

# September 2024

## CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Superintendent Leadership Profile Report



Prepared By :

## **Table of Contents**

Purpose

Profile Development

Desired Characteristics

Focus Group Protocols

Focus Groups Participation

Survey

    Methodology

    Executive Summary

    State of The District Summary

    Leadership Profile Summary

    Leadership Profile Details

    Appendix I: State of The District Item Analysis

    Appendix II: Leadership Profile Item Analysis

    Appendix III: Custom Item Zip Code Distribution

Attachments

    A: Synthesized Notes from all Interviews and Focus Groups

    B: Synthesized Notes from Survey Comments

    C: Climate and Culture Review completed by Public Consulting Group

## Purpose

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) during the months of August and September 2024 for the new superintendent of Clark County Public Schools. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The surveys, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent. Additionally, the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of CCSD and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years. Characteristics were included in the profile if there were similar comments from multiple constituent groups.

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 focus its recruitment on candidates that possess the leadership qualities congruent with the profile.

The search team would like to thank all the participants who attended focus groups meetings or completed the online survey and the CCSD staff members who assisted with our meetings.

## Profile Development

HYA Associates collected data from multiple sources to develop the Leadership Profile and arrive at a set of desired characteristics for recruitment and selection of the next Superintendent of Clark County Public Schools.



## Desired Characteristics

From the results of the survey, focus groups, and interviews, desired characteristics for the next Clark County School District Superintendent emerge. Even when conflicting, contrasting, inconsistent, and contradictory desires are reported (which is normal when surveying disparate groups), common themes emerge that are important to most constituents. The work of HYA Associates is to find where consensus exists. This is an awesome opportunity for the entirety of Clark County School District, as some said, to select a leader that will prioritize relationships, commit to sustained long-term improvements, and commit to be with the District for years and years to come.

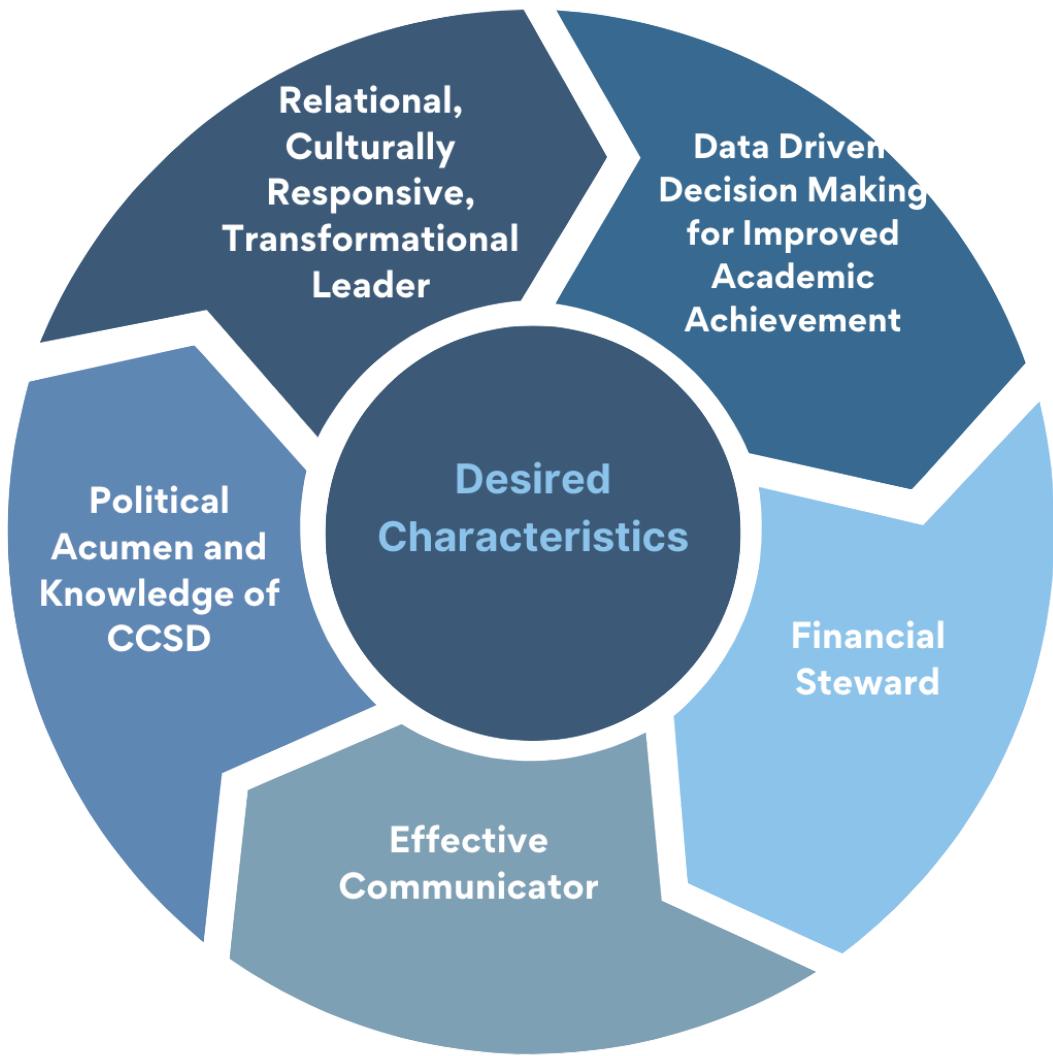
The "Priorities for the Future" section of the survey illustrates the common desires of respondent groups. Extremely rare are there statements that are the top rated for EVERY respondent group, yet CCSD's survey results show the same top two priorities for every constituent group - including students. The top two priorities are:

- **Recruit, employ, and retain effective, diverse personnel throughout CCSD and its schools**
- **Foster a unifying, positive, professional climate and culture of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administration**

Additional consensus is seen for the following priorities:

- Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of CCSD
- Provide transparent communication
- Communicate the rationale of the decisions
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel
- Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices

When juxtaposing the voices from the focus groups and the data from the survey, the following desired characteristics emerged:



### **Relational, Culturally Responsive, Transformational Leadership**

Validating the survey results, focus group participants above all else want a leader who can unify the District, drive transformational change, restore trust, and rebuild the district's reputation. The person should be accessible, approachable, and inclusive. There were concerns consistently expressed about an existing culture of micromanagement, and there seems to be a lack of trust between district leadership, school-level faculty, and staff. Parents want to be viewed as partners, but feel pushed out of the way and not involved in decision making. Students want to feel their voices are wanted and heard at the level of the Superintendent. Improvement can only happen when all members of the organization and community work together.

The number one sentiment is to employ a Superintendent that knows how to encourage, inspire, and motivate employees and the community to support schools to perform in ways that create meaningful and sustainable student success. Across constituent groups, there exists an expressed need for a Superintendent that can rebuild morale, prioritize student and teacher well-being, support building level administrators, and reduce bureaucratic burdens. The next leader must be intentional about creating an internal and external infrastructure to effectively collaborate with a multitude of stakeholders including the school board, unions, business community, parents, politicians, and students.

There is a call for a Superintendent who understands and respects the needs of the district's diverse workforce and is capable of building strong internal relationships and powerful partnerships with the diverse community and support organizations. In addition, the next superintendent needs to understand the need for leadership diversity at the school and District level and be culturally responsive. Students need to see people who look like them in leadership roles. The faculty, staff, school administrators and District administrators should reflect the diversity of the Clark County community.

The focus group voices and the survey are in alignment - *EVERY constituent group wants a Superintendent that will foster a unified, positive, professional climate and culture of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administration.*

### **Data-Driven Decision Making for Improved Academic Achievement**

The term data-driven decision making is directly related to the desire of constituents to have a stronger focus and sense of urgency to improve academic achievement. Lack of alignment, constant changes in programming, vague reasoning, and unstructured use of resources were words used to describe the current reality in CCSD. Staff, in particular, shared that they are unclear how decisions are made, and they are unclear about how curricular resources are selected and implemented. 25% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that *CCSD makes decisions based on information from data and research.* Constituents expect to have a Superintendent with a deep understanding of education, who can articulate a clear vision for the future and implement a strategy focused on improving student outcomes, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Although there was a preference for a leader with school experience, numerous constituencies shared that a leader who understood complex organizational and educational environments and demonstrated exemplary leadership in change management and achieving results, in rural, urban, or suburban environments, could be considered. There is a strong desire for data-driven practices to ensure that resources are effectively used to improve student outcomes. There were significant desires to

identify a leader who could lead efforts to address the *recruitment, employment and retention of personnel*, especially certified teachers.

The next Superintendent must make a commitment to building a collaborative relationship with the entire school community: listening and learning, subsequently setting a direction, and finally persuading all to participate in the realization of the goals. This requires sustained effort, a commitment to staying the course, and data driven decision making. There is a desire for a clear, data focused plan that all constituents can rally around, and there is a desire for organizational focus by reducing the number of initiatives employed at one time to allow schools to focus on execution. The next Superintendent should look to research and best practices when adopting new strategies for improvement and should have measures in place to ascertain the effectiveness of their work and the work of the system. Key performance indicators, utilizing data to make decisions, creating an evidence-based culture, and a focus on student outcomes were descriptors used by stakeholders; this will require courageous advocacy. One of the four most important priorities for students and parents is that the next Superintendent will *demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies*. Stakeholders want a leader that is going to focus on improving academic performance.

### **Financial Acumen and Stewardship**

There is a demand for a Superintendent who will direct resources to the classroom to ensure all students have access to a quality education, addressing disparities in educational opportunities. All eleven board members interviewed shared that it is important that the next superintendent have a strong understanding of finances, but it was more important for the superintendent to ensure that there is an exceptional CFO ensuring that finances are appropriately spent and monitored. 20% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed the *CCSD is fiscally responsible*. In the CCSD stakeholder survey, *"Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of CCSD"* was the third highest rated priority. The new Superintendent must restore trust and rebuild the district's reputation within the state. Many stakeholders believe this begins with creating a student focused budget in a transparent manner that balances the interests of the community and demonstrates accountability. A new superintendent with a strong moral compass, integrity, and a focus on strategic investments were repeatedly highlighted. There is a call for someone who can stabilize the district, reduce unnecessary spending, and improve educational outcomes without inflating costs. One area that all constituents agree requires investment is the *recruitment, employment and retention of effective personnel*. Multiple stakeholder groups communicated that the next Superintendent must prioritize compensation for teachers and support professionals to remain competitive regionally and nationally.

## **Political Acumen and Knowledge of CCSD**

It is important to constituents that the next Superintendent has experience and proven success delivering student growth outcomes. Most stakeholder groups understood that there are few school districts as large as CCSD, so the next leader could emerge from a mid-sized or large school district. It was communicated that it is important that the next superintendent understands the complexities of Nevada's legislature and funding structures. If they are not from Nevada, they must demonstrate an ability to have strong political acumen and an ability to study and navigate the political structure of Nevada. Most stakeholders agreed that someone who understands both urban and rural schools was desirable. Opinions are sharply divided on whether the new Superintendent should be someone from within the district or an external candidate. Some argue that an internal candidate has the necessary experience, connection to the community, and a nuanced understanding of the CCSD's complexities; others are critical of appointing an internal candidate and want a fresh, outside perspective to address long-standing issues such as ineffective management, instructional improvement, and diversity within district leadership positions.

## **Effective Communicator**

Stakeholders expressed a desire for a leader who is a clear, transparent communicator. 27% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that there is *transparent communication from CCSD* and 26% agree or strongly agree that *CCSD provides a clear, compelling vision for the future*. Providing transparent communication was rated as the fourth most important priority for the next Superintendent. An articulate communicator is comfortable and confident with any audience, can transparently explain the direction and decisions of the District, can formulate a compelling vision for education, advocates, and most importantly, brings disparate groups together in a common vision for success. Constituents want a strong, visionary, Chief Communicator who can speak with sincerity, clarity, and be inspirational. Constituents want to understand why policies and procedures exist and want frequent and transparent communication. Some stakeholders suggested that CCSD continue to facilitate focus groups like those for the Superintendent search as a strategy to open lines of communication with students, parents, employees, and the larger community that supports education.

In summary, creating a great school district involves a combination of factors that address both educational and community needs. The personal attributes of honesty, integrity, ethical decision making, approachability and visibility have been woven into the five pillars that should drive recruitment and selection.

## Focus Group Protocols

The structure of the focus groups was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. Session participants were told that their voice would remain confidential to allow for authentic and honest commentary. Participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

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

## Focus Groups Participation

Fifty-one focus groups were offered for constituents to provide input, representing a comprehensive network of constituents and partners of Clark County Public Schools.



The HYA Associates provided summaries of focus groups. These synopsis can be found in Attachment A .

## **Survey**

The online community survey was live from August 12 through September 3, 2024. Questions were clustered around the following focus areas: Current State of the District, Leadership Profile Attributes, Priorities for the Future, and Open Ended Comment. Those comments are summarized by the constituent group in Attachment B. There were respondents from every zip code in Clark County.

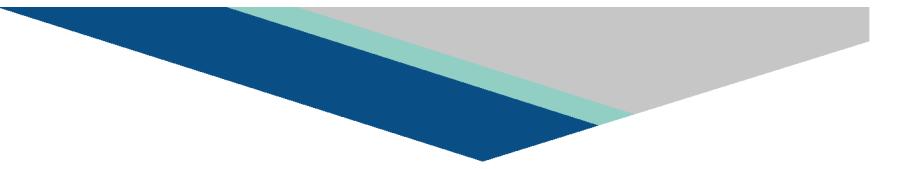
## **Survey Methodology**

The survey results contained in this document are based on HYA's research. The survey addresses district quality and leadership standards in four performance areas:

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

It is not unusual to see the administration rate the District the most favorable of all constituent groups in all of the aforementioned quality performance areas. Community members and former employees consistently rated the District least favorably in all performance areas. Teachers and parents are clustered in between administrators and community members, that is they rate the District more favorably than community members, but less favorably than administrators.

The survey results also suggest a balanced approach and skill based for the next leader in the areas of Vision and Values, Teaching and Learning, Community Engagement and Management as the profile statements were equally distributed between both the leadership pillars and constituents.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Clark County School District - Superintendent Search Survey was completed by 13,749 stakeholders. With almost half of all respondents, the largest stakeholder group surveyed were Parent/Guardian of CCSD students. Parent/Guardian of CCSD Students represented 48.6 percent of all respondents. Nearly a quarter of respondents were Teacher/Licensed Professional. They made up the second most populous stakeholder group at 23.5 percent of all respondents. The third largest participant group were Students at 11.0 percent of all respondents.

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

- Technology is integrated into the classroom. (TL)
- CCSD technology infrastructure is sufficient to support use of technology in the classroom. (M)
- CCSD engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups. (CE)
- CCSD employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools. (M)
- Facilities are well maintained. (M)

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

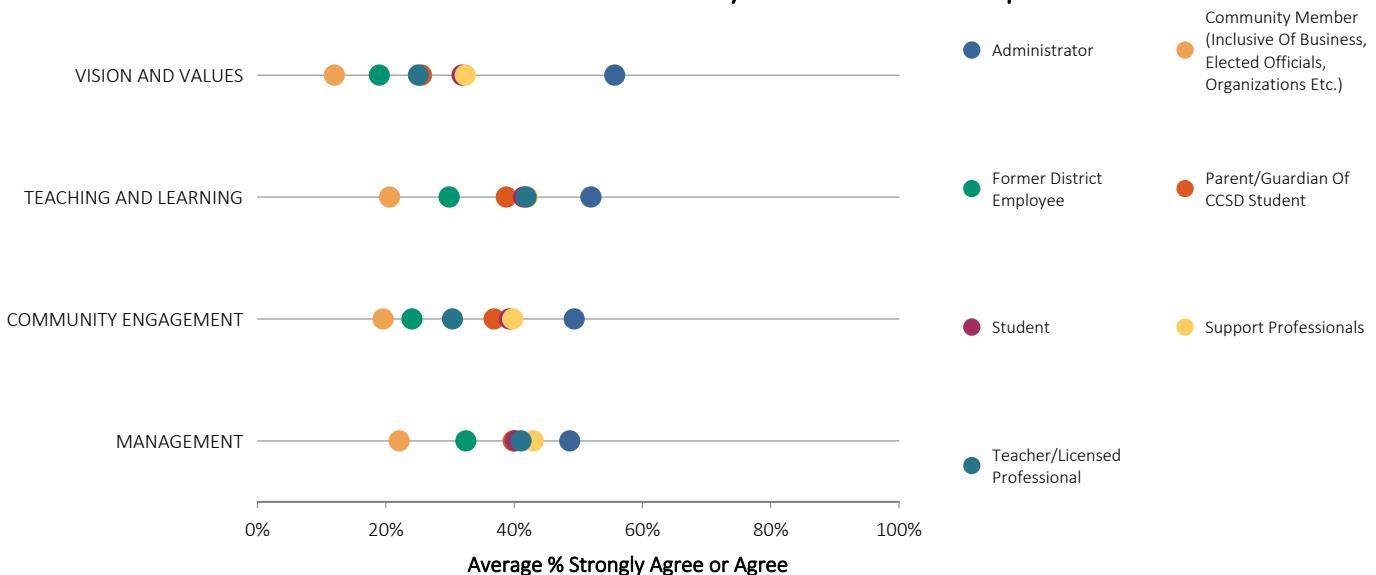
- Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout CCSD and its schools (M)
- Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators (CE)
- Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of CCSD (M)
- Provide transparent communication (CE)
- Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel (VV)

# ANALYSIS

## State of the District Summary

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

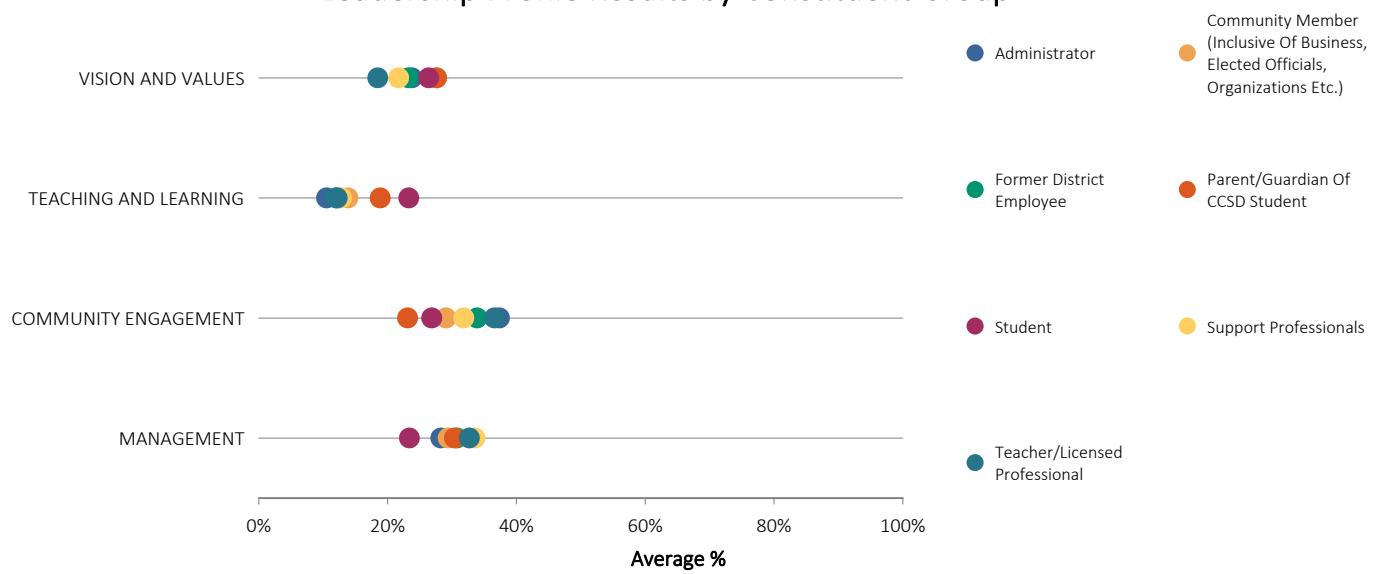
### State of the District Results by Constituent Group



## Leadership Profile Summary

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

### Leadership Profile Results by Constituent Group



## LEADERSHIP PROFILE DETAILS

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

Top 4

	All (13,749)	Administrator (563)	Community Member (Inclusive Of ... (433)	Former District Employee (252)	Parent/Guardian Of CCSD Student (6,678)	Student (1,508)	Support Professionals (1,081)	Teacher/Licensed Professional (3,234)
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout CCSD and its schools	50%	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	46%	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of CCSD	34%	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Provide transparent communication	34%	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	33%	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies	32%	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	26%	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #005a99; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Be an effective manager of CCSD's day-to-day operations	25%	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	23%	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Be visible throughout CCSD and actively engaged in community life	22%	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	17%	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>
Provide guidance for district-wide curriculum and instruction	16%	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>	<span style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: inline-block;"></span>

## APPENDIX I: STATE OF THE DISTRICT ITEM ANALYSIS

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

	All (13,749)	Administrator (563)	Community Member (Inclusive Of ... (433)	Former District Employee (252)	Parent/Guardian Of CCSD Student (6,678)	Student (1,508)	Support Professionals (1,081)	Teacher/Licensed Professional (3,234)
<b>OVERALL</b>								
Please rate the overall quality of education in CCSD.	22%	35%	10%	11%	23%	30%	23%	15%
<b>VISION AND VALUES</b>								
CCSD provides a clear, compelling shared vision for the future.	26%	54%	9%	15%	26%	29%	32%	20%
CCSD is heading in the right direction.	24%	52%	11%	12%	25%	24%	29%	18%
CCSD has high performance standards for all students.	28%	50%	11%	18%	25%	37%	30%	28%
CCSD makes decisions based on information from data and research.	25%	53%	9%	23%	22%	30%	31%	23%
CCSD is working to close achievement and opportunity gaps.	32%	66%	18%	26%	28%	34%	35%	35%
<b>TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>								
CCSD provides a well-rounded educational experience for all students.	28%	44%	11%	13%	30%	33%	32%	23%
Teachers personalize instructional strategies to address individual learning needs.	42%	44%	21%	38%	37%	45%	42%	55%
CCSD schools are safe.	34%	53%	20%	24%	34%	27%	38%	35%
The social and emotional needs of students are being addressed.	32%	52%	12%	21%	30%	26%	38%	37%
Students are on track to be ready for the next grade and ultimately college and career ready.	25%	31%	8%	12%	28%	35%	24%	14%
Technology is integrated into the classroom.	73%	82%	47%	65%	70%	74%	73%	83%
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>								
CCSD engages the community as a partner to improve the school system.	29%	47%	14%	18%	30%	27%	37%	25%
There is transparent communication from CCSD.	27%	32%	9%	11%	34%	27%	27%	14%
CCSD engages with diverse racial, cultural and socio-economic groups.	48%	66%	33%	41%	44%	58%	52%	50%
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>								
Facilities are well maintained.	43%	38%	25%	31%	50%	34%	44%	37%
CCSD is fiscally responsible.	20%	36%	10%	12%	21%	25%	25%	11%
CCSD employs effective teachers, administrators and support staff in its schools.	44%	57%	30%	35%	42%	42%	45%	49%
Employees are held accountable to high standards.	40%	48%	17%	37%	34%	40%	43%	53%
CCSD technology infrastructure is sufficient to support use of technology in the classroom.	49%	59%	24%	42%	48%	51%	51%	51%

## APPENDIX II: LEADERSHIP PROFILE ITEM ANALYSIS

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

	All (13,749)	Administrator (563)	Community Member (Inclusive Of ... (433)	Former District Employee (252)	Parent/Guardian Of CCSD Student (6,678)	Student (1,508)	Support Professionals (1,081)	Teacher/Licensed Professional (3,234)
Recruit, employ, and retain effective personnel throughout CCSD and its schools	50%	56%	47%	58%	51%	30%	48%	54%
Foster a positive, professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators	46%	73%	42%	62%	34%	34%	52%	70%
Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of CCSD	34%	28%	35%	31%	32%	27%	40%	42%
Provide transparent communication	34%	45%	39%	38%	28%	28%	34%	46%
Establish a culture of high expectations for all students and personnel	33%	39%	45%	40%	38%	23%	32%	27%
Demonstrate a deep understanding of educational research and emerging best practices and implement strategies	32%	21%	22%	24%	37%	37%	23%	26%
Understand and be sensitive to the needs of a diverse student population	26%	22%	24%	20%	27%	37%	21%	21%
Be an effective manager of CCSD's day-to-day operations	25%	21%	24%	24%	24%	22%	32%	26%
Provide a clear, compelling vision for the future	23%	29%	33%	22%	24%	28%	22%	17%
Be visible throughout CCSD and actively engaged in community life	22%	20%	24%	24%	21%	28%	28%	21%
Integrate personalized educational opportunities into the instructional program	17%	7%	12%	11%	22%	24%	12%	11%
Provide guidance for district-wide curriculum and instruction	16%	10%	13%	13%	19%	18%	13%	14%

## APPENDIX III: CUSTOM ITEMS

This section includes custom survey items. The first record in the each cell is response count. The second record in the cell is the response percent per role.

Select your zip code.

	All (11,551)	Administrator (496)	Community Member (Inclusive Of ... (365)	Former District Employee (211)	Parent/Guardian Of CCSD Student (5,607)	Student (1,088)	Support Professionals (902)	Teacher/Licensed Professional (2,882)
89002	380 3.3%	13 2.6%	14 3.8%	2 1.0%	181 3.2%	26 2.4%	38 4.2%	106 3.7%
89004	16 0.1%	1 0.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7 0.1%	2 0.2%	0 0.0%	6 0.2%
89005	106 0.9%	4 0.8%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	53 1.0%	12 1.1%	14 1.6%	23 0.8%
89007	15 0.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	8 0.1%	1 0.1%	2 0.2%	3 0.1%
89011	204 1.8%	12 2.4%	7 1.9%	5 2.4%	83 1.5%	7 0.6%	17 1.9%	73 2.5%
89012	283 2.5%	16 3.2%	9 2.5%	5 2.4%	139 2.5%	19 1.8%	20 2.2%	75 2.6%
89014	271 2.4%	13 2.6%	9 2.5%	6 2.8%	128 2.3%	20 1.8%	16 1.8%	79 2.7%
89015	238 2.1%	3 0.6%	15 4.1%	1 0.5%	118 2.1%	19 1.8%	21 2.3%	61 2.1%
89018	48 0.4%	1 0.2%	2 0.6%	1 0.5%	18 0.3%	11 1.0%	1 0.1%	14 0.5%
89019	22 0.2%	0 0.0%	2 0.6%	1 0.5%	8 0.1%	3 0.3%	2 0.2%	6 0.2%
89021	62 0.5%	2 0.4%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	32 0.6%	1 0.1%	10 1.1%	16 0.6%
89025	27 0.2%	4 0.8%	3 0.8%	0 0.0%	8 0.1%	4 0.4%	3 0.3%	5 0.2%
89027	101 0.9%	5 1.0%	2 0.6%	0 0.0%	33 0.6%	11 1.0%	9 1.0%	41 1.4%
89029	113 1.0%	13 2.6%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	27 0.5%	2 0.2%	10 1.1%	60 2.1%
89030	172 1.5%	5 1.0%	6 1.6%	1 0.5%	75 1.3%	20 1.8%	15 1.7%	50 1.7%

Select your zip code.

	All (11,551)	Administrator (496)	Community Member (Inclusive Of ... (365)	Former District Employee (211)	Parent/Guardian Of CCSD Student (5,607)	Student (1,088)	Support Professionals (902)	Teacher/Licensed Professional (2,882)
89031	340 2.9%	21 4.2%	12 3.3%	4 1.9%	165 2.9%	26 2.4%	28 3.1%	84 2.9%
89032	186 1.6%	13 2.6%	3 0.8%	2 1.0%	92 1.6%	20 1.8%	21 2.3%	35 1.2%
89034	33 0.3%	2 0.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 0.1%	1 0.1%	4 0.4%	23 0.8%
89039	1,066 9.2%	87 17.5%	15 4.1%	19 9.0%	111 2.0%	0 0.0%	125 13.9%	709 24.6%
89040	25 0.2%	2 0.4%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	17 0.3%	0 0.0%	2 0.2%	4 0.1%
89044	174 1.5%	6 1.2%	4 1.1%	3 1.4%	111 2.0%	10 0.9%	9 1.0%	31 1.1%
89046	4 0.0%	1 0.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 0.2%	1 0.0%
89052	389 3.4%	18 3.6%	15 4.1%	9 4.3%	229 4.1%	36 3.3%	14 1.6%	68 2.4%
89054	2 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.1%	0 0.0%
89074	267 2.3%	10 2.0%	12 3.3%	10 4.7%	159 2.8%	19 1.8%	13 1.4%	44 1.5%
89081	157 1.4%	6 1.2%	5 1.4%	2 1.0%	85 1.5%	11 1.0%	14 1.6%	34 1.2%
89084	227 2.0%	11 2.2%	5 1.4%	3 1.4%	131 2.3%	24 2.2%	16 1.8%	37 1.3%
89085	28 0.2%	1 0.2%	0 0.0%	2 1.0%	16 0.3%	6 0.6%	0 0.0%	3 0.1%
89086	48 0.4%	1 0.2%	1 0.3%	2 1.0%	27 0.5%	8 0.7%	3 0.3%	6 0.2%
89101	94 0.8%	1 0.2%	6 1.6%	1 0.5%	55 1.0%	9 0.8%	10 1.1%	12 0.4%
89102	85 0.7%	4 0.8%	3 0.8%	0 0.0%	41 0.7%	16 1.5%	6 0.7%	15 0.5%
89103	118 1.0%	1 0.2%	4 1.1%	1 0.5%	68 1.2%	18 1.7%	8 0.9%	18 0.6%

Select your zip code.

	All (11,551)	Administrator (496)	Community Member (Inclusive Of ... (365)	Former District Employee (211)	Parent/Guardian Of CCSD Student (5,607)	Student (1,088)	Support Professionals (902)	Teacher/Licensed Professional (2,882)
89104	103 0.9%	2 0.4%	6 1.6%	4 1.9%	56 1.0%	12 1.1%	11 1.2%	12 0.4%
89106	95 0.8%	2 0.4%	2 0.6%	2 1.0%	37 0.7%	34 3.1%	5 0.6%	13 0.5%
89107	125 1.1%	1 0.2%	3 0.8%	1 0.5%	79 1.4%	12 1.1%	11 1.2%	18 0.6%
89108	203 1.8%	2 0.4%	6 1.6%	2 1.0%	110 2.0%	22 2.0%	20 2.2%	41 1.4%
89109	11 0.1%	0 0.0%	1 0.3%	1 0.5%	5 0.1%	0 0.0%	1 0.1%	3 0.1%
89110	193 1.7%	2 0.4%	3 0.8%	3 1.4%	99 1.8%	24 2.2%	20 2.2%	42 1.5%
89113	180 1.6%	6 1.2%	4 1.1%	4 1.9%	93 1.7%	26 2.4%	9 1.0%	38 1.3%
89115	135 1.2%	3 0.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	87 1.6%	11 1.0%	20 2.2%	14 0.5%
89117	197 1.7%	6 1.2%	6 1.6%	4 1.9%	103 1.8%	17 1.6%	11 1.2%	50 1.7%
89118	71 0.6%	0 0.0%	1 0.3%	2 1.0%	39 0.7%	11 1.0%	7 0.8%	11 0.4%
89119	102 0.9%	3 0.6%	5 1.4%	2 1.0%	50 0.9%	10 0.9%	15 1.7%	17 0.6%
89120	98 0.9%	1 0.2%	8 2.2%	4 1.9%	48 0.9%	7 0.6%	8 0.9%	22 0.8%
89121	229 2.0%	14 2.8%	4 1.1%	5 2.4%	110 2.0%	13 1.2%	26 2.9%	57 2.0%
89122	141 1.2%	5 1.0%	6 1.6%	3 1.4%	77 1.4%	11 1.0%	15 1.7%	24 0.8%
89123	253 2.2%	16 3.2%	3 0.8%	12 5.7%	136 2.4%	17 1.6%	13 1.4%	56 1.9%
89124	8 0.1%	0 0.0%	1 0.3%	0 0.0%	2 0.0%	1 0.1%	0 0.0%	4 0.1%
89128	149 1.3%	10 2.0%	4 1.1%	0 0.0%	71 1.3%	18 1.7%	12 1.3%	34 1.2%

Select your zip code.

	All (11,551)	Administrator (496)	Community Member (Inclusive Of ... (365)	Former District Employee (211)	Parent/Guardian Of CCSD Student (5,607)	Student (1,088)	Support Professionals (902)	Teacher/Licensed Professional (2,882)
89129	278 2.4%	10 2.0%	10 2.7%	7 3.3%	142 2.5%	35 3.2%	17 1.9%	57 2.0%
89130	193 1.7%	6 1.2%	11 3.0%	6 2.8%	88 1.6%	19 1.8%	22 2.4%	41 1.4%
89131	373 3.2%	19 3.8%	15 4.1%	6 2.8%	201 3.6%	40 3.7%	19 2.1%	73 2.5%
89134	102 0.9%	3 0.6%	7 1.9%	5 2.4%	56 1.0%	9 0.8%	5 0.6%	17 0.6%
89135	166 1.4%	8 1.6%	13 3.6%	5 2.4%	95 1.7%	19 1.8%	3 0.3%	23 0.8%
89138	220 1.9%	6 1.2%	12 3.3%	4 1.9%	127 2.3%	38 3.5%	5 0.6%	28 1.0%
89139	161 1.4%	6 1.2%	3 0.8%	4 1.9%	96 1.7%	27 2.5%	6 0.7%	19 0.7%
89141	249 2.2%	17 3.4%	12 3.3%	2 1.0%	145 2.6%	22 2.0%	12 1.3%	39 1.4%
89142	136 1.2%	1 0.2%	1 0.3%	3 1.4%	81 1.4%	12 1.1%	20 2.2%	18 0.6%
89143	100 0.9%	9 1.8%	1 0.3%	4 1.9%	51 0.9%	8 0.7%	3 0.3%	24 0.8%
89144	185 1.6%	6 1.2%	7 1.9%	3 1.4%	108 1.9%	34 3.1%	1 0.1%	26 0.9%
89145	106 0.9%	4 0.8%	5 1.4%	1 0.5%	63 1.1%	14 1.3%	9 1.0%	10 0.4%
89146	56 0.5%	4 0.8%	0 0.0%	1 0.5%	28 0.5%	8 0.7%	6 0.7%	9 0.3%
89147	206 1.8%	0 0.0%	4 1.1%	4 1.9%	114 2.0%	30 2.8%	18 2.0%	36 1.3%
89148	262 2.3%	10 2.0%	7 1.9%	1 0.5%	155 2.8%	38 3.5%	22 2.4%	29 1.0%
89149	238 2.1%	7 1.4%	8 2.2%	2 1.0%	129 2.3%	25 2.3%	18 2.0%	49 1.7%
89156	89 0.8%	2 0.4%	2 0.6%	1 0.5%	49 0.9%	9 0.8%	17 1.9%	9 0.3%

Select your zip code.

	All (11,551)	Administrator (496)	Community Member (Inclusive Of ... (365)	Former District Employee (211)	Parent/Guardian Of CCSD Student (5,607)	Student (1,088)	Support Professionals (902)	Teacher/Licensed Professional (2,882)
89161	1 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
89165	1 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.1%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
89166	229 2.0%	9 1.8%	2 0.6%	4 1.9%	126 2.3%	19 1.8%	8 0.9%	61 2.1%
89169	69 0.6%	1 0.2%	1 0.3%	1 0.5%	51 0.9%	7 0.6%	2 0.2%	6 0.2%
89178	206 1.8%	9 1.8%	10 2.7%	4 1.9%	116 2.1%	18 1.7%	10 1.1%	39 1.4%
89179	85 0.7%	1 0.2%	3 0.8%	2 1.0%	45 0.8%	13 1.2%	4 0.4%	17 0.6%
89183	165 1.4%	6 1.2%	8 2.2%	4 1.9%	86 1.5%	10 0.9%	9 1.0%	42 1.5%
89191	3 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.0%	2 0.2%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
other	78 0.7%	2 0.4%	6 1.6%	5 2.4%	22 0.4%	23 2.1%	8 0.9%	12 0.4%

## **Attachment A: Synthesized Notes from all Interviews and Focus Groups**

### **I. Student**

The student focus groups identified several priorities for district leadership. Students appreciate their supportive teachers and diverse extracurricular activities but seek a leader dedicated to college readiness and visible within schools, not just in an office. They want a superintendent who is inclusive, sensitive to the diverse needs of students, sensitive to the diversity in the district and community, hires faculty, staff and administrators who look like them, addresses bullying and mental health issues, and demonstrates teaching experience, empathy, and technological proficiency. Students emphasized the need for more effective anti-bullying measures and a fair, consistent approach to discipline. Students expressed wanting to be valued and heard regarding their education. They want someone to actually listen to them. They also called for the creation of meaningful end-of-year surveys to prompt actionable change. Overall, they seek a compassionate, accountable leader who values equity, diversity and fosters a supportive, responsive environment.

### **II. Parent**

During several parent engagement sessions, participants outlined essential qualities and challenges for selecting a new superintendent. Parents stressed the importance of a leader who values and supports teachers, addresses issues such as low morale, fiscal responsibility, mental health resources, and school safety. Parents expressed concerns about a leader who is an advocate for diverse students and families including race/ethnicity, family structures, work schedules, community values and parents as partners in education. They also highlighted concerns about rapid district growth, education quality, and rebuilding community trust. Key attributes for the new superintendent include integrity, transparency, strong commitment to student outcomes, and the ability to engage effectively with the community. Parents want a superintendent to be part of the community and visible.

Parents emphasized the need for strong relationships with stakeholders and the Board of Trustees. The superintendent must be committed to inclusivity, and have a personal investment in the district, such as enrolling their own children in the schools. They also expressed concerns about the impact of security forces in schools, preferring a more supportive environment. Additionally, they want a leader who prepares students for real life and improves consistency in behavioral expectations across schools.

The discussion revealed varying opinions on whether the superintendent should be local or from outside the district, and whether they should have an education or business background. It was commonly discussed that the new superintendent should be prepared to take on the unique challenges of a large metropolitan school district like Vegas. Common priorities included better recruitment and retention of teachers, improved transparency in budgeting, and increased local control for rural schools. Specific strategies suggested include tailored recruitment programs, streamlined volunteer processes, and equitable funding for rural schools.

### **III. Licensed**

Participants in the focus groups emphasized several key attributes and challenges for selecting a new superintendent. They called for a leader who demonstrates clear communication, respects and values all staff levels, unites the district and enforces consistent policies across schools. Key concerns include addressing pay scales, supporting veteran teachers, enhancing community engagement and holding faculty, staff and administrators accountable to the policies and procedures set forth.

The ideal superintendent should have recent classroom experience, respect for all staff, and be accessible and inclusive. They should prioritize teacher morale, retention, and provide stability while addressing challenges like teacher shortages and administrative inefficiencies. Participants also stressed the need for a superintendent who understands diverse student needs, understands diversity in the district and communities served and fosters both centralized policies and local autonomy.

Concerns discussed included the district's size, the need for decentralization, and effective fiscal management. Participants advocated for transparency in budgeting, reducing administrative costs, teacher autonomy and reallocating funds to direct educational needs. They also highlighted the importance of competitive salaries for teachers and incentives to retain high-quality educators.

### **IV. Support Professionals and School Police**

Participants in these focus groups emphasized several essential qualities and priorities for the new superintendent including the importance of cultivating a culture where all staff, students, and community members feel valued. There is a strong demand for equitable pay for support staff, emphasizing their value and the need for a respectful, inclusive work environment. The ideal superintendent should have substantial experience with large organizations and a broad educational background, with key attributes including transparency, effective problem-solving skills, and a

deep understanding of the community, especially marginalized groups. Timely training for support staff is essential to uphold high standards and effectively meet role demands. In addition, creating and supporting career pathways to grow and advance in the organization by providing access and opportunities for growth and salary advancement.

Engagement with the community is vital, particularly in closing achievement gaps, and having a personal connection, such as having children in district schools, is seen as advantageous. The superintendent should also have experience in managing large budgets and demonstrating strong financial stewardship. Additionally, there is a call for curricula that focus on real-life skills to better prepare students for future success. The need to foster positive relationships between the board and the superintendent is crucial for achieving district goals and creating a productive environment. Some short and long term challenges were discussed including anticipating ongoing issues like safety, addressing declining student enrollment, board dysfunction and the need for effective employee and stakeholder management.

## **V. Administrators**

Participants concentrated on defining the ideal qualities for the next superintendent of the Clark County School District. The top priorities identified include consistency, climate, culture, and unification. The superintendent should cultivate a supportive culture within the school community by leveraging partnerships with local businesses, engaging higher education, local and state legislators and actively involving parents and community members. Administrators expressed the lack of representation of people of color in school and district administrative positions. The new superintendent needs to have strategies to be open-minded in supporting qualified people of color in leadership roles. The ideal candidate must grasp local nuances, champion innovation, and address the diverse needs of students, particularly English Language Learners (ELL) and Black students, aiming for CCSD to be a leader in educational innovation both in Nevada and nationally. CCSD is not a one size fits all, nor can there be a cookie-cutter approach to addressing the issues and foster innovation. Clear organizational structures, consistent curriculum and instructional expectations, and transparent operations are essential, alongside maintaining a positive staff climate and culture, which is crucial for student success. Additionally, the superintendent should empower principals to address their specific school needs and focus on unifying various employee groups. The superintendent needs to trust the administrators to do the job and address those who are not.

## **VI. Community**

Community focus groups identified several challenges facing the district, including insufficient resources, teacher retention issues, inequities, achievement gaps, and an overemphasis on testing. Additional concerns involve rigid bureaucratic structures, low educator morale, negative media portrayals, and problems with special education and technology implementation. Future priorities include establishing performance-based pay, improving management of disruptive students, ensuring district-wide equity, building a positive relationship with the Board of Trustees and addressing the size of the district and principal decision-making. Desired qualities for a new superintendent encompass advocacy for academic excellence, community engagement, budget transparency, and a commitment to diversity and inclusion, particularly regarding black male leadership at the school and district levels. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of approachable leadership that focuses on building trust, addressing systemic challenges, improving recruitment and retention of diverse staff, and fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment.

The community also emphasized the need to develop partnerships with higher education, local businesses, industry and local government to create a partnership for applied workforces.

## **VII. Clark County Black Caucus Collaborative**

The Clark County School District (CCSD) superintendent search focus group meeting, sponsored by the Clark County Black Caucus and various community organizations, emphasized the need for a superintendent who understands diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at all levels and dimensions.

Participants highlighted the importance of community engagement, fair policies, and addressing historical biases. They stressed the need for a superintendent who is locally connected, understands the unique challenges of Clark County, and prioritizes DEI, parent involvement, and teacher retention. The Superintendent needs to address the lack of diversity in CCSD leadership, specifically the low number of black male principals and administrators. The new superintendent will need to evaluate disciplinary policies that disproportionately impact students of color. Prioritize restorative justice practices over punitive suspensions and expulsions. Improve recruitment and retention of diverse teachers to better

reflect the student population. Increase salaries to become more competitive.

The superintendent needs to be a person who can strengthen partnerships with community organizations and ensure their input and expertise is utilized. The superintendent should collaborate rather than see these groups as adversaries. Review and update curriculum to incorporate the histories and experiences of all students, and ensure multicultural education is integrated across subjects.

Participants stressed the importance of a fair and inclusive process for selecting the next superintendent. The need for a superintendent who understands the importance of parent rights, quality education, and equity. Participants call for a superintendent who will address the current issues in CCSD, promote community partnerships, and prioritize the needs of all students.

Finally, participants discuss the need for a superintendent who understands the unique challenges of Clark County, including cultural diversity and historic funding constraints. An emphasis is placed on the importance of community partnerships, employee retention and a superintendent who prioritizes mental health, social workers and restorative justice practices.

## **VIII. Elected Officials**

Elected officials' focus groups highlighted essential attributes and strategies for the next superintendent, emphasizing a background in business administration and ethical leadership, along with the ability to foster strong community relationships. Key qualities include inclusion, transparency, consistency, and a commitment to addressing diversity in staffing. The need for a unified district and effective change management, particularly in retaining experienced educators, was underscored, along with a preference for a bottom-up organizational approach. Strategies for building trust and collaboration involve prioritizing open communication, responsiveness to community concerns, and addressing diversity needs in staffing at all levels. The elected officials expressed that the superintendent needs to be open-minded and receptive to input from constituents and build collaborative relationships with elected officials. Decisions need to be made in the best interest of the students to promote student achievement academically so they contribute positively to the community. In addition, the superintendent must be able to balance competing interests and stand

strong against various cliques with interests which conflict with the vision and mission of the school district.

## **IX. Rural Schools**

The community meeting emphasized the necessity for the new Clark County School District (CCSD) superintendent to balance centralized policies with local flexibility. Key points included a strong demand for increased autonomy for schools, particularly in rural areas, to better address their unique needs regarding budgets, staffing, and curriculum. The students in the rural community need opportunity and access to diverse programming to enhance achievement academically and ensure that their students are prepared for college and careers. The superintendent should implement tailored strategies for recruitment and retention for faculty and staff in rural areas, including incentives for teachers and improved special education support. Increased transparency in school budgets and enhanced communication between the district office and local schools were highlighted, alongside empowering School Organizational Teams (SOTs) with greater decision-making authority and ensuring equitable funding for rural schools.

## **X. Teachers Union**

The teachers union representatives emphasized the importance of the new superintendent having strong relationships and a collaborative approach with both the teaching staff and the broader community. They highlighted the district's diversity, both in terms of student demographics and geographic regions, and stressed the need for the superintendent to be adaptable and responsive to these varied academic and social-emotional needs of students. Retaining and supporting teachers, especially new and veteran educators, was a major priority, with the union representatives noting challenges around compensation, professional development, and feeling valued.

The union also pointed to their own ability to advocate for and secure funding from the state legislature as a unique asset that could benefit the district if the superintendent was willing to partner effectively. Overall, the union representatives conveyed a desire for a superintendent who would listen to and empower teachers, rebuild trust with the community, and make data-driven decisions focused on improving student achievement and outcomes through a comprehensive, collaborative approach.

## XI. City of Henderson

The constituents for the City of Henderson emphasized the importance of community input and outlined the protocol for the focus group. Key issues raised included the need for a superintendent with classroom experience, strong leadership, the ability to address declining test scores, the ability to improve and close achievement gaps, mental health issues, and administrative inefficiencies. Participants stressed the importance of community involvement, diversity and inclusion of students and families, curriculum reform and the utilization of cost-saving measures. The group wanted to recommend oversight of the process and community input in some way due to a lack of trust in the Board solely conducting the process.

Based on the conversation, the key characteristics expressed for the ideal superintendent include:

- Classroom experience - The superintendent should have spent significant time (at least 5-10 years) as a teacher to understand the challenges teachers face.
- Visionary leadership - The superintendent should be a visionary who can motivate, unify and collaborate with various stakeholders like teachers, administrators, parents, legislators, higher education, elected officials and the community.
- Curriculum and instruction expertise - The superintendent should have deep knowledge of curriculum, instruction and research-based best practices with a proven track record of increasing student achievement. Incorporate more project-based learning, Career and Technical Education programs and true engagement activities like in the magnet school programs in the non-magnet schools.
- Financial management skills - The superintendent should understand the district's finances, revenue sources, expenditures and be able to identify cost-saving measures. Review where the money is being spent and ensure financial stability and efficiency.
- Ability to stand up to unions and the school board - The superintendent should be willing to make tough decisions and not be overly influenced by unions or the school board.
- Commitment to the local community - The superintendent should be from the local area and have a deep understanding of the diverse needs of the students and the community.
- Emphasis on student mental health and reading proficiency - The superintendent should prioritize addressing the mental health crisis and reading deficits among students.

## **XII. Chamber of Commerce**

Chamber representatives commented that the strengths of the District are the magnet school concept and high expectations in that program; they want to see the magnet approach applied to all schools. The chamber further commented on the diversity of the district as a strength. Parents are a strength when used as partners. The business community is a strength and can be used as a partner in education. Teachers and staff are the strength of the district.

Characteristics and Aspects for the next Superintendent include:

- Strong business acumen and budgeting skills to effectively manage the large, complex school district budget and operations.
- Extensive experience in the education field, with a background as a teacher and administrator to understand classroom needs.
- Ability to rebuild trust and improve relationships with the Board of Trustees, community, local businesses, and government/political stakeholders.
- Creativity and an “out-of-the-box” mindset to address current challenges facing the district to increase student achievement and prepare students to transition to the world of work, college and careers.
- Commitment to the local community and a long-term vision, not viewing the role as a stepping stone.
- Truly be part of the community and engage with the business community, parents and community organizations.
- Focus on aligning curriculum and learning experiences to prepare students for the local workforce and economy while closing student achievement gaps.
- Emphasis on supporting special education, mental health, and empowering parents as advocates for their children.

The chamber thought some consideration should be given to the co-superintendent model with complementary skill sets in education leadership and business/operations management.

The group had a recommendation for the interview process due to the lack of trust in the Board of Trustees to include a community panel during the interview process (5-7 member panel) in order to build community trust in the Board. The community panel may provide input to the Board (similar to the NSHE model).

## **Attachment B: Summary of Comments Provided in Survey by Constituent Group**

**Administrator:** Administrators emphasize the importance of experience and familiarity with the district. Many support the promotion of internal candidates who understand the unique challenges of the district. Someone who demonstrated a proven track record of improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps. They express concern about bringing in outsiders with little understanding of CCSD's history. Leadership, trustworthiness, and the ability to lead through challenging times are common themes in their comments.

**Community Members (including business, elected officials, organizations, etc.):** Community members stress the importance of strong, decisive leadership from the start. They are looking for a Superintendent who can drive transformational change, restore trust, and rebuild the district's reputation. Additionally, there is an emphasis on the need for a leader who is courageous in advocating for students and the District, promoting a relevant curriculum to the real world and one who can balance the diverse interests of the community, be transparent, and demonstrate accountability.

**Former District Employees:** Former employees express a deep concern for the direction in which the district is heading, citing poor decision-making and mismanagement. They call for a Superintendent with a strong moral compass, integrity, and a focus on reform. The need for a decisive and experienced leader who can restore faith in the district is repeatedly highlighted.

**Parent/Guardian of CCSD Students:** Parents emphasize financial accountability, especially regarding administrative salaries and severance packages. They want a Superintendent who prioritizes students, student achievement and the delivery of quality instruction over administrative excess. There's also a call for someone who can stabilize the district, reduce unnecessary spending, and improve educational outcomes without inflating costs.

**Students:** Students express concerns about the district's treatment of staff and the continuous introduction of new, unproven ideas. They highlight the need for a Superintendent who respects the staff and focuses on creating a supportive learning and work environments for both students and teachers. Someone who can improve instruction and increase student achievement with engaging instruction. There is a desire for stability and leadership that genuinely considers the needs of students and the voice of students in the decision-making process.

**Support Professionals:** Support staff are concerned about the potential appointment of someone from outside the state, reflecting concerns about bringing in leaders unfamiliar with the district's challenges. They call for a Superintendent who understands and respects the needs of the district's diverse workforce and is capable of building strong internal relationships. In addition, building professional growth pathways to support the advancement and retention of quality support professionals.

**Teacher/Licensed Professionals:** Teachers seek a trustworthy, experienced leader who can navigate the district through its current challenges. They emphasized the importance of clear communication, transparency, honesty, and a deep understanding of education. Many express the need for a Superintendent who can rebuild morale, prioritize student and teacher well-being, and offer a clear vision for the future.

**Attachment C: Climate and Culture Review completed by Public Consulting Group**

# Clark County School District Climate & Culture Review

Presentation to Board of Trustees

May 2023



**Solutions that Matter**

## Background

In January 2023, Clark County School District (CCSD) contracted with Public Consulting Group LLC (PCG) to conduct an independent, external **Climate and Culture Review**.

The review in CCSD was designed to analyze **how district leadership and Board of Trustees practices impact decision-making and the overall culture** of the district with the goal of identifying opportunities for improved practices and procedures.

PCG examined CCSD stakeholder perceptions and experiences related to:

- **Work Environment**
- **Understanding of District Priorities and Vision**
- **District Leadership Practices**
- **Board of Trustees Leadership Practices**

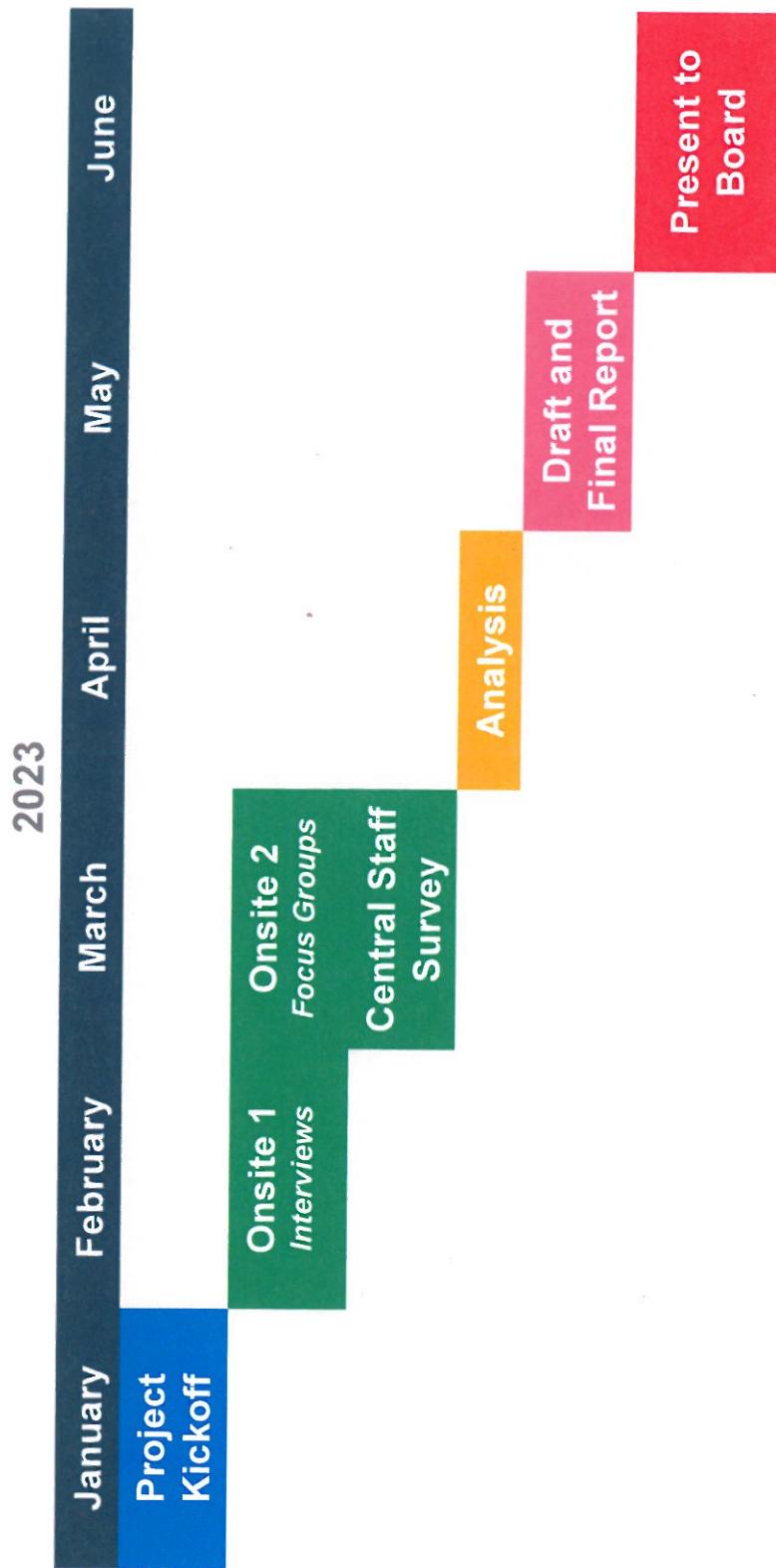


## Guiding Question

“How do the practices of district leadership and the Board of Trustees impact student achievement and the overall climate and culture of the district?”



# Project Timeline



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# Methodology

## **Observations of Board Meetings and Board Document Review**

- Focus: 2024 Progress Analysis, emphasis on Priority 3: Balanced Governance & Leadership
- Sample of Board meetings using rubric

## **Interviews**

- 1:1 or small group with Board of Trustees, Executive Cabinet, & other staff

## **Focus Groups**

- Internal and external stakeholders
- In person and virtual

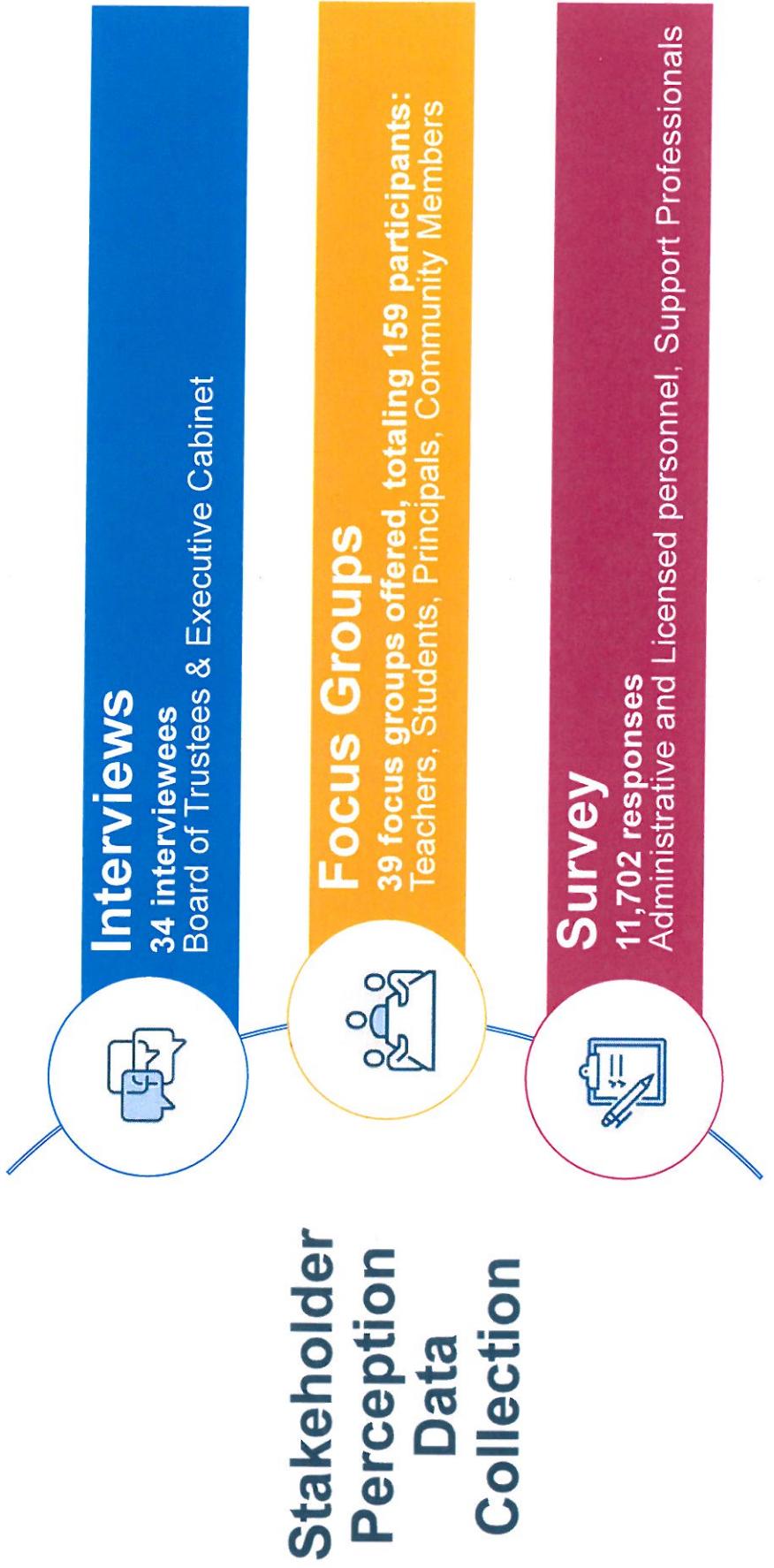
## **Districtwide Staff Survey**

- Electronic survey to all district staff

## **Traditional and Social Media Analysis**

- Print media analysis from October 2022 to April 2023
- Analysis of Twitter activity from January to April 2022





## Focus Groups

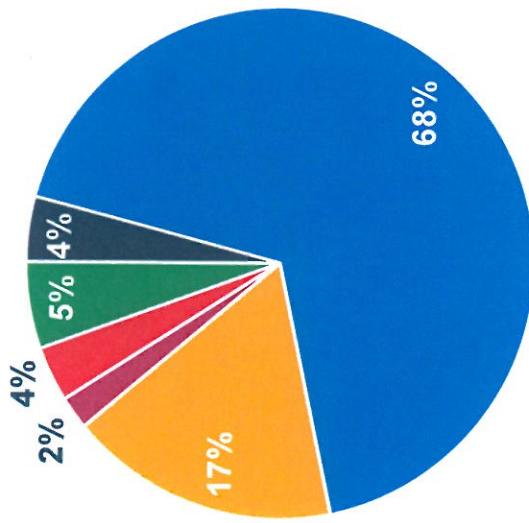


## Focus on Multiple Perspectives

- Regional Superintendents
  - Elementary, Middle, High School Principals
  - Elementary, Middle, High School Teachers
  - Superintendent's Student Advisory Council
  - High School Students
  - Middle School Students
  - Families
  - Spanish-speaking Families
  - Support Staff
  - Central Staff
  - Union Representatives
  - Community Members
  - Parent Advocacy Leaders
  - Business Representatives



## Survey Overview



**11,702 Respondents**  
**36% completion rate**

- School Based Staff - Administrative Personnel
- School Based Staff - Licensed Personnel
- Central Services - Support Professional
- Central Services - Administrative Personnel
- Central Services - Licensed Personnel



Survey Overview



## 40 Questions, for example:

- |  | 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Disagree | 3 Agree | 4 Strongly Agree |
|--|---------------------|------------|---------|------------------|
| 1. The core focus of CCSD is student success.                                  |                     |            |         |                  |
| 2. The actions and behaviors of my colleagues are aligned to CCSD core values. |                     |            |         |                  |
| 3. CCSD leadership makes effective decisions.                                  |                     |            |         |                  |
| 4. CCSD leadership positively impacts school and student outcomes.             |                     |            |         |                  |
| 5. The Board of Trustees shares information in a timely and accessible manner. |                     |            |         |                  |

## Likert Scale Used

- 1** Strongly Disagree    **2** Disagree    **3** Agree    **4** Strongly Agree



## **FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

## Key Themes

1. Ownership and accountability for results
2. Transparency in communication
3. Focus on outcomes-driven decision-making and success for every student
4. Valuing the needs of all staff



# Analysis Areas



**Board  
Leadership  
Practices**



**District  
Leadership  
Practices**



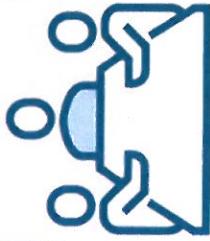
**Communication  
and  
Transparency**



**Climate and  
Culture**



## PRIMARY FINDINGS



## BOARD LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- **Focus on data and outcomes.** The Board of Trustees meetings do not consistently focus on student outcomes or *Focus:2024* progress.
- **Professionalism.** The Board of Trustees meetings' tone, focus, and collaboration demonstrated notable improvement during the January to April 2023 meetings from the previous period reviewed. Public perception of earlier Board conduct still impacts the perceived efficacy of the Board.
- **Transparency.** The Board of Trustees has worked to reorganize the Board meetings to make them more efficient and productive. However, the Consent Agenda format lacks transparency.
- **Lack of student voice.** Board meetings are often more focused on adult behaviors than student needs. Student voice was not present in any of the meetings observed by PCG.



# Analysis of Board meetings, August 2021 to December 2021

Agenda		Operation of Mtg by Trustee President		Trustee Member Participation	
Indicators	Yes/No/ Some	Indicators	Yes/No/ Some	Indicators	Yes/No/ Some
<b>Well-organized meeting agenda</b>	Some (30%)	All Trustees were present*	Yes	Trustees kept their comments or questions focused on the agenda items	Some (43%)
<b>Focus: 2024 staff presentations</b>	Some (14%)	The Board President guided the meeting effectively	Some (30%)	Board president made certain all Trustees had equal opportunity to present their views	Yes
<b>Public Comment available</b>	Yes	Closure on each agenda item was obtained before the Board moved to the next item	Yes	Trustees avoided negative, disrespectful or derogatory remarks to other Trustees or presenters	No
<b>Average Meeting Time: 6 hours</b>		<b>Range of Meeting Time: 3 hours 54 minutes to 9 hours 11 minutes</b>			

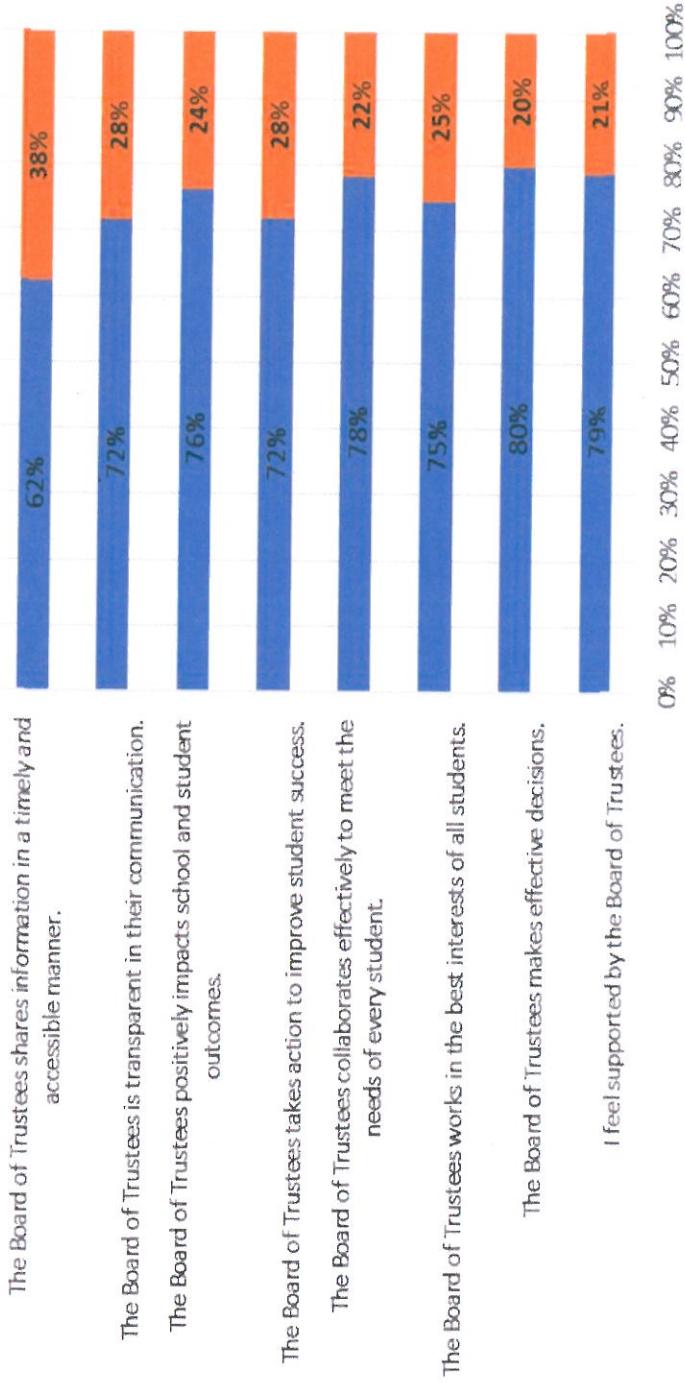


## Analysis of Board meetings, January to April 2023

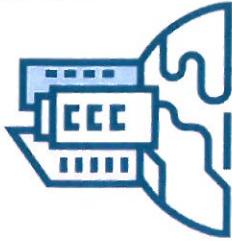
Indicators	Agenda	Operation of Mtg by Trustee President	Trustee Member Participation
Indicators	Yes/No/ Some	Indicators	Yes/No/ Some
Well-organized meeting agenda	Yes	All Trustees were present*	Yes Trustees kept their comments or questions focused on the agenda items
Focus: 2024 staff presentations	Some (43%)	The Board President guided the meeting effectively	Yes Board president made certain all Trustees had equal opportunity to present their views
Public Comment available	Yes	Closure on each agenda item was obtained before the Board moved to the next item.	Yes Trustees avoided negative, disrespectful or derogatory remarks to other Trustees or presenters
<b>Average Meeting Time: 1 hour and 26 minutes</b>		<b>Range of Meeting Time: 44 minutes to 1 hour 56 minutes</b>	



## Staff perceptions of Board of Trustees Leadership Practices



## PRIMARY FINDINGS



## DISTRICT LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

- **Staff lacks information and input on decision-making.** Staff focus group participants shared the perception that decisions were made without any awareness by those who need to implement or oversee the outcome of that decision.
- **Staff feel overwhelmed.** School-based staff focus group participants shared that the large number of new district initiatives was leading to significant burn out.
- **Gaps in internal communication.** Staff perceived that there is no intentionality around information dissemination to various groups.
- **Trustee and Superintendent relationships.** The current way the Board and Superintendent are operating is perceived to be ineffective.



## Staff perceptions of district leadership impact

The actions and behaviors of district leadership are in alignment with CCSD core values.



CCSD leadership positively impacts school and student outcomes.



CCSD leadership takes action to improve student success.



CCSD leadership collaborates effectively to meet the needs of every student.



CCSD leadership works in the best interests of all students.



CCSD leadership makes effective decisions.



I feel supported by CCSD leadership.



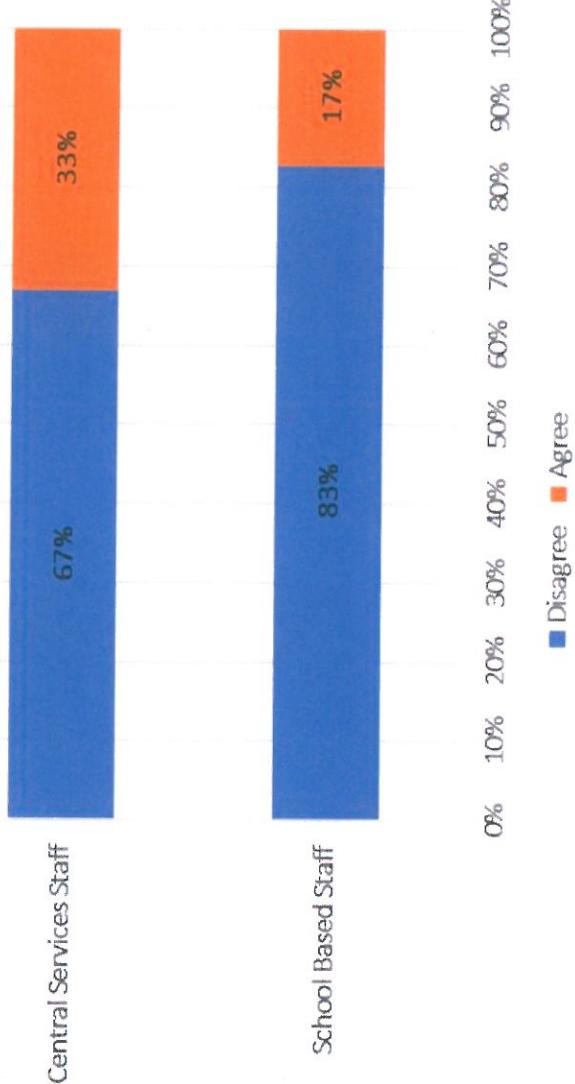
0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Disagree ■ Agree



## Staff perceptions of Board and district leadership collaboration

**Question: District leadership and the Board of Trustees work well together.**





## PRIMARY FINDINGS

# COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

- **A comprehensive districtwide communication plan is needed.** There are components of a communication plan in various offices as well as some communication protocols in place, but there is not a cohesive and coherent districtwide communications plan.
- **Negative messaging impacts students.** There is negative messaging regarding the district from internal and external stakeholders. Students were clear that negative stories about CCSD impact their mindset about the district.
- **Stakeholder groups feel disconnected.** All stakeholder focus groups reported a level of disconnection from the Board of Trustees. Intentional effort needs to be made to build bridges with stakeholder groups.



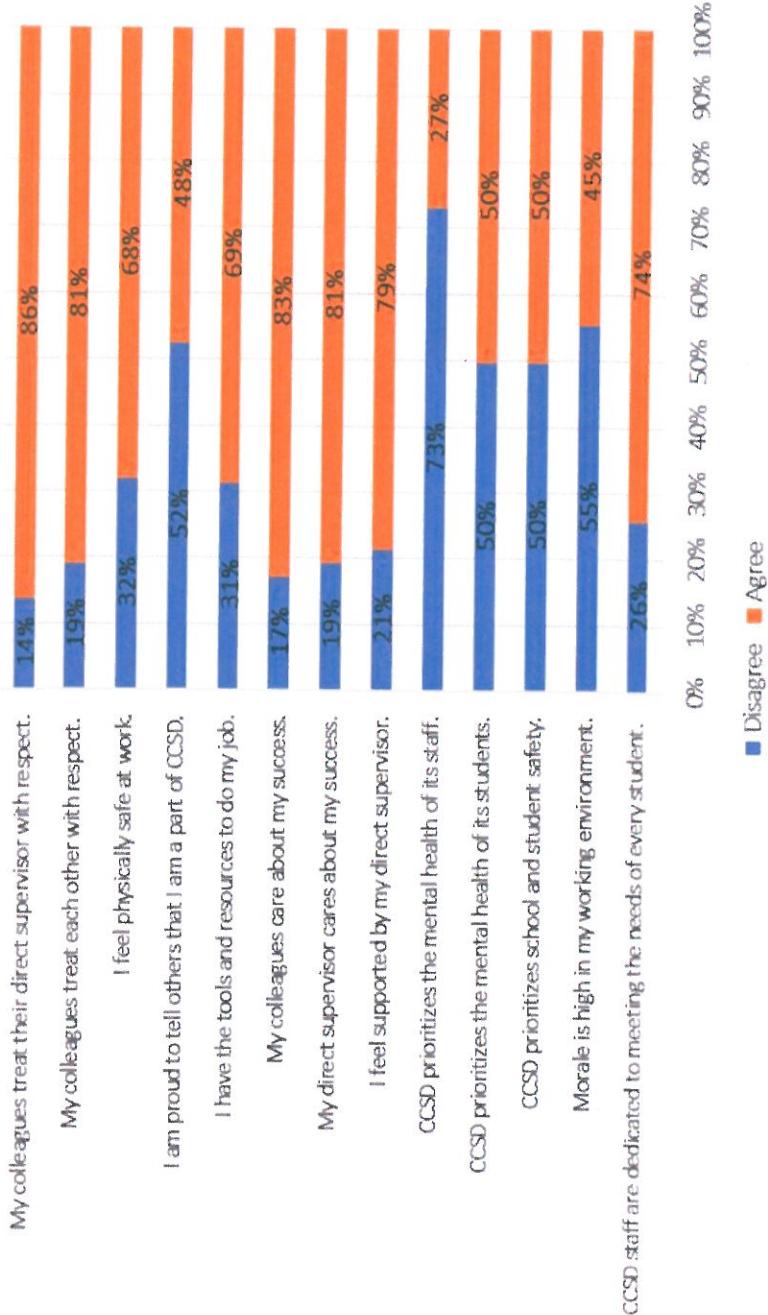
## PRIMARY FINDINGS

# CLIMATE AND CULTURE

- **Perception of CCSD's minimal focus on staff well-being.** School-based staff reported the belief that neither district leadership nor the Board of Trustees care about them.
- **External constraints.** There have been external constraints put on CCSD that other districts in the state do not have to address, specifically AB469. Recent efforts for more intentional oversight and accountability expectations centrally have received significant push back from many building leaders.
- **New resources and supports are having an impact.** CCSD leadership staff have made a concerted effort to develop and provide additional resources and supports to the schools.
- **Staffing shortages and concerns around school safety are impacting climate and culture.**



# Staff perceptions of their work environment



## RECOMMENDATIONS



### Priority Recommendations

- 1. Prioritize Board self-accountability and oversight of actions.**
- 2. Revamp the Board agenda for increased transparency.**
- 3. Focus on data and outcomes to drive improvement.**
- 4. Add stakeholder voices to Board of Trustees meetings.**
- 5. Commit to a vision of high expectations and quality instruction for every student.**
- 6. Celebrate the positive.**



## NEXT STEPS

## Analysis of Full Report

Included in the full report are deeper dives into each of the focus areas:

- Research-Based Best Practices
- Key Findings
- Recommendations

The full report also includes **additional analyses and data visualizations**.



# Implementation Planning





**Solutions that Matter**

# Clark County School District: Climate & Culture Review

## Executive Summary

Public Consulting Group LLC  
May 2023



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2023, Clark County School District (CCSD) contracted with Public Consulting Group LLC (PCG) to conduct an independent, external Climate and Culture Review. The review was designed to analyze how district leadership and Board of Trustees' practices impact student achievement and the overall culture of the district with the goal of identifying opportunities for improved practices and procedures.

PCG defines district culture and climate to encompass how stakeholders feel about and experience their school in terms of norms and values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, school safety, school environment, and organizational operations and processes. School and district climate is increasingly recognized as important to the promotion of students' academic success and healthy development, as well as teachers' job satisfaction and retention.<sup>1</sup>

### REVIEW FRAMEWORK

The framework and guiding questions PCG used for this Climate and Culture Review come from our synthesis of research-based evidence and previous experience. The overarching question for this review was:

**"How do the practices of district leadership and the Board of Trustees impact student achievement and the overall climate and culture of the district?"**

The review examined CCSD stakeholder perceptions and experiences related to 1) work environment; 2) understanding of district priorities and vision; 3) district leadership practices; and 4) Board of Trustees leadership practices. PCG also sought to understand Board efficacy and impact related to student achievement, monitoring data, and adherence to its code of ethics through a review of previous board meetings.

### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Between January and May 2023, PCG conducted a Culture and Climate Review of Clark County School District. PCG developed a study approach that drew on multiple data sources. Data sources included observations of Board of Trustees meetings, a review of board documents, a districtwide staff survey, interviews, focus groups, and a comprehensive review of CCSD coverage in the media. Our methodology is described in detail in the full report.

### FINDINGS

PCG saw ample evidence that CCSD has a solid foundation on which to build. As highlighted throughout the full report, the district has many notable strengths including its willingness to participate in this review.

Four key themes emerged from data collection:

1. *Ownership and accountability for results*
2. *Transparency in communication*
3. *Focus on outcomes-driven decision-making and success for every student*
4. *Valuing the needs of all staff*

Action must be taken to greatly improve the functions of the district and ensure the proper coordination to significantly improve student growth and achievement. The transformation should start with the Board and the way meetings are organized and conducted. Once Board organization and operations are established, the more complex work of infusing a shared sense of purpose with executive district leadership and, in turn, with the schools and the larger stakeholder community can begin.

---

<sup>1</sup> O'Brennan & Bradshaw (2013); Cohen, Pickeral & McCloskey (2009); National School Climate Council (2007); Center for Social and Emotional Education (2010)

The Board of Trustees has already begun an improvement process but, along with district leadership, needs to move policies and practices to the next level.

- Meetings, while much better, need to become more transparent, informative, and focused on measurable outcomes.
- Staff morale and strong two-way communication need to be of primary concern.
- Board and district leadership must hold themselves and each other accountable for student success.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

PCG's recommendations focus on Board and district leadership actions that have a direct impact on climate and culture.

### 1. Prioritize Board self-accountability and oversight of actions.

- a. Conduct twice-annual Board self-evaluations as specifically outlined in BSE-2P. The self-evaluation process provides the opportunity to reflect internally, evaluate performance and identify improvement opportunities. It also signals to the community that the Board is serious about changing the public's perception of its previous behaviors.
- b. Adopt a self-evaluation rubric if one does not currently exist. Ensure the rubric is posted on BoardDocs in an accessible location.
- c. Ensure progress reporting occurs for Priority 3: Balanced Governance and Leadership of *Focus: 2024* with the same frequency as other strategic plan progress updates.
- d. This study is an important first step in Board reflection and accountability and should be lauded. The development of an action plan based on report findings and recommendations will provide CCSD with an implementation roadmap to drive improvements. Action plan implementation is the shared responsibility of the Board and district leadership.

### 2. Revamp the Board agenda for increased transparency.

- a. Consent Agenda items should include, at a minimum, a brief verbal summary of each item for better understanding by the public.
- b. Demonstrate alignment between agenda items and *Focus: 2024* goals. For example, every item on the School District of Philadelphia's Board agenda outlines the connection to the district's Goals and Guardrails, how success will be measured, and how the community/stakeholders were involved in the selection process.
- c. Consider how to bring greater transparency to the current Board pre-meeting briefing process to address the perception that board business occurs "behind closed doors." The Dallas Independent School District, for example, holds a public board briefing once per month.
- d. Analyze the procedures of other large district boards in the country to determine if there are additional ways to continue to run efficient board meetings without sacrificing transparency.

### 3. Commit to a vision of high expectations and quality instruction for every student.

- a. Hold the Board and district leadership accountable for that vision.
- b. Revisit Board and Superintendent guardrails to ensure each guardrail supports realization of this vision and is focused on improved student success.
- c. Develop two to three interim guardrails that are tied to data to monitor progress for each guardrail.
- d. Embrace an asset-based mindset. Engage in strategic discussions through the lens of the assets of a program or initiative and how to build on those assets to achieve district goals. This shifts the conversation away from deficit thinking towards one of improvement.

**4. Focus on data and outcomes to drive improvement.**

- a. Allocate time for *Focus: 2024* updates at every board meeting. The Board of Trustees *Focus: 2024* goal is to have 60% of meeting time focused on monitoring student achievement goals and KPIs. However, the data show that there are some meetings that do not address any *Focus: 2024* goals.
- b. Develop a process to ensure all *Focus: 2024* goals are publicly discussed on a regular and equal basis.
- c. Fairfax Public Schools (VA), for example, has a dedicated segment called Academic Matters during which updates on important academic topics are presented at School Board meetings. All presentations are posted on a dedicated page on the Board website.
- d. Expect more detail and transparency regarding *Focus: 2024* progress. If data are not hitting targets, ask CCSD administrators what additional inputs are needed and how the Board can support their efforts. More detailed information is critical in understanding the problems that the district is trying to address. Presentations need to be more intentional and focused.
- e. Be explicit in how Board decisions align to the overall strategy. More intentional framing of discussions around *Focus: 2024* goals would assist stakeholders in gaining clarity around the goals, the difficulties CCSD has encountered in meeting targets, and the actions needed to ensure better results. Furthermore, providing more specificity and “digging a bit deeper” into the data being presented will help all stakeholders realize the strategies and programs being implemented to change the trajectory of the results.
- f. Conduct Board training to ensure all Trustees are savvy consumers of education data. Leverage the launch of the new district Data Dashboard to support this training.

**5. Draft and adhere to a Board and Superintendent Communication-Collaboration Plan.**

- a. Develop a Communication-Collaboration Plan for the Board and Superintendent to set and document expectations for both the Board of Trustees and Superintendent regarding communication protocols, timelines, and content of Board-Superintendent communication.
- b. Set expectations for information sharing. There are legal and other situations where the Chair and the Superintendent are required to maintain confidence, but otherwise all Trustees should have access to the same information. It is also up to all Board members to respect the Office of Superintendent and maintain confidentiality where required and not bring up issues publicly unless the Superintendent has been apprised.

**6. Develop a comprehensive Board Community Engagement Strategy.**

- a. Draft a multi-year Board Community Engagement Plan leveraging the initial work that has been undertaken this spring.
- b. Provide training to ensure all Trustees understand what is expected and permissible.
- c. The plan should include frequent opportunities for authentic two-way stakeholder communication. Outreach will require intentionality to engage a diverse set of voices.

**7. Add student voice to Board of Trustees meetings.**

- a. Many districts across the country have a non-voting student member on their board. This position provides insight on issues that affect students and elevates a voice that is currently non-existent when decisions are being made. It also provides a reminder to everyone on the dais and in the audience that students are the reason for the work.
- b. Los Angeles Unified School District, Chicago Public Schools, New York City Public Schools, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools all have a non-voting student member on their respective school boards.
- c. Many districts have a dedicated “Student Representative Matters” item on their agenda to allow for sharing of student member updates.

- d. If having a non-voting student member is determined to be not feasible, incorporate the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council to participate on a more frequent basis.
- 8. Increase stakeholder access to Board meetings and associated materials.**
- a. Host Board meetings in different parts of the district over the year to increase stakeholder access to meetings and encourage more diverse participation.
  - b. Ensure Board materials are translated into Spanish, along with other common languages spoken in the district, and are stored in a single, easy-to-find location.
- 9. Engage district stakeholders in Board presentations.**
- a. Invite partner organizations to share about their work in the district in support of the strategic goals, schools to highlight how they have changed their practices and the impact of that change, or leaders of new district programs to celebrate how they are showing promise.
  - b. This will provide the Board with additional information about the happenings out in the field in a more positive way. It will also showcase the work of students, staff, and partner organizations and provide the public with an opportunity to see what is working and bring more enthusiasm and positivity to the meetings.
- 10. Maintain the *Focus: 2024* webpage on a regular basis.**
- a. Outdated materials give the inaccurate perception that work is not being done.
  - b. Updates should be made on at least a monthly basis, as is currently indicated by the webpage.
  - c. The Strategy Office should oversee webpage content and timeliness of updates.
  - d. House all *Focus: 2024* Board presentations on this page, in addition to BoardDocs.
- 11. Expand on Board of Trustees professional learning.**
- a. Engage with external consultants to offer additional professional learning to 'level set' expectations and determine how the Board can be more communicative and collaborative.
  - b. Consider how retreats and other shared experiences build collective board trust and understanding.
- 12. Increase frequency of communication related to the Superintendent evaluation.**
- a. Rather than a once-a-year event, adopt a more ongoing communication process where the Board and Superintendent set measurable goals and discuss progress on those goals at various times during the year.
- 13. Develop a District Communication Plan.**
- a. Include representatives from various stakeholder groups, both internal and external, as part of the development.
  - b. The plan should be a dynamic rather than a static document, changing to meet the needs of the district.
  - c. The plan should develop a comprehensive strategy for both internal and external stakeholders. Plan goals should be aligned to the Strategic Plan.
  - d. Include a media strategy with news agencies to ensure there are always positive stories celebrating outstanding accomplishments throughout the district.
  - e. The Communications Office should oversee the development of the plan as well as assessing the plan's effectiveness. The Engagement Office should be an active partner in plan development and implementation.
  - f. Collect data regarding the plan's effectiveness in communicating to stakeholders and adjust based on the data.
  - g. Board members should support the development of a District Communication Plan and play a role in its implementation.
- 14. Embrace a more open approach to communicating decisions.** More transparency will help to eliminate the assumptions stakeholders make or the misinformation that becomes fact regarding

anything new coming from district leadership. Creating a transparent focus must be intentional and is sometimes difficult, especially during crisis situations. There are always going to be issues due to privacy rights of students and/or staff where information must be withheld. However, there are some practices that will help ensure greater transparency. They include:

- a. Provide more access to information to all stakeholders, but specifically internal staff. The proposed CCSD Intranet will be a good vehicle for sharing more information with staff throughout the district.
- b. Communicate the "why." This "why" should be part of the original communication to demonstrate the thought that went into making that decision.
- c. Involve stakeholders in decision-making. Offer multiple and broad opportunities to gather both internal and external feedback on the issue being discussed to get buy in. This approach not only makes district leadership more transparent, but also ensures the leadership team gathers more information from the field to ensure the decisions include multiple viewpoints from staff with a variety of experiences, backgrounds, and locations throughout the county.
- d. Explicitly plan communication. In a large district such as CCSD, proactive, clear communication must be a daily priority. Without that level of effort, a vacuum grows and rumors, inaccurate information, and eventually resentment build.

**15. Deepen relationships with community leaders.**

- a. Build more intentional two-way communication channels with key leaders of community groups such as the business community, faith-based groups, civic organizations, and both local and statewide political leaders.
- b. Current ad hoc communication and outreach inhibit strategic partnership development.
- c. The Communication Unit should lead this work. This may require the creation of a new position.
- d. The Board of Trustees should be a conduit to stronger relationships.

**16. Reinstitute the Family Advisory Committee.**

- a. This committee provides insight and input on issues important to CCSD families. Developing relationships with families and understanding their needs is an important component of the role of a Trustee.
- b. Many urban districts, such as Los Angeles Unified School District, New York City Department of Education and Detroit Public Schools use a Family Advisory Committee to provide a genuine parent voice on district policy decisions.
- c. As an example, San Francisco Unified School District has an 18-member Parent Advisory Council and comprehensive application process to ensure representation of diverse voices. In addition, the district has several other family advisory groups such as the African American Parent Advisory Council, the Community Advisory Committee for Special Education, the District English Learners Advisory Committee, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Matua Advisory Council, and the Indian Education and Migrant Education Programs family advisory committees, which advise on specific programs and populations of students.

**17. Celebrate the positive.**

- a. Celebrate the positive direction CCSD is headed. Positive examples include new curriculum, training to support staff, technology to ensure better customer service, and the opening of the new CTE Center. The community needs to know the great things that are happening in CCSD, which currently are being drowned out by the "negative noise."
- b. Leverage partners who can help with this communication. For example, the Vegas PBS Student Spotlight is a heart-warming celebration of student and staff successes.

- c. Allocate time at every Board meeting for Trustees to share out and celebrate the successes that they observed during school visits, community meetings and other district events since the previous meeting.

**18. Launch a staff wellness program.**

- a. Create a districtwide wellness program for CCSD to support staff who are struggling or challenged by the stresses of managing the demands of work and home.
- b. CCSD has been focusing on social-emotional support for students, helping them learn strategies to navigate difficult situations. Doing the same for staff would lead to happier and healthier individuals throughout the district who are highly engaged in their work and feel less stress and burnout during the school year.
- c. The Office of Well-being would provide staff with a comprehensive wellness program that supports their physical, social, and emotional well-being.

**19. Engage in small, but meaningful, morale boosting activities for staff.**

- a. Co-design morale improvement strategies with school-based staff through the creation of workgroups or other feedback loops.
- b. Provide more ways to award teachers (new awards, certificates of appreciation, recognition at Board of Trustees meetings). The staff recognition event, Evening of Excellence Starlight Awards, is a great recent addition.
- c. Surprise school-based staff with CCSD “swag” or other small treats as a celebration. Partner with businesses to help fund events.
- d. Brag about good teaching happening in a school on social media or during Friday videos. Rather than just letting staff know where leadership visited, highlight a grade level or teacher.
- e. Give compliments during public meetings, especially Board meetings, about specific things staff are doing well.

**20. Continue building resources and support for staff.**

- a. As new curriculum is rolled out into schools, continue building the resources to positively impact the implementation.
- b. Provide supports that ease the change management process at the building level.

**21. Address staff shortage and school climate concerns.**

- a. CCSD's staff shortage and school safety both emerged as high priority concerns affecting school climate and culture during stakeholder data collection.
- b. PCG has provided an additional nine recommendations related to these areas. These recommendations are included in that section of the report.
- c. Deeper study and targeted action plans are imperative.

## NEXT STEPS

While there are many external constraints—including funding gaps, legislative mandates, and deep community issues—the Board of Trustees needs to marshal the will and resources to take the lead on areas that they can control. Focusing on the bright spots throughout the district and building on those successes through the creation of new systems and processes districtwide that support every student no matter which school they attend will influence positive change. This is a unique time in the history of CCSD for the Board of Trustees and district leadership to build upon the recent turn to a more positive environment and use it to launch much needed new policies and practices.

# Clark County School District: Climate & Culture Review

## Final Report

Public Consulting Group LLC  
May 2023



### **Acknowledgements**

Public Consulting Group LLC (PCG) would like to thank the many individuals who played a role in the development of this Climate and Culture Review of Clark County School District (CCSD). We would like to acknowledge the Board of Trustees, district senior leaders, and central services staff for their supportive role in aiding the review process. In addition, we would like to thank all the parents and guardians, teachers, administrators, students, community members, and business leaders who took the time to meet with PCG staff to offer their perspectives regarding the climate and culture of the district.

### **About Public Consulting Group (PCG)**

Public Consulting Group LLC (PCG) is a management consulting firm that offers technical assistance, strategic planning, professional development, financial management, systems development, and other management advisory services to public sector clients. Established in 1986, PCG has consistently delivered on its motto of *“Solutions that Matter.”* Our education practice is committed to helping schools, school districts, and state education agencies strengthen their performance, streamline their operations, and improve their programs and instruction so that all students have what they need to succeed.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. METHODOLOGY .....	3
3. RECOMMENDATIONS .....	6
4. CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT OVERVIEW .....	11
5. BOARD LEADERSHIP PRACTICES .....	13
6. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP PRACTICES .....	22
7. COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY .....	29
8. CLIMATE AND CULTURE .....	34
9. ADDITIONAL PRIORITY AREAS .....	38
10. CONCLUSION .....	44
REFERENCES .....	45

## TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Survey response rates by role .....	3
Figure 2. Staff survey respondent demographics (selected all that apply) .....	4
Figure 3. Staff survey respondent length of employment in CCSD .....	4
Figure 4. Focus groups offered by PCG .....	5
Figure 5. Priority Area 3: Balanced Governance and Leadership .....	14
Figure 6. Guardrails for the Board and Superintendent .....	15
Figure 7. Analysis of regular Board meetings, August 11, 2021, to December 8, 2021 (N=7) .....	16
Figure 8. Analysis of regular Board meetings January 12, 2023, to April 13, 2023 (N=7) .....	16
Figure 9. Staff understanding of <i>Focus: 2024</i> (all roles) .....	19
Figure 10. Staff perceptions of the statement "The core focus of CCSD is student success" by role .....	20
Figure 11. Staff perceptions of Board of Trustees Leadership Practices (all roles) .....	20
Figure 12. Staff perceptions of district leadership impact (all roles) .....	23
Figure 13. Staff perceptions of district communication practices (all roles) .....	24
Figure 14. Staff perceptions of Board and district leadership collaboration by role .....	27
Figure 15. Overall ranking amongst 26 large urban school districts on the 2022 NAEP .....	30
Figure 16. Staff perceptions of their work environment (all roles) .....	35
Figure 17. Staff agreement with the statement "I am proud of CCSD" by role .....	36

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In January 2023, Clark County School District (CCSD) contracted with Public Consulting Group LLC (PCG) to conduct an independent, external Climate and Culture Review. The review was designed to analyze how district leadership and Board of Trustees' practices impact student achievement and the overall culture of the district with the goal of identifying opportunities for improved practices and procedures.

PCG defines district culture and climate to encompass how stakeholders feel about and experience their school in terms of norms and values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, school safety, school environment, and organizational operations and processes. School and district climate is increasingly recognized as important to the promotion of students' academic success and healthy development, as well as teachers' job satisfaction and retention.<sup>1</sup>

### REVIEW FRAMEWORK

The framework and guiding questions PCG used for this Climate and Culture Review come from our synthesis of research-based evidence and previous experience. The overarching question for this review was:

**"How do the practices of district leadership and the Board of Trustees impact student achievement and the overall climate and culture of the district?"**

The review examined CCSD stakeholder perceptions and experiences related to 1) work environment; 2) understanding of district priorities and vision; 3) district leadership practices; and 4) Board of Trustees leadership practices. PCG also sought to understand Board efficacy and impact related to student achievement, monitoring data, and adherence to its code of ethics through a review of previous board meetings.

The report documents the district's climate and culture at a moment in time. Data collection and analysis have occurred alongside daily operations in the district, and during a period of Board of Trustees transition. During our work, CCSD leadership continued to make administrative and programmatic changes to meaningfully support students, families, and staff. Given the breadth of this scope and timeline for the work, PCG was not able to review all aspects of the district's climate and culture with the same level of intensity. As such, our recommendations highlight specific areas we believe warrant deeper review.

### REPORT TERMINOLOGY

There are several terms and acronyms used throughout this report that require definition and clarification within the CCSD context. Some terms that appear throughout the report include:

**CCSD:** Clark County School District

**ELL:** English Language Learner

**ES:** Elementary School

**FRL:** Free and Reduced-Price Lunch

**HS:** High School

<sup>1</sup> O'Brennan & Bradshaw (2013); Cohen, Pickeral & McCloskey (2009); National School Climate Council (2007); Center for Social and Emotional Education (2010)

**MS:** Middle School

**PCG:** Public Consulting Group LLC

**PD:** Professional Development

**PLCs:** Professional Learning Communities

**SOTs:** School Organizational Teams

## ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

The report is organized in 10 chapters:

- **Chapter 1** introduces this report.
- **Chapter 2** describes the review methodology including our approach to this work and our data collection and analysis processes.
- **Chapter 3** outlines PCG's recommendations for CCSD.
- **Chapter 4** describes the current context of CCSD, including the district's leadership structure, district finances, and student characteristics.
- **Chapters 5-8** present key findings divided into the focus areas of the review: 5. Board Leadership Practices; 6. District Leadership Practices; 7. Communication and Transparency; and 8. Climate and Culture. Each chapter opens with a brief description of select research-based practices, followed by a summary of stakeholder perceptions and key findings.
- **Chapter 9** presents research-based practices, key findings, and recommendations for additional priority areas: Staffing Shortage and School Safety.
- **Chapter 10** details PCG's conclusions from conducting this Climate and Culture Review.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Between January and May 2023, PCG conducted a Culture and Climate Review of Clark County School District. The findings and recommendations are based on our analysis of qualitative and quantitative data collected over the course of the review. The data sources and our approach are described in greater detail below.

### DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the culture and climate of CCSD, PCG developed a study approach that drew on multiple data sources. Data sources included observations of Board of Trustees meetings, a review of board documents, a districtwide staff survey, interviews, focus groups, and a comprehensive review of CCSD coverage in the media.

#### *Observations of Board Meetings and Board Document Review*

PCG reviewed Board of Trustees and district activity related to Priority 3: Balanced Governance and Leadership in the five-year *Focus: 2024 Strategic Plan*. This priority area of the strategic plan focuses on Board of Trustees and Superintendent communication and collaboration. PCG sought to review any Board documentation related to this priority area. PCG also viewed a selection of Board of Trustees meetings using a rubric to assess progress towards achieving plan objectives related to Board meeting time spent on student achievement, monitoring data, and conducting business in a way that is consistent with its code of ethics.

#### *Staff Survey*

PCG also developed and administered a staff-wide web-based survey to gauge staff perceptions in three focus areas: work environment, core values, and leadership of CCSD. The survey was open for 3.5 weeks. Items in the survey were grouped by topic and were primarily structured as Likert scale questions.

- The staff-wide survey yielded over 11,700 responses.
- 89% of all respondents were school-based staff.
- School-based staff (licensed personnel) were the largest role-based respondent group, with 68% of all responses.

Specific findings from the staff survey can be found throughout the report. PCG disaggregated responses by role, race/ethnicity, and employment length. We observed no notable differences in responses based on race/ethnicity or employment length. PCG included disaggregated response rates by role where differences were observed.

The following chart includes the overall response rates by staff role and location.

Figure 1. Survey response rates by role

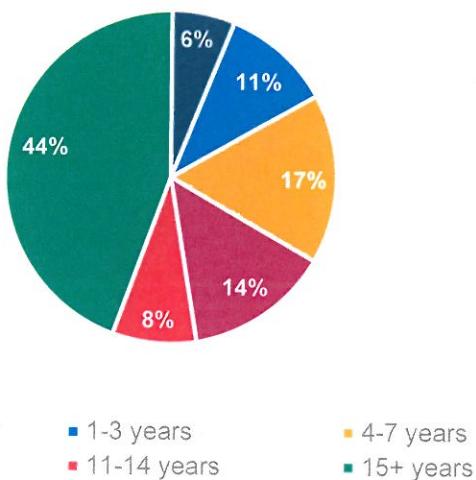
	Administrators	Licensed	Support/Police	Total
School Based Staff Response Rate	46% n=478	46% n=7,909	23% n=2,016	38%
Central Services Response Rate	51% n=249	40% n=408	15% n=642	22%
<b>Total Response Rate</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>36%</b>

The following charts disaggregate total respondents by demographic information and length of employment in CCSD.

Figure 2. Staff survey respondent demographics (selected all that apply)

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
African American or Black	8%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian	6%
Hispanic or Latino	13%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1%
Two or More Races	4%
White	61%
Prefer not to say	13%

Figure 3. Staff survey respondent length of employment in CCSD



#### *Focus Groups and Interviews*

Interviews and focus groups were conducted both virtually and in-person in CCSD buildings. The majority were conducted in-person over the course of two on-site visits, one 3-day visit in February and one 5-day visit in March. Virtual focus group sessions were offered to allow greater accessibility for families. Focus groups were offered in Spanish for families.

Due to the large size of the district, CCSD used existing random sampling tools to select teachers, principals, central staff, students, and parents/guardians for focus groups. Interviews were conducted with all Board of Trustees members, the Superintendent, and all members of the Superintendent's Executive Cabinet. Email invitations were sent by the CCSD Engagement Office and signed by the CCSD Board President.

PCG heard from 34 interview participants and 159 focus group participants throughout the course of the project for a total of 193 individuals. A complete breakdown of the focus groups follows.

Figure 4. Focus groups offered by PCG.

Stakeholder Group	Number of Focus Groups Offered
Students (middle and high school)	6
Student Advisory Council	1
Teachers	7
Central Staff	4
Principals	4
Parents and Guardians	9
Parent Advocacy Groups	1
Business Groups	2
Community Members	1
Union Representatives	1
Regional Superintendents	1
School Associate Superintendents	1
Support Professionals	1

Focus group and interview questions were developed by PCG based on subject matter expertise and previous engagements of a similar nature. Each focus group and interview included general questions asked of all stakeholders as well as questions specific to participants' roles. Questions in both the focus groups and interviews were centered on perceptions of the culture and climate of the district and communication practices. Interviews lasted 30 minutes and focus groups lasted 60 minutes. PCG took formal notes during all engagements which were later coded using Dedoose, a qualitative coding application. Individual responses to PCG's questions are confidential and will not be attributed to specific participants.

#### *Media Analysis*

PCG provided an analysis of both traditional media as well as social media, specifically Twitter, with a focus on CCSD. Forty news reports were randomly selected from October 2022 to April 2023. The news stories were drawn from both Las Vegas daily newspapers and local television news programming.

PCG reviewed the CCSD-related Twitter feed to assess the activity on the platform focused on the district. Twitter was selected as it does not require an invitation to join and is less reliant on private sites. Twitter messages were reviewed from all current Board of Trustees members, former Board members holding office during 2022, the Superintendent, CCSD, and tweets from residents of Clark County from January-April 2023 when the current Board of Trustees members were sworn into office. We reviewed a sample of the activity focused on CCSD. The goal was to get an overview of the tone, messages, and responses by CCSD, Board of Trustees members, the Superintendent, and the public. The analysis of the data is presented within the report.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

PCG saw ample evidence that CCSD has a solid foundation on which to build. As noted throughout this report, the district has many notable strengths including its willingness to participate in this review. This section includes PCG's recommendations that require direct action from the Board of Trustees and district leadership.

Recommendations center around four key themes that emerged from data collection:

1. *Ownership and accountability for results*
2. *Transparency in communication*
3. *Focus on outcomes-driven decision-making and success for every student*
4. *Valuing the needs of all staff*

Specific findings related to these four themes are found within individual report chapters.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Prioritize Board self-accountability and oversight of actions.**
  - a. Conduct twice-annual Board self-evaluations as specifically outlined in BSE-2P. The self-evaluation process provides the opportunity to reflect internally, evaluate performance and identify improvement opportunities. It also signals to the community that the Board is serious about changing the public's perception of its previous behaviors.
  - b. Adopt a self-evaluation rubric if one does not currently exist. Ensure the rubric is posted on BoardDocs in an accessible location.
  - c. Ensure progress reporting occurs for Priority 3: Balanced Governance and Leadership of *Focus: 2024* with the same frequency as other strategic plan progress updates.
  - d. This study is an important first step in Board reflection and accountability and should be lauded. The development of an action plan based on report findings and recommendations will provide CCSD with an implementation roadmap to drive improvements. Action plan implementation is the shared responsibility of the Board and district leadership.
2. **Revamp the Board agenda for increased transparency.**
  - a. Consent Agenda items should include, at a minimum, a brief verbal summary of each item for better understanding by the public.
  - b. Demonstrate alignment between agenda items and *Focus: 2024* goals. For example, every item on the School District of Philadelphia's Board agenda outlines the connection to the district's Goals and Guardrails, how success will be measured, and how the community/stakeholders were involved in the selection process.
  - c. Consider how to bring greater transparency to the current Board pre-meeting briefing process to address the perception that board business occurs "behind closed doors." The Dallas Independent School District, for example, holds a public board briefing once per month.
  - d. Analyze the procedures of other large district boards in the country to determine if there are additional ways to continue to run efficient board meetings without sacrificing transparency.
3. **Commit to a vision of high expectations and quality instruction for every student.**
  - a. Hold the Board and district leadership accountable for that vision.
  - b. Revisit Board and Superintendent guardrails to ensure each guardrail supports realization of this vision and is focused on improved student success.

- c. Develop two to three interim guardrails that are tied to data to monitor progress for each guardrail.
  - d. Embrace an asset-based mindset. Engage in strategic discussions through the lens of the assets of a program or initiative and how to build on those assets to achieve district goals. This shifts the conversation away from deficit thinking towards one of improvement.
- 4. Focus on data and outcomes to drive improvement.**
- a. Allocate time for *Focus: 2024* updates at every board meeting. The Board of Trustees *Focus: 2024* goal is to have 60% of meeting time focused on monitoring student achievement goals and KPIs. However, the data show that there are some meetings that do not address any *Focus: 2024* goals.
  - b. Develop a process to ensure all *Focus: 2024* goals are publicly discussed on a regular and equal basis.
  - c. Fairfax Public Schools (VA), for example, has a dedicated segment called Academic Matters during which updates on important academic topics are presented at School Board meetings. All presentations are posted on a dedicated page on the Board website.
  - d. Expect more detail and transparency regarding *Focus: 2024* progress. If data are not hitting targets, ask CCSD administrators what additional inputs are needed and how the Board can support their efforts. More detailed information is critical in understanding the problems that the district is trying to address. Presentations need to be more intentional and focused.
  - e. Be explicit in how Board decisions align to the overall strategy. More intentional framing of discussions around *Focus: 2024* goals would assist stakeholders in gaining clarity around the goals, the difficulties CCSD has encountered in meeting targets, and the actions needed to ensure better results. Furthermore, providing more specificity and “digging a bit deeper” into the data being presented will help all stakeholders realize the strategies and programs being implemented to change the trajectory of the results.
  - f. Conduct Board training to ensure all Trustees are savvy consumers of education data. Leverage the launch of the new district Data Dashboard to support this training.
- 5. Draft and adhere to a Board and Superintendent Communication-Collaboration Plan.**
- a. Develop a Communication-Collaboration Plan for the Board and Superintendent to set and document expectations for both the Board of Trustees and Superintendent regarding communication protocols, timelines, and content of Board-Superintendent communication.
  - b. Set expectations for information sharing. There are legal and other situations where the Chair and the Superintendent are required to maintain confidence, but otherwise all Trustees should have access to the same information. It is also up to all Board members to respect the Office of Superintendent and maintain confidentiality where required and not bring up issues publicly unless the Superintendent has been apprised.
- 6. Develop a comprehensive Board Community Engagement Strategy.**
- a. Draft a multi-year Board Community Engagement Plan leveraging the initial work that has been undertaken this spring.
  - b. Provide training to ensure all Trustees understand what is expected and permissible.
  - c. The plan should include frequent opportunities for authentic two-way stakeholder communication. Outreach will require intentionality to engage a diverse set of voices.
- 7. Add student voice to Board of Trustees meetings.**
- a. Many districts across the country have a non-voting student member on their board. This position provides insight on issues that affect students and elevates a voice that is currently non-existent when decisions are being made. It also provides a reminder to everyone on the dais and in the audience that students are the reason for the work.

- b. Los Angeles Unified School District, Chicago Public Schools, New York City Public Schools, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools all have a non-voting student member on their respective school boards.
  - c. Many districts have a dedicated "Student Representative Matters" item on their agenda to allow for sharing of student member updates.
  - d. If having a non-voting student member is determined to be not feasible, incorporate the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council to participate on a more frequent basis.
- 8. Increase stakeholder access to Board meetings and associated materials.**
- a. Host Board meetings in different parts of the district over the year to increase stakeholder access to meetings and encourage more diverse participation.
  - b. Ensure Board materials are translated into Spanish, along with other common languages spoken in the district, and are stored in a single, easy-to-find location.
- 9. Engage district stakeholders in Board presentations.**
- a. Invite partner organizations to share about their work in the district in support of the strategic goals, schools to highlight how they have changed their practices and the impact of that change, or leaders of new district programs to celebrate how they are showing promise.
  - b. This will provide the Board with additional information about the happenings out in the field in a more positive way. It will also showcase the work of students, staff, and partner organizations and provide the public with an opportunity to see what is working and bring more enthusiasm and positivity to the meetings.
- 10. Maintain the *Focus: 2024* webpage on a regular basis.**
- a. Outdated materials give the inaccurate perception that work is not being done.
  - b. Updates should be made on at least a monthly basis, as is currently indicated by the webpage.
  - c. The Strategy Office should oversee webpage content and timeliness of updates.
  - d. House all *Focus: 2024* Board presentations on this page, in addition to BoardDocs.
- 11. Expand on Board of Trustees professional learning.**
- a. Engage with external consultants to offer additional professional learning to 'level set' expectations and determine how the Board can be more communicative and collaborative.
  - b. Consider how retreats and other shared experiences build collective board trust and understanding.
- 12. Increase frequency of communication related to the Superintendent evaluation.**
- a. Rather than a once-a-year event, adopt a more ongoing communication process where the Board and Superintendent set measurable goals and discuss progress on those goals at various times during the year.
- 13. Develop a District Communication Plan.**
- a. Include representatives from various stakeholder groups, both internal and external, as part of the development.
  - b. The plan should be a dynamic rather than a static document, changing to meet the needs of the district.
  - c. The plan should develop a comprehensive strategy for both internal and external stakeholders. Plan goals should be aligned to the Strategic Plan.
  - d. Include a media strategy with news agencies to ensure there are always positive stories celebrating outstanding accomplishments throughout the district.
  - e. The Communications Office should oversee the development of the plan as well as assessing the plan's effectiveness. The Engagement Office should be an active partner in plan development and implementation.

- f. Collect data regarding the plan's effectiveness in communicating to stakeholders and adjust based on the data.
- g. Board members should support the development of a District Communication Plan and play a role in its implementation.

**14. Embrace a more open approach to communicating decisions.** More transparency will help to eliminate the assumptions stakeholders make or the misinformation that becomes fact regarding anything new coming from district leadership. Creating a transparent focus must be intentional and is sometimes difficult, especially during crisis situations. There are always going to be issues due to privacy rights of students and/or staff where information must be withheld. However, there are some practices that will help ensure greater transparency. They include:

- a. Provide more access to information to all stakeholders, but specifically internal staff. proposed CCSD Intranet will be a good vehicle for sharing more information with staff throughout the district.
- b. Communicate the "why." This "why" should be part of the original communication to demonstrate the thought that went into making that decision.
- c. Involve stakeholders in decision-making. Offer multiple and broad opportunities to gather both internal and external feedback on the issue being discussed to get buy in. This approach not only makes district leadership more transparent, but also ensures the leadership team gathers more information from the field to ensure the decisions include multiple viewpoints from staff with a variety of experiences, backgrounds, and locations throughout the county.
- d. Explicitly plan communication. In a large district such as CCSD, proactive, clear communication must be a daily priority. Without that level of effort, a vacuum grows and rumors, inaccurate information, and eventually resentment build.

**15. Deepen relationships with community leaders.**

- a. Build more intentional two-way communication channels with key leaders of community groups such as the business community, faith-based groups, civic organizations, and both local and statewide political leaders.
- b. Current ad hoc communication and outreach inhibit strategic partnership development.
- c. The Communication Unit should lead this work. This may require the creation of a new position.
- d. The Board of Trustees should be a conduit to stronger relationships.

**16. Reinstitute the Family Advisory Committee.**

- a. This committee provides insight and input on issues important to CCSD families. Developing relationships with families and understanding their needs is an important component of the role of a Trustee.
- b. Many urban districts, such as Los Angeles Unified School District, New York City Department of Education and Detroit Public Schools use a Family Advisory Committee to provide a genuine parent voice on district policy decisions.
- c. As an example, San Francisco Unified School District has an 18-member Parent Advisory Council and comprehensive application process to ensure representation of diverse voices. In addition, the district has several other family advisory groups such as the African American Parent Advisory Council, the Community Advisory Committee for Special Education, the District English Learners Advisory Committee, the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Matua Advisory Council, and the Indian Education and Migrant Education Programs family advisory committees, which advise on specific programs and populations of students.

**17. Celebrate the positive.**

- a. Celebrate the positive direction CCSD is headed. Positive examples include new curriculum, training to support staff, technology to ensure better customer service, and the opening of the new CTE Center. The community needs to know the great things that are happening in CCSD, which currently are being drowned out by the “negative noise.”
- b. Leverage partners who can help with this communication. For example, the Vegas PBS Student Spotlight is a heart-warming celebration of student and staff successes.
- c. Allocate time at every Board meeting for Trustees to share out and celebrate the successes that they observed during school visits, community meetings and other district events since the previous meeting.

**18. Launch a staff wellness program.**

- a. Create a districtwide wellness program for CCSD to support staff who are struggling or challenged by the stresses of managing the demands of work and home.
- b. CCSD has been focusing on social-emotional support for students, helping them learn strategies to navigate difficult situations. Doing the same for staff would lead to happier and healthier individuals throughout the district who are highly engaged in their work and feel less stress and burnout during the school year.
- c. The Office of Well-being would provide staff with a comprehensive wellness program that supports their physical, social, and emotional well-being.

**19. Engage in small, but meaningful, morale boosting activities for staff.**

- a. Co-design morale improvement strategies with school-based staff through the creation of workgroups or other feedback loops.
- b. Provide more ways to award teachers (new awards, certificates of appreciation, recognition at Board of Trustees meetings). The staff recognition event, Evening of Excellence Starlight Awards, is a great recent addition.
- c. Surprise school-based staff with CCSD “swag” or other small treats as a celebration. Partner with businesses to help fund events.
- d. Brag about good teaching happening in a school on social media or during Friday videos. Rather than just letting staff know where leadership visited, highlight a grade level or teacher.
- e. Give compliments during public meetings, especially Board meetings, about specific things staff are doing well.

**20. Continue building resources and support for staff.**

- a. As new curriculum is rolled out into schools, continue building the resources to positively impact the implementation.
- b. Provide supports that ease the change management process at the building level.

**21. Address staff shortage and school climate concerns.**

- a. CCSD's staff shortage and school safety both emerged as high priority concerns affecting school climate and culture during stakeholder data collection.
- b. PCG has provided an additional nine recommendations related to these areas. These recommendations are included in that section of the report.
- c. Deeper study and targeted action plans are imperative.

## 4. CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Clark County School District (CCSD), founded in 1956, educates approximately 305,000 students. As the fifth-largest school district in the country, CCSD covers 7,891 square miles and serves 64% of Nevada students. There are 372 district-operated schools divided into three geographic regions, including 233 elementary schools, 61 middle schools, 53 high schools, 4 special schools, and 21 alternative schools. The district employs over 40,000 individuals, making CCSD the largest employer in the state of Nevada.

### LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

A seven-member Board of School Trustees works to establish district policy and employs the Superintendent as the chief executive officer, with the function of overseeing all services provided to each student in the care of CCSD. Trustees are elected to four-year terms. In January 2023, two newly elected members and one re-elected member were sworn in. The longest serving member has been on the Board since 2016. The Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Jesus Jara as superintendent in June 2018. The Superintendent is supported by an Executive Cabinet.

Each of the three geographic regions is led by one Region Superintendent, supported by four school Associate Superintendents. A Transformation Network was formed during the 2022-2023 school year and includes 23 of the lowest performing elementary schools from across the district. The goal of the Transformation Network is to provide additional academic support and interventions to improve student achievement.

In October 2021, the Board elected to terminate the Superintendent's contract "for convenience" rather than for cause in a 4-3 vote. They reversed their decision three weeks later. Dr. Jara sued the school district over allegations of harassment and a hostile work environment. The two sides reached a settlement that paid for Dr. Jara's attorney fees. In September 2022, the Board rated Dr. Jara as "highly effective" in his annual evaluation. They also voted to extend the Superintendent's contract through June 2026, along with a \$95,000 pay raise. This recent history between the Board and the Superintendent serves as a backdrop to this study.

### AB469

In 2015, the Nevada Legislature passed a law giving CCSD principals more control over their respective schools. A more detailed Assembly Bill 469 (AB469) passed in 2017, with implementation occurring in the 2017-2018 school year. AB469 is applicable only to "large school districts" with at least 100,000 students. CCSD is the only district in the state to fit this definition. AB469 was written into administrative code as NRS388g.500.<sup>2</sup> The code is most commonly referenced by its bill name.

AB469 gives principals authority over all site-based hiring, planning, and procurement. The law also created School Organizational Teams (SOTs) which are a mix of staff and parents who oversee a school's operational plans and budgets. AB469 requires 85% of unrestricted funds to be allocated to individual schools. Only 15% of dollars can be for centrally specified purposes. CCSD's central services retains control over busing, food services, payroll, information technology, utilities, police services, union negotiations, custodial and maintenance services, capital projects, and administration of certain federally guaranteed programs, including special education. CCSD central services retain control of these expenditure categories due to federal or state legal requirements tied to receipt of these funds.

<sup>2</sup> NRS: CHAPTER 388G - ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT. (n.d.). <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/NRS-388G.html#NRS388GSec500>

AB469 gave significant autonomy and decision-making power to school principals. By limiting the authority of district leadership over schools, it has created inequities and inconsistent practices to emerge across the district. There have been recent efforts for more intentional oversight and accountability expectations centrally that have received significant push back from many building leaders.

## DISTRICT FINANCES

CCSD has a FY23 general operating fund of \$3.093 billion, with a weighted per pupil allocation of \$9,573. In 2021, Nevada ranked last nationally in school finance equity and spending.<sup>3</sup> In FY22, the state transitioned to a Pupil Centered Funding Plan. Under this new funding model, CCSD receives adjusted base funding, weighted funding, and auxiliary service funding based on student need. The intent of this new funding model is to bring greater funding equity statewide.

The Governor, newly elected, has a stated commitment to education and aims to significantly increase the education budget over the next two years in response to the state's historically low funding levels and performance outcomes. Even with these new funds, statewide per pupil expenditures will remain below the national average. It was shared by CCSD district leadership that a substantial portion of these new funds will go towards employee salaries and benefits. The Superintendent has continued to advocate for an "optimally funded" budget.

CCSD received \$777 million through the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Act (ARP ESSER III). Funding allocations were organized around the district's strategic priorities, including 1:1 technology, Tier 1 instructional materials, and wraparound services. AB469's 15% cap had previously restricted the district from making many of these large-scale investments.

## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Students at CCSD come from 140 countries around the world, with 111 different languages spoken in the district. 15.6% of all students are English Language Learners (ELL). Across the district, 12.9% of students receive special education services and 74.4% are qualified for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL). In the 2021-2022 school year, nearly 15,000 students were experiencing homelessness. CCSD has the highest rate per capita of undocumented students in the country. Student enrollment has decreased by 5.0% since 2017.

CCSD is comprised largely of Hispanic/Latino students, who make up 47.7% of the student body. White/Caucasian students represent the second largest group at 20.8% while Black/African students are 15.8% of the student body. Multi-racial, Asian, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students are 7.7%, 6.0%, and 1.7% of the student body, respectively.

The large geographic footprint and diverse student demographics, along with school-based autonomy, mean that schooling experiences for students across the district widely vary.

<sup>3</sup> EducationWeek Research Center. (2021). *State Grades on School Finance: 2021 Map and Rankings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.edweek.org/policy-politics/state-grades-on-school-finance-2021-map-and-rankings/2021/06#top-to-bottom-rankings>

## 5. BOARD LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES AGENDAS AND MEETINGS

#### *Research Based Practices*

School board meetings are an important forum to conduct business, set policy, and communicate goals to the public. Research conducted by Lee & Eadens established statistically significant relationships between certain board behaviors and low student achievement scores. Their study suggests that low-performing districts' board meetings were: less orderly; had less time spent on student achievement; lacked respectful and attentive engagement across speakers; had board meeting members who seemed to advance their own agenda; had less effective working relationships among the governance team; had fewer board members who relied on the superintendent for advice and input; had one member, other than the board president, stand out for taking excessive time during meetings; and did not focus on policy items as much as high- and medium-performing school districts.<sup>4</sup>

With increased accountability for districts by state and federal education agencies through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, the role of school boards to improve student achievement has become an important component of student success.<sup>5</sup> This requires strategic decisions and policy-making that places an even greater emphasis on student outcomes than in the past. Researchers found a positive correlation between board alignment and the support of district goals on the impact student achievement.<sup>6</sup> School boards must understand the importance of their role in creating the conditions necessary for improving student achievement, including the importance of collaboration with district leaders, staff, and the community to achieve success for every student.

In January 2023, a new Board of Trustees was sworn in to serve Clark County School District. There were two new Trustees, as two incumbents were voted out of their positions on the Board. Additionally, Board leadership shifted with a new President, Vice-President, and Clerk. The Board President set new goals and expectations concerning Board meetings. These goals included ensuring meetings are more focused on agenda items, an emphasis at every meeting on *Focus: 2024*, a professional and collegial tone between Trustees, and transparency in decision-making. The changes to Board operations were enacted during the first meetings in January.

#### *Focus: 2024 Strategic Plan*

The district's five-year *Focus: 2024* Strategic Plan sets the vision and course for the district's actions. It is the framework for Board planning and decision-making and should drive the agenda for all Board meetings.

*Focus: 2024* has five priority areas, but only one area is focused on the actions of the Board. Priority Area 3: Balanced Governance and Leadership has a specific focus on Board of Trustees actions. Three of the four objectives in this priority area are impacted solely by the Board as seen below in Figure 5. Also noted in Figure 5 are the metrics used to measure the objectives, the status of the metrics in January 2019, and the January 2024 target goals.

<sup>4</sup> Lee, D & Eadens, D. (2014). *The Problem: Low-Achieving Districts and Low-Performing Boards*. International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership, v9 n3 2014.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>

<sup>6</sup> Johnson, S.M., Marietta, G. et. Al. (2015). *Achieving coherence in district improvement: managing the relationship between central office and schools*. Cambridge, MA. Harvard Education Press.

Figure 5. Priority Area 3: Balanced Governance and Leadership

Objectives	Measures	Current State January 2019	January 2024 Target
1. All Clark County Schools will be rated three stars or higher on the Nevada School Performance Framework	Percentage of schools rated three stars or higher on the Nevada School Performance Framework	55% (193 schools)	100%
2. The Board of School Trustees will devote 60% of its time in regular Board meetings progress monitoring student achievement goals and key performance indicators	Self-evaluation and records of Board Meetings	NA*	60%
3. The Board of School Trustees monitors data consistent with guardrails that the Board identified	Self-evaluation and records of Board Meetings	NA*	100%
4. The Board of School Trustees and Superintendent conducts its business in a way that was consistent with its code of ethics	Self-evaluation and records of Board Meetings	NA*	100%

### Progress Updates to the Public

BoardDocs is a public-facing paperless meeting management software that is used as the document repository for all Board-related business. When reviewing BoardDocs, there were no *Focus: 2024* presentations on this priority area. Interview participants confirmed that no presentations have occurred.

CCSD also has a separate public-facing google site dedicated to the Strategic Plan. PCG was not able to find any status updates for Priority 3 on this website. However, it should also be noted that no updates to any priority area have been made since June 2020 to this site. The webpage says that "updates will be made monthly."

### Measures

- **NSPF star ratings:** Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) star ratings were last calculated for the 2018-19 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The new district Data Dashboard will track this metric once new ratings are released.
- **Self-evaluation:** Board Policy BSE-2P outlines the Board of Trustees self-evaluation process.<sup>7</sup> The policy states that board evaluation will occur twice annually and that individual evaluations will be posted on BoardDocs. PCG could not find any indication these activities had occurred over the past two years based on a review of Board work session agendas. The policy was amended in January 2023 to remove the specific timeframes by which these activities must occur. A work session in December 2022 included this change as part of the Consent Agenda. However, while the Superintendent evaluation timeline was discussed in detail during this work session, there was no discussion related to Board self-evaluation. The evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools occurred September 2022.
- **Records of Board meetings:** In the absence of other measures, PCG conducted an analysis of Board meetings included later in this report.

### Objectives

- The Board Code of Ethics referenced in Objective 4 can be found in Board Governance Policy GB-4.1.<sup>8</sup> It outlines the 10 Balanced Governance™: Individual Board Member Characteristics that Board members commit to follow.

<sup>7</sup> Clark County School District Board of School Trustees. (2023). *B/SE-2: Board Evaluation Methodology*. Retrieved from: [BSE-2\\_P.pdf \(ccsd.net\)](https://ccsd.net/BSE-2_P.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Clark County School District Board of School Trustees. (2017). *GP-4.1: Board Members' Conduct and Ethics*. Retrieved from: [GP-04.1\\_P.pdf \(ccsd.net\)](https://ccsd.net/GP-04.1_P.pdf)

- PCG assumes the “guardrails” referenced in Objective 3 refer to those adopted by the Board of Trustees in an August 2020 work session, as we could find no other reference to these guardrails in Board materials or the Strategic Plan. Guardrails are often specific non-negotiables that must be honored by the Superintendent while implementing strategic plan goals and are typically more closely tied to student outcomes. Figure 6 lists the guardrails defined for the Board and the Superintendent.

Figure 6. Guardrails for the Board and Superintendent

Guardrails for the Board	Guardrails for the Superintendent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Board will not undermine the Superintendent's efforts to achieve Goals; including, directing staff and micromanaging (i.e., hires, programs, budget)</li> <li>The Board will not do anything that is divisive to the Board or Superintendent</li> <li>The Board will have no surprises</li> <li>The Board will not undermine Board or Superintendent decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Superintendent will not lower academic standards</li> <li>The Superintendent will not serve on a board where a financial relationship exists</li> <li>The Superintendent will ensure no fiscal malfeasance or any illegal activities</li> <li>The Superintendent will not fail to respond to community, politics, including Trustee input</li> </ul>

#### *Records of Board Meeting Analysis*

In the absence of other data, PCG analyzed Board progress on the following *Focus: 2024* objectives:

1. The Board of School Trustees will devote 60% of its time in regular Board meetings progress monitoring student achievement goals and key performance indicators
2. The Board of School Trustees monitors data consistent with guardrails that the Board identified
3. The Board of School Trustees and Superintendent conducts its business in a way that was consistent with its code of ethics

PCG utilized an adapted rubric, the *Meeting Management Assessment: Board of Distinction* to determine the Board's level of adherence to effective practices for school board meetings.<sup>9</sup> The rubric is divided into three categories:

1. Agenda
2. Operation of the Meeting by the Trustee President
3. Trustee Member Participation

Figure 7 provides an analysis of seven School Board of Trustees meetings between August 11, 2021, and December 8, 2021. PCG selected this period as it was the timeframe leading up to when the Board fired and subsequently rehired the Superintendent within a month. A “yes” means the indicators were observed at 100% of the meetings and a “no” means the indicator was not observed at any meeting reviewed. For items marked “some,” PCG noted the percentage of meetings in which the indicator was observed.

<sup>9</sup> School Board Rubric Adapted from: Tennessee School Board Association (TSBA). Meeting Management Assessment. Board of Distinction.

## CULTURE AND CLIMATE STUDY REPORT

Figure 7. Analysis of regular Board meetings, August 11, 2021, to December 8, 2021 (N=7)

Agenda		Operation of Mtg by Trustee President		Trustee Member Participation	
Indicators	Yes/No/ Some	Indicators	Yes/No/ Some	Indicators	Yes/No/ Some
Well-organized meeting agenda	Some (30%)	All Trustees were present*	Yes	Trustees kept their comments or questions focused on the agenda items	Some (43%)
Focus: 2024 staff presentations	Some (14%)	The Board President guided the meeting effectively	Some (30%)	Board president made certain all Trustees had equal opportunity to present their views	Yes
Public Comment available	Yes	Closure on each agenda item was obtained before the Board moved to the next item	Yes	Trustees avoided negative, disrespectful or derogatory remarks to other Trustees or presenters	No
Average Meeting Time: 6 hours		Range of Meeting Time: 3 hours 54 minutes to 9 hours 11 minutes			

\*Some members were not in-person, but on the phone and/or joined later in the meeting

Moreover, Figure 8 provides an overview of the Regular School Board of Trustee Meetings occurring between January 12, 2023, and April 13, 2023. Similarly, there were seven Board meetings viewed and analyzed.

Figure 8. Analysis of regular Board meetings January 12, 2023, to April 13, 2023 (N=7)

Agenda		Operation of Mtg by Trustee President		Trustee Member Participation	
Indicators	Yes/No/ Some	Indicators	Yes/No/ Some	Indicators	Yes/No/ Some
Well-organized meeting agenda	Yes	All Trustees were present*	Yes	Trustees kept their comments or questions focused on the agenda items	Yes
Focus: 2024 staff presentations	Some (43%)	The Board President guided the meeting effectively	Yes	Board president made certain all Trustees had equal opportunity to present their views	Yes
Public Comment available	Yes	Closure on each agenda item was obtained before the Board moved to the next item.	Yes	Trustees avoided negative, disrespectful or derogatory remarks to other Trustees or presenters	Yes
Average Meeting Time: 1 hour and 26 minutes		Range of Meeting Time: 44 minutes to 1 hour 56 minutes			

\*Some members were not in-person, but on the phone and/or joined later in the meeting

### **Fall 2021 Meeting Analysis**

During the fall 2021 meetings analyzed by PCG, the Board's level of professionalism deteriorated from August to December during the seven regular Board meetings as demonstrated by the Trustees' lack of

respect for other Board members and staff. That level of disrespect was mirrored by the Public Comment section of the meetings where the public escalated their behavior through raised voices, threats, holding negative signage, and the use of inappropriate language. The Board President admonished both the public and Trustees without raising her voice, but many times she had little or limited impact on behavior in the Board room. Trustees ignored the rules of governance (Robert's Rules of Order) and interrupted Board members who were recognized by the President, left the dais, or created tension through side conversations which escalated to name calling. The public, on many occasions, chastised the behavior of the Board members and pleaded with them to bring back some sense of decorum. A focus on student outcomes was not observed.

#### ***Spring 2023 Meeting Analysis***

The Board of Trustees meetings' tone, focus, and collaboration changed dramatically during the January to April 2023 meetings as observed by PCG. Trustees kept to agenda items, provided comments on action items without disrespecting other Trustees who may not have agreed, and included *Focus: 2024* presentations by CCSD staff. Emotions no longer ran high and there was predictability with each meeting, unlike in the fall of 2021. Meeting times were reduced from an average of six hours to approximately an hour and a half.

However, discussions regarding action items were not always deep and many questions were previously asked during the "Board briefing" out of the public view. This included no discussion by the Trustees on the many Consent Agenda items passed with one vote even though, at times, there was public comment on those items.

It is worth noting that the Board of Trustees meetings are more concise under the new Board. However, board meetings averaging approximately 1.5 hours may not be sufficient to adequately discuss important student outcome issues. In fact, some meetings analyzed within the January to April 2023 timeframe spent more time devoted to Public Comment, where the Board cannot respond to the public, than on Trustees' questions and discussion on the student outcomes presentation.

Both staff and community focus group participants mentioned the Board meetings were previously an embarrassment, but now it seems that the Board "overcorrected" with less discussion and information being provided to the public.

#### ***Student Input***

Many school boards have a non-voting student member to ensure student input is provided on action items, including large urban systems such as LA Unified School District, Chicago Public Schools, NYC Public Schools, and Miami Dade Public Schools. Student voice was not present in any of the meetings observed by PCG.

While CCSD has convened the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, the roles of a non-voting student Board member and the Council are different. The Student Advisory Council works on addressing and solving problems within the schools (i.e., chronic absenteeism, mental health issues, student engagement), the non-voting student Board member provides a student voice on issues and action items being discussed during Board meetings. A Student Advisory Council does not adequately replace the role played by a non-voting student Board member.

### *Stakeholder Voices*

Focus group participants shared their perceptions of Board conduct, including recent improvements.

### *Staff Voices*

- *I have seen two different boards. The new Board is more collaborative compared to the old Board. The issues with the old board filtered down into the schools.*
- *The newly elected Board agreed to be more collaborative and supportive of the community and teachers. There will be a positive impact on the district if that continues.*
- *The Board chair is professional and direct. She won't get into public bickering, and it affects the morale of the district when the Board says terrible things.*
- *The Board is now supportive of what we are trying to do. They now definitely understand the work and respect and value the work of the staff.*
- *The Board tolerated people yelling at them and being disrespectful, that culture trickled into the classroom. It has calmed down now with the new Board.*
- *With the new Board, we are not reality TV anymore. There have been shifts in individuals' priorities and because meetings are more 'boring,' those with different agendas or priorities have gone elsewhere. Now we can focus on the work and be more productive.*

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROGRESS MONITORING OF FOCUS: 2024**

### *Focus on Student Outcomes*

When *Focus: 2024* presentations were part of the agenda, the discussion did not typically focus on the data or on the success or challenges of the strategies being implemented by the district. The observed discussion was not framed around what CCSD could do better to improve results, but rather on how the community, municipality, or state needs to "step up."

Additional analysis of Board of Trustees meetings' emphasis on *Focus: 2024* includes:

- Fewer than half of all meetings had a presentation on *Focus: 2024* goals during the spring 2023 meetings reviewed. Only one meeting during the 2021 meetings reviewed had a *Focus: 2024* presentation. This does not meet the 60% target set by the Strategic Plan.
- *Focus: 2024* targets are not being met.
- Board discussions on the presentations remained high level. Discussions did not go deeper into how the Board can support conditions to improve student outcome results being presented.

When analyzing Board of Trustees meetings, PCG also reviewed a sample of *Focus: 2024* presentations provided to the public at Board of Trustees meetings. Each presentation consisted of a PowerPoint slide template that is updated with new data. When reviewing all presentations simultaneously, it was noted that there was a significant amount of repetition of the slides from each presentation including:

- Most slides are a near duplicate of a previous presentation apart from an additional year of data.
- The format of the slide decks for all *Focus 2024* goals does not focus on changes in the data or provide an opportunity to reflect on how the changes are positively or negatively impacting the data.
- When additional programs or new strategies have been added that are showing promise, additional slides are not added to the slide deck to provide more in-depth information regarding the improved outcomes.

Focus group participants shared that it is difficult to access *Focus: 2024* Board presentations. PCG had a similar experience during our review.

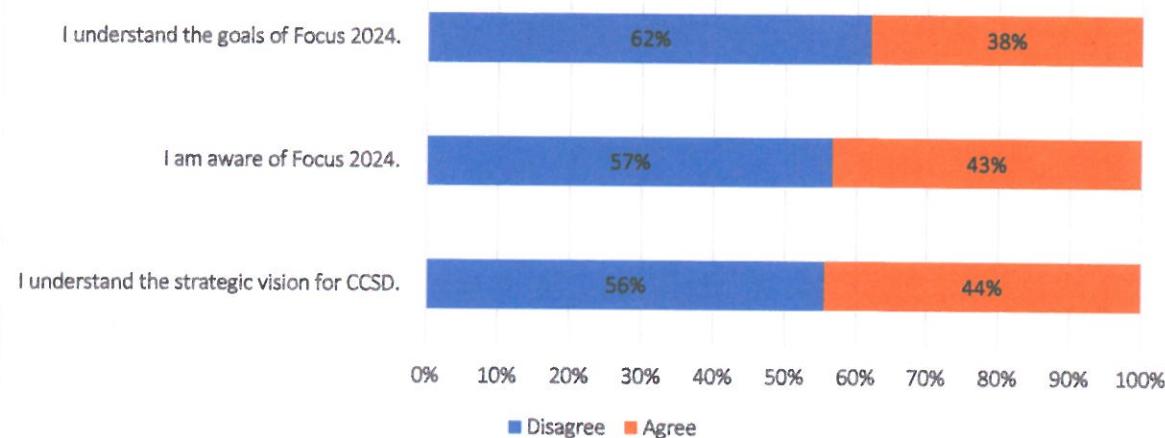
Recent presentations have not been added to the CCSD *Focus: 2024* website but have been added to BoardDocs. Although BoardDocs is a convenient way to store Board materials, it is difficult to maneuver for the public who may not understand how to navigate the system. Additionally, while Board meetings are streamed in Spanish, the minutes, presentations, and work sessions are not translated. Board agendas are translated into Spanish but are stored outside of BoardDocs in the CCSD newsfeed webpage.

#### *Staff Understanding of Focus: 2024*

The Board President publicly stated the importance of reviewing the Strategic Goals in the *Focus: 2024* Plan. This approach provides an opportunity for the public, as well as internal stakeholders, to better understand the Trustee's priority areas measured against CCSD's actual performance in each area.

Survey data indicated a limited understanding within CCSD as to the *Focus: 2024* Strategic Plan priorities.

Figure 9. Staff understanding of *Focus: 2024* (all roles)



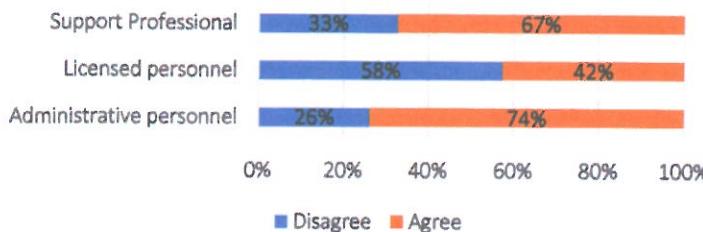
Staff awareness and understanding of *Focus: 2024* in survey responses varied by role.

- 82% of central services administrative personnel and 76% of school-based administrative personnel agreed with the statement "I understand the strategic vision for CCSD" compared to only 38% of school-based licensed personnel.
- 92% of all administrative personnel were aware of *Focus: 2024*. Only 38% of school-based licensed personnel indicated awareness.
- 33% of school-based licensed personnel understand the goals of *Focus: 2024*. 85% of all administrative personnel understand the goals.
- If the majority of CCSD staff are not aware of *Focus: 2024* goals, it is highly likely that parents/guardians and community members have limited awareness.

The tagline for *Focus: 2024* is "Student Success is our Core Business." Only half of all survey respondents agreed with the statement that "the core focus of CCSD is student success." Central services staff were more likely to agree with this statement than school-based staff (65% and 44%, respectively). Agreement

also varied by role, with administrative personnel having much higher levels of agreement than licensed personnel.

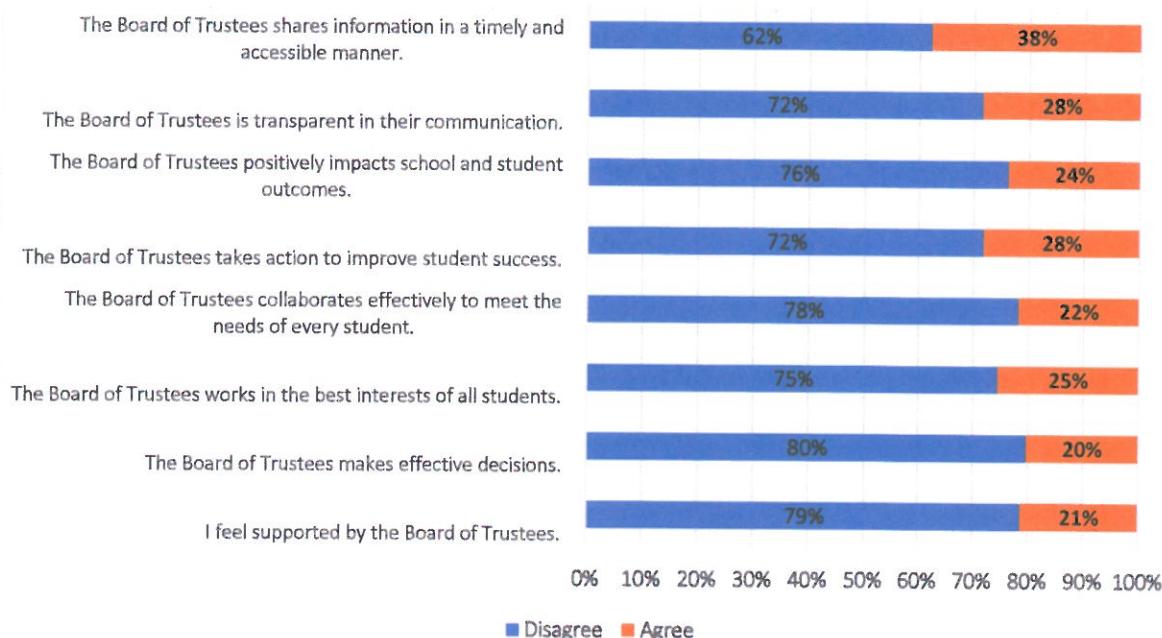
Figure 10. Staff perceptions of the statement "The core focus of CCSD is student success" by role



#### *Staff Perceptions of Board Impact*

Most survey respondents did not have positive perceptions of Board actions, decision-making, or effectiveness. Roughly half of survey respondents reported understanding the role of the Board of Trustees.

Figure 11. Staff perceptions of Board of Trustees Leadership Practices (all roles)



School-based licensed personnel had the lowest levels of agreement with all the above statements, including:

- 24% of school-based licensed personnel agree that the Board of Trustees is transparent in their communication.
- 18% of school-based licensed personnel agree that the Board of Trustees positively impacts school and district outcomes. 27% of school-based administrative personnel agreed with this statement.
- 15% of school-based licensed personnel agree that the Board of Trustees makes effective decisions.
- 20% of school-based staff believe that the Board of Trustees work in the best interest.

- 16% of school-based licensed personnel feel supported by the Board of Trustees. 48% of central services administrative personnel report feeling supported.

### *Findings*

- **Focus on data and outcomes.** The Board of Trustees meeting focus has not always been on reviewing metrics focused on student outcomes. There were many meetings PCG reviewed that never had an agenda item focused on the *Focus: 2024* Strategic Plan. During the seven regular Board Meetings, in the fall of 2021, no meetings discussed student outcomes. When there were presentations, the *Focus: 2024* items were operational. From January 2023 to April 2023, there were meetings with a focus on student outcomes such as chronic absenteeism and discipline, as well as operational items. However, more than half of the meetings (four out of seven) did not have any presentation on *Focus: 2024* goals.
- **Professionalism.** The lack of respect and professionalism during the fall of 2021 was notable. Board governance norms were ignored, and Trustees would speak out without recognition and engage in arguments with other Board members. There has been a significant amount of time and resources spent to provide training to the Board of Trustees so they can better understand their roles and adhere to the policies and procedures that ensure a meeting is well run and that the business of the Board gets completed. While there appears to be progress towards correcting these behaviors, public perception of earlier Board conduct still impacts the perceived efficacy of the Board.
- **Transparency.** The Board of Trustees has worked to reorganize the Board meetings to make them more efficient and productive. However, there seems to be confusion by the public regarding the Consent Agenda and the lack of transparency of the items. Currently, the Consent Agenda averages 17 items per meeting, with some meetings having more than 24 items. There is availability for the public to comment on the agenda, but for most people watching meetings from home, there is no easy way to understand what the Consent Agenda items include. The current practice is that the Trustees receive a briefing in small groups to ensure there is no violation of the Open Meeting Law on agenda items the week before the Board meeting. Many of the action items are discussed another time at the Board meeting, but Consent Agenda items are not.
- **Lack of student voice.** Board meetings were more focused on adult behaviors than student needs. Yet, students are those most impacted by Board decisions. Student voice was not present in any of the meetings observed by PCG. The Superintendent's Student Advisory Council reported not having any connection to the Board of Trustees or an understanding of their role.

## 6. DISTRICT LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

### *Research Based Practices*

Effective superintendents have processes in place to facilitate communication and collaboration with their boards of education, establish and maintain effective relationships with school staff, and engage the external community. They recognize the importance of involving multiple stakeholders to inform decision-making, communicate processes, and celebrate accomplishments.<sup>10</sup> By communicating timely and relevant information (i.e., student achievement data) to all stakeholders, a superintendent builds trust, provides actionable guidance on personnel and programs, and demonstrates responsiveness to situations that arise within the district. Furthermore, to build a positive climate and culture, superintendents must foster an atmosphere in the district built on mutual respect, trust, and cooperation. When the school district is characterized by mutual respect and shared work values, it results in a higher level of collegiality among the staff, which produces increased commitment and improved performance.<sup>11</sup> This also includes developing a vision based upon stakeholder input, sharing information, using critical evaluation to come up with better solutions, implementing professional learning to gain improvement, and making tough decisions even when it may involve personal risk.<sup>12</sup>

### *Staff Perceptions of District Leadership Impact*

Survey responses related to district leadership impact were more positive than perceptions of Board leadership. However, responses still indicate significant improvement opportunities. Nearly 75% of all staff surveyed believe that effective decisions are not being made by the leadership team. Half of all respondents reported understanding the role of CCSD leadership.

- School-based staff had a less favorable view of district leadership than central services staff.
- Licensed personnel and support staff had a less favorable view than administrative personnel.
- School-based licensed personnel had the least favorable view of district leadership across all job roles.
- Central services administrative staff had the most favorable view.

These breakdowns are consistent with what we heard from focus group participants.

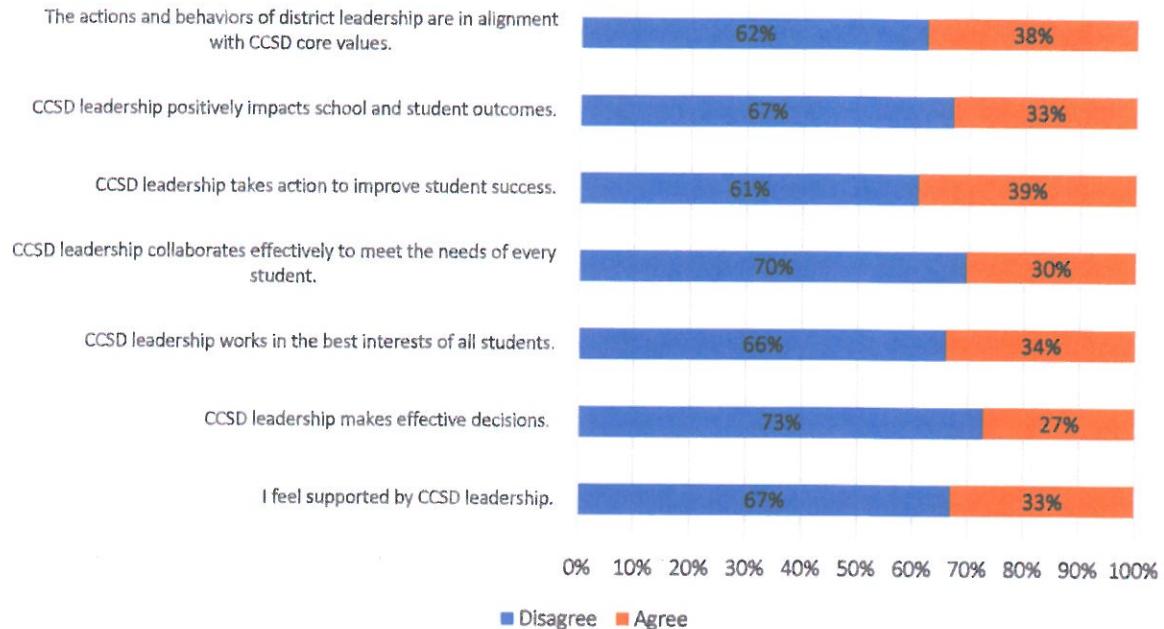
<sup>10</sup> Crawford, D.L. (2014). *Leadership Characteristics and Practices of American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Superintendents of the Year and Finalists*. Online Theses and Dissertations. 252. <https://encompass.eku.edu/etd/252>

<sup>11</sup> Sergiovanni, T. J. (2007). *Rethinking Leadership: A Collection of Articles*. (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

<sup>12</sup> Yukl, G. (2006). *Leadership in organizations*. (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

## CULTURE AND CLIMATE STUDY REPORT

Figure 12. Staff perceptions of district leadership impact (all roles)

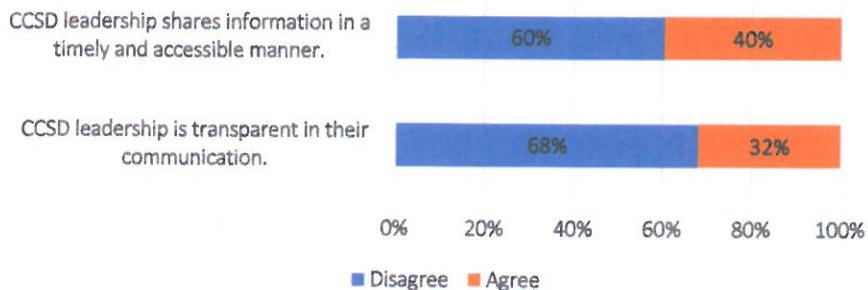


- Half of school-based administrative personnel and a quarter of school-based licensed personnel feel supported by district leadership.
- 21% of all licensed personnel believe district leadership makes effective decisions, compared to 42% of all administrative personnel.
- 65% of central services administrative personnel versus 27% of school based licensed personnel believe that CCSD leadership works in the best interest of all students.
- Half of all central services staff versus a quarter of all school-based staff believe that CCSD leadership collaborates effectively.
- One-third of school-based staff believe that the actions and behaviors of CCSD leadership are in alignment with CCSD core values compared to half of central services staff.

### *Staff Perceptions of District Communications*

The theme of communication by district leadership surfaced across all focus groups: administrators, teachers, parent groups, community groups, business groups, and students. The overwhelming consensus was that the district lacked effective communication. District leadership reported they are communicating and that their messages are not being shared as they make their way down the organizational chain into schools.

Figure 13. Staff perceptions of district communication practices (all roles)



Support staff survey respondents had the highest level of support for district communication practices.

- 46% of all support professionals agree that CCSD leadership is transparent in their communication compared to 37% of administrative personnel and 27% of school-based personnel.
- Similarly, half of all support personnel believe CCSD leadership's communication is timely and transparent.
- School-based staff had much lower levels of agreement about communication and information being timely, accessible, and transparent than central services staff.

Central services staff focus group participants shared concern around the practice of informing principals of new policies or initiatives prior to central staff who may oversee that area. They believed it put them in a reactive mode, left them feeling underprepared and less responsive to school-based staff.

#### *Initiative Overload and Feedback Loops*

The Office of Teaching and Learning's focus on the development of K-12 standards-based curriculum coupled with the purchase of high-quality instructional materials using ESSER money, was appreciated by teacher focus group participants. However, with the ESSER requirement of spending all funds before the fall of 2024, an unintended consequence is that school-based staff reported feeling overwhelmed by the task of learning so many new curricula and curricular materials. Ideally, asking teachers to pilot a program, provide feedback to the district, scale up district-wide with training and support happens within a minimum of a three-year period. LETRS, the literacy training adopted by the district, has significant evidence of its effectiveness, but requires intense training similar to a master's level course.

The district's focus on standards alignment, high quality material, professional development, and goal setting are all best practices that should improve student growth. However, all the new and, in some instances, first-time expectations and accountability coupled with the new material and lack of certified staff in some schools have added significant pressure at the building level. Change is always difficult, but at the "warp speed" expected by CCSD and the lack of communication regarding the "why and how" changes are being implemented have led staff to report feeling frustrated and unsupported.

Many teacher focus group participants asked, "Why can't we be at the table to provide a voice" as the district rolls out this large number of initiatives? There was a perception among school-based focus group participants that they have limited to no input around district initiatives. However, the district's practice is to convene small groups of teachers and leaders to give feedback on new initiatives or policy rollouts. Central services administrative personnel who participated in focus groups and interviews believe there is an active effort to seek out teacher and school-based administrative input. This discrepancy in the perception of input gathering and feedback loops was a theme that emerged across a number of focus groups.

### *Focus: 2024 Alignment to Work*

Members of the Executive Cabinet and others in district leadership positions indicated a strong alignment between their daily work and the district's Strategic Plan. It was reported that there are currently 30 projects within the district that have alignment to *Focus: 2024*.

- There is conversation about adjusting *Focus: 2024* to *Focus: 2026* due to the disruption of the pandemic. As explained during interviews, "we needed to pause for the two years of COVID, so we are looking at 2-year extension to the plan."
- It was shared that *Focus: 2024* has aggressive targets that were intended to be more aspirational than attainable.
- While the plan was shared with the community before it was passed, there was little stakeholder input gathered to inform its development.
- The district is building a project management system that includes the *Focus: 2024* goals and strategies. This includes creating robust metrics to measure the plan.

### *Stakeholder Voices*

Staff, student, family, and community focus group participants share feedback related to communication coming from district leaders.

#### **Staff Voices**

- *Educators have to be included on the big decisions. There won't be any improvement without soliciting their input.*
- *The Superintendent's videos never covered the change in grading. The policy change was communicated through an email from principals.*
- *The information provided to us about moving to the Transformation Network was terrible. They told us to show up to a meeting and not tell anyone. It's not thought through. We are building the plane as we are flying it.*
- *Communication is lacking so much. It affects everyone. We need more communication that's open and transparent.*
- *Public updates on how students are performing now occur. This didn't happen previously. Dr. Jara tells the Board what is good and what is not. There's more transparency.*
- *Communication is one-directional. I send stuff up all the time and I have no idea what happens with it. I'm not sure if it even gets to Cabinet. The feedback loop is faulty.*
- *We have to wait until the principals get the news. The standard protocol is that principals get priority and then central office. That changed with the re-org, putting principals at the top, and in charge of their own budget and everything.*

#### **Student Voices**

- *There is not a lot of communication from the Superintendent. Things that are happening are not well communicated. There are lots of things he is doing but people don't know. It is hard to measure success if nobody knows what is going on.*
- *The only memory I have of Dr. Jara is a video he sent about fighting and I was worried about getting expelled.*
- *Most students see the Superintendent for the first time at graduation when they are leaving the district.*

### **Family and Community Voices**

- *Communication isn't there. Newsletters and emails don't share enough key information and are not broken down in a way that parents will be able to fully understand what is going on.*
- *We need a partnership playbook, with rules for engagement with CCSD. It should be a living document that the district can update so that we can ensure we are following protocols. We got penalized for not following a protocol that we didn't know existed. A playbook will allow us to be better partners.*

### **Findings**

- **Staff lacks information and input on decision-making.** At levels below central services administrative staff, staff focus group participants shared the perception that decisions were made without any awareness by those who need to implement or oversee the outcome of that decision. There was a level of frustration that the people making the decision had no idea the ripple effect of the decision being made.
- **Gaps in internal communication.** Staff perceived that there is no intentionality around information dissemination to various groups. The Wire is a strong start, but many reported finding it overwhelming and difficult to maneuver. Videos from the Superintendent are seen as "a promotion tool for the Superintendent," rather than serving as a conduit for information dissemination. Many staff focus group members shared that they get more information from their Facebook groups than they do from the district. Facebook groups can be a communication tool to supplement information-sharing, but a group of staff sharing "what they heard" as the most reliable form of communication adds to the lack of trust and misinformation circulating throughout CCSD.
- **Staff are overwhelmed.** Teachers and leaders reported appreciating a newly aligned curriculum with high-quality curricular materials that ensured teachers no longer needed to use their own funds to buy classroom material. However, school-based staff focus group participants also shared that trying to learn everything at once was leading to significant burn out and resentment. Furthermore, in addition to new curriculum, teachers and leaders are required to participate in a district-designed PLC model, with a new focus on MTSS, Social Emotional Learning, and Restorative Justice. Each of these topics is important, but it is impossible to learn and implement everything within the same timeframe without impacting the quality of the implementation and the success of the programs.
- **Lack of transparency.** There is a belief amongst stakeholders that a lack of transparency permeates CCSD. Transparency can help to eliminate assumptions stakeholders make or the misinformation they hold as fact about anything new coming from district leadership. Perceptions from every stakeholder group were that transparency is more the exception than the norm.

## **BOARD AND DISTRICT COLLABORATION**

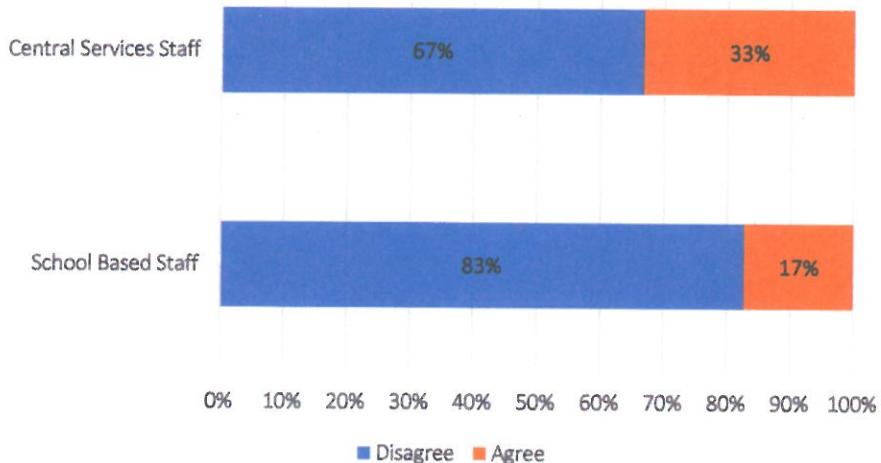
Successful collaboration and communication between the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent requires frequent and respectful communication both in and out of "official settings", such as Board meetings. Past incidents between the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent have been a roadblock to repairing relationships and building trust. When interviewing members of the Board of Trustees, it was clear that all members were looking forward to moving ahead with a renewed focus on improving conditions within the district for student success. However, the tribalism of the Board as evidenced by many previous votes with a 4-3 split will take time to repair along with rebuilding a trusting relationship. While Board members may have differing political views and beliefs regarding educational priorities, they were all unified on the necessity for the Board of Trustees to confront and address problems within CCSD to create conditions for student success.

There continues to be old wounds that have not been healed between some Trustees and the Superintendent. Issues such as perceived favoritism, lack of communication, transparency, and trust were mentioned during the interviews of Trustees and the Superintendent. Some Trustees and the Superintendent spoke about "level setting" expectations on many issues within the schools, the community, and with partners both in the business community and the political realm. Since all Trustees and the Superintendent are looking forward to a renewed focus on student outcomes, this would be the ideal time to level-set all expectations on communication and collaboration to achieve that goal.

#### *Staff Perceptions on Board of Trustee and District Leadership Collaboration*

Most survey respondents do not believe that the Board of Trustees and District Leadership work well together.

Figure 14: Staff perceptions of Board and district leadership collaboration by role



Only 22% of all staff agree that district leadership and the Board of Trustees work well together. School-based licensed personnel had the lowest level of agreement at 17%, with 47% strongly disagreeing with this statement. One-third of district-based administrative personnel and 22% of school-based administrative personnel agreed with this statement.

#### *Stakeholder Voices*

Stakeholders shared their perspectives on the relationship between the Board and the Superintendent.

- *There is a disconnect between the Board and the Superintendent which is why we are not getting anything done. People need to feel heard and connected to leaders.*
- *Board relationships are changing. Last year, they would not take a group photo together. It has taken work to make that happen.*
- *People in this community want a change from what has been going on between the Board and Superintendent. They also want peace, which is why the new Board is trying to be cognizant of each other's opinions and be more respectful.*
- *The perception of the Board and Trustees' relationship affects the climate in the schools. They are working on improving the perception. It has gotten better, but there have been times where it has been really negative and unprofessional.*

- *Contention that the Board has had over the last few years has caused stagnation. The contention with the Superintendent impacts everyone. The focus is no longer on teachers or students, it's on conflict between the Superintendent and the Board. Leadership is dealing with egos rather than kids in classrooms who have needs that need to be met.*

*Findings*

- **Trustee and Superintendent relationships.** The district has major communication issues and the current way the Board and Superintendent are operating is not resulting in any significant progress toward increased student achievement. While there has been a noticeable shift in the tone and focus of the Board of Trustees and the Superintendent as mentioned by all stakeholder groups, there is still a long way to go. Staff wonder how long the “honeymoon” will last with the new Board of Trustees. There needs to be a sense of urgency to clear up any lingering issues and move forward.
- **Transparent communication.** Board members perceived access to information as unequal. Traditionally, in every Board, there is more communication and information shared between the Board President and the Superintendent. With that said, failing to provide equal access to the same information for all Board members exacerbates the mistrust and broken relationships that have occurred over the past few years.

## 7. COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

### *Research Based Practices*

Superintendents and board members must establish regular board communication, instill transparency, and build strong communication strategies to create the most effective, highly functioning school boards. Defining board roles, navigating conflict, creating transparency, establishing meeting norms, and recognizing the value of individual contributions are all part of establishing and sustaining effective board communication and collaboration. Transparency and honesty are critical to a high performing school board and superintendent.<sup>13</sup> It is about keeping everyone informed with the same accurate information. The superintendent is tasked with keeping the board informed and each board member is given access to the same information at the same time. The lack of accurate and timely information leads to conflict, which can be destructive to the relationships between board members and superintendent. Therefore, superintendents and boards should prioritize keeping disagreements from becoming personal, but rather focus on the success of the district.<sup>14</sup>

Effective school boards also have a collaborative relationship with district staff and the community and establish strong communication structures. Those efforts inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals. Effective communication helps to build trust, enhance decision-making, and protect the organization's reputation. Many times, a bad situation is made worse by poor communication.<sup>15</sup> Improving board communication combines communication skills with using the right outlets to accurately inform the public.

Communication practices and transparency surfaced as major themes across stakeholder data collection.

### *Messaging*

Part of the Board of Trustees' role is to communicate during public meetings. At times, the communication is informative, other times it is in response to a presentation or statement made by other Trustees. However, when communicating about CCSD issues, communication often has a negative tone.

It was observed even when there is good news, such as the recent announcement of a record amount of funding from the state for the upcoming school year, the positive news was tempered with statements related to continued external constraints. While that information might play into the struggles the district is facing, it is received negatively by stakeholders. Recognizing the roadblocks faced by the district, there are still many things to celebrate and message in positive ways.

The negative messages coming from the Board of Trustees and Superintendent's Office directly impact the climate and culture at the schools. If the leaders cannot be optimistic about progress being made, additional funding being received, or community partnerships being established, it is difficult for both internal and external stakeholders to feel optimistic as well.

### *Student Growth Perceptions*

Education rankings are an example of this negative messaging. PCG heard from numerous sources, including district leadership, that Las Vegas ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in education nationally. This statistic also showed up numerous times in news articles and in speeches by the current Governor. This ranking comes from a

<sup>13</sup> eBOARDsolutions. (2021). *Essential Steps to Establishing and Sustaining Effective Board Communication*. Board Governance Best Practices. Retrieved from: <https://eboardsolutions.com/essential-steps-to-establishing-and-sustaining-effective-board-communication/>

<sup>14</sup> Hanover Research. (2014). *Effective Board and Superintendent Collaboration*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hanoverresearch.com/media/Effective-Board-and-Superintendent-Collaboration-Featured.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Eisenstein, L. (2019). *Best practices for improving board member communications*. BoardEffect. Retrieved from: <https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/best-practices-improving-board-member-communications>.

Thomas B. Fordham Institute and U.S. Chamber of Commerce report entitled *America's Best and Worst Metro Areas for School Quality*.<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting several national education rankings exist, all with different ranking outcomes.<sup>17</sup>

A national measure of student academic achievement is the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP not only compares state results, but also the 26 largest urban school districts in the country as well. CCSD is part of the comparative group. NAEP data, as well as CCSD's national ranking amongst other urban districts, appear to not be well-communicated within the district or community.

In 2022, NAEP was given for the first time since 2019. Typically, the assessment is given every other year, but with the number of schools in quarantine during 2021, the exam was postponed until 2022. When the results were released in October 2022, the data showed that an overwhelming majority of states saw significant score declines among fourth and eighth graders in math and reading between 2019 and 2022, with students posting the largest score declines ever recorded in math. While CCSD data also showed student declines, the data showed less decline than many of the other large urban districts throughout the country.

Using the results of the 2022 NAEP, CCSD ranks solidly in the middle in fourth grade reading and math and in eighth grade math. CCSD ranks in the top third in grade 8 reading when compared to other large urban school districts.

Figure 15. Overall ranking amongst 26 large urban school districts on the 2022 NAEP

Grade Level Content	Overall Ranking Amongst 26 Large Urbans on 2022 NAEP
Grade 4 Reading	13 out of 26
Grade 4 Math	13 out of 26
Grade 8 Reading	7 out of 26
Grade 8 Math	10 out of 26

The lack of knowledge and misinformation regarding student outcomes held by stakeholders is compounded by the lack of communication by district leadership regarding NAEP results. After NAEP data were released in October 2022, CCSD did not make a formal presentation at a regular Board meeting about CCSD's NAEP results. This was a missed opportunity to dispel the "myth" that Las Vegas ranks "49<sup>th</sup>" in education in the country.

By communicating comparative student outcomes data to both internal and external stakeholders, there may be more confidence that district leadership has a plan that could prove effective in supporting students.

#### *Deficit Mindset*

A deficit mindset is when leaders and staff focus on problems rather than potential.<sup>18</sup> It causes educators to lower their expectations of what is possible based on what the district or schools are lacking rather than

<sup>16</sup> Wooten-Greener, J. (2021). "Las Vegas area schools ranked second-worst in nation for quality." Las Vegas Review-Journal. Retrieved from: <https://www.reviewjournal.com/local/education/las-vegas-area-schools-ranked-second-worst-in-nation-for-quality-2493177/>

<sup>17</sup> Kenny Guinn Center for Education Priorities. (n.d.). *National Education Rankings: What Nevada Can Learn*. Retrieved from:

[https://doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/Boards\\_Commissions\\_Councils/State Board of Education/2022/July/Guinn Center Nevada Education Rankings Phase I and II Report June 2022.pdf](https://doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/Boards_Commissions_Councils/State Board of Education/2022/July/Guinn Center Nevada Education Rankings Phase I and II Report June 2022.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Davis, L. L., & Museus, S. D. (2019). *What Is Deficit Thinking? An Analysis of Conceptualizations of Deficit Thinking and Implications for Scholarly Research*. Currents, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.3998/currents.17387731.0001.110>

what can be built upon. This mindset can also trickle down to classrooms with a focus on what students can or cannot do based on race, poverty, or disabilities. When consistent communication is rooted in a deficit mindset, it is a powerful factor in success versus failure. An asset-based mindset is shifting from an attitude of what cannot be accomplished to what has not been accomplished yet. As asset-based perspective shifts the negative messaging at Board meetings from focusing on everything the district is missing or blaming outside factors for the district's problems to "how can we build on the strengths of CCSD to accomplish our goals?"

PCG observed a deficit mindset messaging approach in our review of Board and district leadership communications. Communications frequently focused on the external factors that inhibited success, rather than the existing building blocks that currently exist within the district that can be leveraged to yield more positive outcomes.

#### *Stakeholder Outreach*

The Board of Trustees has identified stakeholder outreach and communication as a priority and are currently planning community meetings. This spring, Trustees and the Superintendent's Office held four Community Conversations to discuss priorities for CCSD's budget. The meetings were well received, but less than 150 community members in total attended despite broad outreach.

Community focus groups, including business groups, community partner organizations, and parent groups, all reported struggling to connect and communicate with the Board and with the Superintendent. Across all community focus groups, participants shared that they want to support CCSD, but were unsure if that should be done through the Superintendent's Office or with the Board of Trustees. One community partner group described needing a "playbook" on how to go about making the connections. Business and community partner focus group participants shared the desire for more explicit communication from the district and/or the Board of Trustees on how they could provide support.

Parent group participants stated that they previously had representation on a Board of Trustees Parent Advisory Committee, but the Board of Trustees disbanded the group. They were never told why the group was disbanded.

#### *Local Media*

Local media plays a role in informing the community. Media coverage of CCSD has been primarily focused on the negative aspects of the district. PCG reviewed 40 randomly selected news stories from October 2022 to April 2023. The news stories were drawn from both Las Vegas daily newspapers and local television news programming.

- 64% of the news stories portrayed CCSD negatively.
- 23% of the news stories were informational.
- 13% were a positive or human-interest story.

#### *Social Media Communication*

In 2023, social media plays a significant role in communicating to the public. The difference between news media and social media is that there is no fact-checking and rumors, gossip, and innuendos are taken as fact by many participants. PCG reviewed the CCSD-related Twitter feed to assess the activity on the platform focused on the district. Twitter was selected as it does not require an invitation to join and is less reliant on private sites. PCG was made aware of issues with tweets with previous Board of Trustees members, including an admonishment by a former Board President to other Board members during the June 8, 2022, Board of Trustees work session.

PCG reviewed Twitter messages from all current Board members, former Board members holding office during 2022, the Superintendent, CCSD, and tweets from residents of Clark County from January to April

2023 when the current Board of Trustees members were sworn into office. It would be impossible to review all postings, responses, and retweets of messages and therefore we reviewed a sample of the activity focused on CCSD. The goal was to get an overview of the tone, messages, and responses by CCSD, Trustees, the Superintendent, and the public.

- **CCSD:** There were over 800 tweets or retweets from the CCSD Twitter account from January to April 2023. Messages were either informational, celebratory, and/or student focused. Some informational tweets were repeated throughout the three months. Views on the site ranged from around 300 views to over 8,000 views. One tweet from the Superintendent regarding a death of a student received 58,000 views.
- **Superintendent:** There were no active tweets from the Superintendent's CCSD account during the January to April 2023 timeframe. The last tweet was in January 2022.
- **CCSD Trustee Official Account:** There were less than 30 tweets and all were focused on upcoming scheduled meetings.
- **Board of Trustee Members (*unofficial*):** Three Board of Trustees members were very active with almost daily tweets, three had no activity during the January to April 2023 timeframe and one Board member's account was made private. PCG did not find any instances of tweets that included derogatory statements regarding other current Board members or CCSD.
- **External Audiences:** There were negative tweets almost daily regarding CCSD. Some of them were in response to Board of Trustees meetings, news stories from events in the schools, state politics, or general anger and frustration focused on the district. Many of the tweets were from a small group of sources.

#### *Stakeholder Voices*

Staff, students, families, and community members shared their perceptions related to communication and transparency.

#### **Staff Voices**

- *There is little respect for the Board by the community, business community, legislators, and county commissioners.*
- *An old former Board member used to come to my school once a month to meet and discuss issues or concerns within the building. Recently I called a new Board member with a problem and was told by a supervisor to never call a Board member again with a problem.*
- *I only know who the Trustees are because I have watched the Board meetings. They have never been on my campus despite being asked multiple times.*
- *School Board meetings feel like the decision has already been made; public comment is just to make the public happy.*

#### **Student Voices**

- *I know that the Board is above the Superintendent. Before I had a teacher who is on a committee, I knew nothing about them. Now we talk about things that are happening in the district.*
- *We are not taught about the Board of Trustees in school. They need to humanize themselves and introduce themselves. Region leaders should do the same thing. They should speak to the students.*
- *We should know about the Board of Trustees as we are in the position of Student Advisors. If we know these people, there is a higher chance that we can do something with them and see some change.*
- *Everything I see about CCSD is negative. It makes me feel ashamed.*

- *Media highlights positive things for a short time while they do the negative stories longer.*
- *I get super defensive when I see negative media stories. I enjoy seeing star students on the CCSD browsers. It is very positive.*
- *It concerns me that when the media puts out negative stories, it could impact my ability to get into colleges as I am applying right now.*
- *It's okay to have critical media, but they say that we are not as good as kids in other school districts such as LA, Miami, or New York City.*
- *I get discredited even as a good student due to the negative media attention.*
- *If you continue to hear negative and bad things about yourself, you begin to believe them.*

### **Family and Community Voices**

- *The Board does not have a system to track and monitor issues brought to them, including climate and culture issues. Not tracking issues means you can't quantify it to know if it's a school, region, or district issue.*
- *Trustees overcorrected in an attempt to separate operational and governance that they forgot to engage with their constituents. They forgot that they're elected officials. They are loyal to their tribes, their cheering squads.*
- *There are so many steps for parents to jump through that Trustees are able to bury complaints and say, "I'm not aware of that."*
- *The communication process has not been fixed.*
- *There is limited accessibility to the Trustees; they need to be out more in the community.*
- *There is not enough representation of parents within the district when asked for input. The question is, 'Are parents not feeling engaged or not aware that they have Trustees?'*

### **Findings**

- **A comprehensive districtwide communication plan is needed.** A well-designed communication plan is key to developing community trust and support. The district does not currently have a comprehensive districtwide communication plan. There are components of a communication plan in various offices as well as some communication protocols in place, but it is not a cohesive and coherent system.
- **Negative messaging.** There is negative messaging regarding the district from stakeholders, in both traditional and social media, and at Board of Trustee meetings. Public Comment is more than 95% negative as well as public citizens' comments on Twitter. Over half of the news stories released each week had a negative tone or message. Those negative messages are heard in schools throughout the district, but more importantly by students who attend district schools.
- **Stakeholder groups feel disconnected.** All stakeholder focus groups reported a level of disconnection from the Board of Trustees. Many participants stated that they wanted to support the work of the Board, but they did not know how to engage with the Board. Several school-based staff and student focus groups participants shared they have never seen a Trustee at a school event. Parent groups believed that they felt heard before the disbanding of the Parent Advisory Committee, but now feel ignored. Business and community groups want to do more but are unsure of how they can be helpful. Intentional effort needs to be made to build bridges with stakeholder groups.
- **Media stories impact students.** Students were clear that negative stories about CCSD impact their mindset about the district. Student focus group participants were well-aware of the reputation of the district. Students reported worrying that the negativity surrounding CCSD will impact their future success.

## 8. CLIMATE AND CULTURE

### *Research Based Practices*

School culture, as reported by teachers, is critical to the kinds of improvements in learning and achievement that a district can accomplish.<sup>19</sup> Research shows that culture plays an important role in efforts to improve a district, both in what is possible to accomplish and what is difficult to change. Culture is an essential element for the effective implementation of strategic decisions and for district sustainability.<sup>20</sup> PCG uses the definition of culture as the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school or district functions.<sup>21</sup>

### *Morale and Well-being*

When teachers are highly stressed, they feel less satisfied in their jobs and start to develop symptoms of burnout and poor morale within their schools. The pandemic has contributed to more stressful working conditions, which are linked to staff absenteeism, higher turnover, and lower productivity, all of which impact school culture.<sup>22</sup> Negative comments about teachers and leaders made during public forums do not make staff feel supported.

Currently, there are few programs, besides the traditional Employee Assistance Program that provides support. The need to support staff well-being is greater than at any time in recent history, but the district is not equipped to support staff's needs.

The staff survey asked questions related to morale and well-being indicators. In the staff survey:

- 27% of staff believe that CCSD cares about their mental health.
- 45% reported that morale is high in their school.
- 48% of staff reported that they are proud to tell others they work at CCSD.
- 38% are proud of CCSD.

These results align to perceptions from school-based staff focus group participants that district leadership does not care about staff who work in the schools. However, there were some positive trends in the survey data that also suggest the work currently being accomplished by district leadership is starting to show some promise.

The survey findings indicate:

- 68% of staff feel physically safe at work.
- 69% stated they have the tools and resources to do their job.
- 74% stated that CCSD is dedicated to meeting the needs of every student.

<sup>19</sup> The Center on School Turnaround at WestEd. (2018). *Shifting school culture to spark rapid improvement: A quick start guide for principals and their teams*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd.

<sup>20</sup> Johnson, S. M., Marietta, G., Higgins, M. C., Mapp, K. L., & Grossman, A. (2015). *Achieving coherence in district improvement: Managing the relationship between the central office and schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

<sup>21</sup> The Glossary of Education Reform. (2013). Retrieved from: <https://www.edglossary.org/school-culture/>

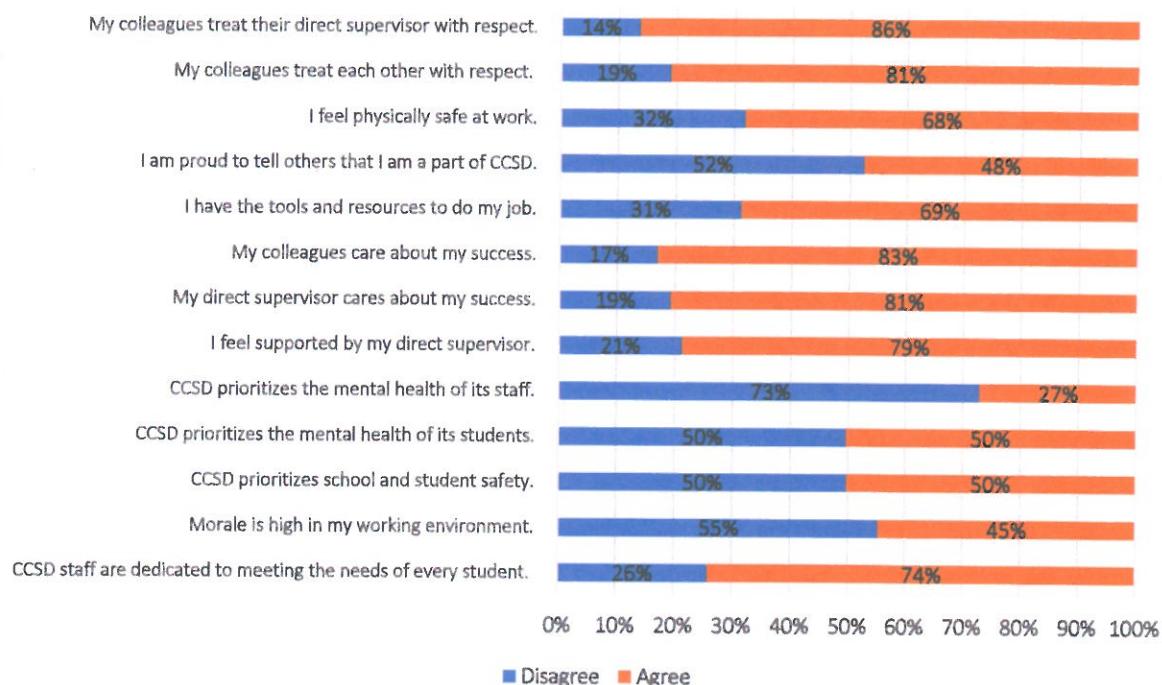
<sup>22</sup> Zamarro, G., Camp, A., Fuchsman, D., & McGee, J.B. (2021). *How the pandemic has changed teachers' commitment to remaining in the classroom*. Brookings Institute. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2021/09/08/how-the-pandemic-has-changed-teachers-commitment-to-remaining-in-the-classroom/>

Additionally, staff report feeling support in their own schools.

- 84% say their colleagues treat their direct supervisor with respect.
- 79% feel supported by their direct supervisor.
- 81% say their direct supervisor cares about their success.
- 81% treat each other with respect.

The survey data show a trend that schools are perceived to be a supportive environment for staff and that it is highly likely that the low morale is due to issues occurring outside of their school. There is mutual respect for direct supervisors as well as staff colleagues. Finally, most staff concur that they have the tools and resources to do their jobs.

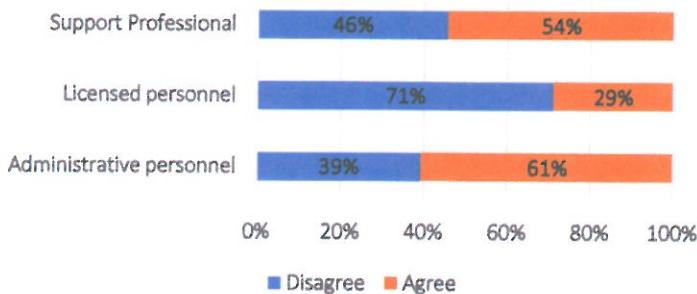
Figure 16. Staff perceptions of their work environment (all roles)



Proud employees feel a greater connection to their work environment and are more engaged, more satisfied, more committed, and stay longer.<sup>23</sup> Pride in the district varied by role, with licensed personnel having the lowest levels of agreement with this statement.

<sup>23</sup> Carr, E. W. (2021). *The Value of Belonging at Work*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2019/12/the-value-of-belonging-at-work>

Figure 17. Staff agreement with the statement "I am proud of CCSD" by role



#### AB469

AB469 has an impact on morale at the school level. The law has contributed to a contentious relationship between district leadership and school principals. The conflicting viewpoints of what the district can and cannot do under the law has been difficult to manage and has added to the declining morale within schools. Focus group participants frequently referenced this confusion. Teachers are unsure who is responsible for decisions being made in their schools, principals are confused as to what authority they may or may not have, the union provides mixed messages, and finger pointing has become part of the culture within the district.

For example, when the district decided to use ESSER funds to purchase curricular materials that would support the Nevada Academic Content Standards, they recognized that the decision to use the material purchased by the district was a decision made at the school level due to AB469. Each school had the choice to purchase their own material out of their school budget or accept the district-purchased material and implement it in their schools. While most of the schools did accept the CCSD-purchased material, there were some schools who decided to stick with what they were using. Although that may not seem like it should matter, the fact that CCSD is a very transient district and students move between schools regularly, not teaching with the same material could impact students' progress as they make the transition.

Inconsistent staffing practices and central services lack of position control also emerged as a significant constraint that has emerged from AB469. It was reported that some buildings are highly resourced, while others have a significant number of staff vacancies.

#### Stakeholder Voices

Staff shared perceptions of working conditions that impact morale, well-being, and an overall commitment to the district.

#### Staff Voices

- *Teacher mental health is an issue. Teachers have taken more time off this year than ever before because they just can't cope any more.*
- *There are no structures in the district set up for teacher wellness. Other districts have great teacher wellness programs, and they are at no cost to staff.*
- *Nobody cares about us in district leadership.*
- *The perception that leadership doesn't know what is happening in their own district (programs, situations that have arisen) contributes to a lot of problems and poor morale. If they knew what was happening in the schools, it would push us towards solving a lot of problems CCSD is facing.*
- *If they really valued mental health and retaining teachers, they would have a dedicated staff member in the district to address the need.*

- *Salary bumps for new teachers created tension in the building; veteran teachers felt disrespected. Mentor teachers are expected to put time into new teachers without compensation while new teachers are making just as much as them.*
- *Support staff are looked at as less than. But the district couldn't survive without them. They need to be treated with more respect.*
- *CCSD is not a good "company to work for." The Board has been an embarrassment and the central leadership doesn't have empathy. If you speak up, you fear retaliation and opportunities are blocked.*

### *Findings*

- **Perception of CCSD's minimal focus on staff well-being.** School-based staff reported the belief that neither district leadership nor the Board of Trustees care about them. They reported comments made at the leadership level that the issues happening in the schools, or the lack of student progress, are due to the "adult issues." There are very few celebrations of good work happening in the schools. There has been some effort on the district's part, such as highlighting teachers through the #TeacherTuesday or "Teachers of the Year" postings on social media. Those efforts are a step in the right direction, but they are limited and do not celebrate the group as a whole. As an example, during the January State of the School address, there was a celebration focused on cinnamon rolls and how much work and collaboration goes into producing and distributing them every day. It was a great opportunity to highlight a team that typically does not get recognition. This needs to happen with greater frequency for all groups within the district.
- **External constraints.** There have been external constraints put on CCSD that other districts in the state do not have to address, specifically AB469. With the intention of promoting a less centralized and more site-based management approach, the law has intensified the contentious relationship between district leadership and principals. The unintended consequence of the law is that it has contributed to the "us against them" mentality, which affects climate and culture issues within the schools. The reality of the situation is that all groups within CCSD, such as district leadership, principals, teachers, and support staff have the same goal: to support student success.
- **New resources and supports are having an impact.** CCSD leadership staff have made a concerted effort to develop and provide additional resources and supports to the schools. Over the past two years, using ESSER funding, the Teaching and Learning team has developed K-12 math and science curriculum and purchased curricular materials to support instruction. Additionally, secondary ELA curriculum and instructional material have been provided for the first time in a decade. It has been a significant undertaking. Staff survey data show 69% of staff agree they have the tools and resources to do their job and focus group feedback indicated that teachers and principals appreciate the resources and supports. While there are some principals who did not choose to use the district material, most stated that the materials were welcomed as they did not have to purchase them out of their own school budget.

## 9. ADDITIONAL PRIORITY AREAS

Two additional themes emerged across nearly every focus group that have a high impact on school climate and culture.

1. Staffing Shortage
2. School Safety

Each of these priority areas warrants further study and deeper review by the district. This chapter provides high level findings that emerged during our data collection and preliminary recommendations the district may wish to consider.

### STAFFING SHORTAGE

#### *Research Based Practices*

Staff shortages are being seen in school districts across the county. Staff shortages mean that the kinds of academic, social, and emotional supports that students need are not available. Without enough teachers and support staff, students are less likely to receive rigorous instruction, are less likely to have access to intensive tutoring to address their learning gaps, are less likely to receive mental health supports, and more than likely will not experience the positive school environments they need to be successful.<sup>24</sup> High turnover also creates instability that disrupts relationships between adults and students and makes it difficult for schools to create coherent instruction and implement new initiatives.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Staffing Shortages*

Staffing shortages, including both permanent full-time positions and substitutes, have hit a crisis level within the district. In the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, CCSD opened schools with 1,400 vacancies. These vacancies have resulted in students being taught by non-certified staff or substitutes throughout the school year. Additionally, there is also a reported shortage of substitute positions, which has led to teachers selling their preps, using support staff as substitutes, administrators or other staff subbing throughout the day, or principals splitting classes and assigning them to other teachers raising the class sizes substantially. While securing sufficient substitutes for classroom coverage is critical to operate each day, the result is that students do not have a certified teacher to teach the curriculum and ensure that students will be college and career ready upon graduation. Furthermore, with the shifting of staff each day, students are exposed to different expectations and a lack of adult relationships that support their social-emotional well-being. If CCSD is going to continue to make progress, there needs to be an effective plan, based on data, to address staffing shortages, both permanent staff as well as substitutes.

#### *Stakeholder Voices*

Staff, students, family, and community focus group participants shared concerns related to the staffing shortage.

#### *Staff Voices*

- *Boards lack of ability to operate effectively has impacted the ability to recruit and hire staff including administrators. Things said during Board meetings are impactful and will impact the district.*

<sup>24</sup> Duncan, E. (2022). *Addressing Shortages in the Short & Long Term*. Education Trust. Retrieved from: <https://edtrust.org/resource/addressing-teacher-shortages-in-the-short-long-term/>

<sup>25</sup> Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). *How teacher turnover harms student achievement*. American Educational Research Journal, 50(1), 4-36.

- *Central office leaders don't address the reality of what we do, don't acknowledge what it's like to walk into your school and figure out how to cover seven empty classrooms, and mitigate the damage you are doing, and be an instructional leader in that moment.*
- *Lots of issues come back to staffing. When there is no sub for a teacher, they split the class and it's horrible. It is good that students are getting instruction from certified staff, but there's not enough space in the classrooms. It is a never-ending battle of "what's today going to look like."*
- *Recruiting is also an issue. Not just retaining teachers. There are not enough teachers in the pipeline to satisfy the issue.*
- *The sub shortage is a real issue. We need consistent adults in the classroom, too many quick fixes right now. It has affected student growth over time. We need a more sustainable system for getting licensed teachers in and keeping them there for the sake of the students. It has been touch and go for the last few years.*
- *CCSD does an electronic survey for all staff who are departing from the district. The two most popular answers to why staff are leaving are personal reasons or moving out of state. Other findings include administrator accountability, work life balance, teacher evaluation process, district policies, and benefits not meeting expectations.*
- *There is a lot of stress about not being able to have the subs that schools need. That stress permeates into the culture and climate of the schools. We know some schools are just fine, but some are really scrambling to cover.*
- *Support professionals need to be paid more. They took away longevity pay for support professionals. They could be making a lot more money in the same role at a different entity.*

### **Student Voices**

- *We have a lot of subs. They still give us stuff to do, but sometimes they don't teach the way we are used to.*
- *Some of the subs don't know what they're doing at times and have to go to Google.*
- *There are a lot of new teachers here now who care about their job, encourage students to do well, they are better teachers.*

### **Family and Community Voices**

- *Positions aren't filled at my child's school. Students say that they're failing classes or not attending classes because there isn't a teacher to even supervise let alone teach.*
- *I am married to a CCSD teacher. There has been a lot of talk about recruitment and retention. My husband is in year 14 of teaching, and only makes \$2,000 more than what the current starting salary for a teacher is in CCSD.*
- *We don't have enough adults in our schools to support students.*

### **Findings**

- **Impact on Students.** PCG heard some fundamental problems that need to be addressed right away that impact school outcomes. The fact that, in many schools, the principal is spending the first few hours every day trying to fill staff vacancies is nothing short of a crisis. Sometimes, specialists are assigned taking away critical services for individual students. Very often, non-qualified staff are used. Focus groups stated that this does not occur everywhere, and some schools are overstaffed due to principal autonomy and inconsistent budgeting. That may be, but it is hard to imagine significantly improving overall student achievement when a significant number of students are not receiving even the most fundamental learning experiences.

- **Recruitment of staff.** A lack of certified teachers is one of the most important issues in CCSD that must be addressed to make any real progress in improving student outcomes. Although there has been a concerted effort to recruit staff, there continues to be a significant gap between the number of certified staff applying for open positions and the number of open positions the district has available. The district data on the success of different recruitment strategies or alternative programs are not clear. Therefore, the CCSD recruitment team may not have a good understanding of which initiatives have shown the most success in recruiting new staff that includes marketing programs such as using billboards in other cities, or the business cards given to teachers this year and the vast number of alternative certification programs. It is important to build on the programs that are successful and eliminate the efforts that have not given you the results that you expected.
- **Retention of staff.** Recruitment of staff is important, but once teachers are hired, it is also important to retain new staff members. Retention strategies must be a top priority for all district and school leadership, there should be a focus on how to keep the talented staff within the district. High teacher turnover rates in schools negatively impact student achievement for all the students in a school, not just those in a new teacher's classroom.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the impact to student learning due to teacher turnover is immeasurable. Turnover also extracts a significant financial cost. Studies suggest that teacher replacement costs, including expenses related to separation, recruitment, hiring, and training, can range from an average of \$9,000- \$20,000 per teacher.<sup>27</sup> Both the impact on student success as well as the financial implications for CCSD provide a compelling argument that strategies to retain teachers should be on all decision-makers in the district throughout the school year.
- **Nevada State University teacher pipeline.** The Board of Trustees approved the School Tuition Assistance Project, a partnership between CCSD and Nevada State College for three million dollars. The Project assists with tuition expenses and student retention efforts for all teacher education and training of students. While CCSD is using their federal money to fund the program and build a pipeline, admission to the program does not require that upon completion, students must initially teach in CCSD. This program's intent is to build a pipeline for CCSD, but there is no requirement for students to 'give back' by teaching for the district.

### *Recommendations*

1. **Create new ways to retain new staff.** Create a New Teacher Ambassador program for CCSD. The New Teacher Ambassador program would be responsible for providing school-based logistical information as well as social-emotional support to all teachers entering CCSD. This program would build a sense of community, belonging, and understanding of the opportunities and challenges of teaching in CCSD. The New Teacher Ambassador program acts as a communications hub, sharing information from the central office to new hires, with particular attention paid to information from the New Teacher Mentor Program. The program's goal would be to increase a sense of support and belonging for all new teachers, which would lead to increased retention.
2. **Develop a Working Conditions Survey.** While asking employees to complete an exit survey provides valuable data as to why staff are leaving the district, the data are received too late to retain valuable staff. Developing a Working Conditions Survey will provide the district leadership team prospectives from CCSD staff about the teaching and learning conditions that support student outcomes and conditions that are barriers to success. These data will provide the district with insight on focus areas that need to be addressed as well as a roadmap for making adjustments in

<sup>26</sup> Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013).

<sup>27</sup> Barnes, G., Crowe, E., & Schaefer, B. (2007). *The cost of teacher turnover in five school districts: A pilot study*. National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

the future. It also elevates staff voice, providing an opportunity for school staff to share their suggestions for improvement.

3. **Continue the “stay conversations” principals have with staff.** If principals are not scheduling “stay conversations” with their top 10% of teachers, then ask them to do so. “Stay conversations” are an effective way to learn more about what your top teachers appreciate about working in their school or CCSD and where there might be room for improvement. Furthermore, stay conversations are also a great way build relationships, express appreciation, and gratitude for teachers’ hard work throughout the year. Additionally, “stay conversations” are an opportunity to collect data on the positive trends as well as the challenges teachers are experiencing within the district. Compile a list of questions that all principals should use in order to easily analyze the data collected.
4. **Incentivize attendance.** Offer incentives for good attendance. Consider an exchange of unused sick days for another reward, such as receiving a bonus equal to the pay you would have been given for sick days, or give recognition to the employees with the least days missed. Material incentives can be effective, but what is more important is fostering an atmosphere of self-respect and enthusiasm in which good attendance is a point of pride. The best incentive you can provide is to give staff meaningful ways to be fully engaged with their school and the district. Staff that feel they are needed are much less likely to miss work.

## SCHOOL SAFETY

### *Research Based Practices*

Safety has become a priority for schools throughout the country. School safety is the foundation of a positive school culture and climate. Students simply cannot learn if they feel unsafe. Teachers and staff deal with everyday disruptions such as fights or other aggressive behavior that can affect school climate and culture.<sup>28</sup> It has been noted by school districts throughout the country that these instances have become more frequent since the pandemic. Because of this increased level of violence in schools, most U.S. public K-12 schools reported taking steps to physically secure buildings and classrooms at a rapid pace. Now almost all schools restrict entry by controlling access to buildings during school hours with measures such as locked or monitored doors and loading docks, requiring visitors to sign or check in and wear a badge, and equipping classrooms with locks so that doors can be locked from the inside.<sup>29</sup>

### *Summary*

CCSD has upgraded safety measures within all schools. Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, CCSD provided wearable instant alert devices built into the badges for all teachers in both elementary and secondary schools throughout the district. Additionally, CCSD has begun to upgrade security cameras and provide more police presence throughout the school day in secondary schools. These measures along with single point entry, locked doors, and training for staff were noted during both focus groups and in survey data. Focus groups suggested that additional programs and support for students could provide strategies that would deter behaviors that require police interventions.

### *Stakeholder Voices*

Staff and student focus group participants shared their perspectives related to school safety.

<sup>28</sup> CENTEGIX. (2022). *Safety Positively Impacts School Climate*. Retrieved from <https://www.centegix.com/school-safety-positively-impacts-school-climate/>

<sup>29</sup> Shaeffer, K. (2022). *US school security procedures have become more widespread in recent years but are still unevenly adopted*. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/07/27/u-s-school-security-procedures-have-become-more-widespread-in-recent-years-but-are-still-unevenly-adopted/>

### **Staff Voices**

- *In one school, a parent threatened to kill the principal and everyone in the school. The district then investigated the school to understand how the leadership responded. There feels like there is no support.*
- *School safety is a district weakness. The challenges we are facing on a daily basis are really tough. People are being berated. High quality teachers are leaving the profession because of it.*
- *CCSD is setting up a commission to look at how CCSD police handles issues in schools and whether they use too much force.*
- *I worked in high school and elementary school, and I saw violence in both. We need to involve the community more.*
- *There were 33 guns recovered last year, currently we have recovered 26 guns. The average age of students with guns is between 13-15 years old, the transition period from middle to high school.*

### **Student Voices**

- *I understand why you have officers in schools but it makes me feel unsafe. They have guns. It is a negative feeling. Guns are easily accessible and that makes me so concerned.*
- *Police make you feel safe, but the school should be safe without having them on campus.*
- *It reminds me we have to have them because no matter what bad things can happen on a campus. It's a double edge sword.*
- *I used to be in a different school. My old school had more fighting and bullying, even guns. I did really badly at my old school, but now this school has changed me.*
- *I feel safe because of the cameras and hall monitors but don't feel very safe because of the area around the school. There are lots of homeless people and people try to come onto the campus.*
- *I feel safe when I can talk to my teachers.*
- *I have a lot of people I can trust at school, and friends I can talk to. In my school there are a lot of security cameras and lots of hall monitors.*
- *I feel safe when I am able to talk to the counselor and talk to the dean.*
- *My school is in a very dangerous area. A homeless person was trying to break-in, and we had to have a lockdown. Stray dogs run onto campus and into buildings when school is in session.*

### **Findings**

- **Security focused efforts in every school.** The efforts CCSD has put into focusing on security over the past year has made an impact on the feeling of safety within the schools by both staff and students. However, during focus groups there were students who shared how unsafe they feel when coming and going to school due to the conditions surrounding the school.
- **CCSD police presence.** The presence of more CCSD police officers in high schools were met with mixed feelings in focus groups. While some students find it comforting and feel more secure, others feel unsafe because they are equipped with guns, which could be dangerous.
- **Equitable treatment for all students.** Based on CCSD's discipline data presented at Board of Trustees meetings, there is a disparity in suspensions and expulsions for students of color. CCSD has convened a *School Police Community Committee*, which at this time has held two meetings to examine current practices, especially for students of color. The Committee is currently led by the CCSD police department and includes representatives from various populations of the Clark County community.

### *Recommendations*

1. **Continue to provide safety measures.** CCSD has made a lot of progress in providing safety measures within the schools. However, there are still areas where more may be needed. There were many focus group participants who shared issues with the safety of school property as well as areas surrounding the school. In partnership with the City of Las Vegas, assess the schools that have reported the most issues.
2. **Continue to increase focus on prevention efforts.** There needs to be a greater focus on prevention efforts, and they must be informed by data to assess risks to proactively prevent, identify, assess, plan, implement, monitor, review, and systematically record all events that result in violence and threats in schools. Furthermore, greater focus is needed on making behavioral health, mental health, and when appropriate, medical services, a priority since these are strongly linked to educational achievement and will help a student alter his or her behavior and develop impulse control, personal responsibility, and social information processing skills. Implementing preventative strategies in these priority areas will contribute to lowering risks and reducing violent incidences within schools.<sup>30</sup>
3. **Support students to feel safe expressing their concerns.** Many students during focus groups expressed that they had an adult in their school to talk with when they had concerns. Unexpressed feelings of concern, fear, and isolation from peer groups are more likely to increase combative or aggressive behaviors. Ensure there are staff who can help students report how they are feeling and address issues of concern. Allow students time to share fears and anxieties with school staff whenever needed.
4. **Prioritize safety training for all school and district staff.** CCSD has many different types of training that focus on safety issues as well as mental health and student well-being. Begin to review all available training and prioritize which trainings are critical for every member of the school community in CCSD to receive. There needs to be a level of consistency that will help to guide responses when safety issues arise.
5. **Focus on disparity in suspensions and expulsions of students of color.** Research indicates students of color are disproportionately impacted by law enforcement in schools.<sup>31</sup> One study indicated Black students are punished more often and more harshly than White students.<sup>32</sup> Data from the *Focus: 2024* presentations reflect the national trends in disproportionality of the discipline of Black students. As CCSD police presence in high schools continues and with the added police presence in middle schools, additional training of the CCSD police force should include a stronger emphasis on racism, including how racial identity influences their work. Furthermore, including a diverse body of students representing all regions within CCSD, in addition to the *School Police Community Committee*, should be convened to provide feedback on CCSD's police presence and responsibilities in schools.

<sup>30</sup> Gordillo, W.J. (2019). *Rethinking School Safety in the New Normal: Comprehensive Violence Prevention, Threat Assessments, Behavioral and Mental Health Assessments in Our Schools*. Public Consulting Group. Retrieved from <https://www.publicconsultinggroup.com/news-perspectives/new-white-paper-rethinking-school-safety-in-the-new-normal/>

<sup>31</sup> Merkwa, A. (2015). *Schooling the police: Race, disability, and the conduct of school resources officers*. Michigan Journal of Race and Law, 21, 147-181.

<sup>32</sup> Hines-Datiri, D. (2015). *When police intervene: Race, gender, and discipline of black male students at an urban high school*. Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, 18 (2), 122-133.

## 10. CONCLUSION

Stakeholder data collected across the district at all levels were consistent on the perception of Board and district leadership impact on school climate and culture. The conduct of Trustees during the 2020-2022 timeframe had a significant negative effect on many aspects of the organization. Central services staff were often treated disrespectfully when making presentations, Board meetings lasted well into the night with emotions running high, and comments on social media by Board members themselves fanned the fear of physical altercations and other threats.

It is commendable for the current Board to support a study of the climate and culture of the district and to change some of the Board meeting practices so they are more efficient and productive. This study becomes a very important first step in resetting the priorities for the vision and accompanying strategies for the Board and Central Office moving forward. However, action must be taken to greatly improve the functions of the district and ensure the proper coordination of this work to significantly improve student growth and achievement.

The transformation should start with the Board and the way meetings are organized and conducted. Once Board organization and operations are established, the more complex work of infusing a shared sense of purpose with executive district leadership and, in turn, with the schools and the larger stakeholder community can begin. The Board and district administration need to be the leaders to coordinate the work to get results.

The Board of Trustees has already begun an improvement process but, along with district leadership, needs to move policies and practices to the next level.

- Meetings, while much better, need to become more transparent, informative, and focused on measurable outcomes.
- Staff morale and strong two-way communication need to be of primary concern.
- Board and district leadership must hold themselves and each other accountable for student success.

While there are many external constraints—including funding gaps, legislative mandates, and deep community issues—the Board of Trustees needs to marshal the will and resources to take the lead on areas that they can control. Focusing on the bright spots throughout the district and building on those successes through the creation of new systems and processes districtwide that support every student no matter which school they attend will influence positive change.

This is a unique time in the history of CCSD for the Board of Trustees and district leadership to build upon the recent turn to a more positive environment and use it to launch much needed new policies and practices, as recommended throughout this report.

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