HYA | HAZARD YOUNG ATTEA ASSOCIATES

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

MILTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

October 28, 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment for the new Superintendent of the Milton Public School District conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in September and October 2026. The data contained herein were collected by HYA consultants by way of individual interviews/focus group settings/forums 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 School Committee in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new Superintendent. Additionally, data were collected from stakeholder interviews/focus groups/forums regarding the District's strengths 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	**Interviews, forums or focus groups**	**Online Survey**
School Committee Members	6	n/a
Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent	2	n/a
Administrators	17	16
Educators (Faculty)	3	52
Support Staff	10	24
Students	7	45
Community/Parents/Guardians	30	n/a
Parents/Guardians with children in the Milton Schools	n/a	363
Community/Parents/Guardians without children in the Milton Schools	n/a	48
Total	75	548

The findings reflect input from participating stakeholders through interviews, focus groups, and an online survey. Participation was voluntary, and the results should be understood as stakeholder perspectives rather than a statistically representative assessment of the District.

A draft of the desired characteristics for the School Committee's consideration can be found on pages 4 and 5. The draft characteristics are informed by the data collected through the focus groups/interviews and survey. A comparison of the consistent responses to survey results follows the draft characteristics. Section 1 provides a summary of the consistent responses. Section 2 contains response summaries from the various categories of individuals interviewed. A summary of the survey results are provided in a separate document.

HYA and the Committee intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses the skills and character traits required to meet the needs of the District. The consultants will seek a new superintendent who can work with the Milton School Committee to provide the leadership needed to continue achieving high academic standards and excellent student performance, while meeting the unique needs of each of its students, schools and the expectations of the community.

The consultants would like to thank all the participants who were interviewed, attended focus group meetings or completed the online survey and the Milton School Committee and District staff members who assisted with our meetings. In particular, Dr. Elizabeth "Lizzy" Carroll, Chair of the School Committee's Superintendent Search Subcommittee and Charlene Roche, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, were especially helpful in organizing and scheduling interviews, focus group meetings and assuring that the consultants' time in the District went smoothly.

Respectfully submitted:
George S. Perry, Jr., Ph.D.
Caryn H. Shaw

October 28, 2026

Milton Public School District
Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

After seeking input from its School Committee members, parents, staff, students and the community via focus groups, interviews, and an online survey, the Milton School Committee seeks a strong strategic leader who is (a/an):

1. Champion of Public Education and Student Success: Be a strong advocate for public education who uses the district's core values to guide decisions in the best interests of all students

2. Experienced and Committed Leader: Bring extensive experience as a superintendent or central office administrator, preferably as an assistant superintendent, with a commitment to serving Milton for the long term

3. Visionary and Strategic Thinker: Lead the development and implementation of a cohesive, five-year educational vision and strategic plan, using data to inform decisions and improve student outcomes

4. Strong Financial and Operational Leader: Demonstrate extensive financial knowledge, sound budget management, and strong operational leadership skills, including the ability to establish effective systems, processes, and accountability

5. Instructional Leader Focused on Student Achievement: Bring extensive teaching and learning experience, with a focus on curriculum alignment, instructional rigor, meaningful professional development, and improving academic achievement

6. Effective and Transparent Communicator: Communicate directly, honestly, and effectively, inspiring confidence and building trust across schools, municipal departments, and community organizations

7. Collaborative, Decisive, and Relationship-Oriented Leader: Build positive relationships with students, staff, families, the School Committee, and community members while demonstrating the courage to make difficult decisions and stand firm in their convictions

8. Equity-Minded Leader: Demonstrate cultural awareness, empathy, and a proven commitment to improving opportunities and outcomes for all students, including a deep understanding of special education programming, procedures, and service delivery

9. Systems Thinker and Problem Solver: Diagnose challenges at the system level, connect multiple priorities and workstreams, and develop coordinated, sustainable solutions while supporting and holding administrators and staff accountable

10. Understanding of Milton and Massachusetts Public Education: Values Milton's history, culture, and community, maintains a visible and accessible presence, and preferably brings experience in Massachusetts school systems and with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) or other major school construction projects

Alignment and Differences Between Interview/Focus Group and Survey Findings - Consistent Themes

The interview/focus group and survey findings provide complementary perspectives on the district's strengths, challenges, and desired characteristics of the next superintendent. While several common priorities emerged across both sources, differences in emphasis offer additional insight into the perspectives and experiences of various stakeholder groups.

Strengths and Challenges

Both the interview/focus group findings and survey results highlight the district's dedicated and effective educators, safe and supportive learning environments, and community diversity as strengths. The survey reinforces these findings, with 81% agreeing that schools are safe, 68% recognizing effective personnel, and 68% rating the overall quality of education positively.

Both sources also identify financial management, the need for a clear long-term vision, data-informed decision-making, and communication as areas for improvement. Only 28% of survey respondents agreed that the district is fiscally responsible, 44% identified a clear shared vision, and 39% agreed that decisions are informed by data and research.

The interviews provided more detailed concerns about middle school performance, overcrowding and facilities, French Immersion, special education, equity across schools, and leadership turnover. The survey also identified concerns about fiscal responsibility and strategic direction, while reflecting generally positive perceptions of school safety and facilities maintenance.

Desired Superintendent Characteristics

Both sources emphasize the importance of strong financial and operational leadership, high expectations for student achievement, a clear educational vision, effective communication, and the ability to build trust and positive relationships.

The survey places particularly strong emphasis on financial and operational management (64%), establishing high expectations (57%), measurable student outcomes (39%), and fostering a positive professional climate (37%).

The interviews place greater emphasis on long-term leadership commitment, systems thinking, instructional expertise, equity, special education, and understanding Milton's community and culture. The survey also highlights recruiting and retaining effective personnel (36%), an area that could be more explicitly reflected in the Leadership Profile.

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

The HYA consultants interviewed 75 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?
3) What characteristics and areas of expertise would you like to see in the next Superintendent?

What follows is a summary of the responses shared by role. The first section provides a summary of the consistent responses and comparison to survey results.

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

- Talented and accomplished students
- Highly qualified, exceptional, and dedicated teachers, with strong retention and low turnover
- Highly invested, talented, and supportive parents and community members
- Strong town support for the public schools
- Positive reputation of the district and its schools
- Diverse suburban community with close proximity to Boston
- Deep sense of community pride, rich traditions, and multigenerational connections
- Established French Immersion program
- Strong academic programs and diverse extracurricular opportunities, including Advanced Placement courses, arts, music, theater, and athletics
- Safe, supportive learning environments that foster a sense of belonging and positive relationships
- Strong school based leadership, including experienced principals who provide stability and continuity

Challenges and Issues Facing the District - Consistent Themes

The following are some key themes concerning the challenges facing the District that emerged from the focus groups:

- Decisions are not consistently guided by what is best for students
- Lack of a cohesive, long-term educational vision and consistent use of data to inform decision-making
- Stagnant achievement scores with limited evidence of academic growth. Gaps in expectations and achievement among student groups

- Middle school concerns related to student academic performance, curriculum and instructional rigor, preparation for high school, and enrollment
- Financial challenges related to district expenditures exceeding revenue limitations under Proposition 2½. Need for clearer communication and greater transparency regarding budget decisions and overrides to rebuild community trust
- Overcrowding, capacity issues and space constraints. Need to clearly communicate facility needs and rationale for new school construction
- Lack of consistent long-term central office leadership. Turnover, staff fatigue, and diminished morale
- Short-term fixes to programmatic and structural issues related to the French immersion program, including concerns about equitable access
- Lack of clarity, consistency, and effective communication in addressing community concerns even with repetitive/redundant messaging
- Community members have strong opinions, and some individuals are hesitant to speak up or feel their voices are not being heard
- Decision-making can be slow, and some of the most challenging issues do not always receive sufficient attention
- Absence of procedures and protocols to address racial insensitivity and promote greater cultural awareness. Concerns regarding preparation for and representation of students of color in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, as well as inequities in staffing, funding, and resources across elementary schools
- Concerns about capability of special education programs and services to serve students and families within the district
- Inconsistencies in curriculum, instructional practices, and academic expectations across schools. Opportunities for more systematic curriculum review, alignment, and meaningful professional development
- Inconsistent districtwide systems, policies, procedures, and accountability across schools and departments.

Desired Characteristics of the New Superintendent - Consistent Themes

The constituent groups CONSISTENTLY mentioned the following desired characteristics:

- Be a champion of public schools
- Uses the district's core values to guide decisions in the best interest of all students
- Extensive experience as superintendent or central office administrator (as assistant superintendent)
- Is a quick learner and can adapt to Milton's needs and culture
- Extensive finance knowledge, solid experience managing finances, budgets
- Extensive teaching and learning experience with a focus on aligning curriculum and instructional practices, professional development and improving student learning
- VIsionary able to lead the development of a five year vision and strategic plan
- Communicates effectively (direct, honest, straightforward, inspires confidence) across schools, municipal departments and community organizations
- Is positive and collaborative and stands firm in their convictions and makes difficult decisions when necessary
- Is committed to serving the district for a long-term

- Systems thinker - diagnose a problem at a system level and work different workstreams in connection with each other, solve multiple problems simultaneously and unified theory of solution
- Equity minded leader for all students to be successful (e.g. global awareness, empathy for students with different backgrounds/experiences, track record for moving the needle on raising achievement of all students)
- Strong operational leadership skills. Able to lead, support, build processes and keep administrators and staff accountable
- Has a deep understanding of special education programming, procedures and service delivery
- Prior experience in Massachusetts school systems preferred
- Prior experience with MSBA or other major school building programs preferred

SECTION 2: *Summary of Comments from Focus Groups, Forums and Interviews*

The second section provides response summaries from the various categories of individuals interviewed.

The focus groups were structured to be open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- How would you describe the strengths of the District?
- What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the District in the next few years?
- What characteristics and areas of expertise would you like to see in the next Superintendent?

This is not a scientific sampling, nor should the comments below be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed.

School Committee (6)

Strengths of the District

- Location close to Boston and urban areas, desirable for young families/more young families moving in
- High performing and good public school system considered an asset
- Schools provide safe and supportive environments
- Fourth highest pupil attendance rate in Massachusetts. Pierce MS highest attendance in state
- Above average achievement among per pupil expenditures, outperforming peers
- PreK before and after school, free kindergarten
- High rating for elementary schools
- Elementary school French Immersion lottery program
- Extracurricular programs and activities offerings at middle and high school levels
- HS lots of offerings and AP classes for students

- Great talent in Milton, a lot of teachers who are really deep content experts
- HS teachers supportive and caring but challenge students
- Impressed by individual teachers and teachers in general over the years
- Desirable place to work
- Very dedicated teachers and educators. Teachers go above and beyond
- Positive labor/management relationships. Passed MEA teacher contract (SY27 year 1 of 3)
- Teachers eager and inspiring
- Efforts to diversify staff making slow progress
- Experienced principals in all schools
- Great staff members. Consistency staff - low turnover
- New members of the leadership team in place - HR director, Assistant Superintendent, and DIEB director. Interim Superintendent trying to create roles and responsibilities, accountability
- People love the town
- Have a sense of belonging, solid middle class, appreciate demographic and economic diversity among families and students. fantastic community. small town feel. friendly people. a lot of greenery, a lot of trees and parks
- People involved in local politics
- Smart and capable people in town
- Parent and community engagement and support for schools - PTO, boosters, Passed override overwhelmingly - 1 ½ year old, saved 77 positions
- Good working relationships among school committee, finance committee, select board
- Stable and consistent school committee - elections late April
- Positive working relationships among school committee members and with the Superintendent

Challenges Facing the District

- Complex district
- Increase cost by 5% and Prop 2 ½ limits tax revenue
- Reliance on volunteer run town
- Finance - 97% residential income/tax burden on home owners even though property tax not as high as other towns
- Lost some teachers in past years financial reasons
- Concerns regarding past budget management, use of reserve funds, and the need to rebuild community trust
- Will continue to need overrides balanced with cuts that make sense
- School building project. 20 year old facilities. Overcrowing issues for years - past land swap to build another middle school and move prek-k and central office, possible years of study, no money for construction, MSBA project investigating
    - Large class sizes - 28 students per class, sometimes 30
    - Special education challenges
    - Overcrowding in MS contributes to students leaving
- Special education unpredictable expenses, not enough space to serve students, have to send out, parents frustration
- Perceived racial and socioeconomic divisions within the district and community
- Some long-term residents in town resistant to change

- Don’t want more traffic, population growth
- Learning gaps among student groups - special ed, low income, Black and Asian
- Concerns regarding incidents of racial bias and the need for consistent procedures and protocols
- Complex district dynamics and competing internal and external pressures
- Strong community opinions and differing perspectives can complicate decision-making and progress
- Some stakeholders expressed concerns about feeling comfortable sharing differing perspectives
- Opportunities to strengthen collaboration and resource-sharing among community organizations
- Trust in school committee and superintendent decisions
- No collaboration between public and private schools. Some with Curry College
- New leadership team - HR and Finance, DEIB new administrators (July), DEIB task force
- Superintendent turnover and churn at the central office. Someone new in each job of assistant superintendent every year, disruption. Not coordinated for a long time
- Problem attracting diverse educators
- Middle school is a concern. It doesn’t rate as well, lowest performing. A number of students go to private schools for middle school. Some come back for HS
- Concerns regarding middle school academic rigor, school culture, and transparency
- Limited evidence of sustained improvement in student achievement
- Lack of creativity, no project based learning
- French immersion needs improvement
- Need to continue strengthening recently established teacher evaluation and observation processes
- No level classes at MS
- Lack of consistency among schools
- Instructional rigor and student success, although achievement data okay
- Learning paths between differentiated
- Instructional consistency lacking
- Mental health support at MS

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Extensive experience as superintendent or central office administrator (as assistant superintendent)
- Extensive finance knowledge, solid experience managing finances, budgets
- Extensive teaching and learning background and focus on academics - curriculum and newest teaching methods
- Visionary. Has vision for 3-5 years
- Systems thinker - diagnose a problem at a system level and work different workstreams in connection with each other, solve multiple problems simultaneously and unified theory of solution
- Equity minded leader with a commitment all students to be successful (e.g. global awareness, empathy for students with different backgrounds/experiences of persons of color, has a vision and support for DEIB, track record for moving the needle)
- Strong operational leadership skills
- Able to lead, support, build and keep central administration accountable

- Personable (Likes interim superintendent - 1:1 interviews with families)
- Respectful to community members and families
- Strong communicator - weekly email to school committee and good communication to all stakeholders
- Doesn’t cave in under pressure
- Need to focus on middle school
- Keep on same course recently built
- Manage budget in sustainable way
- Charisma to garner good will
- Massachusetts experience especially finances, driven by property taxes
- Instructional coherence
- Political savvy
- Directness
- Consistency
- Calm
- Demonstrates a strong work ethic and commitment to the time demands of the position
- Involved
- Dedicated
- Instructional knowledge evidence of instruction
- Trustworthy
- Creative thinker for solutions
- Humility
- Open to feedback and dialogue. Willing to listen
- Cares about educational process
- Realistic financial analysis. Will provide numbers. Backup decisions with data
- Technology driven and comfortable/Data integrity
- Kind
- Relationship builder
- Believes in rigor overall
- Process driven person
- Engage with community on regular basis
- Understands government structure
- Seen middle school turnaround process
- Roll up your sleeves work environment, hands on job
- Being able to say no
- Core belief system
- Moral compass
- Has opinions and challenges thinking
- Strategic plan experience
- Not so reliant on School Committee for cues
- Experience with special education

Community Forum #1 MHS Auditorium (4); #2 Virtual (14); #3 Fire Station (2)

Strengths of the District

- Strong sense of family and belonging
- Rich history, traditions, and multigenerational connections to the district
- Strong sense of unity and shared purpose
- Talented and accomplished students
- Award-winning music and theater programs
- Strong traditions of excellence in athletics and the arts
- Each school has its own unique identity and close-knit community
- Opportunities for students to connect across schools through special education programs, athletics, and theater
- Established French Immersion program
- Current superintendent's email on finances to the town. Appreciated communication, even though there was some blow-back
- Strong principal leaders
- Small town feel
- Good physical conditions in school
- Commitment to build a new middle school
- 90% kids go to 4 year colleges
- Diversity
- Strong sense of belonging
- Students
- Community cares about education and what happens in school
- Growing enrollment shows trust
- Very unique community
- Good location borders Boston
- Parents very involved and care deeply
- Top teachers in the state
- Curriculum at HS second to none
- Hands on parents
- Committed volunteers

Challenges Facing the District

- Turnover of superintendent has made it difficult to advance agenda
- 10% not going to college, don't have support or options
- Multiple factors contributed to turnover
- Perceptions regarding differences in the desirability and opportunities among elementary schools
- Some parents expressed concerns about opportunities for meaningful engagement and having their voices heard
- Differing perspectives regarding the community's changing demographics and future direction

- Concerns regarding community responses to increasing racial and cultural diversity
- Superintendent needs to develop a team - can't operate on their own
- Need to strengthen trust among district leadership, families, and the community
- Budget and finances - reactionary way the budget used
- Differing perspectives regarding responsibility for past financial challenges and leadership decisions
- No formal evaluation process of principals and teachers until 2025-26
- French immersion program needs evaluation. It consumes resources, leads to tracking
- Concerns regarding equitable access to educational opportunities for all students
- Curriculum is different among schools
- MBTA Communities Act - may have an impact on student enrollment and overcrowding schools
- Aging school buildings, approximately 20 years old, that will require ongoing maintenance, repairs, and capital improvements
- Frequent turnover in leadership positions at all levels of the district, contributing to instability and a lack of continuity
- Overcrowding and space constraints, highlighting the need to clearly communicate facility needs and the rationale for new school construction
- Financial challenges and budget constraints associated with Proposition 2½
- Inconsistency in district leadership and decision-making
- Need to close achievement gaps and address disparities in student outcomes
- Ongoing challenges related to special education programs, services, and student needs
- Opportunities to strengthen consistency and expertise in school-level hiring processes
- Insufficient nursing staff to meet student needs
- Need to review and evaluate district service contracts, including transportation and food services
- Too much communication - needs to evaluate what works

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Advocates for and addresses the needs of all students
- Be a champion of public schools
- Views the community holistically and understands its diverse needs and perspectives
- Ensures all stakeholders have opportunities to be heard and valued
- Communicates clearly and effectively, including articulating the need for school facilities and investments
- Demonstrates strong fiscal leadership and financial management skills
- Collaborates effectively across schools, municipal departments, and community organizations
- Is a visionary leader who can establish a clear direction for the district
- Is willing and able to engage in difficult but necessary conversations
- Communicates in a direct, honest, and straightforward manner. Owns problems and moves on
- Leads with transparency and is comfortable acknowledging when they do not have an immediate answer
- Demonstrates cultural competence and prioritizes these qualities when recruiting and hiring staff

- Brings an understanding of Milton and its unique community
- Is a quick learner who can adapt to the district's needs and culture
- Prioritizes and supports the well-being of teachers and students
- Recognizes the importance of behavioral health and ensures appropriate supports are available
- Respects the expertise of others and recognizes when to seek guidance in areas outside their own experience
- Commands a strong, confident, and respected leadership presence
- Brings significant experience as a superintendent or assistant superintendent in Massachusetts public schools
- Demonstrates a proven track record of successful educational leadership
- Is an experienced and effective leader
- Possesses excellent management and organizational skills
- Brings lived experiences that reflect an understanding and appreciation of diversity
- Recognizes and understands the unique characteristics, needs, and cultures of the district's schools
- Demonstrates patience and thoughtfulness in navigating challenges
- Is resilient and able to handle criticism and difficult situations
- Embraces a servant leadership approach, prioritizing the needs of students, staff, and the community
- Understands and can effectively navigate the local political landscape
- Develops a clear, actionable five- and ten-year vision and strategic plan for the district
- Is a strong instructional leader who prioritizes teaching, learning, and student achievement

PTO, Boosters, Site Councils, Milton Foundation for Education (5)

Strengths of the District

- Charming, small-town atmosphere
- Strong French Immersion program
- Opportunities for students to develop lifelong friendships
- Walkable community, allowing many students to walk to school
- Strong sense of community and belonging
- Strong school leadership
- Community places a high value on education
- Significant community support for education, demonstrated by the successful passage of the override and annual fundraising (e.g. individual school and MFE)
- Diverse student population and community
- Close relationships between families and teachers
- Dedicated teachers who consistently go above and beyond for students
- Theatre, music and sports programs
- Exceptional opportunities and programs available to high school students
- Before and after school programs, volunteer and tutoring programs

Challenges Facing the District

- Families/community members feel they are not informed
- Opportunities to strengthen family participation and engagement
- Over communicate. Information is not communicated in a way that families can digest
- Override and budget issues. PTO take on responsibility for translating/communicating about budget issues to families
- Need to encourage open, constructive dialogue and greater understanding of district processes
- Need to strengthen district systems, resources, and proactive planning
- Equity concerns related to differences in PTO fundraising success at Tucker compared with other schools.
- Families don't understand decision making processes. Opportunities for greater districtwide coordination, consistency, and shared decision-making
- Activities and expectations should be clear to families and consistent across schools (e.g. number of field trips)
- Concerns regarding academic rigor and curriculum progression at the middle school level, including the impact on family enrollment decisions
- Overcrowding in schools
- Lack of a clear, cohesive districtwide vision
- Differing perspectives regarding the French Immersion program and its implementation
- Inconsistencies in disciplinary policies and practices across schools
- Perceived differences in academic expectations and rigor across schools

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Champion public schools
- Brings a sense of professionalism and structure
- Demonstrates strategic thinking
- Takes a proactive approach to leadership
- Establishes clear expectations and accountability
- Demonstrates a strong understanding of equity
- Develops and implements effective policies and procedures
- Engages stakeholders in the change process, helping them understand challenges, proposed solutions, and the rationale behind decisions
- Demonstrates strong management and organizational skills
- Leads with transparency
- Communicates clearly, openly, and effectively
- Is committed to serving Milton for the long term
- Maintains a visible and active presence throughout the district
- Has classroom teaching experience
- Engages and builds relationships with all members of the community
- Maintains a strong presence in schools and is accessible to students, staff, and families
- Is a visionary leader who can establish and communicate a clear direction for the district
- Takes the time to learn about Milton's schools, community, culture, and values

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Representatives (3)

Strengths of the District

- Tucker is a gem. The tight-knit community and parents have high expectations. Principal has brought stability and improvements in student achievement and performance
- Middle school 5th to 6th grade transition has improved
- People move to Milton for lots of reasons, including that it is a high performing school district
- Diversity. One of the most diverse towns. Suburban community with excellent diversity. Proximity to Boston
- School administration is trying to improve schools across the district. They are well intended
- Size is a positive factor. Not a huge urban district. We can make schools better
- Teachers are excellent. Administrators are open, have great expectations that all students achieve to the highest potential
- The community is invested in the schools. Overrides have always passed
- CDM and MARC - community members are civically engaged volunteers and readily available
- Physical plants are in good condition
- DEIB and SEPAC
- Wealth can be activated
- Wealth of knowledge in parents and community members
- Local diversity committee in each school

Challenges Facing the District

- Performance gaps among student groups. We should be a model of excellence for all students. Nothing else is acceptable
- Leadership transitions and staffing changes at Tucker have contributed to concerns regarding consistency in instructional practices
- Continued need to address disparities in disciplinary practices, while recognizing recent progress
- Transition from 8th to 9th grade. Students are not prepared for the rigor of high school
- Opportunity gaps at the high school. Black and Brown students are underrepresented in high level classes. Students with disabilities are not well served
- Concerns that Black and Brown students may not consistently receive the advocacy and preparation needed to access higher-level classes at the middle school
- Achievement gaps
- Finances are in a state of flux. Always seems that we don’t have enough money. Community is frustrated by the lack of transparency
- The process for creating a new school building needs to be managed
- Teachers could be measured for effectiveness and reallocated in order to create a culture of excellence for every child

- Our schools/students should not be compared to state averages, but to other high performing districts e.g. the “Ws”
- Need to strengthen support and accountability for school leaders in improving student outcomes
- Opportunities to clarify leadership roles, strengthen decision-making authority, and support central office effectiveness
- Need for greater alignment between the School Committee and Superintendent regarding shared goals and governance responsibilities
- Leadership turnover has contributed to inconsistencies in school-level practices and the need for greater districtwide coordination and accountability
- Opportunities for greater collaboration and resource-sharing across schools
- The diversity committees have been convened together once. Wide variety of expectations and results. Everything done at the elementary schools was driven by parents

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Strong enough to embrace and manage strong personalities
- Proven experience in closing achievement gaps
- Be able to talk about finances and what is expected from the dollars spent
- Need to be able to develop relationships with town officials
- Be strategic, goal and results oriented. Pick a few things to fix over a couple of years. Don’t take 2 years to plan and 10 years to implement
- Ability to think systemically, recognize inconsistencies, and hold people accountable
- Establish a growth mindset culture

Town Officials-TA/Police/Fire/Select Board (2)

Strengths of the District

- Strong PTOs and dedicated PTO leadership
- Engaged, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable parent community
- Rich cultural and international diversity
- Strong commitment to putting students first
- Collaboration, positive working relationships among the Select Board and School Committee, including a joint subcommittee
- Strong sense of pride in the public schools
- Attracts young families who choose to move to Milton for its schools
- Significant community support for education, demonstrated by the overwhelming approval of the override two years ago
- Strong and committed School Committee
- Community offers a wealth of opportunities and amenities, including proximity to Blue Hills, skiing, and the ocean
- Diverse, multicultural community that brings together people from a variety of backgrounds
- French immersion
- AP offerings at the high school

- Strong arts and athletics programs
- Experienced, long-serving principals who provide stability and continuity in school leadership
- Interim Superintendent gained the community's respect and confidence

Challenges Facing the District

- Ongoing financial challenges and structural budget deficit
- Differing perspectives on the new school building project and the need for continued collaboration among town boards
- Community concerns and differing perspectives regarding the override process and financial decision-making
- Need to improve student achievement in certain areas and address disparities in student outcomes
- Encourage greater student participation in Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- Address racial insensitivity and promote greater cultural awareness and understanding
- Turnover in the DEIB leadership position

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Demonstrates strong financial acumen and fiscal responsibility
- Is a strong, effective leader
- Is committed to serving the district long term, ideally for at least 10 years
- Builds consensus and fosters collaboration among stakeholders
- Understands district operations and how the school system functions
- Communicates clearly, openly, and effectively
- Demonstrates inclusive leadership
- Actively engages and builds relationships with the community
- Respects and values the expertise of the current administration
- Empowers school leaders to continue their successful work while providing support and guidance
- Has prior experience working in Massachusetts public schools
- Effectively navigates budget challenges, competing priorities, and difficult financial decisions
- Establishes a clear districtwide vision, mission, and goals
- Sets high standards and clear expectations for students and staff
- Understands and values Milton's highly engaged parent community and its expectations
- Focuses on improving student outcomes and addressing achievement disparities, particularly those related to race and socioeconomic status, through data-informed decision-making

Student Reps (7)

Strengths of the District

- Opportunities for guidance from adults
- Improved transition from 5th to 6th grade. Students from different schools are accepted and feel included
- French immersion attracts families to Milton
- Community is a big part of school. Teacher relationships remain strong even after years. Students are held to high standards
- Options for clubs/teams/start your own group/different classes
- Student government is assigned projects by the Interim Superintendent/School Committee each year for student input - e.g. school calendar, cellphone policy, broader issues
- Student government representatives provide updates on issues at School Committee meetings
- Knowledge and instructional expertise of the teachers. Options for AP courses. 95% of students pass AP exams at high levels. 5 or 6 AP teachers are exceptional
- Introduction of Gemini notebooks have been a good use of technology

Challenges Facing the District

- Concerns regarding the timeliness and transparency of district communications on significant issues
- Finances and how it is spent
- Jump from 8th to 9th grade is a big adjustment. Students reported challenges adjusting to the increased academic expectations and workload between eighth and ninth grades
- Capacity issues. 31 students in a class. A HS teacher bought chairs to accommodate students
- Capacity issues at all levels. Cunningham had to clear out a storage area for a learning area
- Perception that district decision-making and implementation of changes can be slow
- Wait lists for AP courses. Grade levels and prerequisites have priority
- School bus/transportation. One student had 9 different bus drivers in the first four weeks of school. Drivers not familiar with Milton
- There are limits on technology at the middle school

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Demonstrates genuine care and concern for students, staff, and the community
- Values and respects student perspectives and voices
- Stands firm in their convictions and makes difficult decisions when necessary
- Is a systems thinker who understands the interconnected aspects of district operations
- Balances multiple perspectives and competing priorities
- Collaborates effectively with town leadership and municipal departments, including the municipal energy manager
- Has a clear, forward-thinking vision for the district
- Communicates clearly, openly, and effectively

- Is committed to serving Milton for the long term
- Is willing to learn about and adapt to Milton's unique community and culture
- Demonstrates accountability and takes ownership of decisions and outcomes
- Is committed to ensuring equitable opportunities for all students
- Prioritizes ongoing investment in professional development and growth opportunities for teachers
- Brings strong experience and expertise in special education

Union Executive Board (3)

Strengths of the District

- Highly qualified, exceptional, and dedicated educators
- Strong commitment from educators who have been instrumental in the district's success
- Strong community support for the public schools
- Engaged, enthusiastic, and motivated students
- Diverse student population and community
- Supportive teachers and families
- Strong partnerships between educators and families that foster unity and a shared commitment to student success
- Positive staff morale

Challenges Facing the District

- Need for strong and consistent leadership and stability in central administration
- Strengthen governance - e.g. there were months without adequate financial oversight during previous administration
- School Committee's ability to establish clear boundaries and focus on governance
- Budgetary constraints and fiscal management
- Lack of a cohesive, long-term educational vision
- Tendency for the district to operate reactively rather than proactively
- Perception of behind-the-scenes decision-making lacking transparency
- Over the last two years, the Interim Superintendent and Interim Assistant Superintendent have accomplished a great deal, but for a long-term vision remains limited
- Concerns regarding the extent to which student needs have consistently guided district decision-making
- Perceived need for greater transparency in district decision-making processes
- Concerns regarding the influence of local political dynamics on district decision-making
- Special education program management and rising costs
- High staff turnover among paraprofessionals, special education staff, team chairs, and non-teaching personnel
- School Committee is often tasked with operational details by the Superintendent
- Lack of K-12 comprehensive curriculum review and consistency across schools
- Opportunities to strengthen communication and collaboration between district and municipal leadership

- The French Immersion program creates equity issues and structural challenges. Curriculum and materials need to updating
- Inconsistencies in Unit B structure impact curriculum coordination
- Concerns regarding curriculum implementation, alignment, and opportunities for teacher input

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Makes decisions prioritized strictly in the best interest of students
- Possesses the strength and confidence to work constructively with School Committee
- Strong educational vision and leadership strategy
- Thorough understanding of MA public education and funding mechanisms
- Proactive leadership style
- Visionary leader who inspires confidence
- Extensive experience in financial management and school budgeting
- Ability to build trust and positive relationships with stakeholders holding differing perspectives
- Proven ability to mend and strengthen working relationships with Town Hall
- Keeps student outcomes at the forefront of all decision-making
- Ability to keep focus on long-term strategic initiatives and keep distance from short-term interests
- Committed to long-term tenure in the district
- Able to collaborate productively with union leadership and build positive labor relations
- Comprehensive skillset covering all aspects of district administration
- Willingness to address challenges directly with building principals
- Commitment to maintaining and expanding the evaluation and observation systems established by current interim leadership
- Deep understanding of special education programming, procedures, and service delivery consistency across elementary schools, particularly with an expanding population (~25%).
- Capacity to address unmet English Language Learner (ELL) needs
- Ensure smooth transition management without abrupt changes in key interim leadership roles
- Ability to reduce turnover among non-teaching staff, paraprofessionals, and special education team chairs
- Commitment to reviewing curriculum consistency across all schools
- Dedication to completing positive initiatives recently initiated
- Genuinely wants the best outcomes for students
- Clear and articulating visionary leader

Principals (6)

Strengths of the District

- Signs of academic improvement, including third-grade MCAS scores at Tucker Elementary School

- Strong community involvement and engagement
- Families are deeply committed to their children's happiness and well-being
- Strong advocates for students and their needs
- Significant community support for education, demonstrated by the passage of the override
- Dedicated teachers with strong retention and low turnover
- Well-maintained and attractive school facilities
- Strong sense of community pride, with residents actively showing up to support their schools
- Strong fine arts and athletics programs
- Resilient and committed educators who persevere through challenges

Challenges Facing the District

- Opportunities to strengthen resource allocation and alignment between student needs, educational plans, and program offerings
- Challenges in the working relationship between the previous superintendent and the teachers' union.
- Instability and lack of continuity in district leadership
- Overcrowded school buildings and increasing enrollment
- Traffic and congestion challenges around school facilities
- Need to review and update curriculum to ensure it reflects current educational standards and best practices
- Limited opportunities for choice and personalized professional development for educators
- The next superintendent will need to navigate complex district operations and community expectations

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Seasoned, experienced (veteran superintendent) who understands communities like Milton
- Committed to stay. Be grounded in the community
- Advocate for public schools
- Need to be able to talk about French Immersion and equity
- Understand the system changes made in the last 18 months. Don't attempt to change everything then walk away
- Be realistic about what can be done with a commitment to the long-term. Gain traction
- Familiarity with Massachusetts laws/regulations around special education
- Can work effectively with union
- Able to promote unity and collaboration
- Make decisions that are in the best interest of students
- Instructional leader
- Central office experience
- Experience in urban school districts
- Ability to quickly recognize culture, climate and lived experiences and navigate community politics
- Approachable and visible supervisor, thought partner
- Strong budget/finance background

AFSCME/Facilities (3)

Strengths of the District

- Recent positive restructuring and reorganization of central office leadership
- Development and implementation of more consistent central office policies and procedures
- Strong multigenerational ties, with many longtime families remaining in Milton
- Deep sense of community connection, with many former residents choosing to return to Milton

Challenges Facing the District

- Recurring issues that are addressed with short-term fixes rather than sustainable, long-term solutions
- Aging school facilities in need of repairs and maintenance, including roof leaks and replacements
- Lack of consistent protocols, procedures, and documentation across the district
- Inconsistencies in student discipline policies and practices
- Challenges navigating differing personalities and interpersonal dynamics
- Need to continue supporting and strengthening staff morale
- Teachers often having to make do with limited resources
- Challenges meeting the demands and requirements of providing free school meals
- Reductions in custodial staffing that impact school operations and maintenance
- Overcrowding in school buildings
- Opportunities for greater integration and coordination between Food Services and broader district operations

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Recognizes and values the important role of Food Services within the district
- Brings prior experience serving as a superintendent
- Provides stable, consistent leadership
- Demonstrates consistency in decision-making and follow-through
- Is committed to serving the district for the long term
- Communicates clearly, openly, and effectively
- Builds trust and positive relationships across the district
- Demonstrates a strong commitment to Milton rather than viewing the position as a stepping stone to other opportunities
- Leads with honesty, integrity, and transparency

School and District Support Staff (7)

Strengths of the District

- Dedicated and caring staff who are deeply committed to students and one another
- Highly invested and supportive parent community
- Strong staff commitment to the district, with many employees also residing in Milton
- Strong town support for the public schools

- Engaged and involved community
- Strong special education programs and services

Challenges Facing the District

- Frequent turnover in central administration, resulting in leadership instability and a lack of continuity
- Navigating the role of collective bargaining and labor relations in district operations and decision-making
- Ongoing budget challenges, including the need to lay off approximately 70 staff members despite the passage of an override

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Demonstrates a proven track record of successful educational leadership
- Makes decisions grounded in established policies and procedures rather than external pressures
- Has the courage to uphold laws and policies and engage in difficult conversations
- Is highly organized and an effective manager
- Demonstrates strong knowledge of Massachusetts education laws, regulations, and special education requirements
- Builds upon recent improvements and successful initiatives rather than making unnecessary changes
- Brings prior district leadership experience in Massachusetts public schools
- Has experience identifying and securing grant funding
- Takes the time to understand Milton's unique community, culture, and values
- Understands collective bargaining and builds positive, productive relationships with the teachers' union
- Actively listens to and considers all perspectives, not just the most vocal voices
- Is committed to serving the district for the long term
- Demonstrates a collaborative and inclusive leadership style
- Is willing to live locally and become part of the community
- Maintains a visible and accessible presence in schools and throughout the community

Unit B (7)

Strengths of the District

- Supportive community that has demonstrated its commitment to education through the passage of two overrides
- Strong staff retention
- Positive reputation of the district and its schools
- Desirable location with close proximity to Boston
- Significant potential for continued growth and improvement
- Dedicated and committed teachers
- Well-supported district with access to necessary resources
- Recent investments in new mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) curricula
- Positive overall student experience
- Supportive learning environments that foster student growth and success
- Collaborative relationship with the Select Board

- Strong support from the Milton Education Foundation
- Relatively low per-pupil spending
- French immersion

Challenges Facing the District

- Challenges recruiting and retaining paraprofessionals
- Stagnant student achievement data, with limited evidence of academic growth
- Resistance to change and a tendency to maintain established practices
- Difficulty implementing change and building consensus around new initiatives
- Political dynamics that can complicate district decision-making
- Lack of a clear, long-term districtwide vision
- Need to fill the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum position
- Structural and organizational challenges that impact district operations
- French Immersion program presents structural complexities and raises questions about equitable access and opportunities
- Large class sizes, with some classrooms having 26–27 students
- Significant differences among the four elementary schools in programs, practices, and student experiences
- Need for greater clarity and consistency in special education policies and procedures
- Concerns regarding racial and socioeconomic differences in student enrollment and experiences across schools
- Schools operating in silos, resulting in a lack of consistency, alignment, and continuity across the district
- Provisions in the new teachers' contract that create scheduling limitations and operational challenges
- Need for more systematic and consistent use of data to inform decisions and support student improvement

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Demonstrates fiscal responsibility and strong financial management skills
- Establishes a clear, long-term vision for the district
- Demonstrates courage and a willingness to make difficult decisions
- Builds positive, collaborative relationships with the teachers' union and highly engaged parent community
- Is a positive, confident, and effective leader
- Prioritizes meaningful, structured, and relevant professional development for educators
- Is willing and able to engage in difficult but necessary conversations
- Identifies and articulates the district's core values
- Listens to diverse perspectives while ultimately making decisions in the best interests of students
- Works collaboratively with the School Committee and establishes a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Recognizes the importance of institutional knowledge and understanding the district's history and culture
- Develops and implements a clear, actionable plan for moving the district forward
- Takes the time to learn about and build relationships within the Milton school community

- Demonstrates strong knowledge of Massachusetts education laws, regulations, and standards
- Brings experience at both the elementary and secondary levels
- Possesses strong communication skills and communicates clearly, openly, and effectively
- Recognizes, values, and trusts the expertise of the district's strong team of educators and administrators

Central Office Leadership (4)

Strengths of the District

- Strong team-oriented and collaborative culture
- Dedicated individuals who are invested in the success of others
- Wealth of institutional and historical knowledge
- Shared commitment to supporting students and staff
- Administrators who are deeply invested in supporting and empowering educators
- Caring and compassionate leadership that puts people first
- Culture that encourages questions, dialogue, and engagement
- Supportive and highly invested parent community
- Resilient community that comes together during challenging times, including periods of financial uncertainty
- Parents who are passionate about ensuring the best possible educational experiences for Milton students
- Deep sense of pride, loyalty, and love for the community and district

Challenges Facing the District

- Human resources challenges and need for improved HR systems and processes
- Reliance on paper-based HR processes, highlighting the need for automation and modernization
- Need for more consistent, meaningful professional development aligned with curriculum and instructional practices
- Stagnant MCAS scores, with limited evidence of academic growth
- Lack of a clear strategic plan and long-term districtwide vision
- Opportunities to strengthen cross-school and departmental collaboration and coordination
- Lingering tensions and challenges surrounding equity initiatives, compounded by turnover in DEIB leadership, including four directors
- Frequent district leadership turnover, contributing to instability and lack of continuity
- Need to strengthen trust, communication, and collaboration among district leaders
- Resistance to change and a tendency to maintain the status quo
- Need to strengthen academic rigor and expand opportunities for students to reach their full potential

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Keeps students at the forefront of all decisions

- Values, supports, and empowers staff
- Has the courage to make difficult decisions when necessary
- Ensures stakeholders feel heard, respected, and valued
- Demonstrates strong, clear, and consistent communication skills
- Develops and implements a comprehensive districtwide strategic plan
- Brings a broad range of knowledge and experience across educational leadership and district operations
- Is an active, thoughtful listener
- Builds leadership capacity and empowers others to succeed
- Responds thoughtfully and intentionally to questions and concerns
- Is kind, compassionate, and personable
- Demonstrates consistency, fairness, and transparency in leadership
- Builds trust and maintains credibility with stakeholders
- Effectively manages multiple responsibilities and competing priorities
- Demonstrates strong organizational and prioritization skills
- Is approachable, accessible, and relationship-oriented
- Demonstrates a strong commitment to equity and culturally responsive practices
- Understands and effectively implements Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Uses student achievement data, including MCAS results, to identify areas for improvement and raise academic performance
- Establishes clear expectations and holds individuals accountable
- Is responsive and follows through on commitments and communication
- Effectively navigates and de-escalates challenging or emotionally charged situations
- Understands the high academic standards and expectations of Massachusetts public schools
- Meets individuals where they are and demonstrates empathy for diverse perspectives and needs
- Establishes a clear vision and strategy for the district and effectively communicates the path forward
- Fosters a cohesive, collaborative leadership team
- Brings a sense of humor and a positive attitude to leadership
- Ensures consistent, transparent messaging so all stakeholders receive accurate and timely information
- Provides sound judgment, wisdom, and guidance in navigating complex challenges
- Demonstrates strong financial oversight and fiscal responsibility
- Understands Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requirements and regulations
- Demonstrates cultural competency and the ability to foster an inclusive, equitable district culture
- Is committed to serving Milton for the long term
- Is a strategic thinker who can translate vision into actionable plans and effective implementation
- Enjoys interacting with students and maintains a visible, active presence in schools
- Demonstrates a genuine passion for students and their success

Interim Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent (2)

Strengths of the District

- Dedicated teachers who consistently do exceptional work and are receptive to professional development and weekly learning walks
- Resilient educators who sustained the district through periods of leadership instability
- Teachers who are eager to grow professionally and value high-quality, meaningful professional development
- Positive organizational reset underway, with efforts to establish stronger systems, structures, and procedures

Challenges Facing the District

- Extended periods of leadership transitions and the need for sustained stability
- Need for greater collaboration, consistency, and alignment across schools
- Leadership transitions in key operational areas, including the recent hiring of a new business official and human resources administrator
- Need to strengthen and consistently implement staff evaluation processes and procedures
- Stagnant student achievement scores, with limited evidence of academic growth
- Lack of high-quality, meaningful professional development opportunities
- Need for a systematic and ongoing process to review and update curriculum
- Impact of ongoing organizational challenges and leadership transitions on staff morale
- Limited building capacity and overcrowding, highlighting the need for additional space and new facilities
- Need to strengthen academic rigor and provide appropriately challenging learning opportunities at the middle school level

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

- Builds strong, positive relationships with students, staff, families, and community members
- Brings experience and expertise in special education and DEIB
- Is an experienced, effective educational leader
- Maintains a strong focus on improving student outcomes and academic achievement
- Is willing and able to engage in difficult but necessary conversations
- Demonstrates strong financial acumen and fiscal responsibility
- Prioritizes meaningful professional development and serves as a strong instructional leader who understands the importance of ongoing curriculum review and improvement
- Understands and can effectively address school capacity challenges, facility needs, and new building projects
- Takes a holistic approach to evaluating and strengthening district programs and services
- Places teaching and learning at the forefront of district priorities
- Demonstrates a strong work ethic and provides stable, consistent leadership