



Downey Unified School District Leadership Profile Report October 9, 10 and 11, 2012

Participation

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) on October 9, 10 and 11, 2012 for the new superintendent of the District. The data contained herein were obtained from input that HYA consultants received when they met with the individuals and groups in interview or focus group settings. The interviews and focus group meetings were structured to gather data to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the District and the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years. The number of participants, by stakeholder group, is listed below:

Stakeholder Group	Participants
Administrators	48
Board Members	7
Community representatives	8
Faculty and Staff	30
Parents	10
Students	3
Total	106

The responses provided by the individuals and focus groups during the interviews are listed beginning on page 5. Responses are listed as said with no attempt to prioritize them. 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

All the stakeholder groups identified similar strength of the District. Several themes emerged from the conversations with individuals and groups interviewed. The first theme was the desire to meet the needs of all the students. Consequently, the students were identified as the District's top priority. Character Counts was repeatedly mentioned as was the GOOD (Gangs Out Of Downey) Program. A strong curriculum, excellent academic programs, good administrators, faculty and staff, safe schools, and a desire to embrace diversity were cited as the key reasons why student achievement is high.

A second theme that emerged was the confidence of the stakeholders in the Board and the administration. This confidence is derived from having a stable, collaborative Board and a successful caring superintendent who believes in transparency, visibility, and good communication. Because the leadership of the District has been very transparent in its budget development, and in its communication with all stakeholders, the District is fortunate to have a very collaborative relationship with the City Council, the Police and Fire Departments, the employee associations, as well as the entire community.

A third theme mentioned by the stakeholders was the strong leadership at the District office and at the school sites. The District is blessed to have strong educational leaders who are approachable, visible, caring and consistent. Likewise, the faculty and staff are caring, dedicated, and happy. As a result many of them live in the community. These major themes can be combined into an overall theme which all the stakeholders expressed. That major theme is an overarching feeling of trust in the District and a general sense of pride by the entire community. Downey has an excellent reputation. It is a District that is conservative in its approach to new ideas. It does not jump on any bandwagon but cautiously assesses what is the best approach before moving forward.

Challenges

The primary concern expressed by all the stakeholders was in the area of finances. They are aware that the District has done a masterful job with its budget. However, a big concern is what the future will bring as a result of the uncertainty depending on the outcome of Proposition 30. The financial encroachment of the Special Education Program on the general budget was mentioned several times.

A second concern expressed was the changing demographics of the city and of the District. Some believe schools are too crowded or just too big. They point to the large number of transfers from neighboring Districts as a cause of the overcrowded schools. The demographic changes represent challenges as the District works to insure all subgroups meet the No Child Left Behind expectations. Some schools are more impacted than others. Several comments were made that the administrators,

teachers and staff do not resemble the District's changing population. Also mentioned several times was the need for more technology at all the schools.

Several stakeholder groups mentioned that a future challenge will be the need to replace many administrators approaching retirement age. They indicated the District needs to develop a plan to replace them.

After listening to all the challenges expressed by the stakeholders it became apparent that the biggest concern is the uneasiness created by the retirement of the present superintendent. While improvement and some changes may be necessary, the real concern is to have a leader like Dr. Doty who will continue to guide the District in the right direction while maintaining the District's reputation as well as all the great things for which Downey is known.

Desired Characteristics

The stakeholders want a superintendent that embodies similar characteristics that their present superintendent exemplifies. They want an individual who is trustworthy, collaborative, ethical, courageous, open, transparent, visible, flexible, smart, empowering and proactive. They want someone who continues the good work being done in Downey and who is a good speaker, a good listener and a good communicator. They realize each superintendent has to establish his or her own identity but they do not want someone who comes in and begins to change things. Fresh ideas are welcomed but they want someone with Downey roots; someone who is committed to the community and its culture and who wants to stay the course and be in Downey for the long run not just use this appointment as a stepping stone to another job.

Being visible in the schools and in the community is very important. The stakeholders want an individual who becomes active in the community and becomes part of the social fabric of Downey. Having been a teacher and a principal is a requirement and the candidate needs to have K-12 experience and understand what constitute effective teaching practices. Another desired characteristic is to have someone who has served as a superintendent and has a proven track record of collaboration with the board and the employee groups and who understands the intricacies of having a personnel commission.

While a doctorate is not required it is preferred. However, above all the new superintendent must be a person of vision, who puts student first and works to make sure they are successful in school. Being friendly toward the arts was mentioned several times. He or she must also understand Special Education, embrace diversity, and be a good delegator.

The major theme that emerged about the characteristics of the new superintendent is the desire to have someone who wants to maintain the great reputation of the schools and the community while meeting the needs of all the students and having all the schools in good standing. Some believe it must be an insider. Others want

someone with ties to the community and to the District. Others want a superintendent who comes to stay and who is committed to making Downey the best district.

The challenge that the Board and HYA have is to find that uniquely qualified individual who can build upon the District's outstanding reputation and successfully address the challenges that the Downey Unified School District currently faces. The consultants wish to express their appreciation to the Board of Education for selecting HYA to partner with them in this important process. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to Ms. Jennifer Boose for all the help that she has provided to this process.

Respectfully submitted,

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