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# Superintendent Leadership Profile Report

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## **HISTORY/BACKGROUND**

The Rocky River City School (RRCS) District is a suburban area located west of Cleveland, bordered by Lake Erie to the north and the Rocky River and Cleveland Metroparks to the east. This unique location provides a wide range of cultural experiences, professional sports events, world-class medical care, and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Guided by its Strategic Plan, RRCS's mission is to create a nurturing environment that offers exceptional opportunities for the success of globally competitive students. The district serves a population of 2,596 students and is nationally recognized for its excellence. With five schools, RRCS combines the benefits of a small school setting with the resources of a well-funded district. It offers a comprehensive range of educational and co-curricular programs, including over 90 activities, a robust arts program, and championship-level sports.

The safety of its students is RRCS's top priority. The district is committed to a proactive approach, employing best practices in physical security while fostering students' intellectual, social, and emotional development.

Historically, RRCS has excelled in academics. In the 2024 State Report Card, the district received an overall 5-star rating, the highest possible score. Beach Preschool has consistently been recognized as a 5-star Step-Up to Quality Program.

According to U.S. News and World Report, Kensington Intermediate School, Rocky River Middle School, and Rocky River High School have been designated as the best in their respective categories: elementary, middle, and high schools. Niche ranks RRCS as the 10th best school district out of 605 in Ohio.

RRCS is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of fiscal accountability, responsibility, and transparency. Its annual report highlights these efforts by providing clear and accessible information to the community.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document will examine the findings from the focus groups, including the Board interviews and the Community and Leadership Survey Report.

## PARTICIPATION

The numbers of participants by stakeholder group are listed below:

Group	Interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
Board	5	*
Administrators/Supervisors Central Office & Building-level Administrators	12	8
Certificated Staff/Teachers and Union Leadership	17	134
Parent/ Community Members	30	366
Support Staff - including non-represented	0	6
Students	25	5
Subtotal	89	519
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>608</b>	

\*Not all focus groups were disaggregated for the online survey.

## BOARD INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

Individual interviews were conducted with members of the Board of Education, while all other stakeholders participated in virtual or in-person focus groups. The focus groups' structure was open, allowing participants to build upon each other's comments.

Participants were asked the following questions: What do you consider to be the greatest current strengths of the District, and which strengths do you wish to see maintained or expanded? What do you perceive as the most significant immediate challenges for the District as well as the most significant challenges over the next three years? What are the 3 to 5 most desired characteristics that you believe the next superintendent will need to possess to succeed and elevate the district to the next level?

At the conclusion of each interview or focus group, the HYA consultant asked participants for any recommendations of specific candidates to notify about the process. Since permission to share names was not granted, this document will not disclose the individuals suggested as potential executive

leaders. The HYA consultants will make an effort to contact those recommended and inform them about the application process.

It is important to note that the data gathered do not constitute a scientific sampling and should not be considered representative of the majority opinion of the respective groups involved. The results of the interviews and group meetings are compiled in a separate document based on the interviewer's interpretation of the responses.

Focus group participants frequently highlighted academic excellence and District resources as the foremost strengths. They also emphasized the variety of courses available at the schools and the wide range of extracurricular activities, including sports, clubs, and numerous opportunities in the arts.

The quality of the teachers was consistently mentioned as a strength. Participants frequently expressed the importance of retaining teachers, noting how teachers often go above and beyond in their roles and possess strong knowledge in their subject areas. Many teachers in the focus group expressed gratitude to RRCS for providing opportunities for professional learning and supplying lesson materials.

While the strengths of RRCS will attract many candidates to apply for the superintendency, the next superintendent must possess strong skills to be successful in this district.

During the focus groups, participants discussed the need to build trust. A pervasive lack of trust was reported across all stakeholder groups. Comments about building trust encompassed ideas such as "building bridges" between these groups. Some participants mentioned how a recent scandal had damaged trust within the community.

Another significant challenge raised by the group was the need for effective communication, transparency, and trust. Many people expressed that the district operates in a very top-down manner. Several individuals indicated that the new superintendent needs to be a good listener. Two groups highlighted the importance of being open to new ideas and diverse perspectives. There were discussions regarding issues of communication and transparency, particularly concerning how student grades are calculated and how scheduling decisions are made.

Stakeholders pointed out that recent personnel issues underscored deeper challenges within the organizational climate. Some expressed a desire for a culture of accountability. Students emphasized the need for the core value of kindness and highlighted the importance of fostering an environment that embraces diverse ideals. Additionally, some stakeholders stated that there is a perception that students who are not high achievers or who come from less affluent backgrounds may feel excluded. Many voiced concerns about a noticeable lack of joy and fun within the educational environment. Overall,

stakeholders indicated a desire for a focus on the whole child.

While stakeholders recognized the excellent maintenance of RRCS facilities, there are concerns about space resulting from the growth of pre-K and full-day kindergarten programs. The programming and curriculum requirements at the middle school necessitate a different use of space than initially designed. Furthermore, there are worries regarding upcoming bond issues, as many stakeholders are concerned about aging facilities and whether they can adequately meet current programming needs.

## **COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP SURVEY REPORT**

The RRCS Community Online Survey and Leadership Report was completed by 519 stakeholders. Fifty-six percent of the respondents were parents or guardians of students. Nearly twenty-six percent were certified and licensed staff (excluding administrators or supervisors). Community members represented the third-largest group, comprising around fourteen percent of all respondents.

Regarding the State of the District, the following statements were perceived to be District strengths:

- Students are on track to be ready for the next grade and college and career-ready
- Technology is integrated into the classroom.
- Facilities are well maintained.
- District schools are safe.
- The District has high-performance standards for all students.

The top-rated leadership profile characteristics constituents desire in a new superintendent are:

- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Provide transparent communication.
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools.
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel.
- Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life.
- Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the district.

The summaries from the focus groups, individual interviews, and the survey are reported to the Board. They will assist in deliberations regarding the desired characteristics of the future superintendent.