



# Superintendent Leadership Profile Report

## March 10, 2025

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**HYA** | HAZARD  
YOUNG  
ATTEA  
ASSOCIATES

## **HISTORY/BACKGROUND**

Liverpool Central School District (LCSD) has a long history of providing an excellent educational environment for its nearly 6,700 students, of whom 84 percent pursue higher education. The District offers a wide range of programs and services, including honors and Advanced Placement courses, cutting-edge technology, highly respected special education and arts programs, and numerous extracurricular activities.

Located northwest of Syracuse and bordering Onondaga Lake, the Liverpool Central School District Community offers a sparse suburban feel with close proximity to outdoor recreation, parks, museums, shopping and entertainment in an historical setting.

LCSD has hired Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates to assist the School Board in a superintendent search. The District seeks an exceptional educational leader with a proven record of success in student achievement, strategic planning, educational finance, and instructional leadership. The new superintendent would begin July 1, 2025.

The successful candidate will join a team of dedicated educators committed to maintaining high standards and a strong curriculum across the district's eight elementary schools, four middle schools, and Liverpool High School. These schools offer outstanding academic, elective, special education, performing and visual arts, and athletic programs.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in February 2025 for the new superintendent of LCSD. During stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and community forums, HYA collected information regarding the district's strengths and challenges in the coming years and the key attributes of the next superintendent who will address these LCSD's needs.

## STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATION

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

<b>Group</b>	<b>Interviews or Focus Groups</b>	<b>Online Survey</b>
Board	8	
Building Level Administrators	7	13
Central Office/District Level Administrators	12	
Faculty (Licensed Personnel)	5	168
Community Meeting Forum & Survey	22	68
Union Leadership	8	
Support Staff	5	74
Parents (PTO/PTA)	5	265
Students		70
Subtotal	72	658
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	730	

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

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.

The prompts for focus groups and the questions on the survey are research-based, however, it should be emphasized that these 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. Additional

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

### **FOCUS GROUP MEETING PROTOCOL AND SUMMARY**

The structure of the focus groups was open, allowing 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 of a new superintendent?

A breakdown of the comments, by stakeholder group, may be found in Appendix 1.

### **STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT**

The diversity and reputation of LCSD are among the most frequently perceived and discussed strengths by focus group participants, during interviews, and in the survey. Other strengths include an active, invested student body, parental support, an engaged community, and a highly dedicated staff.

LCSD community strongly supports its schools and highly values education. It is a multigenerational, active, and vocal community with a high level of participation and above-average economic resources. The tight-knit and cozy community emphasizes belonging, including the neighborhoods' interconnectedness and diverse resident interactions. Parents and community members contribute time and resources to support students and schools.

LCSD has an excellent reputation as a high-performing and dynamic school system with high expectations, undergirded by a strong commitment to educational growth and equity. The District values community engagement and academic excellence, and maintains a safe and enriching student environment.

LCSD values the breadth of students' interests and provides a wide range of programs and courses to meet students' different needs and interests. Its educators are highly qualified, hard-working, and passionate, so LCSD remains a sought-after place to work and live.

## **CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT**

The complex issues the District faces include academic performance, trust issues, equity, personnel, governance, communication related issues/concerns, building upgrades/restructuring, and financial resources. The concerns about declining academic performance were voiced as challenges and potential threats to the community's reputation. Concern was expressed that academics have suffered since the pandemic, particularly in elementary grades, and the District has not entirely recovered.

While the growing level of diversity was expressed as a strength, it was also identified as one of the challenges for the community and school district. Equity and access were noted as significant challenges related to curriculum. The District is committed to equity; however, the ability to maintain and improve current levels could be impacted by available funding for anticipated growth in student population. Additionally, with its reputation and growing population, providing equitable access to special education programs in each neighborhood school is challenging and a source of concern for some parents.

The high turnover, especially in the administrative positions, has created a lack of stability and vision for LCSD. Frequent turnover has led to inconsistent decision-making and direction. With a revolving door of administrators, developing and implementing long-term strategic plans for the district's improvement and growth has become challenging.

Lack of transparency and poor communication have led to erosion of trust, created a divided community, and impacted the overall confidence in the school system. There is a clear disconnect between the District's stakeholder groups and the community, leading to division. During focus groups and individual interviews, individuals expressed concerns around the need to unify the District around common goals, build trust among all stakeholders, improve community engagement, and incorporate transparency. Accurate, clear, and consistent communication, along with a long-term vision, are desired to help address and resolve the issues with the District.

Stakeholders questioned financial management, budget practices, and budget resource allocations. They are concerned about long-range planning to ensure that resources are available to meet the long-term needs of programs, the community's expectations, and the demand for anticipated district growth.

Addressing these challenges will require a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach.

## **COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP SURVEY REPORT SUMMARY**

The LCSD Community Online Survey and Leadership Report was completed by 658 stakeholders. Nearly 41 percent of the respondents were parents or guardians of students. Nearly 26 percent were certified and licensed staff (excluding administrators or supervisors)—community members comprising over 10 percent of all respondents. Students made up nearly 11 percent of the respondents.

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

- Technology is integrated into the classroom.
- Facilities are well maintained.
- District schools are safe.
- The District employs effective teachers, administrators, and support staff in its schools.
- The District engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups.

The top-rated leadership profile characteristics that 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.
- Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life.
- Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District.
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools.

HYA thanks LCSD for the opportunity to work with LCSD and its stakeholders. We look forward to working with the board as they interview and hire the next superintendent.

# **APPENDIX 1: COMMENTS FROM FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS**

## FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS COMMENTS

### Group: Board of Education (8)

#### Strengths:

- Strong technology
- CTE program
- Athletics and extra-curricular
- Dedicated teaching staff
- Tight-knit community
- Great staff and teachers
- Diversity of community
- Near term excitement generated by Micron arrival
- Seasoned teachers
- Community support
- Diversity of students, socio-economic
- Liverpool sports, art, and music programs
- Administrative staff work through the system

#### Challenges:

- Current school grade structure
- Busing issues
- Growth issues with Micron
- Review TOSA structure
- Work with a young Board of Education
- Evaluate District staff
- Budgetary issues
- Special Education growth
- Restoring trust
- Improving reading and writing
- Reduce class sizes
- Review/revised 20/20 plan
- Improve communications District-wide
- Improve the diversity of the teaching staff
- Respect and equality for students of color
- Reduce class sizes



- Federal government changes
- The willingness to turn the page
- Dysfunction of a divided board, developing a new pathway forward
- Addressing increasing mental health needs of students
- Address emerging growth with perhaps fewer resources

Desired Characteristics:

- Understand and practice transparency
- Able to set goals
- Good at doing business assessments
- Understand CTE
- Willing to challenge the status quo
- Experienced superintendent
- Record of unification
- Ability to creatively resolve budgetary issues - A budget wizard
- Great communication skills and people skills
- Able to unify the district around a common vision
- Winning personality
- Financial acumen
- Experienced in diverse communities
- Experience in the functional area of the district
- Ability to listen, 2-way communication
- Forward thinker
- Strong moral compass
- Proven track record of success
- Balance between collaboration and full steam ahead

**Group: Teachers (5)**

Strengths:

- Strong sense of community pride
- Diverse community, socio-economically, culturally, and linguistically
- Community comes together during tough times
- Beautiful parks, recreational opportunities
- Dedicated staff and a system are a plus
- Right staff in the right place
- Opportunities for growth

### Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- To achieve a position of envy in the region
- Improve morale
- Improve district trust, maintain the chains of trust
- Decrease turnover due to working conditions
- Superintendent support of staff
- Eliminate the fear of retribution
- Eliminate dishonest actions
- Address issues of equity
- Increase resources for Elementary Schools
- Fulfill the promises of 20/20
- Restore community links with the district
- Improve the District communications
- The board has a divided staff
- Manage turnover
- Address mental health issues

### Desired Characteristics:

- An individual of integrity and honesty
- A leader who engenders trust
- Great communicator who is visible in the District and Community
- Culturally competent, cares about the District and Community
- Experienced Superintendent, with teaching and building experience
- Aware of national trends in education
- Critical thinker
- Understands DEI
- Able to relate to the growing immigrant communities
- Able to take advantage of teachable moments
- Support the work of the staff
- Work well with the Board

### **Group Name: Support Staff (7)**

### Strengths:

- Loyalty to the school district
- Tight-knit family-oriented community

- Teachers
- Overall focus on students
- Community resources, summer camp
- School programs
- Area churches are a big part of family life
- Booster support
- Great academic programs

#### Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Dealing with social media
- Address emerging ESL problems
- Adjusting to a tight-knit community
- Healing of staff/staff divide
- Bridge the multi-islands
- Improve the skill set of managers
- Review hiring from within the community
- Improve staff morale
- Board members need to understand their roles
- Working with the Board
- Training the Board on their role/responsibilities
- Address staffing turnover
- Make Liverpool culturally competent
- Healing the trust divide
- Stem a mass exodus of staff
- Resentment of staff
- Ensure adherence to policies and procedures
- Ensure fairness and accountability

#### Desired Characteristics:

- Have ties to the community
- A proven track record of being a unifier of District stakeholders
- Financial acumen
- Cross functional experience
- A sitting superintendent, with urban experience, is helpful
- Able to make a decision and have the courage to stand by the decision
- Good communicator with backbone
- Able to stand up to bargaining units
- Demand respect, but be respectful

## **Group Name: Principals (10)**

### Strengths:

- Seasoned management and administrative team
- Forefront in implementing new initiatives, Innovative
- Diversity, programs, and culture
- Facilities, cutting-edge technology
- Loyalty at the building level
- Strategic Plan
- Family feeling in the District
- Great people! Great work!
- Availability of alternative programs

### Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Repair the relationship between the Superintendent and the Board
- Appreciation of Administrative value add
- Reduce staff turnover
- Future of current programs
- Growing ESL programs
- Complete recovery from COVID implants
- Developing trust among all stakeholders
- Silo decision making
- AP's for Elementary Buildings
- Study population for possible redistricting

### Desired Characteristics:

- Understand economic needs as well as State mandates
- Financial acumen
- Value people and relationships
- Understand the systems processes
- Collegial approach
- Visible in the community, engaging
- Keep the focus, goals, and vision of the District
- Exhibits charisma, able to talk and work with everyone
- Report accurately

- Unifier
- Insist on accountability
- Transparenc

### **Group Name: District Administrators (10)**

#### Strengths:

- Great potential
- Great programs
- Building safety
- School pride
- Special Ed programs
- A close-knit community
- Business partners
- Home-grown staff
- Socio-economic diversity
- Micron generated growth

#### Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Political problems
- Increasing and changing demographics
- Improving the communication system
- Repair a divided board
- Encourage Board workshops on roles and responsibilities
- Change a culture of fear, mistrust, and retribution
- Managing the Micron impacts, the good and the bad
- Negative messages sent by no salary increase for some of the cabinet
- BOE support
- Involve all stakeholders in decision making
- Overcoming fear in the District
- Overcoming the effects of re-org during Covid
- Repairing the effects of a split staff

#### Desired Characteristics:

- Able to address political issues with savvy/resolve
- Understand support for all

- Strong leadership
- Keep the focus on the student
- A unifier
- Able to build an effective team
- Visible and positive
- Vision of continuing greatness
- Experience in construction projects
- Financial acumen
- Able to message conversations
- Great communicator of vision and plans

### **Group Name: Community Members (13)**

#### Strengths

- Staff Commitment and Pride
- High level of work ethic across all staff levels (teachers, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria workers)
- Staff are proud to work for Liverpool and are passionate about their roles
- Many staff members are alumni who have chosen to return and give back to their community
- Educational Excellence
- Advanced literacy programs, implementing the science of reading for 8-10 years
- Strong professional learning communities (PLCs)
- Student-first approach with a focus on student success
- Comprehensive literacy strategy extending from pre-K to 12th grade
- Strong sense of community engagement
- Multi-generational involvement (alumni staff with children in the district.)
- Commitment to supporting and investing in staff professional development
- Diverse and inclusive educational environment, particularly with English Language Learner (ELL) programs
- Proximity to Micron, which may bring new opportunities for technical education
- Existing drone program and career technical education initiatives
- Willingness to adapt and improve educational strategies
- Fine Arts Center
- Great staff, student first
- Small district feel
- Business partners

- Teachers care
- CTE programs
- Solid reputation
- Diversity
- Location
- Growing Immigrant community
- Staff Commitment and Pride

### Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Creating district-wide consistency across physically disconnected campuses
- Implementing and enforcing uniform systems and structures
- Developing collective efficacy across different school sites
- Rebuilding trust among staff, administration, and community
- Addressing significant student absenteeism across all grade levels
- Developing strategies to engage parents and improve school attendance
- Managing declining student population (from 700-900 to around 500 graduates)
- Preparing for potential population growth due to Micron's presence
- Managing the increasing immigrant population
- Addressing physical space constraints
- Expanding English Language Learner (ELL) support
- Integrating diverse student populations
- Expanding career technical education programs
- Developing partnerships with local industries (like Micron)
- Continuing advanced literacy and educational initiatives
- Adapting to technological changes and workforce needs
- Improving community engagement
- Rebuilding trust with the school board
- Creating a unified district culture
- Effectively communicating district vision and progress
- Handling potential budget constraints
- Managing physical infrastructure
- Supporting staff professional development
- Maintaining high-quality educational programs with potentially limited resources
- increasing populations
- Bring cohesiveness and consistency to the community

### Desired Characteristics

- Honesty and transparency
- Curiosity about the district's existing programs and history
- Kid-friendly and genuinely committed to student success
- Ability to build authentic relationships with staff and students
- Visible and engaged (walking through buildings, interacting with students and staff)
- Open to learning and collaborating
- Ability to rebuild trust among staff and community
- Skills to create district-wide consistency and cohesiveness
- Commitment to creating a unified Liverpool school culture
- Willingness to understand and support existing systems and structures
- Accountability-focused
- Ability to rebuild trust among staff and community
- Skills to create District-wide consistency and cohesiveness
- Commitment to creating a unified Liverpool school culture
- Willingness to understand and support existing systems and structures
- Accountability-focused
- Community engagement
- Addressing student attendance challenges
- Supporting career technical education
- Developing consistent district-wide systems
- Promoting staff and student development

### **Group Name: Union Leaders (8)**

#### Strengths:

- A caring, dedicated, and supportive staff
- Community comes together to address needs
- Socioeconomic diversity of the District and community
- Fine arts program
- Large town with small town feel

#### Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Budgetary



- Increasing ESL population
- Visionary leadership
- Staff accountability
- Looming capital projects
- To rebuild trust
- Build a common vision

Desired Characteristics:

- Experienced in a similar size staff
- Visionary Leader
- Financial acumen
- Record of developing district unity
- Experienced in capital projects
- Possess personal values
- Engender trust and collaboration at all levels

**Group Name: PTO/PTA (13)**

Strengths:

- Exceptional Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways at the high school
- Unique technology programs, including a drone program
- Strong partnership with local employers like Micron
- Outstanding arts departments
- Highly talented students in music and performing arts
- Impressive athletic programs with opportunities for students
- Successful athletic achievements (e.g., students playing division one sports)
- Dedicated and caring teachers
- Strong commitment to students beyond academics
- Supportive approach, especially during challenging times like COVID-19
- Strong sense of community
- Great Community
- Supportive environment for students
- Teachers who are often residents
- Safe and nurturing elementary school environment
- Comprehensive support for younger students

- Multiple pathways for student development
- Programs catering to different student interests and career goals
- Comprehensive educational experience across different levels

#### Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Lack of cohesion among key stakeholders
- Contentious relationships between board members, administration, and community
- Toxic social media discussions and divisive communication
- Negative impact on students, teachers, and overall district morale
- Decreased engagement following redistricting
- Reduced participation in school activities and decision-making processes
- Concerns about board members' understanding of budget processes
- Potential misalignment between financial expertise and board decision-making
- Challenges in prioritizing spending and educational investments
- Perceived misalignment of priorities
- Eliminate split assignment of teachers
- Need for improved communication and collaborative approach
- Ongoing mascot and name change process
- Potential lingering tensions from recent changes
- Concerns about discipline and safety, particularly at the high school level
- Need for improvement in literacy programs
- Potential gaps in supporting educational resources
- Concerns about maintaining high-quality educational offerings

#### Desired Characteristics:

- Unwavering in their convictions
- Able to communicate effectively
- Not afraid to share important perspectives
- Holds staff accountable while supporting their needs
- Puts students first in decision-making
- Understands education as both an academic and business endeavor
- Ability to rebuild trust with staff, board, and community
- Transparent and approachable communication style
- Can navigate difficult conversations diplomatically
- Familiarity with Liverpool's recent challenges (redistricting, staff turnover)

- Ability to address specific issues like special area staffing and resource allocation
- Preferably with experience in similar-sized districts
- Fully supportive of teachers
- Understands teachers' needs
- Helps create a cohesive environment between teachers, administration, and the board
- Ensures all community members feel heard and valued
- Actively involved in the district
- Understands local challenges and history
- Preferably with superintendent or assistant superintendent experience (approx. 3-5 yrs)
- Demonstrated ability to manage a district budget responsibly
- Experience navigating complex organizational dynamics
- Preferably not a first-time superintendent, but the quality of the experience matters
- Background in administration (assistant superintendent preferred)
- Demonstrated success in previous leadership roles
- Committed to district success
- Transparent and trustworthy
- Able to reduce existing tensions and promote collaboration
- Prioritize educational programs over peripheral projects
- Improve areas like literacy and library programs
- Address concerns about discipline and student safety
- Forward-looking approach to educational innovation
- Ability to address declining enrollment
- Skilled at recruiting and retaining quality teachers