

March, 2026

SUN PRAIRIE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Superintendent Leadership Profile Report



Prepared By :

HYA | HAZARD
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ASSOCIATES

The Sun Prairie Area School District (SPASD) has retained the services of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) to assist the Board with the hiring of the next superintendent. The consultants will engage the community, screen applications, and recommend candidates to the Board for interviews and further consideration. Any questions regarding the application process, selection process, and/or this Leadership Profile Report should be directed to the HYA consultants.

This report documents and summarizes the qualitative and quantitative data from SPASD invested community partners for the purpose of providing guidance in the hiring of the next superintendent. In addition to the summary, the report identifies themes determined from data by each community partner group as well as desired characteristics of the next superintendent. The report does not analyze the data to determine causes of any challenges the SPASD faces, it is merely a summary and thematic look at findings.

The hiring of a superintendent is the most important responsibility given to a school board. The selection will shape the future of SPASD and determine student success. It is certainly a critical decision facing the SPASD. This report points out numerous issues SPASD faces, yet should also provide direction and great hope for the future. Careful consideration of the SPASD *CULTURE* and *CLIMATE* is necessary to understand the current condition of SPASD.

Findings from this report remind us that the SPASD preferred *CULTURE* is defined in the district's mission and values statement. A culture of educational excellence, a culture of engagement and inclusion, and a culture of operational excellence is clearly documented. Additionally, the commitment to the values of student-centered decision making, a welcoming climate, high expectations, equity, diversity, respect, and dignity has been promised. SPASD exists for Every Child, Every Day.

Unfortunately, there are numerous issues in the current *CLIMATE* interfering with the culture previously described. SPASD should be reminded that *CLIMATE* can be a temporary condition, much like a weather report. If the school board and the new superintendent desire to live up to the preferred culture of the district, the current climate issues must be collectively attended to with diligence and determination. These issues, highlighted in this report, include broken trust, population growth which comes with student challenges, academic performance, fractured internal and external relationships, lack of transparency, an inexperienced school board, student safety and behavior, recent negative staff conduct and press, top-down management, a lack of genuine leadership, and ineffective superintendent/board relations and governance. The situations are serious but not without hope for a brighter future when resolved. Adherence to the preferred culture must prevail.

The search team would like to thank the Sun Prairie Area School District for the opportunity to find your next leader who fits the criteria of your vested community partners. HYA would like to thank all of the participants who attended focus group meetings or completed the online survey; and the District staff who helped coordinate the schedules, invitations, dates, and arrangements which supported the data collection for this report.

Respectfully submitted,

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INTRODUCTION

HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses the skills and character traits required to meet the district's needs. The search team will focus its recruitment on candidates who possess leadership qualities congruent with the profile.

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) during February, 2026 for the new superintendent of the Sun Prairie Area School District. The data contained herein was obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either interviews, focus group settings or through email response. The 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 invested community partner interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the organization and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years. It should be emphasized that the data is not a scientific sampling, nor does it necessarily represent the majority opinion of each respective group.

An HYA Associate interviewed current School Board members and in addition, HYA conducted over 60 focus group interviews for parents, community, staff, and students. Over 130 individuals participated in either focus groups or individual interviews, and 1,287 individuals participated in a districtwide online survey. Individuals may be represented in both groups, names and email addresses were not monitored. Over 1,400 responses provided input for this search process.

Additionally and as referenced previously, a survey was conducted in the Sun Prairie Area School District from February 16 through March 2, 2026. The Sun Prairie Area School District Survey for the Superintendent Search was completed by 1,287 vested community partners. The largest group of responses were parents (595) at 46.2%. SPASD High School Students (268) represented the second largest group at 20.8% of all respondents. Certified staff and teachers (214) represented 16.6% of the total respondents. The community (92) made up 7% of responses. Support staff (82) made up 6% of the responses and administrators (36) at almost 3% of the total population. The full survey summary can be found in the Appendix of this report.

The following questions were asked during each interview and focus group:

1. What are the strengths of the Sun Prairie Area School District that the next superintendent can build upon?
2. What are the challenges facing the Sun Prairie Area School District that the next superintendent should be aware of, or which you would like to see be addressed?
3. What characteristics or traits are you looking for in your new superintendent?
4. Is there anything else you would like to share with us or that we should know about the Sun Prairie Area School District?

DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT

The Sun Prairie Area School District is seeking a Superintendent beginning on July 1, 2026. Sun Prairie is a vibrant and thriving community located in northeastern Dane County, just east of the City of Madison. Approximately 50,000 people live within the nearly 80 square miles that make up SPASD boundaries. The City of Sun Prairie is well situated regionally, with excellent access to major transportation routes and facilities. Sun Prairie benefits from its proximity to the City of Madison and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which provide many amenities, events, and attractions for both residents of and visitors to the Sun Prairie area. Sun Prairie has become known in the region for its high quality of life, its excellent parks and recreation programs, historic downtown, its exceptional public school system, and progressive approach to the development and growth of the community.

The Sun Prairie Area School District serves more than 8,500 students in 4K-12th grade. The district includes 15 schools: nine elementary schools, three middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and an alternative learning high school. The district also offers a 4K program at 10 partner child care/preschool sites around the community, and a virtual school. The district has more than 1,300 employees and a budget of approximately \$220 million.

Vision: Recognized as a high-performing district of choice that reflects the cultures of our diverse community.

Mission: Inspire and prepare every child, every day, by providing relevant, engaging, and innovative learning experiences in and out of the classroom

Our Core Values and Commitments:

- **Student-Centered Decision Making** - We center students in all decision-making by focusing on the needs of the whole child.
- **Welcoming Climate** - We believe in providing a welcoming, safe, nurturing, and collaborative environment that allows the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential.
- **Relationships** - We embrace positive and strong partnerships with students, staff, parents, caregivers and the community.
- **High Expectations** - We have high expectations for students and ourselves.
- **Equity** - We embrace our commitment to equity and are committed to providing resources aligned to students' needs so that every child can thrive. [Core Values and Commitments](#)
- **Diversity** - We believe our diversity is an asset and our strength.
- **Respect and Dignity** - All students, parents, caregivers, and staff are valued and treated with respect and dignity.

District Highlights:

- A- overall rating by [Niche.com](#), and the second-most diverse school district in Dane County
- Sun Prairie East and West high schools ranked in the top 20 percent in the nation by U.S. News & World Report
- 2025 ACT average of 19.9 is above the state (19.2) and national average (19.4)
- Exceeds expectations on the 2025 Wisconsin DPI State Report Cards, with 7 of 15 schools also exceeding expectations
- Community overwhelmingly approved a \$25 million recurring operational referendum, phased in over 5 years in November 2024

Visit the SPASD Website for more information: [SPASD Website](#)

PROCESS

The structure of the individual meetings and focus groups was open, allowing participants to build upon each other’s comments. All participants were asked to respond to the same questions listed on page 2. Board members were interviewed individually. An anonymous online survey was provided in three languages (English, Spanish, and Hmong), and received 1,287 responses.

PARTICIPATION

Responses were gathered from individual interviews, focus groups and email responses collected by the HYA consultants. The HYA consultants conducted seven individual interviews and hosted over 60 focus groups.

Sun Prairie Area School District Focus Group Schedule			
Date	Time	Group Name	Location
Tues. Feb. 17	7:00 to 7:45 am	Community - Open to All	Virtual
Tues. Feb. 17	9:00 to 9:45 am	Non-Profit Partners	Colonial Club
Tues. Feb. 17	10:15 to 11:00 am	Students	Prairie Phoenix Academy
Tues. Feb. 17	11:40 am to 12:30 pm	Educators - Secondary Staff	Central Heights Middle School Library
Tues. Feb. 17	2:00 to 2:45 pm	Educators - Support Staff	PLC Board Room/Large Community Room (20)
Tues. Feb. 17	3:00 to 3:45 pm	Community - Open to All	Virtual
Tues. Feb. 17	4:00 to 4:45 pm	Sun Prairie Education Association	Virtual
Tues. Feb. 17	5:00 to 5:45 pm	Community - Open to All	Virtual
Tues. Feb. 17	6:00 to 6:45 pm	Community - Open to All	West High School
Tues. Feb. 17	7:00 to 7:45 pm	JEDI	PLC, 220 Kroncke Dr., Sun Prairie
Wed. Feb. 18	7:45-8:30 am	Non-Profit Partners	Meadow View Elementary
Wed. Feb. 18	9:00 to 9:45 am	Community - Open to All	Virtual
Wed. Feb. 18	10:00 to 10:45 am	Community - Open to All	Virtual
Wed. Feb. 18	1:00 to 1:45 pm	Community - Open to All	Sunshine Place
Wed. Feb. 18	3:00 to 3:45 pm	Educators - Elementary Staff	Royal Oaks Elementary School
Wed. Feb. 18	4:00 to 4:45 pm	Educators - Support Staff	Royal Oaks Elementary School
Wed. Feb. 18	5:00 to 5:45 pm	Community - Open to All (in Spanish)	Public Library
Wed. Feb. 18	6:00 to 6:45 pm	Elected / Municipal Partners	Public Library
Wed. Feb. 18	7:00 to 7:45 pm	Community - Open to All	East High School
Thur. Feb. 19	7:00 to 7:45 am	Educators - Support Staff	Hilltop Campus - PLC

Date	Time	Group Name	Location
Thur. Feb. 19	8:00 to 8:45 am	Non-Profit Partners	Hilltop Campus - PLC
Thur. Feb. 19	9:00 to 9:45 am	Educators - Secondary Staff	Prairie View Middle School
Thur. Feb. 19	10:00 to 10:45 am	Educators - Support Staff	Hilltop Campus - PLC
Thur. Feb. 19	11:45 am to 12:30 pm	Community - Open to All	Sun Prairie Nursery School
Thur. Feb. 19	1:30 to 2:15 pm	Educators - Secondary Staff	Patrick Marsh Middle School
Thur. Feb. 19	4:00 to 4:45 pm	Community - Open to All (in Spanish)	Northside Elementary School
Thur. Feb. 19	5:00 to 5:45 pm	Community - Open to All	Sunshine Place
Thur. Feb. 19	6:00 to 6:45 pm	Community - Open to All	East High School
Thur. Feb. 19	7:15 to 7:45 pm	Community - Open to All	Public Library - 1350 Linnerud Dr, Sun Prairie
Mon. Feb. 23	7:15 to 8:00 am	Educators - All	Prairie View Middle School
Mon. Feb. 23	7:15 to 8:00 am	Educators - Secondary Staff	Central Heights Middle School
Mon. Feb. 23	8:35 to 9:20 am	Educators - Secondary Staff	East High School
Mon. Feb. 23	8:35 to 9:20 am	Educators - Secondary Staff	West High School
Mon.. Feb. 23	10:00 to 10:35 am	Students	Virtual
Mon. Feb. 23	10:45 to 11:30 am	Educators - Secondary Staff	East High School
Mon. Feb. 23	10:45 to 11:30 am	Educators - Secondary Staff	West High School
Mon. Feb. 23	12:11 to 12:41 pm	Students	East High School
Mon. Feb. 23	12:11 to 12:41 pm	Students	West High School
Mon. Feb. 23	1:00 to 1:30 pm	Students	East High School
Mon. Feb. 23	1:00 to 1:30 pm	Students	West High School
Mon. Feb. 23	2:15 to 3:00 pm	Educators - Secondary Staff	East High School
Mon. Feb. 23	2:15 to 3:00 pm	Educators - Secondary Staff	West High School
Mon. Feb. 23	4:00 to 4:45 pm	Students	East High School
Mon. Feb. 23	4:00 to 4:45 pm	Students	West High School
Mon. Feb. 23	5:00 to 5:45 pm	Educators - Elementary Staff	Virtual

Sun Prairie Area Community School District Focus Group Schedule

Date	Time	Group Name	Location
Mon. Feb. 23	6:00 to 6:45 pm	Educators - All Staff	Virtual
Mon. Feb. 23	6:00 to 6:45 pm	Community - Open to All	West High School
Mon. Feb. 23	7:00 to 7:45 pm	JEDI-BSU members	Virtual
Tues. Feb. 24	7:00 to 8:00 am	Educators - Secondary Staff	Patrick Marsh Middle School
Tues. Feb. 24	8:30 to 9:30 am	Community - Open to All	Virtual
Tues. Feb. 24	10:30 to 11:15 am	Educators - Administration & Administration Support	Hilltop Campus - PLC
Tues, Feb. 24	11:45 to 12:30 pm	DSC Staff	District Support Center
Fri. Feb. 27	11:15 am to 12:15 pm	Community - Open to All	Rolling Prairie Apartments
Fri. Feb. 27	12:30 to 1:15 pm	Educators - Elementary Staff	Virtual
Fri. Feb. 27	4:30 to 5:15 pm	Community - Open to All	Virtual
Fri. Feb. 27	6:00 to 6:45 pm	Community - Open to All	East High School
Sat. Feb. 28	8:00 to 8:45 am	Community - Open to All	YMCA
Sat. Feb. 28	9:00 to 9:45 am	Community - Open to All	Virtual
Sat. Feb. 28	11:30 am to 12:15 pm	Community - Open to All	Virtual
Sat. Feb. 28	12:45 to 1:30 pm	Community - Open to All	Sun Prairie Public Library
Sat. Feb. 28	2:00 to 2:45 pm	Community - Open to All	Westside Elementary
Sat. Feb. 28	3:15 to 4:00 pm	Community - Open to All	Wildwood Apartments
Sat, Feb. 28	4:15 to 5:00 pm	Community - Open to All	The Element on Main

QUALITATIVE DATA

Perceived Strengths • Perceived Challenges • Desired Characteristics

The information gathered from the respondents generated common themes. In this summary report, common themes were identified from the following four groups:

- School Board
- Community (includes parents)
- Staff
- Students

BOARD OF EDUCATION

STRENGTHS of the SPASD (Board Themes)

Strong People & Staff

The district's greatest strength is its people. Teachers, staff, and students are dedicated, talented, and committed to success. There is a strong caring foundation and teamwork amongst staff. Students are engaged and motivated, and staff consistently demonstrate support for one another.

Academic Excellence & Student Opportunity

Student achievement is strong and improving, with report cards trending upward. The district offers a wide range of academic opportunities, including AP courses, as well as diverse extracurricular and co-curricular activities. Students benefit from robust educational programming designed to meet varied interests and strengths.

Financial Stability & Operational Strength

The district is in good financial shape, with sound fiscal management and successful referendums. Operations are well-organized and efficient. Facilities are updated, well maintained, and supported by a long-term capital improvement plan, ensuring sustainability and continued growth.

Growth & Strategic Development

The district is experiencing steady growth. Enrollment is increasing, facilities planning is proactive, and leadership has positioned the district to expand while maintaining quality. The size of the district is a strength, large enough to offer opportunities, yet structured enough to stay organized and responsive.

Community Engagement & Equity Commitment

A supportive and engaged community plays a key role in district success, as evidenced by passed referendums and ongoing involvement. The district values diversity and has articulated a commitment to equity. Its location in Dane County enhances access to resources and partnerships, contributing to a thriving and inclusive environment.

CHALLENGES of the SPASD (Board themes)

Trust, Transparency & Community Confidence

There is a clear need to rebuild trust with the community, particularly in light of concerns that recent decisions have been driven more by fear than by a genuine focus on what is best for students. This perception has contributed to stress and strained relationships among the community, the board, staff, the administration and students. Moving forward, there is a strong desire for greater transparency in decision-making processes, with an emphasis on open communication and collaboration. Ultimately, the priority must remain on doing what is best for students while also supporting the well-being and interests of the broader community.

Governance & Leadership Transitions

SPASD is navigating a period of governance uncertainty marked by a divided school board and ongoing leadership transitions. With potential board turnover anticipated in April and the recent departure of the current superintendent prompting a shift in leadership, stability remains a key

concern. Newer board members are still working to establish their roles, responsibilities, and shared norms, which has contributed to growing pains in board operations. Strengthening and clarifying communication between administration and the board will be essential to fostering alignment, rebuilding cohesion, and ensuring effective governance moving forward.

Teacher Voice, Empowerment & Internal Culture

Teachers are seeking a stronger, more meaningful voice in district-level decisions, emphasizing the importance of being included in conversations that directly affect their classrooms and professional responsibilities. They want to feel heard, valued, and recognized as key contributors to the direction and success of the district.

There is also a clear desire to create an environment where teachers feel empowered to speak openly and honestly. Fostering transparency and psychological safety would encourage more authentic dialogue, allowing concerns, ideas, and feedback to be shared without fear of negative consequences.

Teachers want to strengthen relationships both within their own schools and across the broader district. Improving connectedness between schools and larger groups of teachers would help break down silos, encourage collaboration, and create a more unified district community.

Communication & Decision Making Processes

There is a perception that decision making is often driven more by fear than by a clear strategic vision, highlighting the need for stronger, more transparent leadership. Vested community partners feel that communication with the community could be clearer, and that existing systems and policies may not be fully aligned with the district's overall goals.

Enhancing collaboration and information flow between the board, administration, and other caregivers is essential to build trust, ensure cohesive planning, and support decisions that reflect a shared strategic direction.

Growth, Change & Student Programming

Sun Prairie is experiencing rapid growth, which is putting pressure on the local community and schools. Adults in the system are finding it challenging to manage the pace of change, highlighting a need for structured support and clear strategies.

At West High School, there is a particular need to establish a defined pathway for addressing ongoing issues while ensuring that programs adequately serve high-achieving students. Additionally, the school and community must navigate broader external pressures, including those stemming from the wider Dane County context, as they plan for sustainable growth and development

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Sun Prairie Superintendent as identified by SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS	
Transparency & Communication	Community Engagement & Presence
Emphasis on being transparent, open, and honest. Strong communication skills, including listening, being approachable, and ensuring vested community partners feel heard. Willingness to act on feedback.	Being visible in schools and the community. Connecting with people: students, parents, staff, board members. Caring about the community, investing time, and being a face of the district.
Leadership & Vision	Integrity & Values
Instructional and strategic leadership: having a vision, working with partners, and following through. Advocating for public schools and bringing vested community partners together. Ability to build relationships and facilitate collaboration.	Stand on convictions, firm but fair, act with integrity. Upholding district values and policies, student-focused decision making
Inclusivity & Accountability	
Empathetic toward community members, work with diverse demographics, and seek diverse feedback. Accountability: rebuilding trust, working with the board, and being responsible for outcomes	

PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

STRENGTHS of SPASD (Parents and Community Themes)

Strong, Dedicated Staff & Teaching Quality

The district is viewed as resource rich, opportunity filled, and community supported, with exceptional teaching staff as its foundation. The district is recognized for its strong, dedicated staff and high-quality teaching. Teachers are consistently described as fantastic, caring, and deeply committed to students, reflecting a long standing tradition of instructional excellence. Supportive principals in many buildings reinforce a positive professional culture, while thoughtful hiring practices help maintain the district’s high standards. The district demonstrates notable strength in specialized services, particularly in special education at the high school level. Board support for teachers and retention reflects a shared commitment to staff success and student achievement.

Abundant Student Opportunities

SPASD offers abundant opportunities for students, providing a wide range of academic and extracurricular options designed to support diverse interests and goals. Students benefit from a dual language program, numerous college credit opportunities, and a strong focus on college readiness, ensuring they are well prepared for postsecondary success. A variety of clubs, arts programs, athletics, and activities allow students to engage beyond the classroom and develop well rounded skills. Beyond academics, the district emphasizes real world preparation through meaningful work based learning opportunities. Strong facilities and updated resources further enhance the student experience. Overall, the district is widely viewed as offering “lots of options”

and delivering preparation for life beyond high school.

Strong Community Support & Resources

The district benefits from strong community support and deep rooted investment in its schools. Community members consistently highlight a pro-youth culture, solid financial backing, and a strong volunteer base, including many retired teachers who remain actively involved. Despite ongoing growth, the community maintains a small-town feel grounded in tradition and legacy. This history of pride is viewed as a strength worth celebrating, though some note that the level of involvement and connection may be declining over time. Overall, the schools are seen as an integral and valued part of the community.

Commitment to Inclusion, Diversity & Equity

The school district demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusion, diversity, and equity, viewing diversity as a strength and a positive aspect of its community. Efforts toward equity and inclusion are evident through initiatives such as the dual language program and openness to progressive thinking. Overall, this reflects a culture that values belonging, embraces diverse perspectives, and responds thoughtfully to changing demographics.

Leadership Consistency & Transition Challenges

SPASD benefits from many strong leadership examples, with several administrators and school leaders demonstrating effectiveness and a clear commitment to student success. Elementary schools, in particular, provide a consistently positive experience, reflecting the district's dedication to high-quality instruction and supportive school environments. At the same time, there is an opportunity to build on these strengths by ensuring leadership consistency across all schools and deepening district level relationships. Strengthening alignment and transitions can help extend the positive experiences seen in elementary schools throughout the upper grades, further elevating the district's already strong system and creating a more cohesive, supportive environment for students, staff, and families. The changing board can show support as the new board relationships are still developing.

CHALLENGES of the SPASD (Parents and Community Themes)

Leadership, Governance & Accountability

The Sun Prairie Area School District struggles with leadership and accountability. The district's leadership and board governance is viewed as problematic. District level administration is perceived as over-staffed, insular, and defensive. The superintendent is viewed as prioritizing public relations over substantive leadership, while the board is seen as inexperienced or weak, often rubber-stamping decisions without meaningful oversight. The lack of clear roles for administrators and inconsistent, sometimes questionable, hiring practices, including hiring without proper qualifications or based on personal connections was noted as a problem.

Accountability within the district is missing. Issues are frequently ignored or unaddressed, problems are pushed down the chain of command, and a culture of shifting blame prevails. These factors have created an environment where leadership can be ineffective and systemic problems persist due to insufficient oversight and a lack of transparent, responsible governance. Perception from numerous focus groups stated that the district is top heavy with administration when more resources are needed in the classroom.

Student Safety, Discipline & Classroom Management

Concerns around student safety, discipline, and classroom management center on inconsistent student expectations and unmet behavioral and academic needs. At the elementary and middle school levels, some classrooms are described as chaotic, particularly when serving students with high needs without adequate support. Discipline practices are viewed as uneven, with staff sometimes hesitant to act due to fear of repercussions such as retaliation or legal threats. There is also a perception that student voice and rights are not consistently balanced with maintaining an orderly learning environment, allowing disruptive behaviors to impact instruction.

Reports of bullying and social-emotional challenges appear to be increasing, underscoring the need for more proactive and preventative interventions. Special Education (SPED) services are seen as inconsistently implemented, with evacuation procedures sometimes used as a temporary workaround rather than addressing real behavior issues. The theme reflects a need for clearer expectations, stronger support systems, and more consistent implementation of behavior and safety protocols to ensure productive learning environments for all students.

Equity, Inclusion & Community Engagement

The district shows a strong emphasis on the language of equity and inclusion, but vested community partners report that this often does not translate into meaningful action. Implicit bias and at times expecting less from students of color persists. Efforts at community engagement, such as public committees, are perceived as largely performative rather than genuine. Families, particularly those of English language learners, frequently feel uninformed, highlighting communication gaps.

Overall, the district's approach to diversity and equity is seen as more cosmetic than substantive. While the language around inclusion is correct, community members note a lack of authentic partnerships with community organizations and city agencies. Actions often do not align with stated commitments, leading to a sense of superficiality and missed opportunity for true engagement and student support.

Academic Performance & Curriculum Challenges

SPASD is facing notable challenges in academic performance and curriculum implementation. Academic achievement has declined and there is widespread concern that learning is not being adequately prioritized. Classroom disruptions, rigid and scripted curricula, and inconsistent curriculum adoptions, particularly in reading, have negatively affected student learning, leaving some students with unequal opportunities.

Teacher autonomy and support are limited, contributing to low staff morale, which impacts instructional quality. Community members express frustration with the lack of flexibility in teaching and the repeated failures of curriculum initiatives, summarizing the situation as a decline in both academic performance and genuine learning.

Trust, Communication & Organizational Culture

The district is experiencing challenges around trust, communication, and organizational culture. There is a pervasive sense of fear, retaliation, and gaslighting, leaving staff and community members feeling alienated. Trust between administration, teachers, students, and the broader community is deeply eroded. Decision making is often driven by optics rather than substance, with

a lack of follow through that allows issues to be glossed over. Politics, egos, and superficial relationships appear to take precedence over the needs of students, creating a culture where genuine collaboration and accountability are undermined.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Sun Prairie Superintendent as identified by PARENTS and COMMUNITY MEMBERS	
Accountable & Ethical Leader	Visionary & Strategic Thinker
This leader takes ultimate responsibility for district outcomes, modeling honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior while admitting mistakes without blaming others. They establish clear expectations and procedures, ensuring consistent follow-through and holding all staff accountable with fairness and respect.	Sets high expectations for students, staff, and the district, making informed, strategic decisions that prioritize equity, inclusion, and long-term success. Skilled in change management, they adapt to emerging challenges while maintaining a cohesive vision focused on student achievement.
Community & Teacher Centered	Authentic, Courageous & Resilient
This leader builds strong relationships with teachers, staff, students, families, and the community through authentic communication, visibility, and trust building. Prioritizing inclusivity, recognize historical inequities, and support staff with resources, mentorship, and recognition to foster a positive and equitable school culture.	This leader is transparent, courageous, and guided by values, facing difficult challenges thoughtfully while maintaining composure under pressure. They embrace a learner mindset, welcome feedback, adapt when needed, and challenge the status quo to promote equity, fairness, and excellence.
Proven Experience and Results & Oriented	
This leader has a proven record of driving measurable student success across diverse districts while effectively managing boards, staff, and resources. They combine deep academic and Special Education expertise with a commitment to equity, fairness, and excellence. Must be willing and ready to advocate for change when the current approach falls short.	

SUN PRAIRIE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF

STRENGTHS of the SPASD (Staff Themes)

Dedicated, Talented & Collaborative Staff

The district is powered by highly talented, loyal, and student centered staff who care deeply about kids and work hard every day to meet their needs. Teachers and support staff collaborate, advocate for students, support one another, and demonstrate strong perseverance and commitment, even through periods of change.

Strong Commitment to Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

Sun Prairie demonstrates an intentional and sustained focus on equity that extends beyond race to ensure all students feel seen, valued, and included. With a strong equity statement, diverse student body, inclusive library collections, and an emphasis on belonging, the district works to serve and celebrate its diverse community.

Abundant Opportunities & Supports for Students

Students benefit from extensive academic and extracurricular opportunities, including dual credit courses, clubs, arts programs, summer school, early literacy investments, and both college and career pathways. Strong academic resources, instructional frameworks, and wellness supports, including a district wellness clinic, help ensure students are supported holistically.

Strong Community & Financial Support

SPASD enjoys broad community backing, including supportive families, several successful referendums, Education Foundation contributions, and a community that values teachers and public education. Financial stability, well funded schools, and a growing city contribute to expanded opportunities and sustained investment in students.

Strategic Leadership & Continuous Improvement

The district benefits from a clear mission, strong vision, strategic planning, and established frameworks that guide continuous improvement. Leadership is visible, supportive of schools, responsive to feedback, and focused on long-term growth while maintaining a strong emphasis on student achievement and well-being.

CHALLENGES of the SPASD (Staff themes)

Governance & Board Dysfunction

Staff describe significant concerns with school board governance, including inexperience, individual agendas, lack of role clarity, divisiveness, and erosion of trust. Tension between the board and superintendent, inconsistent adherence to policy, and perceived influence from small vocal groups have contributed to instability, negative public perception, and a high conflict culture.

Trust, Transparency & Communication Breakdown

A recurring theme is a deep lack of trust across the district between board and administration, district office and buildings, and leadership and staff. Staff report top-down decision making, limited input, poor follow through, image management over authentic problem solving, and inconsistent or unclear communication, leading to fractured relationships and low morale.

Leadership Stability, Accountability & Organizational Structure

Concerns include administrative turnover, lack of consistency, perceived “top-heavy” central office structures, and limited visibility of district leadership in schools. Staff express a need for clearer accountability, adherence to procedures, defined roles, stronger support for principals, and leaders who model humility, admit mistakes, and engage collaboratively.

Staffing, Morale & Workforce Sustainability

Low morale, and challenges in recruiting and retaining high-quality staff, including teachers of color, substitutes, SPED staff, and experienced administrators are major concerns. Staff cite workload pressures, insufficient planning time, limited recognition, compensation concerns compared to neighboring districts, and lack of meaningful input in hiring and curriculum decisions.

Student Needs, Equity & Instructional Coherence

Staff report increasing academic, behavioral, mental health, and special education needs without proportional staffing or consistent supports. Concerns include rapid or inconsistent curriculum changes, insufficient alternative programming, inequitable discipline, lack of restorative practices, unclear expectations. Equity efforts are perceived as inconsistent or symbolic rather than systemic and resourced.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Sun Prairie Superintendent as identified by ALL SPASD STAFF	
Trust, Transparency & Authentic Communication	Visible, Relational & Student Centered Leadership
Staff want leadership that is honest, sincere, transparent, and willing to re-establish strong lines of communication. There is a need for frequent, clear communication from the superintendent, follow-through on actions (not lip service), openness to criticism, and the courage to address real issues without glossing over problems. Rebuilding trust across the district is central.	A strong desire exists for a superintendent who is physically present in schools, knows staff by name, seeks student voice, and builds meaningful relationships. Staff want a unifier and “healer” who develops the whole child, keeps students at the center of decisions, supports the arts and academics, and fosters connectedness across every building.
Collaborative Governance & Board Development	Empowerment, Accountability & Professional Respect
There is a strong desire for enhanced board governance and more constructive, collaborative relationships between the superintendent and the board. Staff would like to see a leader who can develop the board, clarify roles, hold members accountable when needed, navigate difficult issues with courage, and avoid a “board puppet” dynamic.	Staff are asking for leadership that trusts teachers, allows meaningful input, supports building level decision making, and works collaboratively with unions. They want authentic accountability, high expectations for all, consistent treatment of schools, and leadership that takes responsibility, admits mistakes, and stands up for staff.
Vision, Stability & Commitment to Equity	
SPASD seeks a courageous, experienced, big-picture thinker who is calm in difficult moments and committed for the long term. Staff emphasize full commitment to the district's equity values, consistency across schools (including equitable treatment of Title schools), support for instructional frameworks, focus on academics, and the ability to move the district confidently into its next chapter.	

SUN PRAIRIE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

STRENGTHS of the SPASD (Student Themes)

Supportive & Approachable Staff

Teachers and staff at Sun Prairie Area School District are approachable, build trust, and actively connect with students. They provide guidance and resources to support both academic and personal needs. Additional services like day care are available for students and staff.

Inclusive & Welcoming Environment

Schools, especially Prairie Phoenix Academy, foster a close knit, comfortable environment where students feel welcomed and supported. Students are valued and not forgotten. Strong school spirit and a sense of community further enhance students' sense of belonging.

Academic Opportunities & Flexibility

The district offers a wide variety of courses, including AP, Dual Credit, early college, MATC programs, and apprenticeships, providing students with multiple pathways for academic success. Credit recovery and alternative options ensure that all students have opportunities to stay on track. Additionally, career exploration and planning resources help students prepare for their future. These flexible academic offerings support diverse learning needs and goals.

Arts & Extracurricular Strengths

The district offers strong support for the arts, with music programs and other creative opportunities that encourage students to explore and develop their talents. This emphasis on artistic growth helps foster creativity, self expression, and a well-rounded educational experience. Athletics are also a key strength, with robust sports programs that receive strong community support. Participation in athletics promotes student engagement, teamwork, and school pride, contributing to a vibrant and connected school culture.

Student Resources & Comfort

The district places a strong emphasis on student well-being, recognizing that learning goes beyond academics. When needed, access to snacks, juice, and other essential resources helps students stay energized and focused, creating a more positive and supportive learning environment. These small but meaningful provisions contribute to students' overall comfort and readiness to engage fully in their studies.

The district provides flexible, resource rich learning environments (Prairie Phoenix Academy specifically mentioned as an example), designed to meet the diverse needs of students. These settings offer tailored support, whether through individualized academic resources, social-emotional guidance, ensuring that each student can thrive. By fostering an atmosphere of care, flexibility, and accessibility, the district not only promotes academic success but also encourages students to develop confidence, independence, and a sense of belonging. These efforts collectively help create an environment where students are empowered to reach their full potential both inside and outside the classroom.

CHALLENGES of the SPASD (Students Themes)

Student Safety & Behavior Management

Concerns about fighting, inappropriate behavior in private areas such as rest rooms, PDA, and inconsistent discipline indicate a need for stronger safety protocols, staff training, and monitoring. The lack of accountability for some students leaves some feeling discouraged.

Staffing, Workload & Resources

Schools are understaffed, with teachers stretched thin and often using their own money for classroom supplies. Shortages of substitutes, hall monitors, and a full time nurse affect both staff effectiveness and student support. Funding for essentials like school supplies, field trips, food pantry resources, and student meals is also insufficient.

Student Voice & Engagement

Students feel their concerns are ignored, communication from the district is poor, and follow-up is lacking. Opportunities for students to influence school or district decisions are limited, leaving many feeling unheard and disconnected.

School Culture & Reputation

When schools struggle with a negative perception, students report they cannot take pride in their school. Negative media coverage, reports being ignored, and a lack of transparency undermine trust and morale for both students and staff.

Academic Support & Access to Services

Students face gaps in academic support, including reading difficulties due to historical curriculum issues, limited access to health services and inadequate attention to student well-being. These gaps impact both learning and personal development.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Sun Prairie Superintendent as identified by HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS	
Student Focused Leadership	Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
Students want a superintendent who genuinely cares about them and prioritizes their needs, especially those who are at risk. This includes being present in schools, listening to student voices, and actively advocating for equitable learning opportunities.	The next superintendent should be free from prejudice and reflect the diversity of the student body, supporting equitable funding and programs. They must understand and embrace all student backgrounds, including alternative options and underrepresented groups.
Trustworthy & Integrity	Support For All Staff & Resources
Students value a leader who is honest, selfless, and takes action instead of avoiding problems. They want someone who does not "look good" for appearances but consistently follows through and demonstrates empathy and understanding.	A strong superintendent ensures that teachers have the support and resources they need to succeed in the classroom. This includes providing supplies, funding, and programs for schools, particularly alternative or under-resourced schools, so that all students can thrive.
Visible & Community Engaged	
Being visible and involved in schools and the community is critical, as students want a superintendent they can recognize and interact with. This includes keeping staff and students informed, fostering relationships, and being approachable and present.	

QUANTITATIVE DATA

From February 16 through March 2, 2026, an online survey was conducted for all invested school district partners. The Sun Prairie Area School District Survey for the Superintendent Search, offered in three languages, was completed by 1,287 vested community partners. Parents represented the largest group, with 595 responses (46.2%). SPASD High School students were the second largest group, contributing 268 responses (20.8%). Certified staff and teachers accounted for 214 responses (16.6%). Community members submitted 92 responses (7%), followed by support staff with 82 responses (6%). Administrators made up the remaining 36 responses, representing just under 3% of the total. A separate summary of survey results is in the Appendix of this report.

RESULTS

The survey results are based on HYA's research related to superintendent leadership standards. The survey addresses both district performance and desired characteristics of the superintendent in relation to the following areas:

- **Vision and Values (VV)** - The leader's ability to provide a clear and compelling vision for the future, align district programs to the broader vision of the district, and uphold high expectations for all vested community partners.
- **Teaching and Learning (TL)** - The leader's ability to guide educational programs, make data-driven decisions, and implement effective instructional change.
- **Community Engagement (CE)** - The leader's ability to be the voice of the district, engage with the community, and involve vested community partners in realizing the district's vision.
- **Management (M)** - The leader's ability to guide operations, manage resources, recruit and retain highly effective personnel, and create an equitable accountability system for all employees.

STATE OF THE DISTRICT (All groups)

The following statements were perceived to be district strengths:

- Facilities are well maintained. (M)
- The District engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups. (CE)
- The District employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools. (M)
- Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs. (TL)
- The District is working to close achievement and opportunity gaps. (VV)

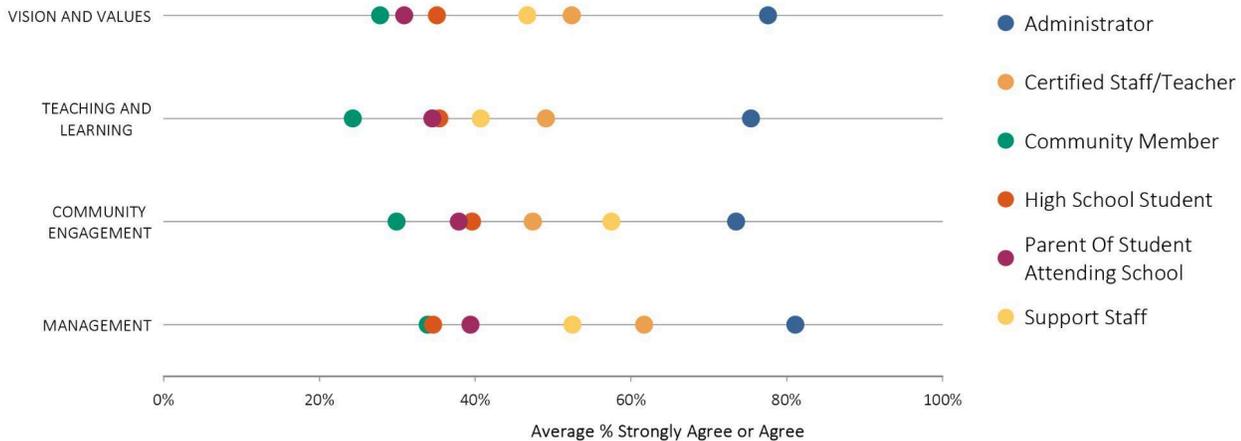
While the statements above are the combined responses of all groups, perceptions of the state of the district did vary greatly by individual groups. Administrators gave the state of the district the highest rating followed by certified staff. Lowest ratings were recorded from the community, parents and students. No conclusions are drawn from this data, however, since perception becomes reality, attention to this variance is needed. 43% of all respondents rated the overall quality of education in the District as a 4 or a 5, on a 5 point scale. An item analysis on each item is provided in the full report.

ANALYSIS

State of the District Summary

Respondents rated statements related to the state of the district on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported in the appendix.

State of the District Results by Constituent Group



LEADERSHIP PROFILE CHARACTERISTICS (All Groups)

The top-rated leadership profile characteristics constituents desire in a new superintendent are:

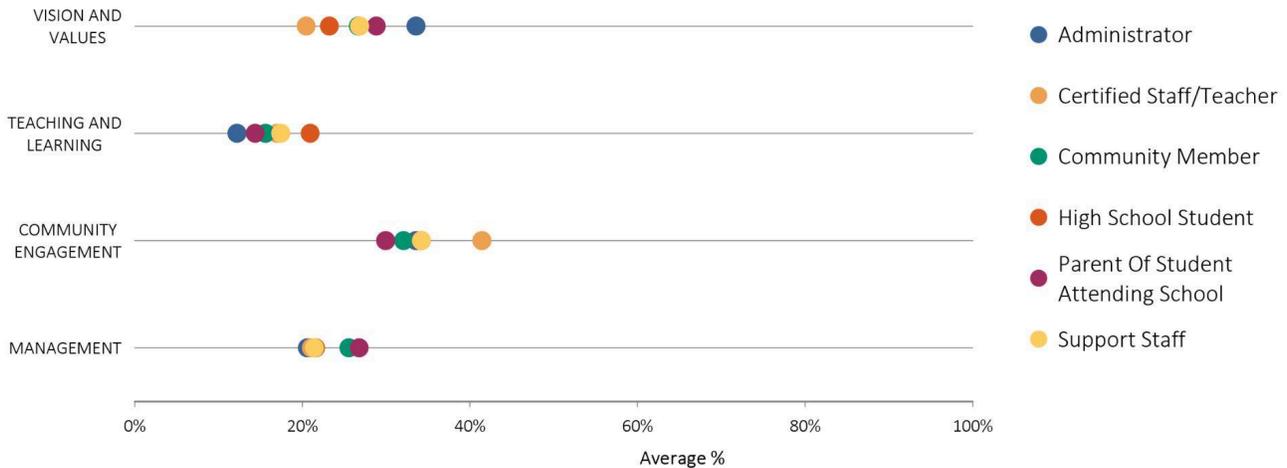
- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators (CE)
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel (VV)
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools (M)
- Provide transparent communication in all formats (speeches, social media, newsletters, etc.) (CE)
- Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population (TL)

The statements above are from the combined responses of all groups. Additionally, there was similarity in responses from individual groups. It appears that characteristics of the next hire are more congruent across groups. An item analysis on each item is provided in the full report.

Leadership Profile Summary

Respondents were asked to select leadership statements that are most important in selecting a new superintendent. Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported on the next page.

Leadership Profile Results by Constituent Group



COMBINED DATA • ALL GROUPS SUMMARY

The strengths and challenges for the Sun Prairie Area School District inform the expectations for the next superintendent. The characteristics presented in the profile for the next superintendent build on the current strengths of the organization in addition to addressing the challenges ahead.

When the data from interviews, focus groups, and surveys were combined, themes emerged. It should be noted that there was more similarity across the data than there were differences. In general, strengths and challenging issues were very similar across groups. However, perceptions of why things were happening often differed across groups. Additionally, the characteristics desired in the next superintendent were also closely aligned across groups. This congruence is viewed as a positive characteristic of this search and will bring clarity in focus for the Board and the new superintendent.

The following themes are supported by the combined data of all groups:

STRENGTHS

- **Strong, dedicated teaching staff and staff in general**
- **Numerous opportunities for students**
- **Supportive community**
- **Diverse population**
- **Growth**
- **Financial stability**
- **New and well maintained buildings**

CHALLENGES

- Broken trust
- Inexperienced board
- Student achievement
- Growth
- Overcoming negative press
- Transparency
- Fractured relationships - internal and external
- Board governance
- Top-down district level leadership

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

- Integrity and honesty
- Putting students first - all students
- Demonstrate experience and proven success
- Respect and value diversity
- Foster board development and collective work
- Listen and seek input
- Repair trust
- Develop partnerships across community
- Model transparent communication
- Authentic
- Be a healer
- Create high expectations and monitor progress
- Courageous and with a backbone
- Visible and engaged
- Support and value all staff
- Seek student voice
- Ability to reflect and self-evaluate

APPENDIX

The APPENDIX pages of this proposal include the following documents:

1. Survey Report
2. Bulleted Notes from Focus Groups and Interviews
3. Sun Prairie Area School District Data Briefs - 2024-2025 Wisconsin State Report Card Analysis



Sun Prairie Area School District Survey for Superintendent Search

HYA | HAZARD
YOUNG
ATTEA
ASSOCIATES

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METHODOLOGY

The survey results contained in this document are based on HYA's research related to superintendent leadership standards. The survey addresses both district performance and desired characteristics of the superintendent in relation to the following areas:

- Vision and Values (VV) - The leader's ability to provide a clear and compelling vision for the future, align district programs to the broader vision of the district, and uphold high expectations for all stakeholders
- Teaching and Learning (TL) - The leader's ability to guide educational programs, make data-driven decisions, and implement effective instructional change
- Community Engagement (CE) - The leader's ability to be the voice of the district, engage with the community, and involve stakeholders in realizing the district's vision
- Management (M) - The leader's ability to guide operations, manage resources, recruit and retain highly effective personnel, and create an equitable accountability system for all employees

Through the understanding of stakeholder's views regarding the state of the district and the desired profile of the next superintendent, this report will help the district prioritize the desired characteristics of the superintendent in a way that will advance the priorities of the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Sun Prairie Area School District Survey for Superintendent Search was completed by 1287 stakeholders. With almost half of all respondents, the largest stakeholder group surveyed were parents of students attending school. Parents of students attending school represented 46.2 percent of all respondents. Nearly a quarter of respondents were high school students. They made up the second most populous stakeholder group at 20.8 percent of all respondents. The third largest participant group were certified staff/teacher at 16.6 percent of all respondents.

Regarding the State of the District, the following statements were perceived to be district strengths:

- Facilities are well maintained. (M)
- The District engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups. (CE)
- The District employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools. (M)
- Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs. (TL)
- The District is working to close achievement and opportunity gaps. (VV)

The top-rated leadership profile characteristics constituents desire in a new superintendent are:

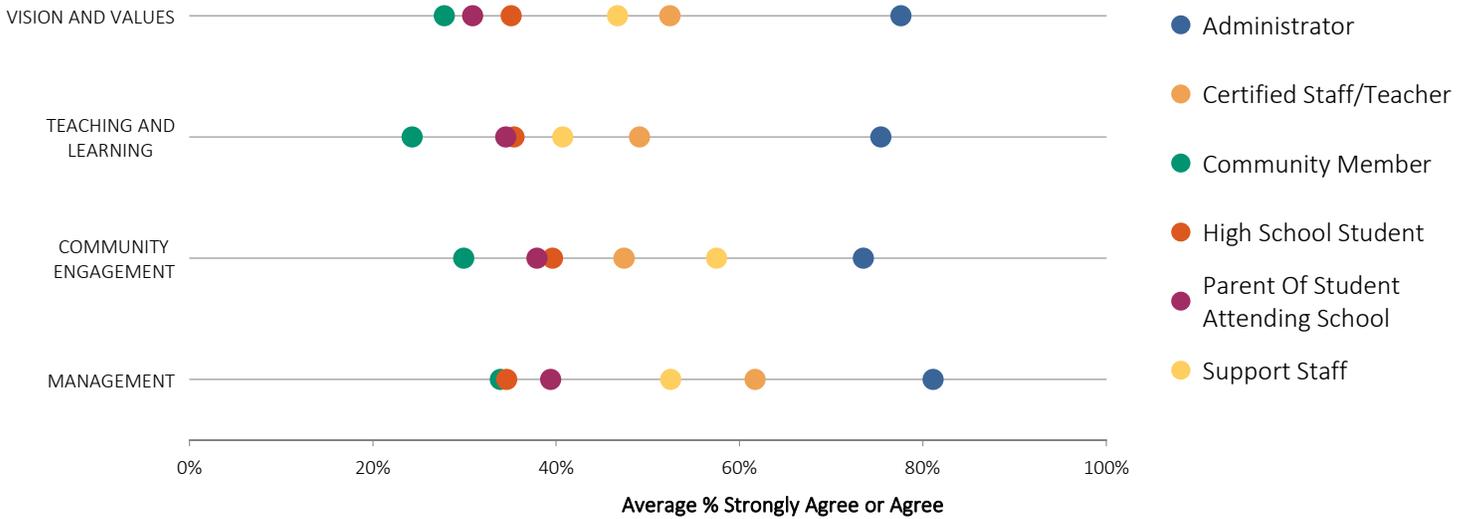
- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators (CE)
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel (VV)
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools (M)
- Provide transparent communication in all formats (speeches, social media, newsletters, etc.) (CE)
- Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population (TL)

ANALYSIS

State of the District Summary

Respondents rated statements related to the state of the district on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported in the appendix.

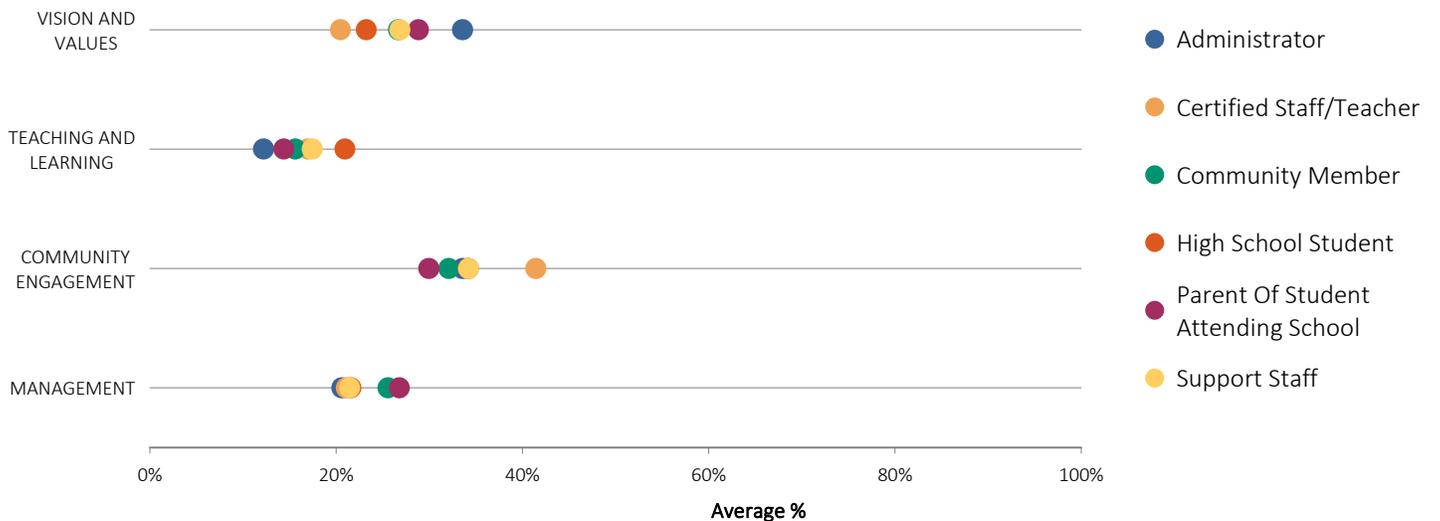
State of the District Results by Constituent Group



Leadership Profile Summary

Respondents were asked to select leadership statements that are most important in selecting a new superintendent. Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported on the next page.

Leadership Profile Results by Constituent Group



LEADERSHIP PROFILE DETAILS

Respondents were asked to select 4 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results by constituent group are presented below. Each constituent group's top 4 most frequently selected statements are depicted by blue cells (reading the chart vertically); consensus is illustrated as multiple constituent groups selected the same statements (reading the chart horizontally).

 Top 4

	All (1287)	Administrator (36)	Certified Staff/Teacher (214)	Community Member (92)	High School Student (268)	Parent Of Student Attending School (595)	Support Staff (82)
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	55%						
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	49%						
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools	46%						
Provide transparent communication in all formats (speeches, social media, newsletters, etc.)	38%						
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	33%						
Be an effective manager of the District's finances and operations	32%						
Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life	30%						
Demonstrate measurable student outcomes grounded in research and emerging best practices	26%						
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	22%						
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	15%						
Provide guidance for district-wide curriculum and instruction	13%						
Effectively engage with political realities	12%						

APPENDIX I: STATE OF THE DISTRICT ITEM ANALYSIS

Percentages of parents, students, administrators, teachers, community members, and other constituents selecting 5 (Strongly Agree) or 4 (Agree) for each item are presented below.

	All (1287)	Administrator (36)	Certified Staff/Teacher (214)	Community Member (92)	High School Student (268)	Parent Of Student Attending School (595)	Support Staff (82)
OVERALL							
Please rate the overall quality of education in the District.	43%	72%	56%	40%	37%	38%	52%
VISION AND VALUES							
The District provides a clear, compelling shared vision for the future.	44%	78%	64%	37%	37%	37%	55%
The District is heading in the right direction.	28%	53%	41%	17%	27%	24%	37%
The District has high performance standards for all students.	31%	78%	43%	22%	34%	25%	29%
The District makes decisions based on information from data and research.	34%	78%	46%	27%	32%	27%	51%
The District is working to close achievement and opportunity gaps.	45%	81%	63%	33%	41%	38%	54%
TEACHING AND LEARNING							
The District provides a well-rounded educational experience for all students.	42%	75%	50%	26%	43%	39%	45%
Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs.	49%	67%	75%	33%	40%	45%	51%
District schools are safe.	42%	81%	57%	25%	37%	38%	48%
The social and emotional needs of students are being addressed.	36%	78%	45%	26%	25%	35%	40%
Students are on track to be ready for the next grade and ultimately college and career ready.	34%	78%	36%	23%	34%	34%	23%
There is a clear plan for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration in the classroom.	18%	47%	24%	9%	28%	11%	22%
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT							
The District engages the community as a partner to improve the school system.	37%	64%	49%	25%	29%	35%	50%
There is transparent communication from the District.	27%	67%	27%	20%	26%	26%	38%
The District engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups.	56%	78%	63%	42%	60%	51%	72%
MANAGEMENT							
Facilities are well maintained.	72%	83%	79%	71%	54%	76%	74%
The District is fiscally responsible.	33%	83%	45%	28%	29%	27%	39%
The District employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools.	49%	78%	74%	32%	33%	48%	59%
Employees are held accountable to high standards.	38%	69%	70%	25%	31%	29%	49%
District uses AI tools and platforms to support and enhance classroom teaching and learning.	19%	67%	32%	8%	20%	12%	21%

APPENDIX II: LEADERSHIP PROFILE ITEM ANALYSIS

Respondents were asked to select 4 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results are presented below by constituent group.

	All (1287)	Administrator (36)	Certified Staff/Teacher (214)	Community Member (92)	High School Student (268)	Parent Of Student Attending School (595)	Support Staff (82)
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	55%	67%	78%	49%	41%	53%	59%
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	49%	44%	43%	55%	28%	60%	50%
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools	46%	36%	47%	49%	32%	52%	38%
Provide transparent communication in all formats (speeches, social media, newsletters, etc.)	38%	28%	37%	42%	43%	37%	27%
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	33%	36%	43%	33%	32%	29%	37%
Be an effective manager of the District's finances and operations	32%	14%	23%	37%	25%	38%	28%
Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life	30%	28%	40%	32%	34%	24%	39%
Demonstrate measurable student outcomes grounded in research and emerging best practices	26%	42%	20%	26%	21%	29%	23%
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	22%	36%	13%	21%	31%	20%	24%
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	15%	3%	8%	12%	24%	14%	16%
Provide guidance for district-wide curriculum and instruction	13%	6%	13%	15%	17%	12%	11%
Effectively engage with political realities	12%	25%	9%	12%	16%	10%	12%

BULLETED NOTES FROM ALL GROUPS

The interviews and focus groups of stakeholders generated the following responses. Careful attention has been given to accurately convey the message. The comments listed below emerged from statements made by stakeholders, and they are to be considered personal opinions of the individual making the comments regarding the Sun Prairie School District.

Board Members

What are the strengths of the Sun Prairie Area School District?

- Teachers are the biggest strength
- Students are dedicated to the students
- Engaged community
- Equity statement
- Good financial shape
- Operations are in good shape
- District is well organized
- Student achievement is good
- Diverse student body
- Growth in the district
- A lot of opportunities for kids, education and co-curriculars
- Teachers are a strength
- Students are a strength
- Smoothly growing district
- Referendum passed a couple of years ago
- Facilities are in good shape, 10 year plan for capital projects
- Diversified school district
- Size of district is a strength
- Great team of people
- Strong foundation of care and continues to grow that
- Staff is strong
- Good financial position
- Facilities are updated and well maintained
- Location - Dane County
- Good variety of extracurricular activities
- AP Offerings
- Supportive community, referendums passing
- Staff is good
- District has a positive culture
- Report cards are looking better
- District is growing
- Opportunities for students

What are the challenges of the Sun Prairie Area School District?

- District's approach to things is fear based
- Make decisions based on fear
- Trust with the community

- Relationship with a bigger group of teachers
- Empower teachers to be open and honest
- Teachers should have more of a say
- Communication with the school board
- Stress with the community and the board/administration
- Need to rebuild trust and transparency
- Offer more to high achieving students
- Board is divided, and governance is a challenge
- Board could see turnover in April
- The growth of Sun Prairie
- Adults don't handle change well - rapid growth
- Better communication with the community
- Trust needs to be rebuilt with the community
- Issue at West High School, need a pathway forward
- Need to rebuild the trust of the community
- Do what is best for the community
- Do what is best for the students
- Make sure the systems and policies are doing what the district needs them to do
- Dane County can also be a negative
- Transition with Brad leaving
- Transition in the board - newer board
- Relationship with the community
- Building trust within the district
- Interdistrict connectedness

What characteristics are you looking for in your next superintendent?

- Transparent
- Accountability
- Stand true to district values
- Empathetic towards community members
- Good listener
- Collaborative
- Open honest communication
- Good communicator
- Transparent
- Make sure stakeholders feel heard
- Willing to take feedback
- Open stance to the feedback
- Firm but fair
- Stand on your convictions
- Integrity
- Student focused
- Ability to work in a diverse demographic
- Seek diverse feedback from stakeholders
- Stand up for policies and what is right
- Firm but fair in decisions with all stakeholders

- Be visible in school and community
- People person
- Strong facilitator
- Be visible, get to know people
- Accountability - work with board to rebuild trust in the community
- Connect board members with administration
- Face of the district
- Instructional leader
- Be present
- Be visible
- Have a vision and work with partners to follow through on the vision
- Cares about the community
- Invests in the community
- Live in the district
- Understand the work done in the classroom
- Big personality
- Engage with the community
- Advocate for public schools
- Experience in strategic planning
- Face of the district
- Bring stakeholders back together
- Approachable
- Visible
- Build relationships
- Prefer experience - larger district, not necessarily a superintendent

Parents and Community Members

What are the strengths of the Sun Prairie Area School District?

- Tough to answer right now
- Lots of options for students
- Very prepared for college
- Lots of ways to earn college credits
- Great interactions with teachers
- Great School-to-Work opportunities
- Many clubs and activities for students to participate in
- Great potential
- New facilities-updated resources
- Dedicated staff
- Efforts towards inclusion
- Variety of activities for kids
- Great teachers and support services
- Great support for SPED at the high school, my student is thriving
- Positive communication from the high school
- Diversity is a plus
- Positive image
- Many opportunities for community building

- People step up and help
- Dual language program is a plus
- Schools
- Parks
- Good place for kids and families
- Resource rich financially, volunteers, givers and helpers, pro-youth
- Variety of clubs and classes
- History of strong teaching staff
- Opportunity to collaborate the schools with organizations and the city
- Potential
- Great opportunities for kids - arts, academics, clubs, athletics
- Dedicated teachers
- Strong administration in some buildings but not all
- Many volunteers, people step up
- Small town feel even with growth
- Most parents appear happy
- Younger students love their schools but that declines as they move up
- Great group of retired teachers ready to help
- Legacy, history, and tradition needs to be celebrated
- Strong community feel
- Fantastic teachers
- Open to equity and diversity
- Good facilities
- Many opportunities
- Support from community
- Staff
- Board supports teachers
- Good hiring of staff
- Great staff
- Supportive community
- Progressive thinking
- Staff really cares
- Some administrators are effective but not all
- Historically supportive community but may be crumbling
- Kids like school for the most part
- Principals are supportive
- Staff is really good
- New board trying positive approach but no real relationship with administration
- Fabulous teachers
- Good reasons to work here
- Good teachers
- Strong community, support financially
- Elementary schools are very positive and safe, quality staff
- Some good district administrators but not all
- Diversity in community is a plus
- Clubs and opportunities for kids

- Strong community support
- It is changing, not sure of the positives

What are the challenges of the Sun Prairie Area School District?

- Should not allow students to turn in late assignments
- If you don't turn in your homework, instead of getting a 0 you get a 40
- Different rules for different groups
- Current superintendent is more of a PR person, spent a lot of money on Sun Prairie West, needs to do his job and not worry about all the fluff
- Need to hire the right people
- Current administrators hired a criminal
- Communication with the community can be better
- Community wants to know what exactly happened with the Dean of Students, not much communication about the situation
- Need more antibullying programs
- Big change in district since West was built (2022)
- A lot of stuff is just for show
- Where are the rights of the students who behave and follow the rules verses the students that disrupt the classroom and tear the room apart, threatening staff and students
- Need more time for passing time
- The community is growing too fast, this is an issue
- Improving the district starts at the top
- Communication
- Committees need to have a diverse group of individuals
- Community input when picking curriculum
- Resources need to go where they impact students
- Top heavy and need more resources in the classroom
- Need to define what some of the administration does and what their role is
- Need to make sure families (especially the ELL families) understand what is happening when it comes to IEP writing
- Have great marketing diversity materials out, but not living up to it
- Communication is not open, people are not heard
- Retaliation to those who differ in opinion
- Issues are often dropped, not addressed, excuses made
- Little pro-active approach
- Culture of fear
- Not welcoming, learn to not poke the bear
- Inconsistent services across the grades and buildings
- Elementary safety concerns, classrooms are out of control with high need students, chaos
- IEP's not being met
- Low performance, low accountability
- No code of conduct, or at least no enforcement
- Decline in academics and in real learning
- Lack of trust
- Retaliation
- Learning needs to be top a priority again - immediately

- Process of classroom evacuation needs evaluation, students are missing learning time
- No homework in lower grades leaves parents with no way to assist their student
- Need better connection with community agencies
- Need partnerships in community
- Lack of trust
- Communication only when district wants to share, not genuine
- Lack of trust in administration
- Need a student services strategic plan
- Staff retention needs attention
- Lack of genuine engagement with community
- District needs to develop relationship with the city
- Culture of involvement and engagement needs to be developed
- Establish a point person in the district for community connections
- Stronger connections with community organizations is gravely needed, district sends message that they don't need anyone
- Lack of trust
- Public committees are for show only, district doesn't really engage
- Leadership is into power
- Staff and talent are leaving
- Chaos in buildings
- Discipline is an issue, staff says they can't do anything because of fear of a lawsuit
- Teachers are not supported
- Learning is not the norm, we are slipping
- Learning is a joke
- Scandals
- Fiscal responsibility is not understood
- The "cats" are no longer in the box, they are all out
- Increase in bullying
- Expanding diversity and student needs
- City needs to step up and help with growing, changing population, and families
- Discipline is a huge problem
- Staff afraid of legal ramification
- Take responsibility, tired of excuses
- Interventions need to start earlier, like in middle school
- Student don't have voice, they are not involved in the process of education and what impacts them
- Board should tour schools during the day, not when school is out
- Homelessness on the rise (300+)
- Teachers don't feel supported by administration
- Votes on OE's are not real, all for optics
- No teacher voice
- Lost control of kids, where are the adults
- Kids don't enjoy school as much as in the past
- Middle and high school are chaotic
- Discipline
- Social and emotional needs and issues are growing

- Staff does not feel supported
- Teachers are not "backed up" so they become apathetic
- Disconnect between schools and families
- Reputation that Sun Prairie will take anyone - move here, come here after you are kicked out elsewhere
- Kids don't feel safe or at peace
- Politics
- Racial issues
- Lip service to equity and diversity, really not doing anything
- Students feeling increasing pressures and stress, too much pressure
- Parents have shirked their responsibility
- District needs to partner with established groups like Sun Prairie Area Ministry
- Teacher shortage
- Sub shortage
- Too many "big blows" recently, too much for the community to overcome
- Problems are pushed down the road
- District has policies and vocabulary but no accountability
- Discipline issues, actions need consequences
- Staff overwhelmed
- Equity issues not addressed
- Cosmetic approach to diversity, not authentic and no action
- Have become complacent
- No accountability
- Toxic, broken organizational structure
- Need to actually "do" equity
- Feedback is seen as an attack, district is always defensive
- Administration knows it all and no one else knows anything
- Slick approach to curriculum adoptions, not enough board information
- Culture of fear and retaliation
- Part of board "rubber stamps" or ignores everything, doesn't accept board responsibilities
- Current issues are symptoms of a bad, broken culture
- Kids pitted against kids for resources - SPED vs regular ED
- People feel alienated
- School board is the problem
- Need financial scrutiny and oversight
- Pull from the business community to help with finances
- Taxes keep going up but performance goes down
- Top administration are bullies
- Superintendent runs the board, the board doesn't step up
- Top heavy
- Lots of turmoil
- Multiple curriculum changes in programs, we buy one and then soon after we buy something else
- Committees are hand picked
- Reading curriculum failed and kids are now suffering

- Students and parents need support and assistance to improve reading
- Gloss over poor school performance, just highlight a few good things instead
- Equity, really?
- Rules are made for the exception rather than deal with the issue, district likes to check things off as if it is solved
- Student lead conferences do not work, superficial
- Grading transition from middle to high school needs explanation
- So many issues - staff are in a 10 foot hole with a 2 foot ladder
- Past board and superintendent were "good old boy club"
- Fear and division growing
- Closed session information leaks out or is conducted with open doors
- No accountability
- Administration is the problem
- Trust broken
- "Looking good" approach comes from administration
- Always afraid of lawsuits
- Different rules and expectations for black and brown students
- Implicit bias exists because we expect less or pass along problems
- Parents who push back or ask questions are blamed
- Issues spin out of control with no attention
- Unfortunate hiring process of current superintendent, solicited by two board members then rubber stamped
- Superintendent is involved with work outside of the district, this needs to be limited in new contract
- Little controls over spending
- Current board is weak
- Monitor district credit cards, too many
- Lots of misinformation or half of the story only
- Teachers could be trusted with greater autonomy
- Breakdown of trust, poor administrative decisions
- Downward spiral right now
- Board resignations - why?
- Administration won't admit when things aren't right or good
- Central support administrators hide and cover up issues
- Equity language is correct but actions do not follow
- Eighth grade algebra decision was bad but administration doubled down and covered up issues
- Too much ego involved in district decisions especially in curriculum
- Growing population is challenging
- SPED needs help and monitoring
- Evacuation plan if SPED is horrible, this needs attention, we do it that way so the district doesn't have to do paperwork or report to the state for SPED offenses, we want to look good
- Curriculum is too rigid and scripted
- Academics need a close look, 40% proficiency as passing is not acceptable
- Evacuation as a SPED remedy is horrible

- We used to be a district of choice
- No transparency
- Trust broken
- Classroom behavior is out of control
- District makes bad decisions to avoid paperwork and lawsuits
- Equity is a noun, not a verb
- Gaslighting
- Need answers about school safety issues
- Approach appears sincere but little or no follow up, all a facade
- Administration likes to look good
- Blame game is the way we roll
- Stuck in status quo
- Every child every day is lip service
- District runs in fear of lawsuits
- District administration is bloated, too many
- Original board and superintendent were good ol boys
- Gloss over everything
- Reading curriculum is problematic, no oversight of process, administration rushed
- Superintendent doesn't foster open communication
- Superintendent and upper administration are too cliquey, cover ups
- As long as no one knows, we just cover things up
- Superficial relationships
- District administration likes photo ops
- Inconsistency across the district
- Issues always in the news, staff usually doesn't know
- Tremendous distrust
- Low accountability and oversight
- Lip service, performance is not really looked at
- Boundary changes did not solve equity issues
- Experiences are different across the district, not all kids have opportunities
- SPED needs evaluation of approaches
- Administrators are hired by who you know, not what you know
- Public communities are hand picked, no follow through
- Curriculum selections need scrutiny
- Tension in meetings
- Issues never go anywhere for resolution
- Administrators are in roles with deficient skills
- If issues are investigated, it never goes anywhere
- Low academics, 4th lowest performance in Dane county
- Poor reading curriculum process and outcome, really bad
- No consistency
- No accountability
- Lack of genuine leadership
- Every kid every day is not operationalized
- Systematic inequality, not rigor for all kids
- District wants to look good

- Broken trust
- Need a fix before things get worse, sliding down now

What characteristics are you looking for in your next superintendent?

- Need someone to do his/her job
- Accountability
- Leader
- Someone that holds people accountable
- The buck stops with the superintendent
- Responsible
- Hire the best people possible
- Work for the Board and community
- Clarity
- Ethical
- Good steward of the community
- Good role model
- Teacher centered
- Experience in working with diverse communities
- Not just a political figure
- Understands the history of the harm that has been done
- Someone in it for the long haul
- Willing to take risks for the marginalized students and families
- Look at system as whole, structure/framework of the administrative team
- Well respected
- In touch with teachers
- Trust
- Need to be proactive
- Develop procedures and communicate them
- Don't gloss over issues
- Taker ownership and responsibility
- Be responsible
- Be real about inclusion and equity, not just words
- Courage
- Honesty and integrity
- High expectations
- Knowledge of what really works
- Admit mistakes, don't cover up
- Do not hire from current staff
- Available
- More connected
- More visible
- Responsive and responsible
- Be community focused
- Bring proven success with diverse populations
- Relationship builder
- Transparent

- Authentic communication, no excuses
- No gaslighting
- Take responsibility
- Admit mistakes
- Don't assign blame
- Visionary
- Engaged in community
- Proven leadership
- Not ego driven
- Open to feedback
- Be a learner
- Not PhD power driven
- Highly ethical
- Proven success and skills for position
- High integrity
- Willing to accept other ideas
- Respect others' experience
- Establish expectations for student behavior
- Repair culture
- Set high expectations
- Make schools feel safe
- Don't let kids fall behind
- Understand diverse cultures and differences
- Connect with community and city
- Bring community together
- Connect with staff, know staff and support them
- Understands equity as a verb
- Change management
- System thinker
- Engage with community
- Courage, tough skin
- Skilled in board relations and governance
- Support for teachers
- Seek representation from staff and community
- Pay attention to academics
- Be present
- Visit buildings and engage
- Pay attention to what is really going on
- Support our staff please
- Be transparent
- Train all staff in crisis response not just SPED
- Look into how SPED is used, study the past audit
- Seek feedback and listen
- Listen to people with issues, don't act like the district is always right
- Don't be afraid of "legal" ramifications, don't use that as an excuse for not dealing with issues

- Listen
- Dig into real equity work
- Don't be protective, be authentic
- Work with the board
- Build trust
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Define our issues carefully
- SPED focus
- Progressive thinker
- Financial awareness
- Don't be afraid, do the right thing
- Create high accountability
- Look into teacher pay
- Transparency
- Confidence
- Better communication
- Courage
- Knowledge of curriculum and what really works
- Address equity
- Genuine, not performative
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Live up to one's words
- Build relationships
- Capable of stepping into a mess
- Take time, examine, move forward thoughtfully
- Make community feel safe again
- No internals
- Foster openness
- Don't worry about looking perfect, be genuine
- Really make it every child every day
- Hold everyone to higher standards
- Retain high quality teachers, thin the administration
- Transparency
- Boundaries will need attention again
- A high tide raises all, we need that
- Demonstrate past success and performance
- Work on board relations and governance
- Don't be defensive, be honest, own it when needed

School District Staff

What are the strengths of the Sun Prairie Area School District?

- Talented staff
- Great support staff
- A lot of opportunity for students

- People want the best for students
- Supportive parents
- Great students and diversity
- Plurality of Society (library collection represents all of the diversity)
- SP 100 Leadership team does a good job and has a great process in place
- Teachers are advocates for students
- Great summer school program
- Great resources to provide academic supports for students
- Teachers rely on each other for support
- Strong community support although it has been fractured recently
- Commitment to equity, especially beyond just racial equity
- Many opportunities to develop interests, clubs and activities
- Support for library media
- District wellness clinic
- Good resources
- Collaboration of staff across district
- Education Foundation resources
- Strong building administration team, appreciative of assistant principals
- Fastest growing city in Wisconsin
- Students
- Supportive community
- Some schools are intentional about student voice, but not all
- Great students
- Going in the right direction
- Strong equity statement
- Investment in core resources and the training to use them
- Investment in early literacy
- Wellness clinic
- Schools are funded well
- Positive growth, means more opportunities for kids
- Diversity is good - age, race, culture
- Local foundation support of schools
- Great opportunity here
- Schools are all about the kids
- Strong mission and value statements
- Thought out strategic plan
- Support for the arts
- Good communication, especially to staff
- Clubs for kids
- High involvement from schools and community
- There is good in every classroom
- Staff supports each other
- Amazing facilities
- Staff is amazing
- Course offerings, growing dual credit offerings
- Community support, referendums pass

- Community values education
- Community values teachers
- District supports all students
- The current employees who have sustained all of the changes in the district, are loyal, even when the district isn't
- The employees care about the students
- The employees work hard every day and do their best
- Teachers
- Financially sound
- Community wants what is best for students
- Beautiful facilities
- Good financial condition
- Great staff
- Many choices for students
- Most staff love going to work because of their dedication
- District works hard to care for kids
- Staff
- Buildings
- Staff pays attention to needs
- Sun Prairie is a beacon for other schools, they often model us
- Instructional framework is good
- Focus on equity
- District leadership supports buildings
- Scorecards and frameworks have taken years to develop but are working
- Leaders care about us
- Leaders are visible
- Continuous improvement
- Strategic framework
- Equity beliefs
- Quality staff
- Strong vision to follow
- Many opportunities for staff and students to grow
- Good staff retention
- Staff dedicated to kids
- Commitment to serve a diverse community
- Beautiful facilities
- Student achievement
- Senior leadership is good
- Equity work is intentional
- Professional development
- Empathy
- Curiosity about learning
- Our feedback is heard
- Equity is a focus
- Everyone belongs and is included
- Great talented staff

- Citizens support education
- Innovative work going on
- Priority on health and safety of students
- Resources are good
- A lot of opportunities for students, both college bound and career bound
- District does a good job with staffing

What are the challenges of the Sun Prairie Area School District?

- Tower mentality needs to end, "us verses them"
- Staff wants more input
- Need to see the superintendent in the buildings
- No Alternative Ed at the middle schools
- A lot of students that need support in the classroom
- Need to hire qualified people, need to go back to hiring teams
- Operational system is not very productive
- A lot of little things have broken confidence and trust
- Students need lots of supports, flexibility to adjust to meet the needs of students and staff
- The more adult people around to support and love kids, the better
- Falling behind in Dane County for pay and benefits
- Support Library Media positions in the district
- Communication, district has grown so rapidly, a lost connection from building to central office, message break down
- Lots of top-down
- With all of the growth SPASD has become top heavy
- Directives coming from top-down, not much collaboration
- Don't live by what's best for kids
- Not following policy for calling parents when issues arise, must adhere to district policy
- Say we want to have hard conversations but we really don't, this does not help
- Need to hire experienced principals and administrators
- Some principals feel staff is threatening when questioning
- Low staff morale
- Blurred line between professionalism and friendship
- Cannot retain teachers of color as they get pushed out
- Top-down decisions with curriculum
- Need to get teachers on board
- Need more collaboration
- Seems like we are in the perfect storm
- Math - example of having 8th grade students take algebra, teachers said not to do it but administration did it anyway, it was a disaster, and need to admit if mistakes are made
- CKLA is a mess (CKLA is a Literacy Curriculum)
- Mental health needs of students
- Behavioral needs across district
- SPED numbers growing but staff lags behind
- Inconsistent allocation of resources
- Growth and needs in attendance boundaries are changing and need attention

- Consistent curriculum is good but we need to focus on age appropriateness and development needs of learners, too much sitting and time on task in early grades
- District office administration is not visible
- Recruiting and retaining subs
- Mental health challenges, students and staff
- Inexperienced board, turnover, looks like amateur hour
- Time for innovation
- Make the load more manageable for teachers
- Departments in the district are not on the same page, people are working in silos
- Demographics show students at the lower end of free and reduced tend to stay there
- Equity should be lead by the district, not school by school
- Retain quality staff, trust and work with union reps
- Close minded thinking
- People's thinking hasn't evolved with the times and with the diversity
- Discipline is not always equitable
- Trust issue in the district
- Growth needs attention
- Board needs to be in touch but act as a whole, not individuals
- Young, unexperienced board
- Stop listening only to negative, there are more positives but they are not as vocal
- Lack of trust across district
- Little support from central office, they know everything and like it that way
- Poor communication about current issues, staff should be more informed
- Appear to have everything under control but it is just an image
- New board with little experience, not familiar with their role
- Board meetings waste time, board needs to be developed
- Superintendent is scapegoat for everything, not really addressing issues
- Hiding behind problems, not confronting real problems
- Paternalistic, defensive approach to everything
- Board and superintendent need defined roles
- Board is toxic
- High conflict culture
- Demographics changing
- No accountability
- Administrative turn over
- Tend to just get rid of the problems or people, we "run the bus over them" instead of solving issues
- Talk about diversity but little real action
- Over reliance on color coded documents when little is actually going on, no accountability
- Bloated administration
- Arts being reduced when they can be a solution to student success for all
- Administration doesn't live here
- District more concerned about image instead of real problem solving
- Always crafting the message to look good
- Procedures are in place but not followed, no accountability
- Need action not just words and documents

- Big talk but little action
- Bigotry exists
- Act 95 had no teacher voice/input
- Teacher input overlooked
- Need real restorative practices, not just talk
- No more token hires to fill diversity appearance
- Too many directors
- Board inexperienced or just not paying attention
- BDDI complaints ignored
- Lack of support from administration
- Administrative turnover
- Lack of consistency in administration
- Lack of transparency
- District office and teachers have a fractured relationship
- Raise expectations for the secondary students
- Need more staff input at the district level
- District is top heavy
- Too many administrators
- Board is all fairly new
- Not holding ALL kids to high standards
- Race inequity - when our main focus is on students of color, we alienate our staff of color. We should not be asking them for the answers. Also, our sole focus for the last four years has been on students of color. It's hard to know the answers to why some students are not achieving, based on their race. Teachers don't have those answers. However, it feels like the district wants us to.
- Stricter rules and policies surrounding students mission class
- Absences and tardies - there is no incentive for students to stay in class, if a student is gone for any length of time, they are considered tardy, even if they are only in class for 5 - 10 minutes
- Communication when problems arise with students who are in our classrooms
- Communication when students leave school
- Communication when new students are added to our roster
- Implementing meetings because someone said we don't work enough hours, when really, we all take work home with us, which we are not compensated for
- Although we have a prep period each day, those are taken up with team meetings. sometimes we have to sub, sometimes we have other meetings - very rarely do I get a lot of planning done for the next day because of other time commitments within the school
- No consistency within the administration and staff, the turnover of employees is ridiculous
- Many of the administration say they listen, but then do whatever they want. For example, when we were splitting into two schools, employees were asked which school they wanted to be at. Many of these requests were denied; therefore, we lost a lot of seasoned employees with historical knowledge because the district did not honor the requests.
- Staff is not listened to in decision making from district office
- District office staff is rarely in the buildings
- Building leaders are pulled out of the buildings frequently for meetings
- Staff rarely are recognized by district office unless you agree with them

- No one listens about the needs of the struggling students
- District staff claim we have high retention rates but we don't at West High School - especially in the SPED department
- Community runs wild on social media and the board is weak
- Board does not foster unity, they are divisive
- Community is entitled, individuals want things their way
- Board meetings are disrespectful and inappropriate
- The board is the problem
- Good job with banners and posters, but accountability is needed
- Superintendent must model and develop administrative team towards trust and high expectations
- A very tough 18 months with board changes, inexperienced and single issue
- Board likes to stick a knife in someone and then turn it
- Board is inexperienced
- Single issues are supported by small groups, not the majority
- Board needs to listen
- Small group has the boards' ear, that is not everyone
- Great leaders were forced out or left
- Defacto environment
- The board is self-serving with single issues, really don't know their job
- Board is toxic
- Corruptive environment growing
- Misuse of social media by community and board
- Equity is just lip service
- Safety is declining, staff feels threatened
- Board runs staff out
- Recent issues stained our community
- Staff feel attacked
- Leaders are working in fear instead of feeling empowered and encouraged
- Board needs to work with the district leaders, not against them
- School board governance needs work
- Administrative support must improve
- Board has negative view of administration
- Board listens to a very small vocal group of complainers, out of touch with larger population
- Board sows dissent
- Board violates theory own policy
- School board with own agenda, not the good of the district
- Growth may require boundary evaluation
- The board needs to learn
- Unacceptable to overlook internal candidates
- Board needs to know their lane and stay there
- Board should not orchestrate and secretly plan their work ahead of board meetings
- Board needs to learn how to work as a whole
- Cant trust current board to follow the process for hiring a superintendent, they will just do what they want to serve themselves

- Board allows a very small group to have all their attention, counterproductive
- We talk but don't invest money into our special needs populations or diverse populations
- Board does not trust administration
- Board loves "we versus them" approach to everything
- Need better board management and governance
- Board needs behavioral norms, agree to them and hold each other accountable
- Board got their way and many are leaving
- We don't trust the experts
- Staff is living in fear
- Toxic environments especially social media, rude and hurtful
- Too many curriculum changes, too much too fast with little input
- Months of bad press and problems
- Board doesn't work as a whole
- Board and superintendent are not helping each other, not working together, "us versus them"
- Need to own our mistakes, not cover up
- Share what is real and genuine, not half truths or lip service
- Too much sugar coating
- Board members have individual agendas
- A few community complainers get the attention and the ear of the board
- Administration cherry picks the data
- Gaslighting is the norm
- Communication needs to be presented so the average person can find it
- Community perception of what is going on across the district
- Managing through student behaviors
- Recruitment and retaining of high quality staff

What characteristics are you looking for in your next superintendent?

- Will need to fix the big issues
- Collaborative
- Takes criticism well
- Big picture thinker
- Fairness, justice
- Visible
- Know staff by name
- Approachable
- Re-establish lines of communication
- Hear from the superintendent more often
- Presence
- Trust the teachers
- Reflect on decisions
- CKLA is a mess (CKLA is a Literacy Curriculum)
- Someone that can have hard conversations
- Don't scold staff when they ask questions
- Involved in the schools
- Follow through with actions, not just lip service

- Here for the work, not just add to resume
- Must support teachers and students
- Transparent
- Don't make decision on emotions, do what's best for kids, do your homework
- Allow for teacher input
- Actively join in
- Be approachable
- Be visible in schools
- Seek out student voice
- Develop the "whole human"
- Be a unifier, bring people together
- Listen and learn
- Develop the administration as a team to serve
- Don't bring a fixed mindset
- Work with union
- Navigate our tough issues
- Be intentional about student voice
- Develop trust
- Grace and compassion
- Understand urban and suburban communities
- Listen and learn
- Develop the board, work on governance
- Get everyone on the same page
- Thoughtfulness
- Kids first
- Be curious
- Advocate for the district at the state level
- Diverse candidate
- Prefer not from a rural area
- Open minded
- Integrity
- Connectedness, finger on the pulse of every building
- Be present for the good things going on, not just the bad
- Be open to change
- Willingness to move us to the next chapter
- Work on board relations and governance
- Connect with our supportive community
- Build bridges and connect to find a common ground
- Be visible and get central office into the buildings, stop hiding
- Don't hide from problems, don't make excuses
- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Develop authentic, genuine accountability, not checklists
- Local ties or ability to develop local relationships quickly
- Could hire from within but only one suggestion
- Experience
- Someone that will stay

- Good communication
- Transparency
- Present
- Visible
- Physically present in the schools
- Honesty
- Loyalty
- Stand up for what is right
- Build trust back in the district
- Positive
- Honest
- Trust the staff at the building level
- Classroom experience
- Educational leadership experience
- Someone to be a leader
- Support staff members
- Listen to the teachers
- Be in the buildings
- Someone who listens to and sticks up for his/her employees
- Someone with high expectations for all people within the district
- Someone who supports the arts
- Someone fair
- Someone open-minded
- Someone who is a leader
- Transparency from district office
- Honest and sincere
- Proactive not reactive
- Be present in the buildings
- Instill respect
- Have one main goal and focus - the students
- We need a healer
- Take care of staff
- Develop the board
- Allow building leaders to make appropriate decisions for kids
- Thick skin
- Make public comments more appropriate
- Visionary but recognize what is working
- Care about people
- Open and honest
- Knowledge of community
- Involved in community
- Full commitment to Sun Prairie equity beliefs and how to act on needs
- Strong board governance
- Bring community together
- Minimize corrupt, disruptive individuals
- Calm in storms

- Collaborative, distributive leadership
- Courage to make the right decisions which are often difficult or not popular
- High integrity
- Take responsibility
- Be real
- Listener
- Develop our internal talent
- Courage in discomfort
- Be a leader not a board puppet
- Leverage talent and expertise
- Live our equity values and commitment
- Support our instructional framework
- Student centered
- Courage
- Hold the board accountable for inappropriate behavior
- Balance needs and expectations
- Build on the equity work
- Get feedback from staff
- Develop the board
- Foster relationships
- Strengthen community
- Have courage and a back bone
- Focus on academics
- Look at our real issues, no more gloss over
- Move the district administrators to the buildings
- Bring consistency across schools, not all kids are treated the same now
- Title schools are viewed as "less than" - make them feel equally valued
- Change the narrative
- See the different angles, learn about those angles
- Personable
- Knows your name
- Visible, warm smile

High School Students

What are the strengths of the Sun Prairie Area School District?

- Prairie Phoenix Academy is very close knit
- Prairie Phoenix Academy has a strong staff
- Prairie Phoenix Academy staff connects with students
- Prairie Phoenix Academy has snacks and juice in the room
- Day care is provided for staff and students at PPA
- Lots of resources for students
- No hierarchy
- Comfortable environment (now at the alternative school)
- We trust our teachers
- Welcoming
- Options for credit recovery

- Alternative school deals with all issues a student may have, we are not forgotten
- Great music program and support for the arts
- Strong sports with community support
- School spirit is positive
- Many courses to choose from, especially AP and dual credit
- Flexible options for early college, MATC, apprenticeship
- Career exploration is good
- Supportive staff, teachers are approachable

What are the challenges of the Sun Prairie Area School District?

- Fighting is bad within the schools
- Teachers not equipped to handle severe discipline
- Reputation of the PPA is that it is not good and only for bad kids
- School supply funding is not good
- Staff spends their own money on supplies and resources with their own money
- Negative stuff in the news and media
- Students said they can't be proud of school
- Students voices are not heard
- Issues with other administrators when things getting reported are thrown under the rug
- Need to do a better job with background checks regarding staff
- A lot of suspensions, bystanders get in trouble for just being there
- Funding for field trips
- Better job with the food pantry
- High schools are understaffed
- Issues with PDA in the middle school and high schools
- Stuff happens in the private bathrooms
- Need a full-time nurse in the buildings
- Female students should be able to go to the nurse for Midol
- Students want to see an open campus
- Lunches can be improved
- Staff is overloaded, not enough help, stretched too thin
- Need better subs
- Could use a hall monitor at the alt school to free up teachers
- No accountability at the high school for alt kids, feel hopeless
- Increase student voice, little representation now
- Make students more involved in district
- Better communication about district issues
- Act 95, we need information
- District does not respond to student concerns, no follow up
- No response to student emails
- Students struggle with reading because of curriculum history of no phonics
- Please pay attention to student concerns, visit our buildings and see for yourself

What characteristics are you looking for in your next superintendent?

- Someone that cares
- Visit the schools and with the students (nobody in this group could identify the superintendent)
- No prejudice at all
- Trustworthy
- In it for the students
- Don't sweep things under the rug, take action
- Female or person of color would be nice
- Equitable funding
- Diversity, should look like us - gender, race, etc.
- Understanding
- Familiar with alternative options and support them
- Be visible, come and be with us
- Listen to student voice
- Focus on all kids learning, especially at risk
- Get resources for supplies and activities at the alt school
- Need a community schools person
- Consistent leadership
- Seek student input
- Be involved
- Be selfless
- Have empathy
- Don't try to "look good"
- Look at our diversity, have open eyes and mindset
- Better classroom support for staff
- Inform the building about what is going on, students and staff need to know and be informed, respected



2024-2025
Wisconsin
State Report Card Analysis

State Percentile Analysis

Sun Prairie Area

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to examine how Sun Prairie Area compared to other Wisconsin districts during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. Percentiles are used to indicate where Sun Prairie Area falls in the distribution of school districts across the state of Wisconsin on a wide variety of metrics related to student achievement, target group performance, financial information, student demographics, and general district characteristics.

Methods

Data were collected across the five areas listed below from the Wisconsin Report Card website (<https://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/reportcards/>) :

<u>Student Achievement</u>	<u>Target Group Performance</u>	<u>Financial Information*</u>	<u>Student Demographics</u>	<u>District Characteristics</u>
Proficiency – ELA & Math	Target Group Outcomes Score	Total Education Cost Per Student	Economically Disadvantaged	Enrollment
Achievement Score – ELA & Math	Target Group Achievement Score	Instructional Expenditures Per Student	English Learners (EL)	Student to Staff Ratios
Growth Score – ELA & Math	Target Group Growth Score	Percent Revenue from Property Tax	Disabilities	Graduation/Attendance
3rd Grade ELA Achievement Score	Target Group Chronic Absenteeism	Teacher Average Salary and Fringe	Ethnicity	Mobility
8th Grade Math Achievement Score	Target Group Graduation/Attendance	Teacher Average Experience		Chronic Absenteeism
On-Track to Graduate				

Percentiles were calculated by ranking all Wisconsin districts who had data on the particular metric appearing in the state report card. A percentile of 50 would indicate that a district had an indicator value that was the same or higher than 50% of districts across Wisconsin. A percentile of 99 would indicate that a district had an indicator value that was the same or higher than 99% of districts across Wisconsin. Note that it may not be desirable to have high percentile rankings for all indicators. For example, it may be preferable to have an average or lower percentile ranking for metrics such as student to staff ratios or between district mobility (the percent of students not present for the full academic year).

Tables 1-5 display the values corresponding to the state 50th percentile, the district values, and the district percentile rankings within the state of Wisconsin for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. Note that the state value is the 50th percentile value across all districts in the state. The change in the value and percentile between these two school years is also reported. Figures 1 and 2 visualize the shift in the state's distribution of ELA and Math proficiency from the Spring of 2024 to the Spring of 2025. The vertical lines represent the District proficiency in the Spring of 2024 and the Spring of 2025. Figures 3 and 4 show the percentage of students designated as economically disadvantaged against the percentage of all students meeting ELA and Math proficiency across the district in the spring of 2025.

*Financial expenditure and revenue data reported is from the previous school year.

Table 1. Student Performance

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
ELA Proficiency	52.5%	53.1%	53	52.5%	52.2%	48	-0.9%	-5
Math Proficiency	55.4%	49.7%	32	55.3%	49.9%	34	0.2%	+2
Achievement Score	61.6	60.6	44	67.3	65.3	41	+4.7	-3
ELA Achievement Score	62.2	62.3	52	66.1	66.1	50	+3.8	-2
Math Achievement Score	61.1	58.9	42	69.6	64.5	34	+5.6	-8
Growth Score	64.1	70.8	79	63.2	71.7	81	+0.9	+2
ELA Growth Score	64.1	77.4	90	62.2	79.3	93	+1.9	+3
Math Growth Score	64.1	64.1	50	64.1	64.1	49	0.0	-1
3rd Grade ELA Achievement Score	63.4	58.4	33	69.5	61.6	26	+3.2	-7
8th Grade Mathematics Achievement Score	58.8	50.9	31	73.5	70.4	42	+19.5	+11
On-Track to Graduation Score	85.6	81.6	24	87.4	83.1	22	+1.5	-2

Notes:

Table 2. Target Group Performance

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Target Group Outcomes Score	58.7	60.1	58	64.8	66.7	58	+6.6	0
Target Group Achievement Score	21.9	17.6	29	30.6	24.1	20	+6.5	-9
Target Group Growth Score	63.2	70.8	83	63.2	72.7	87	+1.9	+4
Target Group Chronic Absenteeism Score	79.5	61.9	8	80.2	63.1	7	+1.2	-1
Target Group Graduation/ Attendance Score	94.2	97.2	72	94.0	94.0	51	-3.2	-21

Notes:

Table 3. Financial Information

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Total Current Education Cost per Student (TCEC)	\$ 13,849	\$ 13,999	55	\$ 14,514	\$ 15,015	63	+\$ 1,016	+8
Instructional Expenditures Per Student	\$ 8,697	\$ 8,330	38	\$ 9,161	\$ 8,823	36	+\$ 492	-2
Percent Revenue from Property Tax	34.8%	45.6%	76	36.1%	46.2%	76	0.7%	0
Teacher Average Salary	\$ 58,571	\$ 61,095	67	\$ 60,219	\$ 62,474	64	+\$ 1,379	-3
Teacher Average Salary Plus Fringe	\$ 83,866	\$ 78,650	25	\$ 86,181	\$ 80,669	22	+\$ 2,019	-3
Teacher Average Total Experience	14.4	12.3	13	14.5	12.1	13	-0.2	0

Notes:

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Table 4. Student Demographics

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Economically Disadvantaged	41.2%	32.7%	30	38.2%	33.2%	36	0.5%	+6
English Learner (EL)	1.8%	7.4%	90	2.1%	7.7%	89	0.3%	-1
Disabilities	15.4%	13.9%	32	16.0%	14.7%	36	0.8%	+4
Asian	0.6%	10.5%	97	0.7%	10.6%	97	0.1%	0
Black	0.8%	12.6%	98	0.8%	13.4%	98	0.8%	0
Hispanic	6.1%	11.5%	81	6.3%	12.3%	82	0.8%	+1
White	86.5%	55.3%	6	86.0%	53.4%	6	-1.9%	0
Two More Races	3.6%	9.4%	97	3.7%	9.8%	97	0.4%	0

Notes:

Table 5. District Characteristics

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Enrollment	955	8,411	97	965	8,596	97	+185	0
Ratio of Students to Staff - Licensed Staff	11.3	10.8	38	11.3	10.3	29	-0.5	-9
Ratio of Students to Staff - Total FTE	6.8	6.4	38	6.8	6.2	33	-0.2	-5
Graduation/Attendance Score	96.0	97.6	70	95.9	96.6	58	-1.0	-12
Between District Mobility	3.3%	3.7%	61	3.2%	4.1%	70	0.4%	+9
Chronic Absenteeism Rate Score	87.0	79.0	17	87.3	78.2	14	-0.8	-3

Notes:

The graphs below illustrate the percentage of students meeting proficiency standards for all subjects in each school district across Wisconsin. The distributions of these percentages in 2024 and 2025 are captured under the grey and purple curves respectively. The state median is noted for each year as well. The vertical lines illustrate the percentage of students meeting proficiency each year in your district.

Figure 1. Proficiency Distribution of Wisconsin Districts - ELA

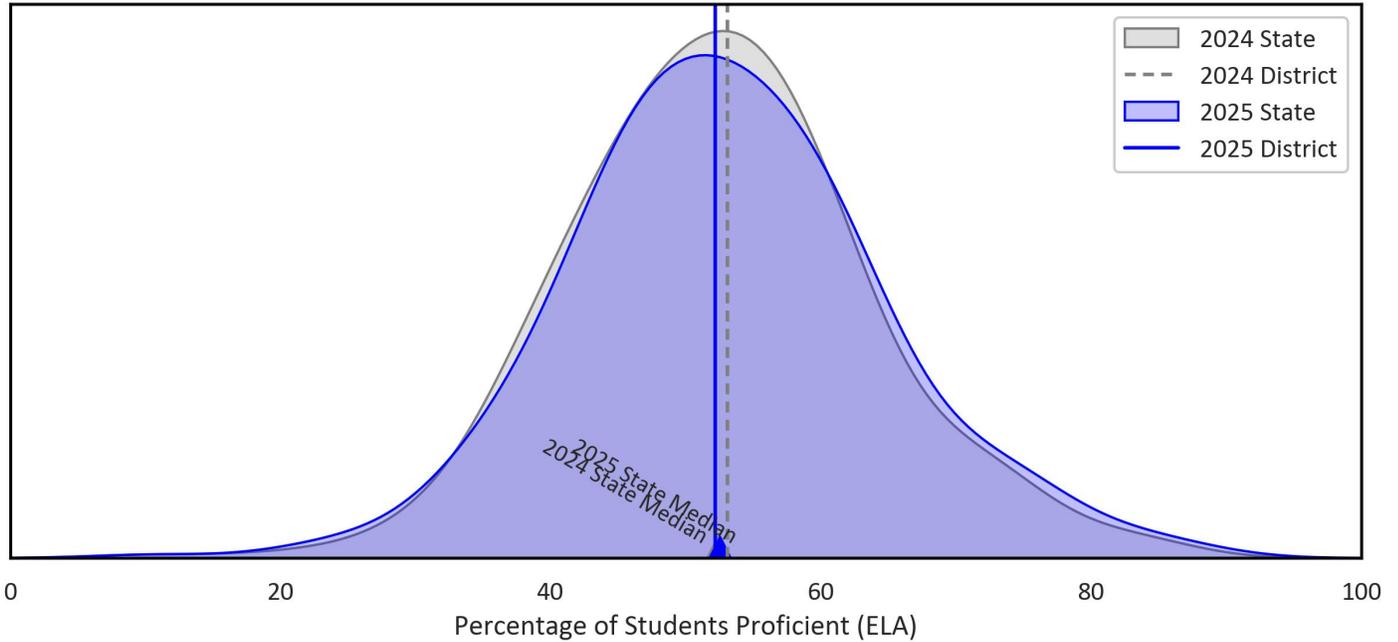
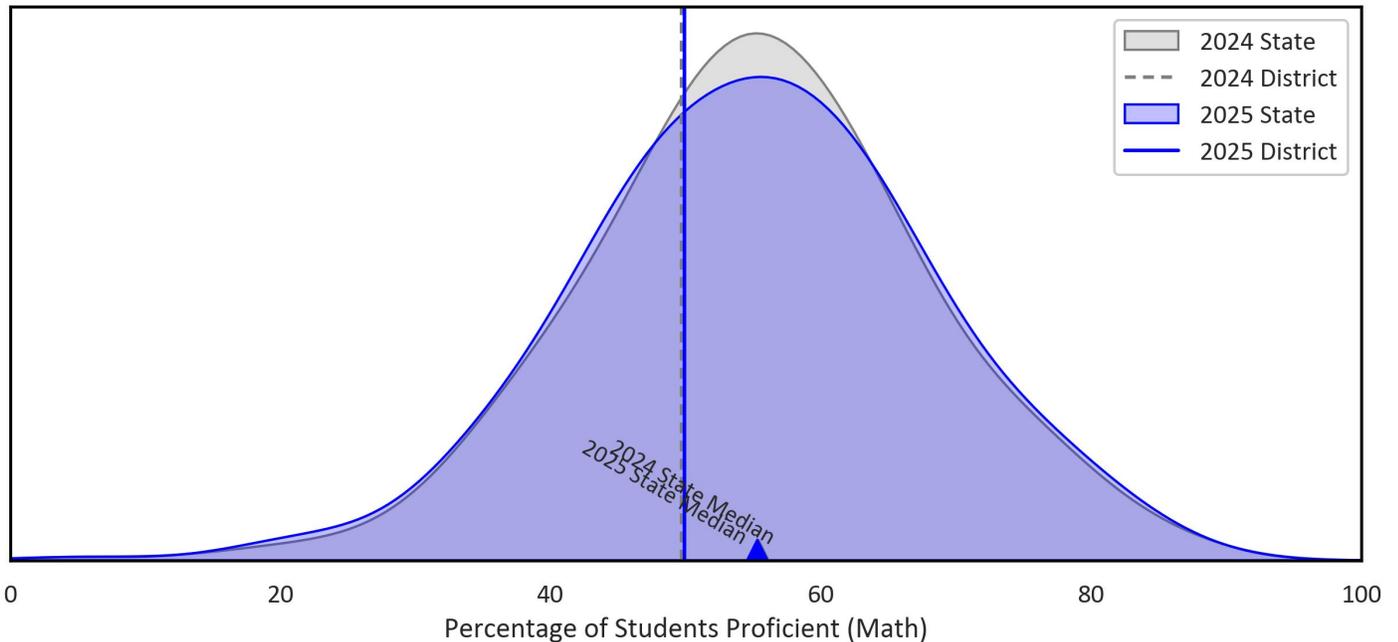


Figure 2. Proficiency Distribution of Wisconsin Districts - Math



The graphs below depict the percentage of students designated as Economically Disadvantaged against the percentage of all students meeting proficiency in the Spring of 2025 across the district. The proficiency grey dots represent all other school districts in the state, with a trend line included through the center of the distribution meeting proficiency.

Figure 3: Economically Disadvantaged vs. ELA Proficiency 2025

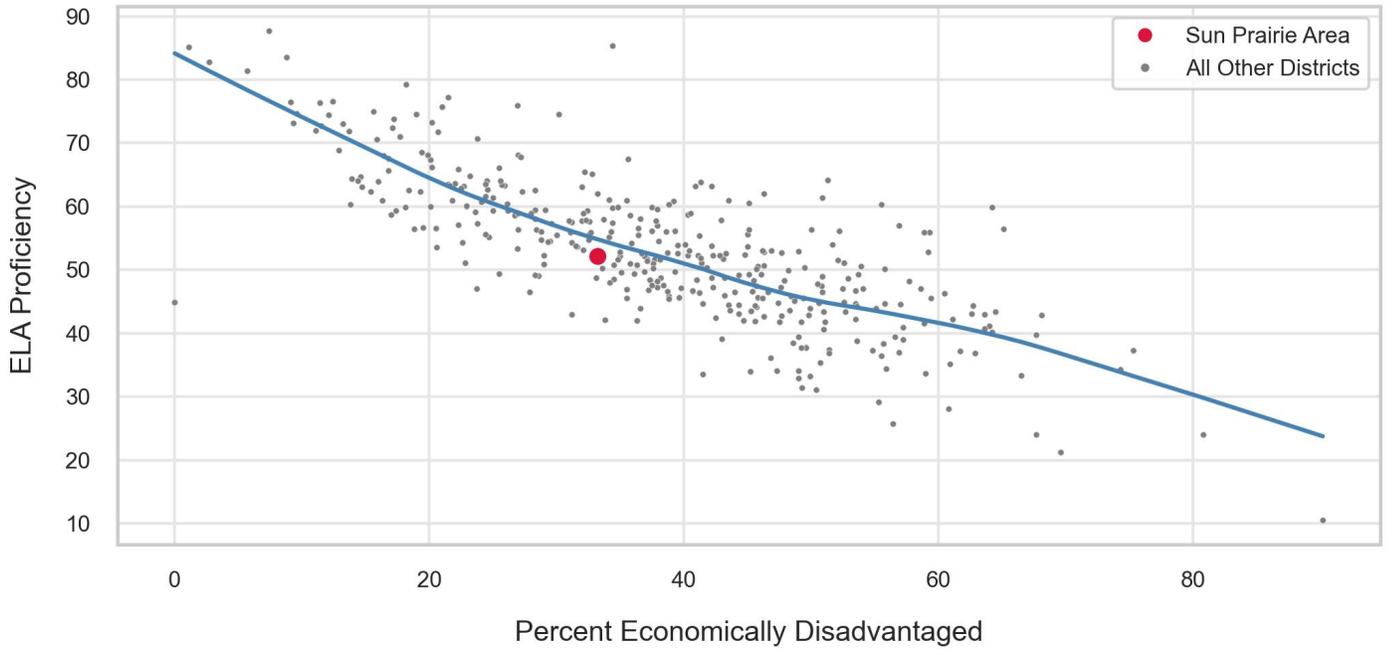


Figure 4: Economically Disadvantaged vs. Math Proficiency 2025

