



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Scarsdale Union Free School District

October 3, 2022

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Process

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in August and September 2022 for the new Superintendent of the Scarsdale Union Free School District (District). 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 Board of Education (Board) in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new Superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews, focus groups, open forums, and a survey collected information regarding the strengths of the District and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years.

Participation

During the months of August and September, the Associates conducted 47 interviews and focus groups. These included individual interviews with each member of the Board of Education and individual interviews with each member of the District Administrative team. As part of the overall outreach to the community, focus groups were arranged for District parent, PTA, booster, and community organizations. These included the community's Senior Citizen Council, Scarsdale Schools Education Foundation (SSEF), Scarsdale Neighborhood Associations Presidents (SNAP), members of Scarsdale town governance, Village Police, Fire, Scarsdale Volunteer Ambulance Corps., Friends of Music and Arts (FMA), Maroon and White (M&W), Drug and Alcohol Task Force (DATF), SAFE Coalition, Scarsdale Teachers Institute (STI), Scarsdale Family Counseling Services, the Scarsdale Public Library, the League of Women Voters, Scarsdale Forum, Alumni and Education Foundation, as well as in person and Zoom Community Forums open to all members of the community. In-school focus groups included faculty, administrators, staff, and collective bargaining leadership. Focus groups also included one for middle school students and one for high school students. These students were selected through their respective building principal's office.

An anonymous online survey was open from September 8, 2022 through September 23, 2022. Survey data was collected from the following stakeholder groups:

- Administrators
- Faculty
- Support Staff
- Students
- Community/Parents/Guardians with students in the Scarsdale Public Schools
- Community/Parents/Guardians who do not have children in the Scarsdale Public Schools

The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below. *Please note that not all focus groups were a group that was disaggregated for the online survey.*

Groups	Personal interviews, focus groups, or open forums	Online Survey
Board of Education Members	7	NA
Interim Superintendent	1	NA
Administrators	26	18
Faculty	70	228
Support Staff	20	42
Students	15	120
Community/Parents/Guardians	113	-
Community/Parents/Guardians with students in the Scarsdale Public Schools	-	894
Community/Parents/Guardians who do not have children in the Scarsdale Public Schools	-	130
Total	252	1432

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.

The HYA consultants interviewed **252** district and community constituents as part of the personal interviews, focus groups, and open forums. Each of the individuals and groups were asked to share their thoughts regarding three questions:

1. How would you describe the strengths of the District?
2. What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the District in the next few years?
3. What characteristics and areas of expertise would you like to see in the next Superintendent?

This report provides the desired characteristics for the Superintendent of Schools based on the responses shared by the above persons as part of the interviews, focus groups, open forums, and the survey. An overview of the input provided throughout the community engagement process is provided in the respective sections of this report. Additional details and data are provided as appendices at the end of the report. Separate reports have been provided to the Board with the responses from the survey, including open-ended comments and recommendations for candidates.

The consultants would like to thank all the participants who attended focus group meetings or completed the online survey and the Scarsdale School District staff members who assisted with our meetings, including Middle School Principal, Meghan Troy and High School Principal, Kenneth Bonamo, for arranging our meetings with students, and Director of Technology and Innovation, Jeannie Crowley, for technical support. In particular, Honoré Adams, District Clerk, was especially helpful in organizing and scheduling focus group meetings and assuring that the consultants' time in the District went smoothly.

Respectfully submitted:

Dr. Susan Guiney

Deborah Raizes

October 3, 2022

Scarsdale Union Free School District

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

Superintendent of Schools

After seeking input from its Board members, parents, administrators, faculty, staff, students and the community via focus groups, interviews, open forums, and an online survey, the Scarsdale Union Free School District Board of Education seeks a strong educational leader who:

- Appreciates the culture of the Scarsdale Public Schools and rebuilds trust
- Engages the school community with excellent interpersonal skills
- Inspires others as a transformational leader
- Is a stellar communicator who is an active listener, makes people feel included, respected, and is a confident and competent public speaker
- Is an innovative and creative academic visionary
- Is visible, approachable, accessible, and enjoys engaging with students, parents, faculty, administrators and staff.

The successful candidate will

- Be certified as a superintendent, or capable of gaining certification, in New York State, and
- Have a long term commitment to the Scarsdale School District.

Summary of Consistent Themes from Interviews, Focus Groups, and Open Forums

The following CONSISTENT comments were heard from the vast majority of participants with whom the consultants met. The comments are listed in alphabetical order.

The conversation with focus groups concerning the new Superintendent was characterized by thoughtful and insightful commentary. The challenges and characteristics have to be viewed through the experiences of constituents who are looking to the District and the new Superintendent to rebuild trust and vastly improve communication. Trust and communication permeated our discussions with every focus group with whom we met.

Strengths of the District - Consistent Themes

The input from the various constituent groups suggest that the Scarsdale School District is unique in many ways:

- Academic excellence
- Ample resources for innovations in learning and to support educational excellence
- Commitment to professional learning and growth
 - Scarsdale Teachers Institute (STI)
- Excellent faculty, administrators and staff who are caring and dedicated
- Parents are involved, committed and dedicated to the education of their children
- Students who think “it’s cool” to learn
- The business of Scarsdale is the schools - education is the heart of the community

Challenges, Issues, and Concerns Facing the District - Consistent Themes

The following are some key themes concerning the challenges facing the Scarsdale School District that emerged from the constituent groups.

- Develop a concise long term plan that articulates a clear vision
- Foster a more inclusive environment
- Improve internal and external communications
 - Decisions need to be clear and concise
 - Faculty, staff, and parents should be heard and involved - some people feel disenfranchised
 - Open and timely
 - The reasoning behind a decision needs to be communicated
- Rebuild a culture of trust

- Strengthen horizontal and vertical alignment in the District while maintaining the values of autonomy and creativity

Desired Characteristics of the New Superintendent of Schools - Consistent Themes

The **three primary characteristics** identified through the interviews, focus groups, and open forums as desired of the next Superintendent are

- 1. Builds trust**
- 2. Is an excellent communicator**
- 3. Is visible in the schools and community**

The constituent groups we met with provided the following attributes that support the three characteristics above:

- Able to articulate reasons behind the Superintendent's decisions
 - Gives advice after careful thought
 - Not capricious decision making
- Ability to engage difficult situations, initiatives
- Creates appropriate frameworks for decision making that allows the District to make defensible decisions and allows for flexibility
- Genuinely likes parents and children
- People person, builds relationships
 - Can bring people together
- Personality traits
 - Authentic
 - Caring
 - Collaborative
 - Compassionate
 - Courageous
 - Deep thinker
 - Empathetic
 - Energetic
 - Engaging
 - Ethical
 - Honest
 - Politically savvy
 - Transparent
 - Trustworthy

- Provides opportunities for all members of the community to feel understood and respected
- Stellar communicator
 - An active listener
 - Confident and knowledgeable public speaker
 - Truly hears what people have to say
 - Writes well
- Strong inspiring leader
 - Calm in the face of adversity
 - Can make the hard decisions
 - Creates a sense of community with sincere involvement of parents
 - Creative problem solver
 - Graceful dealings with individuals/groups with divergent views
 - Has a presence
 - Knowledgeable of education, teaching, and learning
 - Leads learning experiences for administrators and faculty
 - Models professional learning
 - Creates spaces to learn together
 - Integrates technology into everything we do
 - Not petty, doesn't sweat the small stuff
 - Open to new ideas, creative
 - Takes initiative
 - Smart
 - Student centered
 - Well versed in professional development of leadership
 - Willing to take a risk for the reward that benefits the students
- Strong intellect
- Visible, approachable and accessible
 - Engages with the community and parents
 - Makes connections with people: knows people's stories and names
- Visionary
 - A doer
 - Desires to move the District forward
 - Has a long term view
 - Has a vision, sets a plan, brings people on board, and executes



Scarsdale Public Schools Survey for Superintendent Search

HYA | HAZARD
YOUNG
ATTEA
ASSOCIATES

METHODOLOGY

The survey results contained in this document are based on HYA's research related to superintendent leadership standards. The survey addresses both district performance and desired characteristics of the superintendent in relation to the following areas:

- Vision and Values (VV) - The leader's ability to provide a clear and compelling vision for the future, align district programs to the broader vision of the district, and uphold high expectations for all stakeholders
- Teaching and Learning (TL) - The leader's ability to guide educational programs, make data-driven decisions, and implement effective instructional change
- Community Engagement (CE) - The leader's ability to be the voice of the district, engage with the community, and involve stakeholders in realizing the district's vision
- Management (M) - The leader's ability to guide operations, manage resources, recruit and retain highly effective personnel, and create an equitable accountability system for all employees

Through the understanding of stakeholder's views regarding the state of the district and the desired profile of the next superintendent, this report will help the district prioritize the desired characteristics of the superintendent in a way that will advance the priorities of the community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Scarsdale Public Schools Survey for Superintendent Search was completed by 1432 stakeholders. With almost two-thirds of respondents, the largest stakeholder group surveyed were community members / parents / guardians with students in the Scarsdale Public Schools. Community members / parents / guardians with students in the Scarsdale Public Schools represented 62.4 percent of all respondents. Faculty made up the second most populous stakeholder group at 15.9 percent of all respondents. The third largest participant group were community members / parents / guardians who does not have children in the Scarsdale Public Schools at nine percent of all respondents.

Regarding the State of the District, the following statements were perceived to be district strengths:

- Technology is integrated into the classroom. (TL)
- District schools are safe. (TL)
- Facilities are well maintained. (M)
- The District has high performance standards for all students. (VV)
- Students are on track to be ready for the next grade and ultimately college and career ready. (TL)

The top-rated leadership profile characteristics constituents desire in a new superintendent are:

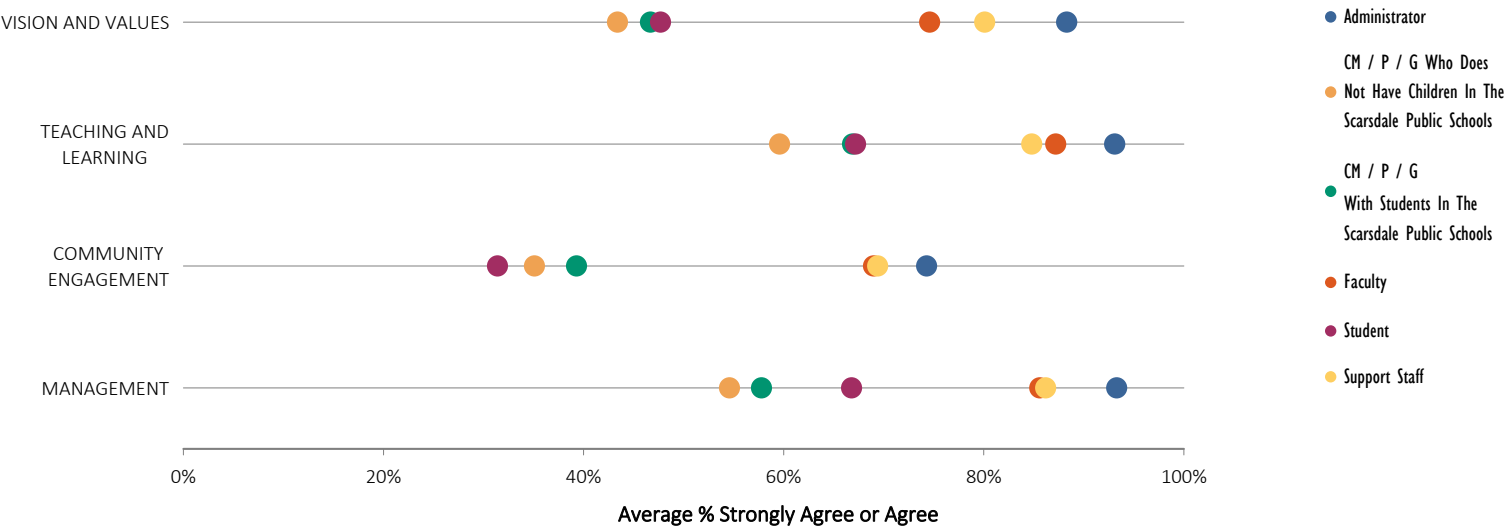
- Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies (VV)
- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators (CE)
- Provide transparent communication (CE)
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools (M)
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel (VV)

ANALYSIS

State of the District Summary

Respondents rated statements related to the state of the district on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported in the appendix.

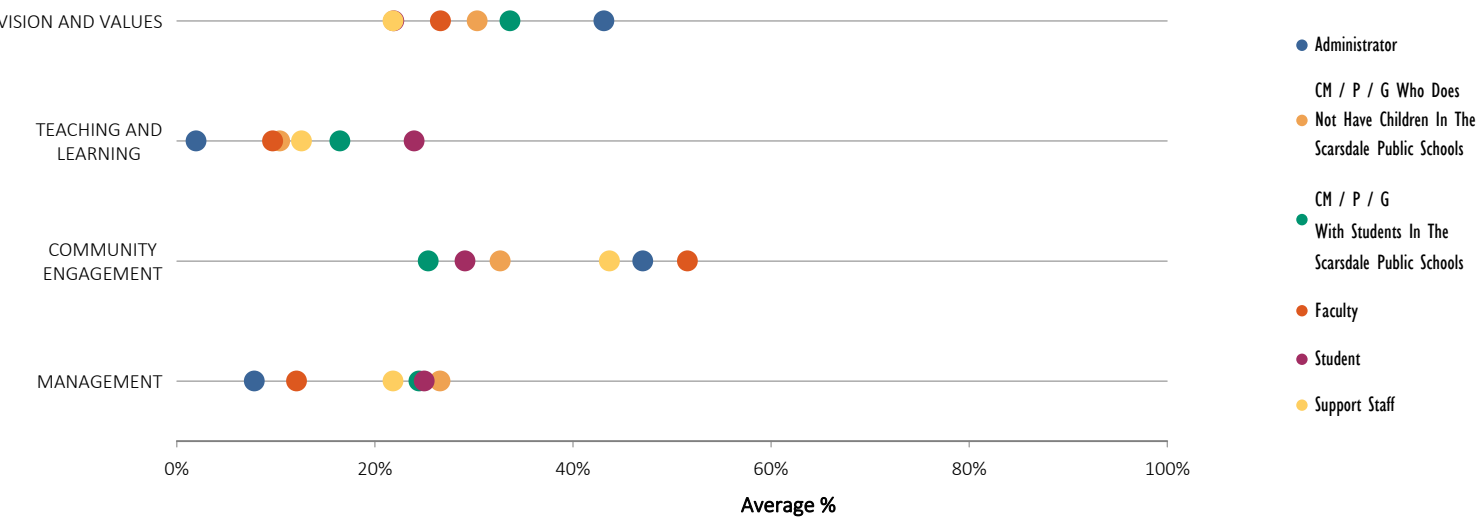
State of the District Results by Constituent Group



Leadership Profile Summary

Respondents were asked to select leadership statements that are most important in selecting a new superintendent. Each statement corresponds to one of the following constructs: Vision & Values, Teaching & Learning, Community Engagement, and Management. Overall results are presented below; results for individual items are reported on the next page.


Leadership Profile Results by Constituent Group



LEADERSHIP PROFILE DETAILS

Respondents were asked to select 4 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results by constituent group are presented below. Each constituent group's top 4 most frequently selected statements are depicted by blue cells (reading the chart vertically); consensus is illustrated as multiple constituent groups selected the same statements (reading the chart horizontally).

 Top 4

	All (1432)	Administrator (18)	CM / P / G WITHOUT Children (130)	CM / P / G WITH Children (894)	Faculty (228)	Student (120)	Support Staff (42)
Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies	36%						
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	35%						
Provide transparent communication	32%						
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools	28%						
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	27%						
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	25%						
Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life	23%						
Be an effective manager of the Districts' day-to-day operations	19%						
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District	17%						
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	15%						
Provide guidance for district-wide curriculum and instruction	14%						
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	14%						

APPENDIX I: STATE OF THE DISTRICT ITEM ANALYSIS

Percentages of parents, students, administrators, teachers, community members, and other constituents selecting 5 (Strongly Agree) or 4 (Agree) for each item are presented below.

	All (1432)	Administrator (18)	CM / P / G WITHOUT Children (130)	CM / P / G WITH Children (894)	Faculty (228)	Student (120)	Support Staff (42)
OVERALL							
Please rate the overall quality of education in the District.	86%	100%	83%	83%	96%	88%	100%
VISION AND VALUES							
The District provides a clear, compelling shared vision for the future.	38%	61%	28%	33%	60%	26%	60%
The District is heading in the right direction.	37%	61%	25%	33%	56%	27%	55%
The District has high performance standards for all students.	55%	67%	46%	50%	71%	58%	71%
The District makes decisions based on information from data and research.	33%	61%	25%	31%	50%	22%	38%
The District is working to close achievement and opportunity gaps.	31%	44%	20%	28%	50%	16%	45%
TEACHING AND LEARNING							
The District provides a well-rounded educational experience for all students.	49%	61%	35%	47%	64%	41%	57%
Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs.	38%	61%	28%	31%	70%	28%	48%
District schools are safe.	63%	67%	57%	62%	70%	58%	67%
The social and emotional needs of students are being addressed.	40%	61%	24%	41%	54%	18%	50%
Students are on track to be ready for the next grade and ultimately college and career ready.	54%	61%	47%	52%	69%	54%	55%
Technology is integrated into the classroom.	65%	61%	42%	66%	76%	58%	69%
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT							
The District engages the community as a partner to improve the school system.	36%	61%	25%	31%	67%	22%	52%
There is transparent communication from the District.	28%	44%	18%	25%	44%	18%	48%
The District engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups.	33%	39%	25%	33%	47%	17%	40%
MANAGEMENT							
Facilities are well maintained.	56%	61%	49%	57%	60%	51%	60%
The District is fiscally responsible.	32%	61%	27%	28%	54%	22%	52%
The District employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools.	52%	61%	38%	49%	73%	48%	67%
Employees are held accountable to high standards.	41%	61%	27%	33%	73%	41%	67%
District technology infrastructure is sufficient to support use of technology in the classroom.	51%	67%	34%	49%	69%	47%	52%

APPENDIX II: LEADERSHIP PROFILE ITEM ANALYSIS

Respondents were asked to select 4 statements they deem most important in selecting a new superintendent. Results are presented below by constituent group.

	All (1432)	Administrator (18)	CM / P / G WITHOUT Children (130)	CM / P / G WITH Children (894)	Faculty (228)	Student (120)	Support Staff (42)
Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies	36%	17%	34%	40%	29%	32%	24%
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	35%	67%	35%	26%	71%	21%	57%
Provide transparent communication	32%	28%	29%	32%	38%	28%	38%
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools	28%	11%	29%	32%	14%	18%	29%
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	27%	44%	27%	33%	15%	9%	12%
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	25%	61%	20%	24%	38%	13%	26%
Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life	23%	39%	22%	16%	50%	23%	29%
Be an effective manager of the Districts' day-to-day operations	19%	11%	18%	19%	14%	24%	29%
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District	17%	0%	23%	20%	9%	18%	5%
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	15%	0%	10%	14%	12%	33%	12%
Provide guidance for district-wide curriculum and instruction	14%	6%	13%	17%	8%	9%	14%
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	14%	0%	5%	16%	10%	16%	10%

Appendix III: Additional Comments from Individual Meetings, Focus Groups, and Open Forums

The structure of the focus groups and forums was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. How would you describe the strengths of the District?
2. What do you see as the greatest challenges facing the District in the next few years?
3. What characteristics and areas of expertise would you like to see in the next Superintendent?

The responses are listed in alphabetical order. **The CONSISTENT RESPONSES that are listed above are NOT repeated again in these groups.** This is not a scientific sampling, nor should the comments be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. The items below are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the Board's attention.

BOARD OF EDUCATION (7)

Strengths

- Board
 - Dedicated, hard working, gets along well
 - Good Board with good communication
 - Welcoming
- Community
 - Culturally-thriving town with a vibrant multicultural community
 - Proximity to New York City
- Schools
 - High School is crown jewel of the District
 - Maker spaces, innovation lab, athletic spaces
 - Prepares students for college
 - Science offerings
 - Terrific programs in fine and performing arts
- Strong relationship between teachers, administrators, staff and Board members

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Budget Planning
- Communication
- Board needs to work on being proactive with their communication to the community

- Shift from defensive reactions to proactive thinking and planning
- Community concerned about national rankings
- Curriculum
 - A School (HS) and Choice (7th and 8th grades)
 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)
 - Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)
 - Learning post Covid - curriculum and mental health concerns
 - Literacy, elementary math program
 - Reviewing Advanced Topics
 - World Languages
- Future facilities needs
- Questions around college admissions
 - College acceptances this year - including admissions to “safe” schools
- Safety and security in the schools
- Student and faculty wellness

Desired Characteristics

- Asks the right questions
- Aware of New York State (NYS) regulations and State Education Department (SED) Law and is proactive about implementation.
- Can work with teachers’ union
- Excited to be in Scarsdale
- Experienced
- Grows and informs leadership and instruction
- Has faith in the people who work in the District
- Humble leader, executes vision and day to day operations with care and humanity
- Not a micromanager
- Presents ideas that can be easily understood
 - Complex thinking into “plain English”
 - Empathizes with different points of view
 - Synthesizes and shares with people who aren’t necessarily as knowledgeable
 - Uses new ways to communicate with a pulse on the schools
- Proactive in sharing communication
- Proven track record
- Stability in leadership
- Strong management skills
- Understands the culture
- Values work/life balance for staff and superintendent

- Committed to health and wellness
- High performing without being all consuming
- Values parents as an asset

Administrators (26)

Strengths

- Able to articulate what the District needs
- Attention to individual children
- Beacon for many districts in the region
- Board is non partisan, not political
- Community where process is valued
- Concerted effort across the administration to have collaborative discussions with staff
- Creative environment
- Culture of engagement and ownership in the District
- Curriculum - high quality choices, energizing
- Financially sound
- Growth from within
- High level of support from parents, Board members - share same goals
- Inclusive community that values voices of teachers, administrators
- Infrastructure - facilities well maintained
- Intelligent, supportive, committed people
- Keeps more special education within the District
- Organization is well established - traditions are in place; part of the culture
- Many opportunities for discourse - structures for voices to be heard
- People look for feedback
- People move here for the schools
- Positive relationship with the Board, the Town and the Administration
- Progressive - supportive
- Proximity to New York City
- Staff
 - Ability to recruit top notch faculty, staff, administration - takes initiative, teacher driven change, ownership and pride
 - Collaborative effort for tackling issues, self policing among teachers
 - Union partners to keep teaching at highest quality-not pulling their weight is not supported by other teachers
 - Amazing professional culture
 - Highly professional staff - dedicated to students
 - Thin contract - speaks to professionalism of the faculty
 - Leadership professional development for administrators
 - Low staff turnover
 - Teachers treated as professionals

- Strong administrative team - Central Office (CO) - moving together - supports one another
- Students
 - Eager to learn
 - Feel well prepared for college
- Tradition of innovation - thought leader district for the nation
 - Capstone project in grade 5
 - Center of Innovation
 - First teacher center in NY (Scarsdale Teachers Institute - STI)
- Very thoughtful and great dialogue among smart people

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Anxiety about college admissions
- Building a diverse staff
- Change is a slow process - strong teachers and partnerships are important
- Communication
 - Advanced Topics - parents need more information and how APs have evolved
 - Build relationship with community services
 - Dealing with the “disappearance” of the prior superintendent (no closure)
 - Information overload - how to coordinate message
 - Internal communication with all levels as well as external communication
 - Teacher autonomy versus need for coherence - structure, accountability
 - Who is responsible for communication
 - Analyze safety plans - consistency, safety protocols
 - Curriculum alignment
- Focus on DEI
 - Identify structures to use
 - Texts
 - Professional support for teachers
 - Comfort level to be able to lead conversations
 - Expanding definition of diversity
 - Providing diverse literature
- Greater sense of community connection
 - Navigate mindfields
 - Community felt disconnected
- Legacy - buying into the legend of Scarsdale
 - Reputation - academic challenge; can't rely on historic reputation
- Low morale is improving - shift in culture

- No urgency for change - only add; don't take anything away
- Staff stay for a career - not much turnover
- Resetting after Covid
- Respect traditions as well as moving the District forward
- Starting to max out on space - Middle School
- Student and faculty wellness
 - Failure is an option - teaching children and parents that this is ok
 - Mental health of students and families
 - Social interaction - initial focus on MS/HS for psychological support; also needed at the elementary schools
 - Student outcomes driven by college acceptances; understanding that many mental health issues are a result of what is done to students; how to communicate what is in the best interest of children
- Teachers' negotiations next year

Desired Characteristics

- Able to make change and respect traditions
- Able to see through different lenses (educator, parent, community, leader)
- Able to work with the teachers union
- Builds bridges and reconnects after Covid
- Educator who has come through the ranks with classroom experience
- Establishes/maintains a good relationship with Scarsdale Principal Association
- Experience in a similar affluent high performing district
- Has the back of the leadership team
 - Well respected by everyone
- Has to be an educator with a business sense
 - Fiscally prudent - with inflation running 3 to 4 times the 2% tax cap
 - Good negotiator
 - NYS experience
 - Different laws around finance, facilities, bonds
- Hits the ground running
- Is available to administrators
- Keeps it professional and not personal
- Listens to all points of view - everyone has a voice, valued - open minded, flexibility in thinking, humble
- Manages conflict within the community
- Owns what they don't understand and wants to learn
- Refocuses back to instruction after Covid

- Strong work ethic
- Team builder
- Visionary
- Understands culture of the District - not a traditional “public school”
- Understands intellectual work going on in this District

FACULTY (70)

Strengths

- Board
 - Professional partnership between the Superintendent and BOE - tremendous amount of respect
 - “We” rather than “them”
 - What do you need to support the best education for our students
- Curriculum
 - Allows programs to respond to students
 - Always have students in mind
 - Builds on existing curriculum
 - Global connections - exchange of students
 - Social Emotional Learning with students at the forefront
 - Staying on top of innovations
- Faculty
 - Agency to do what they do - with trust in teachers
 - Allowed to be innovative
 - Assembled a staff second to none - teachers, administrators, staff
 - Collaboration
 - Faculty involvement
 - Favorable salaries attract strong faculty
 - Feel that opinions and voices matter
 - Former students who now teach here
 - “Joyfulness to the work we do”
 - Longevity in faculty
 - Mentor Program for faculty
 - Comprehensive
 - Life long relationships
 - Openness to feedback and growth
 - Relationships of teachers with students impact lives
 - Responsive to teacher needs
 - Scarsdale families come back
 - Set high expectations
 - Strive for excellence
 - Student centered - focus on needs of student
 - Supported by CO administrators
 - Teachers feel motivated to do their jobs
 - Internal motivation because they are respected

- Support each other
 - Teachers give of themselves
 - Hearts and minds
 - Love to learn
 - Union leadership
- Parent community invested in education
 - Children ready to learn
 - Investment in district
 - Parents are very involved at all levels
 - Parents there to help their children
 - Value education
- Supervision model is growth oriented to develop human potential
- Support from the administration, parents and colleagues
- Support from the District through resources
- Well known as a lighthouse district
- Well resourced, well staffed district

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Articulating the value of education
- Balance of running a school district with efficiency
- Being immune to the noise - managing parents - a few loud voices are getting their way
- Community compares 5 different elementary schools that look and act differently
- Educating parents about social media and handing a child a phone
- Financial challenges
 - Self insured health insurance
- Hiring the right type of team to meet the needs of the District
- K-12 continuity - aligning district goals with challenges in classroom
 - STEAM programs at elementary and middle school
 - Three separate districts: elementary, middle school, high school
 - Understanding the three levels - not silos
- Listening to teachers
 - Mandated curriculum
 - Time constraints
- Long term trends
- Managing expectations of parents
- Managing the increasing amounts of services that are being requested and required through special education (504s and IEPs)
- Mental health issues increasing

- More support needed at elementary level
- Reputation of the District
 - Financial (income tax issue)
 - Regain the reputation from long ago
 - Take on challenges and go back to being a leader and not a follower
- See respect come back into play
- Shifting demographics, especially for college admissions and the anxiety that goes with that
- Social media
- Strengthen role of department chairs
- Strategic Plan needs to be simplified
- Stress of dealing with the myth, the legend, and the town of Scarsdale

Desired Characteristics

- Able to admit when wrong
- Able to balance being pro-teachers and fiscal responsibility
- Able to challenge staff
- Allows teachers to have independence
- Be as willing to learn as well as to educate
- Be part of the life in the buildings
- Can imagine what we can become, knowing capabilities of who is here, and what is possible
- Can manage PR
- Celebrates the good
 - Aspirational goals
- Charismatic
- Curious
- Dignified
- Engages community
- Experienced
- Gives advice after careful thought
- Hard worker
- Knows the children
- Insightful about people
- Invested in the District: the people and community
- Makes people feel comfortable

- Moral compass
- Open to rational arguments
- Provides teachers with a voice
- Really engaged in the work
 - Not just delegating
- Really understands the meaning of wellness -
 - Goal of students should not be getting an A+
 - Should model and defend this
 - Health of the community, including teachers
- Reflective thinker who shares with the community and especially with the faculty
- Respected
- Respectful
- Sees the broad picture when needed and sees the details when necessary
- Sees the District as a educational organization and not a business
- Sensible and logical
- Supports the staff
- Values teachers' time as educators
- Well rounded
- Works well with the Union

SUPPORT STAFF (20)

Strengths

- Athletics
- Community involvement PTC
- Commitment to support in classrooms and for students in aides
- Curriculum
- DEI consultant Dr. Gay (working on plan)
- Excellent education
- Financial resources to provide incredible opportunities
- Generous benefits package
 - Scarsdale Teachers Association (STA) supplies Dental and Vision
- High quality teachers and staff at all levels
- Inclusive community
- Initiatives
- Large district
- People want to live here and send their children to the schools
- Programs
- Professional development
- Quality of candidates - reputation of district as a good place to work
- Reputation
- Resources
- Salary ranges
- Sense of community
- Safety, Security and Emergency Management (SSEM)
- Students come first
- Strategic Plan
- Technology has come a long way
- Staff, students, teachers
- Strong community

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Building after the pandemic
- Culture with an eye toward establishing a new culture
- Engaging the staff and community
- Finding a balance keeping parents and staff happy while keeping students' needs at the forefront
- Heavy workload
 - Additional tasks that need to be done take away from day to day activities

- Wearing different hats, doing different jobs
 - People out sick
 - State reporting
- Hiring staff in a timely manner
- Maintaining the reputation of the District
- Make everyone feel included in the work after the pandemic
- Motivating students and closing learning gaps after pandemic
- Politics and high expectations of parents
- Turnover of administrators and teachers
 - New administrators
- Social media
- Still need more upgrades in technology
- Superintendent and Board relationship

Desired Characteristics

- Academic background with a vision beyond grades (performance based)
- Anticipates problems and a good problem solver
- Appreciative of everyone and acknowledges their work
- Comfortable with technology
- Easy to talk to
- Familiarity with the District
- Inclusive - recognizes all members of the staff as important to running the school
- Keeps interests of students first in mind
- Knowledge of the community
- Supports the faculty and staff and is an advocate for their staff
- Thoughtful decision making
- Worldly and able to hold conversations with the community

STUDENTS (15)

Strengths

- Ample funding for student activities
- Anti-bully
- Clean facilities
- Excellent deans
- Extraordinary faculty - exceptional backgrounds and passionate about their teaching
 - Dedicated and caring about their students
 - Foster learning
 - Hold students to high standards
- Extracurriculars - many opportunities
- Focus on wellness
- Math and science
- Students have potential and passion
- Students have the resources they need

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Address the needs of students who are looking for more challenges and need more support
- AP vs. AT courses
 - Students like AT system
 - Deans should have discussion about difference between APs and ATs
 - Fascinating discussions in AT classes
 - Flexibility of school to offer AP and AT
 - Makes applying to colleges more stressful
 - Teachers not confined to certain curriculum with ATs
 - Workload in ATs can be intense
- Before major changes, students should be informed and perhaps be consulted, so administrators will understand the impact of the decisions from the students' perspective
- Competitiveness
- Curriculum needs to be reassessed
 - How many tests, how much homework
 - Inconsistencies among Middle School Houses
 - Offer more languages
 - World Languages - would like to go more into the culture
 - Social Studies - 6th grade - go into more depth
 - Writing and teaching grammar depends on the teacher

- Make it easier to communicate with the Superintendent
- Pay more attention to student anxiety
- PE - provide levels in physical education classes
- Play up to JV or varsity
- Stronger connections between the elementary, middle and high schools initiatives
- Student Government isn't given the opportunity to be involved in major decisions
- Students need to be listened to - forums - maybe online - also listen to the teachers
 - Perhaps once a month, an opportunity for students to give feedback
- Students try to make changes - too much bureaucracy
 - Takes too long to make changes
- Superintendent needs to be strong enough to stand up to the parents - to push back, have discussions about decisions
- Superintendent needs to establish a level of accountability to make sure the processes are working for the students

Desired Characteristics

- Charismatic
- Dedicated and cares about their job
- Involved with students
- Listens to students' opinions
- Makes a connection with students
 - Involved in student activities
 - Thinking about what is in the best interest of students
- Open to new ideas
- Openness - how and why are decisions made
 - Students want to understand the thinking behind a decision
- Organized
- On top of things
- Promote opportunities
- Role model
- Visible, involved - know people's names, meet families
 - If students know the superintendent, perhaps they will understand more and be more accepting of decisions

PARENTS/COMMUNITY (113)

Strengths

- Balance traditional educational values while supporting innovation
- Cell phone Off and Away
- Committed to building strong special education program
- Commitment to the love of learning - learn about all different cultures
- Community organizations do not work in silos
- Community stands by their students
 - Collaborative approach to issues
 - Recognize the importance of mental health
 - Reduced stigma around getting help
 - Small classes
 - Welcoming community
- Curriculum - the most innovative, proactive, supportive, engaging way to teach students
 - Collaborative learning, project based
 - Differentiated learning - good job of challenging students
 - Math
 - Music program - extra offerings
 - Wide range of literature offered
 - District teaches students to advocate for themselves and be creative thinkers
 - Open curriculum and builds upon learning
 - Top notch curriculum - many opportunities, i.e. STEAM, debate
- District and BOE are willing to financially support programs and services for students
- District embraces DEI and is working toward full inclusivity
- District sees the Educational Foundation as a partnership
- Faculty
 - Attracting good teachers and giving the faculty freedom to do their best
 - Committed to students - go above and beyond (not perfect, though have to be mentioned as strong)
 - Retention of teachers critical
 - Teachers don't see themselves as adversarial to the Board and administrators
 - Teachers have a good connection to parents
 - Teachers work collaboratively with parents and community
- Facilities
 - Well maintained and up to date
- Focus on wellness - mental health of students - school provided language that helped children and parents to look for support
 - Added programs and supports

- Handles all students at all levels well
- Reputation for excellence globally recognized
- Security system continually improving
- Special education teachers work cohesively with the team of teachers
 - Children's needs are being met
 - Service providers are excellent - work for the children and their families
- Students
 - Committed to the work
 - Great critical thinking skills
 - Smart parents and kids
 - Students feel safe
 - Students have pride in their schools and recognize critical thinking skills
 - Students learn how to learn
 - Student voice is empowering
 - Students with special needs - everyone knows the students and teachers are caring
- Tolerant community

Challenges/Issues/Concerns

- Alignment of standards
 - Articulation of standards per grade level and across schools
 - Assessment of students' achievement in light of the standards and communicating this to parents
 - Explanation of standards to parents and community
- Board
 - Improve governance
 - Board needs to look at themselves
 - What is its role
 - Should oversee the Superintendent
 - Managing expectations and roles of parents and BOE
- Caliber of teachers varies - students' experiences are inconsistent
- Can't just run on reputation anymore
 - Last year was a tough year for college admissions
 - Make sure parents are getting accurate information about college admissions
- Change of culture
- Communication
 - Cellular service inadequate and radio communication - District committed to improving communication - need to do analysis and continue projects

- Risk/threat analysis - continue ongoing training - know the law
- Communicate information that creates a bridge between parents and the school, so parents can continue to assist their children
- Communication has to go beyond school community
- Communication with the community and community organizations - not communicating as an afterthought - hands-on, involved, explanation of services to parents
- Lack of communication - among parents in regard to the progress of their children
- Listening to all voices and not just the loud voices
- No cohesive message - would like consistency between the schools
 - Better feedback loop between parents and the schools
 - Should be sharing of best practices
- Parents have lost confidence in the District
 - Inviting parents into the schools
 - Looking for sense of community
- Conscious of school district's role in community ecosystem (textbooks in public library for student use) - support goes beyond the campus
- Create relationships with colleges to take classes
- Curriculum
 - Better at dealing with children with special needs
 - Communicate with parents on how new curriculum is chosen - parents need to see metrics, understand the standards and the rationale behind the curriculum
 - Lacks financial literacy
 - Curriculum and assessment - several disconnects
 - Let go of things that are not helping our children
 - Need metrics to make sure tenured teachers are being held accountable to state standards
 - Outdated teaching methods
 - Parents know very little about the curriculum in the elementary schools - information about the curriculum is lacking
 - Explain the NextGen standards to parents
 - Parents need more information about pilot programs
 - Rebuilding connections with parents will rebuild confidence
 - Defining success for all students
 - Defining the educational vision of the District
 - Different schools/different expectations - autonomy
 - Homework

- District better at dealing with children with special needs
 - Need to evaluate the program and services
- Elementary is weak; especially writing, penmanship
- Evaluation of AP and AT
 - Taking more advanced classes
- Gathering feedback from the community (ex. change in lunch schedule in the Middle School - so children don't have a meaningful break)
- How can we improve
- How to use and not overuse technology to the best advantage
- Lack centralization of DEI plan - goes further than celebrating a Heritage Month
 - DEI officer in the District
 - Gender - not just race
- Last two years have taken a toll
- Parents are filling gaps with tutors
- Rate of change in curriculum not kept on with changes in society
- Recovery from fallout from pandemic
- Review and address special education programs and programs for middle of the road students so that all students feel the same amount of support and care as the high achieving students
- Standardization across the schools - High School is the crown jewel of the District
- STEM lags behind other districts
- Teaching about civic responsibility
- World language lags behind other districts
 - Why does world language not start in kindergarten
- Difficulty of being a working parent - understand perspective of working parents
- Diversity in hiring
- Evaluation of successes - issues - resources - what are the targets - define priorities
 - Disconnect between buildings and Central Office
 - Inconsistency between the elementary schools
 - District needs to be in charge - consistent, coordinated
 - Buildings should not act as independent schools
 - Hold tenured teachers accountable
 - Improving and enhancing excellence
 - Making sure ALL students feel seen, heard
 - Mental health issues - students need more resources
 - Balancing stress - maintaining a healthy balance
 - Quantitative data (curriculum and assessments)
 - Want to see concrete academic progress

- Science curriculum in elementary schools weak
- Technology - what is the appropriate use of technology
 - Students on cell phones
- What plans are already in place
- Facilities
 - Asbestos in the schools
 - Older buildings that have maintenance needs
 - Schools need to be air conditioned
- Faculty
 - Attracting and retaining faculty
 - Need a more diverse staff
 - STA is a strong union
- Human Resources
 - Tenured teachers are complacent
- Inconsistencies in the schools
- Lack of diversity among the faculty, administrators
- Lack of use of metrics / how are the children measured against the standards
 - Education needs to change - willing to upset the status quo
 - Look at other options for writing rather than Teachers College
 - Lack communication with parents
 - Scarsdale does this very differently - prove with results that it's working
 - Accountability and assessment
 - Compare Scarsdale to elite schools across the country
- Lack of openness that leads to lack of trust
- Managing the budget in light of national economic challenges
- Need to work on cleaning-up the image
 - Channel and challenge the individuals who are negative on social media and in public
 - Dealing with the cynicism and divisiveness in the community
- Need to develop DEI plan - bring us together
 - Bringing DEI into the curriculum
 - Bullying
 - Needs to be systematic
 - No formal mechanism to bring up issues
 - Microaggressions
 - Training for staff - need comfort level
 - What are the expectations
 - What is being taught in the classroom

- Parental relationships with the schools
 - BOE needs to build back trust as do the PTAs
 - Involvement in the schools/the District
 - Making sure that all stakeholders' participation feels welcome and heard
 - International parents do not feel welcomed in the PTAs
 - Need more parent volunteers to work on DEI
 - The schools should be embracing the parent community
 - Parents painted with the same brush by the schools
 - Entitled parents
 - Guidance Counselors - you're just going to hire private anyway
 - Hard to please everyone
 - Patronize parents - parents are competitive
 - School says, "You don't understand"
 - Parental input is nil
 - Parents need to be given information on the services that are offered and what programs are offered
 - Parents want children to have the advantages they need - how to level the playing field
 - Rebuilding trust
 - Perception of secrecy
 - Rebuilding relationships and communication with parents
 - Rebuild trust/transparency with community
 - Openness with all stakeholders
 - Transparency
 - Explaining a reasonable definition of what transparency really is
 - Explaining reasons behind decisions
 - Need for Superintendent to get a read on the community
- Poor web site
- Safety - need to constantly reevaluating how safe our schools are
 - High School has many entrances and exits
 - Need safety protocols and systems
- Special Education
 - Bullying
 - Excess turnover of staff
 - Fight to get services
 - Fund outside placements when they don't get the services they need in the Scarsdale schools

- With increased Professional Development, could these children stay in the District?
 - Growth in special education
 - How to include children and parents whose children are out of district in district activities
 - Inclusion
 - Keep as many students in the District
 - Lack of performance reviews
 - More professional development
 - Parents concerned about giving feedback
 - Will there be negative repercussions
 - Reading, comprehension, decoding
 - Area of need
 - Scheduling an issue
 - What is right model for dyslexia
 - HS does a better job
 - More time for “Wilson Reading System” support
 - Should survey parents to assess how the students doing
 - Students not classified however need services, have to pay for the services themselves
 - Teachers could be more effective at flagging needs of students if given more training
- Staffing
 - Need a more diverse staff, Central Office with a global view
 - Staffing issues as individuals retire
- Taxes and finances
 - Be cognizant of larger community and what they can afford
 - IRS issue - still healing from that
 - Long term plan
 - Quantitative analysis - building by building
- Understanding the issues in this community
 - Limited resources and need to make choices
- Vision moving forward
- Very competitive
 - Students compete against each other

Desired Characteristics

- Able to captain the enterprise

- Ability to bring everyone in - hear people - make people feel comfortable and heard
- Acknowledges there is a problem
- Adaptable
- Background in finances
- Believes in accountability, metrics and data
- Can ask “why” and willing to review current practices
- Can explain DEI and manifest it in curriculum
 - Committed to pushing the work forward and appreciates what has been done
 - DEI background
- Can view the District through a K-12 lens
- Cares about the community
- Clear mission statement - all about the students
- Committed to existing plan
- Commitment to scholarly excellence
- Committed to the arts and music
- Competent executive
 - Engage parents and Board members
- Concise
- Curious
- Curriculum background
- Cutting edge - comfortable being a national leader
- Diplomatic
- Diverse
- Dynamic leader
- Educator (classroom experience) and Administrator (both - not either)
- Engage with Parent Teacher Council (PTC) - monthly meetings
- Experience as a teacher
- Experience is the key
- Excellent listening skills
- Experience bringing in new curriculum
- Familiar with Scarsdale
- Fiscally savvy
- Focus on education
- Genuine
- Hands on with direct intervention with students, teachers and parents
- High degree of emotional intelligence
- Hires highly competent people
- Integrity

- Knowledge and personality to make the needed changes
- Knowledge of civil service
- Internationally and nationally known
- Leads with support, challenges status quo, and does not make changes just to make changes
- Needs an objective view
- Open door
- Open minded
- Open to feedback and input from others
- Positive
- Relates to parents
 - Likes parents, listens to parents
 - Parents want to feel heard
 - Tap into expertise of parents
 - Speak to parents through a parental lens
- Relationship with the faculty
 - Has confidence in the faculty
 - If there is a concern, the Superintendent should dialogue with the teacher/administrators
- Responds rather than reacts
- Someone to look up to
- Speaks from a perspective of education rather than PR/marketing
- Special education training
- Strength with a gentle touch/open to new ideas
 - Bridge builder
 - Can stand ground, limit the amount they offend people
 - Likes the people in this community
 - Listens and hears what parents and faculty are saying
 - Listens to everyone and everyone feels heard
 - Really listens to the different opinions before making a decision
 - Willing to do things differently
- Supportive
- Technologically savvy
- Thick skinned and doesn't take things personally
- Thoughtful and able to evaluate the whole system
- Track record of hiring a diverse staff
- Unifies community
 - Teachers need to feel valued

- Wants to be here for an extended period of time
- Warm and easy to communicate with
- Well versed in partnerships
- Willing to work with community organizations