



CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Cambridge, MA

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

September 16, 2015

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) August 26 – 27 and August 31 – September 1 for the new superintendent in the Cambridge Public Schools. In addition, School Committee members held focus groups after the school started. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The surveys, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the School Committee in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the District and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years.

Participation

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

Group	Personal interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
School Committee Members	7	NA
Administrators	11	25
Certified Staff	7	155
Community	49	67
Parents	45	230
Students	8	34
Support Staff	5	28
Total	132	539

Community groups/individuals interviewed included community leaders, city government representatives, former school committee members, business leaders, senior citizens, and attendees at a community forum. It is possible that individuals interviewed also completed the online survey. Thus, to some extent, there may be some duplication in data collection. While School Committee members were not participants in the online survey, each was individually interviewed by a HYA consultant.

The responses provided by the individuals and focus groups during the interviews are listed in two places:

- **Consistent Themes** - which are the consultants' summary of themes they heard across stakeholder groups (Beginning on page 6 of this report)
- **Comments from Interviews and Focus Groups Meetings** – which are all of responses from individual and group meetings (Beginning on page 12)

The comments are listed alphabetically with no attempt to prioritize them. A separate appendix lists all comments made by survey respondents, although negative statements about a single individual have been redacted, in no particular order. Finally, a draft of the desired characteristics, that were discussed with the entire School Committee on September 16, 2015, can be found on page forty-two.

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 School Committee's attention.

Strengths of the District

The Cambridge Public Schools is a vibrant, diverse urban school district serving approximately 6,700 students in grades PreK-12. Located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, adjacent to Boston, Cambridge is a unique urban community with a strong mix of cultural and social diversity, intellectual vitality, and technological innovation. The demographics of the diverse student body include 45% free/reduced lunch; 39% Caucasian; 28% Black/African American; 14% Hispanic/Latino; 12% Asian; and 7% mixed race, Native American, and Pacific Islander. About 30% of CPS students' first language is one other than English. The district has eleven PreK-5 elementary schools, one PreK-8 school, four Gr. 6-8 upper schools, and the comprehensive Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School complemented by a High School Extension Program and the Rindge School of Technical Arts.

Dedicated to the twin ideals of academic excellence and social justice for all students, Cambridge students benefit from highly skilled teachers, class sizes that are smaller than state average, and a wealth of programs and resources supported by a projected annual FY 2016 budget of \$163.9 million. The City of Cambridge is home to unparalleled institutions such as Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Lesley University. With over 100,000 people located in a 6.5 square mile area, Cambridge preserves the neighborhood intimacy of a small city while serving as one of the most cosmopolitan intersections of individuals and ideas in the world.

The school district is governed by the Cambridge School Committee, a seven-member board with six members elected at large, and the seventh member, the Mayor, who serves as Chair of the School Committee. Stakeholders described the district as diverse, dynamic and well resourced with a great deal of pride and support. They applauded the relationship between city, government and school district, including financial support for capital programs, after school programs and summer programming for youth including internships and the Mayor's Summer Work Program.

Generally there was broad consensus on the quality of teaching and learning in the district with parents, students, and administrators talking about the importance and talent of CPS's teaching and support staff. Stakeholders believed that a community of well-educated parents, coupled with the location of outstanding Universities within the district is a distinct advantage and opportunity for the district and students.

Those interviewed, also embraced with great pride the rich diversity of the city and district. Diversity discussions included socio-economic, racial as well as cultural differences focusing on strengths and challenges. They believe Cambridge is a progressive, highly engaged community that places tremendous importance on education and demonstrates this value through their support of their schools.

There was also high regard for the array of support programs and learning opportunities in the district with specific acknowledgement of the high school program, fine arts programming, co-taught classes, RSTA programming, small class sizes, school choice, and Family Liaisons. The investment in and quality of the school facilities was also an area of pride recognized by stakeholders.

Challenges/Concerns/Issues Facing the District

Stakeholders indicated that greater efforts should be extended to ensure that all students succeed. While Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) has a high graduation rate, the achievement level for low income and minority students needs to be improved with a greater sense of urgency. There were also concerns about the impact of "tracking" at the High School level, with some expressing concern that classes tended to be separated by race. Many stakeholders expressed the strong belief that the number of students of colors in AP and Honors should increase significantly if the district is truly providing appropriate learning opportunities for all students. Closing the achievement gaps and addressing disproportionality in class placements and discipline practices were priorities of many stakeholders. In addition, placing an emphasis on changing attitudes regarding race through cultural competency training was perceived as a critical need by some.

In addition to closing achievement gaps parents, in particular, frequently mentioned the need to ensure that all students are being challenged and supported in reaching their potential. Some believe the curricular expectations at the elementary and middle school levels are not demanding enough and do not challenge high performing students. Some believe that heterogeneous classes at the elementary and middle school levels create classrooms that are very demanding and beyond the ability of teachers to meet the needs of a wide range of learners.

The Innovation Agenda changes at the middle school level were generally perceived as the right thing to do, with the caveat that there is a great deal of implementation and deployment work to do in order for the approach to reach its full potential. There was also discussion about inequities between schools as it relates to the distribution of resources, particularly to the elementary schools. Whether these inequities were real or perceived, many believe that "controlled choice" was being impacted negatively.

While an emphasis on testing was expressed by some, others felt the district needed to be more focused on data driven decision making, as concern was expressed that teacher recommendations were not always consistent across schools. The core of this concern on both sides of the issue appears to be the need for the district to find the appropriate balance between its belief in and history of progressive education practices versus the need for a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students and a systematic approach to measuring their progress.

Stakeholders also stated that a greater focus must be placed on improving leadership's approach to accountability in both individual performance evaluation systems and the organization performance monitoring. The need to improve the working relationship between the School Committee and the administration was cited by some as a pressing need in hiring a new superintendent. In addition, they believe that the district should develop/update its strategic plan, to clearly establish a vision for the district, based on community input.

Community members, in particular, noted that the emerging bimodal socio-economic profile of the city is a growing concern and caused many middle class families to move out of the community in order to find affordable housing. Numerous leaders noted that this is an issue of significant concern in regards to the long-term health of the community/

Desired Characteristics

The new superintendent can best establish a basis for success by being visible and accessible in the community and its schools, by valuing all staff, by communicating and listening well, and by continuing collaborative practices. A combination of knowledge skills (instruction, governance and finance), self-confidence and humility will serve the new superintendent well. And there is a strong expectation that the superintendent continue to be a visionary who sustains the innovative and progressive programming that is a source of community and system pride, while still establishing consistent expectations and practices throughout the organization.

The new superintendent will also need to be masterful at establishing and maintaining genuine interpersonal relationships with a wide range of stakeholders. Engaging all segments of the parental communities through proactive efforts to reach out to them, establishing open and supportive relationships with administrators, teachers, and support staff while still challenging them to be their best, collaborating with a wide variety of community leaders, and partnering with the School Committee members will all be essential skills that the new superintendent will need in providing meaningful and long-term leadership in Cambridge.

The new superintendent should also demonstrate outstanding operational management knowledge and skills. His/her background should include teaching, building-level leadership experience, managing a large team, working in an Urban district, and a proven track record improving student learning and closing achievement gaps.

In addition, the new superintendent must be able to manage the political process, with an affinity for forward planning. The willingness and ability to continue, enhance and expand partnerships with city, community and university leaders are critically important in the city of Cambridge. Experience with strategic (long-term) planning around a shared vision would also be an asset as many in the organization felt this is a critical need in Cambridge at this point in time.

In looking at the desired characteristics identified through the online survey results, three characteristics were identified by the majority of respondents as being very important. They are:

- Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators. **Collaboration and Communication** (57%)
- Hold a deep appreciation for diversity and the importance of providing safe and caring school environments. **Vision and Values** (54%)
- Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, and community members. **Community Engagement** (53%)

These three priorities identified through the online survey align with the qualitative input collected through interviews and focus groups during the leadership profiling process. Taken as whole, the Cambridge vacancy presents a unique opportunity for the new superintendent to lead a well-resourced educational organization which is grounded in progressive education practices and a deep appreciation for the value of diversity and is yearning to realize its full potential.

HYA cannot promise to find a candidate who possesses all of the characteristics desired by respondents. However, HYA and the School Committee 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.

The consultants would like to thank all the participants who attended focus groups meetings or completed the online survey. Also, we would like to thank all of the Cambridge Public Schools staff members who assisted with our meetings and particularly thank Dosha Beard and Barbara Allen for their efforts in facilitating our time in the District.

Respectfully submitted,

Hank Gmitro
Edward McCormick

Consistent Themes

Strengths

- Arts programming
- City services for youth
- Community engagement (collaboration with city, Higher Ed and businesses)
- Co-taught classes
- Cultural competency training provided to staff
- Diversity (community and staff, racial, socio-economic, heterogeneous, cultures)
- Facilities
- Family Liaisons
- High School Performance (i.e. Honors/AP courses, Performing Arts)
- High School Program
- Internships and Mayor's Work Program
- Long history of diversity being viewed as a great asset
- Partnerships
- Progressive, highly engaged community
- Property taxes are low
- Resources (money, staffing, Human resources, community assets, parents/community support)
- RSTA Program
- Teachers
- Well resourced

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- A long-range plan with vision and goals should be developed
- Accountability benchmarks are needed to ensure all students are learning
- Addressing needs and making decision in a high political environment
- Attracting and sustaining middle class families in the community as housing costs continue to escalate
- Bi-modal student and family population in regards to SES
- Choice Program – serves a great need but creates other problems
- CP classes placement needs review/revision; fix the inequities of tracking
- Creating a culture of proactive problem solving and forward movement rather than one of reactive solutions to the loudest voices
- Discipline approaches need to move away from punitive consequences to a restorative justice model
- Disproportionality in suspensions and class placements regarding race
- Diversity meets the needs of a diverse population
- Ensure more accountability for student success at all levels
- Finding the right balance of progressive educational practices and systematic assessment to ensure all students are realizing their potential
- Improve achievement for low-income/minority students – close Achievement Gap
- Innovation Agenda – Upper schools are a good idea but need substantial work to realize their full potential
- Lottery system for school choice should be revised/improved (eliminate the perception of inequities)
- Meeting the needs of students in heterogeneous classes – wide range of needs

- Need to challenge all students to best of their potential – talented students and high needs students
- Need to improve communication process throughout the district
- Overhaul of the Leadership Team (show board, principals and teachers support and engagement)
- Placement system for Honors/AP courses needs revision/improvement
- Race Issues – racism in attitude and practice – number of students of color in Honors classes – increasing the number of teachers of color
- Rapid pace of change – too many initiative without adequate follow-up and support for full implementation and deployment
- Reaching out to families of color or poverty to hear their voices and concerns
- Relationship between School Committee and administration

Desired Characteristics

- A dynamic leader, manager and visionary
- Able to make tough decisions and stick with them, even in the face of vocal disagreement from some if the decision is in the best interests so students
- Able to truly listen
- Balances visionary thinking and managerial implementation skills
- Brings people together around solutions
- Collaborative
- Data drivers decision
- Experience as a teacher
- Experience in accessing community/school needs
- Innovator
- Instructional leadership skills and knowledge to move the instructional program forward particularly at the elementary and middle school levels
- Intellectually alive, likes kids and needs to inspire collaboration
- Long range thinker and strategic planner
- Must have superintendent or key management experience
- Open to input from community, staff and parents
- Proactively reaches out to underrepresented and engaged segments of the community
- Proven leadership in dealing with complex issues and improving student achievement
- Provides guidance, direction, and support to the School Committee
- Relationship builder with all stakeholders
- Resilient and able to withstand the criticism that comes when people disagree with you
- Steep in cultural and urban leadership experience
- Strategic thinker and planner
- Strong communication skills and strategies with all stakeholders groups and communities
- Understands the issues and needs related to race concerns and has demonstrated success in improving race relationships in his/her community
- Value the contributions of staff
- Values partnerships and community engagement
- Visible in the school and the community
- Willingness to ensure accountability, proven track record of success

Online Superintendent Profile Survey Results

The Superintendent Profile survey was completed by 539 stakeholders. The majority of respondents were parents with children in CPS (43 percent). Twenty-nine percent were certified staff members, and another 12 percent were community members. The rest were students, support staff, and administrators.

Stakeholder Group		
	Frequency	Percent
Administrator	25	4.6
Community Member	67	12.4
Certified Staff Member	155	28.8
Student	34	6.3
Support Staff	28	5.2
Parent with Children in CPS	230	42.7
Total	539	100.0

The top-rated characteristics respondents selected for a superintendent were:

- Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators. (CC)
- Hold a deep appreciation for diversity and the importance of providing safe and caring school environments. (VV)
- Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, and community members. (CE)

Percentages of respondents overall who selected each item, as well as percentages by stakeholder group, are given in the tables on the following pages. Benchmark results from over seventy comparable districts, incorporating the ranking of over thirty-five thousand stakeholders, are also provided in the table to allow for a comparison of results to national norms.

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.

- Support staff were significantly more likely than certified staff members to choose the Vision & Values item “Strive for continuous improvement in all areas of the District.”
- Community members and parents with children in CPS were significantly more likely than certified staff members to choose the Vision & Values item “Promote high expectations for all students and personnel.”
- Administrators, students, and parents with children in CPS were significantly more likely than certified staff and support staff to choose the Instructional Leadership item “Increase academic performance and accountability at all levels and for all its students, including special needs populations.”
- Support staff were significantly more likely than community members to choose the Community Engagement item “Identify, confront, and resolve issues and concerns in a timely manner.”
- Students were significantly more likely than administrators and community members to choose the Community Engagement item “Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, and community members.”
- Community members were significantly more likely than certified staff to choose the community engagement item “Develop strong relationships with constituents, local government, area businesses, media, and community partners.”
- Certified staff members were significantly more likely than community members, students, and parents with children in CPS to choose the Communication & Collaboration item “Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators.”
- Community members and parents with children in CPS were significantly more likely than certified staff to choose the Management item “Recruit, employ, evaluate, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools.”

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Item (By Subgroups)

Number indicates rank order by overall results		National HYA Benchmark	ALL (539)	Admin (25)	Comm. (67)	Cert. Staff (155)	Student (34)	S.S. (28)	Parent (230)
1	Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators.	32%	57%	72%	51%	72%	35%	50%	50%
2	Hold a deep appreciation for diversity and the importance of providing safe and caring school environments.	29%	54%	52%	49%	59%	65%	50%	52%
3	Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, and community members.	37%	53%	32%	42%	50%	76%	57%	56%
4	Have a clear vision of what is required to provide exemplary educational services and implement effective change.	39%	46%	60%	54%	48%	35%	50%	41%
5	Recruit, employ, evaluate, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools.	27%	40%	32%	48%	26%	38%	50%	47%
6	Promote high expectations for all students and personnel.	34%	39%	44%	54%	25%	38%	36%	44%
7	Hold a deep understanding of the teaching/learning process and of the importance of educational technology.	36%	36%	32%	31%	44%	53%	21%	31%
8	Identify, confront, and resolve issues and concerns in a timely manner.	28%	35%	28%	22%	34%	47%	57%	37%
9	Lead in an encouraging, participatory, and team-focused manner.	28%	35%	48%	27%	43%	24%	21%	34%
10	Increase academic performance and accountability at all levels and for all its students, including special needs populations.	35%	33%	52%	33%	19%	62%	18%	39%
11	Provide meaningful guidance for systematic and comprehensive district-wide curriculum, instructional services, assessment programs, and professional development.	27%	33%	40%	31%	40%	32%	29%	29%
12	Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life.	33%	30%	36%	18%	34%	44%	32%	27%
13	Communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and in a variety of ways.	27%	29%	32%	30%	29%	29%	25%	30%

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Key	VV-Vision & Values	IL-Instructional Leadership	CE- Community Engagement	CC- Communication & Collaboration	M-Management
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Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Item (By Subgroups)

Number indicates rank order by overall results		National HYA Benchmark	ALL (539)	Admin (25)	Comm. (67)	Cert. Staff (155)	Student (34)	S.S. (28)	Parent (230)
14	Seek a high level of engagement with principals and other school-site leaders.	20%	29%	32%	24%	25%	24%	14%	35%
15	Involve appropriate stakeholders in the decision-making process.	22%	28%	36%	21%	32%	21%	32%	27%
16	Align budgets, long-range plans, and operational procedures with the District's vision, mission, and goals.	21%	27%	24%	27%	22%	26%	21%	31%
17	Encourage a sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders regarding success in student learning.	38%	27%	36%	25%	30%	21%	32%	24%
18	Maintain positive and collaborative working relationships with the school board and its members.	27%	22%	12%	31%	17%	21%	21%	24%
19	Strive for continuous improvement in all areas of the District.	35%	18%	16%	25%	12%	26%	39%	17%
20	Act in accordance with the District's mission, vision, and core beliefs.	35%	15%	24%	15%	17%	26%	11%	12%
21	Guide the operation and maintenance of school facilities to ensure secure, safe, and clean school environments that support learning.	21%	15%	8%	10%	19%	26%	11%	13%
22	Develop strong relationships with constituents, local government, area businesses, media, and community partners.	25%	14%	4%	24%	8%	21%	18%	14%
23	Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District.	27%	13%	4%	15%	12%	24%	11%	12%
24	Be an effective manager of the District's day-to-day operations.	23%	12%	4%	18%	8%	24%	18%	11%
25	Utilize student achievement data to drive the District's instructional decision-making.	22%	12%	16%	15%	8%	24%	14%	10%

Key	VV-Vision & Values	IL-Instructional Leadership	CE- Community Engagement	CC- Communication & Collaboration	M-Management
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Comments from Interviews and Focus Group Meetings

August 26-27 and August 31 – September 1, 2015

Listed in alphabetical order

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Strengths

- Above average relationship between the school district and the city of Cambridge
- Building schools as community centers
- City is well run
- Community parents (highly educated, extremely motivated)
- Community values education
- Diversity
- Excellent teachers
- Good relationship between city manager and superintendent
- Graduation rates high for underrepresented students
- Great talent
- Have developed more consistency in curriculum across the schools
- High School program is generally perceived as a shining star that has been improved over the years
- Honors and AP courses are strong
- Low class size/
- Not hung-up on the districts willingness to change
- Outstanding skills in the system
- Parental involvement/
- Progressive town
- Property taxes are relatively low due to strong commercial tax base
- Proven strategy to retain middle class
- Quality administration by in large a strength
- Relationship with the city – capital requirements, after school programs, day care, summer programs
- Resources of community (money, array of community partners)
- Rich Diversity – racial, socioeconomic
- Risk takers
- Safety Net program with police department
- School Committee members and administrators work well together in leading the district
- School facilities – Green Energy building program
- Smart people
- Spirit of the community
- Strong city management

- Strong resources in the community available
- Students are a strength (diverse, engaging)
- Terrific teachers
- The city – diverse and dynamic
- Tremendous community support for high school
- Tremendous financial resources
- Urban district but small enough to be managed and highly resourced
- Very well funded school district
- Visual and Performing Arts/Athletic Programs
- Well educated parents
- Well resourced – bricks/mortar, human resources and or will
- Wide variety of programming outside of the school day supported by the city

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Ability to attract young families to live in Cambridge
- Accountability for evaluation of staff and administrators
- Achievement and needs addressing culturally/Achievement Gap
- Achievement for low income/minority students
- Address the achievement gap (high end unchanged)
- Administration is very decentralized
- Answering the question: “How are spending \$27,000 per student and not getting better results?”
- Bimodal student population
- Broader community/parental engagement
- Budget does not reflect equity needs
- Building leadership at the elementary level
- Communication challenges and expectation differences with Southeast Asian, Haitian, and South American populations
- Convince middle class the quality of all schools
- Crying for leadership
- Decisions not based on clear and complete interpretation of data or selective use of data
- Define negotiables and non-negotiables
- Economic theme – sustainability of economic base and intellectual capital
- Ensure that all kids succeed
- Expand foreign language – World language
- Having a different conversation with the teachers’ union regarding how to close the achievement gaps
- High expectations of money (efficiency/productivity)
- High Honor classes tend to separate classrooms by race (detrack the high school)
- Hiring and retaining staff to reflect district diversity
- Housing costs have forced the middle class out of Cambridge
- How do we insure excellent instruction in every classroom?
- How to manage change
- Identify the core areas for improvement
- Improve communications between superintendent and staff to centralize or decentralize

- Improve management at principal and up
- Income inequality issues
- Lack of a cohesive message about where the district is going
- Lack of collaboration between the School Committee and administration
- Many challenges have existed for many years
- Middle School change has caused divisions in the community
- More accountability and grade sense of urgency or accelerating learning at all levels
- More coordinated approach to programmatic connection to partners
- More open to effective and additional partnerships
- More opportunities for conversations at School Committee meetings
- Need a five-year strategic plan
- Need for greater stakeholder involvement in the budget process
- Need for long-term strategic planning
- Need to address corporate development versus affordable housing
- Need to build greater support for working together
- Need to establish accountability benchmarks
- Need to establish focus and vision
- Need to establish priorities
- Need to evaluate strengths of Academic Programs across the board
- Need to forge a new cohesive vision
- Need to improve the middle school program over the next two years to ensure that it fulfills its potential
- Need to understand that equity and equality are not the same
- Pocket of success but systemic
- Political will to address needs of all schools
- Professional development so that all teachers are capable of providing instruction that will close achievement gaps
- Should celebrate our successes
- Some people believe that individual schools have lost their identity
- Staff retention
- State and federal mandates
- Strengthen leadership at all levels
- Student performance is predictable by SES
- Tap into parental and teacher expertise (best practices)
- Understanding cultural dynamics that divide
- Universal Pre-K
- Utilize success across district
- Very decentralized system that needed to have more consistency
- Voluntary desegregation has caused problems
- Zero Tolerance for “diversity fatigue”

Desired Characteristics

- A good communicator
- Ability to manage competing personalities
- Able to build consensus and a sense of team among school committee members

- Able to clearly articulate the vision for the school district
- Able to deal with highly engaged parents
- Able to handle politics at the position
- Able to leverage university resources
- Appreciates partnerships and resources that are available
- Be hands on
- Bold and takes initiative to address problems
- Collaborative
- Comfortable with challenges
- Communicates a positive message about the needs of various student populations
- Communicates the reasons and rationale behind important decisions
- Communication skills
- Data driven
- Decrease the administrative layers in the district office
- Emotional intelligence is critical
- Energetic, intellectual a lone, respectful
- Experience in districts with diversity
- Experience in middle school leadership and development
- Forward thinker
- Good manager as well as visionary
- Innovator
- Inspiring
- Interpersonal skills
- Knows what is going on by being out in the schools and community
- Lot of experience (worked extensively) in urban and suburban districts/areas
- Management of school experience
- New at career/hungry
- No charter school culture
- No negotiable on student achievement
- No one-the-job training in urban education
- Not afraid to challenge the status quo
- Not afraid to make hard choices
- Open to input - school committee, parents
- Proven experiences in how to handle black/brown boys (not special education)
- Proven leadership in successfully dealing with complex issues
- Proven track record of problem solving, courageous change
- Proven track record on turn around that exceeds Cambridge results
- Respects the role of the school committee and builds a relationships with each member
- Risk taker
- Sees value in a community planning process
- Spends time in the schools
- Steep in cultural and urban leadership experience
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Strong sense of leadership
- Strong values, action oriented, productive

- Support but hold everyone accountable
- Takes concrete and immediate actions to address issues and problems
- Track record of managing up and down the system
- Transformer of culture
- Unafraid to challenge
- Use Cambridge liberalism to bring people together
- Values staff across the board
- Wants to be in Cambridge over the long term
- Wants to engage stakeholders
- Wants to work in the trenches
- Willing to challenge the status quo
- Willing to decentralize but head everyone accountable to high schools
- Willingness to that the risk
- Works with a the School Committee members as leadership partners
- Understands that STEM and STEAM are core issues for success in the new economy

ADMINISTRATORS

Strengths

- Big enough to be challenging
- Class sizes are small
- Community engagement
- Community resources and partnerships
- Diversity – embracing/celebrating/linguistics
- Facilities are in good shape
- Financial resources
- Good union relations
- Management of the budget
- Personable place
- Principals ability to grow and learn from each other
- Resources, including money, Higher Ed, business and cultural opportunity
- Sensitive to needs of a diverse student population
- Size – allows for strong working relationships with all key players
- Strong focus on Academic Achievement
- Talented administrative and teaching staff

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Balancing the needs and wants of diverse learners
- Before making changes a “root cause analysis” should be done
- Could leverage resources better
- District is reactionary rather than proactive
- Doing things without plan could lead to silos
- Funding level removes accountability because there is always money to solve a problem
- Hard to get a focus and sustain a focus
- Inequities in the system
- Need a vision, goals, overall strategy
- No end to requests and expectations
- Often focus is on putting out fires
- School Committee is not in agreement on their role
- Struggle to find the balance between consistency and autonomy
- Utilization of principals future planning

Desired Characteristics

- Ability to build and maintain relationships with school committee members
- Ability to help the school committee members to be advocates and ambassadors for the whole district
- Communicator
- Embraces and promotes strategic planning
- Experience as superintendent or assistant superintendent
- Experience in an Urban district
- Has a visionary compass
- Is visible in the community
- Likes kids

- Manages relationships among school committee members
- Needs to spend time – 1/3 on being visible, 1/3 on district management, and 1/3 on the School Committee
- Progressive and not managing to the status quo
- Rationale leader
- Realistic about career goals – may only be able to survive here for a few years
- Should have staffing power
- Strong decision makers
- Tenacious
- Understands the challenges of building leadership
- Willing to spend time with each school committee member
- Willing to work with the School Committee they way they want to work

COMMUNITY

Strengths

- Administrators and teachers are open to new ideas
- Arts programming
- Buses are named after animals – shows how kid friendly the district is
- Caliber of teaching is strong
- City cares about its schools
- Co taught classes work well
- Commitment to all
- Community engaged and involved
- Diversity
- Drama and Dance programs
- Educated city – understands the importance of education
- Excellent teachers
- Extracurricular programming
- Extraordinary people in community
- Extraordinary people in the community who support the schools
- Great facilities
- Heterogeneous in every way: teaching, racial, style
- High per pupil expenditure
- High School program is generally very strong
- International exchange students
- Intramural sports at some schools
- Lots of community outreach and partnerships
- Lots of youth services and programs
- Mayor's summer work program
- Money is not an issue
- Music program is extraordinary
- Parent liaisons are #1 and a great asset to the schools
- Police Department is very involved in a positive way with youth
- Real commitment to Social Justice
- Resource rich city
- Resources (Lots of money, intellectual capital)
- RSTA Program
- Senior Internship Program
- Students are doing well
- The cultural proficiency workshops that have occurred
- The uniqueness of the K-5 schools
- Understands the unique needs of various student populations
- Uniqueness of K-5 schools
- Very friendly place
- Welcoming attitude in the schools
- Wonderful teachers and guidance counselors at CRLS
- World languages
- Young people are involved in their community

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Address the question of how to invest in everyone's success
- Addressing issues/needs of all students to close the Achievement Gap
- Addressing management lapses such as not completing evaluations on building and district level administrators
- Addressing the needs of students with ADHD
- Bottom up approach to change efforts
- Bringing more services and programming to the underserved
- Coordination of city and school
- Coordination of city and school services
- CP Classes – need a more objective measure for student placement
- Critical need to get students of color into Honors classes
- Dealing with a ton of changes (K-8 to MS), with no real discussion
- Decisions on a centralized or decentralized model
- Develop enough patience to give new initiatives a chance for success
- Developing more trade program options
- Disproportionality in suspensions
- District needs a vision and strategic plan
- Elimination of 8th grade recommendations for class placements – causes too much segregation at the high school level
- Ensure that the school committee supports the new superintendent
- Evaluate the quality of the training programs
- Expand early childhood services to include three year olds
- Expanding the intramural programs so that it exists at all schools and for students not engaged in interscholastic high school athletics
- Extension of the Family Liaison Program to Middle School
- Faculty needs to reflect the student demographics
- Focus on engaging total community
- Focus on supervision, support and evaluation of staff
- Further disaggregate data to understand student Achievement Gaps between different groups (gender, race, income)
- Greater understanding and focus on cultural competency
- Housing stressors placed on families
- Immigrant families do not feel welcome in the schools
- Implementing Universal Pre-K
- Inequality between schools
- Information is sometimes hard to access
- Internship Program should be accessible to all
- Look at first generation families of color that attend college to see how they succeeded in that effort and try to duplicate it with other families
- Managing expectations of a community with robust resources
- More social worker needed
- Narrowing the curriculum to address the requirements of state and federal testing
- Need cultural proficiency and cultural awareness for all staff across the system
- Need for a strategic plan

- Need for more engagement, discussion, and interaction between students in different lower and upper schools
- Need for more teachers of color
- Need for universal junior kindergarten
- Need to better utilize the resources in Cambridge
- Need to bring people together around a common vision
- Need to build career ladders in the system
- Need to create a Career pathway for Administrators/Principals
- Need to deploy restorative justice program across all schools and eliminate punitive discipline approaches
- Need to look at how well the elementary and upper schools prepare students for the high schools
- Need to pick the priorities and stick with them
- Need to proactive seek input from students and underrepresented communities
- Need to understand the systems of oppression that exist
- No respect for teachers
- Outreaching to community resources
- Partnerships with community groups need to be extended
- People need to follow the chain of command in addressing problems and not go straight to the School Committee with their complaints
- Principals need to be supported
- Providing parenting education
- Put students first
- Restorative justice needs to be expanded
- Schools should have comparable resources
- Some evaluation practices are discriminatory
- Speed of change in Cambridge
- Staffing Diversity
- System sometimes places needs of adult over the needs of students
- Teacher Association feels there is too much testing
- Teachers should be part of decision making
- Teaching talent is an underutilized asset
- Tier 2 and 3 student needs more support for social/emotional learning needs
- Too many initiatives – always trying the next “best thing”
- Too many students enter high school in very different places
- Willingness to review High School outcomes

Desired Characteristics

- A proven track record of support for early childhood education
- A strategy for visibility in the community
- Ability to manage divergent expectations
- Able to relate to and talk with all student and parent groups
- Accomplished at closing the achievement gap
- Accomplished at hiring a diverse work force
- Balances research and real world experience in addressing problems
- Be visible in schools and classrooms

- Believes and support partnerships
- Believes in a bottom up approach
- Believes in restorative justice
- Build bridges among interest groups
- Can lobby state and federal officials regarding testing and curriculum requirements
- Communicates directly with students
- Conscious of social justice
- Creates an environment in which it is safe to raise tough issues such as race relationships without reprisals
- Creates partnerships and taps resources in Cambridge
- Educator
- Experience as a teacher and a principal
- Experience as teacher
- Experience in dealing with Gender differences (black/brown and males)
- Experience in working through challenges and innovations
- Experience with a city as Cambridge – Urban/Diverse
- Experience with cultural competence
- Experience with early childhood and elementary education
- Experience working with diverse populations
- Experienced with working through challenging relationships
- Fluent in what racism is and how to eliminate it
- Focus on graduating students who can thrive through college
- From the Cambridge community
- Good communicator
- Great communication skills
- Has deep level of culturally understanding and competency
- Hires well
- Humility
- Inclusive mindset with collaborative skills
- Interested in conducting research on what needs to be improved in Cambridge and how to do it
- Interested in working with the after school programs
- Is interested in the mental and behavioral health issues of children
- Leadership and management skills
- Listens to everyone includes their voices
- Looks at how racism in Cambridge Public Schools needs to be addressed
- Looks beyond the loud and squeaky voices
- Love of Arts/Languages
- Makes communication with students, staff, parents, and community leaders a priority
- Management experience (manage a chain of command)
- Meets with students during the school day
- More interested in supporting quality learning and then having things look good
- Need to inspire collaboration
- Promotes community engagement
- Proven record of closing the Achievement Gap
- Proven record of improving student achievement
- Shifts away from business as usual

- Skill set to manage the political landscape
- Strategic planner
- Strategic thinker who can craft a vision
- Supervises, supports, and evaluates administrators
- Supportive of staff (Principals/Administrators)
- Thoughtful recruiter
- Understands systems and how to make wide spread change across the entire district
- Understands the issue of race
- Urban experience
- Very intentional about supporting staff
- Walks the talk
- Willing to face the issues associated with the achievement gap
- Willingness to be accountable
- Willingness to close the Opportunity Gap
- Willingness to develop a research capability for the district
- Willingness to extend community partnerships

PROFESSIONAL STAFF / FACULTY

Strengths

- Ability to access upper management
- Ability to finance big projects
- AP courses are attracting more students of color
- Array of courses available
- Arts programming
- Attracts strong teaching staff
- Commitment to the Arts
- Diverse Community
- Diversity – Racial transparency
- Diversity of district
- Empowered Workforce/staff
- Engaging community
- Fiscal resources
- Good ELL Programs – students learn academics and English at the same time so they do not fall behind
- Great teachers
- Great teachers
- Lots of community support for youth programming
- Lots of resources
- Middle class families
- Money resources
- No Bullying Policy
- Opinionated, well educated community
- Opportunities for collaboration with city, Higher Ed and businesses
- Professional development
- Spend \$27K per student
- Strong commercial tax base
- Strong student achievement levels
- Strong support services throughout system – guidance, special ed
- Strong vocational ed programming – RSTA program
- Teach Unit
- Teachers are passionate, committed
- Thoughtful and well qualified teachers
- Tremendous resources
- Unique culture of each school
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Well educated staff
- Well managed city
- Well resourced

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- A more segregated community
- Address achievement gap
- Address achievement levels across the board
- Address the inequalities of tracking
- Administration not visible in buildings, to many Assistant Principals
- Appalling lack of focus on Early Childhood Education
- Belief that academic rigor has been sacrificed in creating the middle schools
- Bimodal community as it relates to wealth
- Cambridge sometime does thing for “show”
- Communication needs improvement at all levels (expectations of people to district rather than district to community)
- Conduct a vision review
- Differences in academic rigor among elementary schools
- Different cultures have very different expectations for the schools
- Discipline and equal enforcement of values
- Disconnect between decision makers and implementers
- Equity distribution of resources based on student needs
- Evaluations may bully teachers
- Highly political environment
- Introduction of new programs on almost annual basis
- Involving teachers in developing curriculum
- Leadership is average – needs attention
- Leadership needs a major overhaul (principals)
- Leverage opportunities with Higher Ed
- Loss of middle class in Cambridge
- Lots of initiatives – being pulled in too many directions – lack of follow-through
- Need to improve family engagement
- Need to manage strong and diverse opinions
- Needs of children from immigrant families
- Needs of student, needs to transcend the politics of community
- Not taking a stand against standardized testing
- Number of languages spoken in the home makes communication difficult
- Poor/Black not engaged – How do we reach them?
- Poverty related issues
- Push for universal preschool
- Rapid pace of change
- Reaction to issues are often not timely
- Results do not match capabilities
- Some parents can be very demanding and pushy until they get their way
- Top leadership is not providing vision
- Tracking – needs a superintendent review
- Union relationships

- Upper school structure is relatively new and still finding its way – some believe it needs to be fixed
- Use of consultants is extreme
- Utilization of resources
- Varying levels of parental support for their students and the schools

Desired Characteristics

- A capacity to review/over haul the system
- A collaborator, one who can galvanize people around district goals
- A respectful considerate and engaging individual
- Ability to manage the political process
- Able to innovate
- Able to stand up to stakeholders when necessary
- Affinity for strategic planning
- Affinity for working with Higher Ed
- Believe in community partnerships
- Builds relationships
- Classroom experience
- Comfortable with firing principals who are not doing the job well
- Community visibility strategy
- Curriculum experience
- Dealt with divergent opinions
- Defined instructional strategy (student centered with learning outcomes)
- Experience as a Superintendent on high level administration
- Experience with building PLC's
- Focuses on social justice
- Genuine interest and respect
- Good communication skills
- Good communicator and listener
- Good diplomat
- Hands on management approach
- Has strategic vision
- Hires people who challenge him or her
- Is intentional about hiring the very best staff
- Knowledge of Early Childhood Education
- Listen (hurry but no rush)
- Live in the city
- Loves the classroom – understand and appreciates the needs of teachers
- Managed large teams
- Office management skills
- Open minded to change
- Outstanding leader
- Prior making deep changes to replicate prior experiences
- Proven manager/proven leader

- Proven Urban experience
- Skill set to bring external resources to school and/or communities to improve access
- Some experience in an Urban/diverse school district
- Strong communication skills
- Superintendent or key management experience
- Teacher
- Teaching/Building level experience
- Urban type experience
- Wants to learn about Cambridge before coming in and making changes
- Willing to collaborate with Union
- Willing to look at how money is being spent and if it needs to be adjusted to address pressing student needs
- Willing to take risks
- Willingness to assess the district strengths and needs
- Willingness to challenge Union on priorities
- Works to recruit and employ a more diverse workforce

PARENTS

Strengths

- A lot of resources, i.e. city, Higher Ed, business, money
- After School Programs
- Best Higher Ed Institution to draw from
- Building level administrators are open to working with parents
- Caliber of staff – very dedicated educators
- Cambridge has made efforts to be visionary and forward thinking
- Capacity of student population
- Caring community
- Charter Schools are an asset in providing more choices
- Children feel safe in school and supported by adults
- Committed and amazing teachers
- Community engagement
- Cultural Diversity – race, languages, socio-economics
- District values and family input
- Diverse student body
- Diversity
- Diversity is phenomenal
- Education Programs
- Facilities are generally good
- Focus on developing a love of learning
- Generally navigates the issues associate with diversity pretty well
- Going to school in Cambridge prepares students to live in a diverse world as adults
- Great to hold so many sessions to gather input
- High School performance
- High School programs and offerings
- History of Cambridge
- Instructional Excellence/Quality
- Many different support systems are available
- Mayors Work Program
- Middle School change has generally been positive
- Money/Strong tax base
- No bullying is tolerated
- Outstanding urban school district
- Partnerships
- Performing Arts
- Quality of facilities
- School choice
- Schools focus on learning and flourishing together
- Strengths
- Strong relations with industry
- Teachers who encourage diversity
- Transportation services

- University connections
- Upper school structural change was greatly needed
- Variation in elementary schools is good thing
- Varied and vibrant diverse population
- Very talented teachers
- Wealth of resources
- Well resourced

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- A will to ensure school equity
- Address the issue of sending all behavior problems to one school
- Adversarial labor relationships need to change
- Choice is not between old school progressive and data driven approach or between rich learning experienced and structured learning; but rather to find a way to balance high quality project based learning that engages students with the tools to assess student learning around agreed upon high expectations for all and intervene with support services when needed
- Closing the achievement gap
- Communication between MS teachers and parents varies greatly
- Concern has been expressed about over-testing and this view does not represent what the majority of parents feel
- Controlled choice – promotes inherent inequities between schools
- Cycles of poverty have continued for decades in the community
- Decide on a centralized or Decentralized model
- Developing a culture of high expectations led by Principals
- Discipline approaches are too punitive and need to focus more on restorative justice
- Disparate opportunities for children
- Diversity – meeting the needs of a diverse population
- Eliminate inequalities between schools
- Great communication with parents regarding special education, IEP and support services is needed
- Holding teachers more accountable
- Implementation of standards
- Improve Principal accountability
- Improve teaching morals
- Inconsistency in homework practices
- Is challenging for some kids to get a good education in Cambridge because kids and families are expected to be independent
- Lack of focus on the importance of student learning and student achievement as the core issue in the district
- Lack of supervision of principals
- Long range planning for the district
- Lottery system needs revision/improvement
- Loud voices are not necessarily broad voices
- Mange new initiatives
- MS curriculum has been more uniform but the individual nature of schools has been reduced
- Need for a reflective, self-critical culture in the district

- Need for clear, concise, concrete communication on issues and approaches
- Need to carefully look at subgroup populations who are not doing well
- Need to challenge every child to his/her individual potential
- Need to embed a deep understanding of cultural awareness and competence in the system
- Need to find a way to share best practices in individual schools across the district
- Needs of advanced learners are not always met and these children are not always challenged
- No support for Advance Learners
- Not changing the innovative agenda
- Private schools taking students away from public schools
- Proficiency gap and graduation rates for subgroups are horrendous
- Replicate the Performing Arts model to the elementary level
- Return in investment is not there – we are not getting the results we should given the amount that we are investing in each child
- Review tracking
- School Committee elections every two years does not provide for stability in leadership
- Should hold some session in community centers so stakeholders do not have to come to school offices
- Significant issues with rigor, Common Core, PARC need to be addressed because CPS has chosen to ignore these issues completely
- Small groups of vocal constituents often drive the agenda – they frequently do not represent the views of the majority, but decisions are made to please them because they are voices that are heard
- Some families are being priced out of the community
- Some people are concerned about the early grades being too academically focused and too much testing – not the view of the majority of parents
- Student being passed through grades
- Students earning As and Bs in class and scoring poorly on state tests
- Support systems are not equally available, and it is not always clear as to how to access them
- System needs to learn why families choose to leave Cambridge Public Schools
- Teachers are overwhelmed with the range of learners in their classrooms
- The number of children of color in advanced classes is not proportional to the population
- The school system is not effective at truly leveraging the potential of Cambridge's diversity
- The teacher staff needs to better reflect the diversity of Cambridge
- Timely communication to parents is weak
- To ensure equity of programs as well as maintain the array of programs
- Too much focus on academics and not enough focus on social emotional learning
- Top down leadership does not work in Cambridge
- Tracking – tends to segregate students in middle and High School
- Two schools exist at the high school and are divided along racial lines
- Utilizing budget dollars better for students education

Desired Characteristics

- Ability to lead development of a comprehensive district plan including vision, goals, etc
- Ability to listen
- Ability to utilize expertise within the district and to learn from others – Cambridge seems to always reinvent the wheel, which is waste of resources
- Able to help move the upper school program forward and help it achieve its intent and potential
- Be a presence in the schools and classrooms
- Be open to creating partnerships with community
- Being engaged in addressing cultural issues and differences
- Believes in best practices and supports their use across all schools
- Brings people together by getting them on board regarding change efforts
- Changes the culture from one of complaining to one of problem solving
- Collaborative labor relationship style
- Committed to community engagement
- Communicates regularly and directly with staff and parents
- Communication skills with all parent groups
- Constantly self-reflective and self critical
- Culturally competent
- Data driven
- Deep knowledge of educational practice
- Display courage with diplomacy
- Enhance relationship with teachers and community
- Experience as a Superintendent
- Experience dealing with a wide range of diversity issues
- Experience in accessing community's needs
- Experience with Urban issues
- External Advocacy record
- Finance background
- Finds a way to listen to all and then bring people together around decisions
- Flexibility
- Flexible thinker
- Good manager
- Hands on management style – High energy
- Helps people solve problems
- Honest, great integrity
- Learns from data – on top of the issues
- Listens to all voices, not just the loudest
- Long range thinker
- Makes family engagement a priority
- Measure Achievement differently (not just test scores)
- Open and curiosity about innovation
- Proven ability to manage the politics of the position
- Proven record of community engagement
- Proven record of expanding/increasing student achievement

- Proven track record of getting things done effectively
- Proven track record of success
- Recognizes the importance of partnerships
Communicates regularly and effectively with teachers
- Sees public schools as a moral institution within the community
- Should be a dynamic leader, a visionary
- Steps outside of the safe political box
- Superintendent agenda should be the community's agenda
- Superintendent spend time in schools/promote "Best Practices"
- Takes a careful look at what is being spent and what is being achieved
- Takes a hard look at the performance data of CPS and willing to address the areas of need
- Teacher
- Truly understands what makes Cambridge unique
- Understand the district before making significant changes
- Understands and uses research appropriately
- Understands Data (must be able to explain)
- Upper management skills
- Urban District experience, not necessarily superintendent
- Uses deliberate and soft power to bring people together
- Visionary approach informed by data and balanced with managerial expertise to implement
- Willing to support principals
- Willingness to hold everyone accountable for student achievement
- Works well in a highly diverse and political environment

SUPPORT STAFF

Strengths

- Ethnic and SES diversity
- Family Liaison services
- Intimacy of the elementary schools
- Long history of family and community engagement
- Resource rich
- School services/city services/partner services to support the well being of children in Cambridge
- Working to become more culturally sensitive and aware

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Diversity – long term achievement and opportunity gaps
- Ensuring that good general ed practices are in place as the first means of intervention for special needs students
- Knee jerk reaction to concerns
- Lack of alignment between general ed and special ed
- Need for a strategic plan
- Need to find the right balance between individuality and consistency among schools
- School Committee is reactionary to small groups of dissenting voices
- School Committee pulls the administration in too many directions
- Too many starts and stops, too many initiatives, lack of full implementation of goals – need to establish the priorities and stick with them until they are fully deployed throughout the system
- Transition to a restorative justice approach needs to be system wide

Desired Characteristics

- Ability to stand by a decision once made
- Builds relationships
- Collaborative leadership style
- Communicates the strengths of the system
- Experience as a superintendent
- Experience in working in an urban environment
- Listens and wants to hear what people are saying
- Mindful of the diversity in the community and the ability to address varying needs in various communities
- Motivational
- Operates disciplinary practices through a restorative justice lens
- Sees and understands the root causes of the achievement gap
- Understands the management tasks in the system
- Values family engagement
- Willing and able to work with city leaders
- Works to moderate personalities on the school committee and brings people together as a team

STUDENTS

Strengths

- Arts programming
- Buildings are kept in good condition
- Dance
- Foreign Language
- French
- Friendly neighborhoods
- Generally feel safe in school
- Going to school as an overall experience is positive
- Gym space
- Honor Classes
- Learning environment is sometimes challenging in a good way, sometime not
- Lots of opportunities for children
- Lots of space and places for kids to go in schools
- Love of learning
Math classes
- Opportunities at the high school
- Orchestra
- Principals are nice
- Schools are clean and well kept
- Sports opportunities
- Teachers are great
- Very reliable and supportive city

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Attendance policy is problematic because it penalize students for missing class even if they are doing well in the class
- Bullying is sometimes a problem
- Bus transportation needs to be improved
- Cambridge is very expensive place to live
- Conflicts between students are often not handled fairly
- Co-taught Honors classes are needed
- CP classes give 15-30 minutes of homework while honors classes give hours of homework
- CRLS is two different schools with differing sets of expectations for different groups of students
- Disproportionality in discipline practices – suspensions
- Disproportionality of students of color in honors and AP classes
- Eliminate teacher recommendations in placement decisions
- History curriculum is very Eurocentric and needs to include more global perspective including African American, Afro-Latino, African, West Indies, and Queer Black history
- HS has a poor social environment
- Innovation agenda is not working
- Longer school day 7:45-3:45
- Make 9th grade classes heterogeneous and remove tracking
- More computers are needed

- More events in neighborhoods
- More translations for school information is needed
- Need for cultural sensitivity for all staff
- Need for gender-neutral washrooms
- Need for greater transparency in the system
- Need for more guidance counselors
- Need for more mediation training and services
- Need to create honors options for CP classes
- Need to expand restorative justice practices and training in CPS
- Opportunities gap exists and needs to be addressed
- Over dependence on outside consultants
- Pervasive racism and sexism in CPS
- Schools should require uniforms
- Significant need to increase the number of teachers of color, especially Black teachers
- Some schools are too crowded
- Some students are just passed through classes
- Some students do not feel safe in school
- Some students don't put forth much effort particularly in CP classes
- Some teachers don't seem to care about students
- Sometimes teachers do too much work for students in support them
- Students need teachers they can trust
- Students segregate themselves

Desired Characteristics

- Be engaged with students
- Be friendly
- Believes in restorative justice approach
- Bilingual
- From Cambridge
- Inclusive with all students and staff
- Know the students by name
- Listens to youth voices
- Provide teachers with the classroom resources they need so that teachers do not have to buy their own materials
- Really cares about the success of each student
- Should have gone to Cambridge Public Schools
- Should live in the community
- Talk to teachers
- Track record in closing the achievement gap, increase staff diversity to reflect the student populations, and giving student a real voice in decision making
- Understand the history of Cambridge and is willing to address the issues needed to improve the school system
- Visible and accessible to students
- Visit schools often
- Willing to meet and talk with students
- Works to include the underrepresented populations
- Works to see that conflicts between students are resolved fairly

COMMUNITY FORUMS HELD BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS (

Strengths:

- 3-year old programs in the schools (FMA & Tobin + Special start)
- Academically the district is always moving forward
- Amazing teaching staff x 5
- Dedicated staff and teachers
- Diversity of Cambridge x 5
- Family engagement efforts
- Full time staff support positions (adjustment counselors, OT and PT etc.), please continue to support these important staff positions as Full Time
- Great school based programs (Montessori etc.)
- Great special start programming
- Great staff
- Investment in staff
- Involved parents
- Kids are welcoming of all different populations
- Kodaly program
- Leaders of color is a strength
- LGBT Administrators is a strength
- Montessori and Immersion Schools and choice in programs
- Opportunities for grad students from Harvard and Lesley to work in our schools-strong partnership
- Opportunities for parent engagement
- Schools have strong histories
- Some schools are doing inclusion very well, some could be much stronger
- Spanish at elementary level (FMA)
- Staff is proactive in identifying needs early
- Strong coaching model
- Strong connection to city agencies and other non-governmental operations
- Strong financial resources
- Strong School Leader & Autism program (FMA)
- Strong Special Education
- Strong specialists and coaching models
- There is a constant need and effort made to create community in our schools and district-wide

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Administrators not engaged enough
- After school activities are weak
- Best practices not shared across the district
- Best practices of the strongest K-8 school models were not brought into the Upper School curriculum
- Bring back World Language in Elementary School

- Communication regarding opportunities
- Concern that the Principals plate is too full, the list of responsibilities is too broad, needs to be better defined
- Controlled choice is a weakness
- Don't "standardize" schools, keep the unique-ness. There is a feeling that schools are being homogenized.
- Equity and Social Justice not a focus
- Facing History, monologue and portfolio review curricula were lost, want to bring them back
- Heavily resourced, but outcomes haven't changed
- Hide issues instead of addressing
- High School has grown tremendously in the last few years, but staffing hasn't increased with population growth
- Issues of poverty not addressed
- Lack of administration presence in the classroom/schools
- Lack of coordinated effort around Out-of-school time
- Lack of experimentation
- Lack of play in Kindergarten, kids are stressed
- Lack of support for low SES experiences
- Lots of opportunities to give feedback, but the feeling is that it's undervalued or not listened to
- Lottery system sets families up to fail if they don't get their "choice" and are "mandatorily" assigned
- More social workers in schools
- More visibility of SC members to share strengths and challenges between schools
- Need advanced learner support from elementary to High School, not just in High School
- Need Family Liaisons in the Upper Schools
- Need full time Art Teachers
- Need more diverse teachers and staff, especially male teachers of color. More male teachers in general
- Need more inclusion
- Need more trained professionals in the classroom
- Not addressing deep divisions and differences with respect
- Not all schools are equally attractive or equally marketed
- Not closing the achievement gap
- Recruiting and hiring systems need to be refined
- Schools are being homogenized, identities are getting "lost"
- SEI program is weak, needs to be evaluated
- Small group of citizens can control public policy
- Social Emotional Learning focus and plan is lacking
- Some schools are not chosen, perceived as "bad"
- Special Education
- Standardization of curriculum across schools
- Switching schools is a cumbersome and intimidating process
- Teacher and principals need support in soft skills, needed at all levels
- Teachers are stressed and need more support from administration x 2

- The district leadership and administration takes a defensive stance instead of listening
- Too many consultants
- Too many transitions
- Too top heavy, not enough school based/class
- Tracking in High School starting in 9th grade, College Prep and Honors/AP streams. Segregates kids x 2
- Transition to middle school is tough, principal styles vary widely, making transitions difficult
- Upper School Heads need to have more cohort level meetings to share best practices and learn from each other more
- Upper Schools need more structured ways to meet other upper school communities
- Upper Schools need serious attention, there was poor implementation, was rushed, not evaluated. No real honesty about what was working/what wasn't
- We should be more progressive
- Weak budget process, needs to be reworked. Where are we spending our \$ and how?
- Weak science curriculum

Desired Characteristics:

- “What would you do to improve the Innovation Agenda?”
- A candidate who has a greater presence in all the schools; more hands on interaction with school-based instruction
- A young, vibrant candidate, someone with fresh ideas on how to approach complex issues. Should also be someone the kids can relate to
- Approachable & personable
- Approachable and visible
- Be in the schools more
- Better community partner
- Can navigate across SES differences
- Can use resources wisely
- Can work with School Committee
- Capacity within system to oversee and review, more open and honest assessment of large programs and initiatives
- Collaborative to pull in stakeholders, how can we better pull in underrepresented voices in the district
- Committed to accelerated learner supports / Someone who knows and believes in higher aspirations for students including those at grade level /Track record of closing achievement gap & helping students who excel
- Committed to arts education
- Committed to differentiated instruction
- Communication with parents and families
- Community and synergy builder
- Community building experience
- Consensus builder
- Crisis Management competency, in dealing with parents and staff, ensuring proper communication
- Current superintendent is visible in the community, would want that in next Superintendent

- District-wide culture shift with compassion, growth mindset and mindfulness at the center
- Diversity important, want to see quality candidates of color
- Embrace critical thinking
- Engage with the community
- Experience in public schools, especially Middle School experience x 2
- Experience, especially urban experience
- Figure out the balance between letting schools keep their individual identities while realizing we are a school district.
- Focus on outcomes for boys of color. Boys of color do better at FMA than in other schools, someone who can dig into why
- Good listener
- Greater community engagement not just visibility; two-way conversation
- High integrity
- High work ethic
- In touch with daily routine of teachers and staff and how policy implementation affects the them
- Innovative but listening
- Invested in the community and understands the community they are serving
- Lead by example in terms of being willing to be evaluated and evaluate their staff as well as evaluate programs to determine their worth
- Listening in a meaningful way
- Lives in Cambridge or another diverse community
- Middle School experience
- More of a facilitator than a salesperson
- More Open Door policy for parents
- Need more evaluations on programs, there has been no review of the Innovation Agenda
- Needs to look at Whole Child philosophy
- Not a top down approach
- Open door policy, someone who under-promises and over-delivers
- Personally connected to the community
- Prepared to work hard on the Upper Schools
- Proactive
- Process oriented
- Proven track record
- Proven track record of working well with School Committee, someone who doesn't make it "personal"
- Respectful of what is HERE and strengthening what we have, not someone who comes in with a plan to make a huge shift
- Respectful, lack of ego
- Responsive to parents
- Responsive to student and family needs
- Review systemic culture for accountability; desire for clear expectations and follow through (cronyism was noted as a drag to system)
- Social Justice focus

- Solid management skills
- Someone invested in technology for improving outcomes, strategic approach to IT investment
- Someone who “likes” Cambridge and families, someone who is more a part of the community
- Someone who can balance high stakes testing and assessments, state and national mandates while understanding some parents here are anti testing
- Someone who can build a culture of collaboration
- Someone who can create better alignment between city health and human services with health and safety needs that arise in our schools
- Someone who can improve what we have, not make radical changes
- Someone who can mentor Principals, especially new ones
- Someone who can partner with the vast network of resources in Cambridge to strengthen our schools
- Someone who can realize the importance of hiring people from within the community
- Someone who can recognize great things and adopt best practices, but can also recognize shortcomings and roll up their sleeves to find solutions
- Someone who can roll up their sleeves and do the work
- Someone who can take a more inclusive approach to goal setting, who can champion an inclusive process
- Someone who communicates with respect
- Someone who has a vision but is not a visionary
- Someone who has taught in the classroom
- Someone who is willing to be held accountable, and committed to follow through
- Someone who listens to parents (PTO and School Councils)
- Someone who looks at best practices
- Someone who will focus on each kids, not just ones who are lagging
- Someone with a track record of success with a diverse culture like ours and urban experience
- Stakeholder in Cambridge, invested in the community / Vested in the community
- Strong “Equity” focus
- Strong background in Special Education
- Strong belief in Early Childhood Education
- STRONG communication skills
- Strong connection to the community
- Strong dedication to cultural competency, we need an aligned, visible school-based cultural proficiency
- Strong focus on student learning
- Strong interest in curriculum to raise the bar (curriculum has been strengthened but needs to be refined)
- Strong knowledge of the “Innovation Agenda” the recent switch from our K-8 to a K-5 plus middle school model
- Strong leadership skills and strong in education
- Strong middle school experience
- Strong Special Education background, work closely with Dr. Greer to ensure inclusion practices are a priority in our district
- Supports teachers and listens to their concerns

- Think outside the box
- Thoughtful
- Track record on follow through
- Truly invested in kids, in collaboratively involved, and can move the district forward
- Trustworthy
- Understanding teachers and be more present in the classrooms
- Uses clear metrics for success
- Vision for the school system
- Was a teacher
- Willingness to listen, with strong communication skills who can implement coordination at a high level and set expectations for that from the top down. There is a need for a systemic, coordinated and transparent communication strategy that encompasses both internal and external communications - needs to manage conversation; be out front to dispel misinformation
- Weak science program
- Work with teachers

Cambridge Public Schools

Superintendent of Schools

Desired Characteristics

Based on the input from students, parents, staff, and community members gathered through focus groups, interviews, and online survey results, the School Committee of the Cambridge Public Schools seeks an ***energetic leader, bold thinker, and strategic planner*** who possesses the following characteristics:

A ***knowledgeable and innovative instructional leader*** who:

- Creates and guides an educational system that maximizes and supports the individual potential of each child
- Balances the progressive roots of the Cambridge Public Schools with the need to ensure that all students are provided with a comprehensive and viable curriculum delivered by outstanding teachers
- Ensures the education of the whole child through inclusive support services, thoughtful social and emotional learning experiences, and strong technical and fine arts programming
- Hires, supports, and inspires teachers, administrators, and staff to be student focused, forward thinking, and life-long learners, while fostering collaborative relationships with all unions

A ***systems thinker and proactive manager*** who:

- Communicates regularly and systematically with all stakeholder groups by both sharing information and genuinely seeking input before decisions are made
- Ensures effective/efficient daily operations of and long-range planning for the district and its schools
- Strives to have the teaching staff reflect the diversity that exists in the student population
- Supports, enhances, and expands the partnerships that exist among the school district, the city government, community agencies, and higher education institutions in Cambridge
- Understands how to create and effectively use evaluation processes and program reviews in order to enable employees to flourish and grow in a continually improving school system

An ***effective communicator and committed consensus-builder*** who:

- Demonstrates a high level of emotional intelligence by gaining trust and engendering respect through collaborative interactions with students, staff, parents, and community members
- Establishes deep and meaningful relationships with all segments of the Cambridge community
- Partners with the members of the School Committee as a leadership team in providing direction and guidance for the long-term needs and interests of students
- Understands the struggles and challenges facing students of color and/or economic need and has a proven track record of improving educational opportunities in a diverse environment
- Regularly engages all segments and viewpoints in the Cambridge community, balances diverse competing interests, and brings people together around the common good for all students
- Is visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life

In regards to ***leadership experiences and accomplishments***, the successful candidate will:

- Be certified, or capable of gaining certification, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Have experience as an educational leader in an urban district of similar size and/or complexity
- Have a proven track record of making significant progress in closing achievement gaps and/or can demonstrate the knowledge of best practices necessary to reduce those gaps