



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Chappaqua Central School District



HYA Executive Search
Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates



Executive Summary

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

Participation

The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below: *Not all focus groups were a group that was disaggregated for the on-line survey.*

Group	Personal interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
Board of Education Members	5 - Individually	NA
Interim Superintendent of Schools	1	NA
Central office administrators, principals and other administrators *	21	11
Faculty (Including Association Officers)	3	100
Support Staff	5	22
Parents and School/Community Groups**	21	412
Students/Alumni***	11	162
Total	67	707

**Note: Central office administrators met individually with the consultants. Other administrators met as a small group with a consultant.*

***Note: Parents and community groups include all parent and community groups designated by the Board to meet with the consultants.*

****Note: The consultants met with current high school students. The survey includes current students and alumni.*

A draft of the desired characteristics can be found at the end of this report. The community survey report is presented as a separate document.

It should be emphasized that the data are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. Items are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the Board's attention.

The HYA consultants interviewed approximately 67 district and community constituents. Each of the individuals and groups were asked to share their thoughts regarding three questions:

- 1) How would you describe the strengths of the District?
- 2) What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the District in the next 3-5 years?
- 3) What characteristics would you like to see in the next Superintendent?

What follows is a summary of the responses shared by the above persons. The first section provides the collective summary of all of the respondents. The second section provides response summaries from the various categories of individuals interviewed regarding desired characteristics.

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

The search team would like to thank all the participants who attended focus groups meetings or completed the online survey and the Chappaqua Central School District staff members who assisted with our meetings, particularly Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/District Clerk, Therese Dell'olio, who organized the search team's time in the district.

Respectfully submitted:

Debbie Raizes

Robert J. Roelle

Section 1: *Summary of Responses from Interviews and Focus Group Meetings*

Consistent Themes from the Focus Groups

Strengths of the District

Strong Learning and Student Centered Environment

The Chappaqua Central School District enjoys a long history of being a highly successful school district. With strong parent and community support and a well-regarded faculty, staff and administration, there exists a sense of pride in outstanding student successes: including student successes in academics, the cultural arts and in athletics. The instructional programs strive to prepare students to excel in a rigorous academic environment while simultaneously preparing students to be “good thinkers.” Nearly every group reflected upon the District as being a student-centered school system with a commitment to ensuring that students come first. There is an overall feeling that the District takes great strides to “provide something for each student” and that families relocating to the Chappaqua school/community do so because of the many opportunities their children will receive from the schools.

A Professional Learning Environment

Many participants shared that the District has developed and maintained a very strong commitment to professional growth for all of its faculty, staff and administration. Professional development is ongoing during the school year and continues extensively during the summer recess period. One constituent shared that “we promote growth and it keeps our staff engaged and always thinking.” Further the constituent shared that the commitment to professional growth translates into a learning environment which is exciting for students.

Many faculty members and administrators said that the Chappaqua District is a good place to work. There is a belief that the District encourages innovation, critical thinking and autonomy in carrying out one’s responsibilities. The recent passage of a bond referendum that will support the development of creative learning spaces was referenced as support the community has for designing cutting edge learning environments.

Business Functions and School Facilities

There exists a high level of confidence in the business operations of the District. Recently the New York State Comptroller’s Office conducted its periodic review of the Chappaqua Central School District financials. The Comptroller’s Audit Report of the Chappaqua Central School District did not yield any criticisms or recommendations – which should be viewed as a high compliment to the District. The

knowledge that the business and finance functions are well managed allows the Board and administration to spend time on the important instructional matters.

Also noteworthy, constituents view their school facilities as outstanding. Schools are attractive and well maintained. The facilities reflect a sense of pride and contribute to favorable atmospheres for learning. Many constituents reflected upon the commitment of the District to employ staff members who are outstanding tradespeople who have become respected members of the staff.

Parent/Community Support

Participants frequently mentioned that there exists strong support from parents and the community generally. Recently the community passed a \$42.5 million bond referendum. This bond will support improvements in the schools to support 21st Century learning spaces.

The community reflects a population of highly educated and professional residents. Correspondingly, the parents are well educated and have very high expectations for their children. Parents are actively involved in the schools and support school programs through PTA groups, scholarship fund raising, athletic booster groups and a strong educational foundation. These groups play important roles in communication with the administration and in support of students and programs.

Students

During the meetings, there was frequent reference to Chappaqua students. Participants described the students as highly motivated, “good thinkers” and academically very successful. Upon graduation Chappaqua students annually attend well regarded colleges and universities. Additionally students are seen as “good human beings” who are respectful, hardworking and care about each other.

CONSISTENT THEMES – STRENGTHS

The input from the various constituent groups suggest that the Chappaqua Central School District is characterized by:

- A rigorous curriculum throughout the district
- A strong inclusive special education program
- An “amazing” faculty, administrators and staff
- A very strong commitment to professional development for all employees
- A strong business office
- Outstanding and well maintained school district facilities
- Highly educated parents who have high expectations for their children and are actively engaged in the schools
- A dedicated Board of Education committed to excellence in education

Challenges and Issues Facing the District

The following are some key themes concerning the challenges facing the Chappaqua Central School District that emerged from the focus groups.

Community Challenges

The school district is currently engaged in a personnel matter which has been elevated to a highly publicized legal matter. The matter has challenged the Board of Education and the administration to address questions of transparency, trust and leadership. Mostly, participants were divided as to the current status of the matter as it pertains to the current operations within the District. Many participants opined that the matter was no longer the difficult issue that it was initially, while other participants suggested that there exists the need for considerable “healing” and a concerted effort to restore trust between and among the many factions of the school community. Some participants offered the view that the Board of Education should have been more proactive in responding to community members during board meetings.

Bond Referendum Challenges

The recently successful bond referendum will present some challenges. A very strong business office and facilities leadership team will manage the day-to-day implementation of the facilities improvements relating to the bond. However, in as much as the bond will address design of 21st Century instructional spaces, the next superintendent will need to oversee various phases of the bond implementation.

Leadership Challenges

As the Board conducts its search for the next superintendent, the District will also need to identify a new assistant superintendent for instruction. There exists an opportunity for the next superintendent to select her/his assistant superintendent, however, the timing of the recruitment of two of the top school officials will be an additional challenge. The Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources is relatively new to her position. Thus, within a short period of time, the District cabinet/confidential leadership team will be a relatively new team of administrators working together.

While generally there was strong support for the administration, many constituents shared a view that the leadership practices at the High School were not consistent with practices in the other schools. These same constituents suggested that the next superintendent should conduct a review of high school practices relating to policy development and implementation.

In addition to challenges relating to administration, many constituents suggested that there may exist inconsistent views of the relationships between the administration and the Board of Education. While

the Board is generally viewed as a good and supportive Board, some constituents believe that there may not be a clear understanding of the roles of board members vs. administrators in carrying their respective functions.

Consistent Themes - Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Bringing the school/community together
- Establishing trust within the leadership team (Board of Education and Administration)
- The bond referendum roll out will require oversight
- Assessing the leadership skills needs within the administrative staff
- Defining governance role expectations for board of education members
- Supporting well educated parents who know what they want, yet being able to articulate a different point of view when necessary
- Maintaining and expanding opportunities for students in the tax cap era

Desired Characteristics of the New Superintendent of Schools

Leadership Experience and an Opportunity for Longevity

Almost every group expressed the sentiment that it would be very important to recruit a superintendent who has significant leadership experience. Constituents acknowledged that the past three superintendents in Chappaqua were not in their roles for extended periods of time. There exists a strong sentiment that the next superintendent would be in Chappaqua for the “long haul” -- someone who would make a long term commitment to the district.

An Educational Leader

Participants noted that the next superintendent should be a strong educational leader – someone who can articulate a vision for educational excellence in a high performing school district like Chappaqua. Faculty and administration in particular expressed the hope that the next superintendent would be a collegial problem solver. Generally, there exists a sense that the next superintendent would not need to be a change agent. Rather, the next superintendent should be prepared to embrace what exists in Chappaqua, and lead the district to higher levels of excellence within the existing frameworks.

A Value-oriented Leader with Strong Interpersonal Skills

Participants talked about the importance of a leader who would consistently demonstrate caring and respect for others and who would operate with integrity. The next superintendent should be committed to promoting a climate of mutual trust and respect for all.

In nearly every group, constituents reflected upon the view that the next superintendent should have good people/human skills. They hoped that the next superintendent will actively listen to the views of others and that s/he would possess great communication skills. Most participants want to see the board hire an individual who is approachable, warm, and personable - one who makes people feel

valued and can create a feeling of “family” among the constituents and staff of the Chappaqua Central School District.

Consistent Themes - Desired Characteristics

- A visible and approachable leader who can develop a level of trust in the Board and the administration
- A good listener and observer – someone who can convey a genuine interest in what people have to say, even when he/she will need to present a different response
- A good communicator – oral and written – with confidence to respond to well informed parents
- An instructional leader who is “cutting edge” in his/her thinking
- A strong manager who is a systems thinker and can move the instructional goals forward
- A problem solver – someone who can anticipate issues and address them before they become problems
- A person with humility and who will share pride in what has been built in Chappaqua
- A governance leader – someone who will work well with and provide leadership for the Board
- A person who will make a long term commitment to the District

SECTION 2: Summary of Comments from Focus Group and Individual Meetings

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

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

***All the responses are listed in alphabetical order.**

BOARD OF EDUCATION (5)

Strengths

- Dedicated and talented administrators, faculty, and staff
- Educated parents committed to the schools and value education
- Facilities outstanding – strong staff of in-house trades people
- Inclusion model
- Progressive, leading edge district
- Something for every student
- Staff development – keeps staff engaged and thinking – promotes growth – translates into excitement for our students
- Strong academics
- Strong finance and HR people
- Supportive parents

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Bond project will need oversight
- Continuing to educate our faculty, staff and students on our interdisciplinary approach to learning as the new learning spaces are completed
 - Need to continue our commitment to professional development
- Demanding community
- Possible changes on the Board
- Three contracts are up next year

Desired Characteristics

- Able to say no with reasons and gain respect for decisions
- Be visible and an important part of the community
- Can manage expectations
- Can work well with unions
- Command and control – someone in charge

- Educational leader
- Has integrity and is honorable
- Innovative
- Not afraid to share problems with the Board
- Strong management skills
- Works with the Board on defining roles and communication

ADMINISTRATORS (21)

Strengths

- Congenial atmosphere, schools not competitive – administrators help each other, challenge each other - collaborate
- Culture that honors risk taking
- Faculty go above and beyond to help students
- Families prioritize the importance of education and are supportive
- Opportunities and resources for students
- Professional development/professional learning
- Students – highly motivated, hard working
- Try to be in the forefront of education – make things our own – thoughtful, reflective on how decisions are made – do what is best for students

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Civility – a small group of people can change the whole system
- Connecting learning opportunities and staff development to the bond
 - For some teachers a huge instructional shift
- Difficult year – need to rebuild trust
- Making sure we continue to emphasize social/emotional learning
- Shifting the morale of the District back to the positive
- Tax cap – diminishing resources – need to stay under the cap – constant pressures on staffing –difficult conversations and decisions
- Transition – a lot of administrative changes

Desire Characteristics

- Able to rebuild trust
- Able to work effectively with high performing parents in a high performing district
- Can manage conflict – get out in front of issues
- Can manage the bond
- Cultivating an administrative team – collaborative, supportive
- Effective communicator
- Good listener and observer

- Long term commitment
- Strong instructional leader – research based – current in field – can bring insights – global view
- Thoughtful, decisive, clear
- Vision around managing social, emotional stress
- Visionary
- Will work on improving morale
- Working with the Board to establish roles and responsibilities

FACULTY (3)

Strengths

- Buildings in excellent condition – District takes pride in the buildings
- Can have good relationship with administrators even when we disagree
- Parents are doing their jobs as good advocates from their children
- Supportive, involved parents
- Students self-advocates, eager to do what is asked of them
- Teachers are dedicated and hard working
- Teachers have autonomy to decide what is needed for their students

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Decisions are top down, form committees but decisions are already made
- District uses terms of “industry standard” in responding to teacher contract issues
- Four grievances this year
- Low teacher morale in some of the schools
- Seems to have lost the sense of family

Desired Characteristics

- Good communicator
- Has humanity
- Need to have short, medium and long term vision and able to communicate it
- Presence in the building
- Respectful of faculty
- Truly collaborative
- Understands NYS labor laws
- Values opinions of the faculty and involves them in the decisions

SUPPORT STAFF (5)

Strengths

- High performing district
- Parents have high expectations
- Well known district

Challenges/Issues/ Concerns

- Healing and rebuilding trust
- Make us feel like a family again
- Rapid changes taking place in education – creates anxiety
- So many changes creates low morale – people feel they do not understand the change – makes it hard embrace

Desired Characteristics

- Approachable and visible
- Be able to say no
- Business acumen balanced with a knowledge of curriculum
- Decisive
- Human – not just a figure head
- Transparent
- Understands all aspects of school operations and values all equally
- Will stand up for employees
- Will value support staff

STUDENTS (11)

Strengths

- A lot of opportunities for a student to find his/her niche
- New superintendent will have opportunity to hire his/her #2 – “create super duo”
- New teachers – students enjoy being on hiring committees
- So many resources – academics, extracurricular, sports
 - Unique courses – independent studies – encourages a student to learn more and spread interests – need to be self-motivated, have defined goals, timelines
- Students active in community/strong motivation to be involved
- Students have a voice
- Student newspapers
- Very good honor program – beyond AP

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Administration sometimes not clear about rationale for decisions
- Are administrators afraid to make decisions?
- Athletic fields need attention
 - Baseball field – cages broken – some small fixes would go a long way
- Atmosphere in last year has been very difficult – “an unsettled atmosphere”
- Board members do not seem to listen to students
- District seems distrustful of each other – lack of trust between student body and administration
- Freshmen could use more guidance on how to be involved
- Have more faith in students – let students be able to take courses they would like to take – not allowed to shape own high school career – be a little more flexible – have done a good job of setting standards
- High School grading system needs attention – grade inflation
- If there is an issue, students don’t know where to go, who to trust
- Languages and English should be as important as STEAM
- More marketing of unique and/or new courses – hard to find courses in the handbook
- Need greater articulation between middle school and high school
- Need places to work
 - Library lines very long – frustrating, stressful
 - I labs not used all the time – would be a great space to work independently
- Need to build unity, trust
- Need transparent, timely communication – hear about major issues from news sources – too little, too late
- Stress/ students tightly wound/overworked – very competitive – intense – driven – students feel “they have to” overload on APs
- Teachers’ relationship with administration – teachers vocal about lack of trust with administration
- Transition from middle school to high school should be better organized
- Would like more spirit at events

Desired Characteristics

- Active in the community
- Approachable – open door
- Can handle conflict in a calm manner
- Cognizant of what has happened
- Down to earth – cares more about students than the corporate image
- Firm but concerned about students independent of what parents might say
- Hands-on, have to look at all departments, see what needs to be changed
- Level of transparency

- Recognizes his/her weaknesses and will ask other administrators for help
- Seeks feedback from teachers
- Technology fluent – would make students feel more connected
- Will connect with students
- Will improve connection between the three levels of schools
- Would like a committee that regularly meets with students

PARENTS/COMMUNITY (21)

Strengths

- Academically strong district
- Bond now starting to be implemented
- Faculty – committed, caring
- Great place for cutting edge administrator
- Parents move here for the schools – committed to supporting the schools
- Professional development
- Strong PTAs
- Students and their involvement in the schools and the community
- Teachers

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Communication – not putting information out in a clear and transparent way
- Each child should be able to find niche – on par with academics
- Faculty believed that success of schools is because of teachers/administrators feel they bring about success/parents feel what they give to kids contributes to success
- Fast moving and slow moving district at the same time
- Grade inflation at HS out of control
- High School – low morale – inconsistency in applying consequences for inappropriate student behavior
- Lack of consistency between schools
- Lack of trust of judgement of Board to choose the superintendent
 - Board should come to Ex Committee of the PTA
 - Two seats are up
- More people need to be engaged in a civil way
- Need to restore trust
- Parents mostly at High School feel loss of trust in district
- Pockets of community vocal but do not represent most parents
- Recent budget cuts have hurt the quality of the education
- Some teachers do not believe bond was needed nor is it cutting edge – dreading bond as one more thing on their plates

- Staff is nervous about the future
- Tone deafness on part of the Board and the District – don't want to hear problems – rigidity
 - Bond pushed through too quickly
 - Issue with one of the fields
 - Committees a waste of time – decisions already made
- Too much autonomy given to staff
- Website and other technology is not used well to present message

Desired Characteristics

- Balance collaboration with making informed decisions
- Can advance a vision
- Can bring the community together
- Collaborative, listens, does not react in haste
- Confident enough in leadership not to micromanage administrators – supports chain of command
- Courage of convictions
- Embrace the 21st Century education as defined by the bond
- Encourages questioning
- Experienced manager
- Feels confident to respond to demanding groups
- Good communicator – can acknowledge issues, articulate them, work together proactively to make changes
- Honest
- Knowledgeable about cutting edge curriculum
- Needs to be a sitting superintendent
- Strong leader who can make changes – can hear and accept constructive criticism
- Strong supporter of integrated special education and understands sp ed from top to bottom
- Thick skinned
- Transparent
- Unifier
- Will be able to bring administrations/faculty/parents together
- Will build sense of community
- Will have leadership and gravitas with faculty and community
- Will hold administrators, faculty, staff and students accountable



DRAFT FOR BOARD DISCUSSION

CHAPPAQUA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Superintendent of Schools

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

- A visible and approachable leader who can develop a level of trust in the Board and the administration
- A good listener and observer – someone who can convey a genuine interest in what people have to say, even when he/she will need to present a different response
- A good communicator – oral and written – with confidence to respond to well informed parents
- An instructional leader who is “cutting edge” in his/her thinking
- A strong manager who is a systems thinker and can move the instructional goals forward
- A problem solver – someone who can anticipate issues and address them before they become problems
- A person with humility who will share pride in what has been developed in Chappaqua
- A governance leader – someone who will work well with and provide leadership for the Board
- A commitment to the Chappaqua school/community over an extended period of time
- Longevity

The successful candidate will:

- Be certified as a superintendent, or capable of gaining certification, in New York State
- Make a long term commitment to the District
- Have experience as an accomplished administrator