



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

**Racine Unified School District
February 15, 2024**

SELECTION PROCESS

The Racine Unified School Board has retained the services of HYA to assist the Board with the hiring of the next 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 or Sarena Shivers at sarenashivers@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 December of 2023 through January of 2024 for the new superintendent of the Racine Unified School District. The data contained herein was obtained from input the HYA consultant received when he 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 nine current School Board members were interviewed by an HYA Associate. In addition, HYA conducted 20 focus groups. A total of 215 stakeholders, including high school students, participated in the focus groups. In addition, 28 individuals replied via email responses to the questions asked. A total of 243 individuals participated in either focus groups, individual interviews or email responses. A survey was also conducted from January 3 through January 28, 2024, which resulted in 249 responses.

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

1. What are the strengths of the Racine Unified School District that the next superintendent can build upon?
2. What are the challenges facing the Racine Unified School District 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 the Racine Unified School District .

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 Racine Superintendent were asked to respond to the questions above.

Participation

The total number of individuals interviewed or participating within an interview/focus group/email responses was 243. The HYA consultant held nine (9) interviews and hosted twenty (20) focus groups.

Interviews / Focus Groups
RUSD Administration (ASC/school leadership)
Police Departments (Racine, Caledonia, Mount Pleasant, Sturtevant)
Racine Interfaith Coalition (RIC), Racine Chapter NAACP, African American Roundtable of Leaders
United Way Board, RAMAC President's Council, Higher Expectations Leadership Table, TEMPO, African American Chamber of Commerce Leadership, Downtown Racine Council
RAREA (Racine Area Retired Educators Association), AAUW, PDK
Community/Parents Focus Group #1
Community/Parents Focus Group #2
Parent Leadership Network/parent ambassadors, PTAs
Academies of Racine Steering Committee (this includes businesses HE and ECU), Rotaries, Realtors
Middle School Academies Steering Committee
Superintendent Advisory Council & Facilities Advisory Council
Student Advisory Council
Racine Educators United (REU) and other union reps
Latino groups - LULAC, Dual Language Committee, Hispanic Roundtable, Hispanic Center
Village of Sturtevant, Village of Mount Pleasant, Village of Caledonia
Strategic Planning Committees
RUSD staff # 1
RUSD staff #2
ALL STAFF / RUSD administration / school leaders / ASC
Elected Officials

Description of the District

The Racine Unified School District (RUSD) is seeking a superintendent beginning on July 1, 2024, Located in southeastern Wisconsin, RUSD is the sixth-largest school district in the state, serving more than 16,000 students. The Racine Unified School District consists of 100 square miles. The District has about 3,556 employees, and a general fund budget of \$315M. Education is provided in 23 buildings.

The Racine Unified School District prides itself on our culturally diverse schools that prepare our students to thrive in a global community. RUSD offers a variety of choices and programs that create opportunities for all our students to excel, including: state recognized 3- and 4-year-old programs, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, dual language, award-winning fine arts, virtual learning, nationally recognized Career and Technical Education programs, the Academies of Racine and more! Our dedicated and highly educated staff are focused on ensuring all students achieve their highest potential.

The Racine Unified School District community recently supported a \$600 million capital improvement plan allowing the district to implement its long-range facilities master plan to provide excellent, modern learning environments for all students. This referendum is providing major improvements to every school in the district and facilitating changes to grade configurations to expand in areas of the community where there is growth and close schools where there is not. Excitement is building as school construction gets underway.

RUSD's strong partnerships with business and post-secondary institutions have paved the way for the Academies of Racine at Case, Horlick and Park High Schools. Launched in 2016, the Academies prepare students for college and the workforce through small learning communities or pathways that provide real-world experiences with local businesses and professionals. Each pathway prepares students for specific career areas by connecting regular high school coursework to college and career opportunities after graduation. Students select a pathway their freshman year and study it for the next three years, earning college credits and nationally recognized industry certifications along the way. Ten of RUSD's Academies are nationally certified through the National Career Academy Coalition.

Racine is a great place to live, work and play! From the beautiful sands of North Beach to the miles of bike trails, to the bustling downtown and the local Racine Zoo overlooking Lake Michigan; there is something for everyone. Located between Milwaukee and Chicago, there is easy access to entertainment, shopping, restaurants and nightlife.

RUSD Vision

To graduate all RUSD students college, career, and life ready.

RUSD Mission

Educate every student to succeed. RUSD is dedicated to equitably serving our students through engaging in rich academic, social-emotional, and professional experiences to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be successful adults, employees, and citizens while building collaborative partnerships with families, community, and businesses.

As *Raising Racine 2022* was set to sunset at the close of the 2021-2022 school year, RUSD began a year-long four-phase strategic planning process that ensured an intentional and inclusive approach to bringing all voices to the table while making student-centered decisions based on research and data. That process led to our new five-year strategic plan with ambitious goals to guide us forward toward our vision. Strategic Plan 2027 has four strategic priorities and six bold goals.

Strategic Priorities:

1. Student Success
2. Climate and Culture
3. Systems, Accountability and Growth
4. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

RUSD District Goals

1. Graduation Ready
2. Early Literacy
3. High School Ready
4. Equitable Academic Outcomes
5. Enrollment
6. Technology and Infrastructure

Link to RUSD Strategic Plan: [RUSD Strategic Plan 2027](#)

Visit the RUSD Website for more information: [Racine Unified School District](#)

Strengths of the Racine Unified School District as IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY: Based on the Data Analysis Collected

1. There is a long history of families and tradition in RUSD. Many opportunities for all children/families despite their background. Great services are available in the community schools.
2. Early childhood programs are a strength, along with a successful summer school program.
3. Passing of the referendum and the many upgrades being completed to the buildings and schools across the district.
4. RUSD has some very good initiatives and programming in place. There is a strong effort to change the perception of the district with the goal of improving academic achievement, increasing the graduation rate and lowering the truancy rate:
 - IB program
 - Pathways across the district
 - K-8 concept
 - Dual language opportunities start at a very young age
 - Technology across the district
 - Academies - setting up students for success after graduation

- Growth in early literacy
 - Gateway Tech College Partnership
 - School choice is an enormous asset
 - School options are amazing - Real School, Montessori and fine arts
5. The District's willingness to partner with outside agencies emerged as a strength. There appears to be an improved partnership with the city as well with other governmental agencies. There is a strong willingness to collaborate and partner with many non-profits across the city of Racine.

Challenges of the Racine Unified School District as IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY: Based on the Data Analysis Collected

1. The District needs to be financially responsible and needs to spend money on students and not the central office, the perception is that the District is top heavy. RUSD has a large budget shortfall, estimated to be at \$34 million. The District should be doing benchmarks to see how RUSD financially stacks up against other comparable school districts. The community was evenly divided about the massive facility referendum, passed several years ago. RUSD is creating impressive new and upgraded facilities but there is a perception that no one is monitoring the spending as initial estimates have been exceeded and the School Board continues to approve spending of contingencies.
2. RUSD has lost trust with parents and families and needs to admit when they are failing. Parents feel they do not get the communication regarding big decisions. The new leader must ensure that referendum funds are being used correctly. There also appears to be a communication gap between teachers and administration. Across the District it is difficult to know who to contact for certain issues and it's hard to move some of the work and initiatives forward because navigation can be difficult. There are many layers and this impedes getting things done.
3. RUSD seems to be lowering the bar and needs to improve academics and test scores. It is essential to make an effort to get students to read at grade level. More diverse staff is needed across the District. RUSD has a poor reputation and students are choosing to go elsewhere. The District needs to showcase the good things going on, this will keep families in the district.
4. The cultural acceptance piece is missing at times, there is a lack of cultural awareness. RUSD must understand the cultural differences. Family engagement is a large challenge. There are some good programs that are not accessible to students/families because of barriers such as transportation, cost, parents are not aware of them, etc.
5. There seems to be a focus on building new buildings or remodeling/upgrading certain schools across the district, but not taking care of the inner city buildings:
 - No windows in Gilmore
 - School safety is an issue
 - Climate control in some buildings is a big problem
 - Space issue or lack of space in certain buildings

Desired Characteristics of the Next Racine Unified Superintendent as identified by the COMMUNITY

Visibility	Classroom experience	Must be out and about in the schools/community
Accountability	Able to work with the union	Somebody that understands the clientele
Open honest and available	Understands diversity	If they have children they should attend RUSD
Proven track record	Vested and Committed	Committed to Racine not a stepping stone/long term
Makes tough decisions	Vision	Would be nice if they lived in Racine
Support equity and inclusion	Background in public education	Relate to the youth, meet them where they are
Strong leader	Family focused	Spend time in the Racine neighborhoods
CEO approach	Not afraid of the challenge	Know the history of the city/district
What is your WHY	Strong backbone	Well versed in urban type of schools
Stay the course	Collaborate with higher ed	Think outside the box to get things done
Compassionate	Coalition building skills	Continued support of SRO program
Good listening skills	Boots on the ground	Everyone can achieve, raise the standards
Knowledge of community	Takes ownership	Meet the needs of all students
Believe in DEI	Data driven decision maker	Needs to know about instruction
Humble	Look inside for the next supt.	Deal with issues facing the district
Invested	Willing to come to the table	Cultural sensitivity responsiveness
Latino families need to feel part of the district		Someone not running from a job
Understand nationwide challenges - keep kids in schools		
Believes that there is a place for law enforcement in the schools		
Keep the strategic plan in place and move it forward		
Continue to make progress and accelerate that progress		
Experience in this school district or similar urban district - the culture of Racine is different from others		
Communicate the vision/mission of the school		
Look at trends, what are we failing and how can we improve		
Not looking for someone trying to make a name for him/her self		

Take some risks to get better results for families
Supportive of all staff, think about how each person contributes to the district
Continue to make progress and accelerate that progress
Inspirational leader, people will believe what he/she is saying
Can identify challenges, work towards solutions of those challenges
Somebody who cares, treat staff, co-workers and students like family
Parents are the CEO of their child and community
Focus on all groups of people not just one group of people, inclusive
Someone that knows where Monument Square is (downtown area), knows the Racine neighborhoods and where things are at in the city

**Strengths of the Racine Unified School District as: IDENTIFIED BY SCHOOL BOARD:
Based on the Data Analysis Collected**

1. Across the District there are many invested/supportive community members, parents and teachers. Strong tradition of stakeholders that went to school in Racine and lived in Racine their entire life. Very proud of the school district and city.
2. The academies and pathways are a strength that sets Racine Unified apart from other school districts.
3. On April 7, 2020 a historic referendum for **\$1,072,500,000** passed by a vote of 16,715 to 16,710. The referendum language/wording was as follows: *For non-recurring purposes consisting of building modernization, land acquisition, enhancements for student career pathway programs, safety improvements, furnishings and equipment, technology, and debt service for new building and other capital improvement projects. Money is earmarked for these purposes through the 2050-2051 school year.*
4. A lot of work and initiatives with early literacy is having a positive impact on reading scores across the District. The goal of this initiative is to improve academic achievement and reduce the achievement gap.
5. Racine Unified is a very diverse school district. There are good things going on in the area of DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion). Stakeholders viewed the many different cultures that make up the demographics of Racine Unified as a positive and a great strength, and the Board also sees this as a strength.

Challenges of the Racine Unified School District as IDENTIFIED BY SCHOOL BOARD: Based on the Data Analysis Collected

Despite the many good and positive things going on across the Racine Unified School District the common theme was described as the narrative/outlook about the District is not good and the academic achievement level is low. This bothered many of the stakeholders and was described as an unfair perception. Education in Racine is more than just about the test scores or report card scores. There are many wonderful changes taking place that will positively begin to change the culture, perception and increase academic achievement across the school district.

1. Teacher recruitment and retention is an issue. The District needs a plan/vision and some innovative ideas on how to retain its quality personnel/staff.
2. Public confidence in the District is down (as reflected above) and there needs to be more transparency. There also seems to be some disparity amongst schools within the District. Some schools are thriving academically while others are really struggling. Some schools have been updated and remodeled while other schools are in dire need of upgrade and remodeling.
3. Vouchers, declining enrollment and students open enrolling out of the District into other public school districts and private schools is having a negative effect across the district.
4. The declining enrollment and the loss of the federal ESSER money in 2024 will have a negative impact on the annual budget and the financial picture of the District. Currently there is a projected budget shortfall of \$34 million. Some difficult decisions and budget reductions will be necessary, along with an eventual operational referendum. The current administration is working on this budget deficit.
5. Reputation of being a poor choice for education. As mentioned above, this is a huge challenge across the District. The District needs to continue with its many positive initiatives and programming that is currently in place and use the new data to highlight the improvements to change the narrative.

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 RUSD.

Desired Characteristics of the Next Racine Unified Superintendent as identified by the BOARD		
Transparent	Fiscally smart	Good people skills (staff and public)
Make tough decisions	Honest	Vested in the district and community
Work with teacher's union	Strong financial background	Change the perception of the district
Strong leadership	Active in community, visibility	Strong communicator with all stakeholders
Knowledgeable	Familiar with Racine/this area	Knows the people and community
Build trust with the Board	Works well with the Board	Make a decision and stand by your decision
Talks to all cultures	Engaged in the community	Holds all staff/employees accountable
Classroom experience	Good communicator	Understanding of urban districts and diversity
Good listener	Outgoing and approachable	A leader that can build a culture and accountability
Get the community on their side, PR, meet and greets, work with different groups, need to get public confidence back		
Build on the foundation that has been created, need stability, no more revolving door syndrome		
Strong track record/experiences in the area of academic achievement and early literacy		
Challenge some of the things we have, put everything on the table		
Dissect what actual issues are between the central office and the schools, need to be more aligned		
Fix turnover rates, do they have a plan, how to retain staff		
Good at shifting a culture, accountability, trust, disconnect with the central office		
Not just a good educator but a proven track record and successes		
Willing to move and be part of the community, really vested in Racine		
Must share what needs to be shared with the Board in order to make informed decisions		
Well versed in what is going on, must understand academics, knowledgeable in early literacy and Racine Academies, cannot be hands off, needs to know what is going on		
Early literacy and academies are showing progress, we do not need someone to come in and dismantle current programs		
Must know that the Board is the person's supervisor but also his/her partner, need to get the Board to understand ideas and bounce ideas and thoughts off the Board		

Strengths of the Racine Unified School District as IDENTIFIED BY STAFF: **Based on the Data Analysis Collected**

1. Staff believe that safety is everyone's responsibility, a top priority in the District. Overall, the staff feels the District is safe but mentioned it takes everyone to make sure all safety procedures and protocols are followed at all times.
2. Early literacy, reading curriculum and interventions are starting to have a positive effect on student outcomes. The reading scores across the District are beginning to improve.
3. There are great business/community partnerships across the school district, they have really taken off. The community is starting to rally behind the District. The academies are a prime example of what school success and partnerships should look like.
4. The District passed a large referendum in 2020 and will be able to build some new schools and upgrade other facilities that are in need of improvements. ESSER funding was a huge strength and the District was able to provide more resources for students utilizing the ESSER Funds. The ESSER money will go away by law on September 30, 2024. The District has had numerous, clean transparent financial audits.
5. There are numerous opportunities for students across the District, the sky's the limit!

Challenges of the Racine Unified School District as IDENTIFIED BY STAFF: **Based on the Data Analysis Collected**

1. Student achievement continues to lag and is low across the District. However, the journey we are on, including building district/business partnerships, is helping turn this around.
2. Time for professional development is much needed, and support to follow through by administration and the district office.
3. Staff shortage is a big issue across RUSD. Some support staff are not fully licensed. There needs to be a more diverse teaching staff. One staff member commented **"it's hard to be what you don't see."** It is critical to retain quality staff.
4. The social/emotional concerns for staff and mental health is a big issue.
5. The issues RUSD is facing with the voucher schools taking away from public schools along with declining enrollment, students open-enrolling out of the District and families are moving out of RUSD.

Desired Characteristics of the Next Racine Unified Superintendent as identified by the STAFF

Transparent	Lead out of love for children	Invested and present in the community
Good communication	Think with a purpose and drive	Bring people together, connect with staff
Leader in the community	Manage the finance situation	Be present in the buildings, visible for staff
Engage students and staff	Someone that understands vouchers	See the value in the players at the table
Keep students in mind	Be visible	Willingness to disrupt disfunction
Top heavy, too many chiefs	Act with courage and convection	Strong delegation skills, but then manage
Public school educator	Relationship builder	Someone that is not so interconnected
Hands on leader	Fresh bold ideas	Confident and prepared to make hard decsions
Don't isolate him/herself	Savvy enough to do research and use data	
Honor the great things we have been doing and allowing them to grow and take shape		
Flexible, fearless leader, take a stand and support the needs of district and community		
Supported accountability, strong vision, drives the ship and stays the course, reasonable but doesn't back down		
Lead through the challenges facing the district but also trust other administrators to lead in their roles as well		
Have mission/goal of doing what is best for students, not adults		
Strong supporter of public education, take on outside influences		
Be in Racine for the long haul, be diligent, not a stepping stone or early retirement placement, someone that wants to be here		
Someone that can stand up to the volatile political climate		
Not afraid to shake up the administrative structure		
Build a strong culture, develop relationships, be enthusiastic about education		
Some who is not insecure, if they do something wrong then pivot		

Strengths of the Racine Unified School District as IDENTIFIED BY STUDENTS:
Based on the Data Analysis Collected

1. Teachers are passionate about what they teach and very dedicated to their profession. The students in the focus group really emphasized what a quality staff RUSD has.
2. Students love the diverse student population and this really makes RUSD a very special place. Because of the diversity and different cultures, the students feel they form special bonds and friendships.
3. Academies have a positive impact on student outcomes and career paths, this is a big plus for the District. Numerous academic offerings and outstanding programs are available for students. If students choose to be challenged, the sky's the limit.
4. The students expressed that there is a good amount of community involvement and stated that the Racine community is a strength. Businesses are supportive of the schools and heavily involved in student pathways/careers and support the RUSD in many other ways.
5. Security is good throughout the District and in the schools. The students feel the schools are safe and they said that concerns about school safety does not impede their learning as they feel very comfortable and not worried while they are at school.

Challenges of the Racine Unified School District as IDENTIFIED BY STUDENTS:
Based on the Data Analysis Collected

1. Students feel that student participation/involvement is lacking when it comes to co-curriculars, clubs, activities and music/arts. RUSD should encourage involvement in younger age groups with the intention that if you encourage and inspire participation at a younger age, it will stay with them throughout their high school years.
2. The students stated that communication could be better from the District and schools. Students want a voice within the schools, they want to be listened to and heard.
3. Students felt that the grading system needed to be consistent and there has been a lot of change recently with this. The grading system needs to stop changing, this seems to be stressing out many students.
4. Students expressed a big concern regarding the current RUSD facilities. When other districts come to RUSD they tend to make fun of or joke about the facilities, schools and athletic fields/complexes. The students feel that almost all other school districts have much better facilities than RUSD. This really bothered the students as they are proud of the district and the city of Racine.
5. Although the students feel the schools are safe, they did state that there is a lot of online bullying going on that does trickle into the school and causes problems.

Desired Characteristics of the Next Racine Unified Superintendent as identified by the STUDENTS		
Engaging	Be in the buildings	Take ownership
Funny	Well organized	Someone who knows the district and community
Be present	Accountability	Go to events and be present
Sense of pride	Talk to students	Be involved in the community
Sense of humor	Down to earth	Listen to students
Here for the students	Fair	Make tough decisions, don't be wishy washy
One student stated that they have seen the Mayor in the school more than the previous superintendent		

DESIRABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

Many of the discussions pertaining to strengths and challenges for the Racine Unified School District 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 organization in addition to addressing the challenges ahead. The search team will seek a new superintendent who will understand issues facing the District. It will be important for the new superintendent to constantly foster positive energy, and must know or be willing to get to know the Racine community. 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 in the Racine Unified School District. It is vital that the new leader communicate effectively with all stakeholders, be a good listener and a team player. It is an expectation of all stakeholders that the new superintendent will be visible in the schools and in the community, be engaged and be present.

It is imperative that the new superintendent find a healthy balance between the business side and the educational side of leading a school district. He or she must be able to manage and implement the strategic plan. The new leader will be one who is laser focused and can advocate for the Racine Unified 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, make difficult decisions and must be able to put things in simple terms when explaining them. The ideal candidate will have educational administrative leadership experience in a large (urban) school district, be a strong instructional leader, and have the knowledge and understanding of school finance (how school funding works in Wisconsin). A critical characteristic of the new superintendent is that he or she **MUST** be approachable and be a people person.

Racine Unified School District Superintendent Desired Candidate Profile

The Racine Unified School District seeks a superintendent who in collaboration with the Board, staff, students, parents and community will focus the district 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, the Racine Unified School District seeks a strong, visionary superintendent who possesses the following characteristics:

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 RUSD.

A visionary, inspirational leader who:

- Builds strong relationships with all stakeholders.
- 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, faculty, staff, students, and administrators.
- Listens to and effectively represents the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, and administrators.
- Inspires, motivates, supports, and empowers the staff/principals to lead change with transparency.
- Attracts, leads, evaluates, and retains an effective team of administrators and staff and at the same time holds them accountable to uphold the mission and vision of the Racine Unified School District.
- Places the students at the center of every decision.
- Collaborates by seeking input prior to making decisions and communicates the rationale behind each decision.
- Fosters an open and safe environment that is focused on student and staff mental health and well being.
- Promotes a vision of excellence, innovation, diversity, equity and inclusion to the students, staff, Board, and community.
- Understands and is skilled in a continuous improvement model.

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, priorities and expectations.
- Demonstrates courage in the face of challenges and the ability to navigate complex situations with confidence and empathy.
- Is visible throughout the schools 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, community and elected officials.

- Fosters trust and respect among the Board, students, staff, and community by listening, being decisive and courageous.
- Has the ability to resolve conflict effectively in a fair, equitable and unbiased manner.
- Is open and honest, dedicated, visible and energetic.
- Possesses public relations skills, speaks well and is collaborative.

An experienced educational leader who:

- Is focused on student success and makes that his/her top priority.
- Can successfully enhance, **change the narrative** of the District's reputation for excellence in academics, programs, activities, athletics and the arts.
- Understands the importance of using data to skillfully implement the existing strategic plan.
- Is confident, decisive, and resilient.
- Is a talented facilitator who can inspire, 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 long-term financial health and growth of the organization.
- Exhibits integrity and a high level of emotional intelligence.
- Has the ability to work with and develop relationships with all school district employees, union leadership, students and the Board that are targeted to student success.
- Is accountable and holds others accountable.

A successful candidate will:

- Have exemplary, executive-level, K-12 educational leadership experience and track record.
- Demonstrates authentic leadership.
- Be a team player and be in the trenches with staff, lead by example.
- Continue the work that has been done across the school district.
- Understand the bells, whistles and levers that make Racine such a great and unique place to live.
- Recognize staff and understand what they are doing.
- Have an awareness and understanding of Federal, State and local policy.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with the Racine Unified School District, 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

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 Racine Unified School District.

Strengths as Identified By Parents/Community Members:

- Racine made good decisions during the pandemic, good decision making
- Location is a positive
- Teachers are a strength
- Very diverse district
- Great educational methods across the district, improving reading and updating curriculum
- Doing a better job communicating / real time messaging for communication
- Student transportation to go to other schools
- Dealing with mental health issues and addressing the issue
- Choice schools
- Good administrators, leadership is good
- Going in the right direction
- Positive interaction with schools
- In a good spot at the moment
- Sports programs / rivalries
- Safe feeling when attending events / SROs, lieutenant assigned to schools
- Success of school district directly related to success of community
- There is a desire to be better, execution is questioned though
- Staff is a strength, very dedicated
- Community interest in the school, organizations and individuals
- Understanding and empathy for group home population, partnership to help this population
- Strong RAMAC
- School community developed northstar vision and core values, shared vision
- Community support of the academy model
- High schools are open to people coming in
- Leadership team is committed to changing the culture and structural change, with good outcomes in mind
- Dedicated teachers are in it to win it and they have been through a lot, do a lot with a little
- Open to suggestions for improvements
- District does a nice job looking at data in real time, spirit of continuous improvement
- Community / school work the district is doing is a strength
- Success of school district directly related to success of community

- Working on strong partnerships in the community, keep it going
- There is a desire to be better, execution is questioned though
- Mental health clinics
- Identify and embrace the positive and keep it going
- Highest graduation rates in the history of the district
- Getting students home from choice schools
- Diversity is good but politics can get in the way, need to get politics out of the way so kids can learn
- Passing the referendum
- K-8 (four and expanding) model is a strength and the community school model (partnership with United Way provides support to the families)
- The strategic planning procedure was really good bringing the community together
- ESSER funding really helped
- Community Connectors, violence reduction strategies
- Continuous improvement is a strength along with early literacy
- Vision to move to the next level, building upgrades and up to date technology and learning opportunities
- Graduation rates and report card scores are improving

Strengths as Identified By Board Members:

- A city and county district, not split
- Some individual schools within the district are great
- Top notch staff, team players, dedicated
- Adaptability (reading curriculum example, made a positive change)
- Partnerships, businesses have really supported the academy models
- Partnership with Gateway Technical College and local businesses
- District is trying hard to find educational opportunities for students that do not cost them anything to plan their careers
- The district has many success stories although the report card may not show it
- Lots of community groups that would like to be involved in the district and there are many organizations willing to step up
- Community involvement, United Way and other non-profits.
- Buildings are getting better because of the referendum
- Board works well together and leaves politics out of the board room
- Guiding practices is a strength
- Communication with the community is getting much better, along with positive press from the Racine Journal Times
- Community Connectors
- The different high schools have their own specialties
- Shifted to smaller middle schools and the K-8 grade structure
- Stable Board
- Programming and staff

Strengths as Identified By Staff:

- Great early childhood program, self funded 3K program
- School based mental health model, nine school based clinics, model that state wants
- Choices and opportunities for students - academics, clubs, sports
- Incentives for staff, (example) compensation for Board Certified teachers
- Diversity, district looks like what society looks like
- Families partner with the district to understand and learn about the district to help their children learn
- CTE courses
- Strong partnerships with post secondary schools, four-year and two-year campuses and apprenticeships in the trades
- Music program good, although used to be better
- Impressed by Case High School
- Course offerings and opportunities for students
- Diversity of the students
- Staff is here for the kids
- Good instructional practices
- Many staff members with advanced degrees
- Tradition with families and students
- Good intentions to bring good practices into the district
- Local teachers, committed to the district
- Rigorous programming
- Families are typically happy with elementary schools

Strengths as Identified By Students:

- Ambassadors and promoting the schools, reaching out to other students
- Academy staff and counselors are good, very collaborative
- Ability to participate in clubs and activities
- Music program is getting better each year
- Like the Youth Apprentice programs
- Horlick has a great cheer team
- Soccer is good at Horlick
- Case is strong in football
- Park has a good basketball program
- Horlick theater program is good
- Walden school has great community service opportunities for students

Challenges as Identified By Parents/Community Members:

- After school programming can be improved upon
- If we add more fees the district needs to subsidize
- If we build for the median we leave people out
- Academics and structures need to be a priority
- Cell phone problem in the school (put the phones away and discipline and engagement improves)

- Co-curriculars need to be improved, need to increase participation level for activities
- People would like to volunteer in schools but undocumented people (no drivers license) get a black face on their ID badge, it's been difficult for volunteers to get into buildings since COVID
- People rely on school libraries
- Lack of speciality staff
- Many people do not have internet which puts them at a big disadvantage
- Lack of alternative education
- Question the strategic plan that talks about athletics but not art and music
- Need to improve the lunch program and breakfast program
- Block scheduling is not good for kids
- Truancy
- Potentially realign the district
- Schools handle noncriminal issues
- Providing workforce ready population
- Mental health issues
- Legislative issues affecting schools
- Things are implemented but they are not followed through on or seen through (North Star)
- Inconsistent discipline, not following the law, suspension notice, racial difference
- Universal decline of education in urban areas
- Attract and retain quality staff
- How do we prepare kids for college and career ready
- Challenges because of the governance policies, Board could do more to represent the people they serve
- While the district has identified "Ready for Work, College, Life" as goals... again progress is minimal based on data
- RUSD's own Strategic Plan identifies effective use of technology in the classroom and administratively, it is a challenge
- It does not seem that there is sharing of successful instructional techniques, if some schools are thriving why can't others benefit from collaboration
- The 2022 Strategic Plan calls for more athletics to help student engagement, what about the arts and music? Why are they neglected?
- Attendance and truancy are an issue, curriculum needs to be engaging to make the students want to show up, some kids are missed and slip through the cracks
- During COVID RUSD was closed for a full year and that was devastating to the students, they have not recovered from that
- Need to meet the needs of the diverse population and close the learning gap
- How to break the connection between income and education outcome
- Balance between immediate immersion needs and long term planning needs, have to find the right spot
- If people just knew, large sections of the district blame the district for literally everything and that is not fair, increasing transparency and being up front is important
- Providing workforce ready population

- Legislative issues affecting schools
- Morale and culture issue within the district, each school culture is different
- Struggle to make a connection with the community
- Black parents need to get involved with the school district
- Behavior and disrespect by students
- School funding is an issue especially in special education
- Need to come to the table and become involved and not just complain about things
- What's missing, we have not done enough branding/promoting
- Resistance to change and Racine is a complicated district
- Bussing issues, tough because the bus services are contracted

Challenges as Identified By Board Members:

- City and county district can also be a challenge
- Special education in the district is very costly
- The district is big and as a result it can be hard to figure out where you fit, especially if new to the district
- High needs students and families, many economically disadvantaged families throughout the school district, we need to do more for these families
- The Walking School Bus is not as strong as it used to be (staff and volunteers get students to school)
- Core group of naysayers are hurting the outcomes of school district
- Referendum passed by five votes, the lawsuits, legal fees and court procedure cost the district two years and were very expensive
- COVID really hurt the district enrollment
- Behavioral challenges and school safety issues, staff and student safety
- Need to find out why people leave, need to dive into this
- The former superintendent did not take responsibility and hold himself accountable and there was a lack of transparency, he was not engaged
- Talks of Mount Pleasant, Caledonia and Sturtevant breaking away from the district
- Will need to repair a lot of relations, municipalities, legislators (beyond the Mayor of Racine)
- A lack of trust, communication and transparency between the former superintendent and the Board
- Union leadership goes back to ACT 10, any handbook changes can be met with resistance and backlash, must navigate this well
- Feels like administration is overstaffed, must look at the district office staffing and organizational chart
- Low achievement levels for the underrepresented student population
- Limited access to the arts and music
- Just being an urban district is a challenge, student behavior/gangs in community/schools
- Racine is the most segregated community in the state of Wisconsin
- Economic opportunities are diminishing
- Some very tough schools, Mitchell and Jerstad

Challenges as Identified By Staff:

- Need to improve instructional practice, instructional leadership needs to be consistent, staff is dealing with too many behaviors
- Narrative, external and internal, don't measure everything on the report cards
- Budget deficit/concerns
- Sense of belonging, diversity and DEI still needs work
- When everything is important nothing seems important and it's hard to maintain doing everything really well
- Shortage of bilingual staff
- Union response to changes is a challenge
- Drive to not prioritize public education
- Keep politics out of education, don't put limits on what is taught or offered
- Everything gets left on the schools to fix
- Special education population needs funding to support
- Communication
- Transparency
- Collaboration
- Feels like time is wasted, pulled in many directions
- Lack of substitutes and will get worse when ESSER funds go away
- District may have lay-offs
- Violently "skitsofrantic" political climate
- Provide advocates along with more opportunities for MS/HS students to keep them out of trouble
- Poverty and low income families really struggle to get by
- Passed a very large referendum but what is happening with the construction and upgrades is not what was told to the taxpayers, the order of the phases shifted and different construction is now happening, there is a lot of building outside of the city of Racine
- Lots of departments and they don't communicate with each other
- Willingness to work with the union
- Active in the political spirit
- EA's would like more sick days/benefits
- Does not seem to be accountability as to what people do
- Not much as far as mentoring for administrators once they are hired
- Not consistent on which administrative roles get posted and which ones do not
- Have added a lot of staffing for the academies, need to measure to see if it is successful
- Could use more alternative measures/opportunities/programming for students
- RUSD is doing great things with early literacy but math needs work
- RUSD responds to discipline but systems are not in place, reactive, focus on the behaviors within the buildings
- Lots of meetings for staff
- Understaffed when it comes to support staff

Challenges as Identified By Students:

- Some academy subjects need to have more qualified teachers
- Involvement with the district could be improved, more parental involvement
- Response time needs to be better
- Newsletter or sharing of more information to the students would be much appreciated
- Classes are graded different ways
- Curriculum needs to be consistent also
- Too much staff involvement makes it hard to put students' voices forward, blocked by certain staff
- Reach out more to students when there are community meetings like this focus group, so they can participate
- Low expectations for students, many students do not turn in homework
- Lack of positive reinforcement for students
- COVID really messed things up
- Not much school spirit
- Lack of participation in co-curricular activities
- Schools are not equal or treated the same
- Seems like there are a lot of politics
- Would like to see the academies in the smaller schools as well
- Students leave because of other students and parents don't feel it is good enough
- Newcomers program needs more students
- Transportation to participate in activities and co-curriculars is an issue especially for younger kids that do not drive
- Feel that activities are lacking at REAL school