



# LISTENING SESSIONS AND FEEDBACK: SUPERINTENDENT POSITION

Summary Report  
Carmel Unified School District  
December 13, 2023



# Purpose of Listening Sessions

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- Offer opportunities for stakeholder input on characteristics for a successful superintendent in CUSD
- Review Superintendent Characteristics from Spring 21 Leadership Profile
- Focus Groups, Survey, Interviews
  - Email, Phone, Zoom, Text
- Listen, learn, develop revised, prioritized set of top characteristics

## Timeline

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- Communication, planning and scheduling Nov. 29 – Dec. 1
  - Focus Groups in person and virtual Dec. 4 – 11
  - Survey Dec. 4-11
  - Prepare Report Dec. 12
  - Present Report Dec. 13
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- Many Thanks to Michelle Goncalves for her assistance with logistics and organization!

# Participants

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- Staff and Parent Focus Groups (60 total participants over three sessions), Student Leader
- 1:1 interviews and phone calls (21)
- Direct email (12)
- Texts (8)
- Survey (365)
- (155 focus groups '21) (606 survey, 273 parents)

# Productive Sessions and Input

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- The opinions of all participants in focus groups and listening sessions are important and were heard
- The following summary presents what was heard and learned but it's not a statistical representative sampling
- Important caveats
  - The survey was not scientifically designed
  - It was not a randomly-stratified sample
  - It was a survey of convenience and self-selected participation
  - It could be taken from multiple devices; duplicates were identified and removed
- Bottom Line: Despite the caveats, participants and respondents were forthright, respectful, kind, want what is best for CUSD students, and remain proud to be a part of CUSD.

# LPR Top 10 Characteristics of Superintendent (Spring 21)

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- Excels at engaging all voices, listening carefully, mediating discussion, and unifying stakeholders around a common vision
  - *Responsive communicator - vertical and horizontal, proactive, educates us, transparent, excellent listener*
- Inspirational, energetic, and passionate about ensuring excellence for every child
  - Focus on students
- Demonstrate empathy, compassion, kindness and caring for district students, staff, and the community
- Empathy, honesty and transparency
  - *Integrity, inclusivity, strong moral compass*
- Courageous, confident, thick-skinned, yet humble +++
  - Makes sound and swift decisions
- An extraordinary communicator who understands and has demonstrated how to communicate with and listen to an array of stakeholders
  - A nuanced understanding of different viewpoints, finding common ground and consensus that results in moving forward
- Understand our community and is well-versed in CA school funding, laws and policies
  - *Familiar with a segmented, multi-faceted community and culture and how to facilitate change in CUSD with a numbers of different perspectives and viewpoints. Mitigate pre-existing tensions with ideas about how to problem solve.*

## LPR Top 10 Characteristics of Superintendent (continued)

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- Visible, approachable, and relatable through involvement and being an active presence in schools and an immersive presence in the community +++
- Create stability and rebuilds trust among and between stakeholders
  - Continuity, consistency for trust. Successful experience building relationships
- A leader who excels at strategic planning and keeping the district moving forward and competitive
  - Academic excellence; robust, competitive programs; closes achievement gaps; gets us back to the top

# Additional Skills Rising to the Top Fall 23

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- Experience in leading, managing and developing the Board.
- Can put systems and processes in place that are efficient and effective across the organization
- Values and enables parent partnerships
- Keeps us all safe
- Will commit and stay!





# Top Six Characteristics Survey

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- Provide a clear compelling vision for the future
- Provide transparent communication
- Be visible throughout the district and actively engage in community life
- Foster a positive, professional culture of mutual trust and respect
- Effectively plan and manage the long term financial health of the district
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement them

# Top Five Characteristics

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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.

## Other Comments

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- Knows primary role is managing board and embraces that. Helps the board commit to and understand how they conduct themselves in public despite differences or 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

# Comments

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- A collaborative schools approach – consistency and inclusivity between schools
- Someone who is willing to make and makes tough decisions
- Value that we have a highly sought after district; champions our community
- Keep us fiscally solvent
- No one can walk on water but someone who can work with everyone to establish common ground
- We need someone with significant experience
- Someone who lives here, builds there life here and that we run into at the grocery store
- Problem solve, proactive, don't focus on negative, minimize drama
- Understands and provides leadership across a myriad of ongoing issues; best instructional practices, equity, Title 9, Career Tech Ed

# Expectations for the Next Superintendent\*

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- 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.

- 1-4 \*Spring 21, 5-6 Fall 23