



# LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

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## Phoenixville Area School District May 2023

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in April and May 2023 for the new superintendent of the Phoenixville Area School District. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The surveys, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the successor superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the District and some of the challenges that it currently faces and will be facing in the coming years.

It is noted that the top four leadership profile traits selected on the survey, are for the most part consistent with interview and focus group responses. Students, however, who were the largest respondent group with 551 responses or 66.7% of the total survey respondents, selected the statement, “Provide a clear compelling vision for the future,” as one of their top priorities. Parents/Guardians with 122 responses, included “Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies,” and “Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel” as their top priorities for the successor superintendent.

Additionally, as reflected on the survey results, administrators, certificated staff and parents perceive the overall quality of the district as high, however, students and community members perceive the overall quality of the district slightly lower in comparison to other respondent groups.

### Participation

The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below: *Not all focus groups were a group that was disaggregated for the on-line survey.*

Group	Personal interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
Board	9	
Building level administrators	11	
Cabinet/Central office administrators	8	13
Community	22	32
Elected Officials	0	
Certificated Staff		83

Teachers (Elementary & Secondary)	7	
Community Leaders	15	
Union Leadership	3	
Support Staff - including non-represented	1	24
District Office Staff	3	
Parents - including Special Ed	17	122
Students	12	551
Total	108	825

The community survey report and a draft of the desired characteristics are provided under separate cover and are meant to be stand-alone complementary pieces to the Leadership Profile Report.

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.

### STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

Among the most frequent strengths perceived and discussed by focus group participants and during interviews, as well as reflected in the survey, is the strong sense of community, the community's diversity of backgrounds, socioeconomics, ethnicity and race of its residents, and the district's ability to partner with multiple and various community groups to deliver a rich and inclusive educational experience. The growth of the three communities served by the district has been embraced and PASD finds itself in an envious position as a highly desirable location, in part, because of the school district.

The district is lauded for its well-rounded programs with offerings for all students in all schools including extracurricular offerings in music, arts, and athletics, regardless of location. The district teachers are described as caring and who go above and beyond for all students and families. The 100%+ percent work ethic has been especially evident during the pandemic and the integration of the ELL population. Although there is some fatigue due to the recent health crisis, teachers, administrators, and support staff indicate that they feel supported. Students indicate that they feel safe and accepted in their schools. Community partnerships, especially from non-profits, have been successful and look forward to continued growth as demands and needs arise.

The planned new elementary school and the resultant preplanning for redistricting has been well received thus far. This is a testimony to the community/district relationship and the willingness of stakeholders to participate in the preplanning heavy lifting.

Within the highly engaged communities, there is a strong sense of pride and a feeling of “belonging” in PASD. Most stakeholders interviewed stated that the district community genuinely cares about students, their families, and education. The results of which are reflected in a PASD student description. The students are open, respectful, kind and inclusive. Despite the challenges in the following section, PASD is a highly desirable community to live in, work, and raise a family.


### CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT

Due to the unprecedented growth in the three communities served by PASD, there is an increasing concern regarding the ability to sustain the number and quality of services provided to students and families in the near and long-term future. With a low number of industries, the tax base rests on its residents. Fiscal responsibility is critical as the district continues to serve both high- and low-income families offering programs and courses that meet the needs of students where they are. In particular there is an acute concern for the growing immigrant population who may need services outside of the district purview such as affordable housing.

Although plans for the new elementary building are well underway, challenges regarding redistricting may likely surface as will continued space challenges due to growth. Additionally, recruitment, retainment and cohesiveness of staff will be at the forefront of district challenges in light of the great resignation and community growth. A continued spirit of collaboration may become challenging due to the strain on resources and changing demographics. Maintaining and improving the community and district culture of respect, trust, equity, inclusion, and belonging will continue to be important to most stakeholders. Equally important to most, will be a focus on mental health concerns and issues.

Simultaneously, with the possibility of a changing Board of School Directors and changing landscape, maintaining the district’s reputation and external relationships is also at the forefront of stakeholders’ concerns.

HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to meet the current and future needs of the district. The search team will seek a new superintendent who can work with the Board to provide the leadership needed to continue to raise academic standards and student performance, while meeting the unique needs of each of its schools and communities.



The search team thanks all the participants who attended focus groups meetings or completed the online survey and the Phoenixville Area School District staff members who assisted with our meetings, particularly Sylvia Rockwood, who organized the search team's time in the district.