



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Rockville, MD

## LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Conducted: March 2, 4, and 10, 2015

Presented: March 19, 2015

### Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) for a new superintendent for Montgomery County Public Schools. The data contained in this report were obtained from a series of individual and focus group sessions held with key stakeholders, three open community forums, four general focus group meetings, and an online survey completed by slightly more than 700 participants.

The interviews, focus group sessions and meetings, and survey were structured by HYA to gather input to assist the Board in clarifying the current strengths of the district and the major challenges a new superintendent will need to tackle, as well as determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. To accommodate non-English speaking stakeholders, sessions and surveys were available in Chinese, French, Korean, and Spanish.

### Participation

The number of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data collection is listed below:

<b>Group</b>	<b>Personal Interviews/Focus Groups/Open Forums</b>	<b>Online Survey</b>
School Board	8	N/A
Administrators	47	40
Community	139	55
County Council	3	N/A
Parents	38	386
Staff (Retirees)	3	N/A
Students	10	84
Support Staff	2	45
Teachers	*Approx. 10	108
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>718</b>

\*Teachers attended mixed forums

This report contains an executive summary, beginning on page 3, of the information gathered, as well as detailed data from the various sources and stakeholders. The online survey results begin on page 7. Consistent themes heard throughout the data collection process begin on page 12. The

summary of the responses provided by the individuals and focus group participants begins on page 18, and is sorted by stakeholder category.

A first draft of superintendent characteristics, to be discussed with the Board on March 19, 2015, can be found on page 49. Appendix A, which is a separate document, lists all comments made on the online survey, and is being provided to Board members, although negative statements about a single individual have been redacted.

It should be emphasized that the data in this report are not a scientific sampling, nor should they be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed.

The consultants would like to thank all stakeholders who attended individual interviews, focus group meetings, or completed the online survey. An expression of gratitude is also extended to Suzann King, Roland Ikheloa, and the entire Board office staff who greatly assisted us in planning and scheduling sessions. Our appreciation is also extended to the community outreach office staff members who aided the consultants with garnering comments from non-English speaking stakeholders and translation of those comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Diana McCauley  
Betty Morgan  
Hank Gmitro

# Executive Summary

## **Strengths of the District**

Emanating from discussions with individuals and stakeholder groups is a perceived list of district “strengths.” The five most consistently reported strengths embraced across all groups are:

- Community engagement and resources
- Curriculum options and academic opportunities
- District’s national reputation
- Stakeholder diversity
- Teachers

Stakeholders of Montgomery County Public Schools proudly tout the extensive commitment and engagement of the community, applauding the value that the district demonstrates for its diverse, supportive, and involved constituents.

The abundant curricular options and academic opportunities available to students of Montgomery County Public Schools were cited among stakeholders as a strength of the district. Specific options and opportunities that district stakeholders mentioned are: AP, art, foreign language immersion, health education, IB, social/emotional initiatives, and Title I.

Stakeholders describe the district as being “the jewel of the county.” Beyond the county’s borders, Montgomery County Public Schools is nationally recognized as a trend-setting, high-achieving district. In addition to its “world class academic reputation,” among the initiatives generating this recognition is the district’s *Leadership Development Program* – a sophisticated, solid professional growth system, which includes recruitment, development, peer review, evaluation, mentoring, and coaching.

Stakeholder diversity found within Montgomery County and its public schools is regarded as a “strength” of the district in that it mirrors the world and affords students the opportunity to interact with other students who are culturally, economically, racially, and linguistically different from themselves. The district serves students and families from 157 countries, speaking approximately 138 different languages. And, given the square mileage of the district, the district serves students from urban, suburban, and rural settings.

Stakeholders routinely noted the district’s roster of great teachers. Teachers are regarded by stakeholders as the backbone of the district, frequently going beyond the call of duty to provide their best to all students. In the words of one stakeholder, “the amazing teachers are the cornerstone of the district’s success.”

Another set of five frequently mentioned strengths are:

- Diversity initiatives
- Focus on student achievement
- Focus on the whole child

- Labor-management relations
- Staff

### **Challenges/Concerns/Issues Facing the District**

When provided the opportunity, it is customary for individuals to suggest a list of challenges/concerns/issues that far exceeds the list of strengths. Montgomery County Public Schools' stakeholders readily identified an exhaustive list of challenges/concerns/issues, several of which were more frequently cited than others. Listed alphabetically to avoid the impression that any one challenge/concern/issue garners priority over another, the five most frequently cited ones are:

- Achievement gap
- Communication and transparency
- Diversity
- Economic disparities and inequities
- Testing

Perhaps the most pervasive issue conveyed by stakeholders is that of existing achievement gaps, particularly for black and Latino students. In spite of the fact that district leadership has demonstrated a commitment to address this matter by implementing and supporting initiatives and partnerships designed to reverse the situation, the gaps continue to exist.

Stakeholders feel that there is a need for transparency in the way the district operates. The most frequently mentioned example supporting stakeholder belief centers around the departure of the most recent superintendent which ultimately resulted in this superintendent search process.

Although stakeholders cited diversity as a "strength," they also consider it an "issue." MCPS is a "majority-minority" district described as being "brownier and poorer than it was 15 years ago." Stakeholders communicated the desire for the district to increase its understanding of, and sensitivity toward, students-of-color and different backgrounds. The expressed desires also seek district efforts to further provide opportunities that will enable all students to experience the highest levels of academic success.

Stakeholders assert that "disparity of income levels throughout the county leads to disparities in services in the schools." The inequitable distribution of district resources, whether perceived or actual, does not bode well with stakeholders and is something that the new superintendent will be expected to address and reverse.

Stakeholders communicated their concern regarding "excessive" testing indicating that testing is consuming too much valuable instructional time. Stakeholders further discussed the emotional and psychological impact that testing has on students, noting that testing is generating high levels of stress for students.

Other challenges/concerns/issues that were mentioned by more than one interviewed group are:

- Budget and fiscal concerns
- Overcrowded schools and class size
- School Board
- Student concerns, issues, and needs
- Technology

The consultants caution the Board and others not to look upon the delineation of these challenges/concerns/issues as criticism of the district or any component of it. Instead, it should be regarded as an attempt to catalogue the challenges/concerns/issues that appear to exist, and to provide the Board an opportunity to identify those that are of greatest significance to the district. Once the most pressing challenges/concerns/issues are identified, the Board then needs to identify an individual who has the skills-sets and background to respond to them over a period of time. To aid the Board in the candidate identification process, stakeholders offered the consultants with a roster of desired characteristics.

### **Desired Characteristics**

When describing the personal and professional skill-sets that stakeholders desire in the next superintendent, consultants were presented with an extensive roster. Although stakeholders realize that no one candidate will possess all of the attributes and experiences mentioned, a condensed roster of the pervasive ones was formulated that captured the essence of stakeholder comments: a candidate with the highest level of professional experiences and personal/character traits.

Stakeholders realize that there is “no silver bullet” for anyone to use in addressing the issues, needs, and challenges within Montgomery County Schools. However, the expectation is that the selected individual will not “come in and make radical changes.” To some, the selected candidate will be a servant leader with strong interpersonal skills, a clear vision, values the diversity within the population it serves, who puts all students at the forefront of every decision. In the words of another stakeholder, “Montgomery County Public Schools needs an inspirational, visionary, fiscally responsible, management savvy and future-looking superintendent who is not only an educational expert, but also a great leader.”

To that extent, it is desired that the candidate possess:

- A collaborative administrative style
- Educational experiences that include classroom teacher, building principal, and central office administrator
- Effective communication skills (verbal, written and listening) and conversant in more than one language
- Evidence of being culturally aware, culturally responsive, and valuing diversity
- Respect for, and appreciation of, teachers and staff
- The ability to narrow the achievement gap

Additionally, MCPS stakeholders expect the candidate to be:

- A relationship builder
- Accessible and visible in the schools and throughout the community
- Student-centered
- Visionary

The top characteristics that emerged from responses to the ECRA-HYA online survey categorically reinforce the above list of desired candidate attributes. As presented starting on page 7, those categories are:

- Communication and Collaboration
- Community Engagement
- Vision and Values

Stakeholders appealed to the consultants to identify candidates who are not interested in a “stop over” position. Instead, consultants were asked to promote the Montgomery County Public School district as a “destination district.”

HYA cannot promise to find a candidate who possesses all of the characteristics desired by respondents. However, HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to address the concerns expressed by the stakeholder groups.

# Online Superintendent Profile Survey Results

The Superintendent Profile survey was completed by 718 stakeholders. Over half of the respondents were parents (54 percent). Fifteen percent were teachers, and another 12 percent were students. The rest were community members, support staff, and administrators.

<b>Stakeholder Groups</b>		
	Frequency	Percent
Administrator	40	6%
Community Member	55	8%
Parent	386	54%
Student	84	12%
Support Staff	45	6%
Teacher	108	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>100%</b>

The top-rated characteristics respondents selected for a superintendent were:

- Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, and community members. (CE)
- Have a clear vision of what is required to provide exemplary educational services and implement effective change. (VV)
- Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators. (CC)
- Promote high expectations for all students and personnel. (VV)

Percentages of respondents overall, who selected each item, as well as percentages by stakeholder group, are given in the tables on the following pages. Benchmark results from over fifty comparable districts, incorporating the ranking of over twenty-five thousand stakeholders, are also provided in the table to allow for a comparison of results to national norms.

In addition, differences were examined for statistical and practical significance to determine whether the mean scores by stakeholder group differed. Results indicate that, for many items, the various stakeholders were in agreement. On the other hand, there were several items that certain stakeholders valued more than others.

- Parents, students, support staff, and teachers were significantly more likely than administrators to select the Community Engagement item “Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, and community members.”
- Administrators and teachers were significantly more likely than community members to select the Vision and Values item “Have a clear vision of what is required to provide exemplary educational services and implement effective change.”
- Administrators, support staff, and teachers were significantly more likely than students to select the Communication and Collaboration item “Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators.”
- Parents were significantly more likely than teachers to select the Management item “Recruit, employ, evaluate, and retain effective personnel throughout the district and its schools.”
- Students were significantly more likely than administrators to select the Community Engagement item “Identify, confront, and resolve issues and concerns in a timely manner.”
- Parents were significantly more likely than administrators, support staff, and teachers to select the Management item “Guide the operations and maintenance of school facilities to ensure secure, safe, and clean school environments that support learning.”
- Administrators were significantly more likely than community members, parents, students, and teachers to select the Communication and Collaboration item “Seek a high level of engagement with principals and other school-site leaders.”
- Students were significantly more likely than parents to select the Community Engagement item “Be visible throughout the district and actively engaged in community life.”
- Support staff members were significantly more likely than administrators to select the Management item “Be an effective manager of the district’s day-to-day operations.”
- Administrators were significantly more likely than parents and students to select the Instructional Leadership item “Utilize student achievement data to drive the district’s instructional decision-making.”



Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Item (By Subgroups)									
Number indicates rank order by overall results		National HYA Benchmark	ALL (718)	Admin (40)	Comm. (55)	Parent (386)	Student (84)	Staff (45)	Teacher (108)
1	Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, and community members.	38%	52%	23%	44%	56%	52%	58%	53%
2	Have a clear vision of what is required to provide exemplary educational services and implement effective change.	36%	46%	68%	29%	46%	42%	44%	54%
3	Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators.	40%	44%	63%	42%	42%	25%	62%	52%
4	Promote high expectations for all students and personnel.	38%	43%	40%	29%	49%	33%	47%	38%
5	Recruit, employ, evaluate, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools.	36%	39%	38%	29%	45%	39%	33%	29%
6	Hold a deep appreciation for diversity and the importance of providing safe and caring school environments.	23%	39%	50%	35%	37%	36%	33%	50%
7	Hold a deep understanding of the teaching/learning process and of the importance of educational technology.	35%	39%	30%	27%	38%	46%	31%	46%
8	Identify, confront, and resolve issues and concerns in a timely manner.	35%	37%	20%	33%	38%	48%	33%	36%
9	Increase academic performance and accountability at all levels and for all its students, including special needs populations.	30%	34%	40%	33%	37%	29%	29%	25%

<b>Key</b>	<b>VV-Vision &amp; Values</b>	<b>IL-Instructional Leadership</b>	<b>CE- Community Engagement</b>	<b>CC- Communication &amp; Collaboration</b>	<b>M-Management</b>
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## Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Item (By Subgroups)

Number indicates rank order by overall results		National HYA Benchmark	ALL (718)	Admin (40)	Comm. (55)	Parent (386)	Student (84)	Staff (45)	Teacher (108)
10	Provide meaningful guidance for systematic and comprehensive district-wide curriculum, instructional services, assessment programs, and professional development.	23%	33%	30%	33%	36%	20%	29%	36%
11	Involve appropriate stakeholders in the decision-making process.	26%	30%	33%	35%	29%	23%	31%	35%
12	Guide the operation and maintenance of school facilities to ensure secure, safe, and clean school environments that support learning.	26%	28%	5%	22%	35%	33%	11%	15%
13	Lead in an encouraging, participatory, and team-focused manner.	27%	26%	25%	27%	25%	24%	36%	29%
14	Seek a high level of engagement with principals and other school-site leaders.	22%	26%	50%	16%	27%	20%	22%	26%
15	Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District.	34%	26%	30%	25%	26%	21%	27%	29%
16	Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life.	28%	25%	15%	24%	22%	39%	38%	28%
17	Encourage a sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders regarding success in student learning.	36%	25%	35%	27%	25%	14%	22%	32%
18	Align budgets, long-range plans, and operational procedures with the District's vision, mission, and goals.	28%	23%	10%	29%	23%	24%	38%	21%

<b>Key</b>	<b>VV-Vision &amp; Values</b>	<b>IL-Instructional Leadership</b>	<b>CE- Community Engagement</b>	<b>CC- Communication &amp; Collaboration</b>	<b>M-Management</b>
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## Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Item (By Subgroups)

Number indicates rank order by overall results		National HYA Benchmark	ALL (718)	Admin (40)	Comm. (55)	Parent (386)	Student (84)	Staff (45)	Teacher (108)
19	Communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and in a variety of ways.	27%	23%	28%	25%	20%	26%	27%	29%
20	Strive for continuous improvement in all areas of the District.	27%	21%	25%	13%	20%	27%	16%	23%
21	Develop strong relationships with constituents, local government, area businesses, media, and community partners.	20%	20%	25%	31%	16%	26%	27%	19%
22	Maintain positive and collaborative working relationships with the school board and its members.	31%	18%	18%	20%	16%	27%	31%	14%
23	Be an effective manager of the District's day-to-day operations.	20%	16%	3%	22%	13%	30%	24%	15%
24	Utilize student achievement data to drive the District's instructional decision-making.	19%	15%	35%	24%	12%	14%	13%	16%
25	Act in accordance with the District's mission, vision, and core beliefs.	25%	12%	23%	18%	8%	14%	18%	14%

<b>Key</b>	<b>VV-Vision &amp; Values</b>	<b>IL-Instructional Leadership</b>	<b>CE- Community Engagement</b>	<b>CC- Communication &amp; Collaboration</b>	<b>M-Management</b>
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# Consistent Themes to be Considered

## Strengths

### Community Engagement and Resources

Stakeholders of Montgomery County Public Schools proudly tout the extensive commitment and engagement of the community, applauding the value that the district demonstrates for its diverse, supportive, and involved constituents. The community cares deeply about education and is replete with human and capital resources (including a healthy tax base) “second to none.” The district reciprocates the community’s engagement by embracing and welcoming community input.

### Curriculum Options and Academic Opportunities

The abundant curricular options and academic opportunities available to students of Montgomery County Public Schools was cited among stakeholders as a strength of the district. Specific options and opportunities that district stakeholders mentioned are: AP, art, foreign language immersion, health education, IB, social/emotional initiatives, and Title I. All contribute to stakeholder belief that in Montgomery County, “all kids matter.”

### District Reputation

Stakeholders describe the district as being “the jewel of the county.” Beyond the county’s borders, Montgomery County Public Schools is nationally recognized as a trend-setting, high-achieving district. In addition to its “world class academic reputation,” among the initiatives generating this recognition is the district’s *Leadership Development Program* – a sophisticated, solid professional growth system which includes recruitment, development, peer review, evaluation, mentoring and coaching.

### Diversity Initiatives

The district is sensitive to the needs of teachers and staff with respect to their work with culturally, socioeconomically, and ability-diverse students, and has instituted professional development programs and community wrap-around services specifically geared toward advancing teacher and staff success with these students while concurrently meeting student/family needs. An example of the latter is the fact that the county’s Parks and Recreation Department is the largest provider of the District’s after school and summer programs. Another example is evident in the partnership between the District and the Department of Health and Human Services.

### Focus on Student Achievement

Although the presence of achievement gaps exist within Montgomery County Schools, especially for black and Latino students, stakeholders recognize the district’s commitment to focusing on student achievement and implementing initiatives to support that focus. Student achievement is not compromised by lowering standards, but instead, high standards for all students is embedded throughout programs and curricular offerings.

### Focus on the Whole Child

Stakeholders applaud the district's efforts to focus on the development of the whole child. While academics remain the primary educational focus, the district has instituted programs and partnerships to respond to the health/physical and social/emotional needs and well-being of its students. The latter is particularly significant in that more than 35% of the students in the district are classified as FRL, suggesting the need for non-academic, wrap-around services oftentimes provided by community agencies to which many do not have access.

### Labor-Management Relations

Relations between the administrative arm of the district and unions is viewed as collaborative. Functioning as "true partners," the entities have established a healthy record of engaging in interest-base bargaining and on-going collegial relationships in solving problems.

### Stakeholder Diversity

Stakeholder diversity found within Montgomery County and its public schools is regarded as a "strength" of the district in that it mirrors the world and affords students the opportunity for students to interact with other students who are culturally, economically, racially, and linguistically different from them. The district serves students and families from 157 countries, speaking approximately 138 different languages. And, given the square mileage of the district, the district serves students from urban, suburban, and rural settings.

### Staff

Montgomery County Schools' talented and committed staff proudly render professional service to the district's students and families, and are viewed by many as the "main strength of the system." Staff are characterized as being passionate about students by consistently demonstrating care for them.

### Teachers

Stakeholders routinely noted the district's roster of great teachers. Teachers are regarded by stakeholders as the backbone of the district, frequently going beyond the call of duty to provide their best to all students. In the words of one stakeholder, "the amazing teachers are the cornerstone of the district's success."

## Challenges/Concerns/Issues

### Achievement Gap

Perhaps the most pervasive issue conveyed by stakeholders is that of existing achievement gaps, particularly for black and Latino students. In spite of the fact that district leadership has demonstrated a commitment to address this matter by implementing and supporting initiatives and partnerships designed to reverse the situation, the gaps continue to exist. And, as the consultants were informed, with a growing diverse population, there is concern that the gaps may widen. An extension of any achievement gap is how it can translate into an “opportunity gap” thus posing employment and economic barriers for students long after their K-12 experience.

### Budget and Fiscal Concerns

Budget cuts at the county and state levels and financial challenges within the district have precipitated stakeholder concern, especially as shrinking resources have impacted programs and generated the need to dismantle some of them. Stakeholders further expressed the viewpoint that as enrollments continue to increase, additional fiscal resources will be needed.

### Communication and Transparency

Stakeholders feel that there is a need for transparency in the way the district operates. The most frequently mentioned example supporting stakeholder belief centers around the departure of the most recent superintendent, which ultimately resulted in this superintendent search process. Stakeholders expressed the desire to know how and why decisions are made at the Board and District levels.

### Diversity

Although stakeholders cited diversity as a “strength,” they also consider it an “issue.” MCPS is a “majority-minority” district described as being “brownier and poorer than it was 15 years ago.” Stakeholders communicated the desire for the district to increase its understanding of, and sensitivity toward, students-of-color and different backgrounds. The expressed desires also seek district efforts to further provide opportunities that will enable all students to experience the highest levels of academic success.

### Economic Disparities and Inequities

Stakeholders assert that “disparity of income levels throughout the county leads to disparities in services in the schools.” For example, stakeholders informed the consultants that some schools in the district are “resource rich” while others struggle to provide necessary supplies and equipment needed for effective teaching and learning. The inequitable distribution of district resources, whether perceived or actual, does not bode well with stakeholders and is something that the new superintendent will be expected to address and reverse.

### Overcrowded Schools and Class Size

Overcrowded schools and large class sizes are concerns that stakeholders contend are adversely effecting teaching and learning and impacting student safety issues. Tangential to these issues is the existence of an infrastructure in need of updating.

### School Board

Stated concerns pertaining to the Board include the lack of Latino representation among its members and the absence of transparency. Due to the belief that the Board has “misaligned expectations with reality,” stakeholders contend that the Board “needs to develop and communicate clear goals,” establish “policies and vision to support excellent teaching and learning,” and work “together as a team” for the betterment of the district and the constituents it serves.

### Student Concerns, Issues, and Needs

Whether it be concerns addressing student safety, sexual orientation, or social/emotional needs, stakeholders contend that the district has neither adequately nor sufficiently done all it could to respond to these matters. Stakeholders assert that as the number of students (especially students of poverty, from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and/or language diverse) enrolling in Montgomery County Schools continues to increase, so will the need to have safety nets and programs in place to respond to student concerns. Safety on buses and in school buildings, as well as bullying (in school and via cyberspace) are concerns that were frequently mentioned by stakeholders. A somewhat different expressed concern was that of student start times with stakeholders pushing for a change in start times to better respond to studies that purport the benefits of a later start time for high school students, while others express concern regarding the negative impact changing start times will have on families.

### Technology

Consultants recorded stakeholder concerns regarding technology. Cited concerns include the need for the district to: update technology and expand the sphere of accessibility, ensure infrastructure support for technology, and provide the necessary professional development for teachers to elevate their comfort level in using technology. Stakeholders also expressed the need for the district to remain mindful that all students may not have technology (computers) in their homes.

### Testing

Stakeholders communicated their concern regarding “excessive” testing indicating that testing is consuming too much valuable instructional time. Stakeholders further discussed the emotional and psychological impact that testing has on students, noting that testing is generating high levels of stress for students.

## **Desired Characteristics**

### **Accessible and Visible**

Stakeholders desire a superintendent who does not use the physical office as a shield from the public. They want to know that the superintendent realizes the importance of being accessible to constituents, but not to the extent that it compromises his/her ability to successfully execute the duties and responsibilities of the position. It is expected that the new superintendent will be visible in the schools and around the county, and not afraid to be seen in various communities.

### **Administrative Style**

Repeatedly, stakeholders express their belief for the next superintendent to be collaborative with all stakeholders, including unions and to understand the value in engaging parents and the community. The hired individual is expected to work with the Board in setting the tone and direction for the district.

### **Culturally Sensitive, Responsive, and Values Diversity**

As a district that serves students from more than 147 countries and where 138 languages are spoken, stakeholders were vigilant in appealing to consultants to consider candidates who have a proven record (“not just lip service”) of being culturally sensitive, responsive, and valuing diversity. To underscore the appeal, stakeholders frequently discussed the continuous growth and presence of non-English speaking and economically diverse students and families in Montgomery County.

### **Effective Communicator**

Stakeholders expect the superintendent to be an effective communicator (verbal, written and listening), realizing the significance of communicating openly and directly with all constituents. In the best of all worlds, stakeholders desire a superintendent who is bilingual or multilingual.

### **Personal Attributes**

An extensive list of personal attributes was communicated by MCPS stakeholders. Included among the most frequently cited attributes is the desire for the superintendent to be politically savvy, possessing the ability to develop and maintain strong, cooperative working relationships with the Board and city, county and state political officials. “Savvy-ness” includes having a high level of political integrity with everyone. Other frequently cited personal attributes are: confidence (without being cocky), forthright, consensus builder, ability to boost morale, and above all else, common sense.

### **Professional Experience**

MCPS stakeholders want an educator with a proven record of success as the district’s next superintendent. S/he will have a record of success as a classroom teacher, principal, and central office administrator. The experiential portfolio of the selected candidate will be replete with evidence of successful work in: demographically-similar districts, closing the achievement gap, and managing large budgets.



### Relationship Builder

AS MCPS continues to grow and demands on teachers and staff increase, stakeholders seek a servant leader who understands the need to build and maintain relationships, internal and external to the district. Morale within the district needs rebuilding in order for the district to continue to fully execute its mission in providing a myriad of outstanding educational opportunities for all of its students.

### Student Centered

Stakeholders indicated that it is imperative for the superintendent to be student-centered because students are at the core of the district's existence. "Lip service" from the selected candidate will not suffice as stakeholders will seek to determine the superintendent's genuine focus on students and student achievement through his/her demonstrated performance.

### Supports and Respects Teachers and Staff

Stakeholders desire a superintendent who supports and respects teachers and staff and the service they contribute to students, the district, and community. Stakeholders believe that someone who has walked in the shoes of a teacher will truly understand the expectations and challenges teachers and staff face as they seek to perform their duties.

### Visionary

In essence, stakeholders desire a superintendent who can "build a strategic, shared vision that can be effectively communicated and operationalized through measureable actions." The selected individual should possess a vision for what excellent education can be (beyond the traditional).

# Comments from Interviews and Focus Group Meetings

March 2, 4, and 10, 2015  
Listed in alphabetical order

## ADMINISTRATORS

### *Strengths*

- Academic excellence
- Accountability systems and focus – while there have been some changes, accountability is still a clear focus
- Amazing and committed human capital
- Baldrige approach
- Baldrige-based school improvement process is well deployed
- Baldrige philosophy and process management is pervasive in the system
- Commitment to eliminating the achievement gap
- Commitment to improving processes
- County believes in equity
- Culture of Respect Compact
- Curriculum 2.0
- Diverse community
- Diversity of programs (including Title I and AP)
- Dollars are allocated on a proportional scale based on needs in the school
- Equity and excellence are both valued
- Evaluation systems
- Extremely good relationships with unions – functions as true partners
- Focus on differentiation
- Focus on equity
- Focus on student achievement
- Great relationships with unions
- Great staff
- Great systems and structures in place
- Great talent in MCPS
- Heavy focus on workforce quality and development
- Hiring practices
- Interest-based bargaining is used with all unions
- Internal expertise among MCPS administrators
- Leadership development program for principals is highly effective and successful
- Leadership is dispersed throughout the organization – teachers, support staff
- MCPS economic impact on the State of Maryland
- MCPS is a destination district
- Nationally-recognized *Leadership Development Program* - a sophisticated, solid professional growth system which includes recruitment, development, peer review, evaluation, mentoring and coaching
- Open regarding information about the system

- Operates as a project based organization in most activities
- Professional Growth System is second to none
- Relatively high performing district
- Roster of resources
- School system is the jewel in the county
- Significant gains toward closing the achievement gap
- Stakeholders value the MCPS “brand” name and want to preserve it
- Strong sense of community
- Succession planning
- System differentiates resources to the schools based on needs and performance – Focus Schools
- “Systematic Framework”
- Talented and committed staff
- The Professional Growth System negotiated in the contract; strong professional learning communities
- Top-notch education provided to all students
- Transparency
- Using data to drive instructional decision-making
- Values targeted and responsive instruction
- Valuing diversity
- Wants to be a national leader
- Well-funded

### *Challenges/Concerns/Issues*

- A needed plan, consisting of accountability metrics, for closing the achievement gap
- Accelerated growth in the number of students needing support
- African American community does not always feel the system serves the needs of the students
- Board of Education needs to come together as a team
- Budget constraints
- Choice audits to see if choice programs are worth the costs
- Communication between leadership and staff regarding direction
- Despite a focus on diversity, the teaching staff does not reflect the community or students
- Duplication of work due different departments and cross-over of responsibilities
- Elementary performance gaps are not improving
- Environment is highly political
- Expectations to implement Curriculum 2.0 is disconnected from the realities of the classroom
- Financial challenges
- Fundamental crossroads in addressing the achievement gaps
- Growing ESL and special education populations
- Growing student needs
- Hardware needs for technology
- Impact of federal mandates in special education and ESOL service

- Implementation of Common Core
- Important communications take too long to get to the principals, i.e., one important memo took almost a year to get out to the schools
- Latino and ELL populations are growing
- Literacy needs for second language needs
- Math performance and math program
- Methodology needs to be improved due to resource constraints
- Need for clear vision of where MCPS is going
- Need for metrics for monitoring the implementation of the strategic plan
- Need to rebuild trust
- Need to value and include the employee organizations – the system used to have mechanisms for collaboration and structures for communication which have eroded – some were eliminated by the previous superintendent
- PARCC assessments this spring – while we anticipate performance measures will drop, addressing community and staff concerns will be critical
- Processes that are not transparent
- Public perception of the Board
- Redefining accountability as state testing measures change
- Relationship with County Council and county executive needs to improve
- Relationships and communications needs to continue to improve
- State’s desire to have district do something differently or risk being eliminated
- Still have work to do to change silo mentality among departments
- Strategic plan is not being implemented at the MS and HS levels
- Support for technology infrastructure in the information age
- System is not as open to innovation as they could be
- System to monitor key data points
- The “brand” has suffered and needs to be restored to its one-time height
- The buzz phrase of the previous administration, “To serve you well, we must know you well,” became hollow for people. The new message must be: “I truly want to serve and understand you well,” and then back it up with commensurate actions; too much is superficial, just words, not real, deep, or sincere
- The system has lost a lot of good, senior leaders who will be hard to replace; there are too many leaders new to their jobs and to MCPS who need a lot of support and reassurance – they lack leadership skills and confidence
- There are too many priorities and changes - need more supports for principals to implement changes
- There is a lack of integrity, especially on the instructional side of the house
- There is a need for transparency in the way the system operates; the Exec Leadership Team (ELT) has become an exclusive group that makes decisions unilaterally behind closed doors that are based on theory, not practice
- There needs to be continual dialogue across groups to ensure consistency of action and purpose – need vehicles and structures for dialogue and exchange of ideas
- Two counties in one
- Unnecessary layers of bureaucracy

- We have lost our commitment to continuous improvement and respect for all, which was our legacy and reputation in the past
- We need to make sure the strength of the workforce is maintained

### *Characteristics*

- A “servant-leader” as per Jim Collins’ book – someone who is focused on the good of the system instead of themselves and seeks input from everyone to improve the system
- Ability to achieve Board-directed goals
- Ability to build a strategic, shared vision that can be effectively communicated and operationalized through measureable actions
- Ability to develop collaborative relationships with key stakeholder groups: employees, parents, elected officials, business partners, and community members to advance the instructional, social/emotional, and 21<sup>st</sup> century problem solving goals of our students
- Ability to galvanize and leverage public and political support for capital and operating budget priorities
- Ability to mobilize foot soldiers
- Ability to work with the Board and bring them together
- Accessible
- Administrative experience
- Advocates for all children
- Believes in educating the whole child
- Builds morale of staff
- Builds strong relationships with all stakeholder groups
- Builds strong relationships with students, staff, and community
- Calm, thoughtful demeanor
- Celebrates successes
- Champion for MCPS resources
- Collaborates with unions
- Collaborative – involves stakeholders in decisions
- Common sense
- Confident in ability to navigate the political landscape
- Consensus builder
- Earns the trust of the minority communities
- Engages and involves employee associations in opportunities to inform, review, and reflect upon proposed initiatives and programs that will impact student, parent, employee, and community stakeholders
- Engages parents and community
- Engaging, thoughtful, and strategic communication skills
- Evidence of success in closing the achievement gap
- Execute the vision
- Experience as a principal
- Experience in a diverse school district
- Experience in a large school district
- Focuses attention on the implementation plan for the strategic plan

- Focuses on quality instruction for students – has a vision and a plan to have it successful implemented
- Great communication skills
- Has a clear belief and focus on race and equity
- Has a deep knowledge and understanding of the Montgomery County Public Schools system, our commitment to Baldrige/Continuous Improvement processes and the Culture of Respect
- Has engaging, strategic, and thoughtful communication skills
- Has a short learning curve
- Has a vision and can operationalize that vision
- Has experience as a principal
- Has experience leading a large system
- High level of political integrity with everyone
- Honest – clearly articulates core values
- Instructional leader
- Knows how to scale up good ideas
- Knows how to surround self with the right supporting cast
- Knows Title I from financial piece to legal implementation
- Leads with sustained conviction and enthusiastic commitment to the over 22,000 employees and over 155,000 students whom he/she serves on a daily basis
- Loves politics
- Need to refocus MCPS's attention on teaching and learning key academics
- Not a bully
- Not wedded to change for change sake
- People-person with genuine warmth
- Politically savvy and skilled at communicating to local, state and federal officials
- Possesses a keen awareness of evolving technology, assessment, and instructional policies at the local, state, and national levels
- Possesses and allegiance to collaborative, interest-based bargaining with employee associations
- Practitioner rather than a theorist
- Prepared to have their socks blown off
- Proven record of process and procedures
- Recognizes the talent of the staff and motivates the staff
- Requests and gives constructive feedback and reflection in timely manner
- Respect for MCPS's deep roots
- Sincere commitment to MCPS
- Someone who can “play in the sandbox” with everybody else
- Someone who has “inter” and “intra” personal skills and can maintain good relationships with the unions
- Someone who is conscious of the moment
- Someone who is cooperative and collaborative and recognizes that goals cannot be achieved by one person alone; someone who is for the system instead of for themselves
- Someone who provides leadership and a vision for the future and wants to take the system to the next level

- Someone who will be committed to the system and not trying to use it as stepping stone to get a better job
- Someone who will value the intelligence and work ethics of people in the system and not someone who knows better than everyone else
- Strength to fix the broken pieces
- Strengthens the relationship with the County Council
- Strong vision that is articulated through a clear and consistent message as well as implemented in an effective and sustainable manner
- Transparent
- Transparent with budget issues
- Understands branding
- Understands business operations to support students
- Understands ESL and special education
- Understands MCPS
- Understands special education
- Understands teaching and learning
- Understands that the district needs caring leadership due to having a very difficult year
- Understands the breadth of needs of a very diverse student population
- Understands the significance of being in the nation's capital
- Understands that there's an internal healing that needs to occur
- Values all students learning a second language
- Visible in the community, schools, and state
- Wants to be highly engaged with all communities
- Wants to move the district's strategic plan forward
- Willing to engage in community outreach
- Willingness to strengthen union partnership with MCPS
- Works well with politicians

## **BOARD**

### *Strengths*

- #1 school district
- “All kids matter” is a part of the culture of the system
- Collaboration with the union
- Community cares deeply about education
- Excellent staff members are the main strength of the system
- Diversity: wide diversity of the community gives students real-life experience
- Education is the crown jewel of Montgomery County
- Fully engaged and involved Board
- Great processes in existence
- Great system
- History of doing well
- MCPS’s Vision and Mission
- Progressive county
- Respect for the work the district does
- Support for teachers
- Supportive, involved community
- Teachers and staff care deeply about students
- Teachers are the best in the world
- The district does it all well
- Values the whole child
- Very dedicated and talented staff
- Will help kids in any way possible
- Willingness to have “courageous conversations”

### *Challenges/Concerns/Issues*

- Alternative program
- Balancing competing interests
- Budget constraints
- Career pathways and voc tech
- Children’s nutrition issues
- Competition for resources among county agencies
- Diversity: geographically and demographically
- Environmental education
- External audit needed in special education
- Facility needs
- Growing achievement gaps
- Growing poverty rates
- Home and Hospital Care
- Immigrant population is growing
- Large bureaucracy
- Magnet programs have underrepresented AA and Latino populations



- MCPS has lost a sense of direction
- Need an effective strategy for the budget
- Need for staff training on programs such as MCEA's Excellence and Equity Course
- Need for the Board to clearly define expectations for the superintendent
- Need for the Board to come together
- Needs to find ways to connect with Asian communities
- Not making much headway with AA students
- Number of children who are undocumented
- Opportunities for innovation and doing things differently are needed
- PARCC Assessments
- Physical health of children
- Poor performance by some administrators needs to be confronted – "Josh was intimidated by staff" and didn't seem to be able to address the issue of low-performing administrators
- Pressure and stress on children – issues impact mental health
- Relationship with community organizations and valuing their contributions
- Restructuring the Consortia program and choices
- Revamping the Edison Program to serve more students and to operate a full-day program
- School starting times
- Some students are struggling to meet basic needs
- Students stress and pressure to do well
- The rhetoric is: "we're going to solve the achievement gap," but we don't effectively engage the community in helping up to bridge the gap
- Varying issues in various segments of the county makes it difficult to find common ground
- Working to meet the needs of struggling students

### *Characteristics*

- A good listener
- Ability to build and sustain relationships
- Ability to carry through
- Ability to implement a vision
- Administrator experience, including as a principal and superintendent
- An educator with business mind
- An excellent, direct communicator
- Balances flexibility and guidance
- Believes in educating the whole child
- Cares about the mission of the school district
- Carry-through and implementation skills
- Collaborative
- Courage to make the tough decisions
- Develops relationships with other county leaders and organizations
- Earns the respect of principals and other administrators
- Efficient and effective
- Emotional IQ
- Engagement with students

- First and foremost, we need someone who understands the politics of this county and who can deal with the “East/West” divide
- Focus on teaching and learning
- Gives people a sense of security, safety, and common purpose
- Great communicator
- High value for community involvement
- Knowledgeable about funding process in Maryland
- Knows how to take advantage of community resources
- Knows what they are doing and establishes clear and definitive goals for the organization
- Meets with community leaders
- Mission driven
- Needs to build relationships quickly
- Passionate about MCPS
- Politically savvy
- Practical
- Recognizes that the superintendent needs to work with the Board
- Recognizes the strengths and contributions of each board member
- Skilled in working with minority communities
- “Someone who doesn’t come across as needing to be the smartest person in the room”
- Someone who knows how to get buy-in for new initiatives being proposed
- Someone willing to adopt a “shared governance” approach
- Strategic thinker
- Strong communication and personal engagement with the community
- Supportive of immersion programs
- Thinks in new ways
- Understands and values the needs of principals
- Understands how work gets done in the schools
- Understands Maryland
- Understands MCPS and can hit the ground running
- Understands budget process and has a budget strategy
- Understands the diversity and complexity of the community
- Understands the student perspective
- Values vocational education and career pathways
- Wants to develop a working relationship with the Board
- Willingness to engage disenfranchised communities

## COMMUNITY

### *Strengths*

- Abundance of after school activities
- Access to school facilities
- After-school programs
- Availability of programs for students
- Budget is strong
- Commitment of the taxpayers to support education
- Communication between schools and ESL parents
- Community resources
- Confident administrators who are courageous and willing to allow risk taking
- Culture of learning and continues to strive for more
- Curriculum 2.0
- Diverse programs
- Diversity of students and programs (including foreign language immersion, art, and health education programs)
- Dual language programming
- Edline
- Education important with engagement of community
- Effective and productive labor management relations
- Efforts to close the achievement gap
- Emphasis on excellence and going to college
- ESOL effectiveness and education policy is pretty good
- Extra types of supports for kids below and ahead of their grade levels
- Extremely talented and dedicated teachers
- Facilities are upgraded and well-maintained
- Focus on educational qualities of student learning
- Focus on equity and closing the achievement gap
- Focus on students
- Globalization
- Good reputation of MCPS and the community-at-large vested in the system's success
- Great reputation
- Healthy relationship between MCPS and DHHS
- *HR 17 – Ethnic Minorities in American Society* expanded to include everyone
- High school Signature programs
- Highly functional system despite its size
- Highly qualified teachers
- Honor rolls
- IEPs for every student
- Inclusion of technology in elementary and special ed classrooms
- Individualized instruction
- Input from community is valued
- Internal promotions
- Kennedy Cluster Project

- Linkages to Learning Programs
- Location – close to nation’s capital – take advantage of resources
- Magnet programs – excellent, but need more
- Math classes
- Math content coaches
- MCPS attracts top quality teachers that help create a strong workforce
- MCPS continues to provide a well-rounded curriculum including the arts and other opportunities
- MCPS has a great reputation in the USA and overseas because we provide high quality education, have highly-respected, excellent teachers, and are innovative and progressive
- MCPS has a strong, high-functioning culture that produces significant results
- Modern facilities
- More schools needed because each year the community grows larger
- More student involvement in schools
- Most important to continue high quality education to students
- Move from the “Seven Keys” to the Strategic Framework which addresses the whole child, not just academics
- Movement toward SEL, and an earnest desire to meet the needs of a diverse group of students
- Multicultural education
- Online information and communication is handled very well by the school system
- Opportunities for all children
- Opportunities for our students to engage in diverse culture and activities in school
- Parental groups and involvement
- Parks and recreation is the largest provider of after-school and summer programs
- Professional growth system that uses multiple measures to evaluate teachers
- Programs
- Provide variety of extracurricular activities
- Quality teachers (experience and certifications)
- Redeveloped curriculum at Wheaton High School – a project-learning based and workforce development model
- Resources: financial and human
- Results oriented attitude
- Rigor and high expectations for all students
- Safety
- School teachers, staff, and central office are aware of diverse cultural differences of our communities and accept with open minds
- Sensitivity to parents and multicultural students
- Sincere effort to address student needs
- Social/emotional initiatives and restorative practices
- Spirit of collaboration/information sharing
- Staff development opportunities for teachers and staff
- Staff is well supported and funded
- Starting to use technology to differentiate instruction – UDL
- Strong commitment to parental involvement

- Strong leadership
- Students are encouraged
- Study Circles
- Support of intergenerational programs in the schools
- System has become more collaborative and parents have a greater voice in decisions being made
- System is good at identifying problems and issues that need to be addressed
- Technology – use of in studies and logistics for students
- Thirty years of demographic shifts yet system has maintained high quality services and strong performance results
- Trust among community agencies
- Very good level of recognition of MCPS at the national level
- Wellness Center
- World-class academic reputation

### *Challenges/Concerns/Issues*

- A clear and equitable capacity plan to meet the needs of a growing MCPS
- Absence of moral values
- Absence of transparency
- Access to services
- Access to technology for some students
- Accountability measures that are connected to teachers level, for student growth
- Achievement gap, particularly among Latinos and African Americans
- Achievement gaps are getting wider, poverty level goes higher as ESOL students enrollment grows
- Adequate staffing and training
- Aging infrastructure
- Aware of multi-culture and use appropriate ways to communicate (especially with Asian American)
- Bell time
- Budget – need to address changes from the state
- Budget accountability measures connected to supporting schools – productivity and measurement
- Budget and program cuts
- Bullying, in school and cyberspace
- Chances for attracting quality candidates
- Changing demographics
- Child abuse and neglect
- Class size
- Closing Edison
- Closing the achievement gap - improving academic achievement
- Collaboration with parents and community – balance opportunities with responsibility of educating our students – what can others do to help

- Communication within the system to connect and understand what students and staff are being served
- Large budget – BOE needs a budget analyst to balance understanding of the budget and connect with the community to help them understand the budget
- Concern over the amount of testing
- Consistency in how counselors address problems
- Consistency in implementing the new curriculum
- Counselor caseload (large)
- Cultural competency on the part of staff
- Curricular changes, particularly Curriculum 2.0
- Curriculum 2.0 is good or bad
- Cultural divides and achievement gap
- Decline in graduation rate and college enrollment
- Determine what worked in the past and determine what is needed for today
- Disparity of income levels throughout the county which leads to disparities in services in the schools
- District needs to provide more guidance to and control over school personnel
- Diversity
- Divided Board of Education
- Economic disparities
- Edline implementation is inconsistent
- Elimination of holidays from school calendar
- Enrollment growth – physical plant capacity issues and changing needs of students
- Enrollment growth without building new schools
- Ensure consistent standards and expectations at all schools – there is too much autonomy and differences at local schools
- ESOL students can't participate in many activities
- Excessive emphasis on tests and assessments and the stress generated by it
- Gangs
- High expectations for every student at every school
- High schools need to provide college and career counseling
- Impact of budget cuts in the wake of a growing population
- Impolite and unwelcoming office staff
- Important to close the gap – however, high achieving students need attention at all local schools
- Inability to meet the needs of different learning styles
- Inappropriate attire
- Increasing number of student deaths
- Inequitable distribution of resources
- Investment in professional development
- Labor's sphere of influence
- Lack of after-school programs
- Lack of bilingual staff
- Lack of clear-cut plans to be implemented at the local level at each school

- Lack of equity in resource allocation to schools in terms of teaching, funding, student supports, and addressing academic achievement gap
- Lack of Latino representation on the School Board
- Lack of parental manual
- Lack of School Board transparency
- Lack of skillsets of teachers, counselors, and administrators to deal with children with complex traumas
- Lack of transparency
- LGBT students
- Literacy for second language learners
- Look at the growth of each child – standardize expectations. Not enough emphasis on learning of each child – help teachers use the diagnostic use of student data to do a root cause analysis for each child
- Losing minority educators to PG County
- Losing the culture of continuous improvement
- Lots of sex activities at school
- Low graduation rates
- Low quality food
- Low staff morale
- Many MCPS students do not have access to the internet or a computer at home
- MCPS has numerous boutique programs that are not scalable
- MCPS is a community that has yet to figure out the dynamics of its changing demographics
- MCPS is browner and poorer than it was 15 years ago
- MCPS is half of the budget for the county
- MCPS is too big to be a training ground
- Misperceptions that students and parents of color are indifferent about education and participation in school activities
- Montgomery County is developing urban characteristics
- More consistency between central office and what is applied at school
- More parent involvement in system decision making
- Need alternative high schools to reach students who are better suited to career/technical/vocational
- Need better care during lunchtime, recess, and when buses come and leave
- Need for more classroom teacher aides
- Need for more diversity training across the district
- Need for more emphasis on physical education
- Need for more resources from the county
- Need for more teachers
- Need for quality professional development for teachers
- Need for staff development in cultural competency
- Need for teachers to reflect the diversity of the students
- Need to accelerate the rate of learning for students who are under-achieving and incorporate and integrate all students
- Need to have higher expectations for special needs and students of color and collaborate with other agencies to bring about improvement

- Need to increase teacher and staff diversity and funding for diversity programs as our diversity increases
- Need to increase use of alternative growth measures and less emphasis on test scores
- Need more assistance on buses
- Need more collaboration, a vision, and a plan to achieve the vision
- Need more diversity in the teaching force
- Need more programs for parents
- Need more transparency and dialogue about the challenges
- Need to carefully monitor school student achievement levels at the district office
- Need to change high school start time
- Need to do more to collaborate among all the various ethnic groups
- Need to employ more Hispanics to work in the schools
- Need to equalize spending and the experience level of teachers at all schools and unify the system behind the kids
- Need to implement restorative practices and social/emotional learning
- Need to improve teacher: student ratio
- Need to keep more information in our schools
- Need to leverage resources across the county
- Need to make schools larger or have more schools
- Need to hire more qualified teachers
- Need to maintain quality education
- Need to place high-achieving and struggling students in separate classes
- Need to promote welcoming environment to understand, embrace minorities
- Need to provide minority language services to all students and families without measure of student populations
- Need to provide support for what goes on at the school and classroom levels
- Need to shift the way MCPS and the county interact
- Need to translate cafeteria menus
- Need to use budget effectively
- New curriculum does not support advance learners – need to reinstate ability grouping
- Non-English speaking parents are poorly welcomed/treated
- Overcrowded schools
- Parent voice, while important, sometimes takes precedent over other voices
- Percentage of students in IB and AP should reflect county demographics
- Racial diversity in the county and the need to close the achievement gap
- Racism
- Re-allocate budget to meet needs of closing the gap (philosophical issue) and explain reallocation to staff and parents
- School system needs to recognize it is 53% minority
- Schools receive a disproportionate amount of resources
- Security
- Segregation of students by economic disparity
- Shortage of materials such as computers
- Shrinking resources impacting programs
- Size of the system



- Social determinants impacting the achievement gap
- Special education IEP process
- Special needs teachers are over-burdened; case managers have too many students
- Staffing, training, accountability, expectations
- Student deaths
- Student needs have grown exponentially
- Student-teacher ratios getting higher
- Students are not respectful of teachers
- Superintendent must understand how to run a very large, diverse, and complex school system
- System is at crossroads – need to apply best practices for changing student needs
- System needs to do more testing at the elementary level to prepare kids for MS and HS
- System needs to be more proactive in addressing bullying issues and problems
- System was more responsive in the past
- Teacher evaluations
- Teacher professional development needs to be reinforced
- Teacher training on new curriculum
- Teachers are being asked to do more and more and nothing is taken away
- Teachers should dedicate their work time to the children at all times
- Teachers should test students at least once a week to ensure that they are making progress in their learning
- Technology – need more and increase access
- The new curriculum needs to be implemented – differences of opinion as to whether to implement
- The staff hired at each school needs to reflect the diversity of the county
- Tie student achievement to the budget – student outcome-based budget
- Transfer of Edison programs to the schools
- Transportation is not adapted to students’ needs
- Use of cell phones during class
- Vocational training – need for more
- With a limited budget must balance closing the achievement gap with ensuring all students are good citizens and will be able to compete globally – rigorous curriculum and high expectations – matched with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning
- Work on closing the achievement gap and need to produce significant results in this area

### *Characteristics*

- A bilingual person who knows the African American and other cultures
- A Maryland native
- A product of MCPS
- Ability to define an institutional policy, make the best use of resources, and optimize them
- Ability to develop solutions to overcrowding
- Ability to effectively lead and manage MCPS
- Ability to garner wide community support for initiatives to improve achievement
- Ability to navigate and partner with other government agencies
- Ability to work with and respect all stakeholders

- Able to get people to buy in to a vision
- Able to make tough decisions and stick with them
- Able to solve all types of work with staff
- Accessible
- Applies his/her knowledge towards everyone
- Approachable
- An educated bilingual
- An ideal bureaucrat
- Awareness of multi-cultures
- Balances personnel and resources
- Balances testing and learning
- Balances the needs of all stakeholders
- Basic philosophy that all children can learn and can be pushed and challenged – teach to ability and focus on growth
- Be part of the community – not just parts of it – show up at events, programs
- Understands how to implement Curriculum 2.0 and other programs in a large school system
- Believes in allocating resources based on needs
- Believes in high expectations for all students
- Believes in innovation
- Big-picture focus
- Bold, honest, courageous, and unafraid to address issues of race and segregation
- Brave enough to rethink standardized tests
- Collaborative
- Comfortable with diversity, at all levels
- Commitment to Common Core
- Commitment to continue social emotional learning
- Commitment to excellence
- Commitment to fight hard to adapt the school system to change the status quo
- Commitment to “getting it done” (including closing the achievement gap and increasing graduation rates)
- Commitment to improve instructional effectiveness
- Commitment to keeping class size small
- Commitment to parental engagement and values parental input
- Conscientious of where the needs are
- Confident, but not arrogant
- Continues the commitment to technology and respects the use of social media
- Courageous
- Creative
- Culturally sensitive
- Decrease academic stress on students
- Dedicates his/her time to organize or prepare the personnel to organize work for teenagers so they can be youngsters with a future
- Desires to provide equitable resources to all students
- Diplomatic

- Effective communication skills with a variety of audiences and in a variety of ways
- Effectively plans, acts, and aligns procedures
- Effectively plans and manages appropriate stakeholders in decision-making procedures
- Embraces a distributive leadership model and can find common ground and motivate people to work together
- Energetic
- Entrepreneurial
- Experience as a teacher and a principal
- Experience in bridging collaborative and diversity gaps
- Experience with technology and promotes moving forward with it
- Experience with unions
- Experience with urban and large school districts
- Experienced and seasoned administrator in a larger and more complex school system
- Familiar with unique cultural diversity of Montgomery County
- Flexible
- Focus more on depth in learning
- Focused on work force development
- Focuses on graduating kids to be successful in life and not just the reputation of the county
- Focuses on the whole child, including social and emotional well-being
- Forthright, honest
- Gets along with the Board
- Good communication skills, including listening and with different audiences and different formats
- Has a clear understanding for diversity and open mindedness
- Has a clear vision and acts with culturally sensitive manners
- Has a global perspective
- Has a plan and a process for measuring it
- Has a very good personality
- Has been a sitting principal
- Has stamina and fortitude
- Has the ability to balance the allocation of educational resources
- Has the courage to defend effective student programs and let the ineffective ones go
- Has the desire to work with people from all walks of life
- Have a proven track record of results in closing the achievement gap
- Healer and uniter
- Holds high expectations for teachers
- Honest and open communicator
- Honest in his/her work
- Humility
- Independent thinker
- Innovative
- Insists on Board transparency and is transparent
- Involves and maintains communication with multi-cultural parents, students, and parent groups
- Keeps the focus on academics, including math basics

- Knowledge of diverse school systems and research on how to educate students from diverse backgrounds
- Knowledge of Maryland and the work done in this state
- Knowledgeable of other cultures
- Knows how to build external alliances
- Knows how to serve students extremely well despite budget cuts
- LDGT advocate and supporter
- Listen to teachers and do what's right for kids
- Looks at balance between required and elective courses
- Looks at what is working and expands those programs, looks at what is not working and eliminates those programs
- Maintains positive climate even though shift in racial demographics and racial awareness
- Maintains strong relationships with community leaders, businesses, government, and people
- Makes educational level equally on different community settings
- Manage change
- Maximizes use of limited resources
- Moralistic
- Needs to collaborate with county, state, and federal officials
- Needs to communicate directly instead of using Twitter and other technology that makes someone seem distant and aloof
- Needs to visit the schools more without an entourage, listen to and know teachers, and "be present in the moment"
- Not afraid to be seen in various communities
- Not just a "BS" person who has not been in the trenches as a teacher or principal
- Open-minded
- Open to change
- Out-of-the-box thinker
- People-focus
- Person should know what has been done in MCPS to not repeat or duplicate efforts
- Personable
- Places a strong value on ESL education
- Possesses a clear vision and the ability to communicate that vision
- Possesses strong political instincts or the ability to surround self with people skilled in building coalitions
- Practitioner
- Prepared for increase in Hispanic population and plans changes with cultural diversity
- Priority on collaboration instead of a "if you don't like it, tough" attitude
- Proactive
- Problem solver
- Professional and sociable with the community
- Promotes a late start at the high schools
- Promotes respect for the profession and attracts and retains top staff
- Promotes stability and continuity and will not come in and dismantle everything

- Proven track record – has had experience managing successful school system and programs – customize to current MCPS needs
- Provides encouragement to minority students
- Puts children first
- Reaches out to minority groups and parents
- Real
- Recognizes the importance of continual engagement related to diversity
- Recognizes the responsibility to serve people
- Respects and values partnerships
- Responsive and responds in a timely manner
- Risk taker
- Sensitive to Hispanic people
- Sensitive to religious needs
- Sets a high standard/high bar
- Skilled at handling the people agenda
- Someone not steeped in bureaucracy
- Someone with a good balance of interpersonal, managerial, and political skills
- Someone who can demonstrate statistical results on raising the achievement gap
- Someone who can represent the diverse community
- Someone who will not bend over for the “W” schools
- Speaks Spanish and knows the Spanish culture
- Special education focus
- Straight forward communicator who doesn’t just give acronyms and platitudes
- Strategic
- Strong leadership skills
- Strongly consider internal candidates
- Student-centered and student-focused
- Study the population of the county – listens to people from different parts of the county and respects teachers and staff
- Success in lobbying those with purse strings
- Sure-footed
- Team builder
- Thick-skinned
- Thinks outside the box in order to navigate the politics and, at the same time, get things done
- Tolerant and resilient
- Translate vision into action at the school and classroom level
- Transparent with decisions
- Truly embraces diversity and doesn’t give lip service
- Understands what happens at a local school
- Understands Common Core and PARCC
- Understands he/she works for the Board
- Understands the needs of the Latino community
- Uses and communicates through data
- Values the input of parents and teachers

- Views collaboration as a plus
- Visible in the county, community, and schools
- Visionary – but understands how to make things happen – trickle down process
- Vocal supporter of multiculturalism
- Wants to be in MCPS for the long term
- Wealth of experience
- Well-organized
- Will reactivate “Minority Student Education”
- Will respond to all the needs of the schools equitably
- Willing to hire more ESOL teachers
- Willing to organize meetings with parents to learn about their experiences
- Willing to take time to assess what’s happening and develop a long-term corrective strategy
- Willing to think and implement outside of the box to make a difference throughout the county, and model to the extent that individual schools opt to do the same
- Willingness to co-create
- Willingness to connect to community groups

## COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS

### *Strengths*

- Good budget – generous resources – excellent class sizes
- “We have some of the best schools in the state, and we want to be sure not to lose that reputation”

### *Challenges/Concerns/Issues*

- “If I were a candidate for this job, I wouldn’t take the job unless the Board clarifies its goals and sets a vision for leadership”
- Need more of a “partnership” between the school system and the County Council; the annual struggle over the budget is problematic
- The culture of schools with low socioeconomic students needs to be addressed
- The role of the school system in mitigating poverty needs to be increased
- The system has tried to close the achievement gap on the backs of the high-performing kids, i.e., taking away resources from more affluent schools to give more to high poverty schools
- Things need to be done differently and the BOE should recognize that – it can’t be business as usual – this Board does not set policies and a vision to support excellent teaching and learning; this needs to change
- “We have two, different school systems; one for the white kids and one for the blacks and Hispanics” – the total system is hiding behind the numbers generated by high-performing, high socioeconomic kids

### *Characteristics*

- The new superintendent needs to be smart, have a knowledge of pedagogy and classroom practices, skills to problem solve new solutions to old problems, and not be fixated on test scores
- This system has a \$2.5 billion operation and we need someone who can handle that
- We don’t want a superintendent who is intellectual and arrogant – we need someone who can engage with people
- We need someone who will get back to the focus of teaching and learning

## PARENTS

### *Strengths*

- Accelerated and enriched instruction for all students
- Board of Ed meetings are recorded and broadcasted
- Community that cares about schools
- Diversity of cultures, languages, and experiences
- Edison High School Vocational Education Program
- *Equity Initiatives Group*
- Excellent teachers
- Focus on community input
- Focus on the physical and mental health of students
- Great reputation
- Great resources
- High expectations for all students
- IB program
- Language Immersion programs
- Level of academic achievement in MCPS
- Safety focus
- Strong curriculum
- Special education services
- Strength of the parent community
- Strong neighborhood schools
- Success of minority students
- Tax base
- Teacher development is strong
- Technology access
- Transparency
- Vocational education programming

### *Challenges/Concerns/Issues*

- Budget cuts at the state level
- Budget shortfalls
- Cultural competency on the part of all staff
- Disparity in allocation of resources among the schools
- District is limiting its talent pool
- Diversity of cultures, languages, and experiences
- East/West divide
- Economic diversity and disparities
- Effectiveness gap in addressing socio-economic and cultural barriers
- Entrenched thinking on the part of the Board
- Excessive assessments
- Facilities – capacity and quality
- Great emphasis on music and art



- Greater transparency in decision making
- Growing percentage of population challenged by poverty
- Increasing focus on education of the whole child
- Lack of resources to meet growing enrollment
- Later start times for MS and HS
- Magnet type programs should exist in all schools
- More focus on meaningful assessment and less focus on testing
- Narrowing the achievement gap
- Need to close the achievement/opportunity gap
- Need to focus on respect for all religions and cultures
- Need to increase the diversity of the workforce to reflect the diversity of the county
- Need to increase the pipeline of students prepared to take AP courses
- Perception and disenfranchisement of African American and Latino students and families
- Pressure to solve achievement gap challenges by the school district rather than the community
- Protecting children's safety online
- Putting resources where they are most needed
- Putting strong leaders and teachers in underperforming schools
- Realistic expectations for special needs students
- Revisiting bell time decision
- Seeking input from various language speakers
- Sharing resources equally with all students
- Shift in consciousness to seeing diversity as an asset rather than a challenge to be overcome
- Significant percentage of FARMS in MCPS
- Student and parent input on teacher evaluations
- Teacher retention
- Teachers' union – bad teachers need to be fired

### *Characteristics*

- Ability to forge consensus
- Ability to navigate the politics in Montgomery County
- Ability to relate to all stakeholders and making them feel heard
- Believes in transparency
- Bilingual
- Bold and willing to take risks
- Bridges the gap between the east and west sides of the county
- Builds trust
- Collaborative leader
- Consider internal candidates
- Courageous individual
- Creative problem solver
- Culturally competent
- Down to earth
- Empathetic
- Enhances diversity and inclusion
- Experience in a large diverse system
- Good listener
- Growth mindset
- Experience as a teacher
- Experience in diverse communities
- Experience with multi-cultural education
- Experienced with living in a different country
- Focuses on the whole child
- Has been a principal
- Humble
- Insightful and visionary
- Inspirational
- Keen intelligence
- Leads the system to do things differently
- Listens and considers carefully before making a decision
- Listens to parents
- Must be strongly aware of fiscal management
- Must really care about all the students
- Needs a titanium backbone
- Open to feedback – willing to change his/her mind
- Plain communicator, not a politician
- Possesses a vision for what excellent education can be (beyond the traditional)
- Recruits a diverse workforce
- Rejects one size fits all approach
- Respectful of all points of view
- Results oriented
- Should know MCPS well

- Speaks plainly and avoids jargon
- Stands up for those who can't stand up for themselves
- Stands up to teacher unions
- Strong financial manager
- Subscribes to continuous community engagement
- Surrounds themselves with quality staff
- Thinks outside the box
- Truly cares about all students
- Understands and appreciates the challenges for ELL
- Understands business process (how to get things done)
- Understands how to implement a culture of change
- Understands the Montgomery County communities
- Understands the needs to protect students' privacy
- Values learning a second language
- Views parents as partners
- Wants to make a long-term commitment to MCPS
- Wants to work with the whole community
- Willing to admit his/her mistakes
- Works to maintain and improve the reputation of MCPS

## **Staff**

### *Strengths*

- Community is very invested in education
- Strong student performance
- Students appreciate the diverse nature of Montgomery County
- Wrap around services at Kennedy

### *Challenges/Concerns/Issues*

- Achievement gap
- Consistency of practices from school to school
- Construction needs
- Funding
- Need for more Board oversight
- Need to celebrate and recognize successes
- Need to examine the district office structure
- Organization of consortia in the county
- Portables – security and safety issues
- Safety and security in facilities
- Two counties in one
- Understanding what has worked and why

### *Characteristics*

- Commits to filling a four-year contract
- Common sense
- Builds relationships with state and county officials
- Engages all stakeholders
- Experience as a teacher and principal
- Female
- Good human relations skills
- Good judgment
- Good steward of financial resources
- Has a vision and practical experience to implement it
- Inspires students, staff, and the MCPS community to always do their best
- Keeps the public informed
- Kind
- Looks at segregation in the schools
- Offers a plan for more open enrollment opportunities in the high schools
- Open and transparent
- Pays attention to detail
- Places a priority in safety and security concerns
- Politically savvy
- Proven problem solver
- Reaches out to faith-based organizations and involves them in supporting students in the schools

- Recognizes the people doing the actual work
- Responsive
- Respectful
- Sensitive, hard-working, strong administrator
- Surrounds self with outstanding people
- Understands the day-to-day operational issues in the schools
- Values diversity
- Values the services of all employees regardless of age, race, or length of service
- Will move aggressively to determine which central office positions should be based in schools and returns them to the schools
- Will move aggressively to solve situations related to High School Plus and the Alternative School
- Wisdom
- Works to greater diversify the MCPS workforce

## STUDENTS

### *Strengths*

- AP/IB options
- Consistent work ethic on the part of the staff and students
- Culture in the system is enjoyable
- Diversity of the county
- Everyone is treated comparably and as part of the family
- Extra-curricular offerings
- Focus is on learning to learn rather than learning to pass a test or get a grade
- Funding spent per child
- Great job of identifying issues and setting goals
- Largest Chromebook rollout in the country
- Level of performance
- Resources available
- School choice
- School cultures differ from school to school and are a reflection of their community
- Specialized programs
- Strong reputation
- Student voice is growing and being listened to
- Students are held to high standards
- Students are very intentional about their learning and responsibilities
- Town hall meetings

### *Challenges/Concerns/Issues*

- Budget cuts at the county and state levels
- Closing achievement gaps
- Coordinate student communication with the representative student government groups
- Disconnect in communication between leadership and the students
- Expectations in the county can be very demanding
- Juggling too many priorities
- MCPS always has to be ahead of the curve – pressure to be the first and the best
- Need to analyze how students perform after graduation
- Need to follow through on goals
- PARCC testing
- Responding to parental pressure too quickly
- Teachers trying to use technology they are not comfortable with
- Technology – needs to be up to date and accessible
- Working relationship between MCPS and the County Council

### *Characteristics*

- Can handle complex fast moving organization
- Great communicator
- Great listener
- Team builder

## **Support Staff**

### *Strengths*

- Collaboration between district and employee unions
- Employee relations' processes are healthy
- Heavy emphasis on social emotional learning

### *Challenges/Concerns, Issues*

- Compensation for superintendent is too low to attract quality leaders
- District is not very parent friendly
- Divide in the county
- Employee relations' processes are somewhat stale and need to be revitalized
- Need to clean house at the cabinet level
- Need to implement accountability structures and processes for senior level administrators
- Typical challenges of urban systems

### *Characteristics*

- Ability to translate vision into action
- Attentive to personal relationships – ensure in all interactions that people feel respected
- Delivers concrete action
- Knows the MCPS system
- Politically savvy
- Practical and has common sense
- Thinks outside the box in regards to employee relations
- Understands large systems and how they work
- Understands that every employee is important and essential to the success of the district
- Understands the distinction between improving and fixing
- Understands the economic divide in the county
- Values social and emotional learning