

Carmel Unified School District
Leadership Profile Report
Superintendent of Schools Search

January 2024

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Valerie Pitts, Ed.D. of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in December 2023 for the Carmel Unified School District (CUSD). The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultant received when she met with individuals and groups in 1:1 interviews, focus groups, and virtual community forums as well as from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. These interviews, focus groups, forums, and survey were structured to assist the Board in determining the primary professional and personal characteristics desired in the CUSD superintendent. Additionally, the online survey gathered information regarding the state of the district – views from stakeholders. It should be noted that the data are not a scientific sampling, nor necessarily describe the majority opinions of stakeholders. They are a summary of most frequently heard statements, opinions and concerns among those participating.

Participation

December 1st - 11th 2023, the consultant conducted the focus groups, interviews, and community forums. An online survey was circulated and posted on the district website. A total of just over 100 staff, parents and community stakeholders participated in the interviews, focus groups, and community forums. The community online survey report attached, included 364 stakeholders representing students, staff, parents and the community.

Summary Results of [Survey](#) regarding the State of the District (2023)

(For a detailed explanation of methodologies and quantitative results please see the attached Superintendent Profile Survey)

Strengths of the District

The survey (see attached) reports perceived district strengths are:

- Integrated technology
- Effective teachers, administrators and staff
- Safe schools
- Well-maintained facilities
- Students are on track for the grade level and college and career ready.

Survey results for the top leadership characteristics desired in the superintendent are:

- Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the district;
- Recruit, employ and retain effective personnel throughout the district and its schools;
- Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies;
- Be an effective manager of the district's day-to-day operations;
- Provide transparent communication;
- Provide a clear compelling vision for the future;
- Foster a positive and professional culture of mutual trust and respect.

Listening Sessions and Feedback

The interviews and focus groups revealed deeper insights into stakeholder's desires for the next superintendent. The purpose of recent listening sessions was to

- Offer opportunities for stakeholder input on characteristics for a successful superintendent in CUSD.
- Review Superintendent Characteristics from the Spring 21 Leadership Profile.
- Listen, learn, and develop a revised, prioritized set of top characteristics.

Listening sessions and input opportunities occurred December 4-11. Including focus groups, online forums, 1:1 interviews, email and calls, there were just over 100 participants.

The sessions were productive. All opinions are important and were heard. It is important to state that data collection was not a statistical scientific sampling – as with the online survey, participation was voluntary. *Despite these caveats, participants and respondents were forthright, respectful, kind and clearly want what is best for CUSD students and remain proud to be a part of CUSD.* The following summary presents comments that were heard most frequently. (For a comparison of comments characteristics identified most frequently in 2021 against recent (2023) listening sessions, please refer to the Board presentation deck of Dec. 14, 2023, CUSD Board meeting).

The Superintendent

Personal and Professional Characteristics of the Next Superintendent

It is imperative the next superintendent take time to develop an awareness of the CUSD community's temperament and culture—educated, affluent, proactive parents, caring, dedicated and talented staff and a diverse student enrollment from the geographic reaches of the district. They should be *familiar with a segmented, multi-faceted community and culture*

and how to facilitate change in CUSD with a number of different perspectives and viewpoints. A CUSD superintendent should be able to mitigate pre-existing tensions with ideas about how to problem solve.

The superintendent must be an *outstanding, visionary leader* who excels at engaging all voices, listening carefully, have a nuanced understanding of different viewpoints, mediating dissension, and unifying stakeholders around a common vision. A strong and assertive leader can stabilize the district while keeping it moving forward, continuously improving and focusing on student achievement and learning. This includes communicating regularly about strategies, initiatives and data. In order to continuously improve the superintendent must keep academic excellence and robust competitive programs as the focus, closing gaps in achievement among student groups, and getting CUSD back to the top.

The CUSD superintendent *exemplifies integrity, honesty, trust, (and is trustworthy)* and is passionate about ensuring excellence for every child. The superintendent is student-centered and inclusive (for all the district students), ensuring diversity and equity are visible, demonstrating empathy, compassion, kindness, and caring for district students, staff, and the community. There must be continuity to create trust. The superintendent must be successful in building positive relationships.

The superintendent must be an *extraordinary, responsive communicator, engaging all voices,* and with demonstrated skills in facilitating an array of opinions among stakeholders. They must listen carefully and be able to mediate discussions and unify stakeholders around a common vision, educating groups and individuals through clear, concise and transparent communication.

The superintendent must be *visible, approachable, and relatable* through active presence in the schools – both in teaching and learning and innovative opportunities and activities and regularly attending extra-curricular functions and athletic events as well as being an *active and immersive community* presence. Building trust and relationships as a foundation for sustaining and strengthening a culture of belonging and connection for students, staff, and the community is crucial.

An effective CUSD Superintendent has *self-confidence, and is a humble, servant leader* in service to all stakeholders. They must have a strong moral compass and make sound and swift decisions in service to students and the CUSD community. The effective CUSD leader knows when to delegate to capable district and site leaders. They embody integrity and honesty and communicate frequently, transparently and responsively. Importantly they demonstrate a willingness to think outside the box and build/maintain collaborative relationships and partnerships throughout the community. This includes fostering, honoring and respecting parents as partners.

Additional skills and characteristics worth mentioning include experience in leading, managing and developing the Board, putting systems and processes in place that are efficient and effective across the organization, keeping us safe and have a commitment to longevity.

It should also be noted that numerous comments were received regarding how important it is that the superintendent be someone who is willing to become an active member of the community. The superintendent must serve long term as a stabilizing presence and admired community leader. There was a preference for an individual with California experience, and a willingness to learn about the unique community that is CUSD.

The superintendent must:

- 1) Be an extraordinary communicator – clear, thoughtful, listen actively and deeply, be responsive, connect with all stakeholders, educate us.*
- 2) First understand both the history and current conditions of the community and then build relationships, create collaborative consensus, and move the district forward with a shared aspirational and achievable vision. This will build trust with and among disparate voices.*
- 3) Stick with us. Be highly visible, accessible and approachable and participate as a community member.*
- 4) Be a strong and stable and consistent leader with the ability to hold our direction with transparent decision-making that keeps students, their achievement and well-being at the center of all we do.*
- 5) Respect, value and nurture our input as students, staff and parents. Trust us.*

Performance Expectations for the Superintendent:

- 1) Foster (rebuild) a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among all stakeholders.*
- 2) Sustain and strengthen a culture of belonging and connections for all students and staff.*
- 3) Provide regular and transparent communication.*
- 4) Be visible throughout the schools and community and actively engage in community life.*
- 5) Create and support a strong, high functioning governance team.*
- 6) Provide consistent, stable leadership that supports students to be the best they can be, with excellent instruction, robust curriculum and safe, caring learning environments.*

Sampling of verbatim comments heard during the listening sessions.

Knows primary role is managing board and embraces that. Helps the board commit to and understand how they conduct themselves in public despite differences of opinion. A process for self-reflecting constantly.

Develop other leaders and bring them together collectively and move us forward. Pushes us and gives us honest feedback. Asks the right questions.

Shift the culture and understand change will cause pushback.

Willing to stand up for the right things.

Compassionate, empathetic and thick-skinned

Someone who speaks to us as equals (not that they know better)

Brings a balanced approach; trust others; don't micromanage

Fostering (ie: rebuilding) a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among all stakeholders

Sustaining and strengthening a culture of belonging and connections for all students and staff

Providing regular and transparent communication

Being visible throughout the schools and community, actively engage in community life

Create and support a strong, high functioning governance team

Provide consistent, stable leadership that supports students to be the best they can be, with excellent instruction, robust curriculum, and safe, caring learning environments.

Conclusion

The survey and focus groups help identify skills and experiences the superintendent for CUSD will need to succeed in this high-performing and diverse school district and community. The leadership profile using the information gleaned from the survey and focus groups is used guide and inform the board in hiring a permanent superintendent, with the result of securing the most outstanding superintendent for Carmel Unified School District based on the comprehensive input gathered from focus groups and surveys during the stakeholder engagement and listening sessions.

We want to thank each participating stakeholder for their contributions during the focus groups, community forums, and survey respondents. Additionally, we deeply appreciate the support and assistance of Michelle Goncalves!