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To: Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education

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Subject: Community Engagement and Input Sessions, Superintendent Search

This report is a summary of the findings from the various input sessions facilitated by Leadership Associates consultants on March 18 - April 17. Sessions included meetings with the Board and a variety of staff, students, parents and community stakeholder groups. Input was also provided via phone conversations and email messages. Additionally, themes captured from the online surveys [which were available in English, Spanish, Khmer, and Tagalog] are included. The data collected is foundational in the development of interview questions and for discussions with the finalist(s).

OUTREACH

The Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education gave the directive for an extensive outreach for input from stakeholders throughout the District. To that end over 22 sessions were offered to accommodate nearly 190 face-to-face or Zoom meetings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special appreciation is extended to Tiffany Brown, Jeff Riel, Nader Twal, Chris Itson, Patricia Avila and Julie Crook, who were enormously helpful in assisting us with the organization of the days, preparing schedules and aiding with the flow of meetings. Their assistance was invaluable!

FOCUS QUESTIONS

The input sessions and online surveys asked for responses to the questions below. We also focused in several sessions on what the first round of survey data indicated and spoke with groups about whether that input matched what they believed to be true and to share additional feedback on the topics in the survey.

1. *What leadership qualities, characteristics and experiential background are you seeking for in the next superintendent?*
2. *What do you believe are the strengths of the District? Why would someone want to be the next leader?*
3. *What challenges do you see in the next few years for the District?*

ONLINE SURVEY

Unduplicated Survey Participation

Survey respondents could choose more than one category. The following is the unduplicated number of participants.

English	4,543
Spanish	251
Khmer	6
Tagalog	5

Survey respondents classified themselves as follows:

GROUP	ENGLISH	SPANISH	KHMER	TAGALOG
Parents/Guardian	2,628	224	3	2
Student	493	29	0	0
Community Member	884	28	0	2
Teacher	1,328	17	0	2
Classified Employee	589	9	2	2
Administrator	184	5	0	0
Certificated Employee	523	7	0	3
School Volunteer	403	17	0	2
Public Official	26	4	0	0
Business Owner/Partner	102	6	0	1
Nonprofit Staff/Board	127	8	1	1
Other				

INPUT SESSIONS

Twenty-two input sessions were scheduled both in-person, on Zoom and in a live YouTube session. The input sessions were designed to gather input from existing district staff, students, parents/families, civic leaders, community groups and organizations, as well as the general public. The survey window was extended a week (promoted widely and on during the YouTube input session, which has had over 250 views in English, Spanish and Khmer) to allow for the greatest number of participants. The Community Forum was well attended, held at the same time as the YouTube input session.

MOST DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

An analysis across all survey results and input sessions led us to the following most desired superintendent characteristics:

Leadership and Vision

- Visible, accessible, and present at schools and community events
- Strong instructional leader with deep knowledge of teaching and learning
- Visionary but practical — connects big-picture goals to daily reality
- Has successful superintendent or district-level executive experience
- Politically aware and able to navigate state and national education pressures

Character and Relationships

- Empathetic and a genuine listener
- Humble and approachable
- Trustworthy and transparent
- Courageous — willing to make difficult decisions
- Accountable and follows through

Community and Communication

- Strong communicator with all stakeholders
- Deeply connected to the Long Beach community
- Accessible to parents, staff, and students
- Builds and repairs relationships across all groups
- Bilingual or experienced working with diverse communities

Equity and Students

- Committed to equity and excellence for all students
- Champions underserved students including English Learners, Black students, Latino students, Special Education students, and immigrant families
- Values and elevates student voice
- Proven track record of improving academic achievement for all student groups

Operations and Finance

- Fiscally responsible with demonstrated budget management experience
- Able to right-size the district without harming classrooms
- Experienced in HR systems and managing large organizations
- Understands facilities, labor relations, and union partnerships

Instructional Leadership

- Has recent and relevant classroom or site-level experience
- Supports teacher growth and professional development
- Trusts teachers as professionals
- Data-informed but people-centered in decision-making

DISTRICT STRENGTHS:

Participants identified many district strengths through the surveys and input sessions. An analysis of the input revealed these as the most often cited district strengths:

Diversity

Respondents and participants identified the diversity of the students, staff and community as a defining strength of the district. The Excellence and Equity Policy, Vision 2035 and Student Outcome Based Governance were specifically identified.

Dedicated Staff

Dedicated teachers and classified staff who go above and beyond were named as a strong district asset. One participant summed up this strength as "Talented professionals and therapists that truly care about the kids and their profession."

Partnerships with the Community

The Long Beach College Promise partnership with LBCC and CSULB were cited as a concrete, celebrated achievement and recognition of the community collaboration. One participant said, "Long Beach is a big city with a small town feel."

Instructional Programs

From strong academic programs to elective offerings, respondents identified many curricular and extracurricular strengths: dual immersion, AP courses, arts, athletics, high school pathways and STEM were some of the examples given. Expansion of special education programming was also noted.

Equity and Inclusion

A commitment to equity, inclusion and support for historically underserved students was identified as a strength. The Excellence and Equity Policy and Vision 2035 were specifically named as anchors to this work.

Support for Students

There were many citations of the kinds of support that can be found throughout the district. Free meals, WRAP and whole-child support services, wellness centers, are all viewed as meaningful community investments. Additionally, it was noted many times that the district has strong systems throughout the organization.

DISTRICT CHALLENGES:

Across the surveys and input the following were most frequently identified as challenges the district currently faces:

Current Fiscal Status and Declining Enrollment

Without a doubt the current budget situation, compounded by declining enrollment, was the biggest concern of respondents. Respondents also noted concerns about the size of district administration and needing to keep cuts away from the classroom.

Teacher Workload

Respondents noted that teachers generally feel unheard and undervalued. The need to build trust between teachers and leadership was found in both iterations of the survey. Respondents also cited class size as a concern.

Student Discipline

There is a perception that there is a lack of consequences for student misbehavior and that this affects classroom safety and ultimately student learning. The issue of bullying and lack of consistency and follow-through in student discipline were also noted.

Special Education

Inclusion and the need for support was cited as a districtwide challenge as well as ensuring special education students are receiving what they need.

WHAT THE SUPERINTENDENT NEEDS TO KNOW

Despite a wide range of roles and perspectives, there was much unanimity from the respondents about what the new superintendent needs to know about the community. Some of it is stated above, but as these themes were strongly mentioned they bear repeating:

- Long Beach is deeply diverse — racially, economically, culturally, and linguistically — and a one-size-fits-all approach will fail.
- The community values public education and wants a superintendent who will invest in that value and who will demonstrate authentic connection to the Long Beach community.
- Teachers want to be partners and treated as professionals.
- Undocumented and immigrant families need active protection and authentic inclusion.
- Schools vary enormously across the district; understanding the uniqueness of each school and being aware of how resources are allocated is viewed as essential.

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Long Beach Unified School District's superintendent search engaged with 4,995 stakeholders through more than 22 input sessions and surveys completed in four languages, yielding a clear and consistent picture of what the community seeks in its next leader. Respondents identified a superintendent who is visible and accessible, a strong instructional leader, fiscally responsible, and deeply connected to the Long Beach community. District strengths — including its diversity, dedicated staff, community partnerships, and robust instructional programs — were widely celebrated, while the budget situation, teacher workload, student discipline, and special education support were named as the most pressing challenges ahead. Across all roles and perspectives, stakeholders were unified in their message: Long Beach is a diverse, complex, and deeply committed community, and its next superintendent must lead with equity, transparency, and genuine partnership with students, families, teachers, staff and the community.

Submission of Summary Report

A wealth of information has been gained from stakeholders' input and from the online survey. We appreciate the opportunity to have gathered these important themes to provide the framework for development of interview questions.

Respectfully submitted,



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