

Carroll County Public Schools

Leadership Profile Report

January 27, 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ltd. (HYA) on January 5 and 6, 2010 for the Board of Education of Carroll County Public Schools. The data contained herein were obtained from reviewing the completed Leadership Profile Assessment forms and input consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either interview or focus group settings. The form, interviews, and focus groups were structured to gather data to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent, as well as the skill sets necessary to maintain what stakeholders valued and to address current and emerging issues which the district may be facing.

Stakeholders were very complimentary of the school system, acknowledging its strengths and successes while recognizing its current and future challenges. The quality of a dedicated, caring, and professional staff comprised of teachers administrators and support staff members; high levels of academic performance by students; involved and committed parents; and strong support for the schools by Carroll County were most frequently cited as the primary strengths by all groups interviewed. The work of the staff was particularly noteworthy given the fact that the school system produces high levels of student performance across state and local assessments at a relatively low level of costs compared to other counties in Maryland. There was also widespread recognition that the adults in the organization put the needs of children first when making decisions for the system, the school, the classroom and the individual child.

Other strengths consistently expressed included a very caring and family-oriented culture, the small feel of the community and school system, safe school environments, partnerships and collaboration between county services and the school system, well-maintained facilities, special education services, visible and accessible leadership, a willingness to listen and solve problems, and hard working students. Some areas that were seen as strengths by many, but in need of improvement by others included curriculum offerings, communication, professional development opportunities, cooperation and team work between departments, consistency among the program and services in the schools, and providing services for all students.

The major issue and challenge consistently identified by all stakeholder groups were related to the finances and budget. There was widespread recognition that the financial health of Carroll County, the State of Maryland, and the nation will impose significant challenges on the school system. Because staff members place the needs of children first, the primary impact of these financial challenges, most often mentioned, was the ability of the school system to maintain high levels of student achievement and address the need to expand and/or enhance programs and services when fewer resources will be available in the coming few years.

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There was also recognition that the financial challenges will have a direct impact on the school system's ability to remain competitive with staff salaries and to meet infrastructure and programmatic needs. The anticipated reductions in staffing and resources available may also have an impact on employee morale throughout the organization. This concern also related to a fear that these changes might impact the caring and compassionate culture that is so cherished within the school system.

Other challenges frequently cited included changing demographics both in the areas of student ethnic diversity and increasing levels of low income populations, the need to attract and retain teachers and administrators given the potential for a large number of retirements, declining enrollment, keeping pace with technology needs, meeting the state and federal requirements related to NCLB and AYP, facility inequalities, the need for more consistency across schools and more collaboration among departments, and preparing students for a more diverse world in the 21st century.

The list of characteristics and skills desired in a new superintendent is impressive. The respondent stakeholders are seeking a strong leader with excellent communication and listening skills who will establish and enhance a strong vision for the school system. The new superintendent should be approachable and accessible to all stakeholders, an effective problem-solver and collaborator who can build and mentor a high functioning administrative and board team, and an advocate for all children. The person also must be politically savvy with the ability and knowledge to work closely with Carroll County Commissioners and Maryland state officials, as the financial health of the organization is dependent upon these individuals.

Desirable characteristics consistently mentioned include: child-centered; collaborative but decisive; thoughtful and capable of making tough decisions; a people-person who is trustworthy and compassionate; honest, humble, and respectful in dealing with stakeholders; and well-grounded in the instructional needs of classrooms and schools. In addition, respondents seek a superintendent who respects the culture of the school system and county and is willing to listen and learn before making changes. Stakeholders desire a superintendent who understands school finance, can delegate effectively while still holding people accountable, and is visible in the schools and community.

The stakeholders of Carroll County Public Schools seek to find the perfect person to be its new superintendent. Realistically, there is no individual who will possess all of the characteristics desired or be able to meet all the expectations of the staff and community. The challenge that the Board and HYA has is to find an individual who possesses many of the desired characteristics and the leadership skills necessary to build upon the school system's reputation for excellence and to successfully address the challenges that the Carroll County Public Schools will face in the future. Once the Board selects the candidate that is the best fit for school system, the Board of Education, along with all stakeholder groups, should give that person the time and support to learn about the system and its culture so he/she can be successful.

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates, Ltd. (HYA) for the Board of Education of Carroll County Public Schools. After the Board selected HYA to be its consultants in its search for a new superintendent, an assessment instrument was approved to solicit input which would be used to assist the Board in identifying the characteristics desired in the new superintendent. The Board made the instrument available to all stakeholders through its website. At the same time, the Board invited a number of individuals and groups to meet with the consultants on January 5 and 6, 2010 to discuss these characteristics in greater depth.

One hundred forty eight (148) completed forms were returned by various stakeholders and reviewed by the consultants. In addition, 110 stakeholders participated in interviews and focus group sessions facilitated by Hank Gmitro and/or Michael Hickey. In addition to individual interviews with the five board members, the consultants met with the administrators, faculty, support staff, parents, and community members. To provide an opportunity for all residents who might have a desire to meet with the consultants, the Board scheduled an evening public forum on January 5, 2010 that was open to any member of the community.

In developing this *Leadership Profile Report*, the consultants sought opinions, recommendations, and general comments with respect to preferred candidate traits and qualifications, as well as District strengths, issues, and concerns, which could bear upon future leadership requirements and influence the selection criteria for the next superintendent of schools. At the interviews and meetings, the consultants noted that the Board was seeking the views of a broad range of individuals to assist in the search process. It was agreed that the consultants would report the findings to the Board without revealing the identity of any individual contributor, enabling the Board to use the data to define the leadership characteristics and selection criteria to be used in identifying the next superintendent. It also was understood that the Board had the responsibility to define these characteristics and would use its prerogative to do so.

The assessment instrument that was used to solicit responses provides the framework for reporting the views expressed. The data are aggregated into four response groups – faculty, support staff, administrators, and parent/community. Page 5 presents the data on how each group ranked the desired characteristics and skills on the forced choice ranking. The first chart shows the percentage of respondents in the group ranking the item in the top three rankings of desired characteristics. The second chart shows the percentage of the group ranking the item in the bottom three rankings of desired characteristics. The cells that are highlighted in yellow indicate that majority (50% or more) of the respondents in the group ranked that item similarly. There is fair amount of consistency across groups as to what they feel are the most and least desirable characteristics/skills needed in the next superintendent.

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Beginning on page 6, the individual comments from the surveys and focus group interviews are presented. Under the category “Consistent” are the comments that were presented frequently by most or all of the groups. Comments presented less frequently are listed under the four response groups. Under each of these groups, the comments communicated with some regularity are listed alphabetically as no attempt was made to prioritize them. **It should be emphasized that the data are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of a group. Items are included if, in the consultants’ judgment, they were repeated by a sufficient number of respondents to warrant the Board’s attention.**

The consultants wish to thank the Board of Education; its Executive Assistant, Teresa Richards; the Supervisor of Community and Media Relations, Carey Gaddis; and the staff at the Central Office and Winters Mill High School for the assistance they provided in arranging and facilitating the meetings. Our appreciation is also extended to those with whom we met for their cordiality and responsiveness. We wish to gratefully acknowledge all who took the time to complete the Leadership Profile Assessment form.

Respectfully submitted,

Hank Gmitro
Michael Hickey

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Percentage of group identifying item in the top three desired characteristics and/or skills

Characteristics/Skills	Faculty	Support Staff	Administrators	Parent/Community
Deal directly and fairly with stakeholders	70	62	74	66
Accountable and holds others accountable	30	50	60	56
Awareness of instructional technology	0	50	5	19
Data based decisions regarding student needs	20	12	26	28
Collaborative	40	12	26	16
Effective communication skills	65	25	43	44
Experience as a superintendent	20	0	5	17
Experience in a multi-cultural environment	0	0	2	3
Fiscal management expertise	30	37	33	22
Curricular/instructional best practice knowledge	25	50	33	34

Percentage of group identifying item in the least desired characteristics and/or skills

Characteristics/Skills	Faculty	Support Staff	Administrators	Parent/Community
Deal directly and fairly with stakeholders	5	0	2	3
Accountable and holds others accountable	10	0	12	6
Awareness of instructional technology	50	12	50	44
Data based decisions regarding student needs	25	50	10	25
Collaborative	15	0	7	28
Effective communication skills	5	12	7	12
Experience as a superintendent	50	100	86	67
Experience in a multi-cultural environment	70	88	79	84
Fiscal management expertise	25	12	26	9
Curricular/instructional best practice knowledge	25	25	24	19

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STRENGTHS

CONSISTENT

- Accessibility to superintendent
- Caring and committed culture
- Children come first and the District works in their best interests
- Communication is strong
- Community support for the schools
- Consistency among schools in services and approach
- Dedicated, caring, knowledgeable, and professional staff – teachers, support staff and administrators
- Does a good job of providing services to all students
- Graduation rates
- Great educational value – high levels of achievement for low per pupil expenditures
- Hard working students
- Leadership is visible
- Parent volunteers
- Parental involvement and support
- Partnerships and collaboration with County in providing service
- Professional development opportunities
- Quality curriculum offerings
- Safe environments for children and staff
- Small town feel and connectedness
- Special education services
- Strives for excellence
- Strong leadership in district
- Student achievement is strong
- Supportive community
- Very collegial and collaborative relationships working as a team
- Well-maintained facilities
- Willingness to listen to the community

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FACULTY

- Alternative programming for at-risk students
- Balance of arts and academics
- Benefits
- Collegiality
- Committed and caring curriculum supervisors
- Consistency and organization of transportation department
- Consistency in school policies
- Dedication to recruiting highly-qualified teachers
- Employees treated as professionals
- Freedom to plan according for student within benchmarks, not a set program
- Progressiveness
- Respect for teachers
- Safe schools and working environments
- Success of students beyond high school
- The Outdoor School Experience
- Upper administration is willing to listen and resolve problems
- Variety of graduation paths

SUPPORT STAFF

- Assessment and accountability
- Breakfast program
- Carroll Co is looked to as a leader
- Commitment of food service staff
- Dedicated and professional support staff and administrators that focus on student success
- Desire to be on cutting edge of new technologies
- Food service program is self-supporting
- Great benefits for staff
- Has been fiscally responsible and conservative
- In-house food service program
- Open communication with the person that can solve the problem
- Open door policy of superintendent
- Operating kitchen in each school
- Perseverance of students and parents
- Personal communication and collaboration
- Small district feel
- Strong instructional staff – 97% highly qualified
- Strong state and national ranking in instructional areas
- Superintendent responsiveness to all inquiries

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- Values and ethics
- Very supportive of each others' mission
- Willingness to solve problems

ADMINISTRATORS

- Ability to attract and retain high quality teachers
- Business based decisions to support instruction
- Business support
- Can achieve within the a tight budget
- Career and vocational educational programs
- Central office is aware of building level needs
- Collaboration among leaders in the district
- Cooperative efforts to educate students
- Cultural proficiency training for students and staff over past 4 years
- Down home atmosphere
- Expectations that all students are capable
- Good building level leadership
- Has grown leadership from within
- High standards of performance in all departments
- Interagency cooperation is outstanding
- Leadership - very competent in their areas
- Longevity of staff
- Master Plan – organizational goals implemented several years ago
- Mentoring new teachers
- Parent recognize educators as experts
- Positive community
- Professional development for veteran staff
- Quality leadership is in place
- Sense of history, commitment, and trust in the system
- Size of district – large enough to have resources, yet smaller enough to retain personal touch
- Special education services
- Staff and student focused – do what it takes to get the job done
- Staff members look out for the well being of students both academically and emotionally
- Strong instructional connections developed for students - K-12 and college
- Team spirit and camaraderie
- Teamwork is the strength that helps to produce great results
- Volunteer training program

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PARENTS/COMMUNITY

- Accountability
- Communication among schools, district and community has improved
- Conservative values
- Consistency in programs and operations
- Consistency in staff – low turnover rate
- Continues to try new things and improve
- Dedicated special education department that meets needs of children
- Extra classes when needed
- Families seem to be intact with a mother and father
- Family values in organization
- Great information provided in Spanish
- Implementation on new programs is handled well
- Increased communication from Board of Education
- Investment in technology
- Low crime rate in county
- Maryland State Assessment performance levels
- National Blue Ribbon School
- Not overcrowded anymore
- Outdoor School
- Public forums – town hall meetings
- Relatively few problems compared to others
- School Foundation
- School transportation
- Socio-economic status of students
- Strong athletic programs
- The Technology Center
- Willing to do whatever it takes to help children

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ISSUES/CHALLENGES/NEEDS

CONSISTENT

- Attracting a more diverse workforce
- Balancing needs of northern and southern parts of the county
- Budget and finances
- Concern over spending resources on conducting this search
- Declining enrollment
- Facility inequalities
- Growing diversity in the county
- Increasing demands on public education
- Instructional technology needs
- Lack of consistency among schools in programs and approaches
- Maintaining and improving the level of student performance
- Maximizing resources available in declining financial situation
- Meeting AYP and NCLB requirements
- Need for better collaboration and communication among departments and schools
- Not hurting the culture that is currently working effectively
- Number of retirements coming – teachers, administrator and support staff
- Preparing students for the 21st century
- Preparing students socially to live in a diverse world
- Providing competitive salaries and benefits
- Providing more challenging coursework for gifted and talented students
- Retaining quality staff
- Staff morale
- Staff reductions
- Unfunded state mandates

FACULTY

- An aloof and, at times, clueless State Board of Education
- An inefficient career and tech program
- Accessibility to technology for all staff, especially for electronic communication
- Accountability
- Building administrators consistency carrying through on District policy
- Central office seems out of touch with what is at the school level
- Clearly stated vision, mission, and value statements for the school district
- Gifted and talented program staffing
- Inconsistency in handling discipline

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Faculty – Continued...

- Keeping qualified teachers
- Lack of diversity in the work force
- Lack of funds for classroom supplies
- Many employees approaching retirement age
- Meaningful professional development
- Need for swipe cards to pay for lunch
- Preparing students for the 21st century
- Preparing students for the real world
- Retaining young teachers
- Student/staff ratio
- Vertical communication throughout organization

SUPPORT STAFF

- Class trips and loss of revenue to food services
- County commissioners are going to be elected by region
- Early dismissal days and the impact on food services
- Educating children about healthy lifestyle
- Family dynamics and support
- Federal regulations regarding highly-qualified teachers
- Growing pains in learning to do new things when people want to continue to do the same
- Increase in number of ESL students
- Increase in the number of at risk students
- Movement of federal government to connect student achievement and teacher evaluation/pay
- Need for refining the district's vision
- Negotiations with 5 different unions at the same time
- Outsourcing support services such the lunch program, transportation, and custodial services
- Pizza parties impact lunch program
- Political climate of funding coming from county government
- Regulations regarding facilities needs and improvements
- Safety of students
- Special education budget is growing due to more students and greater needs
- Temporary grant funding causes problems because district can't provide funding long term
- Title I grant funding is declining and provided to only two schools
- Union attitude in negotiations

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ADMINISTRATORS

- Ability to influence legislative decisions that effect schools
- Accountability and the costs of new mandates
- Be proactive in decision-making
- Being strategic about change
- Clearer communication between departments and schools
- Complacency
- Consistency in discipline
- Continuing to be on the leading edge of innovation with significant limitations in funding
- Definition of full funding in Maryland – 40%
- Ever expanding and increasing expectations
- Everyone has to feel valued
- Expanding EC programs to meet the demands of universal PK
- Expanding role of counselors
- Honoring innovation
- Increase in number of students eligible for free and reduced lunches
- Increasing and changing state regulations
- Increasing seriousness of discipline problems
- Integrating technology more effectively into instructional and administrative practices
- Kids coming to school with more problems
- Lack of cultural responsiveness and proficiency
- Lack of talented teachers wanting to become administrators
- Need for transparency
- Need to cut existing services – may need to go backwards before we can go forward
- Need to maintain the focus on the whole child
- Parental over-involvement in placement decisions
- Pool of candidates for elementary principalship is limited
- Professional development to understand the needs of more diversity among student population especially ESL learners and the impact of poverty
- Providing online learning
- Providing visionary leadership in face of enormous change:
 - National standards and testing
 - 21st century skills
- Recognizing that the community is changing and level of support may change
- Reestablishing district's mission and vision
- Respect for the history and conservative nature of the county while addressing 21st century needs
- School facilities and infrastructure needs
- Staff burnout due to increasing demands and fewer resources
- Student should aspire to greater challenges
- Title I funding reductions

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PARENTS/COMMUNITY

- Arts education is not priority
- Arts education needs to be strengthened and enacted the way it is written
- Asking parents to pay for/provide classroom and program supplies
- Bullying
- Care for children and staff
- Coursework of non-college bound students
- Discipline of students
- Elementary ILA curriculum is not addressing basics
- Embracing parents as partners in their child's education
- Enhancing content of STEM program
- Expand the diversity among staff members
- Family breakdown
- Finding the right teachers and pay them based on performance
- Global competition
- Growing chasm between college bound and vulnerable students
- Growth
- Helping new staff feel welcome in the district
- Keeping gangs and drugs out of the schools
- Keeping schools well funded as number of schools have increased
- Leadership and environment to keep teachers
- Make Carroll Co an attractive place to teach
- Misappropriation of funds
- Moral decay
- More homework needed
- Need for more vocational education classes
- Need to be more progressive in academic offerings
- Need to expand business base in the county to provide more resources to the schools
- Outreach and exposure to college options
- Over capacity at high schools due to declining enrollments and construction of new high school
- Professionalism
- System is somewhat stagnant
- Too much teaching to the test to meet NCLB requirements

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CHARACTERISTICS DESIRED

CONSISTENT

- Ability and willingness to deal directly with all stakeholders
- Ability to make tough decisions when necessary
- Ability to work with county commissioners
- Administrative experience – a leader and a manager
- Approachable and accessible
- Brings people together
- Compassionate
- Desire to embrace diversity
- Ethical
- Experience in Carroll County or a similar type of community
- Experienced as a classroom teacher
- Familiarity with Carroll County and Maryland government and laws
- Forward thinker
- Honest
- Humble
- Instructional leader
- Knowledgeable regarding finances
- Not afraid to think outside the box
- Openness and willing to deal with change
- People person
- Politically savvy
- Proponent for all students
- Puts students' needs first
- Seeks consistency across district
- Strong communicator
- Strong instructional leader
- Strong integrity
- Trustworthy
- Understands the day-to-day operations of the classroom
- Visible and involved in the community
- Visible in the schools
- Visionary and able to communicate that vision
- Willing to learn about Carroll County Public Schools before implementing change

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FACULTY

- Business experience
- Collaborative
- Comfortable with press
- Considers impact of decisions on all stakeholders and programs
- Down to earth
- Experience as a superintendent
- Fresh approach, doesn't just want to maintain the system
- Good listener
- Long-term thinker
- Proactive vs. reactive
- Recognizes the efforts of others
- Youthful

SUPPORT STAFF

- Ability to provide guidance and direction to the Board
- Accountable and holds others accountable
- Asks staff for input before implementing changes
- Balance academic needs and resources available
- Balance between delegating and not micro-managing
- Business background
- Charismatic
- Clear thinker – respect information from staff and make decisions based on it
- Commitment to job embedded professional development
- Genuine – the same person with everyone
- Has a belief in and support for early childhood education
- Have worked in a school and a central office environment as a leader
- Knowledge of local, state, and federal regulations and initiative as they apply at the local level
- Passion for teaching young children
- Public school Pre K-12 experience
- Understanding of technology and a realistic view of how to use it
- Understanding the staff members have personal lives
- Understands the needs of the food service program
- Visible throughout organization
- Well-rounded individual
- Willingness and ability to work with other county agencies
- Willingness to meeting with parents and staff to address concerns or seek input – both individually and in groups

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ADMINISTRATORS

- Ability to make central office a more cohesive unit
- Ability to provide leadership and guidance to the Board regarding their role and responsibilities within the organization
- Ability to say no when appropriate to all groups
- Ability to start the first day – no time for a learning curve
- Able to work well with a district leadership team and seek their ideas
- Avoids blame
- Be knowledgeable or become knowledgeable quickly about CCPS policies and procedures
- Be open and honest about problems
- Believes in and supports high-levels of accountability
- Change the silo mentality
- Checks with the source to solve problems
- Common sense
- Conveys a sense of accomplishment and pride
- Creative problem solver
- Crisis management skills
- Empathy
- Empowers staff to be accountable
- Have a presence and ability to market the school system
- Holds realistic and rational goals
- Insures that all important information is gathered and critical stakeholders are consulted before major decisions are made
- Keeps the big picture in mind
- Knows how to work with the media
- Limited desire for radical change
- Lives in Carroll County
- Makes strategic changes on priority needs
- Negotiation skills
- Not egocentric
- Open communication style – willing to listen but able to be decisive when needed
- Passionate
- Provide direction and guidance to School Board regarding roles and responsibilities
- Recognize that Carroll County is viewed as the benchmark in many areas so there is not need for comprehensive, radical change
- Refers people back to source to solve problems
- Respect and understands roles of central office staff vs. school based staff
- Respects and honors expertise of staff
- Risk taker

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Administrators – Continued...

- Supportive of leaders in the system
- Transitions skills – seamless transition in leadership is needed because of critical issues facing the district
- Trust in the leadership at the building level
- Trustworthy
- Understanding and influencing the political environment while still making the right decisions for children
- Understands how schools work
- Understands the whole child
- Willing to make long-term commitment

PARENTS/COMMUNITY

- Bucks the trends of political correctness
- Build a sense of team
- Business acumen
- Clear about what is important and works to implement that vision
- Commitment to arts education
- Committed to the professional development of administrators and mentoring of teachers
- Common sense
- Conservative values
- Decisions based on what is best for kids
- Don't break what is not broke
- Drive for continuous improvement
- Empowering
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Firm, fair and consistent
- Fluent in Spanish
- Focus on core skills areas – reading and math
- Good manager that allows others to do their jobs effectively
- Holds himself/herself accountable for discipline and conduct of the schools
- Humble
- Inspiring
- Knows characteristics of Carroll Co, Maryland and other districts
- Open to fresh ideas and change
- Proactive
- Strong motivation skills
- Strong vision – ability to set a vision and make it happen
- Team player

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Parents/Community – Continued...

- Track record of achievements
- Unafraid to challenge the status quo
- Visible in schools and classrooms
- Young