



Superintendent Profile Report

**Compiled from Focus Group and On-line
Survey Responses**

**Lincoln Public Schools
Lincoln, Massachusetts**

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Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management

MCCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GLOBAL STUDIES

Profile Introduction

The Collins Center staff, on behalf of the Lincoln School Committee, conducted eight (8) focus groups and five individual discussions with key stakeholders within the school district and community in order to identify a desired profile for the next superintendent of the Lincoln Public Schools. Questions which were the basis for the focus group discussions can be viewed in Appendix B. In addition, an on-line survey, translated into Korean, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish, with the same questions used in the focus groups, was made available publicly. The focus groups took place between October 3 and November 1, 2022; the on-line survey was open for respondents from October 6 to October 30, 2022. A summary of the number and stakeholder categories of the participants and respondents is included in Table 1 on the following page.

Gathering input from members of the broader school community plays an important role in the search process. Their feedback and responses provide the basis for this profile. This profile informs the School Committee in their decision making, as well as the Screening Subcommittee in their work to identify finalists. The process and results also provide us, the search consultants, with a deeper understanding of the district, community and the issues and opportunities associated with the position. It significantly informs our recruiting process. Potential applicants will review this report as they learn more about the position. Finally, the report provides the person selected for the role with rich information to develop their initial entry plan.

From the outset of this search, the Lincoln School Committee has made it clear they want an open and transparent search process. The focus groups and survey are part of that process, and one of three ways staff, parents/caregivers, and other community members play a role in the selection process. The other two ways are: 1) being selected as a member of the Screening Subcommittee, and 2) meeting each finalist at a community forum and providing written feedback to the school committee prior to the final decision being made.

On behalf of the School Committee, we thank everyone who participated in person or on-line in making this a meaningful process and in making these data and analyses rich and helpful.

Respectfully submitted,

John R. Brackett, Ed.D.
The Collins Center for Public Management
UMass Boston

Table 1

Number of Participants Attending the Focus Groups and Respondents to the Online Survey

	Focus Groups	Online Survey	Total
Parent/Caregiver/Community	51	176	228
Faculty/Staff	30	69	99
School Committee	7*	4	11
Administrator	13	8	21
Town Officials	2	3	5
Total	103	260	363

Note: *Includes the Hanscom and METCO representatives. The total number of participants (363) is not an unduplicated count. That is, an unknown number of participants may have participated in both a focus group and completed the online survey.

METHODOLOGY

This profile is designed to help inform decision makers in the search process and the applicants for the position on what members of the greater Lincoln community believe are the attributes, skills and knowledge, and background experiences necessary for the next Superintendent of Schools to be successful. We listened and took notes at the focus groups. We then combined that information with the results of the online survey. The focus group data provided more depth and color than the results of the online checklist, helping us to better understand the context for the choice responses. Responses to each open-ended question from the survey and the focus groups were coded to help us determine patterns and themes across all stakeholder groups. While we report the most frequently selected or mentioned topics as priority characteristics, that an issue may have been mentioned only a small number of times does not mean that issue is not important. For example, renewal of the Department of Defense (DoD) Contract for the operation of the Hanscom School needs to be negotiated in FY24. That was not frequently mentioned by participants but is extremely important for the next superintendent in their first year on the job to get up to speed and lead the negotiations. By design, the data are not triangulated nor does the analysis reach the rigor of more scholarly qualitative research. We do not report the data separately for each category of respondents; the Superintendent of Schools serves and leads all stakeholders. Thus, it is important that the profile reflects a composite of perspectives. It is the common themes across all groups that form the profile of the Superintendent of the Lincoln Public Schools. Finally, the purpose of this process is to develop a candidate profile; it is not a school district needs or satisfaction survey. It is also not a reflection of strengths or shortcomings of the current or past administrations. These data do not support such a product.

FINDINGS

Desired Characteristics, Skills, and Experience of the Next Superintendent

Introduction

On the surface, the superintendency of the Lincoln Public Schools may seem to be a relatively modest challenge. If one considers a superintendent profile for a school district with just over 1100 students, two schools, well resourced, a history of high performance and stability, all in an affluent community, that profile would substantively underestimate the needs of this position and its requisite skills and abilities. Respondents were clear when describing the community, school district, and the position as “unique” in structure, culture, and expectations, with a level of complexity that provides an interesting challenge and opportunity. In the sections below, that uniqueness will become evident and the leadership needs more clearly defined. One respondent captured this well in saying “This place is unique. Its ‘smallness’ causes everyone to wear multiple hats and that forces collaboration, coordination, and communication. The civic life of the town is focused on the schools. We have very high expectations, and our elected leaders and community members are partners in the work. The next superintendent needs to be intellectually curious with a high degree of humility.”

See **Appendix A, Table 2** for a compilation of the responses to the online survey regarding the personal characteristics that the next Lincoln Superintendent of Schools should possess.

Priority Personal Characteristics, Knowledge, Attributes and Core Values

We asked participants to help us describe who the person is as a leader. Respondents to the on-line survey were asked to select up to five (5) of the 26 characteristics provided. While each characteristic is important to the success of the superintendent; we utilized a forced choice to help us discern the most important. As one person wanted readers to remember, “Picking only 5 from the list was hard, I hope several of the others are not lost in the numbers.”

In order of frequency of selection:

1. Core Value and Commitment to Anti-Racism, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity

Over 41% of all survey respondents rated this as one of the five most important characteristics and it was also one of the five most discussed characteristics in the focus groups. Lincoln has done a lot of work on this Antiracism, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (AIDE) initiative both at the district and town level. Some believe Lincoln is a leader in this area and, with few exceptions, want the district to continue and deepen the efforts. Participants understand that the next superintendent must lead this work. In order to do so, the commitment must be a core value, not just an operational expectation. As one participant mentioned, “We’re beyond book studies and need to do the difficult work. We need someone who can help us in this journey.”

2. Commitment to Challenging All Students

This was tied for the second most mentioned characteristic from the survey, with 36.5% of the respondents rating this as one the five most important traits. It was also a major discussion in the parent focus groups. As we heard, challenging all students means different things to different people. For some this meant ensuring that ‘all means all’ when setting expectations and providing resources. For others, it links with the commitment to close opportunity and achievement gaps (24.2% selected this as a top-five characteristic). For others still, challenge is the operable word, and they seek a leader who can ensure there is appropriate rigor across the curriculum at every grade level, and that all students are engaged and challenged.

3. Ability to Articulate a Clear Educational Vision for All Students

There were also 36.5% of survey respondents who rated being able to articulate a clear educational vision as one of the five most important characteristics. While not as prevalent in focus groups or frequently mentioned by faculty/staff, many want a leader who understands good teaching and learning which is based in research and data and can clearly communicate that vision to all stakeholders and coalesce their support.

4. Priority on the Recruitment, Retention, Morale and Health of Employees

This was the next most cited characteristic, with nearly 34% selecting it as a top five attribute. First, we learned that most stakeholders value and respect the LPS faculty and staff. Thus, they want a leader who values staff as partners/collaborators, who trusts and respects the staff as professionals, and who understands the stress resulting from working through the pandemic. Most know there has been an exodus from the profession for a myriad of reasons and that turnover is not conducive to long-term progress. Even though the district may be beyond the pandemic, the next superintendent must be sensitive to, and capable of leading the healing process. LPS was open through the pandemic for which most take pride; but most recognize that this came with a price on the emotional and physical health of staff.

Mentioned more frequently by staff, but also a relatively high number of parents, was prioritizing and understanding the importance of positive staff morale. This will be discussed more as an Issue below, however, possessing the leadership attributes to address morale issues, whatever the cause, is a priority.

Finally, the recruitment and retention of staff are closely related to the diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging core value. LPS, like so many districts, has experienced difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff of color. The next superintendent inherits the district's commitment to addressing the issue thus must possess the understanding of the many facets of the issue, and have knowledge of efforts, albeit difficult, which can address the situation and allow the students of color to interact with more adults who look like them. One person highlighted the challenge in saying, "We know it's hard for districts like ours to find staff of color who are willing to come here. It's doubly hard when you are starting from zero, with no cohort in place for a new staff member to relate with. We have to start, and we have to support our staff of color when they come on board so we can retain them."

5. Commitment to the Health, Safety and Well Being of Students and Staff

Closely linked with the previous attribute, this attribute was selected as one of the top five by over 30% of the survey respondents. The fact that this attribute, and number 4 above, were mentioned so frequently, stresses the importance of the people aspect of the district and their health, safety, and wellbeing. This means the new superintendent must be a sincerely caring and empathetic individual.

6. Ability to Give and Receive Feedback to Improve the Performance of Others and Self

28.1% mentioned this trait as one of the five most important for the next superintendent to possess. Obviously, this is grounded in accountability.... accountability of self and others. It also requires one to be an active listener and have the personal characteristics to initiate and participate in difficult conversations.

7. Thoughtful Leadership in Curriculum and Instruction

This attribute was the only other trait that received more than 25% of all responses on the survey. It was more frequently mentioned by parents than by staff. This is likely an indication

that parents view teaching and learning as an integral part of the district's mission and it must be maintained at a high level. The next superintendent must possess a deep knowledge of effective teaching, learning, and assessment, the research that supports such, and the nexus between good teaching and excellence in outcomes.

Other Frequently Selected (Survey) Or Mentioned (Focus Group) Personal Characteristics

The following characteristics were also cited by a high percentage of respondents as important traits. The confluence of quantitative (online survey ratings) and qualitative (online survey comments and focus group feedback) data for these characteristics was strong, but not as strong as the seven mentioned in the previous section.

1. Strong Communication

25% of all respondents mentioned this attribute as a priority for the next superintendent. This was often the first attribute mentioned when we asked the question. Stakeholders lauded the current superintendent's communication abilities (especially during the very difficult days of the pandemic) and her willingness to listen, be clear, deliver the hard message when necessary, and make others feel heard. Stakeholders value this and believe the next superintendent must possess these attributes to keep communications strong across the district.

2. Ability to Bring Diverse Groups of People Together

This was more frequently mentioned by faculty/staff in both the survey and focus groups. It reflects what they perceive is vital in building a healthy district culture, collaboratively addressing the initiatives in place, and enhancing the working relationships within the schools, with the district and with the community. All stakeholders stressed the importance of being a team-builder and one who can "coalesce different stakeholders around common goals."

3. Advocacy for Educational Innovation in the Classroom

Nearly 24% of survey respondents pointed to this as a priority attribute for the next superintendent. More frequently mentioned by parents/community, it reflects the larger school community commitment to be forward thinking and wanting students well prepared for their future. The community's desire to be forward thinking is also reflected in the recent construction of state-of-the-art schools. A quote from a survey respondent seems to capture what is desired, "My hope is that the Lincoln Public Schools will continue to move forward as an innovative district that promotes more flexible and authentic learning. Learning that is project-based, place-based, promotes teamwork, includes hearing different viewpoints and coming to a consensus, problem solving, and learning how to effectively communicate with various audiences. We need a superintendent that can champion this, communicate this well and hopefully get the naysayers on board."

4. Strong Social Skills (Empathy, Humor, Collaboration, Approachability)

Again, more frequently mentioned by faculty/staff than by parents/community, this reflects what educators believe is necessary to build a strong and effective workplace environment. They believe being visible (meaningfully in schools and classrooms), approachable, and accessible is vital to the success of the superintendent

Note: One attribute that was not part of the survey but was raised often in the focus groups, especially from the faculty/staff, was the need for the next superintendent to be a "hands-on" leader. The size of the district and a lean central staffing means the superintendent has responsibilities for some tasks that in other districts would be delegated to other leaders. "Boots on the ground." "All hands-on deck." "Wears many hats." As one participant described, "They are really a player coach."

Priority Skills and Prior Experiences Required to Be Successful

Respondents to the on-line survey were also asked to identify up to five (5) priority skills and experiences from the 16 provided. Each of the listed skills and experiences is important to the success of the superintendent. Again, the purpose of this forced choice is so the respondents would consider each, then discern the most important.

See **Appendix A, Table 3** for a compilation of the responses to the online survey regarding the skills and previous experiences that the next Lincoln Superintendent of Schools should possess.

1. Teaching Experience

Nearly 60% of all respondents mentioned this as a priority.

2. Leadership in Improving Teaching and Learning

46% of respondents mentioned this experience. It was selected as a priority at a higher percentage for the Parent/Community group than the Faculty/Staff group.

3. Experience in Building a District Culture of Trust and Strong Relationships

Like number 2 above, 46% of respondents cited this as a priority experience. One participant of a focus group, in offering this as important, went further in saying “The candidate has to show they have accomplished this in a prior position, not solely state what they would intend to do.”

4. Experience in Building Effective Relationships with Faculty and Staff

This experience was also mentioned by 46% of the survey respondents.

5. School Administrator Experience

42% believed having served as school administrator (e.g., principal) was important for the next superintendent. Interestingly, only 8% felt prior central office administration experience was a priority experience.

Other Frequently Selected Skills and Prior Experiences

The previous five experiences were the most frequently selected by survey and focus group participants. While less frequently mentioned, the following should be noted.

1. Experience in Using and Communicating Data to Support Decision Making

32% of survey respondents rated this as one of the top five experiences required. Not surprisingly, parents/community selected this experience at a much higher rate than faculty/staff. Many staff are engaged with the data as part of their work; parents expressed a desire to better understand performance and other data and how they are used in decision making and planning.

2. Leadership Experience in Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Initiatives

Given the commitment to this work and the initiatives in place, it is not surprising that prior leadership in the area of anti-racism, diversity, inclusion and equity was seen as important. While 31% mentioned this as a priority experience, recall that nearly 42% believe a commitment to this initiative must be a core value of the superintendent. Whether it's a core value, or an expected prior experience, having meaningfully led the work is very important.

3. **Skills in Family and Community Engagement**

31% cited these skills as a priority for the district's leader. This was cited by all stakeholder groups as a priority skill.

We believe it's important to note that, while it did not rise to the same level of priority in the survey as those above, experience in developing and administering the budget and ensuring the financial health of the district was cited in focus groups as a priority. Fiscal acumen is required in order to understand that LPS has two budgets (one for Lincoln and one for Hanscom), that the district operates in basically a non-override environment, and that there is a need to balance available resources with high expectations.

Priority Issues the New Superintendent Should Address in the First Year

We asked survey respondents to share up to three (3) of the most important issues the next Superintendent of Schools must address in their first year in the position. One question that we often get when summarizing the results, is "Are people suggesting this is a problem and it needs to be fixed, or is this something we have that we want to maintain?" As you will see in our explanation below, our answer in LPS is more the latter than the former. That is, with some exception which we point out, most are identifying issues that are important to the success of the district and the next superintendent and they want to insure these don't fall between the cracks or are deferred to a point where recovery is not possible. Most stakeholders are happy with the district, and its performance and path, they want this to continue and be enhanced where possible. The following issue categories reflect that perspective.

1. **Understanding and Communicating the Uniqueness of the Lincoln Culture**

Without exception, stakeholders expressed a strong opinion that the next superintendent has to quickly gain an understanding of, and an appreciation for, the uniqueness and complexities of the district. While small, the district's complexity is defining. The interrelatedness of Lincoln, military and Boston students eliminates a "one size fits all approach to leadership." As one survey respondent so aptly stated, "Lincoln is unique. The position in this town requires broad interpersonal skills in order to work with community members, military members, Boston/METCO families and students, parents who demand high output and parents focused on Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI.)"

The superintendent must understand what it means to operate a school on a military base. They must consider such aspects as: understanding the military culture, the contractual relationship between the Department of Defense and the school district, building a relationship with the Base Commander, engaging the families given their transitory nature, and appreciating the pressures they face. (The good news is the current relationship is strong and the Hanscom administration and staff are extremely capable and have a deep knowledge of these issues. They must be partners for the next superintendent during the on-boarding process.)

Gaining an understanding of the METCO program is equally important. Lincoln was one of the original group of seven districts in 1966 to welcome students from Boston. This relationship is not without challenges and issues. One of most cited issues is the need to build a greater sense of belonging for students and families in the school and in the community. Also, similar to the Hanscom situation, it will be important for the superintendent to build relationships with the students traveling each day from Boston and their families. Gaining an appreciation for the impact bussing has on the students' day and the "lived lives of the

students” was frequently cited by staff and parents alike.

Understanding the Lincoln culture was often cited as a first-year priority. As one person said, “take time to let the culture marinate before starting to make changes.” One aspect of the culture is the high expectations that the community has for the schools and its leaders. Parents and community members expect a lot, but they also want to be partners in the work that leads to the outcomes. This provides a unique opportunity to tap into an amazing talent base of parents and community members. While an opportunity, it also requires tact and strength in order to balance this desire to be an involved partner and in defining boundaries so as to not create unclear roles of responsibility. There also is a strong and healthy relationship with Town officials that must be nurtured.

Finally, not surprisingly, while one of the most cited attributes of the next superintendent is to be a strong communicator; one of the most cited issues to be addressed early in the leader’s tenure is communication. Frequent, honest, and timely communication has become an expectation within the district. The superintendent needs to be an active listener and one who makes others feel they are heard. Clear communications were deemed important by every stakeholder group. Each of the groups stressed the nexus between communications and a culture of engagement, trust and support. Faculty and staff shared a desire to know the superintendent and want them to be approachable, visible and empathetic with the work happening in the schools and classrooms.

2. Deepening the Work and Culture of Anti-Racism, Diversity (Including Staffing), Equity, Inclusion, Belonging

As discussed in other sections of this report, Lincoln prides itself on the work that it has started in building a lived culture of antiracism, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. The next superintendent must come with antiracism and DEI as a core value. The work has started and there is an expectation the next leader will embrace what has been done, lead the district to a deeper level of commitment and understanding and will help everyone grow as part of that work.

The district recently completed an equity audit which can inform the next steps in this work. It will be important for the next superintendent to obtain and unpack the results in collaboration with others to chart the course forward.

Note: While there was overwhelming agreement on the importance of this issue by all stakeholders, it is important to note that there was not 100% agreement. A relatively small number of respondents expressed concern that too much attention and too many resources were being directed to this initiative at the expense of student achievement. Approximately 5% of respondents mention this issue or that of “keeping politics out of schools,” “stop with the political and diversity, get back to the basics,” or “DEI is not helping our children get ahead.”

3. Balancing the Need to Continuously Improve Student Learning (Achievement) and Engagement with an Appropriate Level of Rigor and Challenge as Part of an Effectively Communicated Educational Vision

The next superintendent needs to be aware that, while there is a general consensus of parents that all students must be challenged and engaged in their learning and that there are high expectations for achievement of all students, there is currently a level of tension that exists about the means to that end. Nearly 12% of the survey respondents stated a concern about the level of rigor, challenge and high standards across the grade levels. They expressed concern especially with math instruction, and that high performing students were not being challenged

and their learning not enhanced. Some also mentioned a concern about their student's preparation for the transition to LS.

Concurrently, we heard from parents who disagreed with that premise. They wanted their children to be engaged and "find joy in learning." They felt that caring for the education of the whole child, the social emotional learning (SEL) and safety needs of students was vitally important. Several stated that as the priority goals included in the Portrait of a Learner come to life, district children and adults will be prepared for their future.

Along with this push-pull between the two means to an end, a high majority of participants were in agreement with the need for the superintendent to be able to share a clear vision for the district and for the future of education. Two other aspects were frequently mentioned: a need to address the "covid catch up" and a desire to continue to be "safely" innovative. The latter means ensuring there is proven research to support an innovation and that it is appropriate for the Lincoln context rather than adopting an "innovation du jour" because it is popular in the education world.

We mention this issue not to suggest there is a right or wrong approach or that the claims made are accurate. Rather, the next superintendent needs to be aware there are strong, vocal, and differing perspectives. Engaging to understand and involving the professional staff in future conversations will be important.

4. Understanding and Addressing the Morale of Staff

Slightly more than 20% of responding faculty and staff members mentioned "morale" in their responses. A few mentioned that the pandemic was unbelievably difficult and emotionally challenging; it placed stress on even strong working relationships. These staff members hoped the new superintendent would bring a respect, an appreciation and a high level of trust for the professional staff.

We do not have deep enough information to further clarify what "morale" might mean. We cite it here to inform the next superintendent and allow them to do further investigation into the matter.

Other Frequently Mentioned Important Issues to Address in Year One.

The following issues were not mentioned as frequently as the four above but seem to be important considerations for a new incumbent to the position. We do not have as much clarity around the core issue of each or its context; these are areas for further investigation by the next superintendent.

1. SEL, Health and Wellness, Safety

Nearly 13% of respondents mentioned SEL as one of their three responses to the question. Some just stated "SEL"; others stated SEL needed to be further developed, more SEL data needed to be collected, or SEL and safety of children was paramount.

2. Effective Use of New Facilities

The community and staff are proud of the new state-of-the-art facilities. The educational planning that drove the learning spaces and ambitious energy benchmarks were explicitly stated that helped drive support for the project. As the final punch lists are completed and full utilization is achieved, it is important that the building be utilized as planned, that teaching and learning innovations are implemented and that energy benchmarks are met. One person stated, "There are energy expectations that were projected based on certain assumptions and level of utilization. If those change, it will be important to clearly communicate with all stakeholders why the planned utilization or benchmarks have not been met."

3. Budget, Planning, Financial Health – Hanscom Contract

Part of the first-year learning curve of the superintendent will be fully understanding the town budgeting process and calendar, the uniqueness of having two budgets (one for Hanscom and one for Lincoln), and renegotiation of the contract with the DoD for Hanscom Schools. This latter issue is vital to the future viability of LPS.

One respondent cogently brought many of these factors together in sharing, “Our next Superintendent should be a clear communicator and able to maintain their calm under pressure. They should be able to engage with the town and bring together school life and town life to build our sense of community. The Superintendent should focus on innovative teaching, enabling student voices, and show strong building leadership. They should encourage the faculty to challenge themselves and make use of the new school facilities to create learning environments that support each student. Students, families, and faculty should feel connected, engaged, and supported. We as a community should show the same supportive approach to help our students be resilient, hopeful, connected, curious, and thoughtful.”

What Is Special About LPS and Must Be Preserved

We asked what was special about Lincoln Public Schools and what should be preserved during the transition of leadership. We asked survey respondents to list up to three points of pride. The responses centered around these top nine aspects of the schools, district, and community.

1. **AIDE Initiative.** All stakeholder groups mentioned this as special and found pride in the fact that Lincoln is recognized as a leader in this work.
2. **Curriculum, Academics.** The district is high performing, and the Portrait of a Learner sets a vision for the future.
3. **Community, Culture, Collaboration.** There is a true sense of community between the district and the town/parents/families. There is a culture of collaboration between the teacher’s union and district, the district and town, and the parents and the schools.
4. **Educator Quality.** Educators are caring, innovative and hard working.
5. **Social Emotional Learning Initiative.** SEL has been a positive area of focus at a much-needed point in time.
6. **Small Class Size.** Both parents and staff mentioned this fact. Class size across the district is quite small compared to other districts.
7. **Nature, Sustainability, Environment and Climate.** The town has long been a place that takes pride in its commitment to nature, the environment and climate. That there is a school-wide culture that cares about the earth and climate is a point of pride.
8. **METCO.** Lincoln was one of the original seven districts. Since 1966 there has been an unwavering commitment to the program and its mission.
9. **Arts, Extracurricular Activities.** For a small district, the arts (art, music, drama) remain highly supported. There are a variety of extracurricular activities, sports, and afterschool programs available for the students.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report is to help inform the Lincoln School Committee and Screening Subcommittee in their decision-making process. It shares what the various district stakeholders believe is necessary for the future success of the district and the next superintendent. It will also be shared with applicants as they consider their decision about whether to apply and, if they do, what Lincoln offers to their professional growth and plans.

The decision on who the next superintendent of schools will be is a critical one for the future of the Lincoln Public Schools and for the Town of Lincoln. To that end, the School Committee was anxious to partner with the stakeholders in the process. Participating in the focus groups and the online survey reflects that partnership. We hope this report meets the expectations for it, and that the process of collecting the data behind this report was meaningful to all participants.

While the 350+ respondents who participated in the process, as a proportion of the entire Lincoln Public Schools community is quite small, the messages received were clear and consistent. Some might say there were no surprises presented here. If that's true, then the reader has truly been meaningfully involved with the district and the district's communication (both formal and informal) has been effective.

In summary, the data indicate that Lincoln Public Schools seeks an educational leader who will build upon several of the key initiatives already in place and will deepen that work, and in some cases, put in place initiatives and action steps needed to bring about transformative learning for all students. The overarching message across all groups was "we're generally happy with where we are; but we need to move forward, and we need to address some issues that might be barriers to moving forward." The next leader would be a curious learner, self-reflective and able to give and receive feedback to improve performance. There was a consensus that the next superintendent needs to possess a core value of commitment to antiracism, inclusion, diversity, and equity (AIDE) along with ability to maintain, nurture and, in some cases, build relationships across all stakeholders. That is, they would be an effective communicator, with strong interpersonal skills, who readily and comfortably builds relationships which lead to a culture of trust, respect, and collaboration. They must understand the unique nature of serving a small, yet diverse (Lincoln, Hanscom and Boston students) district. Given the size of the district and staff, the superintendent must be a hands-on leader. The next LPS superintendent needs to be able to articulate a clear education vision for all students and the parent/community have high expectations that the superintendent will demonstrate a commitment to challenging all students. An important characteristic, especially for faculty and staff, is to have a leader who is a collaborator, who respects, supports and trusts educators, who maintains a good working relationship with the union, is approachable and visible in the schools and classrooms, and possesses strong social skills capable of bringing diverse groups of people together.

In addition to the requisites for the position included in the vacancy notice (e.g., required master's degree and Superintendent License), the next superintendent should have spent some part of their career as a classroom teacher, have had school administrator experience, and have demonstrated experience in building effective relationships with faculty and staff. Leadership experience in improving teaching and learning and in using and communicating data to support decision making was especially important to the parent/community respondents. Demonstrated experience in building a district culture of trust and strong relationships and having led diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives was especially important to faculty and staff.

That is a high bar to reach at any level and in any community. As one respondent shared what they would say to the new superintendent, "It's a hard position; you can't please everyone and shouldn't

try. Instead, you should have a crafted educational philosophy of the purpose of public schools and should share that with us; help us see your vision for our children as tomorrow's citizens and leaders and bring us along with you. Listen to but do not cave to fear in any form; if you know the decisions you make every day are all smaller parts of a larger plan you will know they are the right ones. Let us see that you are human, approachable, and unwavering. There are big shoes to fill; thank you in advance and good luck!”

There is a lot to be proud of in Lincoln and the Lincoln Public Schools. The new state-of-the-art Lincoln and Hanscom schools offer an exciting opportunity to focus on the future. There are rich traditions that provide a sturdy foundation upon which to build and thrive. Community support has been as strong as its expectations are high; Lincoln is a unique place.

Author’s Caution: Data for this profile have been gathered in October 2022. They reflect the current thinking, experience, and perceptions of the participants. The next superintendent must clearly be able to address ‘today’s’ issues to be successful. However, the ultimate hiring decision must reflect a longer-term view. Public education and the Town of Lincoln are constantly changing, and its educational, organizational, economic, political, and human capital needs are always evolving. This requires a strong, dynamic, instructional leader who understands systems, possesses the core value of equity of opportunity for all, and holds a vision for the path to future success for all students. They must command respect (possess a gravitas) as a champion for public education and students and be able to help the district and community see the future. Hiring a superintendent with the attributes and talents mentioned in the above report is necessary, but not sufficient. Today’s issues will give way to tomorrow, and it is imperative the next superintendent be a curious learner, a leader of learners and learning, and have clear, strong core values which guide their actions and decision making.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire Response Data Tables

Table 2

Survey Results for Desired Characteristics, Attributes and Core Values

It is important to assess the most important personal characteristics, knowledge, attributes and core values that the next Lincoln Superintendent of Schools should possess. Please select up to five (5) that you think are the MOST important.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity	41.54%	108
Ability to articulate a clear educational vision for all students	36.54%	95
Commitment to challenging all students	36.54%	95
Prioritizes recruitment, retention, morale and the health of employees	33.85%	88
Commitment to the health, safety and well-being of students and staff	30.38%	79
Ability to give and receive feedback to improve performance of others and self	28.08%	73
Thoughtful curriculum and instructional leader	26.15%	68
Strong communicator	24.62%	64
Commitment to closing achievement and opportunity gaps	24.23%	63
Advocate for educational innovation in the classroom	23.85%	62
An inclusive leader with ability to bring diverse groups of people together	23.85%	62
Values social emotional learning	22.69%	59
Integrity	21.54%	56
Strong social skills (empathy, humor, collaboration, approachable)	21.54%	56
Values art, music and other programs as much as core academics	16.54%	43
Commitment to empowering parents, students, and staff	14.62%	38
Ability to develop relationships with key constituencies and effective teams	9.62%	25
Ability to present themselves as the educational leader in the Lincoln community	6.92%	18
Values the core tenets of the METCO program	6.92%	18
Prioritizes being visible in the schools and classrooms	6.54%	17
Knowledge of effective professional development programs	6.15%	16
Knowledge of effective means to seek and value the student voice	5.38%	14
Knowledge of Special Education Laws and Regulations	5.00%	13
Is visible in the Lincoln community and at community events	2.31%	6
Possesses political acumen	1.15%	3
Articulate of programs for English Language Learners and in Sheltered English Immersion	0.77%	2
	Answered	260

*Percentage of total respondents (260) who identified the choice as one of the top five personal attributes.

APPENDIX A

Table 3

Survey Results for Desired Skills and Prior Experiences

It is important to assess the most important skills and background experiences the next Lincoln Superintendent of Schools should possess. Please select up to five (5) that you think are the MOST important.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Teaching experience	59.62%	155
Leadership in improving teaching and learning	45.77%	119
Experience in building a district culture of trust and strong relationships	45.77%	119
Experience in building effective relationships with faculty and staff	45.77%	119
School Administrator experience	41.92%	109
Experience in using and communicating data to support decision making and problem solving	31.92%	83
Leadership experience in diversity, inclusion and equity initiatives	31.15%	81
Skills in family and community engagement	31.15%	81
Experience in developing and administering the budget and ensuring the financial health of the district	26.54%	69
Experience in creating and implementing a district strategy for improvement	25.77%	67
Experience in a school district similar to ours	21.92%	57
Experience in a school district with a METCO program	18.85%	49
Experience in negotiations and the collective bargaining process	10.00%	26
Central Office Administrator experience	8.08%	21
Experience in working effectively with town officials	6.54%	17
Non-educational leadership experience	6.15%	16
	Answered	260

*Percentage of total respondents (260) who identified the choice as one of the top five skills/experiences.

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

As you think about what the next Superintendent of the Lincoln Public Schools needs to “be” or “know about”, please help identify the following:

- 1- Personal characteristics, knowledge, attributes, and core values
(Describe the leader)
- 2- Skills and background experiences
(What does the leader bring to LPS?)
- 3- LPS strengths / points of pride
(What needs to be preserved)
- 4- Issues to be addressed
(What does the next superintendent need to address in the first year)