



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Ann Arbor Public Schools

February 28, 2024

SELECTION PROCESS

The Ann Arbor Public School District has retained the services of HYA to assist the Board with the hiring of the Superintendent.. The consultant will screen applications and recommend candidates to the Board for interviews and further consideration. Any questions regarding the application process, selection process, and/or this Leadership Profile Report should be directed to: Mike Richie at mikerichie@hyasearch.com, Sarena Shivers at sarenashivers@hyasearch.com or Scott Winch at scottwinch@hyasearch.com.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) during the months of January and February of 2024 for the new superintendent of Ann Arbor Public Schools. The data contained herein was obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either interviews or focus group settings. The interviews and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the organization and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years. It should be emphasized that the data is not a scientific sampling, nor does it necessarily represent the majority opinion of each respective group.

All current Ann Arbor Board Members were interviewed by the HYA Associates. In addition, HYA conducted 13 focus groups, including high school students. A total of 134 individuals participated in either focus groups, individual interviews or email responses.

The same questions were asked during each interview, focus group, and email response. They are as follows:

1. What are the strengths of Ann Arbor Public Schools that the next superintendent can build upon?
2. What are the challenges facing Ann Arbor Public Schools that the next superintendent should be aware of, or you would like to see be addressed?
3. What characteristics or traits are you looking for in your new superintendent?
4. Is there anything else you would like to share with us or that we should know about Ann Arbor Public Schools?

Through the information gathered, common themes were generated by the respondents. In this summary report, we will highlight what those common themes were as identified by the following four groups:

- Community
- Board
- Staff
- Students

Process

The structure of the individual meetings, forums, and focus groups was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. All of those involved in providing input in the selection of the next Ann Arbor Superintendent were asked to respond to the questions above.

Participation

The total number of individuals participating within an interview/focus group/email responses or completing the online survey was 2,019. The HYA consultants held seven (7) interviews and hosted 13 focus groups.

Interviews / Focus Group
1. Contracted Employees
2. District Departments Staff (HR, Finance, OSE, etc.)
3. Parent and Student Organizations Representatives
4. Special Education/ELL Community
5. Former Board Members
6. Parent and Community Groups
7. Business, Clergy and Civic/Government Leaders
8. Board Recognized Associations and Affiliated Groups
9. PTO Council
10. Student Groups
11. Instructional Staff
12. Parent/Community Forums
13. Cabinet Leadership team
14. Support Staff

Description of the District

The AAPS Community values a quality education for every child. AAPS students perform at academically high levels, are taught by high-performing teachers, enjoy quality programs, and are supported by engaged parents and community. As stewards of 35 buildings, AAPS houses more than 17,000 children and 2,400 staff and is responsible to provide, restore and prepare schools for its future generations. AAPS annual operating budget is \$312,000,000.

The city of Ann Arbor has a population of approximately 125,000 and is the seat of government of Washtenaw County. Ann Arbor is the principal city of the Ann Arbor Metropolitan Statistical Area, which encompasses all of Washtenaw County. Ann Arbor is also included in the Greater Detroit Combined Statistical Area and the Great Lakes megalopolis, the most populated and largest megalopolis in North America.

Ann Arbor is home to the University of Michigan. The university significantly shapes Ann Arbor's economy as it employs about 30,000 workers, including about 12,000 in its medical center. The city's economy is also centered on high technology, with several companies drawn to the area by the university's research and development infrastructure.

As an international city, Ann Arbor serves students from all backgrounds, with families speaking over 95 languages. AAPS is proud to serve families from around the world with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds; all of these students and families enrich our community. In AAPS, we believe our diversity is our strength; we know we are a stronger community as we honor, embrace, and celebrate our diversity, continually create a culture of belonging for all, and value the connections that unite us as an inclusive Ann Arbor community.

In AAPS, we provide access, opportunity, and excellence in educational experiences, continuing work to remove barriers to learning and high achievement for those most vulnerable in our school community. Academic excellence is maintained while eliminating the predictability of lower achievement. The AAPS team continues to set high expectations for student achievement and to prepare students for success upon graduation.

AAPS prides itself in diverse program opportunities for students including A2STEAM at Northside K-8 School; the International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum offered preschool through 12th grades at Mitchell Elementary, Scarlett Middle and Huron High Schools and soon-to-come Bryant-Pattengill Elementary Schools; and world-class visual and performing arts featured across all levels and campuses; an infusion of World Language, including Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, German, French, Latin and American Sign Language. AAPS is a nationally recognized Project Lead the Way Distinguished District with implementation K-12 across all schools, making it the only district in the State of Michigan to receive this honor.

Strengths of the Ann Arbor Public Schools as identified by the COMMUNITY Based on the Data Analysis Collected

1. The Ann Arbor community is committed to and passionate about public education. The community itself is wonderful and having the University of Michigan is seen as a dynamic and huge positive influence. There is an enormous amount of pride in the school district and a willingness to keep that going. Ann Arbor has a strong reputation throughout the state, and is a district people want to live and work in.
2. Parents and community members feel that the district has strong dedicated staff members. The groups also feel that the staff members (specifically teachers) are underpaid. The consensus was that the district has excellent teachers that have great insights with the students. An appreciation of the time staff members spend volunteering to help students was also mentioned.
3. Ann Arbor Public Schools are strong financially, which is shown by the recent passage of a \$1,000,000,000 bond. The district is well resourced, the parents feel invested and willing to contribute both financially and by passing millages (which are rarely turned down).
4. Another noted strength of the district is the diversity of its population, particularly as related to neighboring school districts.
5. Opportunities for students were also listed as a strength. Some specific examples include: the creative development within the schools, IB track elementary through high school, arts, orchestra, band, choir, strong extracurricular activities and the middle school GSA program.

Challenges of the Ann Arbor Public Schools as identified by the COMMUNITY
Based on the Data Analysis Collected

1. Ann Arbor Public Schools need to address issues within the Special Education Department. Families believe that the district needs to rebuild trust, and that SPED students are often left behind. The feeling is that it is a battle to help SPED students and more often than not, these students are perceived to be a burden. There is also a feeling that the department is understaffed, which contributes to the lack of services.
2. Board Governance and trust of the board and administration is a challenge. The common feeling is that the board is divided and dysfunctional. The politics of the district will be tough and PAC contributions for the school board elections seem to have influence on decisions in the district. There is also a trust factor, one that the community doesn't trust the board or administration. People would like to see consistency throughout the district (all buildings), and the culture from the top to be strong and supportive.
3. Another challenge is equity and racial issues. The belief is that racial incidents could be handled better by the district and that often the district pretends that there are no racial or equity issues. The community would like to see an equity plan that has outcomes. Every student should be afforded the same opportunities regardless of their background (race, economically disadvantaged, gender identity). There was also a concern that the magnet schools may cause segregation and inequities in the education offered.
4. Staffing needs were addressed and the question was asked "what are our shared values?" In large part this relates to staffing challenges within the district such as a shortage of bilingual staff, more support for the early years of learning and nursing/counseling shortages were specifically mentioned. There is also a feeling that there should be better pay for teachers and support staff and that the district needs to take better care of its staff.
5. The lack of before and after school childcare was a concern and also the programming that took place for students after school to assist with their academic needs.

Desired Characteristics of the next Ann Arbor Public Schools Superintendent as identified by the COMMUNITY

Committed to equity	Committed to transparency with parents	Track record of doing the work - equity
Connect and communicate with people	Work with community partners	Work with parent groups
Background and knowledge in Special Education	Big time commitment on a daily basis	Provide more aides in the classroom for support
Focus district on supporting all students	Engage the community	Current on best practices
Look at the best interest of students and not politics	Visible and involved in the district	Strong track record, make substantial progress in transparency

Want someone that will clean house	Open communication with community leaders	Strong leader that will build a strong team (some are in place)
Communicate strong, clear expectations and then follow up	Care about the kids	Be curious about the schools
Strong record of success in previous district	Sense of educational vision/mission	Transparency
Brave, strong willed person	Supportive of all marginalized populations	Willingness to work with people you may not like
Heart for positive change	Strategic vision	Recruit/retain quality staff members
Must be part of the community	Authentic	Honest

**Strengths of the Ann Arbor Public Schools as identified by the BOARD
Based on the Data Analysis Collected**

1. The Ann Arbor Board of Education is immensely proud of the quality, dedicated staff, exceptional teachers and phenomenal programs available to students (academics, arts and athletics for example).
2. An additional strength that was consistently highlighted by the Ann Arbor Board of Education is the overall diversity of the community (race, backgrounds, beliefs, culture, etc).
3. Ann Arbor Public Schools have benefited from historically strong commitment from parents and the broader community.
4. Rich array of resources was highlighted by members of the Board of Education. Board members attributed this to a generous, giving and dedicated community.

**Challenges of the Ann Arbor Public Schools as identified by the BOARD
Based on the Data Analysis Collected**

1. Board members raised public perception, better communication and the need to improve the way the district connects with the community as an on-going challenge.
2. While the vast diversity in Ann Arbor Public Schools was an area identified as a tremendous strength, it was also highlighted as a challenge. The challenge most frequently identified is the struggle to meet all of the varying needs of such a vastly diverse population.
3. Fiscal management, operating with a balanced budget and the undertaking of substantial bond work are additional upcoming challenges identified.

Desired Characteristics of the Ann Arbor Public Schools Superintendent as identified by the BOARD

Transparent	Advocate for teachers and students	Confident, firm decision-maker
Experienced	Willingness to admit mistakes	Understands diversity
Collaborative	Good listener	Committed to equity
Relationship builder	Open-minded	Listens to those underserved
Open to criticism	Forthcoming	Teaching experience
Honest	Equity minded	Open to new ideas

**Strengths of the Ann Arbor Public Schools as identified by the STAFF
Based on the Data Analysis Collected**

1. The level of education and diversity of the education provided is a strength. K-12 IB Corridor and preparing students to be global citizens, as well as the partnership with the University of Michigan was specifically mentioned. The consistency among the schools is also improving. People believe they have arrived when they get to Ann Arbor and it is a badge of honor to work in Ann Arbor.
2. People are the greatest asset of the district. The staff feels they have talented teachers and they are in it for the students and their direct supervisors are supportive.
3. Staff feels that contractual benefits are fairly good (with legislative constraints), and that they are well paid for the industry. Staff is also appreciative of the wellness initiative the district has implemented.
4. The community is an asset to the district, is resource rich and is generally very supportive of the school district.
5. The staff also feels that the student population is diverse and is matched by a diverse staff.

**Challenges of the Ann Arbor Public Schools as identified by the STAFF
Based on the Data Analysis Collected**

1. There is concern that behavior issues are cutting into time for instructional leadership. There is a need for an authentic commitment to all students and a need to push for equity for all students as well.
2. A challenge is legislative interference and the general lack of the Legislature's knowledge of what is going on in the districts.
3. Staff feels that there is a need for a strategic vision (3-5 year plan) that will provide a guide for all aspects of the educational process. Right now they feel that they are reacting, and not planning for the future.
4. Another challenge is recruitment and retaining staff members. Benefits such as insurance are capped which makes it difficult to recruit and retain quality staff members. They feel the district needs to commit to diversity to help recruit new staff members.
5. Communication and the opportunity to have your voice heard (which at times is also a strength), is difficult and the internal communication needs to improve.

Desired Characteristics of the next Ann Arbor Public Schools Superintendent as identified by the STAFF

Longevity, dedication	Humility	Patience
Listening, thoughtfulness	Value diversity	Good business sense
Background in education	Passion for education	Servant Leader
Be able to coordinate everything that is going on	Delegate, share your vision, mission and goals	Skill set to work with diverse populations
Shield the staff from the board dysfunction	Clear, innovative vision with forward thinking	Build relationships and trust - with the board, staff and community
Keep a balance for themselves	Be visible	Skilled in staff relationships and retention

**Strengths of the the Ann Arbor Public Schools as identified by the HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Based on the Data Analysis Collected**

1. Students overwhelmingly spoke about the broad range of programs, academic courses and opportunities as a strength of the school district. Students felt fortunate to have many programs such as IB, DP, AP and a lot of different athletics, afterschool programs, field trips, clubs and art programs. In their words, there is “something for everyone”.
2. Students felt there was strong continuity between the elementary, middle schools and high schools. Many students spoke of the transition from middle to high school as being “smooth”. They felt as high schoolers, they were still connected to the younger grades and had a chance to be involved in programs across high schools as well.
3. Excellent, caring, hard working teachers and staff go above and beyond to support students.
4. Ann Arbor Schools are very diverse and the district supports and fosters diversity. There is a great depth of diversity in the student body as a whole.
5. Students described the broader community of Ann Arbor as “tight knit” and they felt that there is a lot of help, support and resources within the community.

**Challenges of the Ann Arbor Public Schools identified by the HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Based on the Data Analysis Collected**

1. Students openly expressed the concern that not all programs were available at all schools (mainly high schools). They expressed frustration that they could not participate in certain academic offerings (such as IB/DP) and stay at their school. In their words, the programs from school to school are “too different”. They also felt that there was an equity issue with what was available throughout the district.
2. Better communication was expressed multiple times and in many ways by the high school students. Confusion about snow days, exams and early release were examples given; however, there were more general examples of poor communication directly to students expressed.

3. Students recognized and spoke about staff shortages. They also spoke about staff not being as diverse as the student body. There was also concern that teachers were being asked to do a lot but not given an opportunity to weigh in on decision-making in their buildings.
4. Students also want an opportunity to weigh in. Many students expressed a desire for students to serve directly on the board and have more of an opportunity to have “more voice on major decisions”.
5. Too much technology? Post COVID students expressed that Chromebooks were helpful, but there is a lack of writing and hands-on learning after the pandemic. Too much emphasis on digital learning has had disadvantages (headaches, strain).

Desired Characteristics of the Ann Arbor Public Schools Superintendent as identified by the STUDENTS

Makes hard decisions	Passionate	Visionary
Listens to feedback	Uses student input and voice	Supportive
Open minded	Proactive	Genuine interest in students
More inclusive	Loves job	Doesn't take sides
Critical thinker	Less polarizing	Cares deeply for students
Flexible	Listener	Hears the minority
Hands on	Transparent	Cares about teachers and staff
Accountable	Prior experience	Involved in the community
Community oriented	Personal	Calm and level headed
Hip and with it	Cares about teachers	Approachable

DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

Many of the discussions pertaining to strengths and challenges for Ann Arbor flow into the expectations/characteristics for the next superintendent. Several of the characteristics that are present in the profile for the next superintendent build on the current strengths of the school district in addition to addressing the challenges ahead. The search team will seek a new superintendent who will understand issues facing the school. It will be important for the new leader to constantly foster positive energy, and build and improve relationships. The new superintendent must be a good listener, be genuine, be trusted, have integrity, and build relationships that will be the driving force to all of the work for the Ann Arbor School District.

The new leader will be one that is balanced and can advocate for the Ann Arbor School District in a challenging climate. The person will be able to articulate a systemic communication plan that is transparent, open, and builds trust through respectful and collaborative relationships within the school and across the community. The new superintendent will also need to be a great board facilitator, have board governance skills, keep the board informed through regular ongoing communication and feedback.

Ann Arbor Public Schools Desired Candidate Profile

The Ann Arbor School District seeks a superintendent who in collaboration with the board, staff, students, parents and community will focus the school on shared goals and vision. After seeking input from Board Members, staff, students, parents and community members via individual and group interviews and focus groups, Ann Arbor seeks a strong, visionary superintendent who possesses the following characteristics:

A visionary, inspirational leader who:

- Builds strong relationships with all stakeholders and understands the Ann Arbor school community.
- Provides a strategic plan and the longevity in the position to see that plan through.
- Builds strong school board and superintendent relationships with a clear understanding of governance and the development of governance skills.
- Develops and implements a collaborative vision with the board, community, staff, students, and administrators.
- Listens to and effectively represents the interests and concerns of all students, staff, parents, and administrators.
- Be committed to equity for all student populations in the district.
- Inspires, motivates, supports, and empowers the staff/directors to lead change with transparency.
- Collaborates by seeking input prior to making decisions and communicates the rationale behind each decision.
- Promotes a vision of excellence, innovation, and equity to the students, staff, board, parents and community.

An exceptional communicator and consensus builder who:

- Communicates regularly, clearly and concisely in a way that engages and values stakeholders.
- Seeks and sustains professional and collaborative relationships with Board Members based upon commonly agreed goals.
- Demonstrates courage in the face of challenges and the ability to navigate complex situations with confidence and empathy.
- Is visible throughout the school buildings and community, and is actively engaged in building and sustaining positive relationships with all students, staff and stakeholders.
- Is able to create a positive and collaborative working relationship with the staff, city, businesses, non-profit organizations and the community.
- Fosters trust and respect among the board, staff, and community by listening, being decisive and courageous.
- Has the ability to resolve conflict effectively.
- Is open and honest, dedicated, visible and energetic.

An experienced educational leader who:

- Is laser focused on student success and will keep politics out of education.
- Is a talented facilitator who can motivate and engage all stakeholders.
- Is fiscally responsible, has knowledge of school finance and aligns budgets, long-range plans and operational procedures with the organization's vision, mission, and goals.

- Effectively plans and manages the vision, mission and goals of the school district and works collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure success.
- Values diversity and equity throughout the school district.
- Has the ability to work with and develop relationships with all school district employees and the board, targeted to student success.
- Is accountable and holds others accountable.

A successful candidate will:

- Have exemplary, executive-level, K-12 educational leadership experience.
- Provide the district with a strategic plan and then see that plan through.
- Have a track record of authentic leadership.
- Have an awareness and understanding of Federal, State and local policy.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with the Ann Arbor Public Schools, we look forward to finding your next leader that fits the criteria of your stakeholders.

Respectfully submitted,
 Mike Richie, HYA Vice President
 Sarena Shivers, HYA Associate
 Scott Winch, HYA Associate

DATA SUMMARY

The interviews and focus groups of stakeholders generated the following responses. Careful attention has been made to accurately convey the message. The comments listed below emerged from statements made by stakeholders and they are to be considered personal opinions of the individual making the comments regarding the Ann Arbor Public Schools.

Strengths as Identified by Parents/Community Members:

- Passionate about public education
- Dynamic with university in Ann Arbor
- Diversity
- Look at serving all of the demographics
- Community of Ann Arbor is wonderful
- Dedicated teachers
- Dedicated parents
- Strong extra curricular activities
- Good experience for high riser students
- Good experiences with teachers
- Beginning stages of equity and inclusion, try to ensure least restrictive environment
- Well resourced district
- Passionate teachers
- Community is committed to education
- Recruit, retain quality teachers
- Fund balance below state required 5%
- Focus is on students, not on ceasefire in middle east
- People are the strength, outside of the administration

- Family community are a huge strength
- Teachers are a strength but underpaid
- Dedicated teachers
- Diversity of district is fantastic
- Creative development within the schools
- Community High School is a strength, must keep
- Diversity is appreciated, particularly as related to neighboring schools
- Community values education
- Community supports schools
- Millage rarely turned down
- Middle school GSA take things down to elementary schools
- Ann Arbor seems to be a growing population
- Vagrant economy
- Historically good schools
- Pride in the district and the willingness to keep that going
- Progressivism, liberalism, accepting of all students
- Money in the district means resources, provides many opportunities for students
- Opportunities for all students
- Diversity from all backgrounds
- Parents are invested in helping the schools
- Strong reputation throughout the state, possibly nation
- Diversity of the population
- High qualifications of building staff, teachers, paras, office staff
- Arts, orchestra, band and choir
- Size is a strength, no matter who you are or what you are into, you can find your place
- IB track elementary through high school
- Involved parents
- Excellent teachers, great insight with students
- A lot of options
- Great community and engaged families, lots of people willing to step up
- Teachers volunteer their time to help kids

Strengths as Identified by Board Members:

- Professional well educated teaching staff
- Caring community
- Some amount of diversity
- A lot of good work established
- Generous community
- Academic success
- Safe community for a district this size
- Dedicated community, and folks at every level
- Diversity of students, quality of teachers
- Staff are exceptional
- Quality of academics and everyone is dedicated
- Academics are strong
- Dedication of community and families
- Parental involvement, excellence, and a full range of types of people (diversity in many different forms, etc).

- Resource rich community and professionals
- A lot of resources for students
- A lot of diversity (people from other countries that students can really learn from)
- Model and competitive district (on top with equity and setting standards)
- Good working relationships with employee groups
- Staff members are active within the community and the community knows them

Strengths as Identified by Staff:

- Level and diversity of education
- IB corridor from K-12, preparing kids to be global citizens
- Partnership with U of M
- Badge of honor to work for our schools
- People think you arrive when you get in Ann Arbor
- Multi-generational families attend and work in school district
- Wellness initiative
- Contractual benefits fairly good, with legislative constraints
- Well paid for the industry
- Diverse student population matched with diverse staff population
- Opportunity to have your voice heard (also a challenge)
- Staff are in it for the students
- Talented teachers
- People are the greatest asset of the district
- Supportive community
- Leadership is supportive (direct supervisors)
- Communication, information gets out
- Support of ELL students
- Growing our own in SPED dept, aides becoming teachers
- Consistency between schools is improving, primarily at the elementary level
- Community is an asset, resource rich

Strengths as Identified by Students:

- Diversity of thought and opportunities
- Space for everyone and whatever you want to do
- DP tests are free
- Events that span across multiple schools (elementary, middle and high)
- Bond across the schools
- Students have great access to everything
- Tight-knit community
- Everyone can do anything, sports
- Arts programs are amazing
- Mental health resources are strong
- A lot of field trip opportunities
- No problem sharing views
- Wide roster of classes and broad range of things that you can do
- After school programs that are helpful
- Each school has its own personality
- Opportunities for people to get what they need
- Try new and different things when it comes to education
- Diversity of student body as whole

- Great breadth and ethnicity and languages spoken
- Scholarship and financial opportunities for students who cannot pay
- Collaboration with different programs is strong
- AP courses and challenging classes
- Accommodations for students who are struggling
- Really good community
- Pre-occupational training
- Alternative schools unlike the traditional environment
- Take identity into any school that they want to be
- You are not subject to one school
- Extra curricula options are plentiful
- Best teachers
- Tight bonds
- Faculty and teachers show support for students
- Language programs in the district are great
- A lot options in the district
- Having choices of which school to go to
- Community in Ann Arbor is pretty small
- Treat us the same and like family
- Help you get things done and succeed
- Very welcoming community and they are very helpful
- Teachers (at pathways) are more understanding
- Everyone gets a chance for equal opportunities and you never get treated differently
- Diversity and different views are heard and listened to
- Really good job between transitions
- Do a good job of preparing for transitions (elementary, middle, high)
- Really wide range of classes offered and opportunities to learn
- Incredibly cool and different opportunities offered (home building, cosmetology)
- A lot of sports

Challenges as Identified by Parents/Community Members:

- Handling racial incidents
- Be transparent
- Divide between parents and district
- Work on equity plan
- Improve racial disparity
- Trust rebuilding to be done, black/brown families, SPED families
- SPED students left behind
- Battle to help SPED students
- Parents are scared for mental and physical safety of students
- SPED students are seen as a burden
- More transparency about SPED Programs
- Declining literacy
- Declining staff morale
- Communication issue
- Question use of funds
- School board is dysfunctional
- After school programming lacking

- Hire the necessary staff (aides) not more buzz word programs
- Attract, retain quality teachers
- Need to see the good things trickle down to all classrooms
- Mistrust among parents
- Politics of district will be tough on new person (PAC Contributions)
- Loss of before and after school child care
- Make progress on achievement gaps
- Not enough engagement or transparency
- Follow through with parent groups or committees
- Administration doesn't care, trust of administration in community is not there
- Magnet Schools may cause segregation, inequities
- Receiving enough education when you are at the top of your class
- Move up courses are all virtual, no face to face (lower levels)
- Lack of consistency, parents concerned about lack of Holocaust curriculum prior to trip to Washington
- Inclusion should be for everybody
- Anti-semitic issues not dealt with
- Problem with culture in schools, when issues come up they aren't dealt with
- Divided, dysfunctional school board
- Focus on the kids in the district
- Equity
- Fundraising not equal in all schools
- Reputation is good but not always lived up to
- Consistency throughout the district (buildings) should be better
- Support from the administration for teachers trying to do things
- Culture from top should be strong and supportive
- Consistent procedures and policies across the schools
- What are our shared values
- Diversity can also be a challenge
- Money, shortage of staff, nurses and counselors specifically mentioned
- Delay in getting kids back in school post COVID, educational and social/emotional losses
- Bilingual staff shortage
- Finances, staffing
- White supremacy culture
- Critical thinking skills
- Students ready for the real world
- We pretend there is no racism, no equity issues
- How things look as opposed to how they are
- Equity plan that has outcomes
- Not applying data on how children learn best
- Need more adults in the K-5 buildings
- Pay for teachers and support staff
- Need to take care of staff members
- Support teachers
- Do more to support the early years (K-5)
- SPED understaffed
- Allow students to participate in activities (sports) by the gender they identify with

- District struggles with equity, especially in the academic and AP area, theaters and band as well
- Every student needs the same opportunities
- Racism can be an issue
- Equity awareness has started but has a long ways to go
- Big Special Ed issues across district, like pulling teeth trying to get services
- Don't offer a lot to gifted students
- Need more social and emotional support, not enough staffing
- Shying away from 504 and IEP needs
- Homework support with para's is not happening like it should, the district is not being honest with staffing storage, treat parents with respect and tell them the truth
- Need more after school child care
- Make opportunities available for everyone and families need to know about it, when a flier comes home with a summer program they need to have on there where the scholarships are available as well
- What does restorative justice really mean, lots of situations going on in the district
- Safety for students and staff is a concern and communication is lacking when things happen
- Things got very ugly during COVID and kids just went back to school like nothing happened, there was no healing

Challenges as Identified by Board Members:

- Teachers need support but not be over managed
- Students have a wide range of needs
- Information clear and transparent to community and board
- Politically and economically things are better, but a ways to go
- Differences in school quality that is brought upon by issues of equity
- Public perception
- Better ways to communicate with public, not forthcoming
- Distance between administration and public
- Hard to get answers, hard to be accessible
- Change needed outward to the public (ie, marginalized community)
- Need to manage and recruit upper administration
- All voices should be heard and responded to equally with the same passion and vigor
- Small and very vocal group finds too much wrong with the district
- New person will have to be firm and consistent
- Need to get us out of the wave of public-school bashing
- Diversity is so great but so many different needs are presented
- A lot of gaps and inequities occur
- Academics are strong but sometimes we do too much
- Staff is stretched too thin
- Need evidenced based reading instruction
- Need to address reading levels and gaps
- Special education reform around inclusion needed
- Budget issues and ensure staff being paid appropriately
- Making sure we maintain the fund balance
- Budget balanced, sustainable bond work
- Cultural responsiveness

- Engage with parent groups and additional advocacy groups
- Need mental health counselors at every level

Challenges as Identified by Staff:

- Opportunity to have your voice heard (also a strength)
- Legislative interference, and not knowing what is going on in the districts
- Benefits capped insurance, hard to recruit employees
- Staying diverse to help recruit staff members
- Behavior concerns cuts into instructional leadership time
- Parental support, thinking they are running the schools
- Strategic vision, guiding process (3-5 year plan) for all aspects of the educational process
- Transparency
- Internal communication needs to improve
- Take us out of the silos, different directives from different areas
- Here is the change we want but no resources to do so
- We are reacting not planning
- Need a vision moving forward, clear guidelines and expectations
- Authentic commitment to all students
- CTE
- Push for equity for black/brown students, SPED

Challenges as Identified by Students:

- Passion of teachers
- Not a lot of flexibility for things that are really important
- School curriculum can be too similar
- Universal concepts are taught again and again
- Need more ways for students to work on entrepreneurial studies
- A lot of resources, but they aren't distributed evenly
- Clear which resources aren't funding equally
- Communication for things is late
- Students do not have a lot communication
- School safety
- General ways we can stay safe
- More communication on "Okay to Say" (how and what happens when you use it)
- Systems in place for college essay hours would be really helpful and great
- More award opportunities available
- Some programs like DP are only offered in some schools
- Division between activities, opportunities are very divided
- No advocating for students whose parents work late
- Lack vision across all schools
- Too many ideas
- Aren't able to switch to another school because the programs are too different
- Need more encouragement for diverse students
- We do not celebrate diversity as much as we would like (Hispanic heritage or black history month)
- More student voices in the district governing process
- More voice on major decisions
- Hearing the voices of the teachers

- Making teachers feel like they care what they are thinking
- More skill based preparation for college and work
- More preparation for top colleges way before senior year (extracurricular too)
- Chromebooks have been helpful
- Post COVID paper and hands on learning is lacking
- Emphasis on digital learning is too much (headache and eye strain)
- Too many things that are not the responsibility of the teacher are on the teacher
- Not magnet high school (more specialized on the magnet front)
- More staff is needed at the alternative programs
- Staff shortages across the district
- Some students need more support
- Never actually met the superintendent
- Trouble holding staff accountable
- Communication could improve (sending parents updates, schedules, etc)
- District organization and communication
- Should be more teachers of color because the students are diverse
- More equitable funding
- Better decisions around snow days
- More group activities and more after school tutoring sessions
- No sport opportunities or physical activities at pathways
- Diversity club council and not internalized racism, DEI issues
- Picking and choosing with expulsion, who does and doesn't get certain treatment
- AP test policy should be changed
- Students should feel more comfortable coming to adults
- More supports for clubs
- Recycling
- Students should be able to voice their opinion about teachers and staff at a higher level (to be reviewed by the district)
- Need closer bus stops
- More support for parents and families in need (before/after school program)
- When bad things happen people should know more, better communication
- Tragedies are not well communicated, we just move on
- Staff reports take too long