LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

NOVEMBER 2024

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Purpose

This report outlines the results of the Leadership Profile Assessment developed by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in October and November 2024 for the new superintendent of Rochester City School District. The information presented here was gathered from insights HYA consultants collected through individual interviews, focus group discussions, and an online survey completed by various stakeholders. These interviews, focus groups, and surveys were designed to provide the Board with feedback on the key attributes desired in the next superintendent. Additionally, the sessions gathered feedback on the strengths of Rochester City School District and identified some challenges anticipated in the years ahead.

Characteristics were highlighted in the profile when similar themes emerged across multiple groups.

HYA and the Board are committed to addressing the challenge of identifying a candidate who embodies the essential skills and qualities to fulfill the district's needs. The search team will concentrate on recruiting candidates who exhibit the leadership qualities outlined in the profile.

The search team extends its gratitude to everyone who participated in the focus groups, completed the survey, and to the Rochester City School District's staff members who supported our meetings.

Profile Development

HYA Associates collected data from multiple sources to develop the Leadership Profile and arrive at a set of desired characteristics for recruitment and selection of the next Superintendent of Rochester City School District.
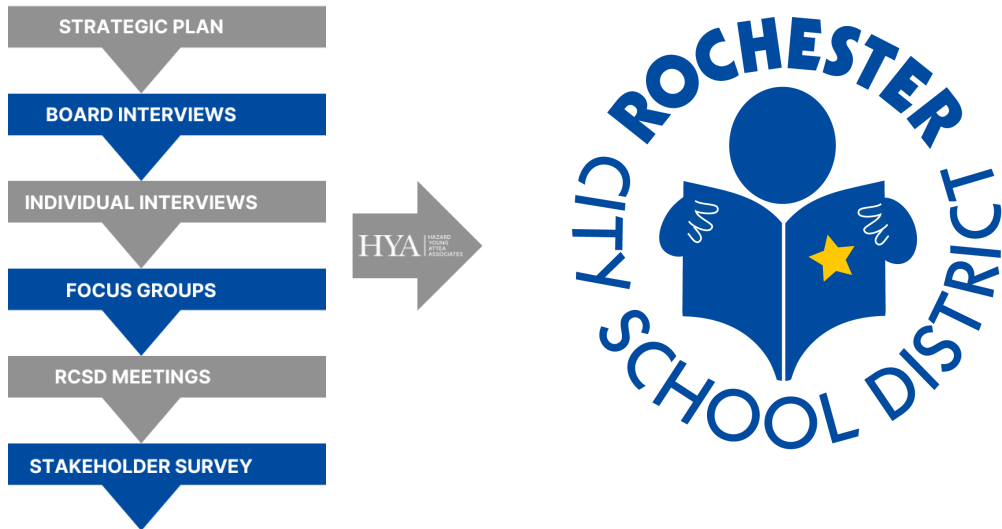
Desired Characteristics

From the results of the survey, focus groups, and interviews, desired characteristics for the next Rochester City School District Superintendent emerge. Even when conflicting, contrasting, inconsistent, and contradictory desires are reported (which is normal when surveying disparate groups), common themes emerge that are important to most constituents. The work of HYA Associates is to find where consensus exists. This is a tremendous opportunity for the entirety of Rochester City School District to select a leader that will prioritize relationships, commit to sustained long-term improvements and commit to be with the District for years and years to come.

The "Priorities for the Future" section of the survey illustrates the common desires of respondent groups. In Rochester City School District's survey results, there was one statement that garnered top support from 5 out of 6 constituent groups:

- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel

There were two statements that garnered top support from 4 out of 6 constituent groups:

- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect (47% among faculty, staff, and administrators)
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the district and its school

When juxtaposing the voices from the focus groups and the data from the survey, the following desired characteristics emerged:
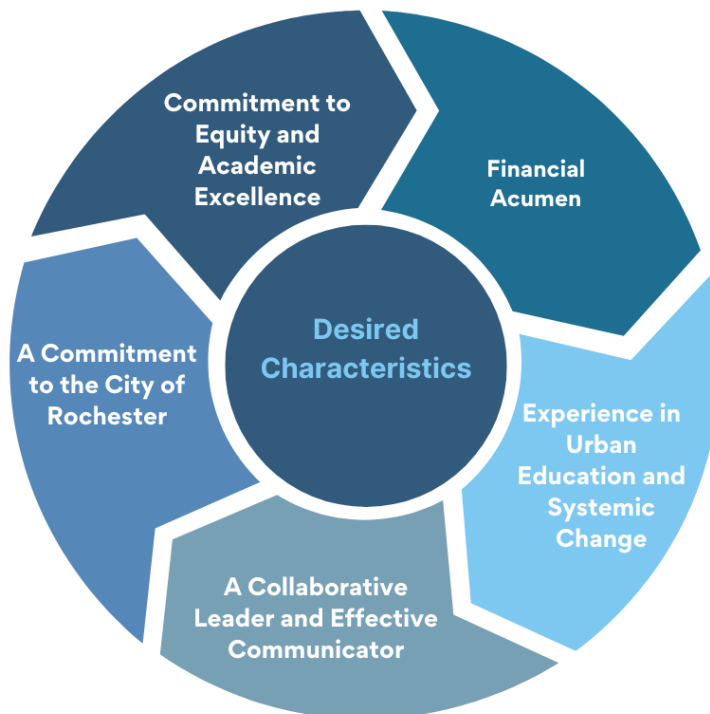
Commitment to Equity and Academic Excellence

Rochester City School District is one of the largest, most diverse school districts in the state of New York. All constituent groups expressed a need to improve the academic performance of students within the school district as a top priority. To address RCSD's academic challenges, the next superintendent must set high standards for academic achievement, particularly in literacy, math, and graduation rates. In addition, it was communicated through focus groups that instruction in Rochester City School District must be stronger and provide for more personalized learning. The disparities in achievement between different student groups is significant, and the next superintendent must understand how to support culturally responsive teaching in an environment with a diverse group of students from low-income backgrounds. In addition, it will be important for the next superintendent to implement a data-driven approach to monitor progress and allocate resources equitably across schools to ensure all students have access to high-quality education. There is a need to collaborate with teachers and schools to effectively build the teaching capacity of teachers to support the culturally diverse student groups that they serve. The historic underperformance of students, according to some constituency groups, is partially related to the constant churn of leaders which has resulted in a constant flux within programming. The next superintendent must be able to execute the current strategic plan with fidelity, and it is desired for the next superintendent to reduce the number of initiatives within the district and provide steady, stable, implementation of a few research-based practices. Teachers want a leader who will not come in with new initiatives, but instead, assess what is currently working, abandoning those initiatives and programs that are ineffective and building upon what is currently promising in Rochester City School District.

Financial Acumen

Rochester City School District has historically faced financial and operational challenges. In recent years, the finances have stabilized, but the district continues to face significant financial management challenges with community members and board members highlighting the need for strong financial stewardship and budget transparency. It was communicated that the community demands transparency in Rochester City Schools, and board members and the new superintendent must continue to refine practices and communicate about the budget in an open, transparent way, so that the community recognizes the district as good stewards of financial resources. In addition, there is a need for strategic resource allocation to optimize student support services and school facilities. Many of the buildings in Rochester City School District are old, and it will be extremely important for the next superintendent to have strong operational acumen to support the district as it prioritizes limited resources and works to advocate at the local and state level to prioritize modernizing building and ensuring students and staff are in safe, clean learning environments. In addition, in the upcoming year, there will be

significant technology implementations and operational efficiencies, particularly in systems like Oracle and PowerSchool which will require strong managerial oversight by the next superintendent. Finally, there is a desire from local elected leaders to ensure that there is a long-term financial strategy that involves collaboration with municipal and community partners to stabilize district finances. The next superintendent must continue to effectively collaborate with elected officials to anticipate and quickly resolve issues related to limited resources within the school district.

Experience in Urban Education and Systemic Change

The RCSD community prefers a leader with significant experience in urban school settings who can understand and navigate the complexities of a large, diverse district. Although a few constituents shared that a leader with proven academic achievement in a smaller, suburban district could be considered, the preponderance of feedback called for an urban leader with a proven-track record of improving academic achievement. The ideal candidate will be innovative and resilient, with a demonstrated history of school turnaround success. In addition, he or she will show sensitivity to urban challenges such as high poverty rates and engage with community organizations to provide holistic support for students. It was expressed that the next leader must see the assets of the Rochester City School District community and should lead by building upon community strengths instead of working from a deficit mindset. The need to begin rightsizing the district is apparent, and the new superintendent must be prepared to address structural issues like school closures, ensuring thoughtful reconfigurations that reflect community needs, and working to recruit a high-quality, diverse workforce.

A Collaborative Leader and Effective Communicator

The next superintendent must excel in open, clear communication, building bridges across constituent groups and instilling confidence within the RCSD community. An autocratic leader who does not bring key constituents into the decision-making process will struggle in Rochester City School District. Union leadership, board members, and community activists exert strong forces upon the school system, and the superintendent must be willing to listen deeply, build consensus, and effectively and transparently communicate in a way that garners trust and respect amongst constituents. Stakeholders seek transparency in decision-making, involving stakeholders in meaningful ways and explaining the rationale behind policy choices. Superintendents have historically struggled to meaningfully engage with school board members, so there is a need for a strong, yet collaborative leader who can manage board relationships professionally and foster a culture of mutual respect and shared responsibility, addressing issues directly and constructively. There is a desire to have a leader who has the confidence and emotional intelligence to push back when needed, but who can do so in a way that is respectful and allows for consensus to be possible.

The next superintendent must also possess strong advocacy and negotiation skills, particularly in dealing with unions and coordinating resources to support teachers, staff, and students. It is desired to have a leader who can simultaneously prioritize students while considering how best to support staff as the district executes its action plans.

A Commitment to the City of Rochester

Rochester City School District has suffered from a continuous churn in the superintendent position. All constituents expressed a strong desire for a leader who is willing to commit for five to six years at a minimum. Personality conflicts and power struggles between key stakeholders has continued to result in the churn of the superintendent. Stakeholders want a leader who will become an active member of the Rochester community and will have the grit and fortitude to push through potential difficult times. The next superintendent should be willing to establish strong communication protocols, commit to student outcomes based governance, and be willing to see improvement efforts that are developed through the next strategic plan to their completion. The next superintendent does not need to be from NY, but they must commit to becoming an active and engaged member of the Rochester community who is willing to learn and appreciate all aspects of living within the Rochester community.

Strategic Priorities

Based on participant input, the next superintendent's leadership focus should include:

- **Academic Improvement**: Raise student performance in core areas, particularly reading and math, and create differentiated learning environments to meet diverse student needs.
- **Cultural Responsiveness**: Foster culturally responsive teaching and a welcoming environment for the district's multilingual, multicultural population.
- **Operational Stability**: Address structural challenges, including outdated technology, enrollment decline, and inefficient systems, to enhance school functionality and efficiency.
- **Community Partnership**: Engage in sustained partnerships with local government, health organizations, and community services to support the holistic needs of students and families.

Focus Group Protocols

The structure of the focus groups was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. Session participants were told that their voice would remain confidential to allow for authentic and honest commentary. 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?

Survey Methodology

The survey results contained in this document are based on HYA's research. The survey addresses district quality and leadership standards in four performance areas:

Vision and Values (VV) - Leadership's ability to provide a clear and compelling vision for the future, align district programs to the broader vision of the district, and uphold high expectations for all stakeholders.

Teaching and Learning (TL) - Leadership's ability to guide educational programs, make data-driven decisions, and implement effective instructional change.

Community Engagement (CE) - Leadership's ability to be the voice of the district, engage with the community, and involve stakeholders in realizing the district's vision.

Management (M) - Leadership's ability to guide operations, manage resources, recruit and retain highly effective personnel, and create an equitable accountability system for all employees.

The District has considerable work to do at informing the Community of the achievements of the District as this disaggregated group rated the District least favorably in all performance areas with only 20% or less agreeing or strongly agreeing to the quality statements presented to them in the survey. Teachers, parents, and students are clustered together in their ratings of each of the four pillar areas in between administrators and community members, that is they rate the District more favorably than community members, but less favorably than administrators (see diagram on page 4 of the survey).

The survey results also suggest a balanced approach and skills necessary for the next leader in the areas of Vision and Values, Teaching and Learning, Community Engagement and Management as the top rated leadership profile characteristics were equally distributed between the four leadership pillars (see page 3 of the survey).

The survey detail follows which provides detailed information on these findings. Through the understanding of stakeholder's views regarding the state of the district and the desired profile of the next superintendent, the survey report will help the district prioritize the desired characteristics of the superintendent in a way that will advance the priorities of the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rochester City School District - Superintendent Search Survey was completed by 1020 stakeholders. The largest stakeholder group surveyed were teachers. Teachers represented 31.1 percent of all respondents. Nearly a quarter of respondents were parents of students attending school. They made up the second most populous stakeholder group at 22.5 percent of all respondents. The third largest participant group were employees at 21.4 percent of all respondents.

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

- Technology is integrated into the classroom. (TL)

- The District engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups. (CE)

- District technology infrastructure is sufficient to support use of technology in the classroom. (M)

- Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs. (TL)

- The District is working to close achievement and opportunity gaps. (VV)

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 (CE)

- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools (M)

- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel (VV)

- Provide transparent communication (CE)

- Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population (TL)

ANALYSIS

State of the District Summary

Respondents rated statements related to the state of the district on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported in the appendix.

State of the District Results by Constituent Group
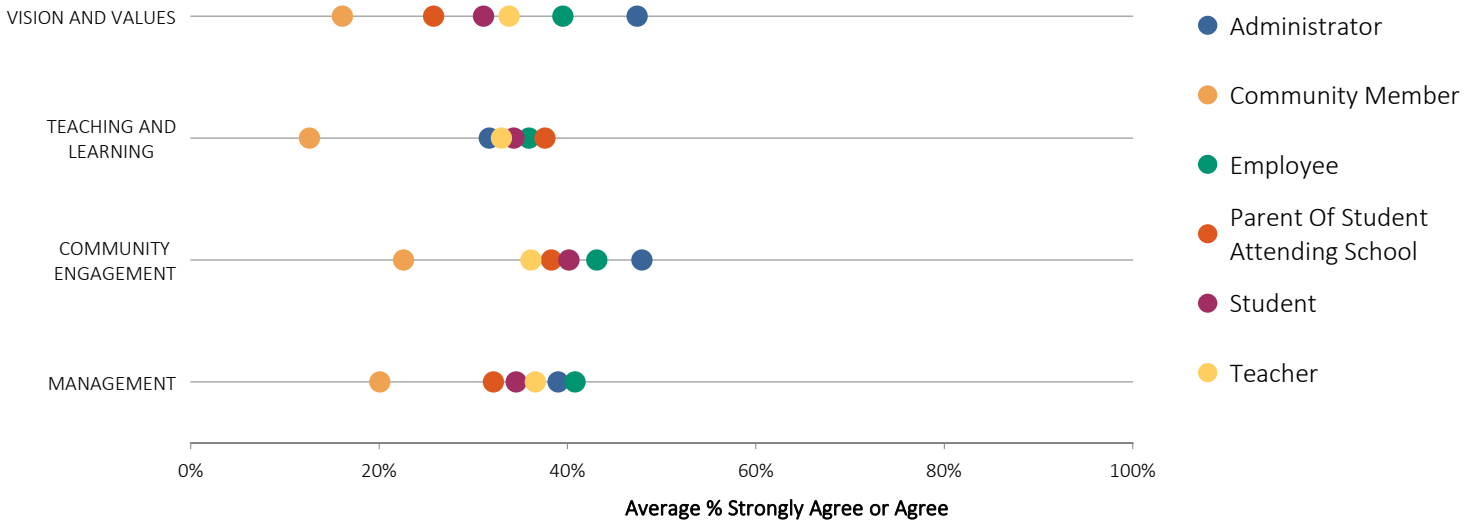
Leadership Profile Summary

Respondents were asked to select leadership statements that are most important in selecting a new superintendent. Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported on the next page.
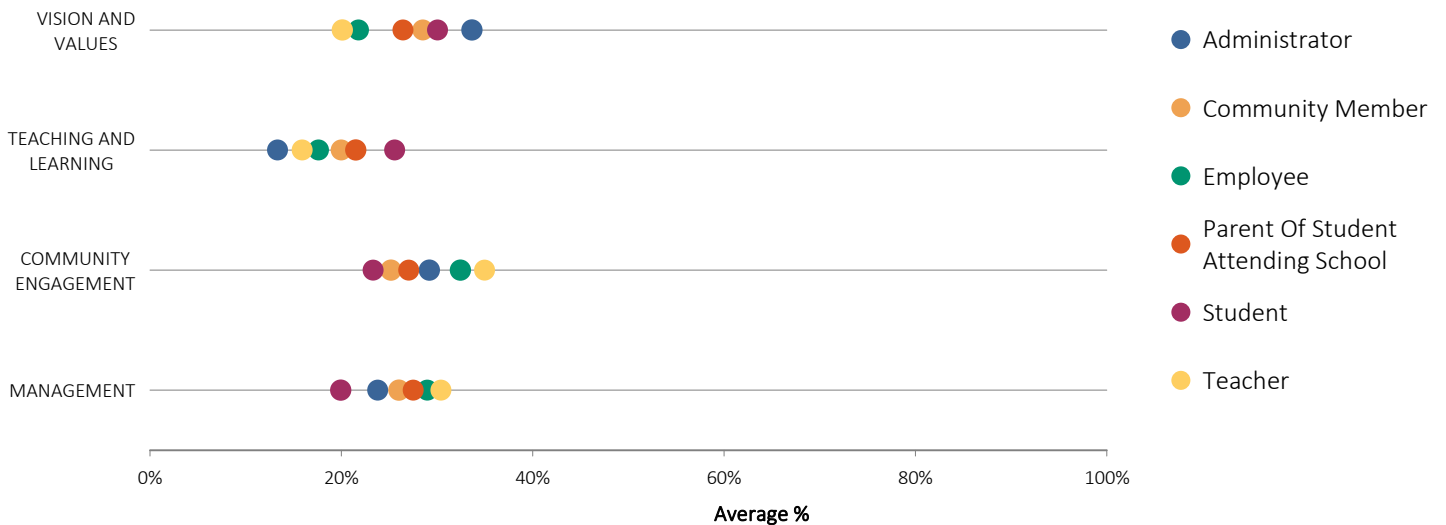
Leadership Profile Results by Constituent Group

LEADERSHIP PROFILE DETAILS

Respondents were asked to select 4 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results by constituent group are presented below. Each constituent group's top 4 most frequently selected statements are depicted by blue cells (reading the chart vertically); consensus is illustrated as multiple constituent groups selected the same statements (reading the chart horizontally).

■ Top 4

	All (1020)	Administrator (81)	Community Member (72)	Employee (218)	Parent Of Student Attending School (230)	Student (102)	Teacher (317)
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	47%	■	■	■	□	□	■
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools	42%	■	□	■	■	□	■
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	38%	■	■	■	■	■	□
Provide transparent communication	35%	□	□	■	□	■	■
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	34%	□	■	□	■	■	□
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District	33%	□	□	□	■	□	■
Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life	29%	□	□	□	□	□	□
Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies	28%	■	□	□	□	□	□
Be an effective manager of the District's day-to-day operations	24%	□	□	□	□	□	□
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	23%	□	■	□	□	■	□
Provide guidance for district-wide curriculum and instruction	19%	□	□	□	□	□	□
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	13%	□	□	□	□	□	□

APPENDIX I: STATE OF THE DISTRICT ITEM ANALYSIS

Percentages of parents, students, administrators, teachers, community members, and other constituents selecting 5 (Strongly Agree) or 4 (Agree) for each item are presented below.

	All (1020)	Administrator (81)	Community Member (72)	Employee (218)	Parent Of Student Attending School (230)	Student (102)	Teacher (317)
OVERALL							
Please rate the overall quality of education in the District.	17%	15%	8%	19%	19%	28%	14%
VISION AND VALUES							
The District provides a clear, compelling shared vision for the future.	38%	58%	15%	44%	22%	30%	47%
The District is heading in the right direction.	27%	48%	14%	37%	20%	25%	24%
The District has high performance standards for all students.	30%	38%	17%	37%	21%	32%	31%
The District makes decisions based on information from data and research.	27%	36%	15%	32%	24%	25%	28%
The District is working to close achievement and opportunity gaps.	39%	56%	18%	40%	40%	39%	37%
TEACHING AND LEARNING							
The District provides a well-rounded educational experience for all students.	22%	20%	11%	27%	27%	30%	17%
Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs.	42%	23%	14%	38%	43%	36%	57%
District schools are safe.	20%	22%	6%	24%	27%	23%	14%
The social and emotional needs of students are being addressed.	26%	38%	14%	31%	29%	20%	23%
Students are on track to be ready for the next grade and ultimately college and career ready.	13%	6%	4%	13%	23%	25%	6%
Technology is integrated into the classroom.	68%	79%	25%	71%	63%	69%	77%
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT							
The District engages the community as a partner to improve the school system.	37%	51%	21%	44%	38%	33%	34%
There is transparent communication from the District.	18%	27%	10%	21%	19%	17%	14%
The District engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups.	57%	64%	35%	56%	56%	65%	58%
MANAGEMENT							
Facilities are well maintained.	35%	51%	29%	40%	41%	25%	27%
The District is fiscally responsible.	16%	23%	12%	18%	17%	24%	11%
The District employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools.	38%	28%	19%	37%	42%	37%	42%
Employees are held accountable to high standards.	33%	14%	11%	36%	26%	31%	46%
District technology infrastructure is sufficient to support use of technology in the classroom.	49%	78%	25%	54%	36%	47%	54%

APPENDIX II: LEADERSHIP PROFILE ITEM ANALYSIS

Respondents were asked to select 4 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results are presented below by constituent group.

	All (1020)	Administrator (81)	Community Member (72)	Employee (218)	Parent Of Student Attending School (230)	Student (102)	Teacher (317)
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	47%	60%	40%	51%	34%	27%	58%
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools	42%	41%	36%	50%	39%	25%	46%
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	38%	72%	47%	36%	36%	32%	33%
Provide transparent communication	35%	35%	22%	40%	32%	32%	38%
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	34%	19%	42%	35%	39%	42%	30%
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District	33%	31%	26%	30%	37%	27%	35%
Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life	29%	19%	32%	26%	30%	28%	31%
Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies	28%	36%	24%	22%	33%	30%	27%
Be an effective manager of the District's day-to-day operations	24%	21%	36%	22%	25%	17%	24%
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	23%	23%	36%	22%	29%	39%	12%
Provide guidance for district-wide curriculum and instruction	19%	23%	21%	17%	18%	25%	17%
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	13%	10%	13%	12%	16%	22%	11%