



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Chesterfield County, VA
Public Schools
June 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in May 2024 for the new superintendent of the Chesterfield County Public Schools. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either interviews or focus group settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The surveys, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the District and the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years. Due to the end of year activities including graduations, attendance at focus groups sessions was weaker than anticipated. However, the results of the online survey reflect a desire from stakeholders to participate in the process. Of the 1,935 respondents, over 43% were parents and guardians and over 38% were certificated staff members.

Participation

The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below:

Group	Personal interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
Board	5	
Administrators & supervisors		133
Building level administrators	7	
Central office administrators	27	
Certificated Staff		746
Faculty	1	
Community Leaders	4	
Community (7 sessions)	33	52
Support Staff	2	136
Parents	3	847
Students	0	21
Total	87	1,935

The community survey report and a draft of the desired characteristics are provided under separate covers and are meant to be stand-alone complementary pieces to the Leadership Profile Report.

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. Items are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the Board's attention.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

Among the most frequent strengths perceived and discussed by focus group participants and during interviews is the size, diversity, and reputation of the Chesterfield County Public Schools. This includes county-wide support of public education, the highly dedicated staff, and an involved parent community.

Chesterfield County Public Schools (CCPS) is a dynamic school system with a plethora of opportunities for all students. CCPS offers numerous and varied programs and courses to meet the different needs and interests of its students. The division values the breadth of students' interests and provides an abundance of programs in athletics, arts, music, and extracurricular activities. Additionally, CCPS is known for its strong and robust CTE programs. Post secondary pathways, especially with Brightpoint, were often noted during focus group conversations.

As noted in the survey, technology and the technology infrastructure is considered a strength and effectively integrated into the classroom. Schools are considered safe as reflected on the survey and in conversations with students at the in-person community focus group.

CCPS staff, including administrators, teachers and support staff are hardworking, dedicated, and passionate professionals. Students and parents indicated that relationships with teachers are instrumental in the success and positivity of the student experience. CCPS administrators indicated they feel supported in their work and reported the success of the "game changer" staff acknowledgement program throughout the district.

The CCPS community is extremely supportive of their schools and places a high value on inclusive public education. It is a multigenerational, diverse, and active community. Although not reflected in focus group attendance, there is a high level of community support at school and student events. Parents and community members, including

business and faith-based groups, contribute both time and resources to support students and schools. There is acknowledgment of the changing demographics and a desire to address the needs of the new demographics whether it be new or upgraded facilities, competitive salaries for staff recruitment and retention, or to ensure equitable resources for all students. Meeting the needs of all students while maintaining high academic standards is a supported priority.

The geographical locale of Chesterfield County is considered highly desirable due to its proximity to Richmond and the reputation of the school division. Changing demographics have increased the number and diversity of the community and student population and is regarded as a strength by most. There appears to be an acceptance of diversity across racial, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, family makeup, cognition, languages, and individual interests. While the growing level of diversity was expressed as a strength, it was also identified as one of the challenges for the community and the school division.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT

Concern was expressed during focus groups and individual interviews around the size, growth, and changing demographics of the county. Of note, across most focus group sessions, both the upgrading and need for new facilities was emphasized. Student and parent frustration due to the quality and number of schools was amplified during some sessions especially when it was perceived that newer schools were not designed with expansion and growth as a priority. Students and administrators also cited frustration with what they considered easily remedied facilities issues and commented on the lack of a systemized, efficient approach to addressing facilities issues. There is some concern of a possible change of division climate and culture if facilities issues are not addressed.

Similarly, it was indicated that schools and departments tend to operate in silos or as a collection of schools rather than as a unified system. Although individual schools were often perceived as family-oriented and promoting unity, this was noted as a missing attribute from a division-wide perspective.

Given the growth and changing demographics, needs of the increasing ELL and special education programs were acknowledged. The ability to meet those needs while also addressing academic performance and graduation rates was listed as a complex challenge for the successor superintendent. Balancing division resources in a diverse socio-economic county, while also recruiting and retaining staff that reflected the changing student population, was a considered a factor in this complex challenge. Forming positive, trustful relationships with county supervisors and state representatives

was viewed as something that needs to be prioritized to address ongoing financial and resource allocation issues.

Lingering and/or new social emotional issues as an outcome of the pandemic has been and continues to be challenging for all stakeholders. Consistencies with discipline and behavior policies were cited.

The division's ability to address the size and complexity of challenges will be the determining factor in the successor superintendent's ability to move the division forward. The most significant issue is the division's ability to address continuing facilities needs and the changing, diverse demographics. These challenges have had an impact on academic, social, and emotional health of students, parents/guardians, and staff. Stakeholders amplified these dynamic and complex challenges and the division's ability to keep up with the changes throughout the focus groups.

HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to meet the needs of the division. The search team will seek a new superintendent who can work with the Chesterfield County School Board to provide the leadership needed to continue to raise academic standards and student performance while meeting the unique needs of each of its schools and communities.

The search team thanks all the participants who attended focus groups meetings or completed the online survey and the Communications and Engagement staff members who assisted with our meetings, particularly Shawn Smith who organized the search team's time in the district.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

The structure of the focus groups was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions.

- What do stakeholders value regarding the schools? What strengths do they desire to retain and build upon?
- What are the issues this District currently faces and will face in the next three to five years?
- What personal and professional characteristics are expected in a new Superintendent?