



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Community Consolidated School District #89

February 11, 2023

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COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 89

FEBRUARY 11, 2023

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Ken Arndt, Ph.D. and Jane L. Westerhold, Ed.D. of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in January and February 2023 for the new superintendent of Community Consolidated School District 89. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA Associates received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group and community forum settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The surveys, interviews, focus group meetings, and community forums were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new Superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and community forums collected information regarding the strengths of the District, some of the challenges that they will be facing in the coming years and the immediate and future priorities that the new Superintendent will need to address.

Description of the District

Community Consolidated School District 89 is a student-centered district with an experienced staff and supportive community. CCSD 89 serves more than 2,200 students in preschool through eighth grade. The district includes four elementary schools and one middle school; most graduates go on to attend Glenbard South High School. Students live in west suburban Glen Ellyn, Lombard, and Wheaton.

CCSD 89 has amazing students who are eager to learn, excited to connect, and motivated to get involved. They draw strength from the diversity of their classmates who share insights about different cultures and backgrounds. The students learn in technology-rich classrooms where caring staff members are committed to ensuring that every single student is empowered to recognize and optimize their full potential.

The district has a tradition of academic excellence; students regularly have some of the top state and national scores in math and reading. The district supports, and is committed to, a whole-child approach that develops each student's academic and social-emotional well-being. The district offers a full range of academic and emotional supports, including a Challenge program for advanced learners, interventionists to provide additional support for students with specific learning needs, and instructional coaches who work with students and teachers to

optimize learning. The district's family-engagement liaisons, psychologists, and social workers build connections between school and home.

CCSD 89 families' deep commitment to education is evident. Extracurricular events are well attended. Parents frequently volunteer at and donate funds to their schools. The community has shown their strong support for the district by approving both a tax-rate and bond referendum in the past five years. The tax-rate referendum will allow the district to maintain programming with strong fund balances for the next 8-10 years. The recent bond referendum will allow the district to make infrastructure and safety repairs at all five buildings over the next two summers.

The district is guided by a strategic plan that was developed with input from students, staff, families, and community members. The district strives to make data-driven decisions that lead students toward responsibility for their academic achievement and social-emotional growth. "Learning for Life" remains the district's motto. The district's mission statement is: "Community Consolidated School District 89 will empower all learners to recognize and optimize their full potential." The district's vision statement indicates CCSD 89 will aspire to:

- Employ rigorous, relevant curriculum, and learning opportunities
- Engage in innovative problem solving, critical thinking, and effective collaboration,
- Enable self-sufficiency, responsibility, and accountability
- Encourage empathy, acceptance, and self-efficacy
- Embrace the strengths in our differences as members of a global community
- Ensure the essential resources necessary to remain a premier school district

The new strategic plan also includes five long-range goals with corresponding strategies for implementation. The strategies include:

- **Academic success:** CCSD 89 will provide an engaging and supportive learning environment that inspires every single student to reach their full potential.
- **Social-emotional development:** CCSD 89 will provide a welcoming education environment where every student can develop confidence, empathy, and well-being.
- **High-quality staff:** CCSD 89 will hire, retain, and support a highly qualified workforce.
- **Community engagement:** CCSD 89 will cultivate meaningful partnerships with families and community agencies to enrich learning opportunities.
- **Effective use of resources:** CCSD 89 will use resources responsibly to provide safe schools where students have the tools they need to learn.

Process

The structure of the individual meetings, focus groups and community forums was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. Sessions were conducted in-person, virtually and by phone. All seven Board members were individually interviewed, as were the current superintendent and the past superintendent. Additionally, the online survey was available to stakeholders from January 17-30, and provided an additional avenue for stakeholders to participate in the process of determining the next superintendent's qualifications and characteristics. Those involved in providing input into the selection of the superintendent of schools were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What are the strengths of the district and community?
- What are the challenges facing the district?
- What are the immediate and future priorities?
- What are the personal and professional qualifications and attributes that you desire in the next superintendent?
- Do you have any names of possible candidates that you would like to share with us? (This information will not be made public and has been reviewed by the consultants. Follow-up conversations were held with some of the individuals identified in this question.)

In responding to each question asked by the consultants, participants shared personal thoughts as well as big picture overarching themes. Regardless of the perceptions, stakeholders were hopeful that the process would assist the consultants in identifying a new superintendent who would be a courageous, inspirational, dynamic and highly energetic confident leader who could demonstrate sincere community engagement and transparency built upon trust, honesty and integrity. Furthermore, the next superintendent would be a confident, visible, approachable, thoughtful and active listener and exceptional communicator. Additionally, the superintendent will have demonstrated proven skills in building relationships with all stakeholders, and have demonstrated success in implementing systems and strategies that closed achievement gaps.

Common Themes

The top overarching themes that emerged were the tradition of excellence, community resources and support, and focus on the whole child. Critical to this tradition of excellence is the quality of the teaching staff and most stakeholder groups remarked on both the expertise and education levels of the teachers and several groups commented on the talented and dedicated administrative team and support staff. District 89 has a long history of academic excellence and is consistently considered to be a destination school district for families and employees. Parents and the community are engaged and altruistic in supporting the schools,

not only financially, but through endless hours of service and volunteer work. In fact, the community has shown their strong support for the district by approving both a tax-rate and bond referendum in the past five years and therefore, the district is in sound and stable financial district.

Although the district has many strengths, themes also emerged noting challenges and opportunities for improvement. Achievement levels have been consistently highly ranked in the district for many years. However, an achievement gap exists within some subgroups of students. Most stakeholders participating in the engagement process voiced this as a concern. Many efforts have been initiated to close the gap, but finding ways to meet the needs of all students so that they continue to demonstrate growth will be a priority for the next leader. Consultants have also heard that the relationship between the Association leadership and the administration has deteriorated in the last few years creating climate and culture issues. Consultants were not able to ascertain whether this was pervasive in the membership or if it was more a leadership issue. Regardless, another priority for the new leader will be to examine the culture and climate across the entire district with all employee groups. Finally, there is anxiety about the upcoming Board election and how that could impact the future direction of the district. The new superintendent will need to be skilled in effective governance and be able to facilitate Board discussions that clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Education versus those of the administration and staff.

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 on-line survey.*

Group	Personal interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
Administrators		7
Board	7	
Building level administrators	5	
CCSD 89 Education Association	16	
Central office administrators	7	
Certified Staff	20	55
Community	31	
Parents	5	
Residents with Children in the District		171

Group	Personal interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
Residents without Children in the District		36
Students	20	
Support Staff/Non-Certified	8	13
Total	119	282

(Note: Members of the Board of Education are not noted since they were all interviewed individually.)

It should be emphasized 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. Items are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the Board's attention.

Online Community Survey

The online survey was completed by 282 stakeholders. The largest group of respondents was 171 Residents with Children in the District. The second largest participant group was Certified Staff at 55. Seven administrators completed the survey. The rest of the respondents were 13 Non-Certified Staff and 36 Residents without Children in the District.

Regarding the State of the District, the respondents were asked to choose from Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree or Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree about the State of the District overall and in nineteen specific areas. [The nineteen statements were in four categories: Vision and Values-VV, Teaching and Learning-TL; Community Engagement-CE; and Management-M] The following statements were perceived to be district strengths (based upon the percentage of respondents who selected either Agree or Strongly Agree) when responses were combined for all stakeholders responding to the online survey:

- Technology is integrated into the classroom. (TL)
- Facilities are well maintained. (M)
- District schools are safe. (TL)
- District technology infrastructure is sufficient to support use of technology in the classroom. (M)
- The District employs effective teachers, administrators, and support staff in its schools. (M)

[The twelve superintendent competency statements were in the same four categories as used in the State of the District: Vision and Values-VV, Teaching and Learning-TL; Community Engagement-CE; and Management-M]

Using the online survey, the top-rated leadership profile characteristics constituents desire in a new superintendent are:

- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators (CE)
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel (VV)
- Provide Transparent Communication (CE)
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools (M)
- Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies (VV)

Percentages of respondents overall who selected each item, as well as percentages by stakeholder group, are presented in a separate document.

The community survey report is provided under separate cover and are meant to be stand-alone complementary pieces to the Leadership Profile Report.

Strengths of the District

When learning about the district through the engagement process, it was apparent to the consultants that the district has historically cherished a strong tradition of excellence and is highly regarded by neighboring districts and suburbs as a highly desirable district and community, and one that causes families to want to move to communities within the district's boundaries. Through the diligent and visionary work of the Board and Administration and support of the community, the district has cleared many hurdles over the last few years. The community has shown their strong support for the district by approving both a tax-rate and bond referendum in the past five years. This support has enabled the district to realize financial stability. Through an inclusive engagement process, the district has a solid strategic plan which will guide the Board and District Leadership through the next several years. While many school districts across the country were tarnished daily during the Pandemic, most stakeholders complimented the district for managing with grace during these most difficult times. The small town feel of the district and the community earned praises from several stakeholders.

Critical to this tradition of excellence is the quality of the teaching staff and most stakeholder groups remarked on both the expertise and education levels of the teachers and several groups commented on the talented and dedicated administrative team and support staff. The current superintendent and her leadership team were often recognized for their expertise in their respective roles in the district. It was noted that teachers are loving, caring, knowledgeable and want students to succeed. The staff appears to have positive relationships with the parents and community and many have longevity in the district.

There was a clear message across all groups that the district has great families and students. The students present in a focus group confirmed this, and they were some of the most professional and insightful students with whom the consultants have heard in the past. Stakeholders stated frequently that the district truly focuses on the whole child. It was further stated that the teachers, administrators and support staff care deeply about the students.

In synchronization with the online survey, respondents participating in the focus groups complimented the district on its technology infrastructure that enables seamless utilization in classrooms, as well as providing students with access at all grade levels. Also in alignment, was the belief that the buildings were safe and secure.

Challenges and Issues Facing the District

Given the tradition and history of the district's excellence in academic achievement, growth and performance, it did not come as a surprise to the consultants that stakeholders were concerned about student achievement. Many districts across the country experienced a decline in student achievement, and significant social emotional issues, as a side effect of the Pandemic. However, consultants heard several times that the achievement levels had started to decline before the Pandemic, and the achievement gaps between different demographic groups were widening. Consultants believe that there are many measures of student success, with assessment scores being one piece of the puzzle. It is always important to analyze individual student growth, which is not in the scope of our responsibilities. Analyzing the culture and climate in District 89 is also not the focus of HYA's work with the district. However, it became very apparent when listening to stakeholders, that there are multiple disconnects between different groups of stakeholders, both internally and externally. Most frequently heard was the negative relationship between the CCSD 89 Education Association Leadership and the Administration. Participating in the focus groups and community forums was voluntary and not necessarily representative of all members in the Association, but it was stated frequently enough that it will require further conversations and a deeper dive into comprehending root causes.

It was noted during individual interviews and focus group sessions that a higher level of polarization, in what typically was viewed as a cohesive community, developed as a result of concerns related to the pandemic, student achievement, curriculum, local taxes, and the perceived quality of the overall academic program. District 89 Board of Education meetings are attended by vocal stakeholders who are concerned generally about specific aspects of District 89's educational programs. Transparent communications, the ability to balance competing interests, mitigating a higher level of frustration than in prior years, and demonstrating the courage to do what is right for students in the face of criticism will be areas on which the new superintendent will need to focus. Actively listening to stakeholders' opinions and addressing areas of concern, while always keeping the focus on what is in the best interests of the students, are challenges that the new superintendent will face.

Immediate and Future Priorities

First and foremost, the transitioning of the new superintendent was on the minds of all stakeholders. The general thoughts centered around the superintendent being able to devote the necessary time to get to know the Board, staff, students, families, and communities. Listening and learning from all of aforementioned stakeholders, building trusting and mutually respectful relationships, and not trying to change all that is cherished, effective, and honored in the district. Additionally, the new superintendent will need to work with the Board of Education after an election has been held. This always requires time together to delineate roles and responsibilities, and define and adhere to best governance practices.

Continuing to collect and analyze student data to identify and address learning gaps for all demographic groups, and utilizing the results of the recent equity audit, is an expectation for all professionals in the district. Working to ensure that all students, including those with special learning needs, are provided with appropriate and challenging programs in a supportive and welcoming environment, will be an area of significant focus for the new superintendent.

Working to improve staff morale, improving the relationship between the CCSD 89 Education Association and the Administrative Leadership Team and the Board of Education, and generally building positive relationships with stakeholders, is a priority. Not differing from what many school districts have faced as a result of societal and pandemic-related tensions, recruiting highly qualified staff to fill open positions, as well as retaining the current staff will be ongoing concerns that all superintendents are facing. Comments by participants in the focus group sessions indicate a desire to build a more diverse staff that better reflects the student population.

Staying focused on the Strategic Plan, adhering to the district’s motto, “Learning for Life”, and not venturing away from the work that has diligently been accomplished, will provide direction for the new superintendent. Although there are Cabinet level administrators overseeing these efforts, the new superintendent will need to be cognizant of the progress of the implementation of the new English/Language Arts program, as well as the master facility plan.

Desired Characteristics for Next Superintendent

The individuals who participated in the focus groups, community forums, and individual interviews collectively agreed that they were not looking for a major change agent who would enter the district with his/her own agenda. The list of desirable characteristics and traits is quite lengthy and not one individual could possibly have refined skills in every area. However, there were many similarities that consultants viewed as necessary for the next leader to be successful during the transition and in the future. The next superintendent absolutely needs to be a **proven instructional leader and relationship builder who can proactively communicate well across internal and external diverse groups**. Furthermore, stakeholders desire a visible superintendent who is student focused, personable, approachable, and highly collaborative. The new leader will have to earn trust through sincere efforts to engage with all members of the learning community in a transparent and caring manner.

Board of Education Individual Interviews

7 Participants

Strengths:

- Capital improvements
- Extracurricular opportunities for students
- Good teacher retention
- Good technology
- Great staff and students
- High performing district
- Many staff and residents grew up here and are now raising their families in D89
- Redistricting
- Referendum Passing
- Schools are safe
- Small town environment
- Strategic plan
- Strong community support
- Teachers and administrators care about students

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Board governance
- Decisions should be made with what is in the best interest of all students
- Fractured relationship between the Education Association and Administration
- Gentrification
- High property taxes
- Respect all opinions and be open-minded
- Some parents feel ignored and are not respected by the administration
- Special education concerns and needs
- Still struggling with the pandemic and how to better help students and staff
- Transparency in decision-making
- Trying to close the achievement gap
- Upcoming April Board Election
- We need to communicate and listen better with the community

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Be more proactive than reactive
- Class sizes evaluated
- Establish closer relationships with the Village in areas of development and growth
- Make certain promises made during the referendum are accomplished
- Make sure students feel safe and valued
- Make what is best for all students is our priority

- Make decisions based upon current research and data
- Mend the divide with the Education Association and Administration
- Seriously address the achievement gap
- Student discipline concerns

Desired Traits and Characteristics

- Accessible
- Active in the community
- Attracts and hires the best candidates in all positions
- Collaborative
- Determined
- Excellent communicator
- Financially astute
- Follows through with promises
- Hard worker
- Humble
- Inspirational
- Listen before acting
- People person who cares for others
- Persistent
- Previous experience in working with unions/associations
- Proven educational leader
- Shares clear expectations
- Strategic thinker
- Understands special education law and requirements
- Visible in the schools and community

CCSD89 Middle School Students' Focus Group

20 Participants

Strengths

- Extracurriculars and clubs-there is something here for everyone if you just ask
- Kids like to learn here
- Library (Media Center)
- Musicals
- Our elementary schools
- Our teachers make learning fun
- Science Fair
- The Student and Faculty Games
- We feel safe

- We like coming to school - hated online instruction 2021
- We like community charity drives, helping others
- We really like cooking class

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Not all elementary schools are equal (media centers) and size
- Some classes, but not all, are too large
- Some teachers are more demanding than others
- Student discipline is not fairly administered (bathroom and hallways)
- We want to see more social workers

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Be a normal person
- Be a sub teacher for a day
- Be more visible
- Be part of Faculty/Student games
- Culturally sensitive
- Elementary schools are not alike and have different opportunities
- Get to know students, have listening sessions - assembly for questions and answers
- Have a proper work and personal life balance
- Have elementary and middle school interact more
- Listen to student voice
- Look at discipline and bullying
- Need more foreign language classes
- Be a special education advocate
- Promote musicals more
- Social emotional learning-we need more
- Special education kids are not treated like general education students
- Talk to students
- Unbiased
- We saw our superintendent in the elementary schools but not middle school
- What are your visions and goals?

Desired Traits and Characteristics

- Accessible
- Be a normal person
- Fun
- Intelligent, speak well but not at a high level
- Like kids
- Nice
- Respectful

- Support students
- Unbiased

Staff

20 Participants

Strengths

- Appreciate being a part of decision making and hearing staff voices
- Communication to meet all of the students' needs
- Fiscally responsive and responsible
- Gifted services for elementary and middle school students
- High achieving compared to State and National norms
- Leadership and Board make decisions in the best interest of students
- Music programs, band and orchestra
- Needs of teachers and students are met
- Parent support
- Phenomenal specials
- Seeks continuous improvement
- Small size of district
- Staff and community members love the district
- Staff value relationships with each other
- Superintendent is visible and knows everyone
- Teachers are professional, dedicated, talented and caring
- Unified to see students to their best
- Well respected in community
- Wonderful relationships with community and staff
- "You belong here" feeling

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Board of Education transparency
- Board is sheltered from staff
- Committees often have outcomes predetermined
- Decisions are made before voices are heard
- Do not always have enough staff, i.e., for restorative practices
- General education classroom experiences
- Healthy balance between kids and data
- Improvements needed with low incidence population of students
- Lack of trust with district office
- Large class sizes in places
- Not a fully inclusive district

- People do not feel heard
- Presence in buildings
- Principals' hands are tied
- Relationships with Board are not encouraged
- Special needs students aren't routinely recognized at the Board level
- Stakeholder involvement in decision making
- Teachers have a need to be respected and valued
- Too many initiatives
- Top-down approach
- Communication between teachers and administration

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Building back trust
- Climate and culture
- Enhancing what is good and going well
- Good listening
- Having conversations with stakeholders
- Ideas are heard and acknowledged
- Respect and relationship building
- Take time to know district and culture before setting own agenda
- Time and grace to focus on English language arts before new initiatives
- Trust that staff knows what they are doing
- Two-way relationship building
- Visibility in classrooms

Desired Traits and Characteristics

- Ability to genuinely respect and trust staff members
- Approachable
- Been a teacher
- Cares about teachers as much as students
- Champion marginalized students
- Collaborative
- Elementary and middle school experience
- Family oriented
- Familiar with special education
- Good listener
- Growth mindset
- Honest
- Humble
- Implement IEPs and 504s quicker

- Inspirational
- Knows when and how to delegate responsibilities
- Leadership skills
- Listens to understand
- Not a preset agenda
- Not on a pedestal
- Open
- Realistic solutions
- Relationship Builder
- Respectful of all stakeholders
- Surround yourself with smart people
- Treat staff with professionalism
- Trust our word when we need support or guidance
- Understand the roles of everybody without micromanaging
- Values and supports teachers
- Visible
- Visionary
- Wants to grow with staff
- Willingness to learn, make mistakes and willingness to be vulnerable

District Administration

7 Participants

Strengths

- Administration is very cohesive
- Buildings are safe and well maintained
- District 89 is attempting to address Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) concerns
- Decisions are made in the best interests of all students
- District finances stable
- Successful passage of the referendum
- Superintendent trusts us
- Supportive parents and community
- Technology plan
- Very compassionate administrators and teachers
- Work well as a team-we help each other
- MTSS progress

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Board governance
- Not all members are supportive of DEI

- Social/emotional needs of students and staff
- The Association relationship needs to be much better with the District and Superintendent

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Address social/emotional needs of students and staff
- Help teachers with the new K-5 English language arts curriculum
- Need a better relationship with the Education Association
- Restorative practices (Senate Bill 100) have not been fully implemented
- Special education inclusion models
- Support the new middle school principal
- Work with the team to develop priorities

Desired Traits and Characteristics

- Authentic
- Calm emotions and fears
- Diplomatic and reflective
- Experienced elementary administrator
- Follow through on promises
- Have a backbone
- Kind but firm
- Listen before making decisions
- Visible in the schools and community

Principals

5 Participants

Strengths

- Administrators work well with each other and help everyone out
- Awesome talented and creative teachers
- Forward thinking district
- Good class size
- Great kids, great community
- New reading and math program
- Resources
- Superintendent supports the principals and challenges us
- Supportive parents
- Very strong and supportive Parent Teachers Council

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Education Association's relationship with the District needs to improve
- Not all teachers support the direction of the CCSD 89 Education Association leadership

- Practicing best governance practices and understanding the role of the Board is a new problem for a small minority on the Board
- The student demographics are changing - very different today than 10 years ago
- Upcoming School Board election
- We never had Association grievances but that is no longer the case

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Be visible in the schools and community - talk with staff and students
- Hire more diverse employees
- Mend the divisiveness between the Association and Superintendent/Central Office
- Spend time learning about the staff

Desired Traits and Characteristics

- Cares about students and staff
- Clear focus
- Good communicator
- Thick-skinned
- Trustworthy
- Visionary who sees the bigger picture

Central Office Support Staff

8 Participants

Strengths

- Strong community support
- Talented staff
- Teachers
- We are always looking at continuous improvement
- We work together as a team

Challenges/Concerns/ Issue

- Better working relationship with the teachers and administration
- Staff needs more guidance and support
- Too much top down decision making
- We need to build up trust in each other

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Build back trust
- Listen before acting
- Superintendent has to be in the schools and community
- Support all staff

Desired Traits and Characteristics:

- Enjoys knowing and speaking with students

- Friendly
- Listens, reflects, and then acts
- People person
- Presents realistic solutions
- Previous educational experience as a teacher and administrator
- Problem solver
- Professional
- Provides guidance to staff
- Relationship builder
- Respectful

Community Consolidated School District 89 Education Association Leadership Focus Group

16 Participants

Strengths

- Dedicated staff-put kids first, work hard and connect with families
- Great students
- Strong parent involvement
- Strong teacher, student-parent relationships
- Supportive and engaged community

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Lack of follow through on some issues
- Lacking in effective systems across the district
- More teacher involvement is desired in curricular and instructional decisions
- Need more collaboration between the Association and Central Office
- Need more focus on academic excellence
- Special education inclusive practices need to be evaluated
- The Board rarely questions the Superintendent's recommendations
- There is a perception that teachers do not feel valued or respected
- There are too many top down decisions being made
- Would like to see more transparency in decision making at the district level

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Examine student misbehavior in the schools
- Heal the relationship between the Board and Association
- Hire more diverse teaching staff that better represent our changing student demographics
- Hire more social workers and psychologists

- Improve relationships between the Association and the Central Office
- Learn about the practices, traditions and culture in District 89 first before making decisions
- Listen first
- Move slowly
- Reclaim higher academic culture in District 89

Desired Traits and Characteristics

- Being ok with disagreements
- Collaborator
- Community oriented
- Doesn't possess a need for narrative control and not a micromanager
- Experienced elementary administrator and teacher
- Long-term visionary who listens to the teachers and community
- Open minded
- Problem solver
- Reflective
- Respectful of opinions from all stakeholders
- Solution oriented
- Transparent
- Visible

Parent Teacher Council

3 Participants

Strengths

- Engaged community
- Fiscally sound district
- Good school/district communication
- Great principals and teachers
- Involved parents
- Schools are safe
- Social media

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Bullying
- Kids in the middle

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Meeting teachers and students
- New superintendent needs to meet with parents

Desired Traits and Characteristics

- Approachable
- Collaborator
- Data driven
- Good communicator
- Open door policy
- Reaches out
- Strong educational experience
- Transparent
- Understands best curricular practices
- Visible in the community
- Visits schools often

Invited Parent Groups

2 Participants

Strengths

- Ample resources
- Middle school parent resources
- Preschool program
- Special education services
- Speech
- Teachers and paraprofessionals are outstanding
- Technology

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Be focused
- Flexible leader
- Listen first before making decisions
- More timely communication from the schools
- Student behavior – the consequences do not justify the action

Desired Traits and Characteristics

- Caring
- Communicator
- Focused on what is best for all students
- Good listener
- Patient
- Personable
- Visible

Community At-Large Group #1

12 Participants

Strengths

- Community supports its schools, i.e. referendum success
- District 89 is a destination district for young families
- Excellent staff
- Fiscally conservative management
- Good management
- Outstanding community
- Paraprofessionals
- People are proud and happy to live here
- Schools are well-maintained
- Teachers are dedicated, talented and caring

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- 25+ students in some classrooms are too many
- Bullying policy not followed
- Kids do not share concerns about other student behavior because of retribution
- Math scores
- Need more instructional assistants
- No serious commitment to metrics
- Not always a safe environment for kids
- No consistent vision from the district
- Some parents have to hire an advocate for their special needs child
- Special education inclusion models
- Student achievement is not as strong as it was in the past
- Student behavior, bullying

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Achievement gap
- Better support services for the kids in the “middle”
- Lower class size
- Need to have a serious commitment in improving the metrics of test scores
- Next superintendent must make academics a priority
- Safety
- Spend more time listening to teachers , parents and the community at-large
- Student discipline

Traits and Desired Characteristics

- Authentic

- Coaching and mentoring skill set
- Collaborative
- Experienced in closing the achievement gap
- Fiscally astute
- High integrity
- Innovative
- Loves our kids
- Not use District 89 as a career stepping stone
- On sidelines and not in the box
- Respects Board members that we elected
- Respectful of all opinions and even those she/he might personally disagree with
- Responsible
- Servant leader
- Team builder
- Trust
- Transparent
- Understands the smallness of the community
- Visible in the schools and community

Community Members at-Large #2

10 Participants

Strengths

- Academics are valued
- Every child is important
- Great teachers
- Many opportunities for the students
- Many partnerships and volunteers in our schools
- Schools are safe
- Variety of activities students can participate in

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Administrators need professional development
- Always address safety in the schools
- District decisions seem to be made without sufficient input
- Healthy disagreement is good
- Implementation of a continuum of services for special needs' students
- Inconsistencies on how Professional Learning Communities function at the different levels
- Leadership development in the schools

- Need to have a stronger teacher voice in decisions
- Needs to be a balance between academics and social emotional learning needs
- Student discipline and growing safety concerns in classrooms
- There are too many inconsistencies between the schools

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Clarity around MTSS
- Differentiating instruction
- Get back to instructional rigor
- Increase professional development for teachers and new hires
- Increase and improve test scores

Desired Traits and Characteristics

- Available
- Build relationships
- Business savvy
- Collaborative
- Communicator
- Educator
- Experienced administrator
- Fiscally conservative
- Innovative
- Instructional leader
- Make a good school district even better
- Make connections with our elected political leaders
- Places kids first in all decisions
- Relational
- Transparent
- Visible in the community and schools
- Visionary

Community Forum - Virtual

9 Participants

Strengths

- Community and families are involved in the school system
- Love our schools and staff
- Neighborhood schools
- Strong leadership
- Social emotional learning in the classrooms

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Additional professional development for teachers on special education topics and strategies
- Disproportionality findings
- Focus is not enough on K-1 foundational skills
- Need for more inclusivity for children with disabilities
- Staffing for extra support for students with special needs

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Better performance metrics need to be developed
- Culture and climate issues in each building should be analyzed
- Evaluate the weaknesses and strengths of staff and plan accordingly
- Staying focused on goals of the Strategic Plan
- Sufficient inquiry into what resources are necessary to improve academics and achievement
- Understanding the community and the people

Desired Traits and Characteristics

- Adaptable and can adjust to change
- Concerned about the extremes that are present in communities and is politically savvy enough to navigate through the challenges
- Educational background-teachers/principal perspective
- Good listener and role model
- Highly motivated to work with children
- Listens objectively to different perspectives
- Open to critical conversations
- Proven track record as a leader
- Recognizes when he/she is wrong and adjust appropriately
- Relationship builder
- Strong and resilient
- Truly wants to be in District 89 and not just looking for a job
- Understands what it is like to work in a diverse district and community and values diversity

HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to meet the needs of the district. The search team will seek a new superintendent who can work with the CCSD 89 and the Board of Education to provide the leadership and governance needed to continue to raise academic standards and student performance, while meeting the unique needs of each of its schools and communities.

The search team would like to thank all the participants who attended focus group meetings, community forums, individual interviews or completed the online survey. We are honored that the Board of Education selected us to assist in their most important responsibility. We would like to particularly thank Communications Coordinator, Matt Hanley, and Technology Coordinator, Ian Vonesh, for their efforts in advertising and/or coordinating the focus groups and community forums, including sending out postcards to residents in the District announcing how to be engaged in the process. (This is not something that districts typically do during the search process). We would also like to thank the Superintendent's Administrative Assistant, Theresa Sevier, for helping coordinate the Board's calendars and special meetings.

Respectfully submitted,
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