

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT Hempstead Union Free School District





Executive Summary

Hempstead Village's rich history dates back to the mid-1600's following the purchase of land from the Marsapeague (Massapequa), Mericock (Merrick), Matinecock and Rekowake (Rockaway) tribes by Robert Fordham and John Carman. Within a short period of time the land purchased was settled by a number of Puritan families from the Stamford area who were seeking a location where they could more freely practice their Puritan/Presbyterian beliefs. During the 19th century Hempstead became the trading hub for Long Island. In 1853, Hempstead became the first self-governing incorporated village. Hempstead became a distribution center for many businesses due to its location in Central Long Island. Likewise, Hempstead became a center of Long Island society with an enviable list of celebrity residents.

Hempstead Village's evolution extended into the 20th Century with a large, diverse population arriving from more urban areas. Hempstead Village was viewed as a location where residents could more readily enjoy the comforts of suburban living. The community was well established with an enviable proximity to the cultural amenities of New York City. Hempstead was Nassau County's retail center during the 40's through the 60's. However, as shopping malls became more popular (i.e. Roosevelt Field) and a nearby Air Force Base closed in 1961, the retail trade in the village began a downward spiral that was exacerbated by the economic conditions of the 70's and 80's.

Today, Hempstead Village is a community of unique diversity with neighborhoods that reflect its equally unique character. Its population of just over 56,000 residents is resilient and maintains focus on the fact that the involvement of many constituent groups can return Hempstead to a more vibrant status as a community, through grants and projects that support community revitalization. The Hempstead Union Free School District's movement toward improvement will play a large role in that status. Noted positive accomplishments of students and staff within the context of the educational system need to be expanded to provide opportunities for all students. Frequent references to those opportunities were made in a spirit of hope that Hempstead Union Free School District students will be prepared well for the world in which they must function in the future with the support of strong community involvement.

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in January of 2017 for the new superintendent of the Hempstead Union Free School District. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when meeting with Focus Groups and individuals in either individual interviews or larger group settings on January 30 and 31, 2017, and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders between January 23, 2017, and February 6, 2017. Sixteen (16) stakeholder interviews and focus group meetings were used to collect information regarding the strengths of the district, the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years, and desired characteristics in the new superintendent. The online survey was used to collect data relevant to ranking desired characteristics in the new superintendent as well to gather open ended comments regarding those characteristics, the district/community in general, and suggestions for prospective superintendent candidates.

Participation

The number of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below (Note: Not all focus groups were a group that was disaggregated for the online survey):

Group	Personal Interviews and/or	Online Survey
	Focus Groups	
Board	5	NA
Building Level Administrators	³19	
Central Office Administrators	3	26
Teachers	^b 21	132
Community	°53	42
Parent of Student Attending School	dNA	107
Support Staff	e6	56
Students	0	205
Total	107	568

^aBuilding level Interview and/or Focus Groups included TA's

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 District

Hempstead residents have easy access to New York City linking them with the arts, entertainment, and a variety of cultural venues. Hempstead is home for residents from uniquely diverse backgrounds, Hofstra University, several museums, the Neighborhood Summer Concert Series and over 1400 acres of green space.

The desire for more community involvement in the school system is very strong. Clergy leaders, service providers, and formal non-profit organizations understand the current position of the Hempstead Union Free School District and the need for sustained improvement in student achievement, professional development, and fiscal operation. Focus Group sessions and individual meeting participants frequently referenced "hope" that strong and active community involvement can be galvanized to support educational programs geared toward improving student achievement.

Several focus groups and individual conversations pointed to the dedication of staff and students. Many referenced the "underplayed" success of several students due to the lack of publicity and the seemingly never ending media focus on the negative aspects of the district. Many staff were termed resilient and

^bTeachers Interview and/or Focus Groups Included all Teachers and Teacher's Union Leadership

^cCommunity Interview and/or Focus Groups included two public Community Forums and a written document submitted by the Hempstead High School PTSO

^dParents of Student Attending Schools included with Community

^eSupport Staff Interview and or Focus Groups included Union Leadership (other than teachers)

creative because of their ability to provide meaningful learning experiences for students despite limited resources and inconsistent leadership.

Becoming a national model for urban/suburban excellence remains a goal for a variety of Hempstead Union Free School district support groups. To do so, many focus group and individual conversation participants viewed untapped potential of students, facilities, and grant funding opportunities as catalysts for reaching the goal.

Challenges and Issues Facing the District

The challenge of community support lies in the ability of various groups to work together. Many groups want to contribute, participate and influence education in the Hempstead Union Free School District. However, some of the groups may only be focused on their own agendas. The new superintendent must provide a collective vision that is inclusive of these groups, but also ensures that their contributions remain focused on student achievement for all and not only the groups they may represent.

Focus group and individual conversation participants expressed concern over continued reduction in funding. The negative budgetary effect on class size and staffing as well as the reduction of programs necessary for students being appropriately competitive with their contemporaries was often cited as a major challenge. While Hempstead Village has moved forward in addressing prolonged budgetary deficits, individual contributions to the tax base remain low. Tax exempt programs for entities within the village are viewed by many as a detriment to the school district.

Multiple concerns that negative events receiving substantial press coverage may present obstacles in recruiting superintendent candidates were evident in Focus Group and individual conversations. State audits reflecting subpar financial practices, the assignment of an Ombudsmen to monitor the registration of immigrant children, and the placement of two schools into receivership highlighted those concerns.

Having two schools placed in receivership (Alverta B. Gray Middle School and Hempstead High School) by the New York State Department of Education is a major challenge for the Hempstead Union Free School District. The authority of the Superintendent (receiver) in this process must be understood and respected. More specifically, endeavors such as developing and/or enhancing plans for school intervention, providing wrap-around services within the schools, expanding educational opportunities for students, and addressing critical staffing issues, must remain apolitical while encouraging community involvement.

Special Education and ELL programs were cited as an ongoing and growing concern. More specifically, improvement in the appropriate identification of students eligible for Special Education, and the evaluation of Special Education programs for grade level appropriateness and opportunities for student achievement were often mentioned as key elements of the concern. Concomitantly, Focus Groups and individual conversations often cited ELL programs needing evaluation and ELL staff needing updated professional development. It was viewed as essential that ELL students need to be included in the discussion of equal access to the curriculum as well as student achievement.

Survey results, as well as focus group and individual discussions indicated that the climate of mutual trust and respect between and among board, faculty, staff, administrators, and a variety of community groups is a major concern. Several meeting participants mentioned the word "fear" in their identification of issues requiring long and short term attention in the Hempstead Union Free School District. In proper context those fears were inclusive of, but not limited to, reprisals for speaking one's mind, for questioning decisions directly affecting the work place environment, for not positioning oneself well in a top down

(from the Board) micro-management model, and for not acquiescing to political pressure(s). Focus group and individual discussions expressed a need for the Board to provide openness in district decision-making as well as district communications. Several instances of delayed information and/or no information received regarding curricular initiatives, policy development and implementation, and the Superintendent search process were mentioned.

Focus group participants and discussions with individuals indicated a strong desire to see improved relationships between the Board members themselves. There is an atmosphere, be it perceived or real, of Board micromanagement and influence over central office decision-making in personnel and program matters that requires attention. The clarification of Board member roles and the clarification of their responsibilities within the context of the school district is viewed by the consultants as the foundation for improving Board performance as well as Board relationships with the population it serves. Board member decorum that is respectful and inclusive of all district professionals, support staff, and all community groups will insure strategic focus on meeting the needs of all students.

Desired Characteristics

Most Focus Group and Survey participants want an experienced educator with deep passion for the achievement of all students. Specific demonstrated successful experience in serving diverse urban/suburban communities, and in developing a visionary operational and academic strategy for the positive forward movement of the Hempstead Union Free School District.

Candidates must have demonstrated a deep respect for the teaching staff and support that staff through appropriate program development, implementation, and evaluation that is data driven, timely and in the best interests of all students. Candidates must have demonstrated development of, and support for a professional Development program that enhances the visionary operational and academic strategy of the Hempstead Union Free School District. Candidates must have demonstrated exemplary political acumen that can be applied to mending fractured relationships between and among community groups as they apply to all aspects of the Hempstead Union Free School district.

HYA and the Board of Education Trustees intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to meet the needs of the Hempstead Union Free School District. The search team will seek a new superintendent who can work with all Board of Education Trustees, all community constituent groups, and all groups employed by the district to bridge significant communication gaps while passionately addressing the critical needs of students that will positively affect academic standards and student performance, while meeting the unique needs of each of its schools.

The search team would like to thank all the participants who attended focus group meetings or completed the online survey, and specifically, Mrs. Patricia Wright, who assisted in organizing the search team's time in the district.

Respectfully submitted,

Edward McCormick Dwight Pfennig, Ed. D.

Summary of All 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 District currently faces, and, will face in the next three to five years?
- What personal and professional characteristics are expected in a new Superintendent?

Community Focus Groups (53 Participants)

January 30, 2017 & January 31, 2017

Strengths

- Agencies with roots in the district
- Belief in Kids
- Community meeting challenges of all students
- Cultural and multi-cultural diversity to be tapped
- Diverse community
- Good Teachers
- Great community
- Great potential for success
- Hope is alive
- Potential for excellence
- Potential to be a national model of how a district can be transformed
- Resiliency of student and staff
- Rich heritage/history
- Students are valued
- Support for students
- Village is accessible

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Additional staff training, curriculum building
- Address negative press
- Address the number of students who get retained
- Board activity trickle down to Kids
- Board commitment to new superintendent
- Board of Education is the problem
- Build confidence with parents and community
- Building trust and morale
- Charter schools

- Communications protocols
- Contract with the teachers in the past not well thought of at the detriment of the district educational system
- Creating a climate of inclusiveness
- Defining stakeholder's role
- Develop/expand STEM programs, CTE courses, more creative programs
- Developing consistency
- Dialogue change that allows for problem solving among all groups
- Disconnect for Latino families
- Educators are frustrated due to non-implementation of standard procedures
- Embracing diversity
- Engage the community in a sincere manner, education a priority
- Ensure greater accountability
- Finance/budget
- Gang activity
- Have the materials necessary to educate children
- High rate of employee turnover
- Huge potential for success
- Identifying and keeping teachers and administrators who are willing to be part of change and success
- Immigrant challenge has been long standing and holds the district back
- Improve student performance, reduce drop-out rate
- Improving district technology
- Improving educational opportunities
- Infuse technical training
- Maintaining qualified staff not bought or weak
- Manage community, board and staff interactions
- Manage politics between superintendent, board, staff and community
- Manage the racial/cultural divide
- Mistrust among Board members due to long standing vendetta/feud among members
- Overcoming negative P/R
- Overcrowding in the district
- Provide opportunities for teachers to be creative and innovative
- Re-focus the MS & HS
- Regaining trust, low morale
- Rigid inflexible teaching doesn't meet need of students
- Slow and poor communication protocols
- Students should have choice for learning
- Superintendent & Board need to work together/cohesively
- Top flight security

- Transportation for Hempstead students
- Understand different learning styles
- Undocumented students
- Uniformed policies
- Veil of district intimidation, fear factor
- We have some good teachers, some just getting by with the politics, and some who should have been gone by now

Desired Characteristics

- A proven record of success
- Ability to work collaboratively with Board
- Able to bring the community together
- Able to collaborate with Unions
- Able to manage both district needs and NYS requirements
- Able to recruit qualified teachers and staff
- Adept at implementing a vision
- Advocate of the students and for the district
- Analyzes leadership mistakes of the past
- Bring factions together
- Business minded
- Can do attitude and out-going
- Can evaluate individuals and program
- Can galvanize the village
- Communicate expectations, engender trust
- Communicate policy clearly
- Communicate well in several languages
- Community and parental engagement experience
- Creative and innovative approach to teaching and learning
- Demonstrated record of improving academic achievement
- Demonstrated record of managing in diverse areas
- Develops positive relationships children and parents
- Doesn't do the opposite of right
- Excited, energetic with a mission to turn around the district
- Experience with children of color with demonstrated results of success
- Fiscally responsible
- Focused on change
- Focuses on making a difference for children
- Go-getter who is results oriented
- Good people skills, management skills, believes in students
- Great communicator, respectful, engender trust

- Honest and straightforward
- Knowledgeable an instructional leader, a proven track record of success
- Knows and understands community schools
- Listening skills
- Looks to the future
- Makes education a priority on all levels
- Makes it clear as to who is in charge
- Manage district and external politics
- Motivated by challenge
- Multi-lingual
- Must be a stand-up person, honest
- Non-political
- Not from Hempstead there's a lot of corruption in the district
- Open to parents
- Organize, visionary and strategic planner
- People person, leader, engaging, visionary and innovator
- Persuaded by the facts, speak up for what is right.
- Preferably live within close proximity to the district
- Respectful of community
- Someone who can engage the community
- Strong advocate for children
- Strong background in technology
- Strong but fair, honest, trustworthy, and good listener
- Transparent, visible in community
- Treat Special Ed, ELL/ESL with respect and knowledge
- Understand alternative education
- Understand and embrace restorative justice
- Understands the difference between numbers (test scores) and what is being learned
- Urban experience
- Vested interest in the students and the district
- Visible in the community
- Visionary sees what others can't see
- Visionary with flexibility, passion and passion
- Willing to develop procedures, open door policy
- Willing to go 100% to have relationship with parents and students

Building Administrators and Central Office Administrators (22 Participants)

January 31, 2017

Strengths

- A great challenge
- District as a family
- Group of people ready for change
- Hard working people
- Professional development
- Students

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Board and superintendent relationship
- Dealing with aftermath of recent events
- Demonstrating transparency
- District fear of vindications/repercussions
- Inconsistent applications of rules
- Inconsistent policies, staffing
- Lack of direction
- Lack of support
- More accountability for both management and staff
- Negative P/R
- Overcome negative reputation
- Politics
- Relationship between Supt, Unions and Board, instability in district
- Space and supplies
- Staff turnover
- Trust

Desired Characteristics

- Build internal capacity
- Committed to staying
- · Communicator, great people skills, change maker
- Community engagement skills, manage politics of village, district
- Develop a sense of trust
- Experience with a diverse community
- Hands on and visible, fair worthy transparent
- Highly qualified person
- Leader
- Stability in building leadership

- Systems thinker
- Understand children are first
- Understanding of Urban community, not afraid of tough discussions
- Urban and community engagement experience
- Utilizing staff skills, empower without dividing
- Visionary, goal setting innovative leader with good coaching skills
- Well verse in curriculum and instruction
- Well versed in ESL/ELL
- Willing to fight the fight, moral character

Teachers (21 Participants)

January 30, 2017

Strengths

- An affable community
- Committed staff that cares for students
- District has unfulfilled potential
- Educators who want the best for children
- Experience of staff
- Facilities
- Good things have come out of the district
- Hempstead is a place where you can make your mark
- Leaders try to be inclusive bringing people together
- Outstanding students
- Rich heritage of the community
- Staff is ready to support a new vision
- Strength in staff and students who have weathered a lot in the past 10 years
- Students continue to strive for excellence
- Students' potential and skills
- Teachers are involved and have vested interest in the high school
- Teachers generally caring about the students
- Uniform policy

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- A Board that makes decisions
- Address air quality, and mold in filthy buildings
- Address issues of nepotism, buddy-buddy system
- Address overpopulated schools and classrooms
- Address teacher attendance and employee attendance
- Adults get in the way of children

- Arts program need to be reinstated through teaching not volunteers
- Attend to the needs of facilities
- Being accountable for taxpayer's dollars
- Better understanding of the needs of all children: socio-economic; racial; cultural; and special needs
- Building parent confidence in the system
- Challenge Board of Education
- Collaboration needs to be inclusive of all stakeholders
- Correct what the Board is doing to kids
- Culture of fear
- Curriculum is not formal needs much work
- Data based instruction
- Dealing with tax exempt businesses (pilots)
- Develop procedures, need to clean house
- District needs to emphasize following the chain of command
- Engage the staff, all stakeholders in decision making process
- Faith in community needs to be rebuilt
- Fear factor among employees needs to be addressed
- Gaining a new level of pride
- Getting messages to the media about student accomplishments
- Getting things done without perception of doing favors or getting things done "because they need to be done"
- Improve Board Performance
- Improve communication channels and protocols
- Improve program selection and professional development
- Improve technology and STEM programs, bi-lingual programs
- Improvement of morale
- Incentive programs for students need to be developed
- Increase teacher involvement in the decision-making process
- Increasing number of ELL students
- Lack of consistency in CAO
- Lack of consistency in curriculum development
- Lack of vision, goal setting, frequent changes in direction
- Latinos/Hispanics from Central America feel no connection to district
- Maintain programs through evaluation
- Maintaining consistency in administration
- Maintenance and upgrades of building and grounds
- Managing overcrowding
- Need a strong and consistent IT structure
- Need for consistency in leadership

- Need for strong curriculum development
- Need models (mentors) for new teachers to follow
- Need to match the current technology in comparable districts
- New math program not received until January
- Not just the disgruntled getting their own way
- Overbearing parental involvement
- Placing qualified people in proper positions
- Policies need to be enforced consistently
- Poor condition of turn of the century buildings
- Professional development should follow programs
- Programs received are incomplete (lack of materials)
- Reducing fear and intimidation
- Reviewing security practices
- Stabilize turnover of staff and administrators
- Stop hiring "buddies" and have fortitude to say no to such hiring
- Student safety needs to be consistently addressed
- Support highly qualified staff and programs
- Sustain programs long enough for evaluation
- Sustainable growth in student achievement students will model success.
- Systems need to be in place and working (busing, payroll, etc.)
- Technology equipment and software
- Trust
- Turn of century buildings
- Unified curriculum
- Unifying what is being done in all buildings
- Utilize grant money appropriately
- Utilizing the talents of all

Desired Characteristics

- Ability to articulate a vision, maintain continuity
- Able to articulate a clear vision
- Able to build internally to externally relationships
- Able to develop and implement a professional development program
- Able to manage roles of all stakeholders
- Analyzes and troubleshoots over population
- Avoid personal vendettas
- Backbone
- Build trust, communicate effectively and transparently
- Can address the morale of the entire staff
- Commitment to follow-thru of unified systems approach

- Demonstrated record understanding diversity
- Demonstrates financial acumen
- Dynamic leader, able to navigate between various sections in the community
- Empower staff and teachers
- Experience in a diverse district
- Gets the staff involved in fixing the district
- Holds people accountable Creates an air of professionalism
- Must be an instructional leader
- No Hempstead connection
- Politically savvy
- Record of closing the achievement gap
- Respects contracts and understands contract administration
- Sets clear direction for the district
- Strong instructional leader who links learning with student safety
- Strong with the Board
- Transparent management process, hold everyone accountable
- Understanding the needs of all students
- Works with attitude that "you" are as important as "I" am
- Works with everyone not just about power
- Write effective policies that can be followed to better organize systems

Support Staff Focus Group (4 Participants)

January 30, 2017

Strengths

- Commitment of staff
- Community involvement
- Like the job
- Potential for growth
- Students

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Add skills courses
- Administrative support for support services
- Allow Superintendent to the job
- Avoid favoritism
- Board meetings
- Consistency of Leadership, across the board
- Coordination of district activities across departments
- Define the role of the Board

- Diversity
- Embrace change
- Establish district stability and continuity
- Establish district trust
- Execute the rules fairly, follow procedures and policies
- Improve attendance, student performance
- Improve Graduation Rates
- Inclusion of support staff in decision making decision
- Increase general and A/P courses
- Make decisions that are not comfortable
- Manage public expectations and roles
- More effective utilization of resources
- Split Board

Desired Characteristics

- Able to manage district politics
- Able to rebuild public trust
- Clear and concise communicator
- Creative in defining community engagement strategies
- Display vision and strategic planning
- Empower key staff to assist decision making
- Empower support staff
- Experience in urban districts
- Fiscal accountability
- Improve school climate and morale
- Open to criticism but not vindictive
- Provide open and transparent direction
- Review and instill a fair and repeatable disciplinarian process
- Visible and engaging, caring and fair
- Visible in the community, strong person/strong backbone
- Willingness to hold staff accountable for responsibilities

Board Members (5 Participants)

Varying dates in person as well via phone conversation

Strengths

- A blended urban/suburban community
- High concentration of Churches and Social Services
- High integrity of Board
- History of success

- Human spirit
- Largest village in NYS
- Opportunity to improve
- Opportunity to turn around a struggling district
- Parents who entrusted the Board
- Quality people who care about the district
- Resiliency of staff and students
- Resilient and talented students
- Strong coalition for support
- Strong people still standing after all they been through
- Students have love for the district
- Very good teachers

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Address gang activity
- Administrators
- All community leaders should be involved on an equitable basis
- Board relationship with public
- Change the mindset of the district
- Community schools/services in delivered in the district
- Concern for adults over children
- Deal with negative press
- Develop and maintain consistency
- Develop trust across the district
- Developing trust, transparency
- ELL teachers need to speak the language of students
- Embrace changes
- Enforcement of suspension policies, adding of A/P courses
- Financial changes/live with a balance budget
- Gangs
- Issues with malfeasance and patronage
- Manage politics of district, i.e. village and community
- Meeting state standards
- More community more involved in the decision-making process
- Overcrowding, finance and tax cap
- Respect each other
- Security rules/qualifications, extend wi-fi
- Solving divisions among diverse groups
- Too many people loyal to previous Board who gave them jobs
- Top heavy very little left for teachers/students

- Transportation for all students
- Unify the Board

Desired Characteristic

- Ability to follow-thru, passionate, fair, deliberate
- Able to work with Board, make tough decisions
- Can develop policies for hiring
- Capable of selecting an excellent business administrator
- Committed to staying
- Communicate effectively with community
- Communication and engagement skill with community, students/staff
- Curriculum & Instruction successful experience
- Demonstrated ability to manage
- Develop procedures to run the district
- Experience building parents/school partnership
- Innovative and creative
- Integrity
- Management experience in Urban setting
- No history of issues
- Not worried about tenure does what needs to be done
- Proven experience in similar district
- Public relation skill set
- Strategic planning experience proven track record
- Strong and fair
- Understand ESL/ELL, Spec Ed, support staff, and media savvy
- Understand Hempstead
- Understand urban communities, data driven
- Understand/utilize grants, a collaborator
- Visionary
- Well organized, honest, respectful, willing to stay awhile
- Work toward unifying the Board



Hempstead Union Free Public School District Superintendent of Schools Desired Characteristics

After seeking input from its Board members, parents, staff, students, and community via focus groups, interviews, and an online survey, the Board of Education of the Hempstead Union Free School District seeks a strong educational leader who possesses the following characteristics:

- Leadership experiences that produce a high achieving and inclusive school district in racial, ethnic and socio-economically diverse communities.
- Community outreach leadership experiences that have formed productive partnerships with all community groups and organizations and makes them feel welcome and included in the Hempstead Union Free School District schools.
- Teaching and administrative leadership experiences that have created a clear and compelling educational vision for the future.
- Adaptability in developing a professional presence that is demonstrated through visibility.
- Leadership experiences in recruiting, employing, and retaining effective personnel throughout the district.
- Leadership experiences in creating a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel.

With regard to leadership experiences and accomplishments, the successful candidate will:

- Demonstrate a deep passion for the achievement of all students.
- Demonstrate successful experience in serving diverse urban/suburban communities, and in developing a visionary operational and academic strategy for the positive forward movement of the Hempstead Union Free School District.
- Demonstrate a deep respect for the teaching staff and support that staff through appropriate program development, implementation, and evaluation that is data driven, timely and in the best interests of all students.
- Demonstrate development of, and support for a Professional Development Program that enhances the visionary operational and academic strategy of the Hempstead Union Free School District
- Demonstrate political acumen that can be applied to mending fractured relationships between and among community groups as they apply to all aspects of the Hempstead Union Free School district.
- Demonstrate working experiences with all Board of Education Trustees, all community
 constituent groups, and all groups employed by the district to bridge significant communication
 gaps while passionately addressing the critical needs of students that will positively affect
 academic standards and student performance, while meeting the unique needs of each of its
 schools.