



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Alexandria City Public Schools
May/June 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in June 2026 for the successor superintendent of the Alexandria 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.

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	9	
Building level administrators	32	37
Senior Leaders & Central office administrators	39	
Faculty	7	134
Community & Parents	113	
Parents/Guardians		392
Community/Business Members		64
Support Staff	12	46
Students	32	86
City Governance	7	
Total	251	759

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

The Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) are characterized by a set of foundational strengths that support their diverse student body and community. A primary strength is the district's diversity, defined by a rich, international blend of students, families, and staff who bring over 127 languages and varied cultural experiences to the learning environment. This is bolstered by a dedicated and talented staff of educators and administrators described as resilient and highly committed, often going above and beyond to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students.

The district further supports its students through comprehensive academic pathways, such as the High School Academies model, dual enrollment, and career-focused certifications, which provide substantial post-secondary preparation. These efforts are enhanced by strong community and non-profit partnerships, with over 140 formal collaborations that expand access to scholarships, internships, and vital resources. Additionally, the district's strategic geographic location near Washington, D.C. offers students and staff unique access to cultural institutions and professional experiences not readily available in more remote school districts.

A commitment to student-centered support is a division-wide priority, with a deep focus on social-emotional learning, inclusion, and tailored support systems like the International Academy. This is supported by a high level of community engagement, where passionate stakeholders remain deeply invested in the district's success. Furthermore, stakeholders frequently cite the agility of a mid-sized division as a key strength, allowing for personalized interactions, a

family-like atmosphere among staff, and the ability to implement innovative initiatives quickly.

Finally, ACPS offers robust arts and extracurricular activities, providing students with engaging opportunities in areas such as band, choir, theater, robotics, and JROTC. These are complemented by strong foundational and early childhood education, which stakeholders emphasize as critical for effectively preparing elementary students for the academic rigors of middle and high school.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) faces significant financial hurdles, including rising labor costs, the complexities of new collective bargaining implementation, and limited annual funding increases. Coupled with these budgetary constraints are pressing infrastructure concerns, such as aging facilities that are over 80 years old and chronic overcrowding, particularly at the middle school level. The district is also struggling to balance growth and changing demographics against the need for organizational stability and a coherent, long-term vision.

The district is prioritizing the closure of persistent academic achievement gaps, as stakeholders have noted that math and ELA performance scores have stagnated despite considerable resources. This task is compounded by the challenge of supporting a complex, diverse student body, where a high number of English Learner (EL) and immigrant students require trauma-informed care and specialized resources that are often under-supported by current staffing levels. Additionally, safety concerns—ranging from bullying and gang influence to campus security—are frequently cited as significant impediments to the learning environment, particularly at the high school level.

A critical issue for the district is the need to restore trust and rebuild relationships among the community, School Board, City Council, and City Manager, as some cite breakdowns in transparency and communication. These challenges are mirrored internally, where perceived communication silos between the central office and school-level teams have led to an organizational structure viewed by many as opaque and top-down. Furthermore, staff retention and morale are perceived to be low due to uncompetitive compensation, high costs of living, and a lack of leadership support, all while the division navigates complex and often challenging external political dynamics.

HYA and the 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 division. The search team will seek a new superintendent who can work with the ACPS 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 ACPS staff members who assisted with our meetings, particularly Dr. James Deaton and Taneika Taylor Tukan who organized the focus group schedules and the search team's time in the district.