



Chicago Public Schools Community Engagement and Leadership Profile Report June 2021

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Community Engagement Objectives

Build community understanding and support through a transparent search process that engages stakeholders.

Identify a general consensus on the perceived strengths and challenges of CPS that can inform applicants who are considering the position.

Identify the desired skills and characteristics the next Chief Executive Officer should possess and demonstrate for success.

The creation of a “Leadership Profile” generated from this engagement to guide the selection of the next Chief Executive Officer.

Structure of the Process

- Planning with City Officials, the CPS Board and Administration for the search process
- Creation of a timeline
- Identifying search committee members
- Developing and implementing communication strategies
- Organizing and implementation of stakeholder activities

Timeline

- Flexible calendar adjusted by one week - June 3
- May 4 - June 11: Community engagement activities
- June 16-23: Community Engagement and Profile Report
- May 13 - June 25: Application submittal and review
- Week of July 6: Candidate slate presentation; Search Committee review; “Interview Protocol” training
- Week of July 12-19: Semi-finalist interviews; presentation to decision makers
- Week of July 26: selection of the finalist and contract review
- New CEO: start date to be determined

Communication

- Emails to all CPS employees and stakeholders, including parents, partners, and vendors
- Prominent placement on CPS.edu website, with webpage specific to the CEO/Supt search process
- Social media posts from the district
- Promotion to principals, Local School Councils, faith leaders, elected officials, community organizations and partners
- All-call invitation to participate in focus groups
- 390 participants were randomly selected for focus group participation

Communication

- Selected individuals invited to sign up for one of 26 non-student focus groups
- Students recruited through direct recruitment of CPS student leaders
- Vacancy announcement posted on the BWP and CPS websites
- Ads placed in professional publications
- Focus group participants asked to serve as “search ambassadors” to inform and encourage participation from the entire community
- Written search updates provided to share information about the status of the search

Community Engagement Essential Questions

- What are the strengths of Chicago Public Schools (CPS)?
- What are the greatest challenges or issues facing CPS?
- What specific skills and characteristics will the next Chief Executive Officer (CEO) need to possess to be successful in CPS?
- What other factors should the decision makers use in reviewing, screening and selecting the next CEO

Stakeholder Engagement

- A total of 4,615 stakeholders feedback comprise the qualitative and quantitative data collected
- 16 one-on-one interviews with city officials, Board members, union leadership
- 34 scheduled focus groups; 1,394 community members applied; 160 community members in attendance representing staff, parents, students and community organizations
- 4,455 completed online surveys open to the community (English - 4,292, Mandarin Chinese - 16, Polish - 16, Spanish - 132)

Survey Participant Results

- 45% of the survey participants were parents; 38% were employees, 20 % were students
- 51% of the employees were teachers; 70% of the students are in high school; 43% in elementary school
- Of 59 zip codes listed only 2 had no respondents

Survey Participation Results

- 34% of the respondents were White; 22% were Black; 22% were Latino
- The top 20% - 60 % of prompt responses for each category identified the strengths, challenges and skills/characteristics composite
- Information about the process and survey were mostly provided through the CPS website, social media and school communication networks.

Strengths: Survey Top 3

- Excellent teachers and staff - 56%
- Supportive parents and community - 41%
- Educational options and programs - 29%

Strengths

- Making huge strides in student achievement, attendance, and graduation rates
- Parents becoming more engaged and involved
- Strong caring, hardworking administrators, teachers and staff
- Students – kids are great with wonderful potential
- Great schools and caring community – pride in schools and passionate people

Strengths

- Variety of programs and extracurricular activities
- Commitment to equity – the Equity Framework
- Resources for students
- Management system organization
- Diversity in and of the district

Strengths

- Positive start with Healing-Centered Project
- Working with community partners/community organizations/parent organizations
- Innovative work to establish teaching and learning coherence
- Student and family focused

Challenges: Survey Top Three

- Allocation of Resources - 38%
- Engaging Parents - 35%
- Closing the Achievement Gap - 33%

Challenges

- Response and repairing trust over the closure schools
- Declining enrollment – impact on funding
- Equity of resources – funding
- Addressing the gap between schools – continue equity work
- Damaged community – trust deficit

Challenges

- Catch up coming out of COVID
- Building infrastructure issues
- Pending legislation regarding elected school board
- Political environment – relationship with Board and city officials
- Tension between city officials and educators unions

Challenges

- Replacing top leadership diversity of staff
- Achievement gaps of underserved students
- District-wide communication – lack of effective community engagement
- Racial inequity
- Size of the district
- Meeting the needs of a diverse population

Other Considerations

- Doctorate – nice but is not essential
- Educator – has served at all levels in the profession
- Seated superintendent do not limit the pool – expertise is valued
- Educator with a proven track record of success
- Chicago connection not required but preferred

Other Considerations

- Consider internal candidates
- Consider Bilingual candidate
- Has worked in a large urban diverse district
- Can have educational independence versus political allegiance

Skills & Characteristics: Survey Top 3 Leadership Profile

- Communicator - 54%
- Cultural competency - 47%
- Organizational skills - 46%

- Prioritizes students - 58%
- Has integrity - 51%
- Community commitment - 42%

Leadership Profile

The Board seeks candidates who can demonstrate “a match and fit” with the skills, characteristics and leadership qualities described in the “Leadership Profile” document provided.

Leadership Profile: Visionary Instructional Leader

- Is an educator who promotes the whole child, is student and child focused for all students and has a track record of leading with a strong racial equity lens
- Has a deep understanding of teaching and learning with the ability to assess effective instruction
- Has a strong instructional background with “boots on the ground” and extensive experience practicing in the field with documented successes in improving student achievement

Leadership Profile: Collaborative Effective Communicator

- Is an active listener communicating effectively both inside and outside the system and committed to work with city officials, Board, staff, families and the entire community
- An innovative leader with the ability to think creatively and “outside the box” to solve complex problems and stay calm under pressure
- An inclusive and collaborative leader who understands and addresses issues around racism, rooted in a commitment to equity, social justice and cultural competency
- Is a strategic planning team builder

Leadership Profile: Skilled Manager

- Demonstrates courage and is effective in working in a large urban environment
- Is a politically savvy leader/manager who can successfully navigate politics without being a politician
- Recognizes the need for a diverse staff, has the ability to identify talent, recruit effective staff and encourage leadership development
- Is a leader with a proven track record of managing resources effectively - collaborative style seeking solutions to complex issues

Leadership Profile: Personal Qualities

- Is a visionary leader with integrity who is able to build relationships and will be visible in all schools and all neighborhoods
- Will commit to CPS for the long run, understands the history of CPS and will build on successes
- Is a transparent and accessible leader to all for all

Summary

There were approximately four thousand six hundred fifteen (4,615) individuals who participated in the interviews, focus groups, and surveys which were used to identify the aforementioned themes and develop the recommended Leadership Profile.

The consultants received a number of positive responses regarding the process and community engagement component from stakeholders. We appreciated the opportunity to conduct these activities with a very engaging, forth right, and cooperative community.

The CPS community should be proud of the extent to which multiple segments of the population participated in this search process.