



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Falls Church City Public
Schools
February 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in December 2024 and January 2025 for the new superintendent of the Falls Church City Public Schools. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual 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 some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years. The results from the online survey data are consistent with the input of the focus groups.

Participation

The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below: *Not all focus groups were a group that was disaggregated for the on-line survey.*

Group	Personal interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
Board	7	
Building level administrators	12	18
Central office administrators	18	
Certified Staff	15	66
Community	25	30
Gov't/Community Leaders	30	
Non-certified Staff	14	11
Parents	13	225
Students	19	476
Total	153	826

The community survey report and a draft of the desired characteristics are provided under separate cover 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

Participants in the stakeholder engagement interviews most frequently emphasized the stellar implementation of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, the advantages of a small private school feel, while also offering outstanding academics and a boundless abundance of extracurricular activities for student engagement. The IB program, spanning from PreK-12, makes Falls Church City Public Schools (FCCPS) only one of eight school districts in the country offering this outstanding academic curriculum program within the PreK-12 band. While the IB program serves as a point of pride for FCCPS, the district's commitment to providing all children with a high quality education, also noted is the excellent level of service provided to the population of exceptional children and the broad array of resources available to support all learners.

Parents and community members are highly engaged and supportive of the school district. Stakeholders work in concert to ensure that Falls Church City Public Schools maintains its prestigious recognition as a stellar educational system with strong, unwavering community support. The community has significant support from local partnerships that include a strong relationship with both the Falls Church Education Foundation and the City Council. The relational connectedness allows people to feel informed to the extent that they continue to be supportive of the schools long after their children have graduated from Falls Church City Public Schools.

Stakeholders benefit from the intimate and personalized feel of the Falls Church community, which carries over into each of the schools all located within 2.2 miles. The level of personalized instruction allows students to build long-lasting, meaningful relationships with their peers, as well as with their teachers and

administrators alike. The size of the school district allows the high quality educators to feel empowered and flexible while maintaining a level of autonomy in their teaching. Educators are true pedagogist, developing, writing, and implementing forward-thinking and engaging curriculum. The Falls Church City Public Schools community is inclusive and a community where everyone knows one another. The outstanding reputation of the school district serves as a driver for residents to move into Falls Church.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT

Participants in the stakeholder engagement interviews noted challenges and issues of concern surrounding the rate at which the population is growing and its impact upon student enrollment, retaining high quality teachers, and addressing racial/religious matters among students. With the injection of new developments within the community, there is a growing concern of how the school district will keep up with the infusion of new students. An outstanding new high school facility has been constructed, however, the Oak Street Elementary School is in dire need of renovation, further impacting the district's ability to address the potential influx of students within the elementary grades. At present FCCPS enjoys the small class sizes in place, although the new developments will serve as a driver for the school district to make decisions regarding how they plan and address the influx of enrollment that is on the horizon.

While the school district is able to recruit highly qualified teachers, some of the reasons noted for the retention issue include the amount of pay, the inability to secure housing in the school district, and staff feeling overwhelmed due to the small size of the district. There is also an expressed need to hire/retain educators of color to be reflective of the inclusive and diverse student body. The small size of the district is a double-edged sword, as there are great benefits, however, many teachers must wear multiple hats to maintain the high level of academic excellence. Further, Oak Street Elementary School's condition impacts the morale of the school community given the challenging physical condition of the school.

While Falls Church City Public Schools support diversity and is a very inclusive community, racial microaggressions are prevalent among the student population. As the student population grows and becomes increasingly more diverse, this issue has the potential to be exacerbated even further. The disparity with the changing demographics will need to be addressed, as this will further amplify the lack of trust. The clash of culture among those with different perspectives or ideologies filter over into the school community, where inequitable distribution of disciplinary infractions regarding racial/religious issues may exist.

HYA and the School 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 district. The search team will seek a new superintendent who can work with the Falls Church City 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 FCCPS staff members who assisted with our meetings, particularly Kristen Michael, who organized the search team's time in the district.