

**LEADERSHIP PROFILE FOR
PRINCIPAL—MOUNT VERNON COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

June 30, 2023

1. Purpose

This Leadership Profile defines the specific attributes for the next principal of Mount Vernon Community School (MVCS). The profile reflects input from several stakeholder groups to include staff, parents, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members and community residents. Applicants and selection panels will use this profile to assess the candidate qualities of the position.

2. Introduction and Background

The Alexandria City Public Schools initiated a search for the position of principal of Mount Vernon Community School in June, 2023, to replace the principal who resigned in mid-June to accept a position elsewhere.

ACPS gathered information for the leadership profile from a community online survey with staff, parents, and community members. The online survey was open to the public. The survey requested participant comments about strengths of the school, challenges facing the school and qualities/attributes desired in a new leader. The online survey was open from June 26-29. The survey enlisted comments from approximately fifty parents, staff, and community members.

As there was no requirement for participants to provide personal identifying information, there may have been some duplication of survey responses. There were, as will be evidenced later, several consistent themes in the survey responses. Certain comments from parents, staff, and community were very much in line with one another.

Note, the data provided are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be construed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups providing feedback.

I have reviewed the comments made and provided a summary of consistent themes in a concise manner to support the application, interview, and selection process for the new principal. This report, by its nature, cannot include all comments made. However, the detail of all feedback is available and will be maintained for an appropriate period.

The strengths, challenges and traits noted will be used to inform panelists about candidates to be interviewed. The successful candidate will be one who, through the interview and selection process, best fits the leadership profile. Ultimately, the selected principal will be a school leader who can provide excellent educational, social, and personal outcomes for students, staff, parents, and the community.

3. Consistent Themes from the Online Survey

Strengths of Mount Vernon Community School

- Broad support for dual language programming
- Strong sense of community among diverse populations
- Culture created and maintained collaboratively by staff and families
- History of a common vision for the school
- Strong support from Del Ray businesses and community
- Passionate, dedicated teachers and staff who put the needs of students first
- Approach to learning that supports the needs of all students

Challenges facing Mount Vernon Community School

- Student population is large for the available space
- Facilities issues related to an aging building needing ongoing attention
- Communication gaps between leadership and the community
- Staff turnover and shortages
- The achievement gap between English and Spanish-speaking students remains.
- Integrating two different language communities and neighborhoods
- Perception of disconnect between central office staff and the Mt. Vernon community
- Academic and behavioral issues generally related to recovery from the pandemic.

Desired Personal Qualities/Attributes of Principal

- Transparent and strategic communicator
- Strong interpersonal skills - caring, compassionate and adaptable
- Spanish speaking and able to communicate across multiple mediums
- Willingness to engage with the community
- Trustworthy and a good role model for students and staff alike
- Someone who acts with integrity and authenticity

Desired Professional Qualities/Attributes of Principal

- Knowledge and vision of dual language programs and how to strengthen it.
- Ability to bring people together - staff, parents, kids, community. Strong and transparent communication skills
- High standards balanced with warmth and positive regard, warmth and commitment to making school a positive place to work so that staff will feel valued and stay.

- Champion of child development and best practices to help all students succeed in the classroom.
- Not a micromanager; someone who can encourage and build trust among staff
- Ability to hire, retain and support qualified bilingual teachers
- Firm but respectful; able to hold people accountable and advocate for Mt. Vernon

4. Sample Comments from the Online Survey.

Many of the comments focused on the dual language program and the desired qualities in the next leader of Mount Vernon Community School. The following comments provide a brief commentary in this area:

- “The new principal should be able to advocate for the school’s needs and requirements in the broader context of ACPS and the City of Alexandria, and to draw in wider school resources (such as the PTA and other parents) when more specific knowledge and/or feedback would be helpful.” - Parent/Guardian
- “I love the community aspect of MVCS. I’ve also been very happy with the recent and upcoming changes made in the dual language program.”—Parent/Guardian
- “I would like the new principal to be someone who is passionate about dual language and diversity. Ideally, the new principal would be someone who wants to get involved with the community, participate in it and highlight the key pillars of our school.” - Staff
- “As a parent, I value the community feel of the school - the integration between the different levels of the school, the different broad demographics at the school, and the integration between the school and the broader local community. This is a direct result of the efforts of teachers as well as the PTA and broader parent group, to bring these potentially disparate groups together in meaningful ways..”—Parent
- “MVCS is a true community school. We have a very active set of parents and, despite the school's large size, are a very close group. Our dual language program is a huge help in closing the achievement gap with our Spanish-speaking students but there is a lot of work still to be done there.”—Parent/Guardian

5. Instructions to Applicants.

A candidate should use this profile to make a self-assessment and determine how she/he best fits the qualities sought by the school community. These characteristics should be reflected in the content of the application. Should the applicant be selected for an interview, that candidate must demonstrate these qualities in the screening process. Generally, a strong principal should demonstrate leadership and management skills, inspire trust, and build support in the school and across the community. We seek a principal who can adapt these qualities for the Mount Vernon Community School community.

6. Closing.

I extend thanks to all who provided feedback via the online survey. Your time, effort, and care are most appreciated. We look forward to the selection of the best candidate as your next principal.

Sincerely,

Rene Paschal
Acting Executive Director of Human Resources