

LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Metropolitan Education District

Preparing Students to Thrive in College and Careers



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in February, 2024 for the new superintendent of the Metropolitan Education District (MetroED). 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 survey, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the District and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years. The online survey data is consistent with the input of the focus groups.

Participation

The stakeholder groups included:

Focus Groups, Interviews & Survey Participants
Board Members
Current Superintendent
School Administration
Instructional & Support Staff
Parents
Community
Labor Partners
Students

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.

Each of the Board members was interviewed individually, as was the current Superintendent. The structure of the focus groups was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments.

The survey, which was provided in both English and Spanish languages, consisted of 17 questions regarding the state of the District, and 14 questions regarding desired characteristics for the new Superintendent. All responses were anonymous and no emails were collected. This survey was posted on the website, and the link was mailed to all employees, parents of students, and community partners.

The following questions were asked of all participating stakeholders in the interviews and focus groups:

1. What do stakeholders value regarding the District? What strengths do they desire to retain and build upon?
2. What are the issues this District currently faces, and will face in the next three to five years?
3. What personal and professional characteristics are expected in a new Superintendent?

Recurrent themes emerged across all stakeholder groups. These themes have been integrated from all engagement sessions and are outlined below according to the three questions.

One important sentiment expressed by stakeholders was an appreciation for the current Superintendent who navigated the course for MetroED to remain stable through the tumultuous change in the state funding model, which resulted in less favorable funding for career technical education programs. Additionally, she supported the District staff and students through the pandemic which was appreciated and noted by stakeholders.

STRENGTHS OF THE DISTRICT

- **CTE Programs**

MetroED provides a stellar array of career technical education courses for high school students and adults. It provides multiple pathways to careers, and 80% of the courses are A-G compliant for the UC and CSU systems. 75% of the students go on to post-secondary education, and the other students are on track for employment with the necessary certifications. As one Board member noted, “MetroED is the best kept secret in Silicon Valley”.

- **Climate and Culture**

The District has a very positive climate and supportive culture. The students mentioned that they appreciate the atmosphere at MetroED as it is more supportive than their comprehensive high schools. They spend time in classes that are meaningful to them, with faculty that really seem to care about them. The students shared how much they appreciate the celebrations at MetroED.

The faculty and staff echoed this sentiment, noting that MetroED is a positive workplace and is an “employer of choice”, noting that other organizations may have higher salaries but that MetroED has a healthier culture than many other employers.

- **Staff**

As mentioned above, the students made a point to share their appreciation for the MetroED staff. The Board also has high regard for the staff, both instructional faculty and support staff. They bring expertise from industry that is invaluable, as well as instructional expertise to teach the students. The staff take pride in their work, as was evident in their comments in the focus group as well as in informal conversations on campus. There are 104 total employees in the District.

- **Students**

All of the students at MetroED have selected to attend MetroED. As such, it is a “school of choice” for the students, and there are minimal discipline issues. The students are dedicated to achieving their goals as they aspire to the careers they have selected. There are 1405 students attending MetroED.

- **School Board**

Through the individual interviews with each of the Board members, it is very clear that they are committed to MetroED. They have taken on the role of trustee for MetroED in addition to their Board position for their home district. Each Board member is passionate about career technical education, and really wants to ensure that it remains intact and will be able to weather current and future challenges.

- **Facilities**

The campus of MetroED is beautiful, with state-of-the art facilities and materials to offer high quality programs. It is well-maintained, and offers an excellent site for both students and staff to do their best work.

CHALLENGES AND ISSUES FACING THE DISTRICT

- **Funding Structure**

In 2013, The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) legislation was enacted, which fundamentally changed how all local educational agencies (LEAs) in California are funded. As one Board member noted, “this torpedoed MetroED”, as well as all other Regional Occupational Centers & Programs. Since this time, the actual funding has not increased, and the District has become increasingly reliant on grant funding for its operational budget. This has impacted the ability to provide competitive salaries for employees, resulting in challenges to attract and retain staff.

- **Governance Structure**

MetroED is a JPA of 6 school districts in Santa Clara County. Each of the 6 Board members for MetroED represent a district in the JPA. With an even number of Board members, there is potential that a vote may be tied, which is a challenging governance structure. Additionally, there is an Executive Council for MetroED composed of the Superintendents from these 6 districts in the JPA. This council poses an additional challenge for decision-making, which adds an additional governance challenge for MetroED.

- **Ability to Attract and Retain Staff**

As noted above, the LCFF has an ongoing adverse impact on the funding for MetroED, which has limited the ability of the District to provide competitive salaries for the region.

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE NEW SUPERINTENDENT

FROM INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS:

- Experience at an executive level
- Financial literacy
- Ability to work with districts
- Politically savvy
- Ability to write and secure grants
- Innovative, with a passion for CTE
- “Walk the Talk” and follow-through
- Committed to MetroED for the long term
- Good people skills
- Frequent and transparent communication
- Strategic and focused
- Proactive and willing to fight for MetroED
- Authentic

FROM SURVEY (PERCENT WHO AGREE OR STRONGLY AGREE):

- Have CTE experience (78%)
- Have CTE administrative experience (76%)
- Understand CTE funding (90%)
- Understand how to support CTE and Adult Education (93%)
- Provide transparent communication (100%)
- Be visible in the District and actively engaged in community life (85%)
- Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future (100%)
- Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies (86%)
- Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators (100%)
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel (96%)
- Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program (78%)
- Be an effective manager of day-to-day operations (86%)
- Recruit, employ and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools (97%)
- Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District (97%)

CLOSING COMMENTS

HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to meet the needs of the district. The search team will seek a new superintendent who can work with the MetroED Board to provide the leadership needed to continue to provide outstanding career technical education for high school students and adults as well as meet the unique needs of the District.

The search team would like to thank all the participants who attended focus groups meetings or completed the online survey and the MetroED staff members who assisted with our meetings, particularly Alyssa Lynch and Yocelin Macias who organized the search team's time in the district.