

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



**Dr. Debra Hill – Dr. Anne Noland  
Dr. Marcus Alexander – Mr. Xavier Botana**

**BWP and Associates Consultants**

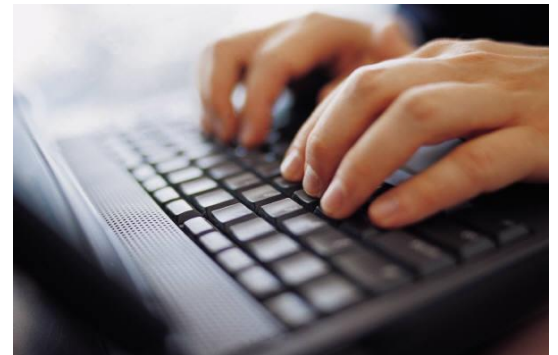
**Finding a Leader For Your Future**

# Gary Community School Corporation Community Engagement Objectives

- Identify the perceived strengths and challenges of GCSC.
- Identify desired qualities and characteristics the next Superintendent should possess and demonstrate.
- Build community understanding and support for the search process.
- Ensure the broadest possible community participation in the Superintendent search process.

# Structure of Engagement Activities

- BWP & Associates consultants conducted telephone one-on one meetings with 5 Board members and 2 administrative staff, and one community member February 12 – March 9, 2024.
- Community engagement activities were conducted on February 12, 2024 and included 12 meetings with, employees, students, parents, community leaders and community members.
- Over 65 people participated in conversations and 456 have responded to the online survey.



# GCSC Search Survey Results

## **Top three strengths of the District:**

1. Supportive community
2. Excellent Teachers
3. Educational Options

## **Top four challenges:**

1. Funding
2. Facilities
3. Educational Options
4. Growth

## **Top three important skills needed in next Superintendent:**

1. Communication skills
2. Management skills
3. Financial skills

## **Top three characteristics next Superintendent needs to exhibit:**

1. Commitment to the community
2. Has integrity
3. Is visionary

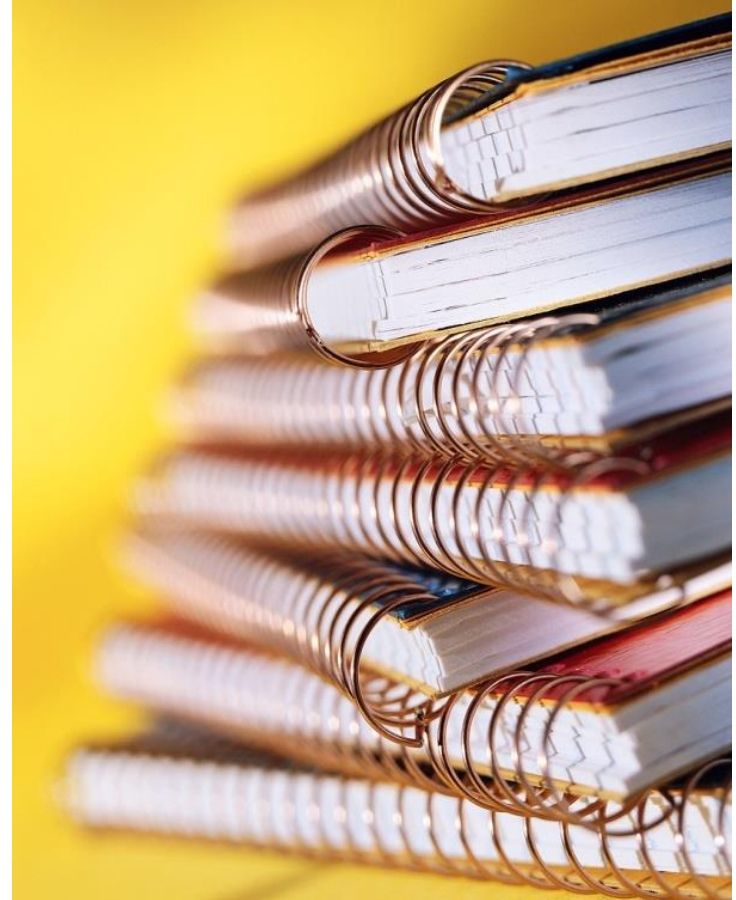
## GCSC Search Survey Results (*cont.*)

**Experiences desired (“Extremely important/Very important”):**

1. Exp. in strategic planning
2. Exp. in a multicultural environment
3. Exp. as a classroom teacher
4. Exp. as a Superintendent with a proven track record

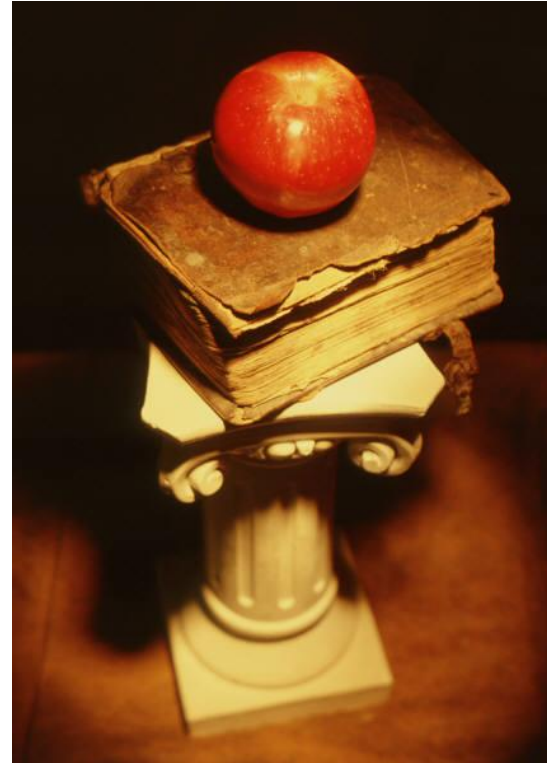
# Engagement Meetings and Forums

- Responses from over 55 people who attended meetings, forums and gave written input were reviewed by the team.
- Comments heard multiple times or that were uniquely relevant and insightful were gathered.
- These “prominent responses” are listed in the report and the following slides provide highlights.



# Three Questions Asked of Participants

1. What do you see as the strengths of GCSC and Gary?
2. What do you see as the greatest challenges facing GCSC?
3. What qualities and characteristics will the next superintendent need to possess and demonstrate?



# Highlighting Strengths of the District

- ✓ 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 staff and teachers/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;



# Highlighting the Strengths of the District

- ✓ 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, pre-school, athletics, and culinary arts – the District is one of the few in the State of Indiana to have three (3) certified STEM schools;
- ✓ staff and students are willing to provide additional supports to ensure that students are successful creating caring environment for all students and willing community partners share in this endeavor
- ✓ The people of the community still have a strong belief that the 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.

# Highlighting Challenges of the District

- ✓ 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 charters 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;

# Highlighting the Challenges of the District

- ✓ Actions around the CGSC have become so political that it is 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.

# Highlighting Other Considerations for the Board

- 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;

# Developing Leadership Profile

- After reviewing both the survey data and organizing the prominent responses from the engagement meetings and forums, the consultants drafted a description of what we believe the majority of participants desire in the next Superintendent from the characteristics and skillsets we heard.
- We present this profile to the Board as a draft so that you will have time to absorb its contents for approval.

# Desired Qualities and Characteristics of New Superintendent: Building the Draft Leadership Profile

- 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 have an aggressive plan to address the chronic failures in students’ State proficiency (test scores);

# Draft Leadership Profile (*cont.*)

- 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.

# Planned Next Steps in Gary Search Process

## **Specification:**

*Board approves Leadership Profile – ASAP*

*Report and Appendices made available to the public*

## **Recruitment/Assessment:** *March 9, 2024 application deadline*

*BWP receives/reviews applications screens applicants*

*completes reference checks -*

*BWP prepares slate of candidates/present recommendations*

*Board selects candidates for interviews*

*Board identifies final community engagement process*

## **Selection:**

*Board conducts 1<sup>st</sup> round of interviews*

*Board selects semi-finalists*

*Board selects finalist*

*Board and candidate negotiate contract dates (TBD)*

*Board Introduces new superintendent to community date (TBD)*

*Superintendent begins on or before July 1, 202*



Questions?

“Individual talents get magnified many times over through the collective lens of an effective team.”

*Dalal Haldeman*

