

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT
Bedford Central School District
October 13, 2021



HYA Executive Search
Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates



Process

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in September, 2021 for the new superintendent of the Bedford 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.*

Groups	Personal interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
Board of Education Members	7	NA
Superintendent	1	NA
Administrators	25	6
Faculty	13	52
Support Staff	4	19
Students	8	65
Parents/Community members	39	443
Total	97	585

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 95 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 few years?
- 3) What characteristics and areas of expertise 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 a summary of the consistent responses. The second section provides response summaries from the various categories of individuals interviewed.

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 consultants will seek a new superintendent who can work with the Bedford 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 expectations of the community.

The consultants would like to thank all the participants who attended focus group meetings or completed the online survey and the Bedford Central School District staff members who assisted with our meetings. In particular, Sandra Speyer, Secretary to the Superintendent, was especially helpful in organizing and scheduling focused group meetings and assuring that the consultants' time in the District went smoothly.

Respectfully submitted:

Dr. Susan Guiney

Deborah Raizes

October 13, 2021

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

Consistent Themes from the Focus Groups

The comments are listed in alphabetical order.

Strengths of the District

CONSISTENT THEMES – STRENGTHS

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

- Caring, committed faculty, staff
- Diversity
- Great kids
- Pride in the schools and the community
- Supportive, caring community

Challenges and Issues Facing the District

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

CONSISTENT THEMES – CHALLENGES, ISSUES, CONCERNS

- Academics – raise the bar for all students
- Bringing the community together
- Disparity in test scores

Desired Characteristics of the New Superintendent of Schools

CONSISTENT THEMES – DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

- Courage of convictions
- Focus on academics
- Good communicator
- Good listener – will be open to hear diverse perspectives – provide opportunities to engage with parents – people need to feel they are being heard
- Holds people accountable
- Long term commitment to the District
- Proven track record of success in a similar district
- Strong educational leader
- Visible and approachable

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 see as the strengths of the District?
- What are the issues the District will be facing in the next several years? What should the Superintendent's focus be?
- What characteristics and areas of expertise would you like to see in the new Superintendent?

The responses are listed in alphabetical order. The CONSISTENT RESPONSES that are listed above are NOT repeated again in these groups.

BOARD OF EDUCATION (7)

Strengths

Many alumni come back
 District does a tremendous job educating our students
 Good financial status
 Performing and visual arts
 Silent majority grateful to live in district

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

Communicating the strengths of the District
 Continual professional development for staff and Board
 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – initiative to create opportunities for every child to achieve
 Enrollment
 Need to build pride again
 Raising the bar for all students

Desired Characteristics

Academic- thoughtful
 Can gain respect and rapport with staff and families
 Commitment to principles
 Courageous, strong leader who has high expectations for staff and all students
 Emotional intelligence – has a heart
 Experience in elementary education
 Non-traditional leader
 Personable – not aloof
 Proactive
 Supportive of teachers and staff

Administrators (25)

Strengths

A pride for working here that is palpable
Administrative team is collaborative
Community values the whole child
Concerted effort to meet the needs of all students
Expectations of teachers on us – they demand a highly professional environment
Faculty willingness to collaborate and try new methods of teaching for all students
Good team – weekly meetings
Great culture, not many discipline problems, kids are appreciative, kind, respectful
Longevity of principals
Partnership and mutual respect among schools
Principals advocate for their students
Programing – opportunities for students
Special education – to create programs to keep students in district and at their home school, especially at the elementary level
Strong programs
Systems in place are robust, layered and work well
Tenure a well thought out process, demanding, tall order to work here

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

Accountability of all levels of staff and constituents
At elementary – learning loss and COVID
Board's role- governance versus management
Difficult to attract minority candidates for teaching positions
Disconnect between Board/CO and the rest of the District
Facing different segments in one district
 Large divide and a large political challenge
Gotcha culture
Looking to do a bond for repairs and immediate needs
Managing funds and budget to ensure that programs and especially staffing are in place
Mission and vision for children questioned by vocal minority – certain demographics should not be taking the resources – bullying – targeting teachers, administrators by name in social media
Stalled on DEI

Desired Characteristics

Bilingual
Charismatic
Collaborator and willing to listen to diverse opinions and ideas
Creatively come up with ideas to bring us together
Decisive

Dedicated to students
Diverse candidate
Empathetic to all demographics in the District
Experience as a building principal
Experience with budgets, bonds
Firm, confident decision maker
Fiscally knowledgeable
Have partnership with pipeline to educators
Knows how to handle political situations
Instructional leader
Not positional authority
Problem solver
Responsive
Seeks out partnerships and opportunities from outside Bedford
Superintendent experience
Supportive of administrators – have their backs
Take the time to learn processes – understands what is in place
Team player
Thick skinned and strong moral compass
Time management and respectful of people’s times
21st Century global thinker
Sense of humor
Understands demographics and the cultures that come with each elementary school to make more informed decisions
Understands NYS schools and laws
Vision for inclusivity

FACULTY (13)

Strengths

Athletics, music and the arts
Commitment to high quality instruction
 New courses at the High School, commitment to science and technology
Emphasis on supporting faculty/staff
Fifty percent seasoned teachers; teachers are flexible and “roll with the punches”
HS achievements
MS model – developmentally appropriate
Staff go above and beyond
Tech is good

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

A lot of administrative turnover – hard to have follow through, vision

A lot of negative press

Communication – needs to be timely and respectful; holding everyone to the same standards (i.e., emails and phone calls)

Community – bully the administration, other parents, teachers

Continue to attract new teachers who are excited about what we do and committed to the District

Competitive market – no steps for new teachers – perception it makes it hard to predict future income as a teacher

Causes teachers to leave

Disconnect between CO and what is going on in the buildings

In order for faculty to do what is asked of them, they need common planning time, training

Major gaps in learning, especially for population new to the country

Need more faculty of color creating a faculty who reflect the community

Neighborhood model of elementary schools – separates socio-economically

Training so faculty/staff understand how it feels to be different

Vocal parents who consume time, resources

Desired Characteristics

Bilingual

Can manage faculty/staff in a constructive use of time – be a role model

Collaborator – can bring people together

Emphasis on supporting faculty/staff

Experienced superintendent

Familiar with the area

Good decision maker

Impressive communicator with a presence

Knows and understands that we are a diverse district

Make decisions and stand behind philosophy of district - will not allow loudest voices to dominate

Needs a backbone

Process of chain of command

Reflective of own practices – understands people are not perfect

Sense of humor

Strong personality who can speak directly and strongly to the Board and community

Stands up for what we do here with integrity and courage

Thoughtful

Upfront, honest

SUPPORT STAFF (4)

Strengths

Dual language program

Challenges/Issues/ Concerns

Gaining the trust of the Board, getting a cohesive Board

How to engage all communities - is it time to redistrict??

Buildings in need of repair

Mt Kisco, Bedford Hills, West Patten - working class, in need of extra supports – no one hears them

Mt Kisco has no room

Pound Ridge, Bedford Village – more affluent and needy in a very different way – more engaged

Not competitive level with salaries – contract overdue (ended in June)

Turnover of administrators/staff

Desired Characteristics

Can bring us together

Experienced superintendent

Make employees feel valued

Manager and humanistic

Personable

Sense of humor

Team player

STUDENTS (8)

Strengths

Community is accepting, not a lot of bullying – respectful

Coming out of pandemic – want to get back to normal – unifying the district

Free lunch benefits students

Important from kindergarten to be good people – encourage students to help out in the community – learn about each other

Teachers like to interact with students, teachers care about students - good hires

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

A lot of division in the community

Important for new superintendent to build connections with the elementary schools

Making sure school policies are not contradicting each other

New superintendent will need to earn the trust of the community

Not a lot of diversity in AP, honors classes – not same opportunities for all students – provide more resources for disadvantaged students (40%)

How to make AP, higher level classes accessible to all students

Language is a barrier, cost of taking AP exams

Pick up and drop at Fox Lane is inefficient – getting off campus can take ½ an hour – campus safety – maybe implementing more security at different entrances

Weeding out the teachers who are not doing a good job

What is being said on social media – trends in social media

Desired Characteristics

Can bring people together – makes connections

Bilingual – speaks Spanish

Emphasizes school pride

Has a good relationship with the teachers – can make connections with the teachers

Has the ability to continue to unify the district

Having experience as a principal – understand differences among students

Holding teachers accountable

Interacts with students

Meet with students – earn their trust – check in with students, staff – come to events – caring

Open, responsive

Well spoken – articulate

PARENTS/COMMUNITY (39)

Strengths

Advanced Placements courses

Communication during COVID – did a great job

Dedicated, committed, engaged teachers/ staff/ principals who challenge the students – so many teachers went the extra mile during COVID – great role models for the students – teachers pay attention to each student's growth

Dual language program – open to all students

Many offerings – encourages creativity

Middle school transition done extremely well, especially in the middle of COVID

Sent home videos to introduce the school

Parents want to be involved and work in a cohesive way with the Bd and the faculty

Sense of community, pride in the district

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

Academics – this must be the focus

All students must have equal opportunities

Raising the bar for all children and dispelling the idea that some have- that the bar needs to be lowered

COVID year was very difficult, many children fell behind, they need help catching up

Bring back homework

High expectations for all students - services provided to meet these expectations

Literacy – curriculum needs to be reviewed – make data available to parents

Rankings, ratings, test scores (declining test scores for over 8 years)

Improve rankings of the schools and the District – that’s a major reason why people move here
Lost focus on the basics
Math curriculum should be examined
Meaningful, measurable, quantitative educational outcomes
Mt. Kisco test scores much lower

Although have a diverse community – the different groups do not mix

Opportunity to leverage strengths – would like the community to one community with a shared vision - neighborhood schools – how to build one community – kids form groups in elementary schools and maintain them through high school

Talking to Latino children and families in the District through a Spanish Facebook page, reaching out to the families, sharing more with the Spanish PTA at MKES

Board of Education – divisive, contentious election, lacking in leadership, they need to focus on education and not be distracted by other issues

Budget – what can be budgeted, what are the priorities and what can the community afford

Don’t think community would support tax cap override

Communication – more communication with parents

Discrimination/bullying unacceptable for any group, all children need to feel safe

Students talk about blatant racism – i.e.. students of color, special education students

Long term capital planning for maintenance

More opportunities for students to get to know other students – more opportunities to have district wide teams, after school courses, arts

Athletics program should reach down into the lower grades – it would help students to get to know each other

Society politicized – not a good situation – don’t teach what is divisive

Keep political agendas out of schools

Special education – should focus on data and outcomes

Desired Characteristics

Calm presence

Can analyze issues and address them

Candidates who reflect the diversity of the District

Can focus the Board on real issues – educating all students

Can speak Spanish

Data driven

Enforce respect toward teachers, each other, Board members, administrators

Excellent management skills

Experience with bilingual learning

Experience coaxing dollars out of the taxpayers

Experience in a diverse system – can leverage diversity – proactive

Experience in a district with a strong special needs program

Experience working with a strong teachers union

Expertise in curriculum

Has developed and demonstrated a strong moral compass
Has a long term vision
Has a presence
Knows how to leverage good programs to improve outcomes for all students
Knows the community
Looks at education from an inquiry approach
Involved in the community
Passionate centrist
Proven track record of improving academic performance
Recognizes and appreciates diversity
Serious about marketing BCSD – can control the messaging
Stands their ground
Thinks outside the box
Will reach out to the Hispanic community

DRAFT FOR BOARD DISCUSSION

Bedford 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 Bedford Central School District Board of Education seeks a strong educational leader with the following characteristics:

- A strong educational leader with a focus on academics who has high expectations for all students
- Courage of convictions
- Good communicator
- Good listener – will be open to hear diverse perspectives – provide opportunities to engage with parents – people need to feel they are being heard
- Has the skills to bring a divided community together
- Holds people accountable
- Proven track record of success in a similar district
- Visible and approachable – enjoys being at events and out in the community
- A strong manager and motivator who can move the instructional goals forward
- A person who will make a long term commitment to the District

The successful candidate will:

Be certified as a superintendent, or capable of gaining certification, in NYS
Have experience as an accomplished Central Office administrator