



LONGVIEW
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CREATING THE FUTURE TODAY

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

January 22, 2024

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) beginning in early December for the new superintendent of the Longview School District. The data contained herein was obtained from input the HYA consultants received from internal and external stakeholders of the Longview Community via an online survey, individual interviews, focus groups, and staff/community forums. The survey, interviews, focus groups and forums were structured to gather information to assist the Longview Board of Directors in determining the primary characteristics desired and needed in the new superintendent. Additionally, HYA consultants collected feedback regarding the strengths of the District as well as current and future challenges.

Participation

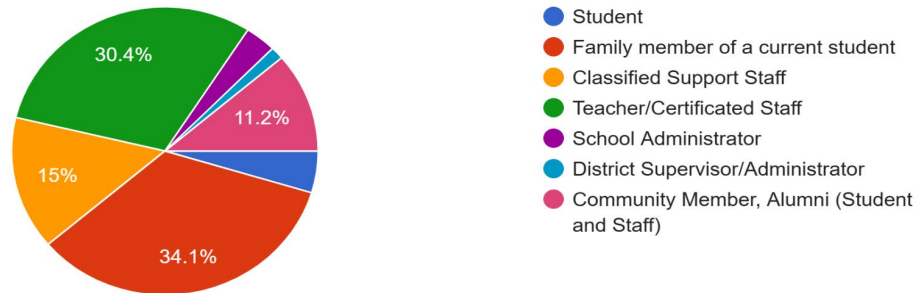
The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in all methods of data gathering are listed in the following chart:

| Group | Personal interviews, focus groups, forums & survey |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Students | 10 |
| Family Members | 74 |
| Community | 51 |
| Certificated Staff | 103 |
| Classified Staff | 62 |
| Administrators/ Supervisors | 24 |
| Total | 324 |

Profile of Survey Respondents

What is your primary connection to Longview Public Schools?

214 responses



Summary of Stakeholder Input

All discussions were thoughtful, insightful, and very helpful. HYA associates conducting the focus groups, forums and interviews would like to thank the participants for giving so freely of their time and for the depth of the discussions regarding Longview School District during the sessions.

It should be emphasized that the data from focus groups and forums are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups. Items were included if they emerged as a significant theme or, in the consultant's professional judgment, they warranted the board's attention.

Strengths of the District

Data collected through personal contacts and survey responses provided overall an encouraging and optimistic view of the district. The following themes surfaced often and across these multiple data sources:

Students First
Caring, Dedicated Staff
Welcoming Tight Knit Community
Community Partnerships & Support

Financial Management
District Communications/Public Relations
Academic and Co-Curricular Options for Students

There was a consistent message across multiple stakeholder groups that the District puts students first. Staff work hard to meet the needs of each and every student.

One of the first responses consistently shared when asked about the strengths of the District was the caring and dedicated staff. A pride exists about the quality and commitment of the staff. Many staff spend their entire career in Longview and many were graduates of the District who returned to serve.

The community was also cited as a great strength and source of pride. The rich history, long-standing traditions, affordable and available housing, and scenic beauty make Longview stand out as a desirable place to live, work, and raise a family. The community was also described as welcoming to newcomers, tight knit, and caring. Community support for schools and students has historically been strong with athletics and student activities mentioned as examples. Support for school funding ballot measures has also been historically strong but was also mentioned as a challenge. Significant work is underway to ensure the community is well informed and understands the School District's current use of local tax dollars as well as needs to be addressed in the upcoming replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy.

It was impressive to hear of the many examples of how the community partners with the schools and supports the many initiatives that work to meet the needs of children. Participants shared how important it is to ensure that these relationships remain strong and that the District continues to explore other partnership opportunities.

Although there are never enough resources to meet the needs, there was a strong sentiment that the District's finances are well managed. Appreciation was expressed about the advanced planning that has been done to avoid funding "cliffs" as well as school funding advocacy work with state lawmakers current district leaders continue to pursue.

A common theme across multiple groups was that communications and public relations has improved in recent years and that it is critical that efforts continue to remain strong.

An asset commonly referenced was the multitude of options available for students both academically as well as with co-curricular activities. While participants are proud of the extensive offerings, a worry exists of whether it is sustainable and some would like to see career and technical offerings expanded through additional community partnerships in the future.

Challenges and Issues Facing the District

No district, of course, is without challenges. The following emerged as common themes:

Student Behavior Issues & Support
Intervention Systems & Support
Staffing: Recruitment & Retention
Financial Sustainability: Operations/Facilities
Trust/Morale

A growing number of student behavior challenges increasing in intensity and severity was identified by most stakeholders as an urgent challenge facing all schools. School level staff described this as a daily challenge in each school consuming significant time and attention by classified staff, teachers, counselors, and principals/assistant principals. School staff expressed the need for a more proactive systems approach to address this challenge through development of a district-wide tiered intervention system providing academic, behavioral, and social/emotional support.

While some staff acknowledged the district's behavior support team and mental health support efforts as helpful, the majority of stakeholders believe staffing and other supports fall far short of the resources needed to address the scope and severity of this challenge. Many stakeholders mentioned the growing special education population as another symptom of this challenge. Some indicate the absence of a systems approach focusing and coordinating all staff and programs on interventions and support creates an unreasonable and overwhelming expectation on special education program staff. It was also shared that several classified support positions in special education remain unfilled due to recruiting and retention issues which increases daily demands on staff and principals which also disrupt instructional services. The majority of school level staff identified this as a top priority for the next superintendent along with a desire for a leader with successful experience collaboratively developing, implementing, and supporting these systems with similar student populations. More generally, stakeholders desire a visionary leader with experience engaging all stakeholders in developing a strategic plan and unifying people and systems to ensure necessary buy-in from staff to achieve shared goals.

Most internal stakeholders shared concerns regarding recruiting and retention of staff with most sharing paraeducator and bus driver positions as examples. Some indicate retention of these staff has been impacted by job opportunities that pay more and others indicate the student behavior responsibilities associated with some of these roles has led to some newly hired staff choosing to leave citing a lack of support and training. Reviewing current recruiting strategies was among the suggestions shared along with a review of funding, compensation, and greater onboarding support for positions that have been difficult to fill.

Like all public school districts in Washington, ample and stable funding to operate the district and address necessary facility needs was identified as a challenge. While some optimism was shared regarding the February Levy along with affirmations of the district's information and communications about the levy, a slight political shift in the community showing declining support for property tax initiatives was also noted after decades of consistent support from voters for Longview's school levies. The district's 2016 bond request for facility upgrades narrowly failed (58% approval). The district's maintenance efforts were identified as a strength but aging facilities will require major repairs/upgrades and are still needed. Inflation and other national economic challenges were shared as possible factors. With the levy providing 15% of the district's operational funding, participating stakeholders uniformly expressed hope that the majority of voters will support the levy.

Beyond the levy, Longview faces the end of supplementary federal funding allocated in response to the pandemic (ESSER), as well as a declining enrollment trend many other districts have also experienced. Legislative initiatives could also result in additional financial impacts for school districts, further impacting available funds to address the increased student support challenges already mentioned as well as increases in salary/benefit expectations anticipated as part of collective bargaining during the 2024-25 school year. This gap between new spending expectations and available funding will be an ongoing challenge that will require the district to consider how existing funds are currently allocated, pursue available supplemental funding opportunities, and consider cost-saving strategies. Some stakeholders mentioned the consolidation of the district's two comprehensive high schools as one cost-saving example but this specific idea was not a prominent theme across all stakeholders. It was shared that the district has explored this idea in the past with diverse opinions emerging and no changes made. While consideration of school consolidation and associated school boundary changes typically elicit a high level of interest and concern, several stakeholders indicated this may be an imperative option to consider across the district given the district's declining enrollment and financial realities looking ahead. For this reason the majority of stakeholders are hopeful the next superintendent comes with experience effectively navigating controversial issues, including leadership of budget planning, facilities planning, enrollment projections, staffing, collective bargaining, and associated stakeholder engagement and communications. Stakeholders also desire a superintendent with experience and talent in advocating for ample school funding with state legislators.

Several stakeholders identified the 2018 teacher's strike in Longview as a flash point for tension and mistrust between school staff and district leadership which many believe still exists. This concern combined with the other challenges already noted were cited by many stakeholders as reasons for low staff morale and a perceived division between school and district staff. The individual talent and expertise among school and district leaders was noted as a strength but several of these leaders shared the need and desire for greater inclusion of all members of the leadership team (school and district) in strategic planning, problem-solving, and decision-making to address challenges moving forward. School level staff also expressed the need for more staff input and involvement in district decisions impacting their work as well as greater

leadership visibility and engagement in classrooms, operations, parent groups, and the community.

Desired Characteristics

Participating stakeholders were asked to name the desired leadership characteristics for the next superintendent of the Longview School District. The following summary of personal characteristics, attributes, skills, and experiences reflects input gathered:

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Superintendent

Longview School District

Honest/Transparent

Trust Builder

Good Listener

Collaborative and Inclusive Team Builder

Effective Communicator

Skilled Problem-Solver

Politically Astute

Systems Thinker and Leader

Visible & Approachable

Humble/Empathetic

Ethical/Professional

Financial Knowledge & Experience

Human Resources Knowledge and Experience

Experienced Educator

Balances Support and Accountability

Courageous - Ability to make tough decisions

Committed

Inspires

We would like to thank all the participants who attended focus groups meetings, individual interviews, or participated in the survey as well as staff who did an exceptional job with all the logistics, particularly Holly Pfenniger and Rick Parrish. We are grateful.

We found this to be an amazing school district and community with a bright future ahead. Thank you for the opportunity to serve!

Respectfully submitted,

Kris

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