April 4, 2023

To: Sharon Ofek  
From: Max McGee  
RE: CUSD PRINCIPAL SEARCH – DRAFT TIMELINE

Carmel USD Proposed Principal Search Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROPOSED DATES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Meeting with Superintendent</td>
<td>April 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Survey Open/Close</td>
<td>April 14 - 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posting and Advertising</td>
<td>April 13 - 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct interviews, focus, groups, and forums</td>
<td>April 17 - 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leadership Profile Report Completed</td>
<td>April 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Opens and Closes</td>
<td>April 13 – May 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slate Presented to Cabinet to Identify Semi-Finalists</td>
<td>May 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabinet/Team Interviews with Semi-Finalists</td>
<td>May 8 -10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabinet/Team Interviews with Finalists</td>
<td>May 12-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcement of Appointment</td>
<td>May 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Assumes Responsibility</td>
<td>July 1 or August 1</td>
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CHS PRINCIPAL SEARCH ADVERTISING AND APPLICATION:

Job Description

Carmel Unified School District (CUSD) is seeking an outstanding educational leader to be the next PRINCIPAL OF CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL. CUSD covers over 600 square miles and offers unmatched natural beauty, historic points of interest and life in a small town. It encompasses some of the most scenic areas of the world, combining the unspoiled natural beauty with the environmental stewardship, artistic creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit of California’s most famous peninsula.

Carmel High School serves 850 students from Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel Valley, Pebble Beach, and Big Sur. It has earned a reputation for academic excellence, offers numerous AP classes, electives, and provides students with abundant extra-curricular activities.

The successful candidate should have a proven track record as a confident and responsive leader, and as an effective communicator who can establish, maintain, and restore relationships.

Desired Education/Experience

- A successful track record of improving the academic achievement of all students;
- A background as a high school teacher, with school leadership experience strongly desirable;
- A strong record of partnering with parents and community members;
- Proven success at hiring, developing, and retaining excellent teachers and staff.

The district will offer a competitive salary and benefits package contingent upon professional qualifications and achievements as an educational leader.

Application Deadline: Monday, May 1, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Application and Selection Process

Applicants should submit the following via email to HYA’s president, Glenn “Max” McGee, maxmcgee@hyasearch.com with CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL SEARCH in the subject line:

- Full resume
- Cover letter stating why they are seeking the job and why they will be an excellent fit for Carmel High School
- Full contact information for three references who can be immediately contacted
- A one page written response that specifically describes how your leadership has resulted in improving students’ success.
Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) Max McGee and Valerie Pitts in April 2023 for the new principal of Carmel High School (CHS). The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in-person and via Zoom in either individual interviews or focus group/listening sessions. In addition, we tallied the results of the online surveys completed by students and stakeholders. The surveys, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather information to assist the Superintendent in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected feedback regarding the strengths of the school and some of the challenges that the new principal will be facing.

Our goal was to understand the uniqueness of the school and community, learn the school’s exceptional strengths and significant challenges, hear stakeholders’ diverse perspectives, and deepen our knowledge of the attributes, characteristics, qualifications, expertise, and experience necessary to lead the school. The information we received from students as young as 14 to residents whose parents and grandparents graduated from CHS has enabled us to accomplish this goal and develop a comprehensive profile for the type of leader who will be the perfect fit for the school.

Topline findings from HYA’s Engage Phase include:

STRENGTHS

Common strengths across all stakeholder groups were:
- Family aspect of the community in a naturally beautiful setting
- The district has an outstanding faculty and support staff who clearly care about the students from a whole child perspective
- The opportunities for students academically, artistically, and athletically are exceptional; moreover, the broad and deep array of extra-curricular clubs and activities at CHS are outstanding.
- Despite limited diversity, the schools strive to be welcoming, accepting, supportive, and encouraging of all students and families from an array of backgrounds, ethnicities, and identities.
• Students acquire a “phenomenal” academic education that prepares them to succeed in college.
• Caliber and general motivation of students; they want to do well and excel; they are generally good to one another, trustworthy, and show terrific school spirit
• Parents are supportive of school, students, and teachers; they are involved and engaged
• The schools and community are safe places.

CHALLENGES
Among the many challenges noted, the most common ones were:
• Lack of consistent stability in leadership at the school and district level
• That academic and social emotional needs of most historically underrepresented students are not being met by the school or district.
• Opportunities for students not immediately college bound; more dual enrollment and CTE options are necessary
• Dealing with the local, state, and national caustic political divisiveness and eroding civility.
• Students report and a current and historical undercurrent of racism, sexism, antisemitism, and homophobia that requires a systemic solution to address root causes
• Declining staff morale
• A perceived overemphasis on social issues has become detrimental to teaching and learning; a balance is needed.
• Student and staff mental health and wellness; removing the stigma of visiting the wellness center.
• The school is becoming more and more separated from the larger community; CHS needs to reconnect with those stakeholders who do not have children in the schools.
• The discipline referral process appears to be unsystematic and relies on individual administrators to process each referral. Furthermore, the disciplinary responses are not uniform and subject to individual biases.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS
• Strong preference for an individual from the immediate region who knows our community and how to positively engage the whole community
• Transparent and trustworthy: “Transparency is key and that is the foundation for trust and trust is the key to success.”
• An exceptionally experienced, talented, powerful, and clear communicator.
• Demonstrated ability and evidence of:
  o Building coalitions toward achieving desired goals and outcomes
  o Providing programs and services that effectively and measurably support student staff mental health and wellness
  o Establishing a cultural climate of mutual trust and respect among all stakeholders
  o Engaging student and staff voice
Developing innovative pathway programs, CTE options, and flexible programming for students in need of alternative educational options.

**DESIRED ATTRIBUTES**

- Politically astute relationship builder and unifier who excels at engaging all voices, listening carefully, mediating disagreements, and building trust.
- An outgoing, approachable, presence whose positivity can “lift people up.”
- Authentically and deeply committed, energetic, and passionate about ensuring excellence for EVERY child.
- Role model of integrity, honesty, and transparency with an outstanding work ethic balanced with preserving family time for students and staff.
- Courageous, confident, resilient, thick-skinned, yet humble, empathetic, and patient.
- An extraordinary communicator with savvy expertise in dealing with social media, and an accomplished public speaker and presenter.
- Visible, outgoing, approachable, and relatable through involvement and being an active presence in schools and immersive, positive, and enthusiastic presence in the community with the ability to “lift people up.”
- A role model of civility and common sense and willing to and comfortable with having hard conversations in public.
- An authentically passionate, dynamic leader who makes students’ best interest paramount in every decision.
- An asset minded individual who sincerely values our teachers, kids, and community and will take the necessary time and make the concerted, successful effort to engage stakeholders, and learn from and about our school, district, and greater community; not be in a rush to make changes.

HYA uses this Leadership Profile Report to recruit applicants who will be a sound fit for CHS, as the basis for interview questions throughout the selection process, as criteria for recommending slated candidates, and as foundational information for the new leader to develop a successful 100 day plan and initial set of annual goals.

**Participation**

The focus groups, interviews, and forums were conducted between April 18 and 26, 2023. The online stakeholder survey timeline was April 17 to April 26, 2023. All discussions were respectful, insightful, and helpful. The HYA associates conducting the focus groups and interviews would like to thank the participants for giving so freely of their time and for the depth of the discussions regarding the CHS principal search.

HYA consultants met with approximately 60 stakeholders in interviews, focus groups, and forums, all highly interactive. Regarding quantitative data, 472 stakeholders responded to the survey and 421 of these had a 95+% completion rate.
By group, the tally of completed surveys was:

- 188 students
- 168 parents
- 53 teachers and certificated staff members
- 7 classified staff members
- 5 administrators

Respondents made 914 individual written comments.

Readers should note that the data are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. That said, the individuals who participated are clearly invested in CHS and eager to have a voice in the principal search. Thus, it is important to learn from them and incorporate their thoughts into finding CHS’ next principal.

Finally, it should be noted data were gathered the month following the dismissal of the CHS principal and having the superintendent placed on administrative leave. While we cannot definitively ascertain if these events skewed responses, we believe that there unsettling impact on students and staff was reflected in several of the survey comments and that the next CHS principal will need to invest time and effort in restoring trust and healing divisions among stakeholders.

Summary of Stakeholder Input

Introduction

Strengths of the District

While numerous comments were made regarding the strengths of the District, the following “top five” significant themes often surfaced across multiple stakeholder groups.

Uniqueness of the district and the elementary school communities

Families move to Carmel and stay there because of all the greater community has to offer in education, arts, athletics, environment, and atmosphere. That said, the elementary schools that send their students to middle school and high school serve a full continuum of families from impoverished to wealthy, from newcomers to multi-generational, from non-English speaking to multi-lingual. This rich diversity is an asset and opportunity for the next leader to sustain and strengthen the opportunities for students and families. Moreover, CHS is in a beautiful geographical location with the availability of extraordinary outdoor activities and opportunities. The rich biodiversity inspires environmental stewardship and sparks adventure and exploration.
Exceptional teaching and support staff
The exceptional caliber of the teaching staff was mentioned across most focus groups. Teachers and paraprofessionals are caring, responsive, skilled, and excellent at their jobs. They are seen as active members of their communities – students value seeing them outside the classroom. Specifically, with regard to teachers, students and their families felt teachers were generous with their time and dedicated to student learning.

Opportunities for students
The extensive academic offerings and nearly countless clubs and activities enable nearly all students find a connection to CHS. While CHS has earned an outstanding reputation for athletic, artistic, and academic performance, we heard how important all the various clubs were to students involved in them and how teachers supported them.

The caliber of CHS students
The students are highly regarded by all stakeholders. They frequently cited how motivated they were, their great school spirit, their creativity, and their general compassion for one another. In meeting with them, we were impressed with their depth of thought, their commitment to CHS, their respect for one another, and how fondly they spoke of their teachers and the opportunities the school provided for them.

Parental support and engagement
While several stakeholders mentioned that this can be a strength and a challenge, most see the parent community as a positive. They value the teachers and are ready volunteers and contributors of their talents and their funds. Parents are thirsty for a dynamic, accessible new principal to connect with them and are open to and eager for leadership stability.

Challenges and Issues

Morale
The decline in staff morale is a serious concern of parents and students as well as staff. Contributing factors have been the press coverage, perceived lack of transparency concerning the dismissal of the current principal and the placement of the superintendent on administrative leave, disruptive behaviors at school board meetings, and a sense of being “rudderless” and “adrift.” Bringing a sense of joyful purpose to the workplace needs to be at the top of the new leaders “to do” list.

Student and Staff Mental Health and Wellness
This challenge was a key concern of all stakeholder groups. The pandemic, leadership changes, rise of an outspoken vocal community group, and other factors have resulted in a need for a systemic approach to addressing student wellness. While individuals are making significant efforts, there is a sense that there are untapped community supports as well as the need for an internal system wide approach to mental health.
More opportunities for underserved and underrepresented students
All groups noted that CHS serves college bound students well, but that it is not necessarily a “good fit” for those who are struggling academically, just learning English, want to pursue a career path, or just do not yet know what their path will be. Again, individual staff members are making good efforts, but a clearly articulated and thoughtfully followed multi-tiered support system appears to be an important need.

The need to strengthen and sustain community connections
One of the greatest potential assets for students is the community itself. We heard how the issues with the lights, the mascot, the leadership changes, and the like may be creating a rift with the greater community. The new principal will need to extend the reach of CHS well beyond the school walls and fields to capitalize on all the community has to offer.

An “undercurrent” of both overt and unintentional biases
Students were especially articulate of how this undercurrent impacts them. The lack of a system for preventing or deterring problems related to this matter as well as for handling problems that arise have resulted in frustration and anger. On one hand, some feel that not enough has been done to support marginalized students and groups and on the other hand, some feel that far too much attention to biases has distracted from the business of education - teaching and learning. A systems approach to addressing the undercurrent would be valued by both sides!

Top Priorities from Focus Groups

- Ensure stable leadership that will listen to the full array of voices and foster coalitions that will engage and unify diverse and opposing viewpoints toward achieving common goals for the benefit of students.

- Authentically value and meaningfully engage all stakeholders to rebuild and restore trust.

- Immerse yourself in our community and school to understand what is unique and to forge strong, supportive relationships.

- Addressing student and staff mental health and wellness issues while simultaneously sustaining a culture of academic, athletic, and artistic excellence.

- Communicate clearly, forcefully, and forthrightly about what is great about CHS, what needs improvement, and what our path forward will be.
Survey Results

Quantitative Results
The responses were more aligned than we generally see in many districts. This overall congruence on priorities, challenges, and desired characteristics is indicative of both the support stakeholders have for CHS.

As Table I shows, the clear top priority for the new superintendent will be to foster a culture of trust and transparency. Additional priorities include improving staff morale and attending to the social emotional/mental health and wellness needs of students, which in turn is connected to enhancing student connectedness and belonging.

Table I: Priorities for the New Superintendent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY STATEMENT</th>
<th>ADMIN n=5</th>
<th>CLASSIFIED n=7</th>
<th>CERTIFIED n=53</th>
<th>STUDENTS n=188</th>
<th>PARENTS n=168</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fostering a culture of trust and transparency</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing or improving systems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementing innovative programs and services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improving morale</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing opportunity and achievement gaps</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fostering student connectedness and belonging</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase attention to students’ mental health</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving communication</td>
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**KEY:** GREEN SHADING IS TOP PRIORITY
BLUE SHADING IS SECOND TOP PRIORITY

Turning to leadership qualities (Table II), stakeholders felt the most important are the ability to: 1) rebuild and restore mutual respect, trust, and transparency and 2) communicate clearly, frequently and authentically. It is noteworthy that the three largest stakeholder groups responding – students, parents, and certificated staff – were all in agreement with these top two qualities. We seldom see this alignment and agreement among these three groups; thus, it is imperative for the next leader to be highly skilled and experienced in these areas.
In addition, as Table III shows, the new principal will need experience in successfully serving English language learners and students with disabilities as well as in meeting students’ social emotional needs. Survey respondents indicated that the school has much room to improve in these areas.

Table III
Qualitative Results

While many of the comments paralleled the quantitative data, a significant number of comments in all stakeholder groups expressed the desire to have the former principal return. We have not included these comments below because they contain his name as well as those of other individuals. As expected, some comments landed on opposite sides of social justice issues as with these verbatim examples of desired attributes and qualifications:

*Experience in engaging culturally diverse students, families and staff; being a leader in culturally responsive and inclusive instructional practices*

*Friendly and eagerness to build a better and stronger community and refocus on education of the core curriculums versus all of this woke nonsense*

However, overall, there was significant support for students of color and LGTBQ students.

The following are representative verbatim comments (i.e., typos and grammatical errors have not been edited or corrected) from stakeholder groups that provide a window into the attributes they desire the next leader have:

**Students**

*Involved with the students and cares*

*Open minded Responsible Communication Supportive*

*Nice and welcoming to all; funny; cool*

*Someone who understands student life, someone who can advocate for mental health and minorities, and someone who can be a strong leader*

*I believe that when a leader is confident and efficient it is ideal. Every leader must be a good person to earn the respect in their position to eventually lead a group.*

*Someone considerate, who appreciates peoples concerns, and cares about connecting to the students*

1. *The principal makes an effort to connect with students and build relationships - walk up to students at lunch/break and spark a conversation. 2. Willing to change the atmosphere of the school.*
I think they need to be able to communicate in an articulate and coherent manner. They need to be intelligent and compelling but also be able to have the strength and determination to handle pressing issues at the school.

Paying attention to studies mental health, and having fair judgment about what choices they make

Bullying, racism, and just disrespect that students are exhibiting to other students. Instead of ignoring the problem, shed light on the situation. Another topic is to address the sexual harassment, show the district is actually going to do something about it.

The new principal should be strong in addressing disruptive behaviors, sexual assault, and racial discrimination. The new principal should openly communicate with students and parents when problems arise in schools.

Connection with the student body - the principal is able to talk to the students and get opinions and students feel comfortable around the principal. Respect - the principal should show students respect (there should be mutual respect) and listen to their input.

Staff (includes certificated, classified, and administrative)

We need an INCREDIBLE leader to help us heal, rebuild, and feel inspired for the future.

Providing stability looks like creating space where people feel psychologically safe, like they can depend on you to answer their questions, hear their ideas and address their concerns. Communication is key for this trait.: Building trust is the foundation for leading. Honesty, clarity and behavioral predictability all make up trust. Leaders must adopt the trait of trustworthiness and prioritize it as one of their most important skills.

COMPASSIONATE communication skills. WILLINGNESS to take a stand on illegal, destructive & disempowering practices happening on campus. CONNECTED to all staff with an appreciation for how each role fits in the greater puzzle

Excellent personal skills- get to know your students and staff. Be caring and communicate. - Follow through- don’t have too many initiatives and don’t let things fall through the cracks or be swept under the rug -Be inclusive and demanding of a safe campus for ALL students. Say it loud!

Committed to celebrating the existing character, charm, and strengths of CHS while having a vision and actual ability to build on that and move us forward as a school. Committed to a shared leadership model. Someone who builds others up and optimizes their potential
Coalition builder, creates structures that support teacher input

Courage, integrity, work ethic. Fairness, caring. Involved, responsive.

Knowledge of the area and community/ embedded in the community/from the community

The next principal should work on trust/relationships first, hold teachers and staff accountable for doing their job, not be afraid to be a decision maker, but include others in the process so there can be some "teeth" in the decision. The teachers here are well qualified and very talented, tap into their expertise to help build the CHS community that the students/staff and teachers deserve.

1. The ability to form relationships with staff and students. Personable 2. Ability to recognize where things need improvement and have the leadership / strength to do the right thing with integrity. Address the areas that are not right and help guide us to be better. Integrity is key.

1. Someone who can establish, maintain, and restore relationships with students, staff, parents, and district colleagues 2. Someone who is able to shift practices to address student needs - build buy in, collaboratively develop a plan for change, and follow through on implementation 3. Someone who values, creates space for, and elevates student voice as a means of shaping the school community - culture and climate

The ability to implement systemic procedures to meet the academic, behavioral and social needs of ALL students and the intestinal fortitude to push back against deeply entrenched but not necessarily evidence-based or effective practices

Establish systems to meet all students academic and behavioral needs. Re-establish trust with all stakeholders through transparent decision-making supported by data.

1) Improve morale by building teacher, staff unity & confidence in Adminstrators at CHS & DO 2) exemplify authentic compassion and strength. Thank you for asking

Pull the staff together by fostering a culture of communication, trust and transparency.

Parents

1) Understands this community. 2) Inspires teachers to be excellent so students are compelled to be excellent. 3) Promotes PERSONAL accountability of students, parents and staff
Inspiring Effective Respectful Available, transparent, people friendly, listen to others, compassion, empathy, tolerant, courageous, innovative, balance, judgement, perspective

Cares about ALL students and staff, open minded problem solver, encourages cooperation

Leadership (create a productive, safe, inclusive school climate; lead by example) Relationship-building (with students, staff, community, healthy collaboration) Goal-Oriented (developing a culture of excellence that rewards positive achievements.)

Person LIVES IN and has already worked in CUSD, or at least PG or Monterey. Carmel has a unique set of students from migrants to military transient families to private jet level wealth. All should be respected and encouraged in their unique challenges.

Unifier, communicator, cheerleader in chief

Strong leadership and taking charge, understanding student culture, focusing on real issues, not useless ones.

Forward-thinking: innovative, visionary educator and a model of modern diversity, equity and inclusion values effective leader: inspirational communicator experienced articulating and executing on strategic plans compassionate: thoughtful, ethical, empathetic and well-informed

Engaged listener with open, flexible mind, willing to explore difficult topics and ready to set a standard of high quality communication and diplomacy. Appreciation for the contributions of all stakeholders rather than those that serve the principals base. Ability to bring groups together. When questions come to the table, ability to follow through with viable action with feedback to those bringing question forward.

Have excellent communication skills (self-aware, humble, coachable, empathetic, conscientious, team builder, collaborative).

The school board and superintendent should be focused on generating a more respectful community/parent climate. The principal should be a student-centric and teacher-focused leader. They should be a compassionate, empathetic leader that prioritizes balancing students’ creative, social, emotional and intellectual growth. As education and the future workplace is rapidly evolving, they should be future-focused and ready to implement innovative cutting-edge educational technologies (meaningful integration of AI, dictation software, digital arts) ... they should be wholeheartedly committed to differentiated instruction and to supporting students with a range of learning styles and thinking differences. This new principal will inherit fantastic teachers and should value, nurture and support them.
School leaders must be adept at building relationships and connect with people inside and outside the school. The foundation of these relationships includes respect and trust.

The turnover in the "executive management roles" within Carmel Unified is troubling, concerning and unacceptable for a CA Distinguished School. Stay clear from politics and ideology and focus on high caliber talent so that you minimize turnover which destabilizes the entire structure.

We are a fractured community and need to come together. We need a leader who is likeable, supportive, unwavering

I believe that the students mental health, happiness and motivation is very key to a healthy and successful high school. A person that means business, has good communication skills and a sense of humor would be a much welcomed change.

Ensuring students are thriving and healthy; joyfully balancing creative, social, emotional well-being with educational excellence enabling students to pursue their passions and career tracks of interest,

Hopefully, the district will catch a hint and hire somebody from within our community. However if they do not, the new principal will need to immediately meet with teachers and staff to get real input on what the school needs. The teachers are our greatest resource. They knew our kids better than any one sitting at a desk in the district office. We need to allow the teachers to help shape the vision for the school.

Top Characteristics of Next CHS Principal

The following summary of personal characteristics and attributes, skills, and experiences includes analysis of input gathered during listening sessions, student and stakeholder survey results, and responses to open-ended items on the stakeholder survey.

1. **Transparent, honest, and impeccable integrity.**
   A common theme across all groups was the consternation, confusion, and anger regarding all that has transpired in the last few months. Stakeholders are starved for a leader who they can trust to be honest and forthright with them. They will demand transparency and openness and expect the leader to be a role model of integrity.

2. **An extraordinary communicator who will communicate with, listen to, authentically engage, and inspire the full array of stakeholders.**
   As noted above, organizational trust is essential to successful progress and effective leadership and the new leader will need to establish and nurture mutually respectful relationships with internal stakeholder groups and external partners. Consistent and transparent **two-way** communication will play a critical role in establishing these
relationships. Most importantly, the principal will need to listen with a desire to understand, make decisions after gathering and considering input, and communicate clearly regarding their rationale for their decisions. The school leader is expected to communicate regularly and transparently with the larger community to understand their perspectives and foster broad and deep support CHS.

3. Highly visible, approachable, and relatable through involvement, being an active presence in schools, and an immersive, outgoing, positive presence in the community. All stakeholders asked that the next principal be a highly accessible and approachable leader to people and students in the school and throughout the entire district. They are a leader who interacts with all employee groups by seeking broad-based input, engaging in two-way dialogue, and making decisions that first and foremost are in the best interest of students while balancing the interests of other stakeholders impacted by those decisions. A strong principal is visible at after school, evening, and weekend events and activities. They are seen regularly in the community events and known as a contributing member to the greater community. Stakeholders need and value a leader who is easily accessible and approachable, available to meet and interact with students and families, has a strong community presence, and possesses abundant common sense.

4. Preference for a former or current local resident. CHS serves a vast array of students and families from an enormous geographical area. While all schools have a unique identity, CHS is truly unique in both the students served and the community which where it is located. Stakeholders expressed a sense of how local perception of CHS as an exemplary school has eroded and needs to be restored and that only someone who has the lived experience and/or deeply understands the historical roots and current conditions of the district can be effective. While an “outsider” could succeed, the sentiment is that the amount of time to learn the district and community culture would be a significant obstacle to making the improvements needed much less authentically addressing the overall negative narrative that has been promulgated the last few months.

5. Caring, kind, empathetic, and compassionate. These characteristics are common to leaders whom people follow. These qualities enable a leader to develop trusting relationships and connect with students, staff, parents, and community members. A principal who genuinely cares about students enough to spend time with them both listening to their needs and acting upon their ideas. Likewise, teachers mentioned the importance of “humanizing” leadership roles.

6. Courageous, persistent, resilient, decisive. Having active, involved parents and community members is an asset, but participants in focus groups also noted it can be a liability. They want a principal who can make a decision, communicate it clearly, and take a stand based on what is right for students.
They need a leader to combat the negative narrative being promulgated by what they perceive is a “small, but vocal community.” They also want a principal who can both collaborate with and if necessary, push back on the district office and the school board if they feel decisions at that level are not the best for CHS.

7. Politically savvy coalition builder

CHS is comprised of skilled, compassionate educators and serves an involved, intelligent and mostly supportive community. However, the next principal needs to understand there are diverse and deeply held viewpoints on issues related to social emotional learning, equity, CTE, disciplinary systems (or lack thereof), and more. The principal will need to identify, welcome, and convene diverse views together around instructional priorities, best practices, academic rigor, and the social-emotional needs of students, student families, and staff. Navigating the growing national, regional, and local political divisiveness will continue to be an important skill as will the ability to foster productive coalitions.

8. Systems mindset

A common concern was that CHS lacked some important structural systems related to student disciplinary matters, staff evaluations, and a mental health and wellness supports. While there are certainly disciplinary consequences, staff evaluation, and personnel and spaces to support mental health, stakeholders see these as isolated efforts and seek a leader who can implement consistent systemic approaches.

The search team would like to thank all the participants who attended focus groups meetings or completed the online survey.

Respectfully submitted by,

Max McGee
Valerie Pitts
HYA Associates