

# **The East Hartford Public Schools Superintendent Search Leadership Profile**

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## SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP PROFILE

### Introduction

Selecting a superintendent is the most important responsibility a school board undertakes. There are tangible and intangible aspects of leadership required in a superintendent who is going to work with the school board, students, faculty and staff, parents, elected officials, and the whole community to provide high quality education for a district's children.

In light of the critical nature of this responsibility, the East Hartford Board of Education sought the input of its school and community stakeholders through interviews, focus groups, and a survey (English and Spanish) conducted in December 2022. The focus group options were as follows:

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
East Hartford Teachers	Tues., 12/6	6:30 pm	ZOOM
East Hartford Teachers	Wed., 12/7	5:00 pm	ZOOM
Students	Thurs., 12/8	1:00 pm	Synergy Rm. 29
Students	Thurs., 12/8	2:15 pm	CIBA/EHHS Rm. 120
Parents/Guardians	Tues., 12/6	5:00 pm	ZOOM
Parents/Guardians	Wed., 12/7	7:00 pm	ZOOM
Non-Certified/Support Staff	Tues., 12/6	4:00 pm	ZOOM
Town Elected Official/ Staff	Thurs., 12/8	10:30 am	Town Hall Wellington Rm.
Community Members	Wed., 12/7	8:00 pm	ZOOM
Community Members	Thurs., 12/8	6:00 pm	ZOOM

This Leadership Profile presents findings from these focus groups, interviews, and the survey, conducted in the first two weeks of December 2022. The consultants scheduled 15 interviews and focus groups and spoke with 115 individuals, including parents, teachers, para-educators, administrators, the Mayor, Town Council members and staff, state representatives, and the East Hartford Board of Education.

In total, 374 East Hartford residents and staff took the online survey. In conducting the interviews and focus groups and developing the survey, we used an unbiased, structured approach. In addition to asking about strengths and challenges of the East Hartford schools and community which could affect future leadership requirements, we asked about the qualities and expertise most desirable in the next superintendent. The East Hartford Board of Education will use these results as it considers its next steps in order to find the best possible Superintendent of Schools for East Hartford at this time. We are presenting these findings to the Board of Education without revealing the identity of any individual contributor.

The East Hartford Board of Education has made a commendable effort to include voices from as many constituents as possible from the schools and community. Many thanks to focus group participants and survey respondents whose pride in and commitment to the schools and Town of East Hartford were evident as they provided perspectives. Special thanks to Chris Wethje and staff for their help scheduling and publicizing the opportunity to participate.

Mary Broderick, Jack Reynolds, and George Coleman  
CABE Search Consultants  
January 9, 2023

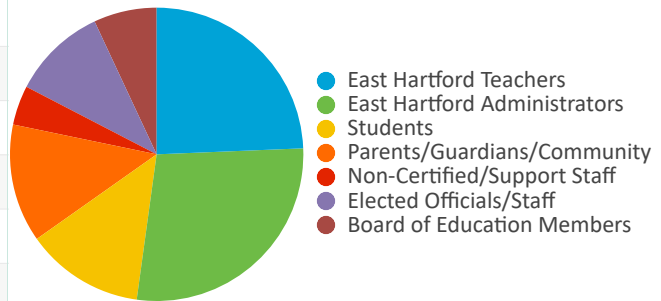
## SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP PROFILE

### Data Collection

In total, 489 individuals participated through interviews, focus groups, and the online survey. The data collected do not constitute a scientific sampling, but a representation of the East Hartford Public Schools and community at a moment in time. The survey was voluntary and anonymous. Though the consultants heard the perspectives of many, this profile cannot entirely capture the complexity and nuances of the schools and town. Nevertheless, the information yields some useful insights for the search process. Items are included in the following report if, in the consultants' judgment, they were repeated by a sufficient number of respondents to warrant the Board's attention.

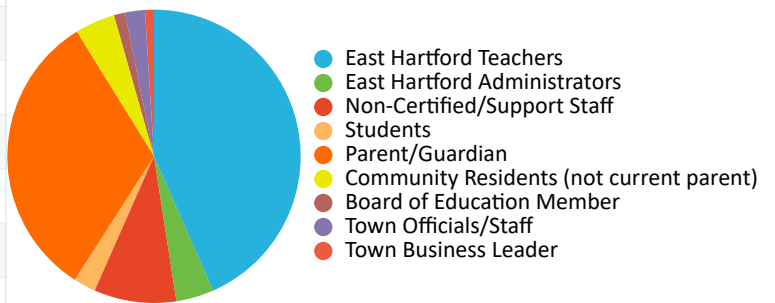
#### Interview and Focus Group Participants

PARTICIPANTS	115	%
East Hartford Teachers	28	24.3%
East Hartford Administrators	32	27.8%
Non-Certified/Support Staff	5	4.3%
Students	15	13.0%
Parents/Guardians/Community	15	13.0%
Elected Officials/Staff	12	10.4%
Board of Education Members	8	7.0%
	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



#### Survey Responses

PARTICIPANTS*	374	%
East Hartford Teachers	177	43.4%
East Hartford Administrators	17	4.2%
Non-Certified/Support Staff	37	9.1%
Students	10	2.5%
Parent/Guardian	131	32.1%
Community Residents (not current parent)	18	4.4%
Board of Education Member	5	1.2%
Town Officials/Staff	9	2.2%
Town Business Leader	4	1.0%
	<b>* 408</b>	<b>100.0%</b>



\*Please note that survey participants identified themselves under multiple categories so numbers add up to more than 374.

# Strengths of East Hartford and its Public Schools



East Hartford’s new superintendent will find significant areas of great strength in the district. The following, beginning in order of most cited, emerged through an analysis of interviews, focus groups, and survey responses: East Hartford’s teachers, administrators, and staff; the diversity of East Hartford and its students; the breadth of offerings and opportunities for students; the caring nature of the schools and broader community; the attention to strong systems, strategic direction, and spirit of innovation; communications; students themselves; parents and families; a collaborative culture; and resources.

### Teachers/Staff/Administration

The vast majority (283) of interview, focus group, and survey participants identified East Hartford’s teachers, staff, and administrators and their work to support students as the primary strength. Of those, 188 spoke of the strong and incredibly dedicated faculty and staff of the district. Teachers are highly talented professionals, diverse in talents and thinking, who are passionate about ensuring each East Hartford student, no matter their circumstances, receives a high quality education. They “understand the breadth of our students’ needs” and “have the knowledge, creativity, and desire to develop unique learning experiences that engage our students in meaningful learning.” They “don’t give up on any student.” The “teaching staff ... is fully committed to the direction our district is moving and believes in the vision and work we participate in to improve teaching and learning.”

Staff at all levels is highly dedicated, committed, and cohesive. “People have drive and hustle... out there working day and night to make something real happen.” They “advocate and go above and beyond for our students from the moment they enter the district until graduation day.”

Forty-nine (49) participants specifically cited the administration as a top strength of the district. The administration is made up of “adaptable, fearless risk-takers, ensuring students and staff have the supports they deserve.” Administration “listens to the needs of their staff” and “they work to make resources available to enhance instruction and learning strategies.” Participants described the leadership team as accessible and collaborative, seeking to cultivate leadership within the staff. “Central Office has found ways for most people to be effective. They are clear about what we need to do and they have our backs, treating us with trust and professionalism.” A few mentioned that the team focuses on relationships and solutions.

Several participants talked of the importance of autonomy in their work. They “are really empowered to address student-centered (issues).” Administrators seek not to micro-manage, but to allow others “freedom of movement: We’re self-driven and our own harshest critics. We throw out ideas. We don’t need the top leader to motivate us.”

Hand-in-hand with the description of the strength of staff was the focus on relationships, according to 35 participants. Describing a family-like atmosphere, many spoke of strong relationships among the staff themselves, and of those that staff cultivated with students and families. Staff are caring adults with empathy and commitment to students and their families.

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An additional 18 participants described a highly collaborative and supportive environment, where all work together as a team. The district's systems "allow for collaboration" and "a team-based approach to meet needs of students."

### **Diversity**

Participants in this study (156) identified a strong commitment to the value and impact of diversity of East Hartford. One suggested that "80% recognize diversity of our community as a strength," celebrating 70 to 100 different world communities and languages represented. The district finds opportunities to support students and families around languages and cultures, "ensuring everyone has a safe space." Some spoke of East Hartford's inclusive environment, including students' diverse abilities, races, religions, backgrounds, and needs.

### **Breadth of offerings and opportunities for students**

A number of participants (89) spoke of the many opportunities (courses and programs of study) the district provides for students to thrive. Students have access to Advanced Placement courses, engineering, aerospace, robotics, real life work experiences and employment training, and music programs. The schools "encourage high performance for all students," trying "new ideas, technology, [and] pedagogy" to foster student growth. An alumni foundation provides opportunities for mentoring and networking, giving students real-life experiences and models of what's possible.

Of the 89 participants citing these opportunities, 26 specifically mentioned the curriculum and program, incorporating high standards of achievement and rigor. One mentioned a "deep commitment to evolving instruction, [looking at] student outcomes and how [they] relate to curriculum development.... [including] a deep commitment to literacy for all." The district provides "numerous supports/resources for families and students." They also have adopted "forward grading policies."

The schools also all offer broad supports "that meet families where they are." There are school-based health centers and licensed psychiatrists. Nine (9) participants specifically mentioned the Early Childhood Learning Center, offering strong early learning programs for young children and resource coordination for their families. In addition, Adult Education is part of the district and should be integrated into the district's asset development strategy for student learning and school improvement.

Eight (8) of the 89 participants mentioned the rigorous International Baccalaureate (IB) programs that push students to excel. There is a "pipeline from kindergarten through high school IB progression."

Six (6) mentioned the wealth of extracurricular opportunities, including sports, marching band, color guard, video production, and mindfulness classes.

Finally, five (5) mentioned Special Services, supporting students to become independent and resilient.

### **Caring community**

Respondents universally described East Hartford as a warm, caring community, with 75 citing this nice town with great, strong, resilient people. The overall community wants to be involved in supporting the students in the schools and the schools are the pride of many in the community. The "community trusts leadership" and fosters good relationships among the Town Council, town leadership, including the "very supportive" mayor, and the Board of Education. These groups also work effectively with their state legislative delegation, encouraging community voices. The agencies and businesses in town want to be involved and offer opportunities for student internships and employment. Other avenues for community involvement include the library and Parks and Rec.

Included among these 75 responses were 17 that specifically mentioned the strong spirit of community within the schools. The staff enjoy a strong sense of unity and work to build relationships with the

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families. They “are a community of learners... committed to all stakeholders to find ways to constantly improve and enrich EHPS.” The students also generally enjoy a feeling of belonging, working and playing sports together.

### **Systems, Strategic direction**

Participants (59) identified the strong systems and strategic direction of the East Hartford Public Schools as a strength. The district’s strategic plan and its five pillars focus the schools’ objectives. The vision and mission “that everyone believes in and drive all the work of the district” focus on supporting student learning. “We are all experts at executing” the vision, which “embraces everyone. The staff have permission to have tough conversations... and the culture supports engagement.” This strong, shared, aligned direction allows the district to be “proactive, not reactive... ahead the curve...” The “focus on every child, every day” engenders “a commitment to valuing the education of all students in East Hartford and a commitment to sharing responsibility in holding high standards of excellence.”

The systems and strategic direction support an innovative, resourceful culture, according to 10 of the 59 respondents. Staff stay up to date on current educational trends and programs, so the district is able to “pivot” to meet changing needs. There is also a focus on professional learning, according to seven (7). In addition to advanced training opportunities, there are coaches to support teachers and staff in all elementary schools. The district’s “continuous growth mindset” means they are “always ahead on current research and trends in education.”

### **Communications**

Another area of strength, according to 36 respondents, is communication, both internally among staff and with parents and the community. Parents Square, described as “intuitive and quick” also “allows parents the ability to talk directly with teachers.”

### **Resources and facilities**

Though funding is a major issue (see next section), the district has been able to tap grant and other resources for students and their families, according to 26 participants. The district’s budget process is not adversarial. Since the schools are not well funded, they have learned to do “more with less.” The town budget only covers 37 percent of the total expenditure. They don’t “throw money at a problem,” but make focused investments.

The town takes pride in its “wonderful parks and great libraries.” The district has created many connections and partnerships to assure and strengthen the collective support for families.

In spite of their age (the youngest school was built in 1976), facilities are well maintained and landscaped.

### **Students**

Students themselves are a strength of the district, according to 22 respondents. They are “resilient and amazing.”

### **Families/Parents**

According to 22 participants, the families are a strength of East Hartford. They represent “generations of people, history, and richness.” They “really love engaging with other families and our staff and school-wide initiatives.” Parents are “generally supportive of what’s happening. The district is “family focused, not just student, child, educating the entire family through Family Resource Centers, School-Based Health Centers, and family events.”

## Challenges Facing East Hartford Public Schools



Though many cited some areas as strengths, others have offered different perspectives or believe an area needs the continued focus of the new leader, so there may be some natural contradictions in the data. Nonetheless, the next superintendent will grapple with some significant challenges when taking the helm of the East Hartford Public Schools. The most cited challenges, in order, were staff morale, retention, and diversity; issues with curriculum, program and equitable opportunities; student performance; student discipline, behavior, motivation, and mental health; funding and resources; preserving momentum and culture; parent/family involvement; issues involving special services; communications and community connections; family circumstances; politics; and facilities and technology.

### Staff retention, morale, and diversity

Though about 238 participants identified staff as a major strength of the district, many (135) identified issues related to staff as a challenge for the new leader. Of those 135, the most often raised concern involved recruiting and retaining sufficient quality teachers and staff to address the needs of East Hartford’s children, mentioned by 59 respondents. Participants talked of difficulties “keeping dedicated staff who are overwhelmed with work and barriers to teaching effectively. Like other districts in Connecticut and across the country, many East Hartford “teachers have retired early or left the district to seek employment elsewhere in recent years.” In addition, it has become more difficult to recruit substitute teachers and support staff due in part to low salaries and lack of pensions for paraprofessionals and secretaries.

The second most mentioned staff issue was morale, with 37 individuals citing demands and stressors on teachers who are feeling undervalued, underpaid, and overworked, resulting in burn out. Several spoke of pressures imposed by administrators and the challenges that created in maintaining positive work environments.

Several (10) expressed concern with administrators, suggesting there were too many people in administrative mid-level roles while “we need bodies in the classroom.”

Eight (8) identified staff growth issues, encouraging a “limit on the introduction of [new innovations] so staff can get better at what they already have,” providing training and time for teachers to learn and adapt to curriculum, and supporting struggling teachers.

Eight (8) others would like to see greater teamwork and collaboration, especially involving teachers in curricular choices. Staff expressed frustration that they felt their voices had been silenced more recently in decisions on curriculum and pacing.

### Curriculum, program, equitable opportunities

The second most mentioned challenge area, with 95 comments, involved curriculum, program, and equitable opportunities. Nineteen (19) responses related to curriculum, with several citing the need for

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greater collaboration with teachers in making curriculum decisions. Some felt the curriculum needed to meet students abilities “on a continuum. Right now the expectation is that everyone can succeed in the same classes.”

Several mentioned the roll-out of the Science of Reading, a challenge across the state. Some felt there wasn’t time to teach themselves how to implement the new program, given insufficient professional development.

An additional 13 participants mentioned the need for a maintained focus on the district’s academic program overall so that all students are prepared “to enter the workplace and/or college and career. While some want to see skills-based learning, others want to build in more play opportunities so students “learn to be part of a group.” Some advocated for maintaining classes and programs that would broaden experiences, “allowing students to be creative and exploratory.”

Retirements have resulted in the loss of some extra- or co-curricular opportunities, such as musical theater. Several expressed concern that “Kids may not have the opportunity to grow” and demonstrate their talents without such co- and extra-curricular options.

Thirty-seven (37) respondents would like to ensure the district continues to focus on equitable opportunities and experiences for all students, “cognizant of our ongoing equity issues (racially, culturally, linguistically, disability wise, etc.) between students, families, and staff members.” A staff member wrote, “We have been very fortunate that district leadership has allowed us, who know our families and their needs, to explain our needs... and has given us a long leash.” However, over half of kindergarteners have not had preschool and the most at-risk students still need increased resources to realize their potential. There is a significant and growing need for support of English Learners. The teachers are “overwhelmed and challenged to meet language diversity.”

Nine (9) of the 37 mentioned the need to build student capacity to “engage more fully in the educational opportunities East Hartford has to offer.”

### **Student performance**

Participants (84) in this study identified student performance as a major challenge. Of those, 22 mentioned the need to improve results on standardized tests. In general, respondents would like to see increased rigor and performance and academic standards that hold students accountable so they are “prepared (academically and socially) for life after high school.”

Of those 84, 32 identified the impact of COVID on student learning. East Hartford, like nearly every district in the nation, has seen an erosion in learning and widening of learning gaps as a result of the pandemic. The challenge for the new leader will be to ensure students who have endured the pandemic have opportunities to close those gaps and heal educationally and emotionally.

### **Discipline, behavioral and mental health, and motivation**

Respondents (80) to this study identified student issues related to discipline, behavior, and mental health as major challenges. Of those, 40 identified issues of behavior and discipline, exacerbated by the pandemic, that need attention. Students need to be held accountable and rules enforced. Adults should address bullying and vaping, and work to improve the tenor of classrooms, according to participants.

Of the 80 participants noted above, 17 identified social and emotional learning issues as a challenge. Students need support in navigating mental and emotional health challenges so they can learn.

An additional 13 participants spoke of motivational issues and non-engagement of students. Some talked about the need for more “hands-on work” and the need for students to be asked their perspectives on their learning.



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Finally, 10 cited chronic absenteeism as a concern. One wrote, “Attendance has a huge impact on a student’s success rate, especially at the secondary level.” Chronic absenteeism has risen dramatically through COVID.

### **Funding/Resources**

Study participants (80) cited insufficient funding and resources as a major problem the new leader will confront. Since grant funding accounts for a large percentage of the district’s spending, there was particular concern about the “funding cliff” when ESSER (Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief) and ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds run out. Though the district allocated most of these resources for infrastructure, \$2 million funded critical services that will require a plan for funding.

Participants identified certain cuts already made that have had a negative impact on the system, such as curriculum committees that allowed teacher voice in decision-making, and replacing some retiring staff. Through the years, town support for the district budget has grown very modestly, in part because of the town’s reluctance to tax its residents at higher levels. The district per-student expenditure (\$15,636 in 2020-21) lags significantly behind most other Connecticut districts, though student needs are greater here. The district’s ECS (Education Cost Sharing) grant has historically been below East Hartford’s fair expectation. Though a true level-services budget requires annual increases of approximately 6%, the district’s annual increases have fallen far short of that mark. Yet participants report that the town doesn’t have the resources to tax. The result has been that the district has experienced an erosion in staffing, materials, and resources to meet increasing student and family needs.

### **Preserving momentum and culture**

According to 45 participants, the new leader will be challenged to “fill the shoes” of the current superintendent, a “well-liked and respected leader” who has been highly visible in the schools and community. Respondents mentioned the need to continue current momentum and preserve the culture of respect and order with a very strong focus on relationships and community and commitment to success and achievement. They also mentioned the need to maintain a strong community among staff, students, and the town. (It should be noted that other voices suggested the need for fresh eyes.)

The current strategic plan is in place to guide the district through 2026. The new leader will be challenged to get “to know current systems and teams and look to enhance and improve them, learning about all programs, projects, systems” and to “maintain and improve on the current trajectory.” Participants would like the leader to learn about current realities and prepare to articulate a shared vision to ensure the best possible education for East Hartford’s students.

### **Parent and family involvement**

Though 22 participants cited parents and families as a strength, 45 expressed concern about family involvement. Many would like to see parents more involved in their children’s education, and experiencing “a culture of welcoming inclusiveness.”

Some spoke of the need to build trusting and transparent relationships with families who are struggling to make ends meet. A strong Family and Community Partnerships program had to be eliminated when grant funding ran out. Newly hired “family relief officers” now are responsible for this work, though some think this is not as strong a structure as the former. In addition, family liaisons need to give parents support to get them into schools.

Some families have pushed back against disciplinary decisions. A couple of participants spoke of the need to address parent concerns without dismissing those concerns.

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### **Special Education**

According to 33 individuals, Special Education presents a challenge, given significant increases in identified students (22% district-wide and 25% English language learners). One resulting challenge will be to balance “staff and resources to compensate for the increase in diagnoses without taking away from the general education population.” The effects of COVID have compounded these needs. The children entering kindergarten present “higher case loads and hours each child needs.” In addition, children who were receiving services may have gone without them during the pandemic, thus losing ground. Several mentioned a fear of non-compliance with state and federal laws.

### **Communications and community connections**

Mentioned as a strength by 36 study participants, another 39 cited challenges with communications and community connections. Some expressed the need for ongoing attention to communicating effectively and building relationships with the entire town and building support for the schools. Several suggested a need to find better ways to partner with the community, such as the library.

Fourteen (14) felt communication with parents could use work. Parent Square works for some, but not all. Some found it difficult to navigate.

Internally, the district will need continued focus on maintaining strong teamwork and transparent communication with staff.

### **Family circumstances**

The students of East Hartford come from families experiencing the whole gambit of socio/economic circumstances, according to 25 participants. Some families are refugees, and some have other issues causing transiency, poverty, and homelessness. As a result, many students have experienced trauma. Several spoke of the need to “staff to [support] a changing demographic of students.”

### **Politics**

Twenty-one (21) participants identified political issues as a source of challenge for the new leader. Ten (10) of those responses were particular to the need to support the education and development of the Board of Education, and to improve its level of engagement with the school community. The leader will also be challenged to navigate the political arena, “continuing the trust relationships between all stakeholders, including the ... town and staff.”

Another dimension of the political realm mentioned was the impact of magnet schools on the district. Though the state’s “Sheff lawsuit was well intended, ... [it was] a horse designed by committee.” Overall, this “political football” has been a drain on East Hartford coffers, costing more to send students elsewhere than the district spends on its infrastructure. In addition, there is the staff burden of case management time and tracking of students in out-of-district magnet schools.

The leader will also need to continue to advocate for students with state and federal governments to garner sufficient funding to support student need.

### **Facilities and technology**

Finally, twenty (20) participants identified a need to renovate and improve schools “to facilitate innovative teaching and learning.” All schools need working equipment, sufficient supplies, and capital improvements. The district will need to “keep up with the digital times.” Some felt the IT department imposed some changes that did not have staff input and created issues, though their work “is more critical than ever to student learning.”

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### Desired Expertise and Qualities in a New Superintendent

What would be the most important expertise and qualities in a new superintendent to tap the East Hartford Public Schools’ strengths and meet its challenges? An analysis of survey responses yielded the following:

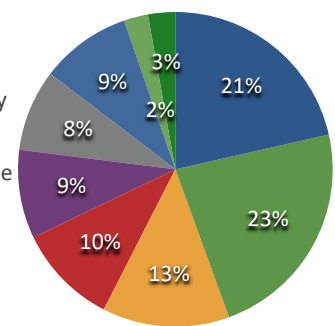
#### Expertise

Survey respondents weighted two of the nine areas of **desired expertise** in a new superintendent significantly higher than the other skills. If we look at participant’s **first choice**, *Builds trusting relationships with students, staff, and community*, at 34.6%, was the top selection. Coming in second was *Communicates and collaborates effectively in schools and community*, at 21.6%. Running a distant third was *Shares district-wide vision of excellence*, at 13%. If we look at respondents’ **top three choices combined**, we see some shifts: *Communicates and collaborates effectively in schools and community* (23.2%) is now tied with *Builds trusting relationships with students, staff, and community* as the top choice, and these two are weighted much more highly than the others. Now in third is *Knowledgeable about educational trends and innovative best practices in instruction* (14.3%).

DESIRED EXPERTISE IN NEW SUPERINTENDENT	#1	%	#2	%	#3	%	TOP 3 #	TOP 3 %
Builds trusting relationships with students, staff, & community	128	34.6%	77	20.8%	53	14.3%	258	23.2%
Communicates and collaborates effectively in school and community	80	21.6%	99	26.7%	79	21.4%	258	23.2%
Knowledgeable about educational trends and innovative best practices in instruction	36	9.7%	63	17.0%	60	16.2%	159	14.3%
Shares district-wide vision of excellence	48	13.0%	32	8.6%	28	7.6%	108	9.7%
Demonstrates proven track record of success improving performance	40	10.8%	27	7.3%	29	7.8%	96	8.6%
Fosters Professional Development, team building, & staff growth	8	2.2%	26	7.0%	56	15.1%	90	8.1%
Possesses strong budget and finance knowledge and skills	15	4.1%	27	7.3%	44	11.9%	86	7.7%
Shares and delegates leadership	6	1.6%	15	4.0%	19	5.1%	40	3.6%
Other	9	2.4%	5	1.3%	2	0.5%	16	1.4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,111</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

First Choice Expertise

Top Three Choices



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### Qualities

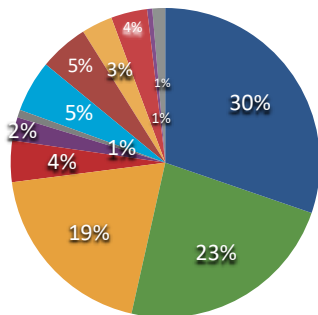
In addition to the leadership characteristics and expertise identified in the prior section, East Hartford survey respondents reflected some clear preferences for **qualities** desired in a new leader. The top **first choices** respondents identified were *Accessible, approachable, visible in schools and community* (30.3%) followed by *Keeps students' growth and wellbeing the primary focus* (23.2%) and *Trustworthy, honest, respectful* (19.5%).

These areas lead in the "top three" category, too. *Accessible, approachable, visible in schools and community* (20%) is now followed closely by *Keeps students' growth and wellbeing the primary focus* (19.2%) and *Trustworthy, honest, respectful* lags a little at 15.2%.

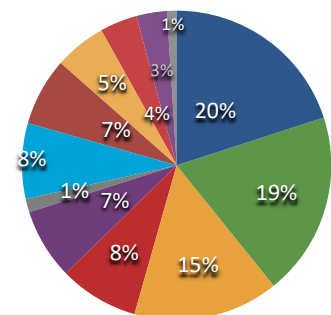
DESIRED QUALITIES IN SUPERINTENDENT	#1	%	#2	%	#3	%	TOP 3 #	TOP 3 %
Accessible, approachable, visible in schools & community	112	30.3%	63	17.0%	47	12.7%	222	20.0%
Keeps students' growth and wellbeing the primary focus	86	23.2%	74	19.9%	53	14.4%	213	19.2%
Trustworthy, honest, respectful	72	19.5%	53	14.3%	44	11.9%	169	15.2%
Exhibits appreciation for and values children	16	4.3%	40	10.8%	36	9.8%	92	8.3%
Inspirational team builder	9	2.4%	25	6.7%	48	13.0%	82	7.4%
Life-long learner	3	0.8%	7	1.9%	6	1.6%	16	1.4%
Fosters & values diversity, equity, inclusivity & accessibility	20	5.4%	31	8.4%	37	10.0%	88	7.9%
Decisive, confident, and objective problem solver	19	5.1%	30	8.1%	30	8.1%	79	7.1%
Committed to transparent communication in schools & town	12	3.2%	22	5.9%	26	7.0%	60	5.4%
Dedicated commitment to East Hartford's vision & mission	14	3.8%	11	3.0%	18	4.9%	43	3.9%
Knowledgeable and hardworking, with attention to detail	2	0.5%	12	3.2%	21	5.7%	35	3.2%
Other	5	1.4%	3	0.8%	3	0.8%	11	1.0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,110</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

First Choice Qualities

Top Three Choices



- Accessible, approachable, visible in schools & community
- Keeps students' growth and wellbeing the primary focus
- Trustworthy, honest, respectful
- Exhibits appreciation for and values children
- Inspirational team builder
- Life-long learner
- Fosters & values diversity, equity, inclusivity & accessibility
- Decisive, confident, and objective problem solver
- Committed to transparent communication in schools & town
- Dedicated commitment to East Hartford's vision & mission
- Knowledgeable and hardworking, with attention to detail
- Other



Needless to say, all of these qualities and skills are essential in a leader, yet they point to the prioritized needs of the East Hartford Public Schools at this point in time. This profile will explore these areas of expertise and dimensions of leadership, integrating perspectives garnered through interview, focus group, and survey comments.

## **SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP PROFILE**

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### ***Builds trusting relationships with students, staff, and community***

East Hartford study participants recognized the importance of relationships to the success of the new superintendent and the district. The new leader should make a personal investment in nurturing relationships with students, teachers, and staff, learning names, and showing appreciation for their efforts. This individual will ensure all in the schools focus on cultivating strong relations among themselves and with students, parents and guardians, and the community at large.

The leader will value staff and nurture relations with their bargaining units, demonstrating caring about staff wellbeing. Cultivating the team and not micromanaging, the leader will ensure staff feel empowered and trusted to carry out their responsibilities. The leader will consider staff input and expertise prior to making decisions that significantly affect their work.

The successful new superintendent will engage with parents and guardians, listening carefully to their issues and concerns, helping them understand the importance of their involvement in their children's education, and making efforts to keep them well-informed.

Kind-hearted, fair, and open, this leader will foster connections with people in the town and its organizations and agencies, such as the library and Parks and Rec, becoming knowledgeable about community culture, needs, and existing partnerships and the potential for new ones. These connections will broaden opportunities for the district's students. Members of the community will trust that the schools are in good hands. Overall, the new leader will seek to understand deeply the East Hartford Public Schools and the community they serve.

### ***Communicates and collaborates effectively in schools and community***

Open-minded, transparent, and willing to learn, the successful new leader will model growth and curiosity, and listening very carefully. A regular presence in classrooms, the leader will understand the context of teaching and learning throughout the district, involving staff and inviting feedback before taking action.

The successful leader will build an educational team "from the teachers up," showing administrators how to demonstrate support and concern in helping staff reach their potential united behind the vision, values, and mission of the district.

Confident, humble, and deeply committed to fostering a culture of collaborative problem-solving internally and with the town, the leader will support all in moving the district toward a high standard of excellence and student success.

The leader will bring honed communication skills, a thick skin and strong sense of self, and awareness and confidence in speaking and writing, always valuing and honoring others' perspectives.

### ***Knowledgeable about educational trends and innovative best practices in instruction***

Adaptable and guided by a growth mindset, East Hartford's new leader will bring a proven track record of success in a comparable district. A solutions-based leader with significant teaching experience, this individual will be versed in data analysis and determined to improve district performance.

A master at change process, the leader will bring fresh perspectives and an ability to inspire others to craft new approaches and innovations to motivate learning. The leader will value change and movement, even if it involves failure, an important component of growth.

This organized, positive, inclusive leader will bring an ability to navigate through networks and locate and administer grants. The leader will also bring savvy about statewide and federal advocacy.

## **SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP PROFILE**

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### ***Shares district-wide vision of excellence***

East Hartford's successful new leader will be able to consolidate varied perspectives into one vision, ensure the vision is widely shared, and support collaboration to achieve the vision. The leader will balance finding creative solutions while supporting and sustaining programs that work.

While preparing students to achieve at higher levels on state benchmarks, the leader will also value the arts, hands-on learning, and other opportunities as ways to ensure students are connected to their learning and have many opportunities to shine.

### ***Accessible, approachable, and visible in schools and community***

The successful new leader will be humble, kind, personable, welcoming, and approachable at all levels. A regular, visible presence in the schools and at community events, the leader will understand and embrace the school and broader community, celebrate diversity and deeply commit to students' success.

### ***Keeps students' growth and wellbeing the primary focus***

This leader will genuinely want to know the students of East Hartford, uplift their strengths, and address learning gaps. Holding expectations high about what students are capable of, this leader will make all decisions focused on what's best for their learning and wellbeing, from Pre-K through Adult Education. Though never making excuses, the leader will understand students' varied family challenges and seek to expand their motivation to learn and succeed.

Though attentive to test scores as a barometer of learning, the leader will recognize that play and joy are integral to the successful learning process.

### ***Trustworthy, honest, respectful***

The successful new superintendent will bring strong character, competency, and integrity. The leader will be bold, forthcoming, and hardworking, leading by example, trusting staff and fostering their growth. An honest, compassionate, and humble individual with a diverse background of experiences, this leader will be ethical in all matters, motivated and driven for student success.

### ***Other***

East Hartford participants identified some qualities and expertise not reflected in the above categories. They referenced an equity focus, systems management, and political savvy.

### ***Equity***

Participants would like a culturally competent individual (preferably reflecting the diversity of the community) who is a highly competent leader. The effective leader will relate to all students, building on experience working in culturally and ethnically diverse communities. The individual will bring a commitment to diversifying the district's teaching staff. Proficiency in a language other than English is desirable.

### ***Systems Management***

The successful leader will bring significant understanding and a track record of building systems and operations (budget, human resources, curriculum, special education, professional development, etc.) and managerial skills to disseminate responsibility with empathy, understanding, and kindness, valuing teachers' time and effort.

## **SUPERINTENDENT LEADERSHIP PROFILE**

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### ***Political Savvy***

The effective leader will also bring political savvy in dealing with the Board, town boards, the state, political agendas, etc., but not be a politician. Rather, the leader will encourage cooperative relations with the town and state and be ethical in all matters.

Finally, East Hartford is looking for a leader who will be committed to staying for a long time.