



# St. Charles District 303 Leadership Profile Report Summary

FEBRUARY 28, 2022

# Broad Spectrum of Data Collection

Qualitative: We talked with more than 100 stakeholders in 42 interviews, focus groups, and forums, all of which were highly interactive.

Quantitative: 851 respondents. By group, the tally was:

- 463 parents
- 268 teachers and certificated staff members
- 11 classroom paraprofessionals
- 51 operational and office staff
- 31 administrators
- 7 students
- 20 taxpayers without children currently in school

Respondents made 1014 individual written comments

# Five Big Takeaways

The new superintendent must:

1. Ensure all students achieve at acceptable levels of our core curriculum, that they are well prepared for college and career and are real world ready.
2. Instill trust, restore relationships, rebuild a sense of community and mutual respect among all district voices.
3. Authentically and meaningfully engage with all stakeholders; communicate frequently, clearly, thoughtfully; and listen and observe actively and deeply.
4. Increase supports for staff, and create conditions to attract, recruit and retain an excellent teachers, leaders, and paraprofessionals.
5. Lead with confidence, courage, clarity, and presence.

# Survey: Most important leadership qualities are communication, culture and climate, teacher retention and recruitment

Percentage of Respondents Indicating Most Important								
		<u>Composite</u>	<u>Admin</u>	<u>Para-professional</u>	<u>Community Member</u>	<u>Operational &amp; Office Staff</u>	<u>Parent</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
1	Communicate clearly, frequently, and transparently	60	53	44	59	64	52	75
2	Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among all	49	67	67	71	51	36	67
3	Proven ability to retain and recruit excellent teachers	55	27	38	47	35	63	50
4	Provide a clear compelling vision for the future	25	50	22	56	28	24	22
5	Demonstrated experience in improving academic achievement for ALL students	40	38	56	53	23	46	31
6	Provide leadership for effective district wide curriculum and instruction	40	50	33	29	28	41	41
7	Understand and be sensitive to the needs of our diverse populaiton	34	47	11	47	42	27	43
8	Effectively plan for and manage the district's long term financial health	20	7	22	12	32	24	13
9	Be an accessible, visible presence throughout district; actively engage in community	25	37	22	41	36	18	31
10	Past experience as a superintendent in a similar district	10	3	22	12	12	12	5
KEY: Shaded cells = 50% or more respondents said "Most Important"								
NOTE: Students are not included because only 4 responded to these prompts								

# Leadership Qualities in a Superintendent Details

Respondents were asked to select 4 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results by constituent group are presented below. Each constituent group's top 4 most frequently selected statements are depicted by blue cells (reading the chart vertically); consensus is illustrated as multiple constituent groups selected the same statements (reading the chart horizontally). It is important to note the number "n" of constituents in each group when reviewing the "overall" percentages; certain groups have a great influence on the "overall" percentage.

Students were intentionally removed from this analysis as only 4 students responded. They are included in Appendix V.

 Top 4

	<b>Selected Overall</b> (n= 776)	<b>Admin.</b> (n=30)	<b>Para.</b> (n=9)	<b>Comm.</b> (n=17)	<b>Office</b> (n=43)	<b>Parent</b> (n=428)	<b>Teacher</b> (n=249)
Communicate clearly, frequently, and transparently	60%						
Proven ability to retain and recruit excellent teachers	55%						
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among all stakeholders	49%						
Demonstrated experience in improving academic achievement for ALL students	40%						

# Focus/Forums/Interviews

## Aspirations for Graduates:

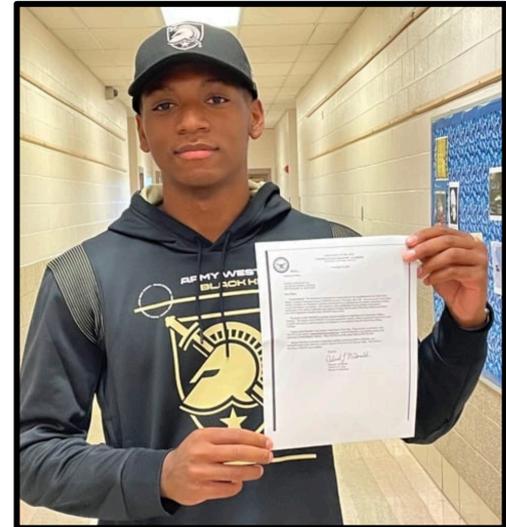
1. Kind, resilient, responsible, and curious.
2. Well-rounded and well prepared for whatever pathway they choose; college, career, life ready.
3. Critical thinkers and reasoners who can engage in respectful civil discourse.
4. Confident, independent, courageous, persevering learners.
5. Strong academic, social, and emotional foundations that will enable them to achieve their aspirations.

# Focus/Forums/Interviews Strengths:

1. The exceptional caliber of the teaching staff; they are caring, responsive, skilled and great at their jobs.
2. High level of parent engagement, passion, support, and expertise.
3. Extraordinary curricular and extra curricular opportunities for students.
4. The “bookends” of the district’s early childhood and transitions programs.
5. Community resources and supports.

# Survey: District Strengths

1. The district employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools.
2. Facilities are well maintained.
3. District schools are safe.
4. District technology infrastructure is sufficient to support use of technology in the classroom.
5. Technology is integrated into the classroom.



# Focus/Forums/Interviews: Major challenges and issues

1. Need for better communication: variable quality, uneven frequency, and lack of transparency have created trust and credibility issues for district leadership.
2. Retaining high quality teachers.
3. Declining test scores and the perception that the district has lacked effectiveness in responding to and reversing this trend.
4. Communicating the rationale for new initiatives and engaging staff and parents in the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of all new initiatives.
5. Addressing the emotional debates and disputes around “D.E.I.” and leading the community to a productive resolution and path forward.

# Focus/Forums/Interviews: Major challenges and issues

6. Restoring governance; Board members are stepping in to fill staff leadership vacuums which has an upside in responsiveness but a downside in micromanagement that leads to confusion, inefficiencies, and loss of productivity.
7. Rebuilding productive, collegial working relationships between and among board/district office/staff.
8. Addressing the plethora of what is perceived as too many top down initiatives and lack of sustained support for seeing them through.
9. Managing the “loudest voices” and social media.
10. Lack of clear vision and understanding of “what we stand for.”

# Focus/Forums/Interviews: Top priorities to address

1. Communication ... Communication ... Communication.
2. Studying and understanding the causes of the “academic slide” and develop a plan for reversing this trend.
3. Rebuilding productive, collegial working relationships between and among board/district office/staff/parents.
4. Be proactive in creating conditions and dialog that will result in unifying stakeholders around a clear direction.
5. Keeping and recruiting caring, talented, dedicated personnel.



# Survey: Top priorities to address

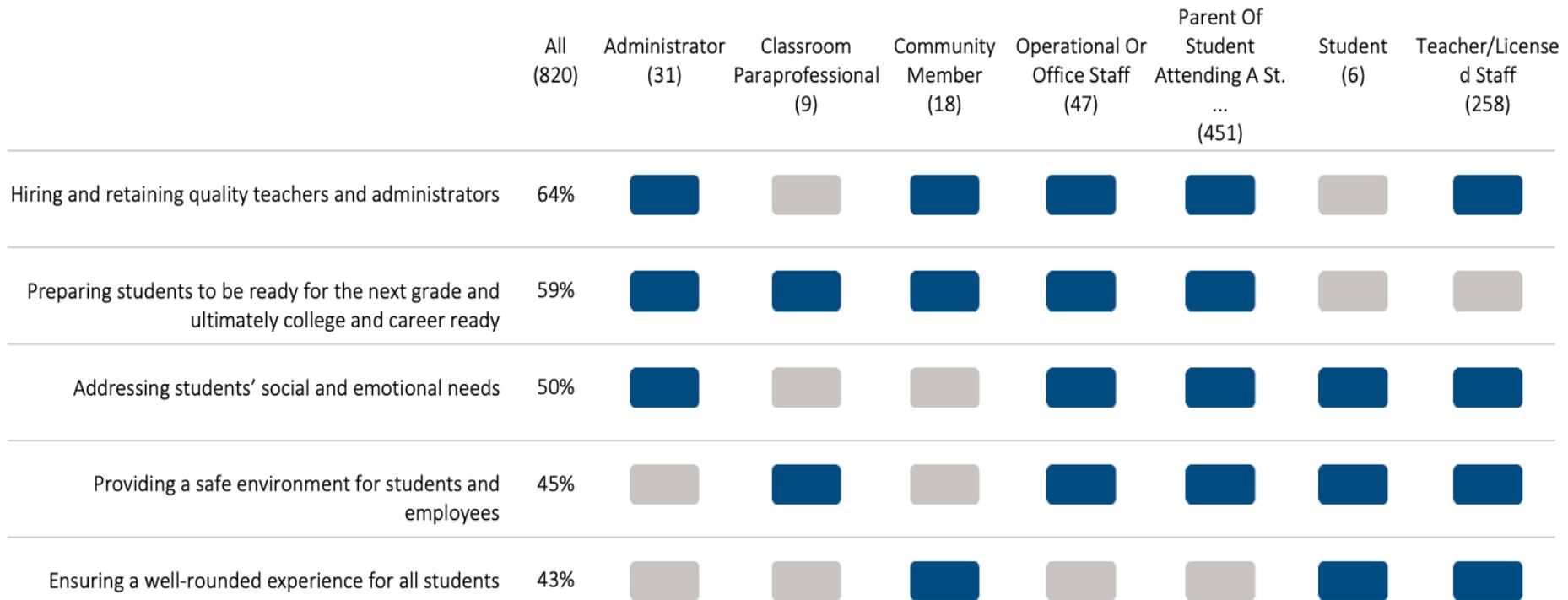
## Quantitative

1. Hiring and retaining quality teachers and administrators.
2. Preparing students to be ready for the next grade and ultimately college and career ready.
3. Addressing students' social and emotional needs.
4. Providing a safe (physically, socially, emotionally) environment for students and employees.
5. Ensuring a well-rounded experience for all students.

## Qualitative

1. Supporting current staff, and hiring and retaining quality teachers and administrators.
2. Improving academic achievement for all students.
3. Transparency.
4. Rebuilding, restoring, sustaining mutual trust, respect, and understanding.
5. Returning to normalcy.

# Survey Says: Priorities to Address



# Survey: The new leader MUST ...

1. Communicate clearly, frequently, and transparently
2. Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect
3. Recruit and retain effective personnel
4. Deliver, model, embody, and unify stakeholders around a clear, compelling vision
5. Improve the academic achievement of ALL students

# Summarizing: Top 10 desired characteristics of the next superintendent

1. Demonstrate leadership with the Board, staff, and community that is dynamic, principled, respected, and trusted.
2. An extraordinary communicator who will communicate with, listen to, authentically engage, and inspire the full array of stakeholders.
3. Be data savvy and focused. Evaluate new programs and services, share data transparently, query data thoughtfully, and use it productively.
4. Adept at working with the Board as a team member and being proactive in maintaining members' focus on district goals and governance roles and parameters.

5. Will effectively rebuild and continuously cultivate productive board/admin/teacher/staff relationships.
6. Adept, positive manager who serves and leads collaboratively to identify, lead, manage, and sustain necessary changes.
7. Visible, approachable, and relatable through involvement, being an active presence in schools and an *immersive, outgoing* presence in the community.
8. Be the public face of the schools and advocate for teachers and students.
9. Articulate a clear vision that puts students at the center of the district's work and will connect and unify disparate voices to achieve our mission.
10. Politically savvy without being a politician.

# Quotable Quotes from School Forums:

- Be visible and interact with teachers and kids and immerse yourself in the community to build trust
- Someone who can bring the community back together and make it a loving and kind and empathetic place again
- Bring us an expert collaborator and excels at engaging others and TWO WAY communication-share the WHY
- Invest in learning the culture of our community and having our district be the leader instead of following Naperville, New Trier, and Stevenson; they should come to us!
- Transparent and authentic communication and **meaningful** staff involvement in committee work
- We need a clear vision with flexible long range plan clearly communicated from a relatable, charismatic person
- Look the part, be the part; the leader has to be well grounded in all aspects of the role
- We need someone genuinely interested in students and puts them first; who really cares about them and who has the courage to make tough decisions for them even in the face of opposition

# Quotable Quotes from Survey Comments:

- A strong leader in communication and vision is needed to manage a very divisive [divided] community coming out of the pandemic.
- I believe we need to make sure the next superintendent has a great personality, ...who gives off a positive vibe and is "real" in his/her actions. I would like to see someone who makes you feel like you have known him/her for years when you speak with them and can connect with kids and parents. ...We need a go-getter who has energy to get things done.
- The word that keeps popping in my mind is a Leader! We should be the district others strive to be and look to for strong decision making and academic achievement!
- A superintendent who is relatable, approachable and grounded. He/She has to be IN TOUCH with the students, teachers and families in the District.
- We need a great leader with a clear, concise vision who can communicate said vision with buy-in from stakeholders (teachers). This person should be familiar to the staff and interact in some manner daily. A strong leader who is empathetic to students and staff needs but able to make tough decisions and communicate how those decisions were made. They should have great vision and communication.
- A proven leader who is transparent and genuine, and above all, has the highest interest in what is best for the students and staff in their district. A leader who is not afraid of their community, but embraces and challenges it to ensure the safety and highest standards for their students and staff.

## Immediate Next Steps

1. HYA will use the results of the Engagement Phase to recruit applicants and prepare interview questions.
2. HYA will continue to recruit applicants, process applications, conduct screening interviews, and reference checking.
3. HYA will present the slate in March.
4. The Board will interview semifinalist candidates.
5. Board will determine the process for handling finalists' interviews.

# With special thanks to:

**Tammy Marsan and other staff** for their expert support and assistance in scheduling the focus groups and interviews, setting up the Superintendent Search web page, and persevering with communications in order to ensure we received more than 800 survey responses!

We are most appreciative of working with such dedicated professionals.