

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT



Rye City School District
January 28, 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in December 2024 and January 2025 for the new Superintendent of the Rye City 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 online survey.

Groups	Personal interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
Board of Education Members	7	NA
Superintendent	1	NA
Administrators	20	5
Faculty	31	44
Support Staff	14	11
Students	9	66
Community/Parents/Guardians	24	NA
Parents/Guardians with children in the Rye City Schools	NA	298
Community/Parents/Guardians without children in the Rye City Schools	NA	29
Total	106	453

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 **106** district and community constituents. Each of the individuals and groups was 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 Rye City Board of Education to provide the leadership needed to continue achieving high academic standards and excellent student performance, while meeting the unique needs of each of its students, 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 Rye City School District staff members who assisted with our meetings. In particular, Michelle Camporeale, *Assistant to the Superintendent*, was especially helpful in organizing and scheduling focus group meetings and assuring that the consultants' time in the District went smoothly.

Respectfully submitted:
Dr. Susan Guiney
Caryn Shaw

January 28, 2025

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

Consistent Themes from the Focus Groups

The following CONSISTENT comments were articulated by the majority of participants with whom the consultants met.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT - CONSISTENT THEMES

The input from the various constituent groups suggests that the Rye City School District is characterized by the following strengths (The comments are listed in alphabetical order):

- Academic excellence and a commitment to student success;
- Committed to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students;
- Dedicated, hardworking, and highly qualified administrators, faculty, and staff who are committed to the District's mission;
- District vision and mission are embedded throughout operations and programs through the Rye Commitment;
- Effective communication which keeps the community well-informed and engaged;
- Facilities are well-maintained and continuously improved with innovative spaces;
- Highly effective Board of Education;
- Highly engaged and supportive parents and community who value education, high levels of school spirit, and are deeply invested in the success of the schools;
- Sound financial health and strong fiscal standing;
- Students feel well supported, are motivated, engaged, and eager to learn;
- Strong academic programs and diverse pathways for student success;
- Well-deserved reputation and great pride in the District;
- Well-established systems and efficient operational policies ensure that the District runs smoothly.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT - CONSISTENT THEMES

The following are some key themes concerning the challenges facing the Rye City School District that emerged from the focus groups (The comments are listed in alphabetical order):

- Balancing academic rigor with student wellness;
- Building trust, fostering relationships with the school community, and continuing the focus on the Rye Commitment;
- Developing a long-term roadmap for academic success and continuous improvement;
- Ensuring consistent communication across various stakeholders, including Guidance, teachers, and the community;
- Expanding extracurricular opportunities to meet the needs of students with varying interests;

- Growing demands in Special Education and meeting the changing needs of students;
- Implementing new programs and NYS curriculum standards while balancing curriculum priorities within constraints of instructional time;
- Long-term financial sustainability, including impacts from the NYS aid package;
- Maintaining and/or upgrading facilities in consideration of current Bond work;
- Recruiting, hiring, and retaining quality administrators, teachers and staff;
- Transitioning to a new superintendent.

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT - CONSISTENT THEMES

The constituent groups CONSISTENTLY mentioned the following desired characteristics (The comments are listed in alphabetical order):

- Able to delegate effectively
- Ability to build relationships with all stakeholders, including students, teachers, staff, and the broader community.
- Actively and frequently engages with the community
- Accessible, visible, and approachable
- Advocate for students
- Dedicated to Rye City, its traditions, and values
- Empathetic
- Energetic
- Excellent listener and communicator
- Focused on the well-being and development of students
- Has a positive outlook
- High level of professional trust
- Hire and retain talent
- Humble
- Innovative
- Makes decisions based on what's best for the students
- Makes people feel valued and listens to various perspectives
- Manage expectations
- Personable
- Professional
- Regular, clear, and transparent messaging to the community and stakeholders
- Strong leadership qualities, particularly in instructional leadership
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Supportive of District staff
- Trustworthy
- Uses and understands the value of data and makes data-driven decisions
- Visionary and forward thinking

SECTION 2: Summary of Comments from Focus Groups 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:

- How would you describe the strengths of the District?
- What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the District in the next few years?
- What characteristics and areas of expertise would you like to see in the next Superintendent?

The responses are listed in alphabetical order. This is not a scientific sampling, nor should the comments be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. The items below are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the Board's attention.

BOARD OF EDUCATION (7)

(The comments are listed in alphabetical order)

Strengths of the District

Academic excellence
Affluent community
Athletics
Clear vision for the District
Communication is aligned across all groups
Community supports the schools
 Rye Fund for Education
Consistency across the District
 Instruction
 K-12 Alignment of Curriculum
 Professional Development
 Use of data to inform instruction
Dedicated experienced staff
Engaged community
Engaged faculty and staff
Facilities are well maintained
Financially stable
Healthy Board and Administration relationship
High operational expectations
Involved students and parents
Multiple pathways for students
 Academy
 IB program
 Capstone Projects

- People move to Rye because of the excellent schools
- Private school atmosphere
- Professional development for faculty
 - Strategic
 - Tied to District goals
- Responsive classrooms
- Revamped literacy and math curriculum
- Rye Commitment
- Schools are focus of the community
- Small tight-knit community
- Special Education
 - ICT classes
 - In house programs for students
- Strong focus on schools
- Strong reputation
- Strong, stable, efficient systems
- Strong, very competent, administrative team
- Students are highly motivated
- Team is collaborative and works well together

Challenges Facing the District

- Able to maintain/improve academic profile
- Balancing academics with wellness of students
 - Continue to make mental health a priority
- Challenging all students
 - Inspiring students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers
 - Truly challenging the top students
- Communication
 - Engage the community
 - True outreach
- Creating a long term roadmap
- Emphasis on athletics
- Enrollment increases
- Ensuring that all students feel that they belong
- Evaluating programs and curriculum for effectiveness
- Expanding professional development
 - Engaging additional faculty and staff
- Field space and available land
- Financial future and impact on District
 - NYS aid package
- Focus on activities and interests for non-athletic students
- Landmark buildings make facilities work challenging
- Maintaining the current standard
- Managing expectations of parents and community
- Meeting and exceeding standards
 - Continuous improvement and not resting on laurels
- Mentoring the new high school administration

Ongoing bond/facilities work
Pressure on students to achieve
Space in school buildings
Student health and wellness
 Mental health
 Social and emotional
 Substance use
Students are highly motivated (concern over stress and engagement)
Transition to new leadership
Very engaged parent community

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

Able to engage the community through outreach
Able to evaluate the programs in place and make recommendations/decisions to move forward
Academic focus
Amazing communicator
Approachable
Appreciates that all students learn differently and provides programs for all students to thrive
Brings a critical eye to the work for the purpose of continuous improvement
Builds relationships
Cares about the whole child
 Encourages social emotional and mental health supports for students
Connects with the community
Consistent
Dedicated
Diligent
Easy going manner
Educational leader
Energetic
Ensure that programs are being implemented with fidelity
Excellent oral and written communicator
Experienced negotiator
Extremely engaged leader
Focus on academics
Forward thinking
Friendly
Good decision maker
Good listener
Great follow up
Hardworking
Honest
Innovative
Involved in local, state, and national organizations
Instructional leader
Kind and firm
Knowledge of instruction
Likeable

Maintains culture and forward movement
Open
Present
Relationship builder
Strategic thinker
Thoughtful risk taker
Transparent
Trustworthy
Understanding
Understands difference between mindfulness and mindset
Understands education
Understands systems
Uses data to make decisions
Visible
Visionary
Works with intention to maintain standards and grow the District
Works well with the Board

Administrators (21)

(The comments are listed in alphabetical order)

Strengths of the District

Aligned K-12 approach to District work
Board's commitment to the Rye Commitment
 Everything is linked to this
Bond
Clear vision
Collaborative administrative team works well together
Committed and supportive Board of Education
Communication
 Regular messaging to the Community
Community engagement by district
Community really cares
Community provides support and financial resources
Community trusts the district
Curriculum and instruction
Dedicated staff
Designing creative and innovative spaces
Family oriented culture
Generations of community members
Implementing technology to keep the focus on the future
Inclusive practices in the areas of general and special education
Individuals feel supported
International community
New administrators welcomed and receive support
Opportunities for community input

People move to Rye and stay
Philosophy of continuous improvement
Policies and procedures are in place to keep the District running smoothly and without impacting the instructional program
Positioned to be one of the most innovative Districts in terms of pedagogy
Pride in the schools
Professional development
Resources are available to address student needs
Staff feels supported
Staff is dedicated and hardworking
Strong relationships
Support from Rye Fund
Systems in place for data collection
Teachers and teacher leaders support the vision and mission of the District
The Rye Commitment is infused in all aspects of the District

Challenges Facing the District

Able to respond to any possible future emergencies
Academic pressures/stress
Building and maintaining relationships
Building trust
Completing the Bond work under today's fiscal constraints
Continuing momentum
Creating a caring environment for high achieving students
Creating a plan for ongoing growth
Culture of Rye
 High expectations
Developing a culture of care
Differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students
Implementing authentic learning projects
Implementing IB Diploma Programme at the High School
Innovating to move the District forward toward excellence
Maintaining a focus on the Rye Commitment
 Competing priorities
 Ensuring alignment
Maintaining parent expectations
Mentoring new administrators, teachers, and staff
Providing students with counseling and social emotional support for all needs
Supporting building administrators to support classroom teachers
Transitioning to a new superintendent
Understanding the history of the District
Utilizing and maximizing new spaces

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

A good person
Able to connect the current initiatives so that there is a unified flow
Able to engage in planning growth of District

Able to make a decision when the need arises
Accessible
Allows team to lead
Apolitical
Appreciates and supports the Rye school community and the good work that has been done
Approachable
Attends events
Available
Believes in quality professional development
Clear and consistent message with no hidden agendas
Collaborative
Commitment to the District
Compassionate
Connects with the Community
Critical thinker
Clear instructional focus
 Support new literacy and math curriculum
Develops strong relationships with people
Empathetic
Encourages growth
Excellent communicator
Financial acumen
Fundraising ability
Genuine
Good listener
Has a clear understanding of quality education
 Curriculum
 Pedagogy
Has a good sense of humor
Has a long term vision
Has a well developed entry plan
Humble
Inspires staff to go beyond current success
Knowledge of secondary education
Listens
Looks at multiple layers and levels of the District
Measured
Mindful of safety and security
Not impulsive
Not a micromanager
Not reactive
Open
Patient
Politically savvy
Present
Reasonable
Reliable

Respects differing perspectives
Respects the work that has been done
Skilled at hiring and retaining good talent
Strategic thinker and planner
Strong backbone
Strong instructional leader
Supportive of staff as people
Supports and encourages administrative team
Supports professional development
Takes the time to understand what is happening in the schools and supports the team to accomplish the task
Trustworthy
Understands needs of students in this fast paced, ever changing world
Understands the entire organization
Values everyone and all aspects of the District
Visible
Visionary
Wants to be part of the solution
Will maintain consistency
Willing to learn about new technologies and how they can be used in the District
Willing to listen to many perspectives

FACULTY (30)

(The comments are listed in alphabetical order)

Strengths of the District

Affluent community that supports the schools
Community organizations fundraise and support the District
Faculty
Great community
Open to new initiatives
 Authentic project design
 Capstone projects
Resources
Support for the theater, music and art programs
Technology
 Access
 Resources
Willing to try new things

Challenges Facing the District

Academic diversity
 Special education demands are increasing
 IEPs are becoming more complex
Administrative changes
Disparity between teachers and administrators

Efficiency

- Teacher/student contact time reduced to address initiatives

- Using funds wisely

Feeling that the morale is low

Increasing teacher input

Limited opportunities for vertical articulation

Managing time

- District mandated minutes

- Makes it difficult to teach the actual curriculum

Several initiatives

- AP Capstone

- IB program

- Updates to NYS Curriculum Standards particularly at the elementary level

Space constraints

Teacher recruitment, hiring and retaining

- Attrition as experienced teachers retire

- Areas of particular concern are Special education and World languages

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

Able and willing to back the faculty

Acknowledges achievements

Brings a fresh set of eyes to the District

Builds relationships

Caring

Collaborative

Dedicated

Engages with teachers and staff

Expresses the "why" behind decisions

Honest

Knows that the best teachers work in Rye

Leadership skills

Makes people feel valued

Proactive

Sees the value in a departmentalized 5th grade

Trusts the professionals

Values science education

Values each facet of the Community

SUPPORT STAFF (12)

(The comments are listed in alphabetical order)

Strengths of the District

Academics

Attracting and hiring excellent teachers, administrators and staff

Community support

Generational

Great schools
High achieving District
People love the community
People move to Rye for the schools
Private school feel
Reputation
School spirit
Student engagement
Students are well prepared for college
Support for students
Traditional
Walkable District
Warm relationships between parents, teachers, students
Welcoming culture
Well deserved reputation
Wonderful students

Challenges Facing the District

AI and technology
Bond work that is continuing
Generational community
Guidance is stretched thin
Maintaining a welcoming environment and culture
Maintaining communication
Middle school
Needs of students are shifting
 Everyone has to shift to meet the needs of the students
 Learning needs
 Mental health needs
Negotiating clerical contract (up 2026)
Sports
Student stress

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

Amiable
Approachable
Attends events
Calm
Caring
Collaborative
Compassionate
Delegates
Engages with teachers and staff
Excellent communicator
Experienced educator
 Principal
 Teacher

Has a sense of humor
Has an open door
Humble
Knows people
Listens to more people when planning
 Collaborates with the people who are being impacted by the work that is happening
Makes an effort to get to know employees
Makes an effort to know what jobs people do and what those jobs entail
Nurturing
Personable
Planner
Positive demeanor
Relationship builder
Relaxed
Strong
 Not a push over
Strong writer
Supports the District team
Trusts staff to do their jobs
Values communications
Values the contributions of staff
Visible

STUDENTS (9)

(The comments are listed in alphabetical order)

Strengths of the District

Academics
Arts are recognized
Close knit community
College acceptances
Family feel
High standards
Many opportunities
 Boces
 IB
 The Academy
Project based learning
Reputation
Small enough District that everyone knows the Superintendent
Strong curriculum
Students feel supported
 Finding ways to help students
 Program adjustments
 Working with schedules
Special education
Teachers very supportive

X - period
After school help
Building relationships
The Academy
Very accomodating

Challenges Facing the District

Athletics

Focus on football
Getting work done
Time management

Communication

Can be hit or miss
Response time
Guidance
Teachers
Not all respond to emails
Posting homework at 10 pm

Curriculum

Science department
Implementing new standards and learning
World Languages
Alignment
Pacing

Elementary School

Equitable treatment of all students
Guidance
Parents are very protective of their children
They get very involved and intense

Ensuring special education accommodations are followed in the classroom

Technology

AI to check writing
Professional development

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

Able to adapt to challenges
Accommodating
Adaptable
Builds relationships with students
Can be laid back
Caring
Charismatic
Chill and not up tight
Enthusiastic
Friendly
Funny
Inclusive
Innovative

Interacts with students
Knows students
Knows when to be independent and stands on their own ideas
Looks to the future
Open
Open minded
Present
Shows up for games
Smart
Supportive
Supportive of the arts
Thinks before they speak
Thoughtful
Treats all students fairly
Understanding
Visible

COMMUNITY/PARENTS/GUARDIANS (24)

(The comments are listed in alphabetical order)

Strengths of the District

Arts

Board and current Superintendent work well together, plan and execute plans well

Board and Superintendent have committed to educating all learners

Communication

Accessibility of superintendent

Availability of information around topics such as the bond, budget

Weekly emails

Curriculum

Aligned through all elementary schools

District is forward looking

District meets student needs

Efforts to continuously improve facilities

Engaged community and parents

External relationships with non-profit organizations

Families who can choose to send children to private schools, send their children to Rye

Families who send children to private still support schools

Financial backing of District

Focus on education in the community

Focus on mental health and SEL

Satellite mental health clinic

High expectations for staff

Hiring has improved and engaged many community groups

Keeping special education students in District

Open to innovation

People are generally happy with the schools

People move to Rye for the schools
People take pride in the schools
Philosophy of continuous improvement
Rye Fund for Education
Special education
 Buddies program
 Co-teaching
Strong experienced staff
Teachers are open to professional learning and implementing new skills
Teachers are dedicated
 Comes from the top down

Challenges Facing the District

After school opportunities for elementary students
 Challenging clubs and choices at elementary level
Aging infrastructure and facilities
Becoming a "Leader District" among other districts in Westchester
Budget
Don't lose momentum
 Changes that have been put in place
 Maintain standards
 Success through the District
 Elementary through High School
Educating all types of learners
Elementary schedule
 Fitting in curriculum
 Loss of specials
FLES
 Not returning the results that were hoped for
High expectations
Maintaining financial support
Maintaining school pride
Making sure all voices are heard
Maintaining community involvement
Managing parent expectations
Parents' grassroot efforts
 Passionate parents will set up groups and fund them
Policies around hot topics
 Cell phones
Politics around Rye/County/Playland
Stress levels are high
Teachers in the Arts
 Plan for hiring as experienced faculty move closer to retirement
Technology
 Challenges
 How it is used in the children's day
Utilizing Teaching Assistants in the elementary classroom

Superintendent Desired Characteristics

A solid person
Able to take a stand
Accessible
Approachable
Available
Calm
Classroom experience
Comfortable speaking to people
Committed
Communicates regularly with parents and the community
Dedicated
Direct
Energetic
Engages with the entire community including non-profit and other community organizations
Engenders trust
Excellent communicator
Experienced
Flexible thinker
Forward looking
Has a vision of education and what is ahead for students
 Transitions into the world post-Rye
Holds people accountable
Honest
Inclusive
Innovative
Instructional leader
Involved
Knowledge of IB
Knowledgeable of what is happening in the District and in education
Looks at situations from multiple perspectives
Manages parents' expectations
Negotiator
Open
Personable
Politically savvy
Present
Strong
Supports the Arts
Supports special education
Trustworthy
Understands financial constraints and concerns of a school district
Understands NYS education and special education
Values teachers and staff
Visionary
Willing to take on problems in the District

Rye City School District Superintendent of Schools

DRAFT Superintendent Desired Characteristics

After seeking input from its Board members, parents, staff, students and the community via focus groups, interviews, and an online survey, the Rye City Board of Education seeks a strong strategic leader who:

- A collaborator who encourages professional development for staff, and supports a culture of teamwork;
- Able to navigate parents' expectations and concerns;
- Approachable, empathetic, and skilled at making people feel valued by listening to diverse perspectives and fostering a collaborative environment;
- Dedicated to Rye City and its traditions and values;
- Exceptional communicator, capable of delivering regular, clear, and transparent messages to all stakeholders;
- Exhibits strong instructional leadership, and consistently makes informed, strategic decisions, and holds others accountable;
- Focuses on the well-being and equitable development of all students, advocates for social-emotional support, understands their evolving needs, and is able to adapt and solve problems effectively in a rapidly changing educational landscape;
- Honest, humble, compassionate, and energetic, with the ability to maintain a calm demeanor and sense of humor in challenging situations;
- Listens to various perspectives and works effectively with the administrative team, teachers, and staff to foster a supportive, inclusive, and growth-oriented environment;
- Possesses a forward-thinking vision for the District's growth, while maintaining high academic standards and momentum;
- Professional, personable and maintains a high degree of professional trust;
- Strong relationship-oriented leader who has a track record of recruiting, hiring and retaining talented staff;
- Visible and actively engages the broader school community including administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents and community members.

The successful candidate will:

- Be certified as a superintendent, or capable of gaining certification, in New York State;
- Demonstrate a sincere commitment to the long-term success and well-being of the District.