



## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in January 2017 for the new superintendent of the Fairfax County Public Schools. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The survey, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the Division and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years.

## Participation

The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below:

Group	Personal Interviews or Focus Groups	Online Survey
Board	11	NA
Building level administrators	85	186
Central office administrators	22	
Community	144	106
Parents	11	540
Students	7	106
Support staff	56	382
Teachers		425
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>1745</b>

The specific results from the community survey report, *FCPS Community and Leadership Profile Report*, are provided under a separate cover. However, the major findings of the survey results are integrated with the information gathered during focus group meetings and community forums in this report.

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.

## Strengths of the Division

The Fairfax County Public Schools have a long history of providing high quality education to the students and families of the county. It is one of the most respected school districts in the country due to the traditions of excellence and the fact that the Division continues to produce high levels of student learning, even though the student population is changing and becoming more challenging with increasing numbers of second language learners and children living in poverty. Community members, parents, staff, and students believe that FCPS is a healthy school system that is moving in the right direction. While facing many challenges, there is a collective belief on the part of constituents that FCPS is up to those challenges and will continue to provide outstanding educational services in the community. Some of the most significant themes shared by stakeholders regarding the strengths that FCPS can build upon include:

### **Breadth and Depth of Programs and Services**

While all stakeholder groups report that FCPS offered a strong and diverse level of services and programs to meet the needs of the array of students in the system, the most powerful voice came from students. This was the factor that they most appreciated about their time in FCPS. As one student said, “All students should be able to find their niche in high school given the variety of classes, programs, support, and extracurricular offerings.” Parents expressed similar views, that the schools really do focus on educating the whole child and while academics are a high priority, so are programs in the arts, social/emotional learning and student well-being, restorative justice, and student activity opportunities.

### **Support for Both Ends of the Spectrum**

As part of the perspective on the breadth of programming, parents, community, and staff members made specific references to the services available for both talented students and students who many have special needs. While not universal, there was generally strong support for the quality of programming for gifted and talented students and for special education programming and services. Parents and community members shared the view that families often choose to live in Fairfax County because of the quality of the special education services and the options available for academically gifted students.

### **Quality Staff Across Employee Groups**

Parents, community members, and students frequently noted that one of the variables that make FCPS a high quality school system is the people who work there. From bus drivers to food service workers, support staff, teachers, and administrators at both the building and district levels, constituents truly believe that FCPS employees are committed, professional and talented in their various roles. Comments were often made that staff members go the extra mile to help students, that they really care about children and their well-being, and that they are highly responsive when problems or issues arise. This widespread appreciation for the work of the staff appears to be deeply rooted, sincere, and exemplified through frequent comments supporting the idea that FCPS needs to pay competitive salaries to keep their great staff members in the system.

### **Moving in the Right Direction**

Across all stakeholder groups who attended focus group meetings and community forums, there was strong agreement that FCPS is moving in the right direction. The vision, mission, Portrait of a Graduate, and the Strategic Plan, Ignite, were cited as setting the stage for the future work of FCPS. Constituents want to see a continuation of these efforts and deployment of the strategies and priorities defined in the Strategic Plan. Very few comments were made about changing the direction of the system, while numerous comments were made that changing the direction of the system would be a huge mistake. Stakeholders shared their appreciation for many of the change efforts that have occurred over the past few years. They mentioned changing school starting times, restorative justice, AAP changes, efforts to improve food services, school renovations, and most importantly, a change in culture. Many constituents shared that they felt FCPS is far more responsive and customer focused than the district has been in the past.

The online survey questions on this topic show that there appears to be a disconnect between the perceptions of administrators and staff versus those of students, parents, and community members. While the majority of the internal stakeholders feel the Division is headed in the right direction, only about a third of the external stakeholders feel this way. Similar patterns exist in the online survey results related to three items - (making decisions based on data and research, transparent communication, and fiscal responsibility). These differences are certainly areas that the new superintendent will need to address.

### **Challenges and Issues Facing the Division**

While there is strong sentiment that FCPS has many positive attributes, there are also constituents who believe that FCPS has significant problems that need to be addressed. For example, where many people commented on the strength of special education programming, several parents had deep concerns and criticisms of special education programming and the services their child is or is not receiving. Similar comments were made about other aspects of the Division that while some saw them as strengths, others saw significant needs for improvement. They included career and technical education opportunities, gifted programming, ESOL services, and probably most frequently, serving the average child in the general education program.

While numerous specific concerns were shared and are noted in the comments in this report, some general themes about challenges facing the Division and problems that need to be addressed also surfaced throughout the conversations. Those major areas included:

#### **Changing Financial Demographics in the County and the Division**

One of the most significant issues facing the county and the school division from the perspective of community members, parents, and staff is the changing demographics in the county. While these changes impact all aspects of community life (housing, transportation, safety, health, and social services) the impact is being felt first and foremost in the schools. Wealth disparity in neighborhoods, multiple family dwellings, and increasing housing density are equating to significant differences in student demographics from school to school and across regions of the county. Student needs based on neighborhood, family and community financial resources to support children, and availability of

volunteer support and family engagement may all vary greatly from school to school and neighborhood to neighborhood. The constituents who shared these concerns worry that Fairfax County is becoming a community of “haves and have nots,” which will require significant changes on how local schools deliver services and support to the children in the neighborhoods. These changes will certainly require changing the approach taken, but may require a greater financial investment in some schools to provide necessary support services for student success.

### **Growing Immigrant and ESOL Populations**

While economic disparity is one factor in the changing face of Fairfax County, language is another. Growing numbers in the ESOL population and the number of immigrant families will require the school district to provide more English language learning programming and will increase the average cost of educating an FCPS student. Professional knowledge and best practices regarding English language learners illustrate that it takes several years for students to learn English, which is critical to their success in school. Maintaining learning in other subject areas while students are learning English also is important so that students do not begin a downward spiral of falling further and further behind.

### **Student Well-being**

Students, parents, and staff members also expressed concerns about the growing level of student stress and the need to ensure healthy, safe, secure, and caring school environments for children. While there is strong commitment for educational excellence in Fairfax County, there is growing awareness that pressure for grades, extracurricular activities, and peer acceptance can cause undue stress for children, particularly at the high school level. Constituents appreciate the work that FCPS has done to address student stress and well-being issues and would like to see work continue on these needs as the system continues to move forward in the future.

### **Infrastructure Needs**

Given the number and age of FCPS facilities, infrastructure needs related to renovation, expansion, and replacement are huge financial responsibilities for the Division. The current program is behind schedule and underfunded to meet the growing needs within the county. Add increasing technology needs to this equation and FCPS is facing a significant challenge on many levels.

### **Staffing Needs**

For one of the first times in decades, the nation, Virginia, and FCPS are all impacted by a growing teacher and administrator shortage. Many factors such as salary and respect for educators are influencing the number of young people going into education in general. FCPS is also impacted by the fact that salary schedules in surrounding school districts are outpacing the salaries paid in FCPS by thousands of dollars per year per teacher. While the initial impact of this shortage was being felt in hard-to-staff areas such as special education, high school and middle school math and science, and ESOL teachers, the current situation is being felt in regular classroom positions, and administrative positions such as the principalship. Because constituents see one of the greatest strengths being the quality of the staff, FCPS needs to address these issues quickly and effectively in order to prevent an overall decline of quality in the system.

### **Staff Morale**

The issue of salary is one aspect of teacher morale concerns, but workload and parental expectations are of equal concern. Teachers and principals feel that the daily workload related to paperwork, training, data analysis, communication, and student support may all be reasonable and appropriate when considered in isolation, but the combined effect of all these changes in expectations is overwhelming. Many staff members expressed the view that they feel they are at a **breaking point** in fulfilling their responsibilities and the expectations within the system. When significant increases in expectations and demands from parents are added to this equation, some staff are experiencing significant levels of professional stress.

### **Budget**

Funding for public education has been a concern for years. On a national level, increasing needs for public and community services, economic turmoil in real estate markets, and concerns over taxes have all contributed to mounting pressures and competing interests for governmental officials making revenue and expenditure decisions for public services. In addition, Fairfax County funds its schools through a process by which the School Board is responsible for expenditure decisions and the County Board is responsible for revenue decisions. This landscape will require the new superintendent to develop a meaningful working relationship with both Boards, as well as serving as an advocate for the needs of the children of Fairfax. Growing costs for federally mandated special education services and English language learner services at the same time that the federal government is reducing financial support given to schools districts puts additional strains on the budget. Finally, the infrastructure of aging, and sometimes overcrowded, facilities creates significant financial challenges for the county and the public school system.

## **Desired Characteristics, Skills, and Abilities in the Next Superintendent**

### **Relationship and Team Builder**

Stakeholders across groups believe that relationships within the Fairfax County Public Schools and the broader community are critical to continued success in the school system. Team building and collaboration are essential skills for the superintendent. The community also believes that FCPS has increased its responsiveness to the needs of internal and external constituents, and there is widespread consensus to have this culture continue and grow. Positive working relationships between the superintendent and all major stakeholder groups will be essential for this culture to thrive.

### **Listener**

A second major component of supporting a responsive and nurturing culture in FCPS is the ability to truly listen. People want to be heard and to know that their input, suggestions, and concerns are being taken seriously. While it is not possible to give everyone everything they want, it is possible to treat everyone with respect and give them the opportunity to share their views in a meaningful manner. The superintendent also needs to be able to explain the reason(s) behind his or her decisions so that people know their views were heard even though the decision may not have been made the way they wanted it to be decided.

**Advocate for All**

FCPS is known for numerous advocacy groups and for many competing interest groups. While stakeholders want someone who will listen to these views, they also want someone who will be an advocate for what is in the best interest of all students. It is impossible for school districts to be all things to all people, but it is possible to be clear around their priorities. The new superintendent needs to be a strong advocate for the needs of students, for staff to be treated with respect and professionalism, and for parents to be listened to and engaged. The system will benefit greatly from a leader who sets the standards that 1) adults need to support children and 2) everyone treats each other with mutual respect and understanding.

**Communicator**

Communication skills are at the core of any successful leader. Listening to constituents is essential, but equally as important is the ability to clearly articulate information to stakeholders. This applies to both big and small communication. Big issues around communication might involve the mission, vision, direction, financial health, and cultural foundations of the school system. The superintendent needs to be the face of the Division on these matters. Additionally, the superintendent needs to be a communicator on a personal level when working on solving a problem or dealing with a crisis. The personal expression of process, decision, and rationale helps the recipient understand how and why decisions were reached and helps to building the relationships that were previously noted as deeply important.

**Strategic Leader**

FCPS is at a unique place in its organizational health and path. The leadership skills needed to guide the Division through the coming years is a combination of forward thinking leadership and the ability to guide the system to achieve the vision that has been created over the past several years. Constituents believe the Division is on the right path and want to see Portrait of a Graduate, and the Strategic Plan fully implemented. They do not want a leader to come in with a new vision and a desire to start the process again. Yet, they want the leader to be forward thinking and visionary in order to tweak and adjust the Strategic Plan as needs and variables change over time.

**Knowledgeable About Boardmanship**

Stakeholders believe that in order for FCPS to be successful, the School Board and the County Board must also be successful. They seek a leader who can apply the skill set described above to help the School Board be the premier board in the state and the nation and to build meaningful, mutually respectful relationships among the School Board, the County Board, the Superintendent, and the County Executive.

**Successful Manager with an Instructional Focus and Financial Acumen**

In addition to the specific leadership attributes listed above, constituents want the new superintendent to be a capable and competent manager of a multi-billion dollar operation with the financial acumen to efficiently and effectively run the daily work of the system. In addition, while daily operations are essential they also want a leader who keeps the instructional focus of the organization at the heart of the decision-making process. While the system needs to maximize its use of resources, it cannot do so at the expense of serving children well and helping all children thrive and work to reach their potential.

### Online Survey Results

The top five characteristics defined through the online survey of stakeholders include the following descriptors. They are closely tied to themes heard during the focus group meetings and community forums. While there are numerous connections and relationships between the themes heard directly from stakeholders and the characteristics from the online survey, the primary connections are as follows:

The first, fourth, and fifth most desired characteristic are part of the Management and Instructional Leadership categories on the survey instrument and relate to the focus group/community forum themes of Advocate for All, Strategic Leader, and Successful Manager with an Instructional Focus and Financial Acumen.

- Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the district and serve as the primary advocate at the local, state, and national levels for the district needs.
- Recruit, employ, evaluate and retain effective personnel throughout the district and its schools.
- Increase academic, artistic, social, and emotional learning for the whole child, along with decreasing achievement gaps in the system.

The second and third most desired characteristics from the online survey fall in the Stakeholder Engagement category and are closely aligned to the following themes heard during the meetings with stakeholders -- Relationship and Team Builder, Listener, and Communicator.

- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect between faculty, staff, administrators, parents, community members, and the Board.
- Listen to and effectively address the expectations and concerns of students, faculty, staff, parents, area businesses, community partners, and taxpayers in the school system.

HYA and the School Board will strive to find an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to meet the needs of the Division. The search team will seek superintendent candidates who can work with the Fairfax County School Board to provide the leadership needed to continue to achieve academic excellence, enhance student learning, and support the social and emotional well-being of students while meeting the needs of each of its schools and communities.

The search team would like to thank all the participants who attended focus group meetings or completed the online survey and the FCPS staff members who assisted with our meetings, particularly Ilene Muhlberg, Bev Madeja, Ann Benedicto, and Desiree Wunderlin who organized the search team's time in the Division.

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

**Diana McCauley, Ann Monday, and Hank Gmitro**

## Summary of Comments from Focus Group Meetings

The structure of the focus groups was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What do stakeholders value regarding the schools? What strengths do they desire to retain and build upon?
- What are the issues this Division currently faces, and will face, in the next three to five years?
- What personal and professional characteristics and attributes are desired in a new Superintendent?

### Board Members

#### Strengths:

A lot has been accomplished in the past three years

Board has kept things moving forward

Changes to the culture to make it more caring and respectful of parents

Changing school starting times

Created a vision and moving in the right direction

Direction for the District is correct – Portrait of Graduate, Strategic Plan and cultural changes all needed to be continued

District able to operate at a good pace and get info to Board member

District does a better job of listening to people

Does well by its employees

FCPS helps to develop life-long learners

FCPS holds very high standards

FCPS often leads the way

Focus on expanding career and technical education options needs to continue

Forward-thinking district

Full day Mondays

Funding for ESOL services

Graduates are set to succeed

Graduating students are of the highest caliber

Great strides in reforming the discipline system

Headed in the right direction

Helps students with learning resiliency

Improved principal selection process

Later start times

Leadership team is effective

More responsive leadership team

Needs-based staffing

Often referred to as the best public school system in the country



Professional organization  
 Project momentum  
 Remarkable administrators  
 Special education services are world class  
 Streamlining the leadership team  
 Strong commitment to employees – salary and compensation efforts  
 Strong leadership team  
 Stronger communication and connections with the community  
 Support provided by staff  
 The district does so much for families  
 We have supportive families  
 Working on closing gaps

**Challenges/Concerns/Issues:**

1 to 1 initiative is not going well  
 \$7.6 million for snow removal during the week school was closed is evidence of poor fiscal management  
 AAP serving 15-20% of the population – Is this needed?  
 Achievement gaps  
 Balancing parity and equity with flexibility and trust  
 Becoming a majority minority school district  
 Board dynamics and division  
 Board is a bit dysfunctional  
 Board is operating on a basis of personality rather than focusing on solving issues  
 Boundary change issues will take serious leadership  
 Budget  
 Building relationships with non-parents in the community  
 Can't afford to have the new superintendent leave after a few years – need stability  
 Chairman and vice chair have too much control and influence in Board decisions  
 Communication with PTAs and PTOs  
 Concern that 1 to 1 initiative is taking too many resources – Is it worth the benefit?  
 Concern that Board dynamics will be a liability in attracting good candidates  
 Concern that partisanship on the Board is going to create unanticipated consequences in the next election cycle  
 County is becoming more segregated economically  
 Demographic changes  
 Differentiating pay based on hard to fill positions  
 Difficulty assessing the quality of Gatehouse staff  
 Disconnect between staff in schools and Gatehouse  
 District does not like talking about the impact of high poverty schools  
 District sometimes turns a tin ear to how things are perceived in the community  
 Do not have effective and consistent evaluation oversight by district administrator of building leaders  
 Equity issues  
 Equity issues and the changing face of Fairfax County  
 Equity or resources

Everything is always about the budget

Facilities

Financial management is not good in the Division

Growing number of minority majority schools

Growing special education population

Have and have not in counties

Have not addressed student workload issues

Lack of programming options at some schools

Lack of trust between School Board and Board of Supervisors

Lack of trust in the budget process

Lagging pay and benefits

Level for frustration on the part of LT members with Board dynamics and behavior

Meals Tax failed because the community does not feel the school district is a good steward of their tax doors

Morale due to workload

Need for a position for Chief Equity Officer

Need more focus on writing especially at middle and high school levels

Need to create early college

Need to cut back on programs and create greater alignment

Need to expose administrative decisions to greater scrutiny

Need to keep focus on measureable indicators of success

Need to pay teachers more

Need to prepare students for college and careers

Polarization of Board

Relationship with the business community

School system and county are becoming more segregated economically

Significant IT problems

Some aspects of the Portrait of a Graduate are not measureable

Still have pocket of excellence and need greater consistency of quality

Student discipline approaches still need to be improved

Teacher and staff compensation

The Board is becoming more divided along party lines

The school system needs to manage its finances the way a family does

The way the transgender bathroom usage issue was handled

TJ admission rates for differing areas of the county

Transparency in the budget is needed – line item info

We don't need a leader to come in and change directions or create new programs

**Desired Characteristics:**

A doer

Ability to assess talent at Gatehouse

Ability to minimize drama

Able to delegate

Able to support the current direction – Portrait of a Graduate and Inspire

Able to tell the School Board what they do not want to hear  
 Action oriented  
 Activist  
 Administrative to run a large district  
 Appreciation for robust audits  
 Believe in continuous process improvement  
 Believes less is more  
 Bilingual  
 Builds relationship with Board of Supervisors  
 Can protect staff from the Board  
 Can say "NO"  
 Champion for public education  
 Collaborative  
 Continues the culture that we care about each other  
 Courage to address equity issues  
 Courage to address issues of poverty  
 Develops strong relationship with community  
 Develops trust  
 Dexterity to change direction when needed  
 Experience in large systems  
 Face of the school district  
 Financial acumen  
 Fiscal skills  
 Forceful when needed  
 Good at assessing needs in the organization  
 Good business acumen  
 Good custodian of funds  
 Great executer of operations  
 Great political skills  
 Has been a classroom teacher and principal  
 Helps the Board Chair and Vice Chair to share more information with full board  
 High level of integrity with fiscal responsibility  
 High profile  
 Humble  
 Instructional leader  
 Lack of ego  
 Leadership skills to guide difficult decisions  
 Listener  
 Listens to everyone but knows how to make a decision  
 Local and regional ties to Northern Virginia so the person wants to stay  
 Mends fences with Board of Supervisors  
 Missionary attitude  
 Need to be strategic in prioritizing funding  
 Non-defensive with the Board  
 Not a caretaker

Not interested in social engineering agenda  
 Open to ideas but keeps us on course  
 Opposed to charters and vouchers  
 Passion for the county  
 Persuasive  
 Practical experience dealing with poverty  
 Problem solver  
 Responsive to board needs  
 Sense of humor  
 Strong advocate for district needs  
 Superintendent experience  
 System focused  
 Thick skinned  
 Transparent  
 Understands diversity  
 Understands high poverty  
 Understands that you can't always make everyone happy and you sometimes have to just make the decision  
 Understands the importance of building relationships  
 Understands VA funding mechanisms  
 Views all board members as equal  
 Vision for the future without losing the vision that is in place  
 Willing to stay for the long term  
 Works to have the right leaders in the right places  
 Works well with community college

## Building Administrators

### Strengths:

"Portrait of a Graduate"

5-year mission of Ignite

A collective focus and division wide message of a portrait of a graduate and literacy. This consistent message has been motivating and the information has been very useful right away in classes. We do not want to lose that momentum.

Balanced approach towards assessments

Being innovative

Central office is responsive to building principals

Clear vision and message

Community/school input on school leaders selection

Continue to provide vision for Portrait of a Graduate: provide support and empowerment for making it happen

Continued support of Portrait of a Graduate (Focus on Literacy Development)

Courage to advocate for all stakeholders

Creative/critical thinking

Culture of caring  
 Degree to which stakeholders are involved in decisions  
 Develop region leadership to give school leadership a balance of autonomy & accountability  
 Diversity – all types  
 Emphasis on developing through professional development  
 Employee benefits  
 Employer breadth of available resources  
 Flexibility amongst schools  
 Focus on innovation  
 Focus on literacy  
 High principals--work well as team  
 High quality and diverse opportunities and programs for students and staff  
 High quality education delivered by the district's schools  
 High quality of employees  
 HR support  
 Identify ways to show the greatness of our school outside the SOLs  
 Nourish professional development (CLTs continued)  
 Offer an array of elective opportunities across the county  
 Offering students a wide variety of program options – IB, AP, Gen Ed, Sp Ed, AAP  
 One of the largest employers in the Northern Virginia area  
 Portrait of a graduate – FCPS  
 Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Plan have set the right direction  
 Portrait of a Graduate on the right track but took a great deal of time to communicate to schools  
 Portrait of a Graduate outcomes  
 Professional Learning Communities  
 Professional trust of school leaders  
 Project Momentum  
 Project-Based Learning  
 Recognizing individuality/unique needs of each school  
 Redesign of the instructional process  
 Regardless of whatever school you're in, all kids need a highly qualified teacher and instructional materials for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners  
 Reputation of excellence and trailblazer  
 Resources available to instructional staff  
 Someone who can come in and continue to run with the Strategic Plan  
 Started being innovative about reaching our increasingly diverse student body  
 Strong culture, very valued  
 Strong voice for budget with county  
 Support and continue Portrait of a Graduate  
 Teachers, administrators, and personnel in the trenches  
 The programs cover a wide variety of services from special needs to advance academies to career tech fields  
 The quality of the schools impact the value of real estate  
 Trust school leadership  
 Trying to meet the needs of very different school populations

Values diversity of people, thought, and experience

Vision created by Portrait of a Graduate (not the Strategic Plan)

We are right on the cutting edge, but we don't have cohesive, consistent professional development

We value our programs – Academics, etc. Opportunities to meet the diverse needs of our learners

We value the level of autonomy at the building level as supported by school needs and population

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

Number of new administrators

Ability to communicate effectively – only info to cabinet and supervisors and isn't shared or dispersed consistently

Advocating for ERFC for vested members

Appropriate/adequate compensation

Behind in IT: needs full overhaul

Budget

Budget – manage in a way that is not all encompassing

Budget and funding – resources to respond to changing demographic, to fund and keep highly skilled staff

Budget and the need for the person to be strong and willing to go out and work to truly get the staff the raises and ensure we can fully fund what we are so well known in the state

Budget needs to reflect the needs of our schools

Budgetary concerns: especially since the “Meals Tax” did not pass which will result in a significant annual budget shortfall

Center v. level III school site

Changes in demographics

Changing – increased diversity, poverty

Changing county demographics

Children becoming addicted to technology

Class sizes

Communication – too many silos – don't know what each is doing

Communication pyramid – cohesion of message from LT -> Regions -> Schools

Community is starting to discuss charter schools

Compensation (all employees)

Continue (quickly and aggressively) work on meeting needs of diverse learners

Cultural proficiency

Data management systems – behind/ineffective (EDSO)

Develop a systemic approach to development of new teacher (years 1-3) and new to FCPS (county-wide)

Disconnect between many different offices within the county leads to too many disjointed initiatives at the school level.

Don't always know who to call with all of the changes at Gatehouse

Don't necessarily want a change agent – too much lately not seen through. Don't want to change course.

Employee compensation needs to be competitive so we can attract and maintain high quality educators and leaders

Finding balance for children in Northern VA  
 Follow through with: central office is here for the schools; the schools are not here to support the central office  
 Getting traditionally non-involved parents engaged with the system  
 Growing ESOL population  
 Have/have-not schools – equity  
 Having to Fairfaxize everything  
 High school programming requirements at the state level  
 How will they work with the multiple personalities of the School Board?  
 HR: a lot of work needed including staffing the needed supports for schools. Recruiting efforts  
 Identifying school leaders  
 Impact of federal and state mandates  
 Impact of the change in demographics – having staff and programs to keep our schools moving  
 Increased specialized boutique programs compete with core needs (ex. Immersion, FLES, AAP)  
 Increasing levels of student poverty, particularly at elementary level  
 Internal communication needs to be improved  
 Interpretation narrowly on HR issues to detriment of students  
 Lack of coordination at the Central Office level  
 Litigious parent community  
 Managing parent expectations  
 Meeting the needs of all students specifically as our population changes – focused so much on raising the bar, need to get back a little more to name and need focus  
 Morale, related to salaries  
 More flexibility needed in implementing initiatives  
 Need a strong advocate in front of BOS  
 Need for support and mentoring for principals  
 Need to look at curriculum expectations and requirements  
 Need to look at different paths to graduation  
 Open budget process  
 Parents who can be very demanding  
 PD offered in a timely manner to avoid teacher absences during the year  
 Principals do not have a common understanding of our culture. We are not all on the same page with what we need/want, or even who we are. Our culture doesn't exist.  
 Professional development for teachers and principals  
 Re-establish FCPS as a leader: move away from deficit model defensive stand  
 Redesign region office structure  
 Resource challenges at the elementary level  
 Retention of the best and the brightest teachers and administrators  
 Same mission and vision with permission for schools to take different paths  
 Scaffolding support to schools to level the playing field  
 School Board is difficult to work with  
 School Board is holding us back from being cutting edge  
 School Board members directing principals what they should do  
 School Board: dysfunctional  
 See the vision of Portrait of a Graduate – not try to change it

Size

Staff morale

Staff ratio formulas are not transparent

Substantial budget plan (maintaining core options)

Succession Planning: needs to be instituted

Suggested changes to retirement benefits

Teacher and staff recruitment and retention

Teacher recruitment and retention

Teacher shortages

Un-keepable promises, i.e. Special Education

Understanding the demographic shift (suburban – urban; ESOL, Socio-economic status, diversity, equity, etc.)

Understanding the needs of secondary schools

We keep reorganizing

Would like more communication across regions – other schools like us not necessarily in our Region.

Regions are so large. We really appreciate our RAS workload. Is it realistic?

Desired Characteristics:

“Calloused up”

A person who builds trust and empowers the current leadership within the county

A superintendent for the people

Ability to build strong relationships with Board of Supervisors and School Board members

Ability to negotiate

Able to build solid relationships with stakeholders and understand the political nature of this area

Able to develop a progressive agenda and who has the political savvy to support us with the State

Able to listen – not defensive

Accept the culture of FCPA

Accessible

Acute understanding of finance/budget – able to [clearly] communicate to all stakeholders

An educator, not a politician

Analytical – able to determine big ideas from input

Balances institutional knowledge/longevity with innovation

Builds leadership in others

Builds relationships

Builds relationships within the system instead of prioritizing outside

Can do all that’s necessary in the first year/no time to play in the sand box

Can stand up to school board members when they get out of their lane

Collaborative

Commitment to being here in FCPS

Committed

Communication – ability to rally a cause; transparency; accessible to school staff; manage

Washington, DC caliber media

Communication – in the deepest sense of the word

Communication skills



Communicator, including a willingness to listen  
 Competent  
 Connects with instructional staff  
 Consistent with division wide programs/processes  
 Courage to advocate for all stakeholders  
 Courage to define us as who we are in reality, not in fantasy  
 Courage to ignore rhetoric that should not be dignified with response  
 Courage to say “no” and explain why “no” means “no”  
 Courage to stand up for justice  
 Courageous  
 Delivers hard messages to community  
 Distributed leadership  
 Does not believe one size fits all  
 Dynamic  
 Dysfunctional Boards – experience in working with  
 Elementary experience  
 Embraces the community – be willing to invest in FCPS long term – invest in the community  
 Evidence of work done in closing the opportunity gap  
 Experience with a changing district as well as diversity and poverty  
 Focus core instruction/students  
 Focused voice on the budget  
 Good communicator  
 Good listener of multiple perspectives  
 Guts to take on major systemic change needed to get us out of budget deficit - we are a large district  
 Has a historical perspective of Fairfax  
 Identifies core excellence in FCPS  
 Has experience in Fairfax already  
 Has secondary experience  
 Highly energetic and healthy  
 Humor  
 Innovative  
 Innovative and thinks out of the box  
 Insightfulness – real understanding of SB situation; historical knowledge of FCPS  
 Inspires a shared vision  
 Intelligent, skilled professional  
 Keep a positive climate where people (principals) feel safe and valued  
 Keep main things, main things  
 Knows how to balance a substantial budget  
 Knows instruction  
 Listens and learns before making changes  
 Listens to all voices – have trust in your principals who have boots on the ground  
 Listens to the input from principals  
 Loyal: gives us 5 years  
 Makes it a priority to attend principal meetings  
 Not a micro-manager

Not afraid to make decisions; make things happen  
 Out of the box thinker  
 Pays attention to the needs of the wide range of schools  
 Personable; approachable – someone who is willing to get in the schools and show they understand the challenges of each school  
 Political acumen to advocate with all groups  
 Politically astute and able to work with the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Governor, and other elected officials  
 Politically savvy  
 Relatable – can build strong relationships  
 Relationship builder  
 Relationship builder  
 Relationship building with all groups  
 Resilient; thick skinned  
 Resolute – someone who can keep going, plow ahead  
 Respects the history and culture of the FCPS System  
 Shared decision-making  
 Shared transparency on issues  
 Smart – but able to relate to all  
 Someone not afraid to have a voice for the educator and not politicians  
 Someone who can create a common deep culture  
 Someone who is thoughtful and gathers all information before making a decision  
 Stands up to anyone if it is what is right and best for students and teachers  
 Staying the course despite political pressure  
 Strategic  
 Strength in Core Beliefs  
 Strength to hold their own with the Board, vocal parent community  
 Strong advocacy skills  
 Strong: can say “no”  
 Support flexible implementation of initiatives  
 Supportive of keeping students in public schools  
 Supportive of providing salary increases  
 Thick skin  
 Thoughtful  
 Transparency  
 Trust in leadership  
 Trusting and trustworthy  
 Understand big  
 Understanding of diversity  
 Understanding of urban school district  
 Understands and is strategic with large school systems and community members who don’t have children in FCPS  
 Understands special education  
 Values preschool education and early intervention  
 Values professional development for principals

Values the voice of principals  
 Visible in schools  
 Visible in the schools  
 Visionary – inspiring, creative  
 Wants the best for all  
 Wants to be here for long term  
 Willing to engage and direct school board  
 Willing to take a risk

## Community

### Strengths:

“Portrait of a Graduate”  
 “Portrait of a Graduate”  
 1 to 1 initiative  
 A great archipelago  
 AA centers  
 Academic programs are strong and creative  
 Acceptance and treatment of LGBT students have been improving  
 Accessibility of the teachers  
 Addressing issues by involving staff and parents  
 Advanced Academics programming available at local schools  
 Alternative schools  
 Arts program  
 Attention to individual student needs  
 Availability of opportunities and options at HS Academies  
 Band, Activities, Sports are high quality  
 Big changes in special education  
 Board of Supervisors wants to have the best school system in the country  
 Bully prevention data is strong and shows a focus on healthy school environment  
 Business partnerships  
 Changing demographics and still maintaining overall performance levels  
 Changing district language to include everyone  
 Changing starting times  
 Clarity of work on closing achievement gaps  
 Clear and consistent messaging  
 Co does Sex Ed very well  
 Colleges value a FCPS graduate  
 Commitment to technology  
 Community Schools  
 Course offerings are tremendous  
 District is far more inclusive  
 District understands that teachers need to be paid fairly  
 Diversity

Diversity and acceptance, especially in regard to LGBTQ  
Diversity in FCPS is broad, in terms of differences among people culturally, in backgrounds, in thought  
Diversity in the county  
Division level frameworks for operations  
Dr. Garza one of the best superintendents FCPS has had  
Educating the whole child: academically, nutritionally, mentally, athletically, etc.  
Excellent at meeting the needs of students at the top and bottom  
Excellent reputation  
Expansions of cyber education  
Extra effort by the staff  
FCFT and FEA are working together  
FCPS Pride  
First impression is strong  
Fiscally responsible  
Foreign language programming at the elementary level  
Foundation support for employee recognition programs  
Generally ahead of the pack  
Genesis Work  
Good at supporting math programming  
Graduates of FCPS have strong reputation at the state and national levels  
Graduation rates  
Great about accommodating students  
Greater level of consistent and equitable implementation of change efforts  
Has been a refreshing three years  
Has improved communication methods and efforts  
Helping students learn to speak English  
Hires high quality staff and supports them  
Huge system that has resources  
IB/AP instruction great  
Increases to teacher pay  
Incredible instructional programs  
Joint Budget Task Force  
Kids love going to school  
Language Immersion Programs  
Leaders explain the why behind decisions  
Listening Tour was a good idea  
Listens to stakeholders  
Long-standing culture of “can do” attitude  
Lots of great experienced teachers  
Lots of high quality special education services  
Maintaining art programming  
Many good teachers  
Moving in the right direction  
Music programming

One of the best districts in the country  
 One of the best school systems in the country  
 Openness of the administration  
 Orchestra program  
 Outstanding fine arts program  
 Outstanding human capital  
 Parent involvement is strong  
 Parent Liaison and Resource staff and office are great  
 Partnership between FCPS and the City of Fairfax  
 Pay increases for staff members  
 People choose to live here due to schools  
 Portrait of a graduate - 21 Century Skills -- valid and appropriate for all students  
 Produces the next generation of leaders  
 Programs like Responsive Classroom and PBIS are effective  
 Programs to support new teachers are available  
 Project Momentum  
 Promotes respect for diversity  
 Provides a good education  
 Provides a very high quality education at a reasonable cost  
 Provides competitive edge for college  
 Puts kids first  
 Pyramids have come together and improved articulation  
 Quality of programs – a national leader  
 Quality of teachers  
 Recognition of growth and diversity as an asset and opportunity  
 Reduced focus on SOL testing  
 Reduced the number of at-risk schools from 43 to 9  
 Relationship with the County Schools: an interdependent relationship  
 Reputation is very strong  
 Reputation of FCPS: businesses make decision to locate here based on the reputation of the school  
 Reputation of the schools draws families to want to live here  
 Reputation of the system  
 Robust relationship with the business community  
 School personnel getting some training on issues related to student safety and well-being  
 Schools are very supportive of full range of students  
 Shift to provide more opportunities for career education  
 Someone who can come in and continue to run with the Strategic Plan  
 Special education programming  
 Special Education services  
 Spectrum of programs and services  
 Strong relationship between the Foundation and FCPS  
 Strong teacher support  
 Student safety is important  
 Students are proud to graduate from FCPS  
 Successful in helping all kids from all backgrounds

Superintendent was the voice for students who need extra help  
 Support of teachers  
 System-wide infrastructure has improved  
 Teacher quality  
 Teachers at LBSS have been great for high achieving students  
 Teachers had more hope under Dr. Garza's leadership - felt heard  
 Top students really excel  
 Transparency in the system  
 Transparent budget process  
 Up-to-date facilities  
 Variety of cultures and religious backgrounds and diverse viewpoints enriches the community  
 Washington Area Study Council  
 Welcoming environment  
 Willingness to work with the parents  
 Working together with Board of Supervisors

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

80 hours of family life education from K-12  
 AA Center Program and Level 4 schools are not equally distributed across the District  
 Academic emphasis at TJ has waned  
 Achievement Gap  
 Achievement of boys falling behind girls, need to determine why  
 Balance of high expectations and over emphasis on college prep with alternatives (CTE, internships) that prepare students for work and life  
 Becoming an urban school system  
 Behind the curve on cost saving operational changes  
 Belief that private wealth is more important than public wealth  
 Bleak fiscal situation  
 Boundary issues – planning for population growth in the Route 1 corridor  
 Boundary changes are needed  
 Budget  
 Budget - need for funds to support growth and teacher pay  
 Budget – composite index is outdated and needs to be updated  
 Budget accountability - wasteful spending  
 Budget challenges  
 Budget challenges, need to support teacher salaries, capital needs  
 Budget issues  
 Budget Task Force needs to have full access to budget, not just the program budget  
 Budgetary Concerns: especially since the “Meals Tax” did not pass which will result in a significant annual budget shortfall  
 Budgeting and funding issues  
 Budgeting and funding issues: battle between district and the county; failure of meals tax  
 Budgeting structure and relationship between the School Board and Board of Supervisors  
 Bullying: needs to be addressed in a more effective and consistent manner

Challenging world of students - media, technology, pressure, drugs, etc.  
 Changes in FLE and Health curriculum not supported  
 Changes regarding LGBT/gender issues were rammed through without discussion and input by parents  
 Changing from a suburban to an urban district  
 Changing student demographics  
**Class sizes**  
 Class sizes are too big  
**Closing achievement and opportunity gaps**  
 Communication is not two-way  
 Communication: absence of in timely manner  
 Community input needed on boundaries and facility usage  
**Competing advocacy groups**  
 Complexity of schools - so much diversity, not just cultural, racial but also diverse points of view, needs, demands, expectations  
 Concerns about student stress level  
**Consistency of service**  
 Continued need for parental involvement, realizing that the parent is the first teacher  
 Continues use of "temporary" trailers for 20 years  
 Cost of living in Fairfax County  
 Cost of living makes it hard for teachers to work and live here  
 County growth  
**County is polarized**  
**County needs to recognize it is a majority minority community**  
 County segregated by wealth  
 Critical shortages have shifted from traditionally hard to fill areas to grade 4-6 teachers  
 Curriculum is not as rich and full as it should be  
 Curriculum of Family Life philosophy vs. the content of curriculum - don't match  
**Decline in quality over time**  
 Deficits among students that need to be addressed - meeting the diversity of needs of students  
 Difficult intersection of School Board, Board of Supervisors, and the County  
**Difficulty getting the message out without a local paper**  
 Diversity  
 Diversity causes alienation - language barriers keep some parents from feeling part of community; religious differences divide people, and cause discrimination  
 Diversity: especially non-English speaking families  
 Diversity: racial and FRL  
 Do students really excel and is reputation deserved  
 Don't have enough instructional time to go deep with students  
**Dyslexia programming is inadequate**  
 Economic disparity across the county  
 Economic segregation in county  
**Eliminate Reading Recovery**  
 Elimination of Project Excel  
**Enormous pressure on high school students**

Equality and equity  
 Equity and equality struggles  
 Equity of access  
 Equity of access in the system  
 Executive functioning and social skills need to be taught  
**Expensive, poorly designed buildings**  
 Extent of job responsibilities of the superintendent and the importance of delegating  
 Facilities issues – overcrowding and maintenance needs  
 Families that work 2-3 jobs just to survive here, cannot always be engaged  
**Far more on the plate, with fewer resources available**  
 FCPS cannot just reflect those who are already successful - and must make minority achievement a real priority  
**FCPS is not as good as people think**  
 FCPS must articulate what diversity means in Fairfax County  
 FCPS parents can be over-protective so children do not learn from mistakes or develop resilience  
 FCPS top-heavy - too many central administrators, “management”  
 Fear on the part of principals  
 Filling vacancies - many classroom-teaching vacancies remain in January  
 Frustration on the part of parents when children do not get to attend their neighborhood school  
 Gatehouse does not know what is happening at the schools  
 Gay/Straight Alliance needed at middle schools  
 Gen Ed classrooms are challenging and diverse - getting harder to find teachers who are ready to deal with these challenges  
 Gen Ed instruction is only average in comparison to AAP and AP/IB  
 Getting good people to become teachers and stay in education  
 Getting parents involved in a positive way  
 Grading policies still differ from school to school  
**Growing diversity**  
 Growing internal leaders  
 Growing population of English language learners with extra educational needs  
 Growth - 2000 more students, 134 more staff projected to be needed  
**Have to monitor the district bureaucracy**  
 High turnover of staff due to higher salaries in neighboring districts  
**High-level classes are not academically challenging**  
 Higher teacher salaries in neighboring communities  
 Hostile business community - Business relationships are poor - Business community has failed FCPS  
**IEP students do not get the services defined in their IEPs**  
 Inconsistency of principals’ expectations  
 Inconsistent population growth  
 Increase in the number of FRL kids  
**Increasing divide between haves and have nots in the county**  
 Increasing population of FARMS and ESOL student population  
 Ineffective principals should not take years to remove  
 Insensitivity toward needs of minority families  
 Integration of technology in instructional programming



Is all of the technology needed – get back to basics

**Is the district top heavy?**

Keeping the brand

Lack of community engagement on Policy 1450

Lack of program evaluation

**Lack of transparency in decision-making**

Landlocked nature of school sites

Larger class sizes

Looking for ways to right size budget especially since the meals tax referendum did not pass

Loss of employees and positions

**Loss of teachers and principals due to salary**

**Lots of competing interests**

Lots of talent but needs to be utilized in a different way

Maintaining and strengthening the range of programs - from Advanced Academic to Gen Ed to Career Tech

Maintaining the reputation and quality with changing times

**Make the curriculum reflect the experience of all students**

Making sure that ALL students feel safe in public schools, including transgender children

Many administrators and others in schools do not understand the Spec Ed laws and needs of disabled students

Many parents work long hours and cannot participate in School Board meetings and follow policy changes

**Meals tax failure**

**More communication**

More focus needed on kids at the bottom half of the class instead of at the top half of the class

Moving from a suburban to more urban environment

Need for a lot of sensitivity training

**Need for a school in Clifton**

Need for accountability measures for administrators

**Need for concurrent enrollment in community college and FCPS**

**Need for more career education opportunities**

Need for more uniformity among schools

**Need for strong partnership between School Board and Board of Supervisors**

Need for workforce/vocational education, and make accessible to everyone

**Need more elementary foreign language programs**

**Need more flexibility when developing and implementing programs**

Need to create more career and technical opportunities for students

Need to create community schools

**Need to create more flip lesson experiences**

Need to develop closer working relationships with NOVA

Need to do a better job of making students citizens of the world

Need to expand 1 to 1 initiative to all students

Need to look at the strategic plan

Need to make buildings greener when renovating them

**Need to provide more community voice**

Need to provide more training to substitute teachers  
 Need to recruit exceptional talent  
 Need to SEE that what was said at a Listening Tour is acted on  
**Need to split up the District into smaller districts**  
 Need to support teachers - especially those beginning in their careers  
**Need to understand twice exceptional students**  
 Need to use public/private partnerships to address areas of financial need  
 Need to work to eliminate all of the attendance boundary islands  
 Need to work together more on human life issues, i.e. domestic violence  
 Needs more focus on academics  
 Needs of Region 3 often are not recognized or acknowledged  
 No advocacy group for general education  
 Not learning enough about itself as far as successes and failures  
**One size does not fit all**  
 Opportunities within schools that are not being publicized, shared, or talked about  
 Over communication means that some important messages get lost  
**Overworked and underpaid teachers**  
**Parent concerns versus political correctness and social engineering**  
 Parent involvement needs to continue to be supported and encouraged  
 Parent Resources need more funding  
 Parent voice should be more important  
 Parental rights need to be respected in regards to mental health issues  
 Parents and students fearful of changes around LGBTQ  
 Parents are leaving schools with tougher demographics  
**Parents should not be taken out of the equation in teaching about sex ed and values**  
 Parents sometimes have issues when they feel their concerns are not being addressed, i.e. transgender bathrooms  
 Pay increases for support staff  
**Permitting opt out provisions from programs and instruction when it conflicts with religious values**  
 Physical stamina required to perform the job  
**Pitting parents against Board of Supervisors**  
 Poor economy  
 Poorly run capital development program – out of touch and behind schedule  
 Potential threat to retirement plans  
 Poverty: approximately 30% FRL  
 Principal pipeline  
 Principal succession planning and program  
 Promoting the district - needs to be enhanced and accelerated to better communicate what the district does  
 Providing iPhones to administrators during a tight budget time is problematic  
 Quality of work life for teachers: too many assessments, too much bureaucracy  
 Question of inclusion (doesn't embrace social inclusion)  
**Questions about why and if we should be exceeding state mandates for programs and services**  
 Recruitment and retention of good teachers  
 Region 3 is underserved in regards to gifted services

Relationship between the two boards is critical

Relationships with city governmental leaders is sometimes strained

Role of the School Board needs to be clarified

Route 1 corridor has some significant challenges

Saying students should be fluent in two languages in the Portrait of Graduate is not realistic as programs to accomplish this are not available

School Board members are junior politicians and do not work well together

School Board should focus on educational policy, not social policy

School Board: individuals promoting their own agendas

School Board: size (12), need clarification of Board roles, Board management of self

School Board: working with 12 different personalities

School facilities

Schools must help with the social, emotional, physical needs of many children, as well as educational needs - to give them what is needed to succeed

Sex ed should be an opt-in rather than an opt-out program

Sex education curriculum and time spent on it

Size of the schools

Slow moving county

So many needs in the county due to have and have nots

Social experimentation (gender issues) controversial and divisive

SOL emphasis and testing has hurt program and content teaching

Some schools do a better job of reaching out to non-English speaking parents than others; good practices need to be replicated

Some staff still view it as us versus them

Some students are neglected by the system

Special Ed - making sure ALL needs are met

Special ed services do not meet the needs of the students

Special ed students in self-contained are too isolated and not getting social skills

Special Ed teachers need resources

Special Education population

Special education services need to be improved

SR&R issues related to "gender theory" that parents feel conflict with beliefs

Still a system of school rather than a school system

Strong sentiment in the community that the District should be more financially frugal and responsible

Student stress/mental health/suicide concerns

Students feeling stress due to pressures of continual testing

Students in the middle get lost

Students need life skills as well as academic knowledge

Students should rate teachers

Students with disabilities are not graduating with skills required to work and to live - too much emphasis on the goal of college preparation

Students with invisible disabilities

Systemic problems in the county and the schools

Teacher pay - keeping up with region

Teacher quality has declined

Teacher retention and burnout - workload on teachers can be overwhelming

Teacher salaries

Teacher salaries - FCPS must retain and attract teachers - not competitive in region

Teacher shortage - now and in the future

**Teachers are overwhelmed with bureaucracy and testing**

Teachers are overwhelmed with the workload

Teachers being pulled from classrooms to attend professional development activities

Teachers can go to Alex Co for more money (as much as \$20,000 more)

Teachers cannot afford to live in Fairfax Co

Teachers cannot live in Fairfax Co - some live as far as West Virginia

Teachers feel overburdened by too many programs all at once under Dr. Garza

**Teachers leaving FCPS and going to other districts for higher salaries**

Teachers leaving the profession and FCPS due to salary and workload concerns

Teachers using handouts instead of hands on learning

**Team building between Superintendent and School Board**

Technology in schools without enough training and support for teacher, therefore becomes a waste because it is not utilized

Too much money being spent on Sex Ed - spend these funds on ESOL

Too much testing

**Transgender policy**

Transient neighborhoods

Transportation

Twitter is a factor

Understanding the culture of Fairfax

Understands that there is separation of church and state that must be inclusive of all belief systems

Unrealistically high academic expectations

Unreasonably demanding parents

**Variance in special education services**

**Very demanding parents**

Virginia is #1 in the country regarding the path to prison for minorities

**We are ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among DC area districts**

We need a more activist board and a subordinate superintendent

What is the value of a high school diploma in getting a job right out of high school?

Whole child: needs to be a priority

**Desired Characteristics:**

A 21st Century kind of person; educates for the future

A team-builder, knows that you are as strong as the people around you

Ability to bridge the divide between BOS and School Board

Ability to connect with the multiple communities in the county

Ability to delegate

Ability to delegate, trust and empower

Ability to handle loud Board voices

Able to deal with all different types of people

Able to deal with competing parental and community desires and expectations  
 Able to deal with high-educated parents  
 Able to implement innovative programs  
 Able to navigate the funding mechanisms in VA  
 Accessible  
 Accessible to staff  
 Accountable  
 Adaptable  
 Addresses graduation rates  
 Administrative consistency - rules/policies are uniformly communicated and followed  
 Advocate for the schools  
 Advocates for teachers  
 Amplify successful voices  
 An educator who knows and understands schools, talks about children  
 Appreciative of workforce/vocational education  
 Approachable  
 Articulate  
 Articulates the message, hears concerns, and communicates in a non-patronizing way  
 Asks what we can do better  
 Awareness of mental health issues for students  
 Be familiar with all aspects of the Division  
 Believes in high expectations for all  
 Believes in protecting student privacy and security  
 Bilingual (Spanish)  
 Brings creative ways to do things - in relation to funding, for example  
 Budget and management skills  
 Budgetary experience  
 Builds a positive working relationship with Board of Supervisors  
 Builds community within the school  
 Builds relationships  
 Can adjust to changing times  
 Can be the "face" of FCPS  
 Can bring people together around common principles  
 Can deal with politicians and get things done, i.e. Meals Tax  
 Can implement sound, effective and consistent policies in regard to technology  
 Can make FCPS a desirable place for the best and brightest to work: salary, support, and incentives  
 Can make hard decisions, decisive  
 Can relate to school community in a positive way  
 Can work with BOS on fiscal matters  
 Can work with entire SB, even those who are "independent"  
 Can't be afraid of the noisy voices on the Board  
 Champion of public education  
 Cognizant of over-testing  
 Collaborative  
 Collaborative and consensus builder

Collaborative leader: not Karen Garza's style  
 Commitment to evidence based educational practices  
 Commitment to inclusion and acceptance of diversity  
 Communication skills  
 Communication skills critical  
 Communicator  
 Communicator, including a willingness to listen  
 Conflict resolution skills (NO TWEETING ALLOWED)  
 Connected to principals  
 Connects with other educational leaders in the region  
 Continues the focus on relationship building between administrators and staff  
 Continues to make the mental health of students a priority  
 Cultural sensitivities  
 Data-driven practitioner  
 Deals with Special Ed resources around inclusion and mainstreaming  
 Decision-maker  
 Demonstrates success managing a large complex system in which one size does not fit all  
 Demonstrates out of the box thinking  
 Develops a strong leadership team  
 Develops strong relationships with the Board of Supervisors  
 Does not cater to one group or listen to the loudest voice  
 Does not over-emphasize SOL scores  
 Does not reinvent the wheel  
 Effective boss who recognizes people  
 Embraces the ideals of Portrait of a Graduate, emphasizes critical thinking, social skill over rote learning and standardized testing  
 Empathetic and approachable  
 Empathic and demonstrates good judgment  
 Emphasis on critical thinking  
 Engage with the community  
 Establishes trust  
 Even-tempered  
 Exceptional interpersonal skills  
 Experience as a teacher  
 Experience in a system that is very diverse  
 Experience running a large school system  
 Experience with families of need and wealth  
 Experienced educator  
 Experienced in multiple central office roles  
 Expertise in addressing needs of low-income students  
 Exploration of innovative programming for ALL of our children  
 Familiar with education in Virginia  
 Financially savvy  
 Fiscal acumen  
 Fiscal knowledge and expertise

Fiscally savvy; can deal with budget challenges effectively and creatively  
 Fluent in world affairs and current events  
 Good “salesman”/PR person  
 Good decision maker  
 Good listener  
 Good motivator  
 Good politician  
 Has a record of listening to parents, meeting parental needs  
 Has a servant-leader mentality  
 Has a vision for the administrative structure that is needed  
 Has new ideas for budgeting and planning to bring to the table  
 Has trustful relationships with teachers - i.e., communications with Supt are not intercepted  
 Has worked in a metro area  
 Helps staff and community feel connected  
 High caliber, polished, and knowledgeable leader  
 Honest  
 Honest and upfront about the challenge of achievement gaps  
 Honors the strategic plan and Portrait of a Graduate  
 Humble, hungry and smart  
 In addition to all of the 2013 attributes and skills sets, the new superintendent needs to be/have/willing to do the following:
 

- Experienced with diverse populations, and perhaps even be bilingual
- Frequent communication/outreach
- Proven record of reversing the achievement gap
- Skilled negotiator
- Up and out on the hill influencing policy

 Innovative  
 Innovative, will bring new ideas to the budget process  
 Innovative: the Supt will not just talk 21st Century skills but also really get us there  
 Insists that everyone is on the same page  
 Interpersonal skills to develop deep, meaningful relationships  
 Involves community in decisions  
 Is able to hire people who are committed to the needs of disabled students  
 Is culturally aware  
 Is out in the schools  
 Is responsive  
 K-12 teaching experience  
 Keeps decision making free of political whims  
 Know how things work behind the scenes  
 Knowledgeable about technology  
 Knows how to find and recruit talent  
 Knows that diversity is complex - we are urban/suburban, have differing needs and beliefs  
 Knows the pace of northern Virginia  
 Knows what they do not know  
 Learner

Learns about the system and history before making changes  
 Leverages political capital at state and national levels  
 Listener  
 Listens to both sides and finds compromise  
 Local  
 Look at internal candidates who know the system  
 Looks at a different route for how we teach kids today and in the future  
 Loss of vocational education - too much focus on college prep  
 Maintains the quality of fine arts  
 Makes decisions based on facts, not emotion  
 Makes evidence-based decisions  
 Makes sure all students are safe and taken care of  
 Makes sure that FLE and Health curricula encourages moral behavior; seeks more parent input about these programs  
 Management experience in a large system  
 Management skills to run a large organization  
 Media skills  
 Moral compass to work through tough decisions  
 Need to consider succession planning  
 Need to understand the pieces of the county that impact FCPS  
 Needs to bridge the progressive and conservative factions on the Board  
 Nice and open  
 Not a smooth talker but one who takes action  
 Not egotistical  
 Not fixated on numbers  
 Not focused on leaving a legacy  
 Not swayed by the loudest voice  
 Open communication  
 Open door policy  
 Open to new ideas, flexible, but consistent  
 Opens lines of communication to students  
 Outstanding communicator and listener  
 Owns the culture  
 Partners with other governmental leaders  
 Personality larger than the position  
 Pleasant demeanor  
 Political animal: knows the politics of the area (DC); comfortable in this environment  
 Political skills and advocacy  
 Politically astute and able to work with the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Governor, and other elected officials  
 Politically savvy  
 Portrait of Education for ALL students  
 Principled leader who is undeterred  
 Proactive and forward thinking  
 Progressive



Promotes an overall culture of inclusion for ESL  
 Protects teacher planning time; respects the need for teachers to have regular unencumbered time  
 Realistic about taking a hard look at ways to save dollars: evaluate programs, reallocate resources  
 Receptive  
 Recognizes and understands minority student needs  
 Recognizes that people are different  
 Recognizes the exceptional work of staff  
 Recognizes the need for flexibility at the school level  
 Record of closing achievement gaps  
 Relationship builder  
 Remembers that all people in FCPS are not wealthy  
 Respectful of city leaders  
 Respects everyone's view  
 Respects parents, listens  
 Respects students and encourages them to participate and seeks their input  
 Respects the needs of LGBT students  
 Respond to teacher and parents via email  
 Savvy to the political process  
 Sees that the success of the school system is based on success with the most needy students  
 Sees the importance of college and career readiness  
 Sees the value of programs like PBIS and Responsive Classroom  
 Servant leader  
 Sets realistic expectations; knows what he/she really can accomplish  
 Should consider up and coming deputy superintendents and not rely on superintendent experience  
 Solutions oriented  
 Someone who builds trust through transparency  
 Someone who knows the culture and expectations of Fairfax County  
 Someone who likes people and children  
 Someone who proves that they can deal with complexity and size; comes from a district of similar size and diversity  
 Speaks her mind  
 Stands out as a worldwide leader - restores the prominence of FCPS in USA  
 Stands up to VDOE, when FCPS has better policies  
 Sticks to a system that works, does not follow every educational buzzword/trend  
 Strong  
 Strong interpersonal skills, but not a push-over  
 Strong management experience and proven ability  
 Strong open communicator with the Board  
 Strong outside face  
 Strong person with a backbone  
 Strong personality  
 Strong presence  
 Strong special education background  
 Strong values - focused on life skills for all students, helping students become resilient

Support teachers in regard to salary, work conditions, autonomy; recognizes and addresses the pressure on beginning teachers

Supportive of employees

Supports strong relationships with cities in the county

Supports teachers

Takes social issues off the table

Takes the time to meet with parents

Team builder

Team-operating leader

Thick-skinned: not a place for shrinking violets

Thinks outside the box

Thoughtful prior to speaking

Traditional: will not compromise core classes

Transparency with stakeholders

Transparent

Transparent - explains how a decision is made - is timely and open

Understand VA politics

Understands and respects the uniqueness of the FCPS and City of Fairfax relationship - maintains and continues the partnership of FCPS and City of Fairfax - is open to meeting with City Superintendent; respects the requirements of the City of Fairfax

Understands how to differentiate curriculum

Understands Special Ed laws and regulations

Understands that education is not a competition

Understands that parents are the primary educators of their children

Understands that the real clients are the students

Understands that there are students in FCPS not going to college

Understands the complex issues around FLE, Health, SR&R and issues of gender and sex; recognizes that these issues are important to parents

Understands the constituencies of parents in this area

Understands the essential role of parents and welcomes all parents

Understands the need for an inclusion first philosophy for special ed, especially at secondary level

Understands the winds of change, will be able to deal with changes from federal and state levels

Understands the work that has been done over the past three years

Understands what students with disabilities and all students need after graduation - believe in the need to provide these services

Upfront, open and honest

Uses facts to present and defend a position

Values all students

Values and supports art education

Values parent input; has a proven track record of effective parent involvement

Visible in the schools

Visionary

Visionary, but has a plan for getting there

Visits schools - and goes to classrooms, spends time with teachers

Wants to be a national leader

Wants to change the transgender policy  
 Wants to partner with county regarding joint use of facilities  
 Wants to partner with the business community  
 Wants to work with the Board of Supervisors  
 Will be a unifier around common values and living in America - not divide us due to diversity  
 Will commit to a tenure sufficient to get things done  
 Will consider getting rid of smart phones and calculators  
 Will continually look for ways to improve communication  
 Will keep bathrooms segregated  
 Will listen to what employees are saying  
 Will respect the values of some families regarding same-sex bathrooms, etc.  
 Will understand the need for students to understand how to live in a world with technology  
 Willing to do things like listening tours  
 Willing to make long-term commitment to FCPS  
 Willingness to foster a positive collaborative working relationship between the School Board and the BOS  
 Works to sustain changes  
 Works well with the business community

## District Administrators

### Strengths:

Able to move quickly in important decisions  
 Alignment of efforts and operations  
 Alternative approaches to assessments  
 Being innovative  
 Changes in our grading practices  
 Choices and options for students  
 Collaboration among district level administrators at Gatehouse  
 Collaboration between FCPS staff and counterparts at county level  
 Communication has improved  
 Decisions are made when necessary  
 Despite budget challenges, focus is on Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Plan  
 Ed Leaders works  
 Excellent education across the spectrum – Sp Ed, Average, GT, Career Ed  
 FCPS looks at educating the whole child  
 FCPS pushes innovation at the state and national levels  
 Focus on learning rather than testing  
 Gains in closing achievement gaps  
 GT services  
 High quality staff  
 Innovative system  
 Inquiry-based instruction  
 Magnet for special education

Moving principals  
 Overall achievement is strong  
 Overall focus on continuous improvement  
 Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Plan have set the right vision and direction – need to continue implementation  
 Special education services  
 Staff is phenomenal – dedicated, focused, and intelligent  
 Strong leadership team  
 Support for teachers  
 Supportive of staff  
 Teachers and administrators are dedicated and give 100%  
 Teamwork at Gatehouse has improved  
 Trying to be more responsive to parental concerns  
 Working to do our best to improve without throwing out all programs and starting over

**Challenges/Concerns/Issues:**

51K students in living in economic need and 31K needing ESOL services  
 Achievement gaps  
 Administrators are feeling overwhelmed and exhausted  
 Amount of time that teachers and administrators spend on outlier parental concerns  
 Being responsive to parents takes a lot a time and means that some other work may not get done  
 Board does not monitor or police itself  
 Board is out of control  
 Board jumping over the chain of command on problems – this models inappropriate behavior to the community  
 Board members do not follow their own policies  
 Board members involved in operations – grade challenges, personnel matters, budget requests, discipline matters, AAP placements, curriculum material challenges.  
 Board needs to stay in its lane  
 Budget – need to take a very careful look at technology budget to be sure it is being spent on critical priorities  
 Budget challenges every year  
 Budget negotiations  
 Cabinet structure needs to be evaluated  
 Champagne tastes on a beer budget  
 Class sizes  
 Climate issues  
 Development systems for new principals  
 ELL and Immigrant student needs  
 Equity issues  
 FCPS is strapped financially – need more staff in all departments  
 FCPS over pilots programs  
 Growing ESOL population – takes more services and has additional costs  
 Lack of focus

Lack of trust and respect by staff  
 LT members feeling lack of access to superintendent and not involved in important decisions  
 Meals tax not passing  
 Moving too fast on changes  
 Need 5-year operation plan for the strategic plan  
 Need a framework for decision-making  
 Need for superintendent to be engaged with principal association leadership  
 Need to develop a 5-year financial plan  
 Need to prioritize the components of the strategic plan and accomplish what is reasonable each year  
 Need to say “No” at times  
 No need to reorganize the district – this would be problematic and cause unnecessary and harmful internal stress  
 Pace of change over the past 3 years  
 Political challenges connected to school board  
 Public perception of board behavior  
 Relationship between the School Board and the Board of Supervisors  
 School board members getting down in the weeds and directing staff  
 Some board members are disrespectful of staff  
 Staff workload has increased significantly and cannot be maintained over the long term  
 Systematic erosion of what makes FCPS great  
 Turnover of principals  
 Workload issues

**Desired Characteristics:**

Ability to tweak the system without a major overhaul  
 Able to deal with difficult Board dynamics  
 Able to define appropriate balance in customer service  
 Able to tell people what they do not want to hear  
 Able to tell the story  
 Advocate at county and state levels  
 Advocate at state level  
 Advocate for principals and staff  
 Advocate for the school system with the community  
 An operational manager  
 Balances input and decision-making  
 Be well versed in procedural aspects of board work  
 Celebrates and recognizes the talent and work of the staff  
 Checks ego  
 Develops trust with the community  
 Encourages the Board to take a more active role in advocating for full funding  
 Enthusiastic  
 Experienced with diverse student population  
 Fairfax is on the brink of operationalizing a new vision and bringing it to scale – need to continue this work

Focuses on consistency in instructional practice  
 Gets the big picture  
 Has record of closing achievement gaps  
 Holds principals accountable for school performance  
 Innovative  
 Knowledgeable about leadership development  
 Knows instruction  
 Knows what is going on throughout the system but does not micromanage operations  
 Listens to principals  
 Politically savvy  
 Politician  
 Protects administrators from school board members getting down in the weeds  
 Protects the administration from the Board  
 Provides stability  
 Relationship builder  
 Respects people  
 Sets clear expectations for School Board regarding requests for information  
 Shows the community the value of the work FCPS does  
 Someone who can implement the current vision and direction  
 Stable  
 Strategic planner and thinker  
 Supportive of principals  
 System thinker  
 Understands community  
 Understands the media and social media  
 Understands the needs related to having a diverse student population  
 Understands the uniqueness of FCPS  
 Visible in the schools

## Parents

### Strengths:

"Portrait of a Graduate"  
 AAP services  
 Celebrates successes  
 Collaborative organization  
 Diversity in course offerings  
 Excellence in educational programming  
 FCPS has held the line on testing  
 Focus on student health  
 Greater transparency  
 Holistic approach to food and wellness  
 How changing school start times was handled  
 K-12 programming

Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Plan are the right direction – we need to build upon them

Recruits good talent

Someone who can come in and continue to run with the Strategic Plan

Students have the opportunity to be well rounded

Support for special education

Support for the arts

Support the diversity of student interests

Teachers and staff go above and beyond the call of duty

Teaches executive functioning skills

Transparent and productive communication

Videos to explain complicated issues

Willing to listen to stakeholders and inclusive of all voices

### Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

Achievement Gap

Budget – years of unfunded state and federal mandates

Budget for food services

Budgetary Concerns: especially since the “Meals Tax” did not pass which will result in a significant annual budget shortfall

Capital investment in the schools to deal with overcrowding

Class sizes

Class sizes of 30-35 students

Classroom size and generated tension between parts of the community (wealthy v. FRL)

Closing achievement gaps

Combining FCPS resources with the Fairfax County Public Library resources – need to do this

County development continues to segregate the county economically

County is aging and becoming urbanized

Elementary PE is only 2X per week

Inequities among the schools

Math program concerns

Modular classrooms

Morale issue with staff

More discipline in managing the budget is needed

More special education staff is needed

Need for longer elementary recess daily

Need for more AAP resource teachers

Need to increase AAP opportunities for students of color

Need to increase staff salaries

Needed resources to respond to language and ability diversity

Online textbooks: need to reevaluate the use of (not as effective as the printed text book)

Promoting the district- needs to be enhanced and accelerated to better communicate what the district does

Revenue for DoD services is lacking

Rush to technology needs to be evaluated by conducting a serious analysis regarding costs and benefits

School should focus on academics, not social engineering

Students being taught in trailers

Sustainability and environmental concerns

Tax reform is needed

Teacher pay needs to be increased

Too much time spent on sex education

Transgender policy was handled poorly

**Desired Characteristics:**

Accessible

Advocate for tax reform at state level

Builds a growth mindset

Builds business partnerships

Builds upon the strategic plan and does not change direction

Can focus communication to differing communities in Fairfax

Collaborator

Communicator

Communicator, including a willingness to listen

Diversity – experience in dealing with

Does not make penny wise and pound foolish decisions

Effective and strong budget negotiator

Experience as a teacher, principal, and district level administrator. A CEO without education experience will not work in FCPS

Good listener and understands the needs of the community

Innovative, 21<sup>st</sup> century schools thinker/re-designer

Knows how to address achievement gaps

Listens to student voices

Management experience

Need to look internally

Politically astute and able to work with the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Governor, and other elected officials

Politically savvy

Relationship builder

Respectful of all stakeholders, especially the children

Respects and supports teachers

Skilled financial manager

Strong advocate for FCPS

Supports GT programming

Team builder

Understands and advocates for student mental health

Understands infrastructure needs

Values diversity



Visible in the schools  
 Works with County Board of Supervisors on budget

## Staff

### Strengths:

70% of Fairfax Co retirees stay in the area  
 Board of Supervisors and School Board relationship has improved  
 Collaboration efforts by leadership  
 Counseling services  
 Culture and climate of FCPS survives even with new leadership  
 Diversity in community  
 Drives State-level policy and decision-making  
 Emphasis on interpersonal relationships  
 Employees made to feel valued via attempts to decrease workloads  
 Employees provide professional development - often teacher led; share best practices  
 Engagement of stakeholders is a practice that should be continued  
 Excellence  
 FCPS is an asset in the County's economy  
 FCPS is viewed as a national leader  
 Focus on cultural proficiency  
 Freed up time for support staff leaders to attend meeting  
 Good administrative staff  
 Good facilities  
 Great deal of pride in the system  
 Headed in the right direction  
 Heard staff concerns and responded  
 High standard for leadership performance in FCPS, including superintendent performance  
 HR Dept supports and listens to retirees  
 Human Resources: made better although challenges remain  
 IB program  
 Improved salaries  
 Increased openness from Superintendent between FEA and other employee organizations  
 Initiatives around teachers' workday  
 Innovative  
 Later school start times  
 Lobbying efforts  
 Many retirees had good careers, support FCPS and want to "give back"  
 Military considers FCPS the gold standard of school systems  
 National profile and reputation  
 Open communication  
 Open town hall meetings  
 Openness to employees  
 Professional growth opportunities

Progressive system  
Project Momentum  
Proud to work here  
Recognizes diversity of students and serves their needs  
Regional office support for principals and schools  
Responsiveness to student needs  
Retirement system  
School visits  
Schools are doing a good job with a diverse student population  
Selective about educational "fads" - does not jump on every bandwagon  
Special education services  
Strategic plan is focusing our work  
Strives to be a world-class system  
Strong special education programs  
Strong support for the arts  
Students are friendly with each other  
Students Rights and Responsibilities document  
Superintendent has reached out to staff  
Teachers, administrators, and personnel in the trenches  
Technology is available and accessible  
Top quality staff  
Uses research-based academic programs  
Values and invests in professional development  
Values teachers and stakeholders  
Very diverse community  
Wants all children to be successful  
Went to battle for FCPS

**Challenges/Concerns/Issues:**

6th grade assessments in music and art - are they valuable? Results not shared  
AAP program needs to be revamped  
Budget battles  
Budget issues - a yearly roller coaster  
Budgetary Concerns: especially since the "Meals Tax" did not pass which will result in cuts to district programs and services  
Budgeting and funding issues: battle between district and the county  
Busywork assigned to teachers  
Changing community demographics  
Class sizes  
Classroom size – particularly at the high school level  
Closing achievement gaps  
Competition and stress regarding college admissions  
Connecting with the 70% of the community who do not have children in school

Constant program changes and training - does not stick with what works or keep parts of what is working

Continuing economic development and growth in Northern VA

Counselors are overwhelmed

Current board is divided in 3 factions

Cuts have come from support staff numbers

Diversity in workforce is needed

Diversity is changing the paradigm

Diversity of students and their needs

Diversity: the actions of the more affluent parents who demand and consume a lot

Dollars in this year's budget are focused on second year of pay increase for teachers and not support staff

Drive to take AP courses

Each pyramid has its own unique needs

Employee workload

Employees not receiving enough salary during certain pay periods to pay benefits

Equity among the schools

Erosion of strengths in recent years

ESOL and Special Education: huge populations

Evaluation System: 7 standards and the System's impact on morale

Failure of Meals Tax

Fairfax is urbanizing

FCPS has been in a reactionary mode

FCPS is no longer at the forefront, in recent years too much grabbing on to external trends

Frustrations with budget shortfalls

Grade inflation: allow students to retake exams until the desired grade is attained

Growing diversity

Growth in number of older ELL students coming into the system

Hard to fire people in FCPS

Implementation of the strategic plan will take a lot of work and priority setting

Increasing number of immigrant students

Lack of awareness on the part of community for teacher salaries, retention issues - caused the defeat of the meals tax

Lack of respect for teachers - by parents, by County leadership

Lack of trust in central administration

Lack of trust in teachers to design curriculum

Losing teachers of color

Loss of joy and creativity in teaching and learning - loss of fun for teachers and students

Low morale, pessimism among employees

Mental health and social challenges of students

More and more being added to academic programs; the core of instruction is hurt

Much of the testing we do is useless and does not aid in planning instruction

Need an office of minority affairs

Need for more parent liaisons and counselors

Need to increase the diversity of the staff

Need to look at boundary changes  
 Need to maintain teacher quality  
 Needs related to growing diversity  
 Overworked administration  
 Policy battles  
 Population in Fairfax County is far more transient – at all income levels  
 Potential changes in public ed due to national political shifts in policy and funding  
 Pressure on teachers  
 Promoting the district - needs to be enhanced and accelerated to better communicate what the district does  
 Public ed not a common value - 70% no longer have children in schools  
 Public education feels very precarious right now  
 Pushing students too much  
 Salaries  
 Segregation in our schools caused by AAP, economic status and housing  
 Size  
 Social and emotional well-being of students  
 Socio-economic disparity in the county  
 Sometimes minority staff members do not feel included in decision-making  
 Staff feeling overwhelmed  
 Student/teacher ratios - during recession student/teacher ratios grew incrementally but the results are very large classes now  
 Succession Planning: needs to be instituted  
 Superintendent Advisory Council needs to be reinstated  
 Support staff access to computers and need for language support  
 Taxpayers are tired of tax increases  
 Teacher burnout - unfilled vacancies adding to stress and workload of teachers  
 Teacher retention - leaving FCPS for more money, better opportunities  
 Teacher salaries lagging - teachers have to work extra jobs  
 Teacher shortages  
 Teacher workload; time not provided in school day for demands  
 Testing issues - too much - burdens of PLCs and SOL  
 This year FCPS opened with many vacancies  
 Too much data collection, PLC generated work  
 Too much focus on SOLs  
 Top down organization  
 Where do you draw the line and say no we can't do that

**Desired Characteristics:**

100% committed to public schools  
 2012-13 criteria is still relevant  
 Ability to articulate budget needs and build partnership with county  
 Ability to navigate both boards – School Board and Board of Supervisors

Ability to take the lead on revamping the Evaluation System (remove the weighting and encourage more teacher research)

Able to make implementation decisions and explain why decisions were made the way they were

Able to remove poor performers from their positions

Able to stand up to board members and say no

Able to stand up to special interest groups

Accessible

Add a major bullet to criteria "Advocate for All Staff Members"

Administrative experience with a large school system

Advocate for staff as well as students

Advocates for a diverse educational curriculum - balancing STEM and arts ed - that promotes life-long learning

Advocates for all children

Advocates for FCPS at state level

Approachable

Approachable - down to earth

At least 3 year MINIMUM as a teacher - has to have walked in the shoes of a teacher

Believes in equity

Negotiations skills

Brings Board together and unites them

Budgetary experience

Builds a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce

Builds partnerships

Business acumen

Can appropriately protect the system from the whiplash of change

Can command a room but make people feel at ease

Can continue to build on the relationship with the Board of Supervisors

Can use position of authority to appropriately promote respect for the classroom teacher

Cares about the personal time of teachers - know how many hours they work

Committed to stay

Communicates with stakeholders - including retirees

Communicator

Communicator, including a willingness to listen

Compassionate

Compassionate toward students

Conducts listening tours

Creates buy in for the strategic plan initiatives across the district

Creative, wise and big picture thinker

Cultural sensitivity and understanding

Decides on priorities and focuses time and attention on those areas

Deeply respects teachers - builds a climate of mutual respect

Develops deeper relationships with County Board members

Does not add work to teachers without consideration for workload

Does not bring an agenda

Empathetic: County has "haves" and "have-nots"

Empower principals to run their buildings; in turn, allows teacher to run their classrooms  
 Encourages kids to learn  
 Encourages retired educators to serve on ad hoc committees (i.e., health care)  
 Expects administrators to back their teachers when parents are inappropriately "involved" and putting unfair pressure on them  
 Experience in a large system  
 Experience with complex systems  
 Experience with large school districts  
 Fair  
 Focuses on the whole child  
 Gets to know people  
 Gives teachers autonomy and respect  
 Go-getter  
 Has "fire in the belly" - takes on the hard fights and advocates for what we need  
 Has a sound philosophy regarding teaching and learning, grounded in this philosophy  
 Has a strong and clear plan for FCPS, but is flexible and will listen to the community  
 Has experience as a teacher and a principal  
 Has school experience - has some knowledge of all levels  
 Has some experience with and knowledge of this region  
 Has the ability to speak in front of audiences with a clear agenda  
 Humble servant  
 In touch and in tune with schools, understands the elementary school experience  
 Innovative  
 Integrity  
 Keeps current  
 Knows how to manage the Board  
 Knows that "The main thing (teaching and learning) is the main thing"  
 Knows that one size fits all will not work in FCPS – flexibility  
 Knows where he or she stands so that there is security in a changing time  
 Listener  
 Listens to different points of view; people know that they are heard  
 Longevity  
 Makes closing achievement gaps a priority  
 Makes sure that employees know the Supt as more than just a name  
 Must check in on regions to ensure equality and equity across the district  
 Not overly data-driven, knows that students are not numbers  
 Passionate  
 Personable  
 Politically astute and able to work with the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Governor, and other elected officials  
 Politically savvy  
 Positive national reputation  
 Promotes high expectations for both employees and students  
 Provides a clear message that teachers are supported

Rallies community around our schools; convinces community that investment in schools benefits them, as well

Realizes the benefit of utilizing FCPS teachers and administrators to facilitate in-house training sessions instead of paying large sums to bring in outside consultants

Recognizes that salaries and a good benefits package are essential (Retirement Plan is under attack)

Respectful of all stakeholders

Seasoned leader, not a "newbie"

See big picture

Seeks a high level of respect and support and engagement with those in the "trenches"

Shares what we can do, not just what we can't do

Someone with political acumen who can adjust to changes

Sound experience in budgeting and fiscal planning and program implementation - will hire the right people for this work

Strategic thinker

Strong budget experience

Supports employees

Sustains pay increase for staff

Takes FEA input seriously

Tough skinned

Transparent

Trusts teachers to make instructional choices based on their direct experiences

Understands changes within the county from suburban to increasingly urban

Understands diversity – equity is not equal

Understands politics

Understands that employees are overworked

Understands that every constituent is important

Understands the complexity of FCPS

Understands the impact of proposed changes

Understands what contributes to low morale

Understands what it costs to live in Northern Virginia

Values a diverse workforce

Values increasing salaries to retain staff

Values staff

Values what many teachers do for children, what they provide

Visible ("Listening Tours")

Visible in all regions of the County

Visible, out in the field, not in central office all the time

Visionary who recognizes how education is done

Visits programs informally - even those that are small and not "marquee"

Voice of the employees, particularly support staff

Wants to be here for the long term

Welcomes diversity

Welcoming and open to new ideas

Will be prepared to respond to federal changes, possible decrease in support for special ed

Will build relations with business, private sector, and take advantage of what is here

Will continue the established meetings with retired educators and HR reps - values this input  
 Will have a plan to address federal changes  
 Will help to redefine what accountability is  
 Will look at FCPS strengths and weaknesses before making changes  
 Will visit the various socio-economic regions of district - preferably before being hired  
 Will work with SB to try to diminish the effect of politics, making decisions only to get votes

## Students

### Strengths:

Access to information anywhere anytime  
 Art programming  
 Collaborative  
 Communication among/between parents, students, teachers - Parent/Student views are valued  
 Diversity  
 Diversity - students learn from each other and are prepared for a global society  
 FCPS students are motivated academically; students plan for their futures  
 Field trips provide meaningful interactive experiences  
 Good teachers  
 Green Initiatives  
 Healthy rivalries  
 IB diploma  
 Inclusive  
 LGBT accommodations are appropriate  
 Most students are prepared for college  
 Progressive  
 Recognizes schools that need extra help  
 Reputation as one of the best school systems in the country  
 Resource support for college prep  
 Resources available - i.e., technology, media centers  
 School board is accessible to the community  
 Schools are interconnected and support each other  
 Students are generally open-minded regarding diversity and gender issues  
 Summer programs  
 Technology is integrated into instruction  
 Variety of classes offered in high schools

### Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

AAP criteria is artificial  
 Distribution of resources in certain areas of the county  
 Diversity - being sensitive to religious and cultural differences can create issues, such as with the school calendar and religious holidays  
 ESOL students may not be able to participate in sports and school life because of language barrier



Getting students more involved  
High stress, competitive environment  
Need for great connections between AAP students and general education students  
Need for more training in special education for school-based staff  
Need for students to learn about different cultures - lack of programs to address this  
Need to focus on the needs of ESOL students and students with disabilities  
Need to help all students feel valued  
Need to improve communication – information is available but you often have to seek it out  
One size does not fit all due to the diversity in the county  
Overcrowding - lack of sufficient classroom space  
Parent/Student View can cause additional stress for students and for teachers  
Too much focus on GPA  
Very competitive district, which causes student stress  
Visibility in the schools of district administrator

**Desired Characteristics:**

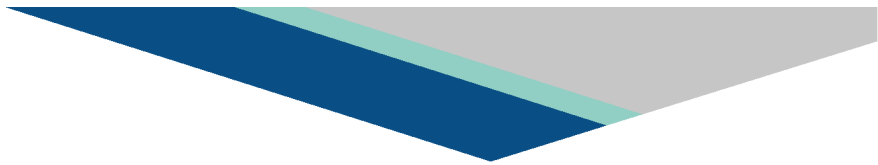
Actively listens, takes information from the community, open-minded  
Can deal with the budget  
Clear vision, but will take risks  
Communication skills  
Empathic  
Familiar with FCPS and Northern Virginia  
Good manager  
Has worked in a diverse community  
Politically savvy  
Sets priorities based on community input  
Steadfast – able to deal with competing interests



# FCPS Community and Leadership Profile Survey



**HYA** Executive Search  
Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates



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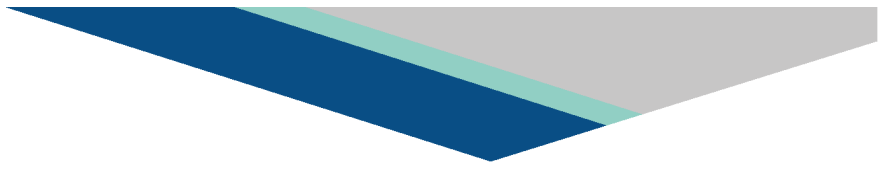
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## METHODOLOGY

The survey results contained in this document are based on ECRA Group's research related to superintendent leadership standards. The survey addresses both district performance and desired characteristics of the superintendent in relation to the following areas:

- Vision and Values (VV) - The leader's ability to provide a clear and compelling vision for the future, align district programs to the broader vision of the district, and uphold high expectations for all stakeholders
- Teaching and Learning (TL) / Instructional Leadership (IL) - The leader's ability to guide educational programs, make data-driven decisions, and implement effective instructional change
- Community Engagement (CE) / Stakeholder Engagement (SE) - The leader's ability to be the voice of the district, engage with the community, and involve stakeholders in realizing the district's vision
- Management (M) - The leader's ability to guide operations, manage resources, recruit and retain highly effective personnel, and create an equitable accountability system for all employees

Through the understanding of stakeholder's views regarding the state of the district and the desired profile of the next superintendent, this report will help the district prioritize the desired characteristics of the superintendent in a way that will advance the priorities of the community.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The FCPS Community and Leadership Profile Survey was completed by 1745 stakeholders. The largest stakeholder group surveyed were parents of students attending school. Parents of students attending school represented 30.9 percent of all respondents. Nearly a quarter of respondents were certified/licensed staff. They made up the second most populous stakeholder group at 24.4 percent of all respondents. The third largest participant group were support staff at 21.9 percent of all respondents.

Regarding the State of the District, the following statements were perceived to be district strengths:

- District schools are safe. (TL)
- The district has high standards for student performance. (VV)
- Technology is integrated into the classroom. (TL)
- The district employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools. (M)
- Facilities are well maintained. (M)

The top-rated leadership profile characteristics constituents desire in a new superintendent are:

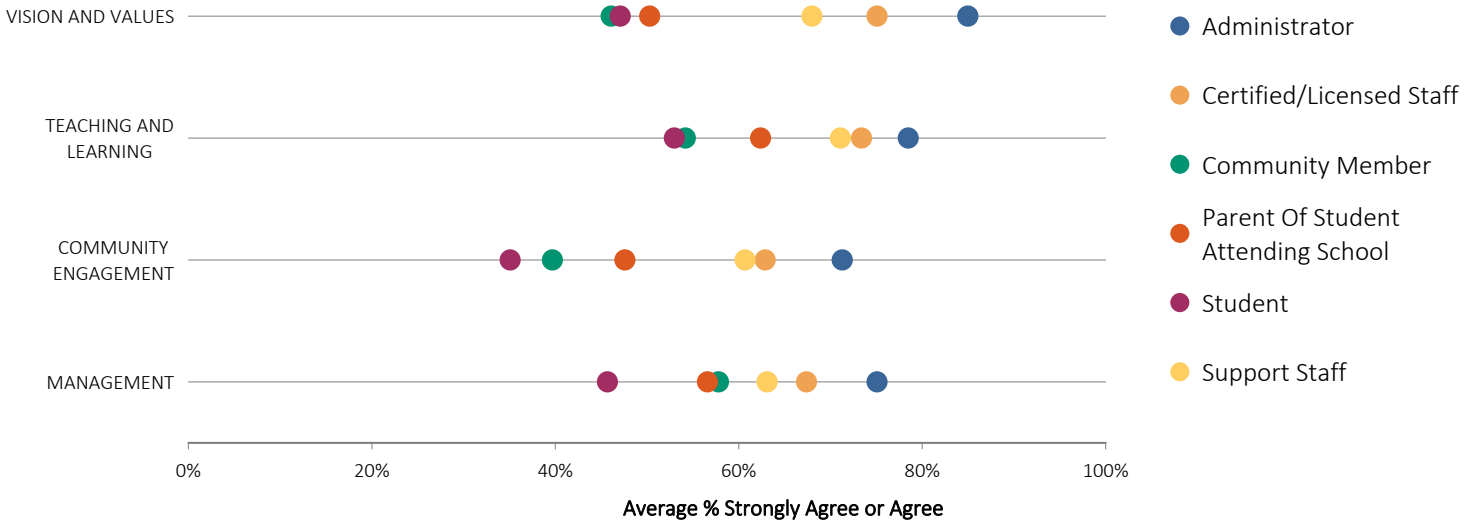
- Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the district and serve as the primary advocate at the local, state, and national levels for the district's needs. (M)
- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect faculty, staff, administrators, parents, community members, and the Board. (SE)
- Listen to and effectively address the expectations and concerns of students, faculty, staff, parents, area businesses, community partners, and taxpayers in the school system. (SE)
- Recruit employ, evaluate, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools. (M)
- Increase academic, artistic, social, and emotional learning for the whole child, along with decreasing achievement gaps in the system. (IL)

# ANALYSIS

## State of the District Summary

Respondents rated statements related to the state of the district on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported in the appendix.

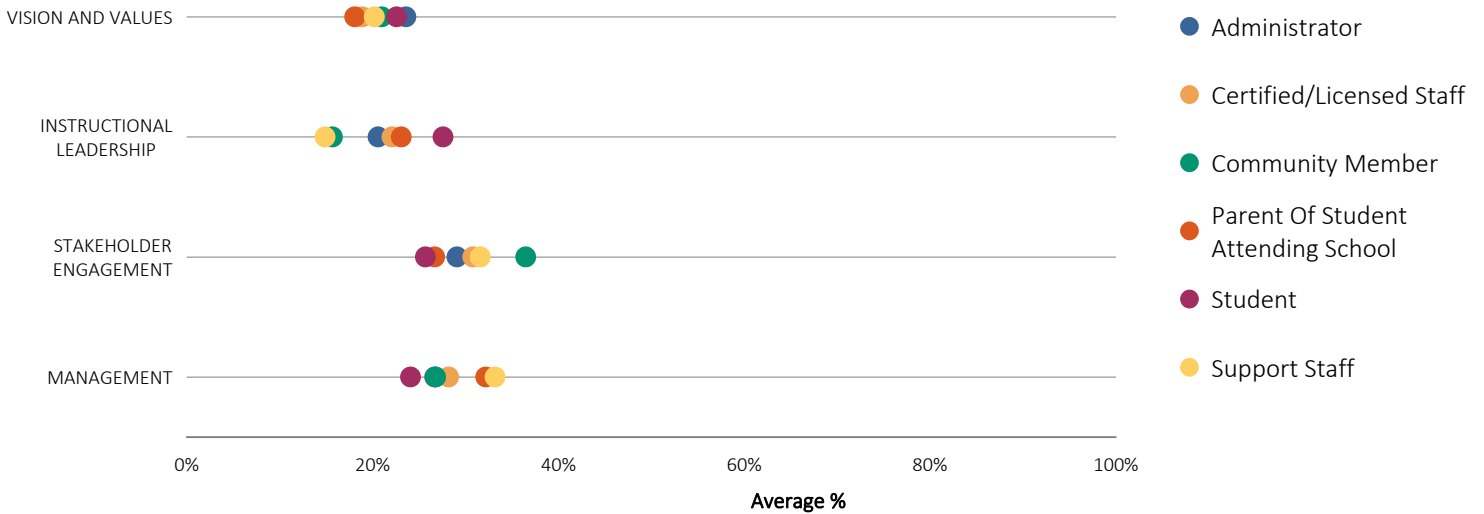
### State of the District Results by Constituent Group



## Leadership Profile Summary

Respondents were asked to select leadership statements that are most important in selecting a new superintendent. Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Instructional Leadership, Stakeholder Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported on the next page.

### Leadership Profile Results by Constituent Group



# LEADERSHIP PROFILE DETAILS

Respondents were asked to select 5 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results by constituent group are presented below. Each constituent group’s top 5 most frequently selected statements are depicted by blue cells (reading the chart vertically); consensus is illustrated as multiple constituent groups selected the same statements (reading the chart horizontally).



















 Top 5

	All (1745)	Administrator (186)	Certified/Licens ed Staff (425)	Community Member (106)	Parent Of Student Attending School (540)	Student (106)	Support Staff (382)
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the district and serve as the primary advocate at the local, state, and national levels for the district’s needs.	48%						
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect faculty, staff, administrators, parents, community members, and the Board.	48%						
Listen to and effectively address the expectations and concerns of students, faculty, staff, parents, area businesses, community partners, and taxpayers in the school system.	45%						
Recruit employ, evaluate, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools.	39%						
Increase academic, artistic, social, and emotional learning for the whole child, along with decreasing achievement gaps in the system.	32%						
Be an effective manager of the district’s budget and day-to-day operations.	30%						
Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research regarding teaching/learning processes along with the ability to implement and deploy effective change throughout the system.	25%						
Lead in an encouraging, participatory, transparent, and team focused manner.	23%						
Promote a culture of high expectations for all students and a service orientation and accountability for all personnel.	22%						
Understand and consistently address the needs related to diversity and equity in the school system.	22%						
Provide a clear and compelling vision for the future of the school system.	21%						
Provide for meaningful, frequent and transparent communication among all stakeholder groups.	20%						
Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life.	19%						

## LEADERSHIP PROFILE DETAILS

Respondents were asked to select 5 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results by constituent group are presented below. Each constituent group's top 5 most frequently selected statements are depicted by blue cells (reading the chart vertically); consensus is illustrated as multiple constituent groups selected the same statements (reading the chart horizontally).

 Top 5

	All (1745)	Administrator (186)	Certified/Licens ed Staff (425)	Community Member (106)	Parent Of Student Attending School (540)	Student (106)	Support Staff (382)
Provide guidance for systematic and comprehensive district-wide curricula, instructional practices, and professional development, which is responsive to the differing needs at the school and classroom levels.	18%						
Guide the operation and maintenance of school facilities to ensure secure, safe, and up-to-date school environments that support learning.	17%						
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the education program for students at all levels.	17%						

## APPENDIX I: STATE OF THE DISTRICT ITEM ANALYSIS

Percentages of parents, students, administrators, teachers, community members, and other constituents selecting 5 (Strongly Agree) or 4 (Agree) for each item are presented below.

	All (1745)	Administrator (186)	Certified/Licensed Staff (425)	Community Member (106)	Parent Of Student Attending School (540)	Student (106)	Support Staff (382)
<b>OVERALL</b>							
Please rate the overall quality of education in the District.	78%	87%	83%	67%	74%	65%	79%
<b>VISION AND VALUES</b>							
The district provides a clear, compelling vision for the future.	63%	85%	77%	41%	48%	46%	69%
The district is heading in the right direction.	51%	75%	61%	30%	39%	37%	54%
The district has high standards for student performance.	77%	91%	82%	62%	70%	75%	80%
The district makes decisions based on information from data and research.	54%	81%	71%	30%	38%	29%	57%
The district is working to close the achievement gap.	61%	87%	76%	42%	45%	31%	66%
<b>TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>							
The district provides a well-rounded educational experience for all students.	57%	75%	60%	36%	52%	50%	60%
Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs, special education and gifted.	61%	73%	77%	48%	51%	38%	60%
District schools are safe.	80%	92%	88%	65%	75%	65%	81%
The social and emotional needs of students are being addressed.	53%	68%	60%	31%	50%	23%	58%
Students are on track to be college and career ready.	63%	76%	67%	48%	61%	55%	60%
Technology is integrated into the classroom.	75%	77%	77%	64%	73%	68%	80%
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>							
The district engages the community as a partner to improve the school system.	51%	75%	61%	31%	40%	25%	58%
There is transparent communication from the District.	43%	59%	52%	26%	38%	23%	44%
The district engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups.	64%	76%	70%	48%	59%	48%	68%
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>							
Facilities are well maintained.	68%	75%	69%	66%	70%	46%	66%
The district is fiscally responsible.	43%	67%	48%	34%	35%	28%	45%
The district employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools.	69%	88%	78%	58%	66%	43%	65%
Employees are held accountable to high standards.	64%	82%	80%	47%	52%	38%	66%
District technology infrastructure is sufficient to support 21st century learning.	52%	56%	56%	42%	47%	54%	55%



## APPENDIX II: LEADERSHIP PROFILE ITEM ANALYSIS

Respondents were asked to select 5 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results are presented below by constituent group.

	All (1745)	Administrator (186)	Certified/Licensed Staff (425)	Community Member (106)	Parent Of Student Attending School (540)	Student (106)	Support Staff (382)
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the district and serve as the primary advocate at the local, state, and national levels for the district's needs.	48%	49%	55%	41%	49%	21%	49%
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect faculty, staff, administrators, parents, community members, and the Board.	48%	66%	57%	45%	39%	27%	48%
Listen to and effectively address the expectations and concerns of students, faculty, staff, parents, area businesses, community partners, and taxpayers in the school system.	45%	29%	48%	58%	44%	38%	49%
Recruit employ, evaluate, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools.	39%	41%	36%	32%	46%	25%	37%
Increase academic, artistic, social, and emotional learning for the whole child, along with decreasing achievement gaps in the system.	32%	37%	38%	30%	32%	37%	22%
Be an effective manager of the district's budget and day-to-day operations.	30%	24%	28%	30%	31%	18%	35%
Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research regarding teaching/learning processes along with the ability to implement and deploy effective change throughout the system.	25%	23%	28%	16%	30%	25%	18%
Lead in an encouraging, participatory, transparent, and team focused manner.	23%	32%	27%	24%	19%	16%	21%
Promote a culture of high expectations for all students and a service orientation and accountability for all personnel.	22%	23%	16%	22%	26%	20%	25%
Understand and consistently address the needs related to diversity and equity in the school system.	22%	26%	26%	24%	18%	26%	20%
Provide a clear and compelling vision for the future of the school system.	21%	30%	18%	20%	19%	19%	23%
Provide for meaningful, frequent and transparent communication among all stakeholder groups.	20%	23%	17%	30%	21%	6%	21%
Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life.	19%	19%	20%	21%	17%	22%	21%
Provide guidance for systematic and comprehensive district-wide curricula, instructional practices, and professional development, which is responsive to the differing needs at the school and classroom levels.	18%	27%	22%	13%	19%	14%	12%
Guide the operation and maintenance of school facilities to ensure secure, safe, and up-to-date school environments that support learning.	17%	11%	10%	10%	19%	23%	25%
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the education program for students at all levels.	17%	11%	14%	7%	23%	23%	14%