

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

White Plains City Public Schools



Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
December 2025 - January 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in December 2025 and January 2026 for the new Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources of the White Plains City School District. The data contained herein were obtained from the input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings. The interviews and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. 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.

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 online survey.

Groups	Personal interviews or focus groups
Board of Education	5
Superintendent	1
Assistant Superintendents	2
Principals	9
Directors	5
HR Office Staff and Director of HR	5
Union Leadership	3
Department Heads	7
Former BoE Members & PTA Co-Presidents	3
Total	40

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 of Education and Superintendent's attention.

The HYA consultants interviewed 40 district and community constituents. Each of the individuals and groups was asked to share their thoughts regarding three questions:

- 1) How would you describe the strengths of the District?
- 2) What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the District in the next few years, especially those impacting the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources?
- 3) What characteristics and areas of expertise would you like to see in the next Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources?

What follows is a summary of the responses shared by the above persons. The first section provides a summary of the consistent responses. The second section provides response summaries from the various categories of individuals interviewed.

HYA, the Board of Education, and the Superintendent 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 consultants will seek a new Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources who can work with the Board of Education and Superintendent to provide the leadership needed to continue advancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Human Resources Department through a continuous cycle of improvement, focused on the needs of the academic community.

The consultants would like to thank all the participants who attended focus group meetings and the staff members who assisted with our meetings. In particular, Liza Torres, who was especially helpful in organizing and scheduling focus group meetings and assuring that the consultants' time in the District went smoothly.

Respectfully submitted:
Caryn Shaw
Monica Browne

Section 1: *Summary of Responses from Interviews and Focus Group Meetings*

Consistent Themes from the Focus Groups

The following CONSISTENT comments were articulated by the majority of participants with whom the consultants met.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT - CONSISTENT THEMES

Strengths of the White Plains School District:

1. Diversity as a Core Strength and Real-World Preparation

White Plains is a diverse district across race, culture, language, socioeconomic status, religion, and experience. This diversity is intentionally embraced, celebrated, and leveraged to prepare students for the real world. The district is viewed as a true microcosm of society, inspiring inclusive practices and perspectives.

2. Strong Sense of Community, Identity, and Pride

The district benefits from a uniquely strong, multigenerational community with deep roots, rich traditions, and a "small-town feel" despite being a large district. School pride, shared identity, and community support are evident among students, families, staff, and alumni.

3. Student-Centered Focus and Commitment to the Whole Child

White Plains prioritizes meeting students where they are and supporting them academically, socially, and emotionally. The district emphasizes equity, individualized support, celebration of student strengths, and opportunities for all learners.

4. Highly Dedicated, Collaborative, and Professional Staff

Teachers, administrators, and staff are widely described as caring, hardworking, solution-oriented, and deeply committed to students. Kindness, collegiality, and professionalism are cultural norms, with strong collaboration across departments, schools, and roles.

5. Stable, Experienced, and Supportive Leadership

The district benefits from consistent, long-standing leadership at the Board, cabinet, and administrative levels. Leaders are approachable, caring, and work cohesively in the best interest of students, contributing to smooth operations and institutional stability.

6. Strong Board of Education and Governance

The Board of Education is experienced, responsive, fiscally responsible, and the greatest champions of the district's mission. Strong relationships exist between the Board, administration, families, and community partners, with an emphasis on feedback, transparency, and long-term vision.

7. High-Quality Programs, Curriculum, and Resources

White Plains offers extraordinary and varied academic programs, a well-developed curriculum, strong special education services, and broad access to opportunities for students. The district is well-resourced and fiscally sound, ensuring students and staff have what they need for success.

8. Commitment to Professional Growth and Staff Development

Robust, targeted professional development is aligned with strategic planning and continuous improvement. The district invests in growing and retaining its workforce, supporting new teachers, nurturing internal leadership, and maintaining staff longevity.

9. Culture of Collaboration and Continuous Improvement

There is a shared mindset of reflection, innovation, and problem-solving. Teams work together effectively across all levels, continuously seeking ways to improve curriculum, instruction, operations, and student outcomes.

10. Strong Community Partnerships and External Support

The district enjoys active support from families, local government, and community organizations. A wide range of external resources enhances student support, reinforces the value of education, and strengthens the district's ability to serve its diverse population.

**CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT THAT ARE SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO THIS POSITION:
CONSISTENT THEMES**

Challenges for the White Plains School District:

1. Modernizing HR Systems, Structures, and Processes

To continue to strengthen and modernize the HR infrastructure. This includes increasing consistency of districtwide systems, improving data entry, enhancing transparency, improving cohesion of data platforms, and aligning/coordinating recruitment tools (e.g., OLAS). Stronger oversight, standardized procedures, and integrated systems are needed to improve efficiency, accuracy, and responsiveness in this large, complex district.

2. Recruitment and Retention of High-Quality, Diverse Staff

Recruiting and retaining strong educators—particularly in high-demand areas such as math, science, dual language, specialists, and coaching—is increasingly difficult. Challenges include a diminishing applicant pool, maintaining compensation competitiveness, and the continued need to intentionally build a workforce that reflects the district's diversity.

3. Developing a Strategic, Centralized Hiring and Onboarding Model

Advancing a cohesive and effective hiring system across the district that is focused on continuous improvement. Strengthening alignment, building capacity, and ensuring consistent HR support across schools are challenges to be addressed. Proactive oversight of hiring timelines and processes will improve the candidate experience, support early staffing stability, and reduce reliance on substitutes over time.

4. Change Management Within a Strong, Traditional Culture

The Assistant Superintendent must lead thoughtful change, advocate for improvement, and navigate a learning curve while balancing innovation with respect for long-standing practices in a fast-paced environment.

5. Complex Labor Relations and Union Contract Navigation

The district operates under multiple union contracts with strong union leadership and differing structures. The role requires a deep understanding of contract language, skill in managing courageous conversations, and the ability to balance collaboration with firm, consistent application of agreements.

6. HR Capacity, Staffing, and Cross-Training

The HR department supports a large and complex district and has meaningful opportunities to strengthen its capacity and internal systems. Continued investment in requisite staffing,

cross-training, and clear role alignment will enhance efficiency and resilience. Strengthening collaboration with payroll and building additional internal capacity will further support effective management of timelines, investigations, compliance, and daily operations, positioning the department for sustained improvement and long-term success.

7. Supporting Principals, Leaders, and Employees

Many principals are relatively new and require guidance from HR. Additionally, the Assistant Superintendent must support struggling employees, manage varied personalities, and address emotional and sensitive personnel issues with empathy, discretion, and consistency, while remaining highly accessible to staff and leadership.

8. Compliance, Safety, and Regulatory Complexity

The role demands strong knowledge of state regulations, evolving mandates, safety and security protocols, and the HR role in investigations. Potential regulatory shifts and high-stakes personnel matters add complexity and risk, requiring precision and sound judgment.

9. Financial Uncertainty and Resource Constraints

Future funding uncertainties, including state aid, grants, and broader financial constraints, impact staffing flexibility, compensation structures, and retention strategies. The Assistant Superintendent must plan proactively while balancing fiscal responsibility with staffing needs and program growth, including high school expansion.

In summary, the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources will be tasked with leading systemic improvement, strengthening recruitment and retention, managing complex labor and personnel dynamics, and continuing to modernize HR operations—while navigating change thoughtfully within a large, diverse, and high-expectation district.

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES – CONSISTENT THEMES

Top 10 Desired Characteristics

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources – White Plains School District

1. Strong Relationship Builder and Collaborative Team Player

Success in this role requires exceptional relationship management—with staff, principals, cabinet members, Board of Education, unions, and community partners. The candidate must value teamwork, avoid silos, collaborate seamlessly across departments (especially payroll and business), and be visible, accessible, and engaged throughout the district.

2. Experienced, Knowledgeable, and Credible HR Professional

The candidate must bring substantial HR experience—preferably in a similar or larger district—with strong knowledge of New York State laws, certification, APPR, labor relations, investigations, layoffs, and compliance. Credibility and competence are essential for trust and effectiveness.

3. Systems Thinker Who Builds Structure and Efficiency

A top priority is the ability to design, document, communicate, and sustain effective HR systems and processes. The candidate must be detail-oriented, accurate, and skilled in streamlining procedures, improving data integrity, establishing onboarding and recruitment systems, and creating consistent, transparent practices across the district.

4. Relational, Empathetic, and People-Centered Leader

The ideal candidate is highly relational, emotionally intelligent, and places the “human” at the center of human resources. They demonstrate empathy, compassion, respect, and warmth, actively listen, support staff at all levels, and foster positive morale while maintaining professionalism and accountability.

5. Change-Agile, Solution-Oriented Leader

The district seeks someone who can thoughtfully lead change—advocating for improvements, anticipating issues, and solving problems proactively—while respecting White Plains traditions and culture. The candidate must balance innovation with stability and implement change deliberately and effectively.

6. Responsive, High-Energy, and Effective Under Pressure

White Plains is a fast-paced environment and there is an expectation of timely, high-quality responses. The ideal leader thrives in high-demand environments, demonstrates a strong sense of urgency, manages multiple responsibilities simultaneously, and remains calm, composed, and steady under pressure.

7. Integrity-Driven, Fair, and Trustworthy

Integrity is non-negotiable. The candidate must demonstrate neutrality, confidentiality, transparency, consistency, and fairness—willing to stand their ground when necessary while maintaining trust with all constituents. Ego is in check, and decisions are guided by ethics, policy, and law.

8. Clear, Transparent, and Skilled Communicator

The role demands exceptional communication skills—clear, timely, transparent, and accessible. The candidate must give and receive honest feedback, coach rather than criticize, facilitate difficult conversations, engage union leadership effectively, and maintain open lines of communication across the organization.

9. Strategic Talent Developer and Workforce Builder

The candidate must excel at identifying, recruiting, hiring, developing, and retaining high-quality and diverse staff. This includes continuing to build college partnerships, strengthening recruitment pipelines, leading candidate vetting, supporting principals, and growing the potential of every employee through coaching and professional development.

10. Committed, Grounded, and Invested in White Plains

The district seeks a leader committed to White Plains for the long term—someone who values the community, understands its culture, listens and learns before acting, respects existing traditions, and is excited to roll up their sleeves and contribute hands-on to continuous improvement.

In summary, White Plains seeks a seasoned, empathetic, systems-minded HR leader who combines strong character with high energy, deep expertise with humility, and strategic vision with hands-on execution—fully committed to supporting people, strengthening systems, and advancing the district's mission.