding that administrators' plates are full and working to control what is added (i.e., the workload of administrators)
- Understanding that members, schools, and districts come in all shapes (i.e., Being inclusive of the diverse membership)
- Understanding, promoting, and supporting the belief that "All means all"
- Walking a fine line between the multitude of issues where diverse view exist
- Working with a large and diverse Board of Directors to develop a unified voice
- Working with organized labor for the good of students and schools (i.e., administrators are not the enemy)

Professional Qualifications/Experiences

- "Boots on the ground" experience to understand the needs of members
- "In education, it is hard to lead what you don't know"/Walked in our shoes/An educator
- Acknowledges and acts to remove barriers to inclusion (e.g., uplifting women in leadership, works with affinity groups)
- Aligns the Association's work with the Mission, Vision, and Goals in a cohesive manner
- Allows staff to do their job
- Articulates the need without whining
- Attends to the politics without being political
- Comes out swinging on issues
- Competent leader
- Connections with other educational associations and organizations (e.g., SSDA, Capitol Advisor, CCEE, CCSESA)
- Credibility with all members
- Exhibits the four frames of leadership (i.e., structural, human resources, political, and symbolic)
- Experience as a superintendent allows one to interact with all roles, but not an absolute
- Experience as a superintendent to understand the volume of work and all aspects of the system
- Experience as an instructional leader
- Experience in a wide range of positions and settings, superintendent experience preferred
- Experience in education at least at the cabinet level
- Experience in TK-12 in various roles (e.g., teacher to superintendent), superintendent experience desired/ Has the breadth and depth of TK-12 experiences in multiple roles and settings

- Experience leading and managing people with different backgrounds, needs, and expectations
- Experience with and involvement in ACSA
- Experience with managing organizations/associations
- Experience with political advocacy and governmental relations
- Experience working collaboratively with other associations (e.g., CSBA, CTA)
- Fails forward, but learns and grows from the failure
- Focuses on student and district achievement
- Gets in front of issues with a plan for action
- Has a record of successful leadership
- Has building-level and district-level administrator experience in multiple roles in multiple districts
- Has connections (i.e., foot in the door) in Sacramento
- Has gravitas in Sacramento
- Has led successful school turnaround initiatives/ Implemented successful change
- Has the credibility of members
- Into the core work of ACSA, not the position's title
- Involved/engaged with/has had a role in ACSA
- Knows and has had successful experiences with the California political system
- Leans into the work and goes for it
- Listens more than he/she talks
- Made wherever he/she worked better
- Makes sense of the issues and frames the message for members
- Manages people effectively
- Plans for the post-COVID environment in education
- Prepares future leaders
- Protector of education
- Protects administrators who are doing their job in the face of political challenges/rhetoric
- Proven history of quality successes
- Represents all members
- Sees the big picture in education, but can address the details
- Serves as the voice for education on more than just the hot topic issues
- Supports/backs up administrators
- Trajectory of career roles with increasing responsibilities
- Understands and experience in navigating the political waters
- Understands and experience with Special Education and ESL
- Understands and has had successful experience in the California educational system
- Understands and supports the importance of work force initiatives
- Understands finances and can analyze the Association's budget and how funds are spent (e.g., the relationship between internal and external spending, critical expenditures, dues structure and the use of dues, outside sources of revenue)
- Understands the cascading impact of decisions
- Understands the infrastructure of the ACSA (e.g., Councils, Committees, Leadership Assembly)
- Understands the role of Adult Education in the educational system and includes Adult Education in the conversation
- Understands, has experience, and has contacts in the political arena
- Values and uplifts women in leadership roles
- Walks the talk
- Works collaboratively with other agencies

- Works in the political arena without losing one's mind or cool

Personal Characteristics/Traits

- Active listener
- Adaptive
- Alive
- Approachable
- Backbone/Tough
- Balanced personally and professionally
- Being in the mind of the movers and shakers
- Big picture person
- Bring diversity
- Bulldog on issues
- Character to do the right thing
- Collaborator
- Committed to the work
- Communicator/Strong communication skills/Uses the four styles of communication
- Confident
- Considerate
- Courageous leader
- Credibility
- Disagrees respectfully
- Does what is right for kids
- Empathetic
- Engage audiences/Strong public speaker
- Engaged in the work
- Engaging
- Equity focused/Equity literate/Equity mindset
- Focused on the common good for students
- Follows through
- Goes for it
- Great spirit
- Grounded
- Has courageous conversations
- Has the fight in him/her
- High energy
- High EQ
- High IQ
- Honest
- Honors the culture
- Human touch
- Innovative
- Integrity
- Learner/Life-long learner
- Listener/Listens to diverse viewpoints
- Moral compass/Moral fiber
- Motivator
- Not afraid to challenge the status quo
- Open-minded
- Optimistic
- Organized
- People person/Strong people skills
- Person of action
- Person of his/her word
- Personable
- Positive attitude/Positive tone
- Praises people
- Preciously bright
- Proactive
- Public presence
- Pushes the envelope
- Relates to all people/Schmoozes with people
- Relationship builder
- Represents all members
- Respected
- Risk-taker
- Smart enough to learn
- Stamina
- Stands up in the face of controversy
- Storyteller to communicate
- Strong moral ground
- Student-centered/Students first
- Supportive
- Takes input and feedback
- Team builder/Team player

- Thinker/Thinks ahead
- Transparent
- Understands issues and details
- Understands the impact of the job on one's family
- Understands the new realities
- Values input
- Visible
- Visionary leader
- Walks the talk
- Worker

Focus Group Summary #5 Participants

- ACSA Staff
- Ambassadors
- Regional Consultants
- Retirement Committee

Strengths

- Adjusted, adapted, and grew as an organization in responding to COVID-related issues/Reacted quickly to COVID-related issues/ In the forefront of responding to COVID
- Advocates effectively in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. with a high-quality Governmental Relations team
- Advocates for and supports legislation that develops policies beneficial to students, schools, district, and members
- Strength of the Executive Board – allows people to be creative and strategic
- Communicates the “big picture” as well as detailed information on issues/Communicates information through Regions
- Communicates timely and relevant information that impacts members (e.g., COVID, legislation)/Keeps information flowing
- Communicates with members through multiple methods (e.g., live broadcasts, publications, emails, meetings, issue-specific trainings)
- Connects leaders (i.e., networking)
- Expertise with legislative action/Great Governmental Relations staff
- Focuses on students
- Has the big picture of what is going on in the state
- Delivers services and resources in a form they need
- Is more defined in how it supports members
- Keeps members informed about state legislation and federal government issues
- Keeps members informed especially in isolated regions and job-alikes with few administrators
- Legal advice, services, and support
- Mentoring and coaching programs
- Networks administrators across the regions, job categories, and issues
- Offers excellent member services
- Offers excellent professional development programs (e.g., Academies, Institutes, conferences, webinars) both in-person and online (very important and effective during the pandemic)
- Opportunities for members to develop and hone leadership skills through ACSA work (e.g., regions, councils, committees, conferences)
- Provides a range of member services
- Publications
- Represents members

- Staff responds quickly
- Was strengthened by the pandemic

Challenges/Issues

- Addressing the ongoing impact of COVID in a proactive manner
- Advocating changes to STRS that benefit districts, current members, and retirees
- Aligning the work of State ACSA with Regions and Charters
- Assuring student access to technology
- Attracting and retaining members/Communicating the value of membership (e.g., superintendents should promote the value of membership for all administrators)/Understanding the interests and needs of newer and younger administrators (e.g., the cost of dues)
- Balancing the diverse interests across ACSA and California education
- Being “the” voice for education compared to CTA, unions, and parents/Building a strong public perception of ACSA
- Being strong with the Executive Board
- Being visible and engaged with the members, especially in the Regions
- Communicating with all members regarding advocacy on issues
- Confronting negative/hostile public opinion of schools due to COVID-related issues
- Determining the best balance between virtual and in-person meetings and professional development
- Developing a budget that allows ACSA to effectively achieve its mission
- Earning the trust and respect of staff
- Empowering staff
- Engaging all Councils, Committees, and Regions in the decision-making process
- Engaging all members of the organization in meaningful ways (“a bottom-up focus on membership”)
- Evaluating organizational structure to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of services
- Evaluating the role of retirees in ACSA
- Evaluating the structure of ACSA and adapting it for future challenges
- Feeling by members that the new Executive Director is a leader and respectful of the sites
- Generating the feeling among staff that “I can’t wait to go to work today because of the new Executive Director”
- Greater focus on the national front and partnerships with national associations (e.g., AASA, ASCD)
- Having a feel and understanding of the organization
- Identifying priorities
- Including and balancing the needs and interests of all segments of a diverse organization (e.g., site vs. district, urban vs. rural, small vs. large)
- Incorporating technology into the organization
- Is a leader
- Is a strong presence at the Capital
- Learning the history, structure, and culture of ACSA
- Listening to the student voice
- Maintaining contact and communication with the members
- Melding existing and new staff into an effective team
- Needing to meet most of the qualifications boxes

- Organizational budget/finances (e.g., rising costs, declining membership, dues structure)
- Presenting a unifying and hopeful message
- Promoting the value of ACSA with potential and new members (i.e., “beaten into membership with butterfly wings”)
- Promoting the Vision and Mission
- Providing a human touch on the local level (i.e., more connection to the charters and regions)
- Providing coaches for new administrators
- Providing quality education for all students
- Pushing back on CTA-driven legislation
- Respecting people and receiving it in return
- Serving as emoji for ACSA
- Supporting administrators in dealing with parent demands
- Tapping the expertise of members on Councils and Committee/Expanding opportunities for retirees to be involved
- Understanding the “big picture” from large urban districts to small rural districts and everything in between
- Understanding the Association (e.g., history, changes, issues)
- Understanding the impact that the diverse demographics of California has on educational issues
- Understanding the need to change, but that education is often one of the last fields to change
- Understanding the structure of ACSA, its regions and charters, and the role of consultants
- Watching and learning while maintaining momentum and addressing issues

Professional Experiences/Qualifications

- Advocate/voice for education
- Aware of site issues/struggles and connects with members regarding local issues
- Builds a strong public perception of ACSA
- Connects the members despite the diversity of members and districts
- Connects with/Knows people
- Creates access to resources
- Encourages, promotes, and builds coalitions/Builds networks and partnerships
- Encourages, promotes, and supports innovation
- Experience as a site and district administrator in California (“progressed through the ranks”)
- Experience as a superintendent especially in California; in recent years preferred
- Experience in Human Resources/Curriculum and Instruction/Counseling/Business/site administration
- Experience in leading an organization in the field, not the “ivory tower”
- Experience with strategic planning
- Experience working with boards
- Experienced educator/leader with proven record, Ph.D. preferred
- Guides and supports the organization
- Has a sense of the Association and its history
- Has a vision for ACSA that takes it to the next level
- Has courageous conversations

- Has experience outside of education that enhances their educational professional experiences
- Has leadership presence
- Has sense of balance
- Innovates and adapts to the changing times
- Involvement in and experience with ACSA
- Is “present” and engaged in the work
- Is a team builder
- Keeps his/her ear to the ground
- Knowledge and experience with political systems/Knows Sacramento and government workings inside and out
- Listens as an individual, but takes input from others (e.g., Councils, Committees, Regions) to make decisions
- Lobbies effectively by knowing, understanding, and having experience in Sacramento/Engages state leaders
- Meets with employees
- Political focus outside of California/Has a national view of education
- Political leader who represents members
- Possesses the big picture
- Possesses, communicates, and implements a strategic vision
- Promotes membership/Communicates the value of membership
- Promotes the diverse interests within ACSA while building collaboration
- Proven leadership within limited resources
- Puts ACSA first
- Reaches out to, is accessible to, and engages members
- Recruits to promote diversity
- Respected by and respects others and other groups (e.g., Asian, African American, CALSA, LBGQT)
- Serves as an internal and external liaison
- Student-centered
- Supportive of, collaborates with, and networks with other state and national organizations/associations
- Systems thinker
- Tech world recruiter for innovation
- Trusts people out in the fields (regions)
- Understands and walks the halls of Sacramento
- Understands systems
- Understands that one cannot please everyone/Makes the tough decisions
- Understands the “big picture” of California education
- Understands the structure of ACSA
- Uses multiple methods to communicate with members
- Works with staff, but allows staff do their work while holding them accountable
- A leader, not necessarily an educator because ACSA does not run like a school district/Has managed an association or organization

Personal Characteristics/Traits

- Addresses members by name
- Allows people to run, but holds them accountable
- Allows staff to be creative
- Approachable/Available/Accessible
- Balance in both work and personal life
- Balanced
- Believes in and empowers staff
- Bridge builder/Coalition builder
- Brings diversity to ACSA
- Builds and earns trust and respect

- Cares for/Committed to/Engaged in ACSA
- Charismatic
- Collaborative
- Collegial
- Communicator/Direct, honest communication (e.g., courageous conversations)
- Competent (Say, Plan, Do)
- Concerned
- Connected
- Courageous
- Desires to learn and grow
- Diplomatic with divergent parts of the state (poor, multiple cultures)
- Doer/Gets things done
- Down-to-earth
- Dynamic
- Empowers/encourages people
- Encourages others
- Engages everyone
- Enthusiastic, supportive, inclusive
- Ethical (“optics and ethics are import”)
- Flexible
- Focused
- Friendly
- Generous
- Goals oriented/Gets things done
- High energy/Hard worker
- Honesty
- Honors and embraces diversity
- Honors how hard site administrators work
- Humble
- Implements the vision, mission, and plans
- Inclusive
- Innovative
- Inspires/Motivates
- Integrity
- Knowledgeable
- Knows and understands people
- Leadership presence (people want to follow)
- Listener
- Looks you in the eye
- Love for education and students
- Makes the hard decisions
- Meets with staff
- Models expectations
- Motivates
- Networks
- Never says “no”
- Oozes credibility
- Open and transparent
- Open-minded
- Organized
- Passionate
- Personable
- Political operative
- Positive attitude
- Possesses humanness
- Present, visible, and engaged with members and partners
- Relatable and down to earth
- Risk taker
- Sense of balance and boundaries
- Sense of humor, but serious
- Solicits and values input
- Strong character
- Strong interpersonal communication skills
- Student-focused/Student-centered
- Supportive of others
- Systems thinker
- Take charge person/Takes the initiative
- Team builder
- Team-oriented
- Threads the needle
- Trustworthy
- Understands issues and makes the tough decisions
- Understands the role of technology

- Understands, values, and promotes diversity and equity
- Unifying force
- Visionary
- Walks the talk
- Wants to work with the staff
- Youthful
- Uses the talents of the people; lets them run with the work
- Visible to the members

Respectfully submitted by HYA Associates Carmella Franco and Jim Negri