PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Superintendent Search
Community Engagement Report
School Board Presentation  May 26, 2022

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Finding a Leader For Your Future
Pittsburgh Public Schools
Community Engagement Objectives

• Identify the perceived strengths and challenges of PPS.

• Identify desired qualities and characteristics the next Superintendent should possess and demonstrate.

• Build community understanding and support for the search process.

• Ensure the broadest possible community participation in the Superintendent Search process.
BWP associates met with Board members, employees and community members on May 11 and May 12.

Engagement included 30 meetings with Board members, employees, students, parents, and community leaders in addition to 5 community forums.

Over 150 people participated in conversations and over 1,560 have responded to the online survey.
Engagement Meetings and Forums

- Responses from 150 people who attended meetings and forums.
- Over 20 emails.
- Comments heard multiple times or uniquely relevant and insightful included in draft leadership profile.
- These “prominent responses” are listed in the report and the following slides provide highlights.
Top three strengths of Pittsburgh Public Schools:
1. Excellent teachers and staff - 62%
2. Educational programs and options – 38%
3. Location of district/Supportive Community – 32%

The three most important issues or concerns facing PPS in the next five years:
1. Funding – 49%
2. Personnel – 35%
3. Educational options and programs – 33%
   Community Relations – 33%

Top three important skills you would like to see in next Superintendent:
1. Communication skills – 67%
2. Managerial skills – 44%
3. Collaboration skills – 43%
Three most important characteristics you would like a superintendent to exhibit:

1. Integrity – 64%
2. Commitment to the community – 53%
3. Good judgement – 47%

Experience desired in Superintendent – (Extremely/Important)

1. Experience in strategic planning – 97%
2. Experience in a multicultural environment – 95%
3. Experience in instruction – 93%
4. Experience as a superintendent with a proven record of success – 87%
Community Engagement
“Essential Questions”

1. What are the strengths of PPS?
2. What are the greatest issues, concerns and challenges facing PPS?
3. What qualities and characteristics will the next superintendent need to possess and demonstrate?
4. Other - is there anything else the Board should consider?
Strengths

Strengths: All Focus Group Participants
Pittsburgh Public Schools

Strengths

• Dedicated, caring, skilled teachers and staff;
• Amazing students who want to succeed and are resilient;
• Strong community support for the schools;
• Diverse options for students, such as magnet schools and special programs;
• Pockets of highly successful schools and programs;
• Good resources and solid per pupil expenditures;
• Diversity and uniqueness of the communities in cultures, languages, religion ...;
• Strong community assets such as the universities and foundations;
• Growing with great potential as companies seek to locate here like Amazon and Google;
• A history of working-class blue collar population who is friendly and want to help each other out;
• Collaborative relationships such as “Strategy 21” and Pittsburgh Promise.”
Challenges

Challenges: All Focus Group Participants

- administrator
- administration
- financial
- facilities
- administrative
- disparity
- negative
- equitable
- low enrollment
- decision
- professional
- building
- deficit
- size
- leadership
- board
- child
- leadership
- special
- teacher
- equity
- mental
- district
- issue
- school
- staff
- better
- serve
- basic
- trust
- huge
- parent
- racial
- alignment
- central
- diversity
- communication
- program
- money
- number
- clear
- family
- loss
- resources
- support
- violence
- charter
- work
- children
- opportunity
- education
- gap
- system
- high
- pandemic
- capacity
- principal
- business
- classroom
Pittsburgh Public Schools

Challenges-Issues- Concerns

• Issues surrounding equity, diversity, inclusion and social justice;

• Equity of resources, opportunities and programs among schools (are perceived “have” and “have not” schools);

• Poor sometimes inconsistent communication with the staff and community;

• Current finances and structural deficits – fiscal issues about priorities;

• Declining enrollment and people moving out of district for other options – schools may need to be closed and this will bring division to the community and the neighborhood school structure;

• Safety and addressing community and school violence and mental health for students and staff;

• The administration seems to have no clear vision and is disconnected – better professional development is needed for all; there is a need to publicize the good points about the district and schools;

• Achievement gap in performance among races and subgroups and low overall achievement in core areas;

• Staff is not diverse as it should be and does not represent the demographics of the community and there are staffing issues in the administration and schools;

• The district does not seek available partnerships with universities, foundations, medical centers and businesses;

• The Special Education program and the inconsistency and gaps in serving the unique needs of immigrants, homeless and English Language learners.
Skills and Characteristics

Skills and Characteristics: All Focus Group Participants
• After reviewing and organizing prominent responses from the engagement process to the desired skills and characteristics for the next superintendent, the Search team drafted a description of what the majority of participants desire in the next Superintendent.

• We present this profile to the Board as a draft so that you will have time to review its contents before final approval.
Leadership Profile (draft)

Pittsburgh Public Schools Stakeholders have identified the skills and characteristics, which they believe will lead to success for the next Superintendent. The School Board seeks candidates who can demonstrate a “match and fit” with the following skills and characteristics. All these characteristics are important and are not in any rank order.

• The individual appointed will be a Leader who:
  • Has a clear leadership vision and is dynamic and inspiring;
  • Is an innovator and out-of-the-box thinker;
  • Is able to seek available partnerships with universities, foundations, medical centers and businesses;
  • Has the personal know how to identify and support good staff and will be able to build a strong, supportive team that will collaborate with all segments of the community using data and good judgement to make decisions;
Leadership Profile (continued)

- Demonstrates integrity and has a strong backbone, is thick-skinned and is able to make tough decisions;
- Has experience in strategic planning in a multicultural environment;
- Has been a teacher with experience in instruction, a variety of programs such as Special Education and technology and who has demonstrated success in improving student achievement by reducing or eliminating achievement gaps;
- Is strong in community relations, visible, approachable, accessible and culturally responsive;
Leadership Profile (continued)

• Is caring, transparent, compassionate and is a relationship-builder who will foster unity and promote trust;

• Has strong and effective communication skills and the ability to connect with all facets of the community;

• Understands finances and prioritizing resources;

• Is politically savvy and has experience in the politics of equity and is guided by what is best for all students.
Other (Other issues the Board should consider in review and selection of a candidate).
• Has experience and someone with a proven track record of leadership and success in a similar size district who could be an assistant superintendent or district-level administrator;

• A doctorate would be nice, but not an absolute requirement and has an educational background;

• An understanding by the candidate that they will need to live in the city and having city experience would be nice;

• Someone from Pittsburgh who knows and understands the community;

• Internal candidates – “they know us”;

• Someone that will be committed to the job and will not use it as a stepping stone;

• Skilled in the field.
Planned Next Steps in PPS Search Process

Specifications: Completed May 26
Board approves Profile

Recruitment/Assessment: April – May 30, application deadline
  BWP receives/reviews applications
  BWP screens applicants/completes reference checks
  BWP prepares slate of candidates/present recommendations – June

Selection:
  Board selects and schedules interviews with candidates
  Board conducts 1st & 2nd round of interviews – June
  Board selects finalists – July
  Board selects new superintendent/negotiates contract – July
  Board introduces new superintendent to community – July
  Superintendent begins no later than October 1, 2022