



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT



February 9, 2023

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Dr. Brian Harris, Ed.D. and Dr. Connie Collins, Ph.D. of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) from January through February, 2023 for the new superintendent of Township High School District 214 to replace Dr. David Schuler upon his departure at the end of the 2022-23 school year. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews, focus group settings, community forums, and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The surveys, interviews, community forums and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews, community forums and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the District and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years and the immediate and future priorities that the new Superintendent will need to address.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT

High School District 214 is one of the largest high school districts in Illinois. Recognized as a Blue Ribbon High School District by the U.S. Department of Education, High School District 214 is located approximately 25 miles northwest of Chicago in a 68.3 square mile area. It serves students from the surrounding communities of Arlington Heights, Buffalo Grove, Des Plaines, Elk Grove, Mount Prospect, Prospect Heights, Rolling Meadows, and Wheeling. Larger in area than the city of St. Louis, the district serves nearly 300,000 residents. O'Hare International Airport and downtown Chicago are minutes away, and Woodfield Mall offers area residents one of the world's largest indoor shopping centers in the country.

High School District 214 currently has seven campuses. John Hersey High School is located in the Village of Arlington Heights and Prospect High School is located in the Village of Mount Prospect. Buffalo Grove, Elk Grove, Rolling Meadows, and Wheeling high schools are located in the villages for which they are named. The Academy at Forest View, the Vanguard School, the International Newcomer Academy, and the administration offices are located at the Forest View Educational Center in Arlington Heights.

The district has a complete academic program with more than 600 separate courses, as well as many programs and services for students with special needs. They also have a comprehensive set of extra-curricular offerings, including drama, service clubs, special interest clubs, music groups, and a full slate of athletic offerings available to students. In addition, District 214 is committed to providing lifelong learning opportunities for residents of all ages.

PROCESS

During January and February, the HYA Associates conducted focus groups, interviews, and community forums. Over 25 focus groups were scheduled, 13 individual interviews completed, and 4 open community forums were provided for the community. Those community forums included two virtual and two in person at Forest View Education Center which resulted in 46 community members participating. In all, we had 214 stakeholders attend the focus group sessions. Additionally, 2675 stakeholders responded to the online survey. The online survey was available to stakeholders from January 18 through February 1 and provided an additional avenue for stakeholders to participate in the process of determining key attributes of the district and the desired qualifications and characteristics for the next Superintendent.

Here is a summary of the key stakeholders who participated in the focus groups/interviews:

Interviews and Focus Groups

- Board Members
- Executive Leadership Team
- Civic Leaders and Community Partners
- Parent Leaders (PTO/Boosters)
- Local Feeder Districts' Board Members and Superintendents
- Teachers/Certified Staff
- Support Staff
- Union representatives
- Administrators/Instructional Leaders
- High School Principals
- Students from each school

The structure of the focus groups and community forums was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. A majority of the focus group sessions were conducted via Zoom. Those involved in providing input into the selection of the Superintendent were asked to respond to the following questions:

- What are the strengths of the district and community?
- What are the challenges facing the district?
- What are the immediate and future priorities for the district?
- What are the personal and professional qualifications and attributes that you desire in the next superintendent?
- Do you know any candidates that you believe would be a great fit for this position?

It should be emphasized that the data are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily

be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. Items are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the Board's attention.

Finally, the community survey report and the desired characteristics are provided under separate cover and are meant to be stand-alone complementary pieces to the Leadership Profile Report. They will be used along with this report for recruitment of candidates and also as an entrance guide for the next Superintendent. A comprehensive report of the online survey is provided in a separate document titled: **State of the District Survey Report**.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

Among the most frequent strengths perceived and discussed by focus group participants and individual interviews, as well as reflected in the survey, is the diversity of HS District 214 and how it is embraced and celebrated by stakeholders, including students. There exists a strong sense of community pride and respect for traditions, which have been in place for many years. There exists strong support and involvement from a committed and dedicated community who recognize the value of education for all students.

Partnerships with universities, colleges, businesses, and non-profit institutions support programs and services for students and the district's vision for student success. The dedicated and competent faculty, staff, and administrators are committed to meeting the needs of all students and recognize the importance of providing a high quality education to prepare students for college and/or the career of their choice. Critical to this tradition of excellence is the quality of the teaching staff and most stakeholder groups remarked on the expertise and education levels of the teachers and several groups commented on the dedicated and talented support staff and building administration.

The wide variety of educational opportunities offered to the students in HS District 214 is another strength that is commonly acknowledged by stakeholders. Specifically, the outstanding educational offerings available to students was mentioned during every engagement session. There are numerous extracurricular activities for all students to become involved and the district staff consistently encourage students to be involved in some type of extracurricular activity.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT

HS District 214 has a long history of academic success and is considered to be a destination school district for families and employees. Many families specifically moved to

the community for the schools. There were, however, several participants who wanted a renewed focus on academic achievement scores as compared to other nearby districts. There was significant discussion shared related to the Career Pathways and also the block schedule. Both initiatives while offering improvements and opportunities for students have significant concerns and issues to be addressed in the near future.

While diversity is listed as a strength in the district it was also mentioned by almost every focus group and in the community forums as a challenge as well. The concerns centered around having the appropriate resources, staff, and programs to meet the needs of the students. There were many specific references to improving the quality and focus of EL programs to meet the evolving needs of students in the community. It was also noted the need to provide district level leadership in the student services area due to a recent retirement that was not replaced. Finally, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiative was referenced several times. While it is appreciated to have a District Director of DEI, this position and the importance of the work needs to be significantly increased.

FREQUENTLY NOTED THEMES

The data contained in this report were gathered from Board-identified or self-selected stakeholder respondents as outlined on page 3 of this report. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the data are not from a purely scientific sampling. However, in almost all cases the data were prioritized by the individuals and members of the groups from which they were gathered. In addition, prior to drawing any conclusions about consistent themes or recurring ideas, the consultants reviewed the occurrence of the indicators or Strengths, Challenges, Priorities and Leadership Qualities within and among the eleven reference groups chosen to participate in this study. So, it can be safely said that there is certainly a rigorous method for bringing these conclusions to your attention and consideration, when selecting the desired characteristics for the next Superintendent for HS District 214. Items are included from the interviews, focus groups, community forums and/or survey, if, in the HYA Associates' judgment, they were repeated with sufficient frequency thus indicating a pattern and/or warranting the Board's attention. Those receiving multiple mentions are listed below and are not in priority order:

Strengths:

- Programs/curriculum (Dual Credit, CTE) meeting the needs of students
- Excellent highly trained and supportive staff
- Administration is student focused

- Continuum of career offerings for students
- Excellent services for all students
- Supportive engaged community and local governmental collaboration and support for schools
- Deep rooted traditions at each school
- Diversity of students, staff and community
- Extracurricular activities are extensive
- Facilities are well maintained
- Families and community are supportive and trusting of the district's work
- Fiscal responsibility and management
- Great deal of pride in the district and the district's success
- Tremendous tax base
- Nationally Recognized School District
- Innovative schools and programs for students

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Addressing societal changes and political climate to manage those changes
- Transparent communication (Departments and buildings, social media, HS programs available)
- Cultural responsiveness and equity work as a priority
- 7 unique buildings on islands- Unhealthy competition and comparisons
- Response to diversity - DEI, sensitivity training, diverse staff, discipline options, equity audit
- Diversity of teaching staff matching the student diversity
- Transportation access and availability
- Career pathways restrictive, growing space needs, larger core classes
- Academic success predictability is dependent on which HS program and academic expectations
- High school rankings and success of each school
- Block vs. skinny schedule (little time to eat lunch, focus on attendance)
- Keeping up with so many projects and initiatives
- Academic concerns and mental health issues as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic
- Meeting the needs of a diverse population
- Meeting the social/emotional needs of staff and students
- Transparency (admit flaws, trust, inattention to details)
- High tax bills
- Need internal processes and procedures in place
- Central office turnover, Gaps in system

- Facilities renovation
- Bears Stadium issue

Immediate and Future Priorities

- Creating a renewed district vision, mission, and strategic priorities
- Hiring and retaining quality teachers and administrators
- Renewed focus on academic rigor and student achievement
- Addressing students' social and emotional needs
- Continue to address the diversity (DEI) in the district with a thoughtful and strategic focus
- Provide transparent communication internally and externally
- Must address the EL program for all schools
- Develop a long term master facility plan

Desired Superintendent Qualifications and Attributes:

- Confident with humility
- Fresh face to the district who can lead change
- Visible, approachable, and relatable through involvement, being an active presence in schools and a collaborative, outgoing presence in the community
- Veteran superintendent, High School leadership experience, former teacher
- Successful record of DEI initiatives
- Demonstrate leadership that is dynamic, principled, respected, and trusted
- An extraordinary communicator who will communicate with, listen to, authentically engage, and inspire the full array of stakeholders
- Prior success with staff, students, and community
- Skilled positive manager who serves and leads collaboratively to identify, lead, manage, and sustain necessary changes
- Be the public face of the schools and advocate for teachers and students
- Articulate a clear vision that puts students at the center of the district's work
- Ability to thoughtfully engage all voices in important decisions
- Devoted to students' academic and personal growth and success
- Genuinely likes people, is deeply caring, authentically passionate about students
- Strong and confident enough to deal with conflict and make difficult decisions
- Trustworthy leader who demonstrates integrity, honesty, humility, and compassion
- Visible and approachable throughout the district and actively engaged in the community

CONCLUSION

The HYA Associates would like to thank all the stakeholders, who participated in the interviews, focus groups and community forums or who completed the online survey, for their insights and candor. A note of thanks to all staff members who assisted in facilitating our work in gathering this data, and for their extra efforts in handling the necessary arrangements for our virtual meetings, community forums, and follow-up on any issues of concern or clarification.

In closing, HYA is committed to recruiting and screening candidates who fit the leadership profile and will provide HS District 214 the high quality of successful leadership it desires. The next Superintendent needs to sustain all that is special about the schools, programs, and personnel and provide the vision, hard work, commitment and collaboration that will engage all stakeholders in moving the District forward to meet the expectations of long term success.