# **CAPISTRANO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

# SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the findings of the *Leadership Profile Assessment* conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ltd. (HYA) for the Board of Education of the Capistrano Unified School District (Board) as one of the initial steps in its search for a new Superintendent. The data contained herein were obtained from reviewing 251 *Leadership Profile Assessment* forms and interviewing196 persons identified by the Board, in individual, focus group or community input settings, on February 16 and 17, 2010. The questionnaire, interviews and focus groups were structured to gather data to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics it might seek in its next Superintendent. Through this process, the consultants attempted to identify the personal and professional characteristics desired in the superintendent, as well as the skill sets necessary to build upon what constituent groups valued while addressing current and emerging issues which the District might be facing.

Information obtained through the interviews and completed questionnaires reflects similar views from the various groups with respect to the multiple strengths of the Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD). Many respondents expressed pride in the general academic accomplishments of students and achievement on a District-wide basis. They noted that CUSD was recognized as one of the top performing large school districts in California. Respondents routinely identified supportive parents and community and dedicated teachers, faculty, staff, administrators and School Board as strengths. The PTA and community and business organizations were recognized as having a major impact on individual campuses by raising funds and providing volunteers to fill the gaps created by insufficient funds or personnel. Teachers were recognized for building a strong foundation that resulted in academic achievement as demonstrated by the success of students on state and national tests. CUSD was noted for its commitment to providing students at the secondary level with opportunities to take advantage of innovative programs and advanced placement courses.

Most of the concerns cited by respondents are attributable to two factors. The first is what many referred to as the *political climate* that is evidenced by a Board and stakeholders that are perceived to be entrenched and factionalized. The second relates to the District's budget shortfall that is exacerbated by state and national fiscal crises.

It is apparent that the *political climate* has divided the staff, parents, community and possibly others into disparate groups that are focusing their energies on what they perceive to be the fault of others rather than on collectively working to address the significant issues and *faults* that exist in the District. This *climate* has generated a high degree of distrust and upheaval that appears to have contributed to some instability throughout the District.

At the same time, and intertwined by many with the *political* machinations, is a perceived significant budget crisis in the District. There is a concern that programs will be eliminated and that classrooms will be overcrowded. The ongoing teacher contract negotiations and union concerns are perceived to be impacted by both major issues perceived to be facing the District and are perceived to have

further factionalized the community, teachers and Board. This in turn has resulted in what is perceived to be a culture of low morale among employees.

Respondents also felt a significant need for improved communication from the Board and administration as well as significantly greater transparency in their respective governance and management roles. The significant allegations of wrongdoing attributed to former administrators as well as perceived intimidation of staff has created a perceived culture of fear that many feel is responsible for stifling creativity, dialogue and a unified academic focus throughout the District. Stakeholders feel the District needs clear, focused leadership to guide the District in improving teaching and to ensure its stability through this budget crisis.

Respondents agreed on many of the attributes that would assist a new Superintendent in successfully addressing the issues confronting CUSD. They desire a strong, collaborative educational leader of unquestioned integrity who is a politically astute problem-solver with exceptional communication and interpersonal skills.

The new Superintendent should have the ability to engage teachers, administrators, the Board, the community, faculty, parents, support staff and students as needed in addressing the issues confronting the District. He/she should have the ability to engage these respective stakeholders in developing and communicating a common shared vision and building enthusiastic support for its implementation. He/she also should seek and consider the views of the respective stakeholders when making decisions that affect them and be open to innovative ideas. The successful candidate should have the financial and budget experience to tackle the current budget issues and set in place a financial plan for the future.

To effectively plan for the future, the new Superintendent must have or develop an understanding of the history of CUSD. He/she needs to be a good listener and a unifying force that will take the time to understand the diverse opinions of employee groups, parents and community members and to place these opinions on the table as everyone focuses on what is best for the students. The volatile political atmosphere requires the next Superintendent to be politically savvy, yet be apolitical. The successful candidate needs to possess the courage to tackle controversial issues, explain the rationale for his/her proposals and decisions on the basis of how they will benefit students, in spite of vocal opposition.

The new Superintendent should have experience in building positive working relationships with state and local officials, local businesses, parents and community organizations. The new Superintendent should be a consensus builder who inspires trust, promotes leadership in others and thinks creatively. He/she should be actively involved in the community and visible in the schools, dialoging comfortably with students, teachers, support staff, parents, community members and board members.

HYA cannot promise to find a candidate who will possess all of the characteristics desired by respondents. However, HYA intends to meet the challenge of finding individuals who possess many of the skills and character traits required to address the concerns expressed by the constituent groups, and present them to the Board for its review and selection

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Attea, Albert "Bud" Marley, Carolyn McKennan and Doyle Valdez

# **INTRODUCTION**

This report presents the findings of the *Leadership Profile Assessment* conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates, Ltd. (HYA) for the Board of Education of the Capistrano Unified School District (Board). After the Board selected HYA to assist in its search for a new superintendent, an assessment instrument was prepared to solicit responses which would be used to help the Board clarify the characteristics it should seek in the new superintendent. At the Board's direction, the District distributed the questionnaire to a variety of stakeholders including administrators, faculty, support staff, parents, students, elected officials and community groups. The Board also identified a number of individuals and groups to be invited to meet with the consultants on February 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010 to discuss these characteristics in greater depth. In response, the consultants received and reviewed 251<sup>1</sup> Leadership Profile forms and met with 196<sup>2</sup> individuals during their visits in the District.

In developing this *Leadership Profile Report*, the consultants sought opinions, recommendations and general comments with respect to preferred candidate traits and qualifications as well as District strengths, issues and concerns which could bear upon future leadership requirements and influence the selection criteria for the next Superintendent. In an effort to ensure that the process was inclusive, the consultants noted that the Board was seeking the views of a broad range of individuals to assist in the search process. It was agreed that the consultants would report the findings to the Board without revealing the identity of any individual contributor, enabling the Board to use the data as it proceeds to define the leadership characteristics and selection criteria to be used in identifying the next Superintendent. It also was understood that the Board had the responsibility to define these characteristics and would use its prerogative to do so.

The responses provided with some consistency by the individuals, focus groups and those who completed questionnaires are presented in this report. Groups represented included board members, administrators, faculty, students, support staff, parents, elected officials and community leaders. The comments throughout the Report are listed alphabetically since no attempt was made to prioritize them. It should be emphasized that the data are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the District's stakeholders or the respective groups to which they are attributed. Items are included if the consultants believe they warrant the Board's attention.

Hazard, Young & Attea would like to thank the CUSD Board for entrusting them with the responsibility for conducting the interviews and working on the search for a new superintendent. Specifically, HYA thanks Dr. Bobbi Mahler, Jane Boos, Julie Hatchel and Connie Scott for their assistance and support. We also thank those with whom we met for their cordiality and responsiveness, in addition to all who took the time to respond by written form.

Bill Attea, Albert "Bud" Marley, Carolyn McKennan and Doyle Valdez

Capistrano Unified School District Leadership Profile Report

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Stakeholders returned 251 forms, however 32 individuals either did not identify their respondent group or did not complete the ranking item on the form. Consequently the responses from 219 forms are represented on the tables to be found on pages 16-18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> 6 board members; 31 administrators (district office and principals); 31 community members (public forums and several focus groups); 60 faculty (teachers and other staff members with certificates); 32 parents (PTSA presidents and leadership, School Site Council reps, boosters, etc.); 29 support staff (support employees – secretaries, cafeteria personnel, custodial and maintenance, etc.); and 7 governmental officials (city managers and other officials). It should be noted that many individuals who were interviewed also submitted completed *Leadership Profile* forms

## <u>STRENGTHS</u>

## **CONSISTENT**

Advanced placement courses and International Baccalaureate program Blue Ribbon/Distinguished schools Broad range of excellent instructional and extracurricular programs Caring teachers Concerned parents Effective partnerships between schools and business establishments Engaged and supportive parents in many schools Excellent elementary schools with good reading scores and assessment Excellent music and fine arts programs Foundation involvement Fund raising for schools Good facilities Great teachers who even under extreme budget crisis excel at their jobs Great population of stakeholders High student test scores Learning environment in which innovation and change are embraced Parents are collaborative and supportive PTA and parent organizations are highly involved Special Ed staff Students want to achieve and excel Well-qualified, dedicated and compassionate faculty, administrators and support staff

## **BOARD**

Great colleges, corporations, cities and location Intelligent students Students, Parents, Teachers and Principals Supportive parents Talented teachers and administrators Test scores of students

## **ADMINISTRATORS**

Academic rigor Collaborative environment within the school clusters Collegiality among principals with strong work ethic focused on student achievement Community support Dedicated and loyal employees wanting what is best for the whole organization Driven and data-savvy staff and teachers Focus on student learning Genuine investment in academic and personal growth of students by staff and administrators Geographic location Instructional teams at school sites Outstanding special education program Capistrano Unified School District *Leadership Profile Report* 4 © 2010 Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ltd. Quality teachers and administrators Quality of graduates Resilience of the management team Parents are collaborative and supportive Professional learning communities Students return as teachers Test scores are superior Willingness to take risks with new initiatives

## **COMMUNITY**

Businesses are active in the District Foundation supports the District Geographic location Growing school district Many opportunities for community involvement Parents are supportive PTA fundraising School Board is good Some of the highest ranked schools in the state Students strive academically Tax base is good

## FACULTY

Academic Rigor Competent, supportive principals Culture of collaboration and support among teachers Dedicated, hard working employees Excellent, well prepared teachers Fundraising by parent groups Parental support for schools Professional learning community Quality Education Schools ranked academically high in the State Students are engaged Teachers encouraged to develop innovative programs

## PARENTS

Collaborative effort by all stakeholders Dedicated parents Dedicated teachers Good AP, International Baccalaureate programs, academies, Art and Music High academic standards Highest test scores of large school district in California Joint use with cities Quality principals

Quality of schools Parental involvement PTA, booster clubs and educational foundations dedicate hours of work and fundraising School board trustees Students are high achieving

#### **STUDENTS**

Communication at the schools Good communication Many caring dedicated teachers, staff and administrators Schools ranked high in the State Students academic drive to succeed Students high test scores Student achievement continues to improve

#### **SUPPORT STAFF**

Academics Diligent support staff determined to help all children succeed Employees dedicated Foundation support Parent support PTA - fundraising Test scores Well trained teachers Work ethic of all employees

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS/CITY MANAGERS**

Academic performance is excellent Dedicated teachers and support staff Good facilities A good facilities master plan Parent participation Students graduate and go on to top colleges

# ISSUES/CONCERNS/CHALLENGES

#### CONSISTENT

Board lacks experience in education Board members perceived to be at odds with teachers Board perceived as being disrespectful to teachers and stakeholders Budget shortfall Climate of distrust **Disgruntled** parents Experienced and respected administrators have left the District Facilities maintenance Financial crisis for this budget year and state budget crisis Lack of leadership Low morale of teachers, support staff, faculty and administrators Need for clear, focused leadership to guide staff in improving teaching and learning Need for more effective Communication Overcrowded classrooms Restore community trust through improved communication Unsettled contract with teachers

## BOARD

Budget issues Create trust and calm optimism with everyone Build a solid organization Fiscal prudence and intelligent cooperation Labor issues due to declining State revenue Lawsuits Need to move beyond past successes and continuously strive for improvement Political issues due to declining State revenues Restore confidence in ability of District to provide outstanding academic programs Stability

## **ADMINISTRATORS**

Budget conflicts between Board and staff Budget shortfall Facility maintenance Focus needs to be on education and not politics Fractured staff, community Inconsistent communication among and between departments Inconsistent leadership Lack of trust between unions, parents and community towards Board and administration Lack of unity Need to cultivate succession planning for administrative positions Overcrowding of classrooms 7

Political fragmentation Projected housing starts within the next five years Providing a strong cabinet that employees can have faith in their leadership Retain high quality teachers Reduction in programs Recall efforts are divisive Seven cities are within the district boundaries Staff morale State budget crisis Superintendent candidate needs to be aware of all the issues in Capistrano

## **COMMUNITY**

Budget shortfall Candidate must be aware of the controversies in the district Communication is lacking in all areas Facilities and maintenance issues Fiscal climate and crisis Key administrators have left the district Lack of clarity of vision or communication identifying the future direction of District Lack of trust with all stakeholders Low morale Need for transparency Political division Union issues

## FACULTY

Board doesn't understand their role Financial outlook Keep the dollars in the classroom Lack of transparency Lack of trust Morale is low Political factions Polarization of teacher union and Board School Board issues are distracting Union issues

## **PARENTS**

Board not unified Budget cuts are affecting classrooms and programs Communication not good between Board and teachers Economy Improve communication between and among teachers, administrators, parents and community Keeping AP, honors, advanced classes for the future Lack of choices for vocational and technical courses Lack of satisfactory conclusion to contract negotiations Lack of trust between Board, unions and constituents Low morale of teachers Maintenance and sustainability of aging facilities Need non-college bound programs Overcrowded classes Politics Programs are at risk State fiscal crisis Superintendent candidate needs to understand the current political issues Superintendent instability

#### **STUDENTS**

Budget Financial funding for programs Lack of unity between School Board members and Teacher unions Overcrowding Political factions State financial budget crisis Teacher rights

#### SUPPORT STAFF

Board disconnected from employees Budget Communication breakdown with employee groups Compliance with unfunded state and federal mandates requiring changes Extremely sensitive political environment in which issues are influenced by political turf, distrust and community's negative opinion Lack of effective leadership and planning in recent years Lawsuits Management not experienced Need for drastic action to turn CUSD around; requires support of teachers, principals parents and students Political instability State funding deficit Superintendent who will commit and stay

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS/CITY MANAGERS**

Budget constraints for the district Loss of community trust and credibility New Superintendent needs to be aware of situation he/she is walking into: problems, demands and expectations of the community Political instability State budget crisis

## **CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **CONSISTENT**

Actively involved in the community Appreciates the value of volunteer organizations Approachable, excellent interpersonal skills, seeks and enjoys dialogue with all groups Articulate Bridge gaps between board, community, administrators, faculty to provide healing California resident with vested interest Collaborative, consensus builder Commitment to academic rigor Decision maker Diplomatic, with the ability to navigate politically charged waters Dynamic leader with ability to inspire and motivate staff to work together to meet expectations Education experience Effective negotiating skills Ego on backburner Exceptional communication skills (speaking, writing and listening) Experience as a teacher and building principal Fair, flexible, caring, morale builder Fiscal management Good listener Honest Inclusive, brings people together; able to gain and maintain community support Integrity, both personal and professional Knowledge of and commitment to developing leadership skills of principals and staff Knowledge of curriculum, instruction and learning, research-oriented Leader Non-Traditional Superintendent Not using this job as a stepping stone to another district Open-minded Problem solver Secondary education experience Stands up to the board Strength to make decisions for the best interest of the students Strong business acumen Teaching background Trustworthy; stands firm on his/her word, not easily swayed Team builder Transparent Visible in schools Visionary Willing to tolerate dissent and address the issues appropriately

#### **BOARD**

Conservative individual Collaborative Courageous Data driven Diplomatic Ethical Financial analysis Fiscal management Focuses on students Keen administrator Impeccable moral character Integrity Leader Long term commitment Makes sound decisions Non-traditional background Optimistic Organizational psychology and leadership Savvy communicator who understands the power of sharing information Sense of humor Servant leader Tireless person but values family time Traditional background Visible in community and organizations Visionary

### **ADMINSTRATORS**

Ability to keep focus on students Approachable California experience Capacity to address the negative morale throughout the District; a healer Collaborative Communication skills that include systematic soliciting and listening to views of diverse groups Consensus builder Courage and moral fiber to make decisions on what is best for children Diplomatic Effective communicator Effective in dealing with conflict Ethical decision making - doing what is right for students even if it may be controversial Experienced as teacher and principal Financial /Budget experience Garners respect and remains accessible to all stakeholder groups Guides the Board on decision making process Honest Instills confidence

Integrity Interests and needs of students must be top priority Leadership skills Listener Open minded Patient problem solver, aware that meaningful change takes time Pragmatic Pro-active change agent Strong background in K-12 Success in establishing positive relationships with unions Team player Traditional candidate Values all stakeholders Visionary Visits schools Understands and supports the unique qualities and needs of different schools Wisdom to seek input from others but courage to facilitate change when appropriate

#### **COMMUNITY**

Ability to work as a collaborative partner with the employee organizations and community Change agent Coalition builder Committed long-term Communicator Experience in education Experience working with a Board that understands its policy-making role Honesty Integrity Listener Non-traditional candidate Open-minded listener who seeks and values views expressed by the Board, administrators, teachers, staff, students and community Leadership Servant leader who empowers students, administrators and others to reach their full potential Stiff backbone Traditional superintendent from California Transparent Understands budgets Willingness to know the history of the district Visionary

## **FACULTY**

Advocate for public education Articulate Bridge builder with teachers, administrators, community, Board and business leaders Collaborative Commitment to stay in the district Communicator Conducts a thoughtful, open-minded assessment before implementing untried innovations Ethical Impartial Honest Integrity Leadership and ability to unite all stakeholders Student advocate Team builder Traditional superintendent candidate Transparent Truthful

### **PARENTS**

Accessible and willing to work with parents, employees and community California experience Commitment of 5-10 years Communicator Decisiveness in leadership Education background Experienced in recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers Facilities management of older and newer schools Fiscal Knowledge Integrity Listener Person who can rebuild trust between Board and public Positive leadership to build a community that is working together for our children Problem solver Proven leadership Public education advocate Skilled in conflict resolution Strong leader, compassionate Straightforward, truthful and willing to discuss openly with the community the difficult issues that need to be resolved Superintendent candidate could come from business background, CEO Understands how to maximize resources for children with special needs in the district Visionary

#### **STUDENTS**

Ability to collaborate Appreciates the importance of student leadership opportunities Approachable Balances budget Cares about students, wants them to succeed in life and solicits their opinions Compromises with the unions Effective Communicator Fiscal management skills Happy Honest Involved in schools Open-minded, willing to listen to all opinions before making a decision Maximizes resources for children with special needs in the district Mediator Multicultural Strong-minded, helpful, intelligent Superintendent who is an educator Willing to listen to students Willing to make decisions that benefit, even if not popular

#### SUPPORT STAFF

Ability and willingness to develop positive relationships with unions and work well with them Calm, stabilizing influence Candidate from local area Conveys vision Genuinely likes people; seeks opportunities to interact with staff, students, parents, and community Healer Honesty, integrity Inspires everyone to coalesce around a common vision and support its implementation Listener Long-term commitment Open-minded Reaches out to partner with community organizations, agencies and volunteer groups Strong character Supportive of teachers Team builder Thick-skinned Transparency Unites people Well-rounded person

### **ELECTED OFFICIALS/CITY MANAGERS**

Community builder Dedication to excellence and continuing improvement in academic performance Effective communicator Good people skills Honest Proactive in communicating District issues to the cities

# **Ranking Summary**

Respondents were asked to rank the following characteristics in order of importance from 1-11 with 1 being most significant.

	Board	Admin.	Comm.	Faculty	Parent	Student	Supp. Staff
Respondents (total of 219)	3	39	22	55	48	35	17
Ability and willingness to deal directly and fairly with faculty, staff, students and parents	3	1	1	1	1	1	2
Ability to identify revenue through alternative sources	8-9	9	7	7	9	6	8
Accountable and holds everyone in the organization accountable for his/her respective area of responsibility	1-2	6	6	5	6	3	1
Awareness of instructional and administrative applications of technology	10	11	11	11	10-11	9	9
Belief in data based decision making that focuses on the individual needs of students	5	5	10	9	7	7	7
Collaborative	7	4	5	3	5	5	6
Effective communication skills: verbal, written and listening	4	2	2	2	3	4	4-5
Experience as a superintendent	6	3	3	4	4	8	3
Experience in a multi-cultural environment	11	10	9	10	10-11	11	10
Fiscal management experience	1-2	8	4	6	2	2	4-5
Knowledge of emerging research and best-practice in the area of curriculum/instructional design and implementation	8-9	7	8	8	8	10	11

# **Ranking of Criteria – Average Ranking**

Respondents were asked to rank the following characteristics in order of importance from 1-11 with 1 being most significant. The average rankings given to each item are presented in this chart.

	Board	Admin.	Comm.	Faculty	Parent	Student	Supp. Staff
Respondents (total of 219)	3	39	22	55	48	35	17
Ability and willingness to deal directly and fairly with faculty, staff, students and parents	3.33	2.74	2.36	1.38	2.65	2.68	2.79
Ability to identify revenue through alternative sources	7.33	8.11	6.43	6.48	7.04	5.94	6.77
Accountable and holds everyone in the organization accountable for his/her respective area of responsibility	2.00	5.69	5.68	5.36	5.36	5.32	2.21
Awareness of instructional and administrative applications of technology	7.67	9.71	8.71	9.80	8.50	7.47	8.77
Belief in data based decision making that focuses on the individual needs of students	5.00	5.68	7.71	7.40	6.21	6.47	6.46
Collaborative	7.00	4.34	5.20	4.69	5.20	5.82	4.50
Effective communication skills: verbal, written and listening	4.00	3.74	3.86	4.35	5.04	5.68	4.00
Experience as a superintendent	6.00	4.24	4.76	4.74	5.09	6.56	3.93
Experience in a multi-cultural environment	9.00	9.32	7.55	8.34	8.50	8.00	8.85
Fiscal management experience	2.00	6.13	5.00	5.56	4.92	5.03	4.00
Knowledge of emerging research and best-practice in the area of curriculum/instructional design and implementation	7.33	5.89	7.19	7.04	6.93	7.65	9.17

# **Ranking of Criteria – Range for Rankings**

Respondents were asked to rank the following characteristics in order of importance from 1-11 with 1 being most significant. The range of each respondent group's responses is presented in this chart.

	Board	Admin.	Comm.	Faculty	Parent	Student	Supp. Staff
Respondents (total of 219)	3	39	22	55	48	35	17
Ability and willingness to deal directly and fairly with faculty, staff, students and parents	3-4	1-7	1-9	1-7	1-8	1-11	1-8
Ability to identify revenue through alternative sources	5-10	3-11	1-11	2-11	1-11	1-11	3-10
Accountable and holds everyone in the organization accountable for his/her respective area of responsibility	1-3	2-11	1-11	2-11	1-11	1-11	1-11
Awareness of instructional and administrative applications of technology	6-9	7-11	2-11	7-11	2-11	1-11	2-11
Belief in data based decision making that focuses on the individual needs of students	2-8	1-11	4-11	2-11	1-11	1-11	1-10
Collaborative	6-9	1-10	1-8	2-11	1-10	2-11	2-8
Effective communication skills: verbal, written and listening	3-5	1-11	1-8	1-11	1-10	1-11	1-7
Experience as a superintendent	1-10	1-11	1-11	1-11	1-11	2-11	1-11
Experience in a multi-cultural environment	8-11	4-11	3-11	1-11	1-11	1-11	5-11
Fiscal management experience	1-3	3-10	2-10	1-11	1-10	1-9	1-7
Knowledge of emerging research and best-practice in the area of curriculum/instructional design and implementation	4-11	1-10	1-11	2-11	1-11	1-11	7-11