

**Gary Community School Corporation
Gary, Indiana
Community Engagement Audit and
Leadership Profile Report
March 4, 2024**

**Presented by
Dr. Debra Hill, Dr. Anne Noland
Dr. Marcus Alexander, Mr. Xavier Botana**

BWP and Associates Consultants

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The following is a written report which provides data and information gathered through a community engagement and audit process for the Gary Community School Corporation (GCSC). This report serves as documentation relative to the input received from constituent members of the Gary, Indiana community. A virtual oral summary will be presented to the Board on March 4, 2024. The purpose of this community engagement audit was to seek both quantitative and qualitative data from members of the Gary Community representing the thoughts, ideas, concerns and profile of a quality leader. A “Leadership Profile” was developed to be approved by the Board of Education. This profile will be used by all those engaged in the search process as the basis for the recruitment, identification and selection of the next superintendent. A special note of thanks is given to members of the Search Team: Dr. Danita Johnson, Mr. Michael Suggs, Mr. Michael Tolbert and the incomparable staff members, Ms. Erma Patton, Ms. Chelsea Whittington, Mr. Vincent White, and Ms. Crystal O’Brien, who extended their gracious hospitality, planning support and assistance in such an enthusiastic, warm and efficient manner.

The information provided reflects the overall themes that emerged from input and feedback gathered via this audit which was conducted February 12 through March 9, 2024 with School Board Members and numerous constituent groups in GSCS.

While not accounting for duplication in participation in multiple activities, a total of approximately five-hundred twenty – one (521) constituents participated in: individual phone interviews with Board Members, liaisons or administrative staff and a community member; ten (10) focus groups – three (3) were virtual; two (2) community forums (1 was virtual) and four hundred fifty-six (456) online surveys received via SurveyMonkey. All community engagement activities were conducted by BWP consultants onsite and virtually as well as via three (3) emails sent directly to the consultants and incorporated into the data information.

Group Name	Number of Participants
Bd./Admin./Liaison/C.M.	8
Focus Groups/Other	41
Community Forums	16
Surveys	456
Total	521

Identified focus group participants included: central office staff; principals and assistant principals; students; teachers and teacher union representatives; parents and grandparents.

Community partners invited to attend a focus group included: local, state and city representatives; IUN leadership; Gary Common Council; Sojourner Truth House, Gary Library Board; Black Chamber of Commerce; former school board presidents; National Gary Roosevelt Alumni Association; K-14 Initiatives - Ivy Tech; Gary Literacy Coalition; Boys and Girls Club; NAACP Board, local clergy; 411, Gary Literacy Coalition; YWCA.

Communication regarding the community engagement process was placed on the District website, distributed via flyers and letters of invitation, presented during two (2) radio podcasts, placed on Facebook, announced at Board meetings and shared by “word of mouth”.

The community online survey was made available to constituents from February 5 through February 25, which included a one week extension from the initially identified date in order to encourage a broader range and larger number of participants. Four hundred and fifty-six (456) individuals completed the survey.

In order to address Board and community concerns about engaging all segments of the community and most importantly those individuals considered to be in “marginalized” groups, community leaders were asked to serve as “search ambassadors”, to use their contacts and outreach efforts to inform and encourage participation from the entire community. The BWP focus group facilitator team included Dr. Debra Hill, Dr. Anne Noland, Dr. Marcus Alexander and Mr. Xavier Botana. All data from the community engagement activities was gathered and analyzed exclusively by the BWP team.

The community engagement focus groups and the survey process sought responses to the following four prompts:

1. What are the strengths of GCSC?
2. What are areas of challenge or concern?
3. What skills and characteristics will the new Superintendent need in order to be successful in GSCS?
4. What other issues, concerns, or suggestions should the Board consider as they are considering candidates?

While notes were taken, they were not meant to be provided as verbatim statements, but rather summarized thoughts while capturing the essence of the participants’ perceptions as related to the question prompts. This qualitative information paired with quantitative data collected via the survey provided the consultants with information regarding common themes that emerged through this community engagement process and enabled the development of a Leadership

Profile using a frequency distribution analysis model.

A summary of the survey results reveal that participants felt:

Top strengths included: a supportive community, excellent teachers

Top challenges and issues were: funding, facilities, educational options, and district growth

Top leadership skills needed were: communication, managerial, financial and organizational

Characteristics needed are: community commitment, integrity, a strategic planner and has vision.

Other considerations for the Board are: someone who has experience as a classroom teacher-principal-central office administrator, has worked in a comparable size district, knows technology

The survey participant demographics are shown as:

67% living in Gary

40% previously had students in Gary schools

47% are not employed by the District

34 % do not have children as a part of their household

35% are teachers

28% represent others

53% are affiliated with West Side

Appendix A provides the top ten most frequent themes which emerged from both the qualitative and quantitative data regarding strengths and challenges. The themes listed are not in priority order or all inclusive, but summarize and capture the essence of the community's perceptions about the GCSC community and can provide helpful information for the new incoming superintendent.

Appendix B presents the "Leadership Profile" which emerged from the analyzed data collected. This information will be presented to the Board on March 4, 2024. It is hoped that after review and any minor modifications, the document will be approved by the Board. This approved "Leadership Profile of Skills and Characteristics" will be used as a recruitment and screening tool for all applicants by the consultants and Board of Education.

Appendix C provides the feedback transcript of comments from all interviews, focus groups and ancillary community member participants. It is important to note that names of specific individuals are not included. In order to protect individual statements, the comments have been provided in focus group clusters, but are not organized so that any groups can be associated with specific comments.

Appendix D presents the results and data from the online community surveys. It contains charts regarding the responses and demographic information regarding the participants. This data was incorporated in the strengths, challenges and leadership profile listing.

Summary

With the completion of the community engagement processes, there were approximately five - hundred and twenty-one (521) individuals who participated in the interviews, focus groups and survey which were used to identify the aforementioned themes and formulate the development of the recommended Leadership Profile.

Gary Community School Corporation should be proud of the extent to which multiple segments of the population participated in this search process.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Themes from the Community Engagement Activities

Appendix B - Recommended Leadership Profile

Appendix C - Interview and Focus Groups Responses

Appendix D - Community Survey Results

Appendix A

Major Themes from the Gary Community School Corporation Community Engagement Process

Summarized Identified Strengths of GCSC

- ✓ Extreme pride in the history and traditions of the City of Gary and the Gary Community School Corporation with a history of support for the district from community leaders, especially among legacy graduates;
- ✓ The people who work in the District are real and have a genuine interest in the District because they are from the community and have been in the system virtually all of their lives from a student to an employee;
- ✓ Strong community involvement (i.e., support for the referendum) – taxpayers in the District have a genuine interest in supporting the growth of the students and their educational programming;
- ✓ Dedicated and committed teachers and staff who care about the kids providing a sense of family – the longevity of the teaching staff creates a system of stability for the students and community;
- ✓ Strong financial position at this time with a potential to bolster it with the sale of real assets;
- ✓ There are many very talented students in the District academically who have the opportunity to participate in the CTE Program/Career Center and in programs such as STEM, preschool, athletics, and culinary arts – the District is one of the few in the State of Indiana to have three certified STEM schools;
- ✓ Staff and students are willing to provide additional supports to ensure that students are successful, creating a caring environment for all students and willing community partners to share in this endeavor;
- ✓ The people of the community still have a strong belief that GCSC can get back to its “glory days” and the longevity of the folks in the district demonstrate a long-term commitment in spite of the challenges the district has faced, providing it with great potential for growth and improvement;
- ✓ The current Board of Education is made up of multiple professionals/executives who have the potential to take the District to the next level and make positive connections with the new Mayor;
- ✓ The location of the city provides access to state beaches and parks, growing industry and is close in proximity to Chicago.

Summarized Identified Issues and Challenges of GCSC

- ✓ There has been a lot of turnover with administration within the District which causes a sense of instability and a lack of productivity – when people are left out of the decision-making process they give up and loose engagement in the District – communication and trust;
- ✓ District stakeholders feel disenfranchised in the District because their voices have never been heard, and the Board and Administration does not come to them for advice or counsel – the District is really not run by the Superintendent or Administration, but by Board Members and other political factions that only have a vested interest in their person gain - the new structure of the Board of Education and District after being released from State Oversight is a major concern because of the desires of certain parties/factions/politicians being in control - need to put differences aside;
- ✓ The Administration of the District seems to do very little to hold students accountable for their actions; therefore, the students do whatever they like and are now out of control and discipline is an issue;
- ✓ Loss of enrollment – school enrollment is low because parents send their children to charter and parochial schools because GCSC does not support its students and community – creating competition from charter schools and other districts;
- ✓ Many people cannot move past “the Old Gary” long enough to see that times have changed and the need for new administration and strategies is imminent for District growth;
- ✓ Actions around GCSC have become so political that is it very difficult to make sound decisions to move forward – staff is overwhelmed with too many new initiatives and systems that are not in place;
- ✓ The financial condition of the District was stabilized by the State Oversight Committee – now that the State Oversight Committee is pulling out, there is a great fear that the District will resort to its past practices of insolvency and mismanagement;
- ✓ Low morale, poor external reputation, us versus them mentality due to the takeover – low academic performance as measured by academic tests coupled with a great deal of deferred maintenance;
- ✓ Sense that middle schools are pitted against each other extends to when students are together at the high school – some communities within Gary lost their schools to closure leaving some communities without schools;
- ✓ Room for continuing to expand community engagement in the schools – family issues – a need to strengthen student supports, particularly to respond to the losses resulting from COVID.

Other information to be considered by the Board Summarized

- ✓ Candidate should want to be in Gary, ideally live in Gary and want to be here for a long time – stability has been missing and is badly needed;
- ✓ Ph.D. or sitting superintendent not required, but the candidate should have extensive administrative experience in urban public schools – specifically at the central office;
- ✓ Candidate should be someone that students and community see as a role model for what they can become;
- ✓ Board should support the candidate when they start;
- ✓ There is an underlying pride in Gary that needs to be cultivated;
- ✓ New superintendent needs a long-term commitment;
- ✓ Open schools to more after-school and community activities.

Appendix B

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE GARY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT

BWP and Associates consultants, after gathering and incorporating the quantitative and qualitative data via the community engagement process, believe the following ten skills and characteristics are the most desired in a new superintendent. All of these characteristics are important and are not listed in any ranked order.

The individual appointed should be:

- A transformational visionary who is familiar with the history of Gary and has with the ability to develop a strategic vision as a futuristic thinker who can embrace what is possible for the future;
- A person who has a passion for “putting students first” and can bring people together by working with the School Board and all constituent groups in a collaborative and all-inclusive manner;
- Someone who will be visible in the schools and community, is a good listener and communicator welcoming feedback, has integrity and is strong and confident in making tough decisions;
- Strong in their knowledge of budgeting, Indiana finances, with experience in capital building projects;
- Able to demonstrate a proven track record of success that is data-driven and has evidence of the academic achievement improvement for all children especially: special needs populations, African America students, and children from income challenged families and has an aggressive plan to address the chronic failures in students’ State proficiency (test scores);
- A professional who has demonstrated knowledge, skills and understanding of curriculum, instruction and assessment and how children learn and achieve;
- An individual who can demonstrate political savvy in working with local, state, and national government representatives and has an understanding of the ramifications of a state takeover;

- A cheerleader who can highlight Gary's successful programs and who will develop strategies to support, encourage and improve enrollment;
- A person who will be committed to the Gary community and schools, transparent in their communication, and has the ability to connect and build supportive partnerships;
- An individual who has a background or experience in school turnaround management and has a very strong perspective in pushing student opportunities and access in sports, industrial education, and post-secondary opportunities.

Appendix C

Interview and Focus Group Responses

Board and Individual Interviews of Others (9)

Strengths

- commitment to children
- pride in having a public school system
- largest theater stage in the city
- culinary arts
- community historical in education system, almost to a fault
- the Career Center
- pride in the people
- advanced classes
- there are a lot of people that want to see the corporation do well
- there is a lot of community support and involvement – lots of people who care
- there are many “legacies” – people who are doing well who are graduates of Gary schools who want to see the district return to what it was
- the people – they truly care about the kids
- the culture – Gary Community School Corporation has always been a very unique district
- Gary location – the northernmost part of the state – it’s adjacent to Chicago
- Demographic – 99% African American – also adjacent to Porter County – a very diverse area
- there are Greeks, Latinos – a very diverse place
- kids and the leadership team all experienced that for me, as a product of the Gary Community School District that’s made me a stronger and better person
- the history – a lot of great people have come out of the district – can draw on that if you can harness that – opportunity for kids to see some very great people and have that be a springboard
- passionate people that want to see the district move forward
- new Board – a strength as long as the Board works with the Superintendent and leadership to move to forward

Challenges

- fiscal challenges – state education formula for the entire state
- end of the referendum could cause a very serious problem
- district competition
- low tax collection – rate is at about 35%
- perception of Gary and the Gary Community Schools Corporation that go hand in hand – negative – it’s well established that the City has struggled for a long period of time – that is reflected in the perceptions
- the student population – the district has gone from 40,000 students in its heyday to just over 4,000 now – lack of jobs, housing, etc. – makes it tougher for people to want to live here

- there's the competition that the State of Indiana has set up with charters and now with vouchers that make it where students don't have to go to Gary schools
- clear academic challenges – reading rates – perception that the schools are out of control, that the kids are running around causing shootings – of course, none of that is true, but the perception is based on the academics
- finance – it will be a challenge to continue to stay in the black
- the history – something can be a strength, but also an Achilles heel – relied on too much – not used to grow
- troublemakers – not there to help kids – they are there for the whatever, themselves
- money – money is king – until the school corporation has a solid tax base, how do you get people to move there? – it's a chicken and egg thing – do you need people to move there so that you can provide a good education, or do you need to provide the amenities first?
- we're in a unique situation – if you didn't go, say go to Westside, unless you really know and are known, it's hard
- Board Members will go directly to the staff to get things done instead of going to the Superintendent
- hard to really understand the organizational structure of the District because of the Management Company
- having a Finance Chief and a Superintendent both reporting to the Board could be problematic – the Superintendents needs to be the Board's "person" for running the District – we need to only hold one person accountable – that keeps down confusion

Skills and Characteristics

- transformational leader
- flexible
- visionary
- can manage other leaders
- communicator
- team builder in schools and community
- data-driven
- ear to ground
- visible in school and community
- urban school background
- extravert
- expertise in academic and finance
- ability to build trust
- good understanding of today's challenges
- motivate staff
- hold staff accountable
- understand finances or be able to bring in a financial person
- has a personal brand
- can go to the legislature and make things happen
- rockstar

- nurturer
- Civil Rights/political leader
- be able to work with the council – know the mayor – If you put someone in who can do all of those things, the money will come
- strong executive management background
- knows how to work with people
- team builder
- ability to develop a rapport with the community
- confidence builder
- collaborator – work with community agencies to help move the district forward
- thick skin – take a lot of arrows – able to withstand the heat and remain positive
- understand the difference between the Board vs. Superintendent roles
- wants to do the job
- strong leadership, communication and interpersonal skills – everyone is going to know them and they have to be able to live up to that scrutiny
- problem solver – there are lots of issues to deal with
- doer
- strong emotional intelligence – ability to read a room and know who you are dealing with and what they are trying to achieve
- bring people together – collaborator
- ability to create a strategic plan
- skilled with budgeting, curriculum, development and community engagement
- strong cultural competence – understand the needs of the students and community
- familiarity
- high level of competence
- local community involvement – we’re Gary and we love our churches, our fraternities and sororities – connections here are the currency – who is the person behind the letters
- pulse on future industrial opportunities for jobs
- change leader
- history of turnaround – literacy rates

Other

- being a sitting or previous superintendent
- coming through education (vs. from another background like the military, business, politics)
- Doctorate nice to have
- from within the district: nice to have
- Indiana experience: nice to have
- urban school experience: essential
- African American: important
- live in Gary - nice to have
- central office experience: essential
- experience working with a Board: important
- experience working with Legislators/elected officials: nice to have

- collaboration with stakeholders: essential

Central Office Staff/Principals/Administrators (10)

Strengths

- leadership with a new mayor – will provide stability and political connections working with schools and the city leadership
- great principals – cohesiveness to build back the schools and attract students
- getting students back with good school leadership
- working with the church – “one church-one school” to build community input, mentorship, tutors, supporting single parents and lower income families in the community
- resilient spirit – Gary group of people who have stayed and do great things
- stakeholders continue to stand
- good history – good location – area on the lake – lots of parks
- community is holding on and waiting for the change – we will not give up in spite of the road blocks – down but not counted out
- one identity with Cougar Pride versus silo approach provides new life to the district
- will come together with the district as one and one mindset – unified goal – bring it back and get students back
- great student legacy with Gary students in the NFL, NBA
- a desire to stick together – potentially great for a new superintendent
- size of the district
- good above average central office staff
- good principal talent by in large
- the community cares – is engaged around the school
- district in decent financial place – must focus on what is needed for the next couple of years
- Board is one of the best in the state – approachable
- good number of staff graduated from the district
- generational educators
- make sure dollars address needs
- investing in the learning community
- students
- colleagues down to earth and easy to work with
- people are committed
- want best outcome
- support for public education
- Gary has the only public school in district
- district matches the community
- staff really cares for kids
- course offerings – career and college
- athletics
- facilities
- technology

- new board (not political)
- people caring is a strength – people are invested in the district Strengths
- a good number of staff are graduates of the district to believe in giving back in an environment that shape the school
- you can tell the passion is here
- generational educators
- students are more intentional about telling you what they want and how they feel – i.e., weapons detection machine replaced metal detectors
- solution-oriented
- the people who work here are more real/down-to-earth than other districts – staff are easy to work with – loyal
- connection – community wants the best outcome for the Gary District as a public-school entity not a charter
- District matches the makeup of the community well
- a lot of people who generally care

Challenges

- long term financial stability
- enrollment needs to continue to grow
- no growth – will equal consolidation of schools
- essential to reaffirm the referendum for 2028
- the entire student population is at risk – low achievement performance
- poverty is a challenge for supporting students
- uniformity across the district – progress needs to continue
- need to factor in the factions
- economics of the district
- transient community – parents and kids
- some people have not come on board
- consistent and quality instruction
- absenteeism leading to poor performance leading to discontentment in the community
- teacher retention – we need to hold on to the great ones who about the kids
- absenteeism for staff and faculty
- need to do more to address mental state of the staff and faculty
- need to do more for parent education
- job availability – some don't have needed skills
- need more connections with businesses
- recruitment of highly qualified staff – we have lots of emergency permits for teachers – teacher drain
- state pushing for charters
- budgets must be managed and not allow to go back to way they were before with nepotism and bullying
- illegal activities
- state has given us one chance

- people have exhausted themselves to get things right
- people still trying to circumvent
- stability/commitment
- accountability for those not doing the right thing
- communication is a huge problem
- instability
- lack of systems
- more resources
- still a great deal of need

Skills and Characteristics

- main focus is the children “children First”
- able to work with people – has high emotional intelligence – can bring back cohesiveness at another level
- understanding of school finances – the funding formula has changed
- approachable – comfortable to speak with
- knowledgeable about urban districts as well has a global perspective
- executive experience
- able to balance budgets and manage the money
- recruiter of students
- expertise in turning a district around (urban district)
- knowledgeable about best practices and getting that across to teachers and parents
- communicates from the top-down touch all with two-way communication
- communicates and builds relationships with everyone
- collaborative
- hand-in-hand – has academics and fiscal responsibilities for budging – knows the budget
- problem solver – lots of personality – open minded
- a good listener
- can be a neutral party – sees other side and sees the value
- respected and gives respect
- ability to affect change
- visionary – committed to the community and stability of the community – “homeostasis mover”
- knowledge of best practices in instruction
- is excited and supportive about moving the district forward
- has expertise in inclusion and special needs populations
- understands relationship building – a uniter
- has to be a doer and is willing to do the work
- understands all of the facets of the school
- understanding of the budget and operational necessities
- a visionary
- has a mix of leaders and manager

Other

- Doctorate not mandatory – experience trumps the degree
- if it is an internal candidate and you know them you will need to be objective
- important for the Board to talk to folks other than the listed references
- it's a great place to make a name for yourself, but may only have a shelf life of 3 years
- does not have to be from Gary, but understands or has ties
- the selection should bring everything back to the students
- may have ties to the community – 8 years of multiple managers who have tried in a positive way
- location and religious affiliation
- AI
- there is an underlying pride that needs to be cultivated
- from a technical standpoint what I'm reading applies not only to Gary, but everywhere, that education is kind of trapped in some kind of time warp – Gary is starting to open up a bit from a curriculum perspective, but we need someone who can come in and has experience transforming education
- a female leader may be more organized and likely to succeed if they had the other traits and skills discussed

Teacher/Staff Focus Groups (9)

Strengths

- been in the corporation for over 100 years
- we have a history and a past – some good and some bad – should know about the history of the city
- community is very involved with the school district – they would like to continue to be involved – at least be aware – there have been times that a lot of things that occurred were not appraised of and found out after the fact
- [redacted name] principal
- new mayor who is from here
- we added an hour a day – made us a better paid district
- no strengths at all
- a lot of people who are willing to go the extra mile for the children in the District
- staff are very eager to provide the students with different strategies and interventions to make the students successful
- taxpayers who don't have children in the district will volunteer to assist children in the District
- grassroots community
- is easy to have tough conversations with people because we are a close-knit community
- strong caring teaching – people are very committed
- generations of families that understand the value of pouring into the District – legacy
- those who have been here a long time, as a school community, we stick together pretty well and help each other – the teaching community, the students, and the parents, a lot of us are in it for the long haul
- the experience of the district as a whole – we have quite a few people that have been here for a long time – although some of the teachers here are veterans, and have seen things come back around

- principals and directors, things that you need in the classroom, if you ask, we have been able to get those things – as long as there is a standard with it and it is needed
- administration at West Side – they are pretty much on the same page
- teacher commitment – left the district for 6 years and came back – most don't leave Indiana – in it to win it no matter what goes on
- a lot of people are from the community and have gone to the schools – are committed to the students in the area, "Let's get Gary back" – Gary used to be a very affluent community
- administration comes and goes, but we the people are still going to be here
- teachers are staying in the school to give back to the students to make the community better for them to be successful and professionals right here in Gary
- the teachers will always make it work – "Whatever hand you give us we play with it"
- we stick together and help each other
- experienced/veteran staff
- if you ask, you get resources
- administrators
- teacher commitment
- many of us are from the community
- teachers want to make it work

Challenges

- Superintendents don't stay – we don't get longevity here – coming out of state takeover
- stability is going to be important – morale is low – so much turnover
- every new person has new goals, new directions – someone with longevity will improve morale
- history is that superintendent doesn't get a second contract – Superintendent has to be someone who understands how to work with the school board
- this district used to be a premier district
- School board is the one that removes the superintendent – has to be able to know how to work with a school board
- parental involvement – one time we had an assistant superintendent who had a background in parental involvement – with the closures and busing there is less community in the schools
- someone who has a background with motivating parents – teaching parents to parent
- recruitment of students – needs to be able to tout Gary schools – we have lost a lot of students to charter schools – has to talk to students and parents and tout the positives of Gary schools
- academically (math and reading) has been historically low – having a strategic plan around how to close the gaps – not adding more programs, but rather using the ones we have – believe that once we are academically growing people will come back
- coming in has to have a remediation plan – the gap has widened with COVID and return to school – not long term subs, need to recruit people who will want to be here – we lost a lot of programs for students after-school and such, but then we can't find people who will be coaches to the students – kids will come back if we have those things in place
- not putting band-aids on buildings – that's why we've had to close schools – i.e., Westside roof: told they put one on and it still leaks

- referendum would have failed without the faith-based community – when it’s worked it’s because we’ve worked together
- A lot of good people have been run out of this district
- When people are left out of the decision-making process, they give up and loose engagement in the district
- discriminator – a whole city of black people who cannot make one decision about their children’s education
- things that are put in places are not effective
- from the time that the District has come under State oversight, there has been no continuity, not consistency, and the changing of the guard happens at the drop of the dime
- the District has never had one Emergency Manager for a long period of time – there was not consistent vision – every year the district falls further and further behind
- it is easy to correct the financial part, it is very difficult to change the academic
- no program has every had stability in this District – inconsistency causes problems for partnering institutions who support the District
- there are a lot of people/organizations that want to help the District, but there is no assistance or process to get it done
- the Emergency Managers come into the District and never want to tap into the stakeholders to understanding the challenges of the District, and they never try to figure out what the challenges are that need to be address.
- our District is in the shape that this is in is “by design”
- DOAB never looked at any measures of academics – community, administrations, programs, and curriculum
- the Emergency Managers only worked to get a bonus – the district might have reached some fiscal milestones, but the goal of academic improvement was never existent
- the administration does not hold students accountable and they are doing whatever they like
- the Gary schools are a prison
- there are no evidence supports for students or parents across the District - there is no sense of community
- schools were shut down where kids walk to them, only to be bussed to a school on the other side of time
- no one listens
- there are no sports in the schools - you have a pool that doesn’t work, but you spend money on things that don’t even matter
- the mismanagement and lack of leadership from the administration has caused parents and teacher to feel beat down
- there is a standard state curriculum, so Gary should not be without a curriculum or textbooks
- the financial problems of the District were created by conflicts of interest
- Gary as a problem with only focusing on the “good schools” and not necessarily the schools that have challenges
- this is a very transient community
- no wrap around services
- we have a lot problemed children – all we do is kick them out, suspend them, and expel them as the city goes, so will your schools
- it used to be money and resources, but with ESSER – that will be over soon

- the money is not divided to where it needs to go – we are purchasing things that we don't need – priority in spending
- we are tapping into high school curriculum in the 6th grade – we are just buying stuff
- the music department still has instructions from older schools – proposal for more equipment still hasn't been addressed
- not having proper supplies and materials to teacher courses
- breakfast and lunch – we still have problems with students eating – students come to class and not focused – the staff at the Career Center have to pitch in to buy food for students to eat because they don't have food
- transportation is a problem – transporting students between the buildings to the Career Center
- there are people who are walking around with clipboards – no idea who they are they are – not here to support students – why are they not supporting students – they watch and manage the time of adults very well – management of staff
- teachers do not have enough time for planning and IEP writing
- the administration pushes the limits of the CBA to micromanage teachers – teachers do not feel that it is effective – no real time management and no follow through with directives
- does the District require teachers to add PLC/PD because of a requirement from the State, or is the PD supposed to be meaningful – it's really not PD it really is a staff meeting and Admin just use it to meet with teachers – teachers shared that it is not the same at each building – in some buildings PD is highly structured and meaningful
- teachers are concerned about the purpose and meaning of many operations of the district – i.e. late starts, early release, etc.
- the lack of follow through and communication of District operations causes a lot of confusion and frustration in the District
- clarity
- at one time, the principals used to report to the Elementary Director or the Secondary Director – not sure who they report to now – now they are just getting a lot of directives and deadlines and are running around trying to do it
- Principals are expected to be masters of everything – the principals get trained and then they are expected to go out and train the teachers – never get firsthand information from the experts
- a different department is running the math department
- roles and responsibility across the District are not clear
- CTE – the teachers feel like the step-children – get left out and not even considered – are a pathway to graduation
- irrelevant meetings – too many directives – work on top of work – you may not get the first directive, but then receive something on top of it and you are expected to do it immediately
- buy-in – building leaders and instructional coaches do not provide modeling and examples of what to do
- teachers do not have the confidence that administration and instructional coaches have the competence to lead teachers – they are not able to model instruction/expectations and provide training for the teachers
- Career Center – gets students with IEPs – no idea what to do with them – there are no staff at the Career Center who can support students with intensive needs

- the need for qualified people across the District
- more professional development in the Special Education department
- the curriculum is not relevant to the current times of the District
- there is no focus on anything
- inconsistency in pay
- finances
- lots of staff do not work with children
- management of non-teaching employees
- no follow through/too many new initiatives
- are the PDs really needed/what is the purpose
- principals are expected to be the masters of everything
- right sized
- roles and responsibilities need clarity
- staff is overwhelmed
- teachers need modeling
- help for new teachers
- lack of focus
- some big ideas do not work

Skills and Characteristics

- able to set a clear vision – know how to develop strategic plans – set priorities – focus resources on the critical area
- maintain a relationship with students – has to work with children
- able to work with people – has worked with teacher unions
- academic track record
- has worked in and urban setting
- make sure that teachers are involved in decision making
- a superintendent that is willing to listen and is visible
- visits every school every month
- approachable
- understands financial management and budgeting
- creative – understands human capital
- understands the staff has been there – they have longevity – listens to the people who have been here and have seen everything that came before especially around academics to learn what has worked and not change it for the sake of changing it
- has been in the classroom – has to be able to relate to everyone in the system
- someone who has worked with African American children
- successful academic background
- knows the history of Gary and how tough it has been – knowledge of community – knowledge of state takeovers and how to get out of them
- has training in special needs
- has worked with lots of students
- understanding of maintenance and how to ensure that things are in good working order and clean

- will need to come up with a plan for where to move from here financially – needs to be able to make the hard decisions to keep GCSC in a good place and not have to close schools
- has to have experience with referendums
- someone who would be in a position to help us think about how to build new buildings – there are some neighborhoods without schools
- someone who is willing and wants to work with the community – takeover = us versus them
- understanding of the school funding system in Indiana – how to speak to the legislature and city government – our school district should not be on an island
- flexible – not my way or the highway – people who are here are people who have stayed and are committed to the district – we are educators – we’ve been here, we need someone to come in and be partners with us – top down doesn’t work – need stability
- get teachers to buy in or it’s not going to work – we are in the trenches – we see what is going on
- need to be nimble – everyone has to be nimble – we are going through so many changes – has to be in the trenches and willing to see what is happening in the trenches
- has to be able to make hard decisions – closing schools – will need to make those decisions
- turnaround expert
- data-driven – makes decisions based on data and real information
- instructional leader – has lot of information on instructional systems that have interventions and strategies that can be successfully applied to our population
- a good communicator – able to articulate what he or she wants to implement
- a good manager
- a good listener
- implementer
- open minded – will listen to the needs and wants in this community
- has leadership skills
- has an aggressive implementation plan for academics
- has to provide school climate structure – children cannot learn in chaos
- the superintendent has to understand that there will be some causalities
- knowledge of industrial in educational skills and trades
- strong administrative skills
- will address disciplinary issues
- a people person that builds a strong parent organization
- has a lot of involvement in sports and the role that is plays in the lives of children
- fearless and not afraid
- courageous – will not bend under pressure
- don’t come in and throw everything out
- familiar with the area – the types of students that we deal with – what our issues are – even if they are not from the area – have to be willing
- intentional
- someone that the staff can respect and look up to – sound professional, look professional, speak like an educator – academic terminology, depth
- visible – ask questions, get to know your staff
- available

- don't say that you live in the District, but have to fly in every couple of days
- able to work with and communicate with the Union – we are the voice of the teachers
- make us rise
- know the District
- be visible in the schools
- keep your word
- not just good on paper

Other

- not from the district office necessarily, but someone who has a record of success in getting to where we are trying to achieve
- not someone from corporate America – has to have walked in my shoes
- someone who has been a principal
- someone who has been in the classroom and has effectively led a school
- someone who has gone through the ranks – maybe an assistant superintendent
- needs to understand our culture and our city
- someone not coming from k-12 will not be prepared with the things that are needed
- race doesn't matter
- live in our city
- needs to understand Title I supplementing and not supplanting
- PhD or not, needs to be licensed – not someone who is coming at it for the first time – want someone who has been a superintendent
- no emergency permits
- someone who is likely to stay
- someone who is committed and wants to be here
- someone who comes here because they want to give back
- everything that has happened bad to this district has come from the Secretary of Education and DOAB
- the community does not have any accountability or leverage over the school board because they are appointed and not elected
- the students need to have afterschool programs
- taxpayers do not have a voice in the schools – we pay for the educational process, but don't have a voice in the process
- come in and have a real concise plan and stick to it
- we need to look far and wide for a new superintendent – not somebody from within the District
- we don't want someone to come in that is out of touch and in a bubble
- should know the buildings – current/past administrators go out to the buildings
- we have had teachers and parents to complete surveys and nothing has happened – we feel that this process could just be a cover up
- this District has been a huge part of the community – you used to be able to come to the Career Center to get your hair done, car worked on, eat in the culinary department
- [redacted staff name] – kept her word – she said that she was coming into a classroom and she did – she observed the lesson and then provided the teacher with strategies and resources
- we don't want someone who just looks good on paper – we want someone who can really do the work

- address favoritism – the district gets rid of people that are great in the school community, but they always bring in people that they know – qualified or not

Students: 9th-12th Grade (7)

Strengths

- whole life – we have a place for everybody: sports, arts, community
- very family-like feel – you feel supported by teachers, administrators – always someone
- offers more opportunities than other schools – was in a charter school – GCSC offers languages, athletics
- good communication – anything going on in the building is on Facebook so everyone knows what is going on
- it is not overwhelming – in some charter schools there is a lot of pressure – here you can make mistakes and not worry about the consequences – there are consequences, but they don't cost you your education
- financials – in a lot of schools you have to pay for lots of things
- GCSC cares for the students – teachers and faculty try hard – they work to make sure that students are their best self

Challenges

- a lot of students don't have outlets for therapy – they have anger and other emotions that lead to fights
- lack of engagement – some students don't like to come to school
- don't prepare all students for college – definitely careers, but less so for college – has friends who went and did not feel prepared at all – we put some things off until too late – SAT taken too late – should be in freshman/sophomore year
- lack of community engagement – leads to student engagement being lower – starts at home
- need to get parents engaged so that students will be engaged
- need more engagement activities – students don't know about all of the good things that are happening at Westside – that will lead to more parent engagement
- public perceptions that everyone is fighting – superintendent will need to fix the reputation
- need to get to the kids through the parents – if they don't believe in the Gary schools, they're not going to send their kids

Skill and Characteristics

- must be open minded – all kids are not the same and they have a different past – need to learn about the students and not assume
- somebody who the students can relate to – prefer someone who comes from an inner-city community [redacted staff name] went to Westside and we can relate to him – needs to be a model of what they can become – can look like us
- has to be a role model – African American or Black – want someone who looks like us – that makes a difference
- should come with a positive mindset – be ready to maintain things that are working and build on top of the things that we have
- needs to be unbiased – we have a horrible reputation

- needs to come in ready to learn – if they are not from Gary and didn't go to Westside, they need to be ready to listen
- needs to understand what is going on – there are kids that come in and can't read or write – it needs to be pushed and started in elementary school – needs to be primed to push more academics – you can only do so much if you don't start earlier
- needs to come in ready to connect middle school and high school – they come in with a likelihood to get in fights – went to GMS in 8th grade, when I get to Westside if anyone says something to me, I'm fighting – connect middle school/high school in a positive environment
- connect students across schools before they get to the high school – breaking down all of the negative scenarios between middle schools – we can be competitive with each other, but it doesn't have to be negative
- needs to engage with the students – I've never known who the superintendent is and I've been here for 12 years
- needs to engage with the elementary so that they think learning is fun
- needs to participate in activities so that people see that they are here for the students – not just at the big things like graduations

Other

- doesn't need to have too many degrees - Masters yes
- needs to have experience as a principal and teacher – [redacted staff name] was a teacher and he can understand what the students experience
- think that we should have someone who has been a superintendent – we don't need more experiments – someone who is more seasoned
- would like to keep superintendent for a while
- would like someone to come from Gary
- maybe not a superintendent, but definitely an administrator for a while
- not someone from an affluent community – they need to come from the places that we come from – no private school/boarding school
- no charter school experience – it was only about the money when I was at the charter school – the principal would only take pictures of the kids that were at the top
- superintendent that makes every kid think that they are number one
- has to be willing to learn
- be ready to come in with a happy face – “I'm here for you guys” – that will automatically improve things for the Gary schools – has to come in with a mindset to make things better for kids
- needs to be about the students first
- SAT scores look the way they do because the school system is failing the students – need to hold kids back a grade
- interview should have a visit with students to see how things go
- has to be resilient

Parents, Community Leaders and Community Members (41)

Strengths

- people in the district are willing to go the extra mile
- grassroots community groups strong
- strong caring teachers
- next generation student legacy
- educate all students
- grow our own talent
- transparent
- dedicated professionals
- Gary community has a strong sense of community
- students
- programs – i.e., radio station, career center, etc.
- athletics
- opportunity for change and growth
- space
- people – sense of family
- alumni
- amazing teachers
- potential pipeline to work
- dual degrees
- 3 state certified STEM programs
- many high school activities
- we love our children
- children love teachers
- career center has great potential
- one church-one school
- wonderful people
- truancy monitoring
- people have a sense of pride
- pre-school
- a new mayor will bring fresh ideas and business opportunities
- new business opportunities are popping up
- the Westside is working on early college entrance and dual credit programs
- positively growing
- close to IU, Ambridge, Purdue – 4-year institutions plus Ivy Tech and the Career Center
- Gary is centralized – federal state park, beaches
- great hospital system – steel industry are partners to work with and funding for students
- NIPSCO – Minority Young Black Women
- citizens are passionate about making a difference in the lives of children
- can be revitalized
- our goal is about excellence

- active parents who were also educators
- Pre-K-12 grade levels – Bethune Programs
- kids seem to love their school – lots of school pride
- parents have pride for those who have students within the system
- college classes and honors courses – not widely known
- the teaching staff are very dedicated to the students
- the administrators are really good, but they have lacked professional development and guidance
- administration is well intended – just need support
- teachers are all qualified – they are open to new strategies – just need the resources
- there are a lot of old School teachers who have been here for decades and have stayed
- the community – the people in this community see education as once being one of the strongest synergies in the city
- the residents that send their kids to the school have a belief that the schools can be great again
- there is a lot of potential in this community – people want to see better
- definitely family-oriented and history of strong family connection
- experience with community schools – Roosevelt High School had a strong backing in the community – many of the leaders in the community were graduates
- willing group of stakeholders whether parents or alumni to engage in reimagining what can be – because they are so grounded in the community – a lot of energy there
- the children are extremely talented and not necessarily offered the opportunities – they have so much talent and without the resources – there is a maturity about them because of the challenges that they face – have had the opportunity to think about what is good and bad
- lots of positive teachers – have the school and students interests at heart – very engaged and willing to go the extra mile – even our support staff – not here for the paycheck
- still have a lot of assets: properties – have sold a lot of old schools – have five buildings that are left for sale
- new city leadership with a commitment to education – need to be able to partner with them – with Indiana University Northwest
- lots of community partners – a lot of things stopped when COVID hit, but as far as partners like Urban League, Chamber of Commerce, IUN, we need to continue doing that
- commitment to educating all students regardless of race, gender, or disability
- grow your own – many employees were students in the district and now work in the District
- the District has always been transparent to the community – regardless of whether they wanted to hear it or not
- a huge sense of community
- very talented students – the performing arts program – early college – dual credit – athletic
- working on getting facilities up to par
- opportunity for change and growth – look at the way that we educate from a new lens
- there are three certified STEM schools within the District
- dedicated staff
- community partners provide great support to the District – they are always willing to be present and active within the school community
- there are a lot of programs that the kids can be involved with – i.e., Aviation, Production Studio

- GCSC is a big family
- the students love their teachers and have a great respect for them
- the staff shows a commitment to the students – there is a real interest and desire to see the students succeed
- the people – strong sense of pride in their city, community, and the people who came from here
- the pride is a driving force in the community
- the Career Center is probably one of the greatest strengths in the community – it also used to generate revenue because other Districts would send their students to the Career Center
- this District is a hidden gem – it just needs to be polished up
- students
- some teachers – those who have stayed and cared
- people in the district are willing to go the extra mile
- strong caring teachers
- next generation student legacy

Challenges

- test scores
- financial challenges
- referendum
- competition from other districts
- we talk about the old days too often
- attracting high quality teachers
- image
- “if you build it they will not come”
- individuals come to gripe, but do not want to be a part of the solution
- low tax collection rate
- disciplinary issues
- attendance
- lack of concentration on career pathways
- drugs
- relevant curriculum
- children do not understand school purpose
- still doing remote learning
- no accountability
- people are not involved in the decision-making process
- state control – district has been in constant flux – we became resistant with no vision – things just fell apart – we got father behind – even community partners lacked continuity
- community partners feel blocked
- temporary leader never bothered to reach out
- community members feel like state intends for them to fail
- kids were left behind
- inconsistency

- kids are moving to other districts
- we need good schools to attract new business
- schools are not available to the public
- no sense of community
- no one at the state listens
- mismanagement
- no trust
- parents are beat down
- kids lack work model
- curriculum
- financial problems were created by conflict of interest
- no accountability
- Gary focuses only on A schools
- homelessness – no wrap around services
- lots of kids with lots of problems
- schools need to do double work
- management team from state – took local decisions away
- special needs children
- not enough staff – i.e., nurses, social workers, etc. to help children
- parental involvement
- students are not exposed to career pathways
- families need more support
- math and reading achievement
- safety
- family structures
- technology
- community needs to put differences aside
- school facilities
- decisions without input
- negative community members need to be encouraged to appreciate Gary
- cultural learning curve from those from outside
- need more credentialed teachers – can offer more training and certificates
- transient – young students move a lot – need to see how they feel about school – it is a little different
- parents need to be made to want to know more – better for students – become involved
- communication with parents
- discipline issues
- input has not been allowed by Indianapolis
- air quality in schools has not been addressed – reports are available on unhealthy levels
- citizens are not allowed in the schools – get no input
- the ground rules were not followed during the focus group – discussion on irrelevant topics
- citizens cannot hold the Board accountable because they weren't elected by the community
- the Board is not in touch with the community – not representing the citizens because of their allegiance to the Secretary of Education – not in tune with what is really happening in Gary

- there is a disconnect between the reality of what's happening with schools and students and what is being said is happening in schools
- perceptions are not real about the students or citizens of Gary
- citizens are not going to tell the consultants what the real situation is
- daughter attended Westside Leadership Academy from 2011-2014 – she experienced three different principals
- having to watch the chaos and know what needed to be done, but your hands are tied – was heart rendering
- city was not receptive to any type of input – continually borrowed systems of the Minneapolis School District
- must understand and plan for the fact that some families have used creative ways to economically provide for their families – sometimes involves their children as a means of survival – this includes a large part of our special education department
- schools are three and a half years behind, at least, due to COVID – this doesn't include prior to COVID – test scores are obscured
- a high count of homeless and highly mobile families
- buildings not up to par – appearance based on the view of the students
- discipline could be better
- need more parent involvement
- the District gets rid of superintendents too quickly – superintendents are blowing in the wind
- some people in the community feel very strongly about the District, others don't – they don't care
- the old Board members wanted to manage the school District rather than allow the superintendent and administration to manage the District – they were much too involved in the operations, rather than allowing the superintendent to do the work and make recommendations to the Board
- the previous Boards have not really acknowledged the issues of the District – it was all about politics
- no one message – every time you have a new superintendent you have a new message and new goals – no consistency
- the School Board had become a popularity contest – has nothing to do with the best interest of kids
- superintendent needs to be able to provide the Board background on how a district is run
- be open minded and be willing to listen to what has come up – don't try to rush and answer right away
- the new superintendent should be from Gary – they are familiar with the groundwork, they know the rule
- there are a couple of people within the District that have the credentials that could move up
- not sure if it is best to have the new superintendent to come from Gary – would much rather see an open search – a person with good experiences in a larger district, etc.
- must relate to the community – must feel the community – have to allow the voices to be heard when decisions are made
- superintendents should not be office people – they should be people out in the schools – they should be good delegators and managers
- the superintendent should have experience in all facets of the field of education
- must be innovative and open to new ideas
- must be very educated in the law – have to be alert to what is going to help and hurt the school district
- must have relationships with other school districts in the areas

- cannot not operate in silos – they should have a friend downstate that they can pick up the phone and get some support
- the superintendent needs to immediately get involved in the NW Indiana Superintendent Study Council getting more parental involvement – a lot of good parents that are involved, but we are still lacking – some out there – if we get more parental involvement in the schools to see what is going on in the school, interacting more with the teachers and the staff
- some parents think that the schools are not involved – some admin and teachers are not on hand – if we get more parents involved in the school that would be positive
- lack of enforcement around behavioral issues – some students don't feel respected, safe when they transition into a new environment such as IUNW – when you have a conversation with them, they say “well I am allowed to do that in school” – it's a challenge because they get off track
- not enough resources to manage the emotional behaviors that need to be addressed – came up in conversations with community leaders in other projects
- finances are a challenge
- overcoming gaps in leadership during the state takeover – now moving back to a community owned school district
- now going back, we're up in the air – don't know if we are going back to where we were with previous Boards – it's a big question mark for how we go forward and not backward to the old way – that may be a challenge – the cliché is we used to do it this way – we can't do it the old way – have to do it a new way
- we need to find a way to work through differences – there has been no recent history
- the lowest test scores in the State of Indiana
- fiscal – the way that the State has changed education funding, they are taking money out of public education – if another referendum is not passed, then the money goes away
- competition from other school organizations is a threat to the District's future
- community members talking about the “olden days”
- having new people to come and live and work in the District
- the image of the District – there are so many other people picking up kids to take them out of the community – the image is that you will not get a good education in the city
- there are members in the community who disrupt progress without having any positive intentions
- low tax collection rates – about 35% – schools can't get any additional funding which means that it's hard to do anything
- student attendance is very low – if they are not in schools they can't learn
- special needs children
- not enough staff to help children – i.e., nurses, social workers etc.
- parental involvement
- students are not exposed to career pathways
- families need more support
- math and reading achievement
- safety
- family structures
- technology
- community needs to put differences aside

- school facilities
- decisions without input

Skills and Characteristics

- people in the district are willing to go the extra mile
- strong caring teachers
- next generation student legacy
- visionary
- long-range commitment
- connect with students, parents and staff
- accessible through social and local media
- long-range planner who holds others accountable
- resides in Gary
- understands career pathways
- able to build bridges
- doctorate not mandatory
- able to build bridges
- love/knowledge of Gary
- experience in urban setting
- thick skin
- experience with diversity
- experience with parents
- respects all students and parents including non-English speaking
- knowledge of Gary's history
- broad focus
- visionary
- builds relationships
- show interest in the community
- serve through transformation
- negotiate politics
- leader not manager
- coordinates school, community and media
- open door policy
- involved in the community
- knows academics, finance and turnaround
- data driven
- committed for the long run
- collaborator inside and outside the district
- can wear lots of hats
- bring in good people
- can communicate with parents
- understands multiple situations and show grace with parents and staff
- can bring new and fresh ideas

- wants to do good for the students of Gary
- can recruit students and families back to Gary
- appreciates the differences in everyone
- has a vision on how to keep the good stuff and try something new
- help parents get the resources needed to help them help students
- will provide more parental support
- has a winning spirit – proven track record – is about excellence
- dedicated to parents and children
- understands how to address discipline issues especially in single parent homes – can visualize who they are and how students see themselves
- transparent
- can build relationships through proactive building
- is willing to put it all on the table and deal with it
- supportive of the families and will help provide resources
- person to be open to ideas from ordinary people
- has an understanding of this environment – meaning poverty-stricken students and families – this district is predominantly free and reduced lunch
- has to be able and willing to adapt quickly in short increments – making up for educational time loss for the remaining students
- ready to take on Gary's high levels of homelessness creating some stability
- be able to handle the unique characteristics of this community – able to run the District with an iron fist
- our children need someone who loves them and is not just in it for the position – they should be looked at as their children
- needs to be willing to look from within prior to hiring people to do jobs that seasoned teachers or staff have the capability of doing – already know and understands the environment
- is creative in regards to the removal/shifting of teachers that should be enjoying life
- work towards salaries for the staff that provide them with livable incomes
- has an education background – academic teacher – principal – some business experience
- a leader who is well liked by all constituent groups
- is cool under pressure – is confident and in charge
- not afraid
- visible in the community and schools
- overall nice person who is approachable and open to listening
- has knowledge of the district
- has to be strategic in a way that helps to build a sense of community around children
- has to be someone who can think out 30 years
- a very good communicator – brings stakeholders together – will be surrounded by a good team, but has to be able to bring people together
- great leadership qualities – everyone is still in a learning stage
- ability to agree to disagree – this can't be an ownership position – my way or the highway
- needs to rely on the management team – strong financial management team, your teachers, along with the Board and the superintendent

- leadership has to be more than just one person making the ultimate decision – we’re all doing this for the students
- has people skills
- needs to know what they need to bring everything together
- does not need to be a finance or curriculum specialist, but has to have the ability to find and bring together people with those skills – in the past, people have brought skills and tend to stay there and not listen to others
- has to be the person that guides the process not the person who is implementing
- has had results – that’s more important than local knowledge
- not to exclude people from the area but sometimes people from the outside may be able to see things without existing bias
- can take our district to where it needs to go
- a systems thinker – we focus on the needs of K-12 – can look at the different pieces and make them work together
- has awareness of the community
- has the right approach to the children – the children are very accepting
- maybe a good idea to talk to the African American teachers in the district – they believe that they have made a difference
- used to the politics of division in Indiana – they could be someone coming from a rural area who has experienced racism
- display the qualities of leadership – we’re no different from other districts – every district has challenges – if you are here to make a difference – we don’t scare you off
- the right person with the vision and the ability to adapt
- ability to work with community partners – District is not in isolation
- has to be able to reach across the table to businesses, nonprofits – we’re moving away from silos
- instructional leader
- manager
- listener
- implementor
- open minded
- understands needs of community
- aggressive with academics
- focus on academics
- turnaround expert
- focus on trades
- knowledge of urban education
- disciplinarian
- trainer
- team builder
- supports after school programs
- understands finance
- understands remediation/tutoring needs
- STEM

- a Superintendent that can develop skills – a lot of students will not go to college so they have to have access to jobs and industry skills
- the Superintendent should be willing to work with the Truancy Corp in order to get students back in school
- compassionate
- educated
- whatever the students need you to be
- be willing to take calls from the council woman and the lunchroom lady
- has vision, hope, and positive attitude
- knows the value of preparing the students to be global assets
- mature enough to work with parents, teachers, community and stakeholders in an effort to make the Gary schools a system of high quality
- the Superintendent should not listen to the “olden days” stories, but look forward to the 21st century
- stand their ground with the community
- be willing to unite with those in the community that want to see this District grow
- a love for Gary or a knowledge of the community
- relatable to all stakeholders in the community
- diverse background culture-wise
- experience in working with parents to increase engagement
- respects students and parents (of all colors), and Sped, and EL
- values the students and their potential
- has exposure – Gary would not be their first experience in an urban environment
- must know technology
- show a real interest in this community and the students of the community
- shepherd the District through transformation
- able to successful negotiate the politics of being a Superintendent
- be a leader and not a manager
- be able to coordinate between the Board, Administration and the media
- specializes in District and school turnaround
- must know academics and finance
- person needs to be able to make data-driven decisions
- a person that is committed to do the work, in a way that will cause them to be in the District long term
- will be able to bring the entire district all together
- would be nice if the Superintendent lived in Gary
- should have a Doctorate Degree, and should have State Licenses – but would be acceptable with acceptable skills instead of a Doctorate
- be able to communicate with all groups
- teaching background
- people person
- divorced from politics
- communicator in a variety of situations
- flexible in a dynamic situation
- emotional intelligence

- build trust
- spend time in the classroom

Other

- does not think that it is important for the Superintendent to have a Doctorate as long as they are strong in leadership and have great skills – academic credentials don't make you a good leader
- do not require the Superintendent to live in Gary – limiting
- The Superintendent should come from outside of Gary – the District would benefit from a person with a different perspective versus a person who has been involved in the current District – “expansion and growth”
- live in Gary
- prepare the board for candidate assessment
- it will take two people to do the job
- not a yes person
- communication should be more than an email
- remember the shoulders you are standing on
- don't talk at me
- some teachers are treating kids like dirt
- build a school museum
- pay superintendent equitably
- we do not need someone who needs on the job training
- should be able to see previous accomplishments
- not necessarily from Gary – they may be better from outside and may bring a different perspective
- have questions about the number of survey participants probably only 50 and then the survey may be padded
- it may be helpful if they are from Gary or from a similar location
- can live close enough to get to work easily
- would be nice if the Superintendent lived in Gary
- doctorate degree and state licenses preferred
- there will be some casualties
- bring sports back
- consistency needed
- engage learners
- after school clubs
- if I were leading the search, I think I would put them in a room with a diverse and passionate group of people together and see how they lead the conversation
- should not be afraid to look outside of NW Indiana – in fact it might be necessary
- For our male population – to see them in someone – young boys need to see men in a leadership role in a positive leadership role – women too – it's much more likely that the children will be able to relate to someone who looks like them – when it comes to the challenges discipline wise, they need to be able to see themselves and relate to the next generation – some of our students are rough, but if they see a positive role model in front of themselves that can make a difference

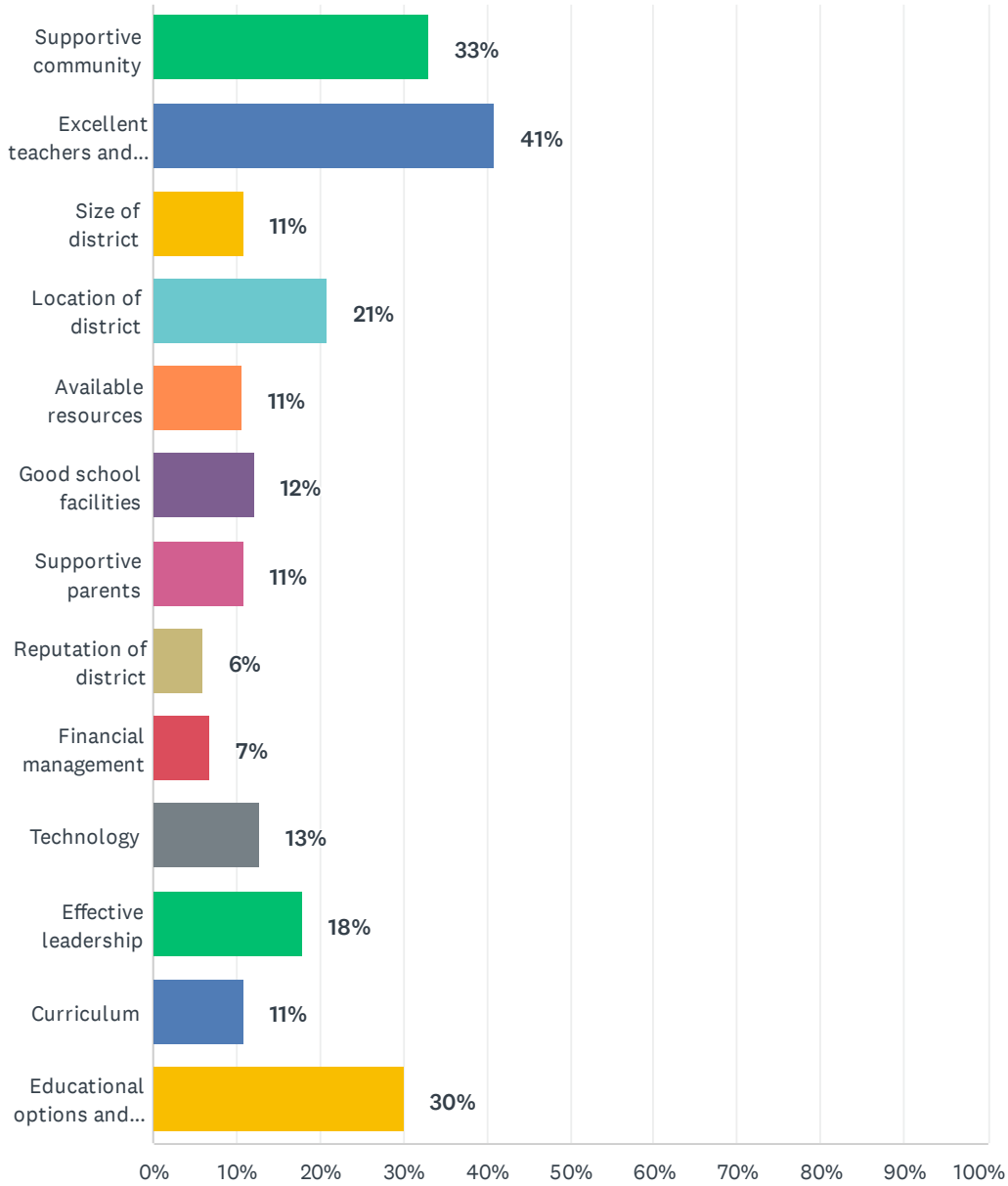
- Someone who lives in the community would go a long way to gaining acceptance, especially if they come from the outside – It's statement if they move to the community – that's what we had in the past – most of our leadership lived in the surrounding areas: Merrillville, Schererville, Miller – some of our leaders moved to the area and that gave a sense of pride
- had some who didn't live in the community and still did a good job
- pulling people from outside of higher education – there are advantages and disadvantages
- In higher education – hiring lots of attorneys – they have experience talking to politicians, stakeholders – they have lots of the skills
- be open to having someone who hasn't taken all the steps
- would be hard pressed to take someone who hasn't set a step in the classroom
- leader
- curriculum expert
- someone who can bring all of the people together
- does not need to be an expert in everything
- ideally, someone who has the traditional background and has all of the leadership qualities we talked about
- the District needs to create a system to still provide students that are an extreme disruption to the education process a quality education
- how is this transition into a new superintendent and school board going to effectively happen when there has been no real transition over the past couple of years

Appendix D

Community Survey Results

Q1 Select at least one but no more than three most significant strengths of Gary Community School Corporation.

Answered: 456 Skipped: 0

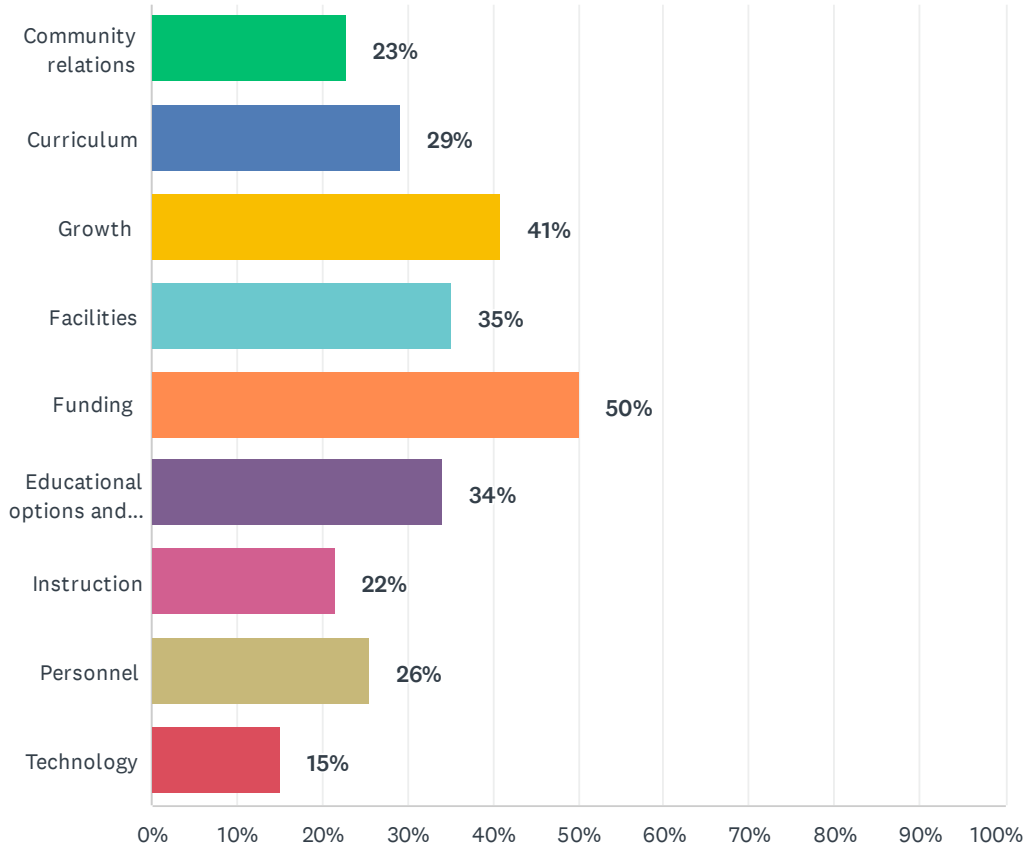


Gary Community School Corporation
Superintendent Search Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Supportive community	33%	151
Excellent teachers and staff	41%	187
Size of district	11%	50
Location of district	21%	95
Available resources	11%	49
Good school facilities	12%	55
Supportive parents	11%	50
Reputation of district	6%	27
Financial management	7%	31
Technology	13%	58
Effective leadership	18%	82
Curriculum	11%	50
Educational options and programs	30%	137
Total Respondents: 456		

Q2 What do you consider to be the most important issues or concerns facing Gary Community School Corporation in the next five years? Select at least one but no more than three.

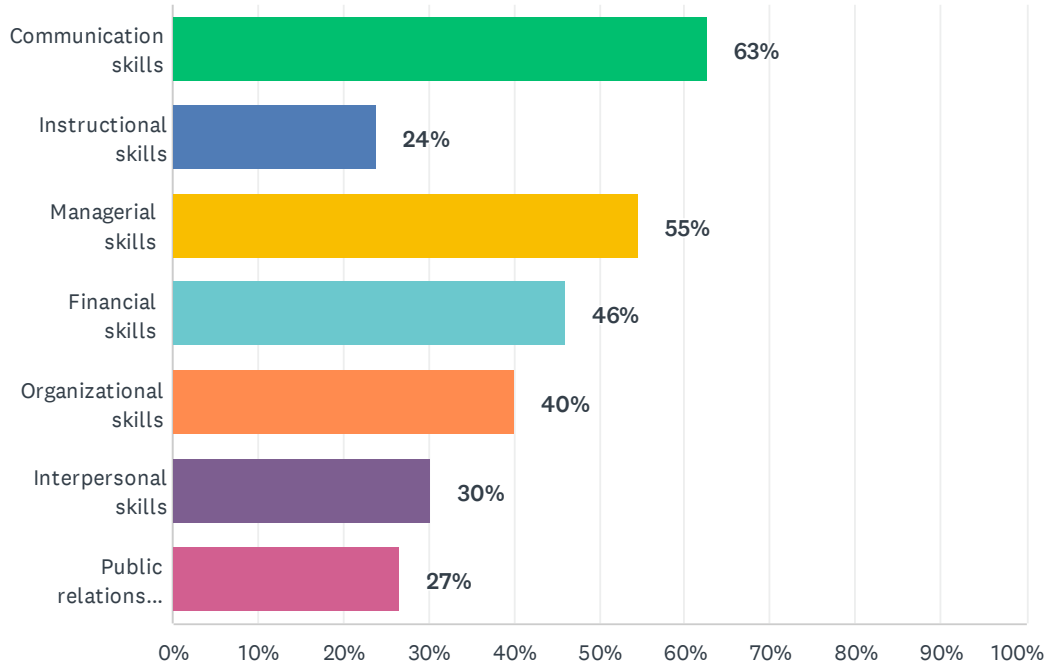
Answered: 439 Skipped: 17



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Community relations	23%	100
Curriculum	29%	128
Growth	41%	180
Facilities	35%	154
Funding	50%	220
Educational options and programs	34%	150
Instruction	22%	95
Personnel	26%	112
Technology	15%	66
Total Respondents: 439		

Q3 Select at least one but no more than three most important leadership skills you would like a superintendent to have:

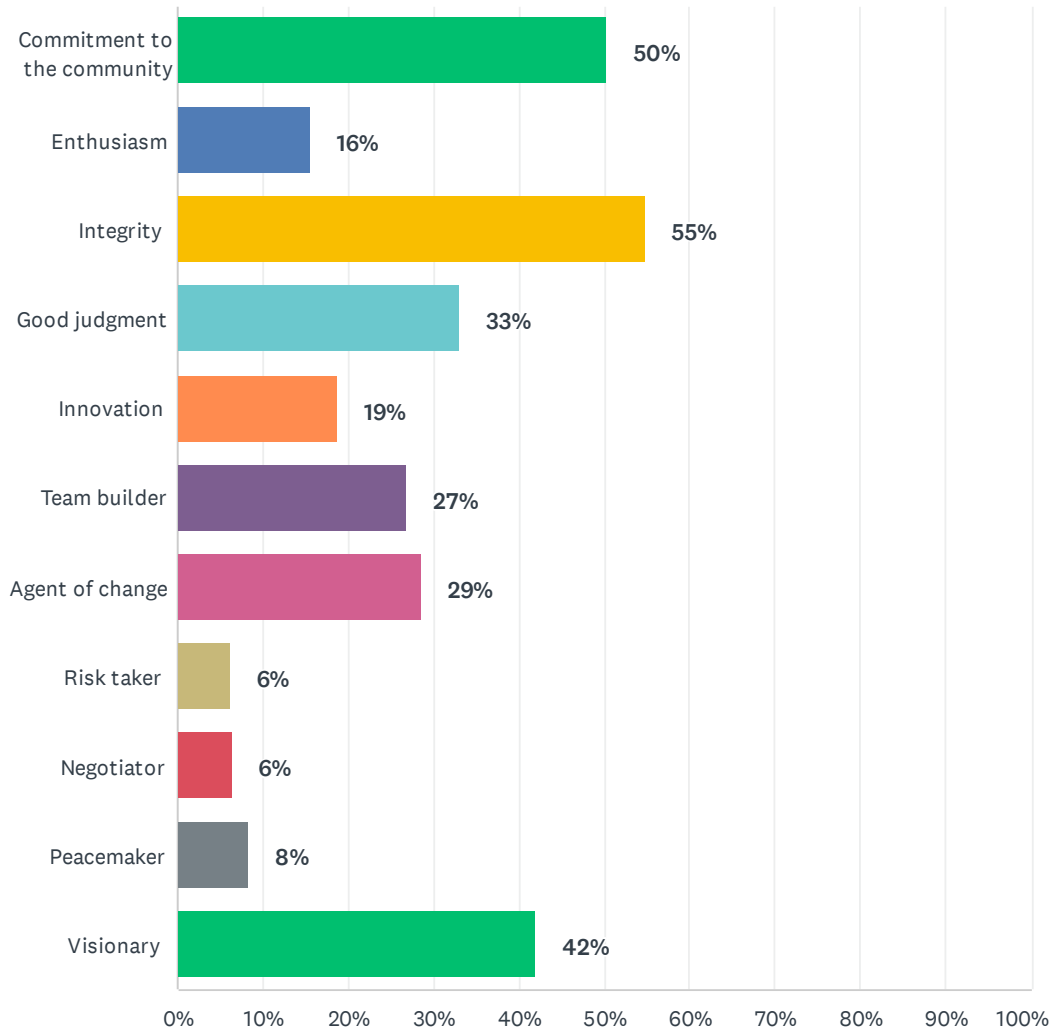
Answered: 434 Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Communication skills	63%	272
Instructional skills	24%	104
Managerial skills	55%	237
Financial skills	46%	200
Organizational skills	40%	174
Interpersonal skills	30%	131
Public relations skills	27%	116
Total Respondents: 434		

Q4 Select from the list below the three most important characteristics you would like a superintendent to exhibit:

Answered: 424 Skipped: 32

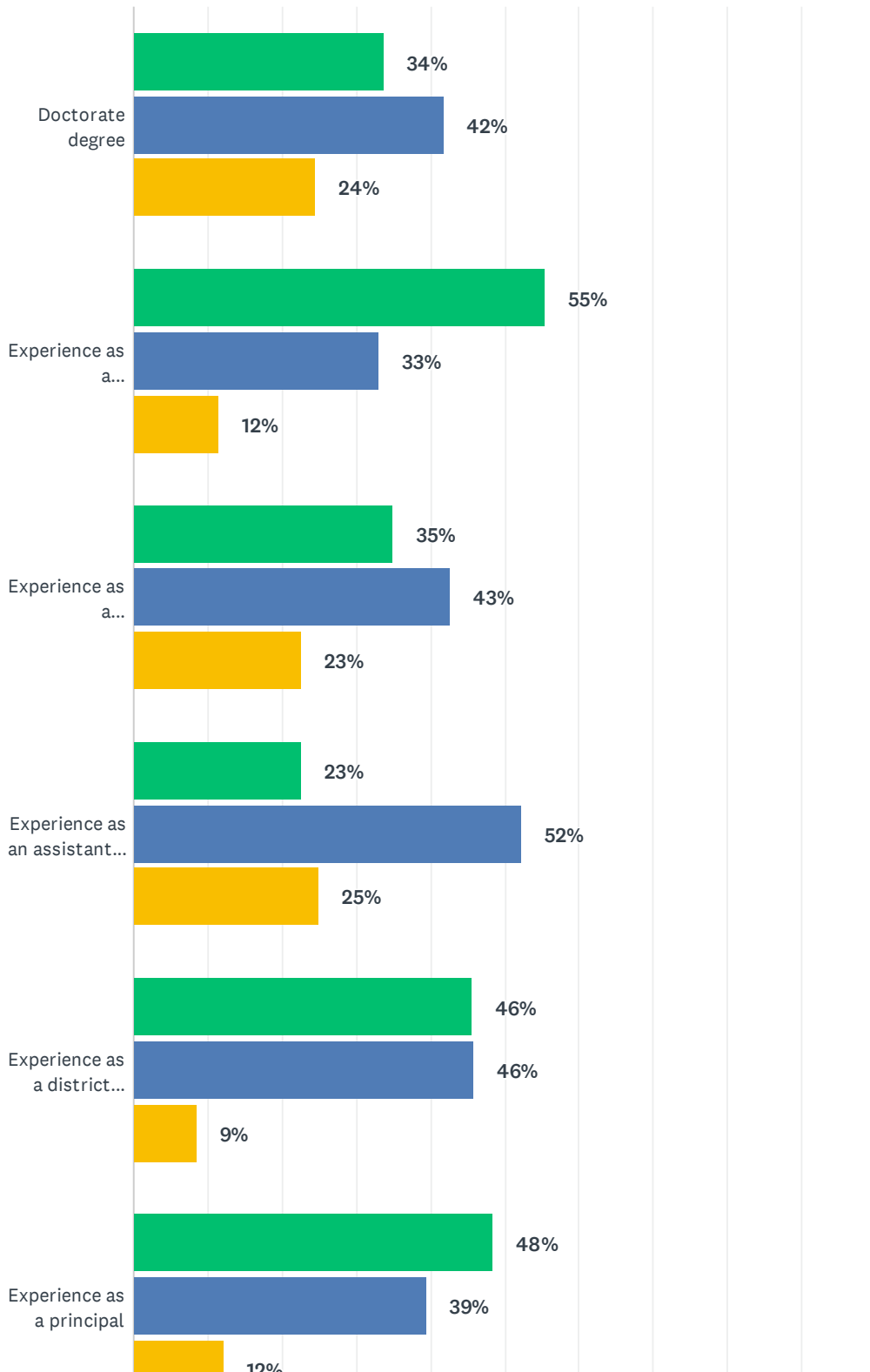


Gary Community School Corporation
Superintendent Search Survey

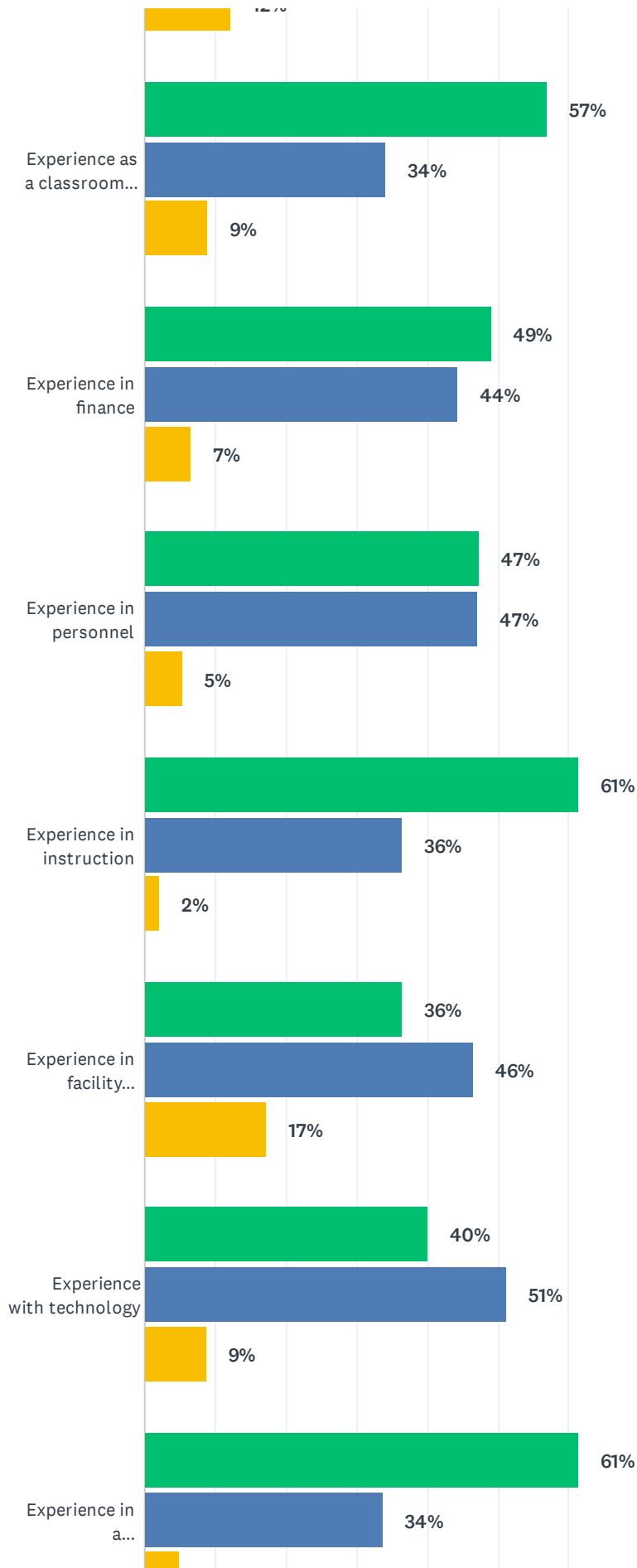
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Commitment to the community	50%	213
Enthusiasm	16%	66
Integrity	55%	232
Good judgment	33%	140
Innovation	19%	80
Team builder	27%	114
Agent of change	29%	121
Risk taker	6%	26
Negotiator	6%	27
Peacemaker	8%	35
Visionary	42%	178
Total Respondents: 424		

Q5 For each of the items below, indicate whether you believe the item is either extremely important, important, or not important in the new superintendent:

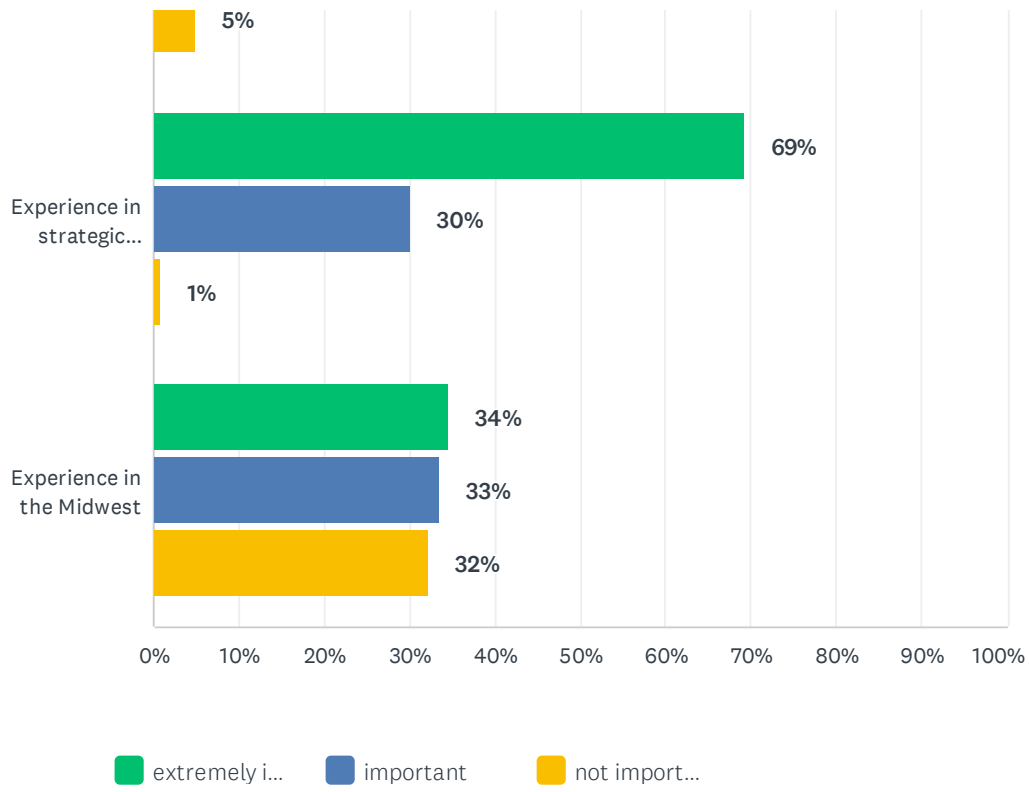
Answered: 393 Skipped: 63



Gary Community School Corporation
Superintendent Search Survey



Gary Community School Corporation
Superintendent Search Survey

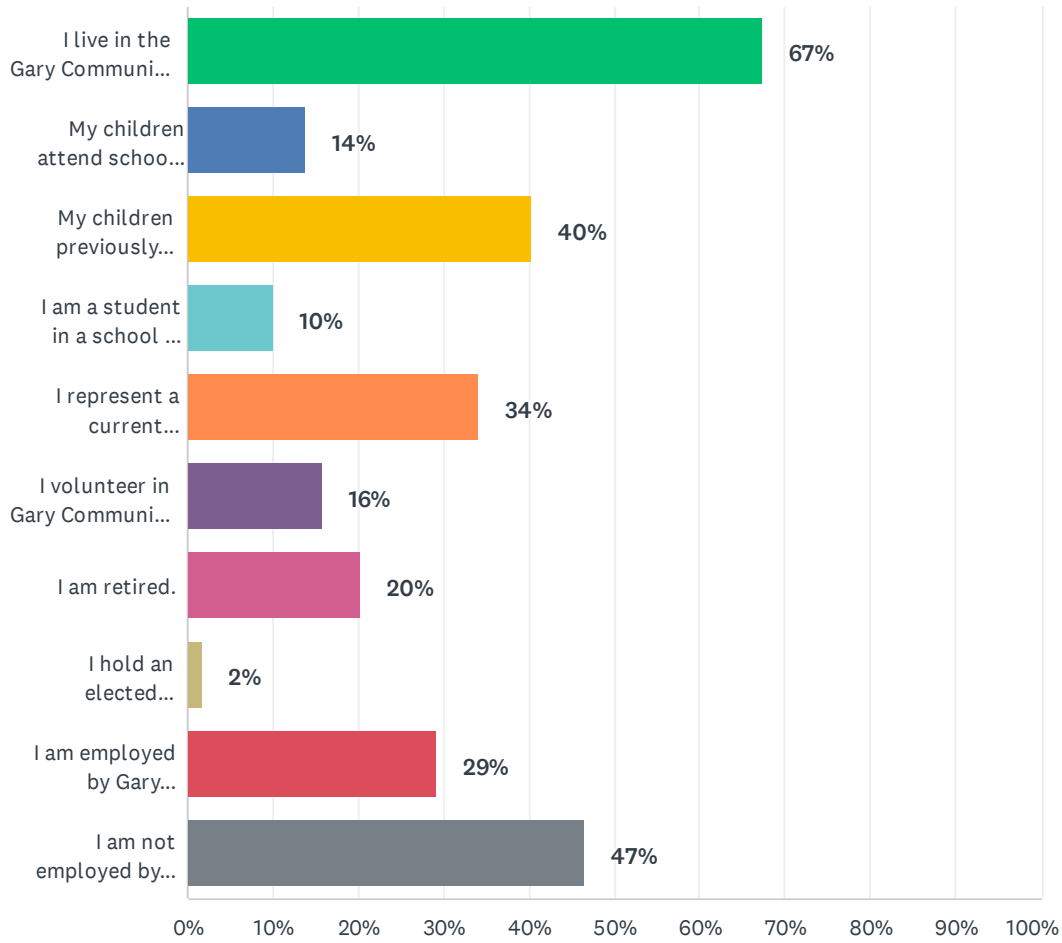


Gary Community School Corporation
Superintendent Search Survey

	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT	TOTAL
Doctorate degree	34% 132	42% 164	24% 96	392
Experience as a superintendent with a proven record of success	55% 216	33% 129	12% 45	390
Experience as a superintendent in a district of similar size	35% 136	43% 166	23% 88	390
Experience as an assistant superintendent	23% 88	52% 203	25% 97	388
Experience as a district level administrator	46% 177	46% 178	9% 33	388
Experience as a principal	48% 188	39% 153	12% 47	388
Experience as a classroom teacher	57% 221	34% 132	9% 35	388
Experience in finance	49% 190	44% 172	7% 26	388
Experience in personnel	47% 184	47% 183	5% 21	388
Experience in instruction	61% 238	36% 141	2% 8	387
Experience in facility construction and management	36% 142	46% 181	17% 67	390
Experience with technology	40% 154	51% 197	9% 34	385
Experience in a multi-cultural environment	61% 239	34% 131	5% 19	389
Experience in strategic planning	69% 268	30% 116	1% 3	387
Experience in the Midwest	34% 134	33% 130	32% 125	389

Q6 Please indicate all which apply to you:

Answered: 387 Skipped: 69

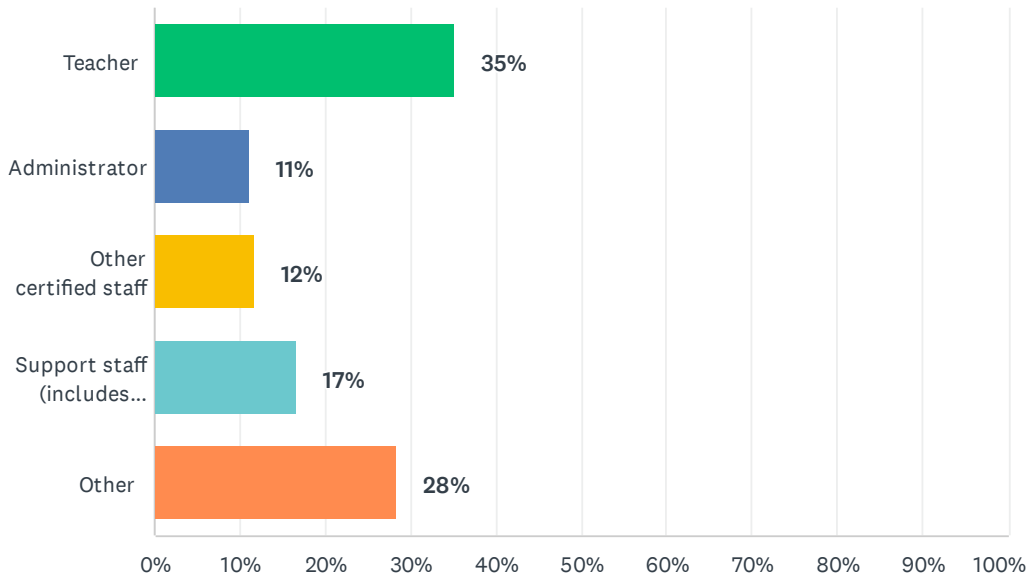


Gary Community School Corporation
Superintendent Search Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I live in the Gary Community School Corporation attendance area.	67%	261
My children attend schools in Gary Community School Corporation.	14%	54
My children previously attended schools in Gary Community School Corporation.	40%	156
I am a student in a school in Gary Community School Corporation.	10%	39
I represent a current non-child household.	34%	132
I volunteer in Gary Community School Corporation.	16%	61
I am retired.	20%	78
I hold an elected political office.	2%	7
I am employed by Gary Community School Corporation.	29%	113
I am not employed by Gary Community School Corporation.	47%	180
Total Respondents: 387		

Q7 If you are employed by Gary Community School Corporation, please specify your position. If you are not employed by the Gary Community School Cooperation, please advance to the next question.

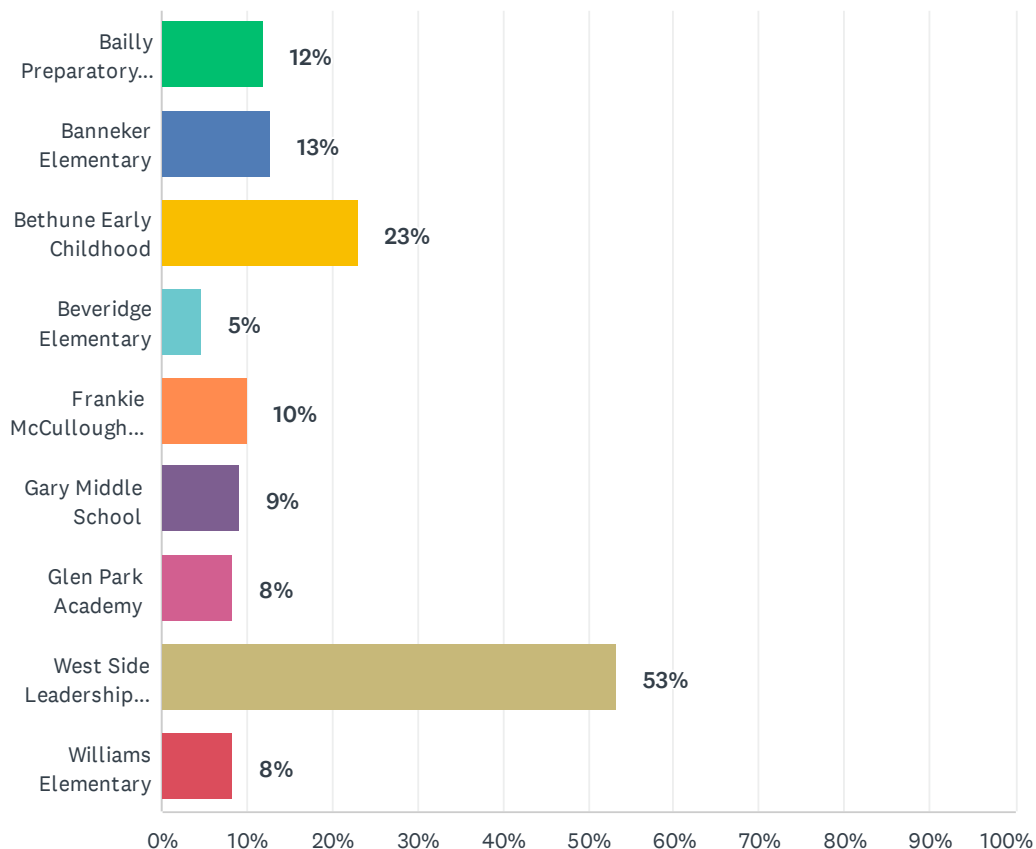
Answered: 145 Skipped: 311



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Teacher	35%	51
Administrator	11%	16
Other certified staff	12%	17
Support staff (includes secretary, instructional assistant, custodian, bus driver, food service, and maintenance)	17%	24
Other	28%	41
Total Respondents: 145		

Q8 If your child or children attend a school in the Gary Community School Corporation, please indicate which schools. Please click all that apply.

Answered: 109 Skipped: 347



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bailly Preparatory Academy Middle School	12%	13
Banneker Elementary	13%	14
Bethune Early Childhood	23%	25
Beveridge Elementary	5%	5
Frankie McCullough Elementary	10%	11
Gary Middle School	9%	10
Glen Park Academy	8%	9
West Side Leadership Academy High School	53%	58
Williams Elementary	8%	9
Total Respondents: 109		