

Maryland State Department of Education

State Superintendent

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

December 6, 2011

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in October and November 2011 for the new State Superintendent in Maryland. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or regional forums and from the results of the online stakeholder survey. The surveys, interviews, and regional focus forums were structured to gather input to assist the Maryland State Board of Education in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths and challenges facing the Maryland State Department of Education and public education throughout the State of Maryland.

Participation

The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below:

Group	Online Survey	Regional Forums
Business Leaders	61	6
Administrators/Local Leader	122	45
Parent and/or Community	550	18
Political Leader	10	6
Students	64	0
Teacher or Support Staff	377	132
Total	1184	207

The responses provided by the individuals and focus groups during the interviews and the results of the online survey were used to identify the consistent themes heard across stakeholder groups. These themes are listed alphabetically with no attempt to prioritize them.

Two separate appendices list all comments made online by survey respondents and the individual comments and ideas shared during the regional community forums. Negative statements about a single individual or inappropriate language have been redacted in order to handle all input in a professional manner. The report also contains a draft of the “desired characteristics” sought in the next state superintendent. These characteristics will be finalized by the Board and used in their interviewing process.

It should be emphasized that the data are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. Items are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the Board's attention.

Strengths of the District

The State of Maryland, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the twenty-four county school districts all have much to be proud of in regards to the success and quality of public education across the State. Almost universally recognized by stakeholders is the fact that Maryland ranked #1 for the third straight year in three national rankings - Education Week, the *College Board* for AP performance, and the *Washington Post's* Challenge Index. Additionally, stakeholders recognized that the State has made some progress in narrowing the achievement gap by working to improve the performance of all students. Parents and staff members often commented that they were pleased with the level of academic performance of students, but still greatly valued the education of the whole child. They wanted to insure that curriculum retain a robust commitment to the arts, career and technical education, as well as the social emotional health of students.

Many stakeholders credited two main reasons for the success of public education across the State, which were: 1) the quality and dedication of the teachers, support staff, and administrators in local school districts and 2) an aligned, articulated, and comprehensive program of services developed by MSDE and deployed across the 24 school systems. The opportunities for communication, input, and shared decision-making between state leaders and local educators were regularly recognized as a significant and somewhat unique strength in Maryland. There is a consistent belief that educators from the classroom to the State Superintendent are very child-centered and are committed to doing what is best for children.

Stakeholders also recognized that the State Superintendent, the Maryland State Board of Education (MSBE), and the Maryland State Department of Education have developed strong working relationships and partnerships with business and political interests. Business partnerships were consistently recognized as adding value to the quality of services provided in the State, and business leaders as well as staff members expressed a strong desire to see these partnerships continued and expanded. In regards to political leadership, MSBE and MSDE are generally viewed as maintaining a level of independence from politics, but with the recognition that they have been actively engaged in advocating for the needs of children and public education during the legislative process.

Regarding internal operations of MSDE, most, but not all educators, who shared their views, believe that MSDE is a highly responsive and customer focused state agency. The view was often expressed that MSDE works better than many other state departments of education and that other states often come to Maryland to learn what they are doing and how they have achieved such a high level of success. Many participants attributed MSDE's accomplishments to the commitment and quality of the staff working at the department. There was recognition that the downsizing of the department and the requirements of *No*

Children Left Behind and *Race to the Top* have placed additional demands on the department. Despite these challenges, most educators who attended the forums still felt that MSDE was doing an excellent job in meeting their needs and providing outstanding service. Attendees also commented that they believe MSBE was providing quality leadership for both the department and the State. In general, respondents believe that the State is on the right track and recognize that the key work that lies ahead will be challenging but extremely worthwhile.

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

While Maryland has much to be proud of in regards to its educational system, there are significant challenges that are facing the State that will need to be addressed by the new State Superintendent. First and foremost are challenges related to student achievement. Many stakeholders expressed the view that maintaining the #1 ranking on national comparisons may be more difficult than initially achieving them. Continuing to provide strong leadership in order to produce high levels of student achievement has now become the norm in the State, and anything less than #1 may be viewed as a step backwards. In addition to overall student performance levels, there is strong desire and widespread recognition regarding the importance of closing the achievement gap. Maryland's commitment to children and the growing diversity in the State make the closing achievement gap imperative for moving the system forward, and addressing the needs of all students.

A second area of widespread agreement in regard to challenges is that of fully implementing the Race-To-The-Top Grant. The creation of curricula tied to the Common Core Standards, new assessment instruments, a statewide data management system, and teacher/principal evaluation systems linked to student achievement would each be demanding tasks on their own. Having to create new systems in all four areas at the same time will require the new State Superintendent to think strategically, use resources widely, and engage all stakeholders in a coordinated and collaborative retooling effort.

Some of the other challenges facing Maryland include improving STEM education efforts, technology needs within MSDE and across the districts, teacher preparation and retention needs, facility requirements, professional development opportunities, safety and security needs at local schools, career education opportunities, and labor relations. The above-mentioned challenges all come at time when financial resources at the local and state levels are severely stressed. Most of the solutions for these challenges will require new and creative approaches or the reallocation of dollars from obsolete programs and services. The likelihood of significant levels of new funding to implement change seems remote, at least in the near future.

The internal operations of MSDE may be both a challenge and an opportunity for moving forward. The challenge comes from several concerns mentioned by stakeholders. While many felt that the department is service oriented and customer focused, others did not. The view was expressed that the department operates in silos and asks for duplicate efforts and information from local districts. In addition, some stakeholders felt that the department

has a “one size fits all mentality and does not recognize the capacity differences among the various school systems across the state. Another challenge expressed by many is that staffing the department has become increasingly difficult due to salary restrictions, loss of positions, and pending possible retirements. The opportunity that may arise out of this challenge is one of rebirth. This may well be the time for the new State Superintendent to look at how the department is organized and whether or not it adequately matches the critical challenges defined above.

Desired Characteristics

The array of characteristics desired in the next State Superintendent is extremely diverse, but that is to be expected in describing a role that is so multi-faceted and far-reaching. Even with the diversity of views on this matter some significant themes did emerge and may be the critical skills needed to bring stakeholders together and move the Maryland public education system forward.

Instructional leadership appears to be top priority for all stakeholder groups across the State. Many constituents felt the new superintendent should have a strong education background having served as a teacher, building level administrator, and district level administrator. Many viewed that strong instructional knowledge and understanding were essential to lead the state agency and to guide local systems in reform efforts. They seek a leader who will be an advocate for children, the voice of public education, and visible throughout the State. The top three priorities identified in the online survey were:

1. Provide every student with highly effective teachers, educational leaders, and all other school personnel necessary to achieve success consistent with measureable goals.
2. Hold a deep understanding of the teaching/learning process and ensure that the Maryland State Department of Education supports quality instruction and student learning.
3. Be innovative in integrating technologies, instructional strategies, and emerging skills that enable all students to reach their full potential in a globally competitive environment.

These three items closely align with the comments made at regional forums of being an advocate for children by working to insure that high quality staff members are working with children and that children are learning

Another fundamental attribute sought by stakeholders is that of being a visionary and proactive problem-solver capable of helping Maryland achieve new levels of success. Stakeholders want a new leader who understands that Maryland has been on the forefront of educational innovation and accountability efforts, but also has a clearly articulated goal and vision of becoming a world-class educational system. They seek a leader who supports this goal and can translate that vision into a set of actions that will move the system forward in a meaningful and comprehensive way. An in-depth understanding of some of the tools available that support a reform agenda, such as the Race-To-The-Top grant and the

Common Core Standards would greatly enhance and expedite this work. The fifth priority from the online survey indicated that stakeholders want the new State Superintendent to “have a clear vision for a world-class educational system that prepares all students to be college and career ready.” The alignment between comments heard at the regional meetings and the vision priority from the online survey provides strong evidence that constituents would like to see Maryland’s vision for the future of public education fulfilled.

At the same time that stakeholders seek to significantly improve the system, they seek a new leader who will appreciate what has been accomplished in the State to date and who wishes to learn before implementing change. A collaborative leadership style that engages stakeholders in the decisions impacting their lives appears to be a fundamental need in the new State Superintendent. Additionally, a desire to continue to partner with business, labor, and community is essential. Being politically astute, working well within the legislative process, and building alliances with legislative leaders will also be critical, particularly in an era of limited financial resources. The online survey results support these ideas through the fact that the fourth priority sought is a State Superintendent who would “listen and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, legislators, business interests, and community leaders.”

In addition to the statewide leadership skills desired, stakeholders seek an effective manager for MSDE. They desire someone who understands MSDE, its past successes, and its history of articulation and participation, but who can also help the agency become more service-oriented and flexible in its approach. Many viewed the ability to recognize problems, acknowledge mistakes, and seek meaningful solutions as critical in the new State Superintendent. Internal stakeholders are also seeking a leader who can align the resources at the state and federal level with those at the local level in order to help all districts improve, while recognizing the significant differences in both the needs and the capacity of the 24 school systems.

On a personal level constituents seek a leader who is approachable and accessible, open-minded and a risk-taker, data-driven and research-based, technologically competent, a great communicator with all stakeholders, and energetic and intelligent. They desire someone with impeccable ethics, a servant spirit, and a passion for educating the whole child. They hope the successful candidate sees the role of Maryland State Superintendent as an incredible opportunity and desires to remain in the role for the long-term. As one person put it, Maryland needs a leader who has the knowledge of a scholar and the heart of a practitioner.

HYA cannot promise to find a candidate who possesses all of the characteristics desired by respondents. However, HYA and the MSBE intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to address the concerns expressed by the constituent groups. We will seek a new state superintendent who can work with the Maryland State Board of Education, guide the Maryland State Department, and lead public education throughout the State in order to insure that Maryland is providing a world class education to each of its students.

The consultants would like to thank all the participants who attended regional forums or completed the online survey. Also, we would like to thank Tony South, Charlene Necessary, and the staff members at the seven schools that hosted the regional forums – Baltimore Polytechnic Institute (Baltimore City), Easton High School (Talbot County), Edgewood High School (Harford County), Huntington High School (Calvert County), Laurel High School (Prince George’s County), Mountain Ridge High School (Allegany County), Seneca High School (Montgomery County)

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Morgan
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Consistent Themes

Strengths

- #1 in the nation three years running
- Both the State Department and local school systems are child-centered and seek to meet the varying needs of the State's diverse student population
- Great teachers, administrators, and staff are in place across the State and are highly committed to the success of public education
- Maryland has an aligned, articulated, and comprehensive program of services focused on high standards and achieving strong results
- Maryland has been on the forefront of accountability efforts and is often sought out by other states to learn what is working here
- MDSE and MSBE maintain independence from the political leaders but are actively engaged in political advocacy and lobbying efforts on behalf of the interested of children
- MSBE and MSDE have established strong relationships and partnerships with the business community across the state
- MSDE operates on a continuous improvement philosophy which has helped to contribute to the State's past success in improving student achievement and making headway in closing the achievement gap
- MSDE staff is generally viewed as highly responsive and customer focused
- MSDE works in collaborative fashion with educators, parents, and community and listens to the voice of educators through numerous opportunities for meaningful dialog and participation in the decision-making process
- Numerous professional development activities are provided across the state by MSDE
- State efforts have been future-focused and forwarding thinking in regards to establishing a world class educational system

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Closing the achievement gap
- Economic and financial challenges will require the State and local districts to do more with fewer resources
- Facility needs in some locations
- Funding challenges at the local and State levels
- Growing economic, cultural, ethnic, religious, and racial diversity in the State
- Internal operations at MSDE are challenged by several factors – loss of 144 positions, salaries not competitive with local districts, number of staff that may retire from leadership roles, and up-to-date technology infrastructure challenges, communications, procurement, and personnel operations
- Maintaining #1 status may be more difficult than first obtaining it
- Managing the new data requirements through RTTT
- MSDE operates with a silo mentality at times, inhibiting the work of the Department and resulting in duplicate or competing work on the part of local districts

- Need for job-embedded professional development to meet all of the new challenges and requirements
- Race to the Top Grant, NCLB reauthorization, and new teacher/principal evaluation requirements, new assessments, and common core standards present significant challenges to the State and local districts
- Recognition that all students may not be college bound and there is a need for high-quality career education opportunities and employment pathways
- Safety and security concerns
- Some stakeholders view MSDE operating in a one-size-fits-all mentality and would like to see greater flexibility in the way the department operates, particularly on compliance related issues and in recognition of regional and size/capacity differences of local districts
- STEM education needs to be significantly improved and enhanced
- Teacher preparation and retention needs are growing
- Too much emphasis on test scores and AYP – desire to focus attention on the needs of the whole child
- Transition of leadership after long-serving successful state superintendent may present challenges to the new the leader
- Understanding the history and context of Maryland, which can often be somewhat insular
- Working collaboratively with union leadership regarding improvement efforts

Desired Characteristics

- A true champion for children
- Ability to say no when needed
- Ability to work with diverse interest groups and various stakeholders – comfortable with everyone from a kindergartner to the Governor
- Acknowledges problems or mistakes and works to find meaningful solutions
- An educator who has experience as a teacher, building level administrator and district level administrator
- Approachable and accessible to all stakeholders
- Believes in innovation and continuous improvement
- Believes in the State’s vision for a world class educational system and is able to implement that vision with realistic expectations for change
- Collaborative leadership style
- Deep appreciation for the diversity across the state – regional, economic, racial, religious, and ethnic
- Demonstrated ability to bring ideas and programs to scale
- Develop rapport quickly
- Energetic
- Fiscally knowledgeable
- Good judge of talent and ability to rebuild a new MSDE leadership team as personnel changes
- Good manager
- Great communicator with all stakeholders

- Has the ability to build strong relationships with federal government
- Impeccable ethics
- Knowledge of scholar with the heart of a practitioner
- Knowledgeable regarding global educational trends and future-focused
- Listens deeply and seeks to understand
- Open-minded, risk taker
- Politically astute and engaged in leadership on behalf of children's needs
- Record of proven success in improving educational opportunities and student learning
- Servant spirit
- Technologically competent
- Thinks well on his/her feet
- Understanding of Maryland and its history regarding public education
- Values educating the whole child
- Very strong sense of self, but humble with little need for personal recognition
- Visible across the state
- Wants to be in Maryland over the long-term
- Data-driven and research-based

Maryland State Department of Education

Online Superintendent Profile Survey Results

The Superintendent Profile survey was completed by 1184 stakeholders. Almost half of respondents were parents or community members (47 percent), 32 percent were teachers or support staff members, another 10 percent were administrators, and the rest were business leaders, students, and political leaders.

Stakeholder		
	Frequency	Percent
Business Leader	61	5.2
Administrator	122	10.3
Parent or Community Member	550	46.5
Political Leader	10	.8
Student	64	5.4
Teacher or Support Staff Member	377	31.8
Total	1184	100.0

The top-rated characteristics that respondents selected are:

- Provide every student with highly effective teachers, educational leaders, and all other school personnel necessary to achieve success consistent with measurable goals.
- Hold a deep understanding of the teaching/learning process and ensure that the Maryland State Department of Education supports quality instruction and student learning.
- Be innovative in integrating technologies, instructional strategies, and emerging skills that enable all students to reach their full potential in a globally competitive environment.
- Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, legislators, business interests, and community leaders.
- Have a clear vision for a world-class educational system that prepares all students to be college and career ready.

Percentages of respondents overall who selected each item, as well as percentages by stakeholder group, are given in the tables on the following pages.

In addition, differences were examined for statistical and practical significance to determine whether the mean scores by stakeholder group differed. Results indicate that, for many

items, the various stakeholders were in agreement. On the other hand, there were several items that certain stakeholders valued more than others.

- Business leaders, administrators, parents, and community members were significantly more likely than teachers and support staff to select the item “Have a clear vision for a world-class educational system that prepares all students to be college and career ready.”
- Parents and community members were significantly more likely than administrators to select the item “Ensure that all districts provide safe and caring school environments.”
- Business leaders, parents, and community members were significantly more likely than teachers and support staff to select the item “Promote high expectations for all students and personnel.”
- Administrators were significantly more likely than business leaders, parents, community members, students, teachers, and support staff to select the item “Align budgets, long-range plans, and operational procedures with the State’s vision, mission, and goals.”
- Business leaders, parents, and community members were significantly more likely than students, teachers, and support staff to select the item “Be innovative in integrating technologies, instructional strategies, and emerging skills that enable all students to reach their full potential in a globally competitive environment.”
- Teachers and support staff were significantly more likely than business leaders, administrators, parents, and community members to select the item “Provide support for all students, teachers, and school-based personnel to achieve personal growth and fulfillment.”
- Administrators, teachers, and support staff were significantly more likely than business leaders and students to select the item “Hold a deep understanding of the teaching/learning process and ensure that the Maryland State Department of Education supports quality instruction and student learning.”
- Business leaders were significantly more likely than administrators, parents, community members, teachers, and support staff to select the item “Increase academic performance and accountability for all its students, especially for low-achieving schools.”
- Business leaders, parents, community members, and students were significantly more likely than administrators, teachers, and support staff to select the item “Provide every student with highly effective teachers, educational leaders, and all other school personnel necessary to achieve success consistent with measureable goals.”
- Business leaders and students were significantly more likely than administrators, parents, community members, teachers, and support staff to select the item “Understand and support Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education.”

- Business leaders and administrators were significantly more likely than parents, community members, students, teachers, and support staff to select the item “Be accountable by operating under objective measures of success determined by State and national standards with data-driven actions to enhance learning for every student.”
- Teachers and support staff were significantly more likely than parents and community members to select the item “Be visible throughout the State and actively engaged with governmental leaders regarding educational policy.”
- Parents and community members were significantly more likely than administrators and students to select the item “Promote meaningful engagement with parents, families and community members to support academic achievement and individual success.”
- Teachers and support staff were significantly more likely than business leaders, administrators, parents, and community members to select the item “Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among educational groups and interests.”
- Teachers and support staff were significantly more likely than parents and community members to select the item “Lead in an encouraging, participatory, and team-focused manner.”
- Administrators and political leaders were significantly more likely to select the item “Serve as an effective liaison with local, state, and federal educational agencies and organizations.”

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Item (By Subgroups)

Number indicates rank order by overall results		ALL (1184)	Busn (61)	Admin (122)	Par/Com (550)	Polit (10)	Stud (64)	Tch/SS (377)
1	Provide every student with highly effective teachers, educational leaders, and all other school personnel necessary to achieve success consistent with measureable goals.	50%	61%	37%	56%	20%	66%	41%
2	Hold a deep understanding of the teaching/learning process and ensure that the Maryland State Department of Education supports quality instruction and student learning.	49%	34%	57%	47%	40%	30%	55%
3	Be innovative in integrating technologies, instructional strategies, and emerging skills that enable all students to reach their full potential in a globally competitive environment.	44%	56%	46%	49%	70%	28%	35%
4	Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, legislators, business interests, and community leaders.	43%	34%	34%	41%	30%	53%	48%
5	Have a clear vision for a world-class educational system that prepares all students to be college and career ready.	42%	62%	56%	44%	50%	41%	31%
6	Promote high expectations for all students and personnel.	37%	52%	34%	41%	60%	28%	31%
7	Promote meaningful engagement with parents, families and community members to support academic achievement and individual success.	36%	28%	22%	43%	30%	20%	36%
8	Provide support for all students, teachers, and school-based personnel to achieve personal growth and fulfillment.	35%	23%	20%	31%	20%	36%	46%
9	Understand and support Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education.	30%	57%	26%	36%	10%	38%	18%
10	Ensure that all districts provide safe and caring school environments.	30%	18%	17%	34%	20%	36%	31%
11	Promote student physical and mental health and fitness to help students achieve academically and develop habits of healthy living.	30%	23%	22%	33%	0%	25%	31%

Key	VV-Vision & Values	IL-Instructional Leadership and MSDE Operations	SR-Stakeholder Relationships, Communication and Collaboration
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Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Item (By Subgroups)

Number indicates rank order by overall results		ALL (1184)	Busn (61)	Admin (122)	Par/Co m (550)	Polit (10)	Stud (64)	Tch/SS (377)
12	Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among educational groups and interests.	28%	15%	27%	20%	50%	28%	42%
13	Encourage a sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders regarding success in student learning.	28%	20%	30%	28%	30%	13%	32%
14	Strive for continuous improvement in all areas of education throughout the state.	27%	25%	31%	27%	30%	27%	27%
15	Lead in an encouraging, participatory, and team-focused manner.	25%	18%	31%	20%	10%	19%	34%
16	Be visible throughout the State and actively engaged with governmental leaders regarding educational policy.	25%	21%	32%	20%	40%	27%	31%
17	Hold a deep appreciation for the diversity across the State of Maryland.	23%	23%	30%	20%	30%	25%	26%
18	Align budgets, long-range plans, and operational procedures with the State's vision, mission, and goals.	23%	23%	44%	18%	20%	16%	25%
19	Increase academic performance and accountability for all its students, especially for low-achieving schools.	23%	44%	18%	24%	30%	31%	17%
20	Serve as an effective liaison with local, state, and federal educational agencies and organizations.	22%	16%	32%	21%	60%	9%	22%
21	Communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and in a variety of ways.	21%	11%	29%	19%	20%	22%	22%
22	Be an effective manager of the Maryland State Department of Education's day-to-day operations.	18%	13%	20%	17%	20%	16%	20%
23	Utilize technology that links all data with analytic and instructional tools to promote student learning.	16%	20%	23%	17%	10%	22%	12%
24	Be accountable by operating under objective measures of success determined by state and national standards with data driven actions to enhance learning for every student.	14%	31%	26%	12%	20%	13%	11%
25	Maintain positive and collaborative working relationships with the Maryland State School Board members.	11%	11%	19%	9%	0%	14%	11%

Key	VV-Vision & Values	IL-Instructional Leadership and MSDE Operations	SR-Stakeholder Relationships, Communication and Collaboration
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Maryland State Department of Education

State Superintendent of Schools

Desired Characteristics

After seeking input from its Board members, parents, staff, students, and community via regional forums, interviews, and an online survey, the Maryland State Board of Education seeks a strong educational leader who possesses the following characteristics:

A visionary instructional leader who:

- Is committed to Maryland’s vision of becoming a world-class educational system
- Understands curriculum and instruction and is able to apply this understanding to the work with the Department and within the schools across the state
- Believes in the value of diversity and insure that the State’s system is designed to meet the needs of a diverse student population and close the achievement gap
- Serves of the voice of public education and the champion of children throughout the State
- Deeply understands what it will take to have all students college and career ready by the time they graduate high school

A collaborative problem-solver who:

- Understands the legislative process and is an advocate for children within the political process
- Engages all stakeholder groups in meaningful decision-making regarding improvement efforts
- Values the educational needs of the whole child and works to insure that programs are in place to meet those needs
- Is knowledgeable about state and federal regulations and encourages innovation to meet those requirements while preparing children for the 21st century

A knowledgeable, capable manager who:

- Leads the day-to-day operation of the Department with a clear focus on improving student learning
- Embodies a servant spirit and helps the Department to be customer focused
- Values professional development for all educators across the State
- Recognizes and celebrates the varying needs and capacity of the 24 school systems in the State and supports flexibility for districts in meeting MSDE requirements

With regard to leadership experiences and credentials, the successful candidate will:

- Is currently, or is able to become, certified in the State of Maryland as a superintendent of schools
- Has classroom teaching and building/district leadership experience
- Has an earned doctorate from a nationally accredited university