Executive Summary

It is important that the historical context of the elected Board of Education selecting Newark's next Superintendent of Schools be noted. Newark Public Schools were under State control from July 1995 through February1, 2018 (23years). During that time, the regulations guiding the operation of State controlled districts in New Jersey caused the role of Newark's Board of Education to be advisory in nature working with a State appointed Superintendent of Schools whose responsibilities and authority spanned all areas of Newark Public Schools Operation. In September of 2005, the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) was signed into law. NJQSAC was specifically designed to evaluate districts in a way that was simpler and more streamlined by reviewing the improvement in student achievement through addressing five key areas: Program and Instruction, Personnel, Fiscal Management, Operations and Governance. Following the implementation of NJQSAC, Newark Public Schools improved incrementally and gained local control of areas beginning with Operations (2008), Fiscal Management (2014) and progressing through the areas of Personnel (2016), Governance (2017), and Instruction and Program (2017). On September 13, 2017 the New Jersey State Board of Education determined that Newark Public Schools had made significant progress in satisfying the regulatory requirements of New Jersey's Quality Single Accountability Continuum and voted to initiate the return of local control to the Newark Board of Education. The State Board required the district to develop a transition plan outlining the process through which "full voting authority and governance would be returned to the Board of Education." The plan was presented to the State Board in December of 2017 and established the date for the return of the District to local control would be February 1, 2018, for a two-year period through January 31, 2020. Then plan will then expire provided all aspects of the plan have been "successfully implemented."

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) in February and March 2018 for the new superintendent of the Newark Public Schools. The data contained herein were obtained from input that HYA Associates, Dwight R. Pfennig and Edward McCormick, 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 between February 13, 2018 and March 12, 2018. 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 the District and some of the challenges that it will be facing in the coming years. Finally, HYA Associates thoroughly reviewed the *Transition Plan for the Return of Local Control to Newark Public Schools* which was presented to the New Jersey State Board of education in December of 2017.While the entire plan was instructive, items 7 through 9 of the plan (pages 21-

25) regarding the superintendent search, expectations for the new superintendent working with the Board of Education, and the evaluation of the superintendent served as "key" supplemental material for the Leadership Profile.

Participation

The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below: *Not all focus groups were a group that was disaggregated for the on-line survey.*

Group	Personal interviews or focus groups	Online Survey
Board	7	NA
Administrators	17	132
Teachers	29	448
Central Office Staff and Support Staff	37	NA
Community	NA	158
Ward Community Meetings	230	NA
Community Organizations	9	NA
Community Leaders	5	NA
Business Leaders	11	NA
Educational Partners	18	NA
Interfaith Alliance	12	NA
Parents	NA	180
Students	27	55
Other	NA	243
Total	**402**	**1216**

The community survey report, "open-ended" comments gathered through the survey, and candidate suggestions from the survey are provided separately and are meant to be stand-alone complementary pieces to the Leadership Profile Report.

It should be emphasized that the data are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. Items are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the Search Committee's and Board's attention.

The focus group input, individualized conversations, and on-line survey data contributed several perceptions, opinions, and ideas to the development of the Leadership Profile. Likewise, the information gathered from the *Transition Plan for the Return of Local Control to Newark Public Schools* provided background and directional information important to guiding the Superintendent search. The narrative summaries which follow contain the most common themes presented

through the aforementioned means. The meeting notes following the *Executive Summary* contain more detailed information gathered through focus group discussion and/or individual interview(s) in each of the areas considered for discussion and/or comment.

Strengths of the District

Newark is a proud city that looks toward emerging economic potential as a driver of positive change through effective partnerships with community organizations, business partners and educational institutions. The fact that Newark has worked through the complicated process of regaining local control is indicative of the strength of the district perceived by many stakeholders who provided input for this Leadership Profile. The process has been gradual yet successful as the Newark Public Schools regained local control. In moving forward, the rich history of Newark serves as an exemplary background for school improvement through the strategies laid out in the *Transition Plan for the Return of Local Control to Newark Public Schools*.

Resilience was a word frequently used to describe the positive aspects of Newark Public Schools as well as the positive aspects of professional staff dedication and student achievement. Staff members and "outside of school" participants in the Focus Group and online survey are genuinely proud of the accomplishments of many students who have persevered through difficult school conditions as well as difficult social conditions. Several focus groups referenced the "underplayed" success of several students due to the lack of publicity and the seemingly never-ending media focus on the negative aspects of Newark Public Schools. Many students have served as excellent examples for those who will follow them. Students have also contributed positively, when called upon, to provide ideas for the forward movement of the district and the return of the district to local control.

Newark's forward academic achievement movement is couched within the most recent academic successes of the district. It should be noted that as continuous improvement is a major pillar bracing Newark's future, several noteworthy accomplishments have taken place. Those accomplishments include but are not limited to: Newark Public Schools' focus on the Common Core standards occurring earlier than most NJ districts; 3 year gains in Newark Public Schools' PARCC scores in grades 3-8 (up 11 percentage points in ELA and 7 points in Math, while the state is up 6 and 5 points respectively); and an improved graduation rate (from the high 50s to 78).

Challenges and Issues Facing the District

The daunting challenge of meeting the requirements of the agreed upon *Transition Plan for the Return of Local Control to Newark Public Schools* is the most significant challenge facing the Board as well as the new Superintendent. Those requirements include but are not limited to; budgeting processes and allocation of resources; development of policies for budget and financial planning; aligning financial goals

with student needs and continuing corrective action; creating sound lines and protocols of communication between central administration and the Board; and defining the responsibilities and roles of the Board and administration. It is a general perception among many focus groups that the result of Newark's public referendum on deciding upon district type (elected or appointed Board) through referendum on November 6, 2018, will re-energize the focus on the transition plan and forward movement of the district.

The desire for more community involvement in Newark Public Schools is strong and varied. Philanthropic organizations, faith-based organizations, business partners and college/university professionals, clergy leaders, service providers, and formal non-profit organizations understand the current position of Newark Public Schools and the need for sustained improvement in student achievement, professional development, and fiscal operation. Likewise, the groups involved in the "trenches" of Newark Public Schools (i.e. teachers; parents; students; administrators, etc.) also understand the needs of the district in terms of student achievement, but perhaps from a different perspective. Focus Group sessions frequently referenced hope that strong and active community involvement can be galvanized to support educational programs geared toward improving student achievement. It will be incumbent upon the new Superintendent and Board to effectively communicate a clear process through which varying organized groups and those "in the trenches" can combine their many efforts and talents to create a shared vision that moves the district forward in terms of achievement though the transition period and is long lasting for future growth.

While procedural references regarding budget are included within the context of the *Transition Plan for the Return of Local Control to Newark Public Schools,* there is a deep public concern about the annual budget and financial state of the district. Several focus groups referenced equitable allocation of resources among the schools, the ability to track "dollars into classrooms, "the major financial deficits "left behind" by the State and the increasing loss of state aide moving to Charter Schools as the major components of that concern. Focus groups also referenced the fact that budget reductions over the several years have caused a number of school programs and activities within Newark Public Schools to be eliminated and/or severely curtailed. Concomitant to the overall budgetary concerns was the perception by a number of focus groups (i.e. parents, teachers, administrators, community members), that the allocation of resources among the schools is inequitable. Most groups commenting about this were concerned that such inequities were creating an atmosphere of "haves and have nots" among schools in varying locations.

All focus groups referenced the need for Newark Public Schools to be student centered. Meeting that need caused many focus group discussions to center on concerns about the replacement of veteran professional staff members who have been responsible for leadership in the "pockets of success" in student achievement and innovation in the district. It was often stated that frustrations with non-

competitive salaries, lack of resources, negative approaches to enrollment, and poor professional development opportunities caused less experienced staff members to move on to other districts and more experienced staff members to retire (sometimes early). Focus groups indicate a strong perception that Newark Public School professionals who had an important sense of the history of the community and schools were exiting disproportionately to those who could provide that perspective for students. The challenge will be for Newark Public Schools to work toward ending that perception through providing equitable staff development opportunities, continuing consideration of reinstating programs positively impacting students, and influencing classroom leaders (or prospective leaders) to be carriers of Newark's history through best practices of instruction in a variety of subject areas.

Desired Characteristics in the New Superintendent

Focus groups wholeheartedly expressed the opinion that it will be incumbent upon the new Superintendent to have demonstrated experience in building and maintaining a sound working relationship between the Board and the administration. Those experiences should clearly reflect the documentation of and strategic implementation of a plan to build and maintain those experiences within previous work assignments.

Focus groups are counting on the fact that the new Superintendent of Newark Public Schools must have demonstrated successful leadership in a diverse urban school district. In so doing, she/he must have demonstrated deep respect and support for the teaching staff and support that staff through the development of, and support for a professional development program that links a clear shared vision for student centered programs to increased opportunities for improved student performance. Those elements of support should also point to the fact that schools, staff members, and students were viewed as equitable partners in the educational process be it in visionary planning, allocating resources, or seeking input on innovation and evaluation of programs.

Newark's new *Superintendent* will have to be politically savvy. The *Transition Plan for the Return of Local Control to Newark Public Schools* will require a high degree of interface with State and local officials to maintain the plan's progress and integrity moving forward. Likewise, the new Superintendent's past experiences should point to the fact that "going to bat" for his/her previous district, be it in relation to funding opportunities, legislative matters affecting his/her school district, or being an advocate for students in his/her school district were commonplace.

It is important that the new Superintendent be financially savvy. In addition to surrounding himself/herself with a strong business administrator/financial officer, the new Superintendent should have demonstrated experience in developing a collaborative working relationship with the Board of Education in creating, modifying, and implementing a budget that supports clear vision for the forward

movement of the district while addressing financial shortfalls in a responsible manner. Above all, there should be clear indicators that candidates' previous experiences have exemplified a fair and equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs of all students.

Finally, Newark's new Superintendent must have demonstrated expertise in previous central office assignments in communicating with all entities in an equitable manner throughout the educational community within which he/she worked. It is expected by most focus groups that communications reach out to all parties in an open, honest, and transparent manner. It was also viewed as extremely important that the communication continuum in candidates' previous districts exemplify a strong sense of physical presence in all areas of the community.

HYA, the Search Committee, 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 challenges of Newark Public Schools. In so doing, they will seek an outstanding, experienced educator who can work with the Newark Public Schools Board to provide the leadership needed to continue to raise academic standards and student performance, while meeting the unique needs of each of its schools and the community.

The search team would like to thank all the participants who attended focus group meetings, met individually with HYA Associates, or completed the online survey. Likewise, HYA would like to recognize the "behind-the-scenes" efforts of Newark Public Schools staff members, and Newark's organizational, business, and clergy leaders who assisted with scheduling our focus group meetings, assisted in facilitating larger group sessions, and located appropriate venues for meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

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Summary of Comments from Focus Group Meetings

The structure of the focus groups was open, allowing for participants to build upon each other's comments. 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?

Group #1:

Strengths:

- Community and organizational interest in the schools through programs, grants, etc.
- Community organizations' interest in maintaining quality programs and looking toward growing them
- District achieving the status of regaining local control.

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Address the instability of the staff
- Concerns with all aspects of charter, including but not limited to: finances; dealing with special needs students; the effect of losing 5,00 more students
- District needs to review what is behind the test scores
- Maintaining stability in the office of Superintendent. It won't serve the district well to have a high turnover rate in the superintendency
- Meeting the challenge of charter schools growing at the expense of the district
- Notes of the Focus Group meetings should be made public
- Restoring faith in things that are open and honest
- Staff salary review – Newark lags behind several communities (in Essex County)
- The district cannot afford a misstep in regaining local control

Desired Characteristics:

- Capable of controlling and managing the school the NPS budget
- Evidence of hiring and maintaining staff in all positions
- Experience in a district commensurate with Newark's size and socio-economic status
- Through experience understands the nature of shifting populations and their effect on budgeting and programming
- Understand the environment and concerns of each Ward

- Understands the history of Newark and what has happened from the community standpoint and that of the DOE
- Urban experience and a willingness to be here for awhile

Group #2:

Strengths:

- Belief that children can achieve at high levels (there have been more courses in that vein)
- Data is used to support skill level of students
- First time in years – a positive tone between community and schools
- Instructional shifts (to common core) have gone well
- Promoting the schools through social media the past few years has been positive
- There has been greater attention on inclusion and less on restructuring environments

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Academy programs in High Schools no longer unique
- Address facilities concerns (quickly aging infrastructure)
- Address inequities between schools by Ward
- Addressing the hurt, anger, frustration of teaching and administrative professionals
- Closing schools has caused obstacles for school attendance
- Enhance and improve school security
- Enhance relevant programs that are working
- Extended day program availability should be equitable
- Get away from the rhetoric between charter schools and regular public schools
- Get rid of poor conditions that allow charter schools to grow
- Mentoring program for teachers needs revitalization
- Put money on the table to create positive incentives for teachers to stay
- Support for new mentors should be available
- Supporting attendance counselors and effectively combating truancy
- The release of trade(s) people who helped maintain facilities

Desired Characteristics:

- Able to lead the healing of a disunified administration
- Budget expertise 9understanding the nuances of each school)
- Doesn’t blame – acts/moves forward
- Doesn’t need a driver to understand Newark
- Doesn’t outsource the superintendent’s office. Major decisions should not be farmed out – but made in Newark
- Doesn’t succumb to political or corporate pressures

- Experience as teacher and the courage to actually teach a class
- Forges positive work with Board and can navigate bureaucracies
- Grow the district and attempt to bring students back
- Has had demonstrated success on each level of the Pre-K-12 continuum
- Here for the children of the district
- Institutional knowledge of K-12 district
- Knows teachers in every school
- Realistic in continuing the good work already begun
- Recognizes when to act
- Resourceful – can create vision and interest while espousing value
- Respects families and communicates well with them
- Stands up to local, state, and Federal politicians
- Strong Character
- Understand “trauma” informed teaching and learning
- Understand issues affecting students that effect their learning
- Understands Newark past/present/future

Group #3:

Strengths:

- Administrators as well as teachers are a diverse pool
- City of creative people
- Excited to be in the district, people care about students
- Getting to see the kids at different events and activitiesHiring people who care about students
- Outstanding, excellent teachers
- Pockets of excellence have changed life positively for many residents
- Powerful positive momentum for educating students of poverty
- Proud to be from Newark
- Relating to the kids as family
- Resilience of parents and students despite all challenges (the tenacity to rise above it all)
- Rewarding to work with the kids
- Rich history of the city
- Students who are able to face the challenge of all the testing nonsense
- The educational narrative is changing (for the good)
- The long struggle to finally gain local control
- Caring for the students of the district
- Open to district changes (but sometimes they occur too fast)
- Some of the changes have been good for the district
- Students strong feelings/opinions regarding their teachers
- There are some innovative teachers in the district

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Addressing the inequities in schools and in closing schools
- Addressing the infrastructure. Too many building with major problems not being addressed.
- Addressing the reality/perception of the system being very political
- Dealing with the loss of students over several years (to Charter and private schools)
- Expecting a reduced staff to do the work of many more
- Fully staff support staff functions in the district
- Handling human resources decisions more effectively
- Investigate hiring practices for inequities
- Investigating the high staff turnover
- Listening to us “we may be able to help”
- Making sure there is less nepotism and playing favorites
- Need to be more involved with decision-making
- Not being a dictatorial administration
- Providing more “basic” instruction so that effective differentiation of instruction may be implemented
- Recognizing support staff for a “job well done”
- Restoration of “civil service” positions
- Restoring after school programs
- Reviewing all positions in a “top heavy” administration
- “Student superintendents (first timers)” shouldn’t implement new programs
- There have been too many “guest star” superintendents (known well, but didn’t stay too long)
- Timely payment for earned overtime

Desired Characteristics:

- Able to institute equity based on what’s “true”
- Able to place education above politics
- An inclusive decision maker
- Brevity and courage
- Cares about mental health components of education (social/emotional health o students and parents)
- Communicate well with everyone
- Demonstrate/Practice what equity looks like while not folding “like a cheap table”
- Doesn’t just look good in a suit
- Engages stakeholders
- Experienced program implementer
- Fair and equitable treatment of others because he/she comes from the trenches

- Focus as a driving force for fundamental academics
- Inspires and energizes others
- Is approachable. Someone you can talk to
- Makes decisions based on a vision related to rigor
- Passion for social justice
- Passionate about all programs while maintaining equity for all students
- Politically savvy
- Possesses soft skills and understands emotional intelligence
- Should receive the same respect we give the kids
- Someone who respects opinions of non-instructional as well as instructional employees
- Someone who understands the big picture
- Strong compassionate leaders
- Supporter of public education
- Systems thinker who does not permit working in silos
- Understands food service and its effects on the district
- Understand how to use data and promote a positive data culture
- Understands technology
- Understands the diversity of Newark
- Understands the need to fully staff schools
- Understands the variety of cultures in Newark
- Understands there is something greater than being liked
- Values transparency
- Willing to listen to parents and students

Group #4:

Strengths:

- Band/Arts
- Beautiful and strong life experiences
- Diversity
- Like the infrastructure
- Scholarship programs
- State control to Local Control
- Variety of educational opportunities
- Youth care about education

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Administration does not treat students well
- Attendance
- Clean water and clear infestations in buildings
- Communication

- Equity between schools
- Equity of assets and resources
- Expand programs for all students
- Improve school lunches
- Improve teacher effectiveness
- Improve the image of Newark Schools
- Secure more resources
- Spend wisely
- Transportation

Desired Characteristics:

- Able to engage community
- Be resilient
- Cannot be self-serving
- Do what they must do
- Don't give up youth
- Experience in Urban communities
- Focus on level of testing
- Know the community
- Know the environment
- Newark background/understand the culture
- Proven track record of success
- Realize that one size does not fit all
- Understand budgets
- Understand students
- Understands differentiated learning styles
- Willing to work with the community

Group #5:

Strengths:

- Currently existing collaborative partnerships with schools and community
- First time that many Newark residents are going to college
- Proud of the City
- Revitalization – corporate and philanthropic entities calling Newark "Headquarters"
- STEAM/STEM focus on education

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Bring back core experiences in the Arts and Library that have been reduced
- Connect issues of lack of home resources to what's provided by school
- Creating and maintaining a "cradle to career" approach to teaching and learning

- Making a substantial investment in guidance counselors
- Meeting kids where they are and raising expectations – so they are competitive when leaving the system
- Providing services that will continue to help all students
- Realizing weaknesses and figuring out what to do about them
- Review the need for Apprenticeships that may assist future employment for students
- Taking a sustainable approach to education
- Taking the “blinders” off student and strengthening opportunities for them
- There are still pockets of lack of access to arts and culture
- There needs to be a huge investment in Guidance Counselors
- Utilizing social work to get students ready for school – not letting children fall through the cracks

Desired Characteristics:

- Ability to map assets and develop a sustainable authentic relationship with partners
- Capability to be an honest broker of data
- Capable of bringing people together to celebrate successes
- Evidence of clear ability to “steer the ship”
- Experience in outreach and communication. Mindful of continuous communication improvement
- Expresses a strong urban education philosophy
- Open to collaborative partnerships
- Passion for innovative technology that provide enhanced opportunities for students
- Surrounds herself/himself with deputies/assistants who can execute the established vision and goals of district
- Understand school infrastructure in an urban setting
- Understands the importance of mislabeling students because of lack of resources

Group #6:

Strengths:

- Arts education roundtable (networks around Arts/STEAM outside of the school system
- Awareness of Pathways to education
- Commitment to whole child development (needs to be continued)
- Corporate confidence in Newark
- Education Trust working with 17 schools on culture climate
- Incredible pockets of good work
- NPS has talented people – there has been some improvement in administration

- Restorative justice and dealing with school suspensions (but there is need for improvement)
- Science Lab in the Central Office
- The transition plan serving as a road map forward

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Accountability on roles and expectations for staff and students
- Accurate and timely diagnoses for students with significant disabilities
- Address all system within the school district for operational efficiency
- Addressing chronic absenteeism
- Addressing the conflict between pre-schools and transition to Kindergarten
- Bringing together the “City” conversation and the Ward conversation in all areas
- Children’s councils addressing safety/health/housing/transience
- Clearly defining what success is
- Communication work needs to work. Should find means to be more inclusive
- Community schools may be the better way to go in certain locations
- Consistency in Central Office dealing with busing issues. Payments, approvals need to be handled from “customer service: point of view.
- Continuation and expansion of unified professional development to scaffold teaching and learning in the arts
- Decreasing silos and increasing the pockets of good work
- Determine what works and what doesn’t in moving forward
- Equity issue in Special Education. Needs top down look on providing “true inclusion, all of the time
- Getting things done utilizing all resources in an aligned system
- Inconsistencies in punishments for students. Need to meet the needs of students
- Need for continuity and consensus in moving forward following return to local control
- Need for educating parents on what education means
- Parents deserve to know the truth of what’s occurring in the schools

Desired Characteristics:

- Ability to bring together public charter schools and public schools to provide best choices for parents
- Ability to create a deep (administrative) bench that has a strategy behind filling the bench
- Able to create a district of excellent schools and illustrate success in marketing them
- Able to leverage city wide resources to increase safety in schools
- An honest broker of data
- Capable of answering to choice points on local district schools and community schools
- Capable of building networks within and across areas that benefit all kids
- Demonstrated long term (past) commitment to a district that has been motivated to change with positive results
- Empathizes with the experiences of special needs parents
- Engages parents and believes they have a role in educating their children
- Inclusive of those without traditional preparation for teaching and learning

- Not afraid of sharing data
- Thinks differently about systems and how they may work differently
- Understand systematic support for innovation and improvement
- Understands the continuous improvement cycle
- Use time and energy to do authentic engagement with students and parents to create a shared vision

Group #7:

Strengths:

- Corporate confidence in Newark is on the rise
- Law enforcement officers who are trained to deal with the kids
- Strong sense of community in addressing Newark's problems
- Support systems provided by the churches to enhance those of the city and/or school system
- The district working its way out of State takeover and establishing full control of its schools

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Acknowledgement of all religious Holidays on the school calendar
- Attention to security in schools
- Changing the conditions in the schools to better prepare students for college
- Concerned about the short-term fiscal stability of the district (i.e. tax-base; funding of charters; legislative ability to cut budget)
- Creation of more embedded vocational opportunities for students
- Developing means through which teachers are trained to deal with students
- Developing processes for entrepreneurial experience in schools
- Employing and maintaining staff that have the skill set to teach
- Infrastructure (buildings) needs renewed attention
- Need for more regimentation in schools – many doing what they want to do
- Providing access to foreign language opportunities that will enhance job opportunities (Specific reference given to Chinese influence in Africa and the need for African American employees who can speak Chinese)
- Providing counseling so that students get to know themselves and be guided toward course to meet goals/expectations
- Rebuild reduced or cut programs in Special Education, the Arts, and Vocational areas

Desired Characteristics:

- Able to balance law enforcement and mental health issues in the schools
- Displays passion for Newark and understands each school
- Identifies problems with students and addresses them
- Record of dealing with sensitive issues – doesn't neglect them
- Someone from Newark. We are products of our environment
- Someone who is ready to work with Mayor
- Team player who can balance political agendas with those of the school district
- Understand the cultural diversity of Newark – inclusive of the gang culture
- Understands and supports system for immigrants and the diverse faith community

- Understands best practices for the professional development of teachers

Group #8:

Strengths:

- Administrators and staff have had success with limited resources
- Build upon STEM initiatives district-wide
- Business competency
- Camaraderie in the community
- Community – quality /equity despite Charter schools
- Community relations
- Community values neighborhood schools
- Culture is strongly valued in schools and community
- Diversity
- Extended after school program
- Great community schools
- Hometown pride
- Newark has good teachers
- Parental involvement is valued
- Parents respond to and get involved crises
- Professional student guidance from outside industries
- Quality instruction
- Reading/writing Literacy
- Respect for student voices
- School administrators who care about children
- Staff commitment to students
- Stakeholders value safety, excellence, commitment, resources, up-to-date curriculum
- Stakeholders value the quality of education and care of students
- Strong community partners (CBO's, Arts and Philanthropic orgs.)
- Strong parental involvement and support for schools
- Strong sense of community
- Stronger parental engagement
- Student drop-outs
- Students have access to tools for success
- Teachers that are committed, valued, and want to be here
- Teachers that are qualified and degreed in subject areas
- Unique culture(s) of every Ward
- Value structure in classrooms
- Volunteers are welcome in the schools

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- 14th amendment compliance
- Accountability for violations of IEP's
- Additional preparation (tutoring) to prepare for standardized testing
- Address "push outs" and "drop outs"
- Increase vocational trade and/or occupational courses
- Address a horrible hiring process and hiring standards

- Address ancient facilities
- Address and improve discipline policies
- Address chronic and severe absenteeism
- Address consistency of arts program throughout the schools
- Address need for stronger social service resources
- Address over emphasis on technology
- Address overcrowding in schools and classrooms
- Address possible over classification of students
- Address restrictions on school choice for bilingual students
- Address safety, home and school
- Address separation of siblings (universal enrollment) traveling to multiple schools
- Address the amount of paperwork for teachers
- Address the front desk behavior of staff members who are rude
- Address the loss of qualified teachers and good instructional workers
- Address the perception the urban youth are failures
- Address the whole child and stop emphasis on test scores
- Addressing bi-lingual needs
- Addressing bullying and gang activity in the schools
- Addressing college advisement resources from early grades on
- Addressing needs of ESL population given Newark is a sanctuary city
- Addressing poor facilities and transportation issues
- Addressing the need for a longer school day and longer school year
- Adequate support staff for schools
- After school programs need to be accessible to all – not centrally booked
- All aspects of poverty
- An equitably disbursed budget
- Assess district real estate
- Assure that teachers have the tools to be successful
- Attending to mental health issues and services
- Audit student failure and the fact that some are being “pushed” through the system (social promotion)
- Build stronger comprehensive high schools
- Build stronger supports for special needs students
- Build upon social and emotional well-being of youth
- Building a stronger awareness of Newark’s culture inside and outside of school
- Building relationships with family and community
- Carry the momentum of learning to read through middle school
- Challenge of removing politics from education
- Charter schools should be accountable to regular public schools
- Climate of education should change
- Close “One Newark” to permit students to come back to their home schools.
- Collaboration with community and central office (avoid working in silos)
- Consistency in investing in the district and developing a strong program of professional development
- Create a pipeline of talent so future leaders are homegrown
- Create a strong discipline plan to ensure good students aren’t penalized for the challenging students
- Create more staff diversity

- Create training and professional development opportunities for students
- Creating a greater variety of afterschool programs inclusive of bilingual programs
- Creating high school bilingual programs inclusive of specialty magnet schools
- Curriculum uniformity district wide
- Dealing with student trauma and grief counseling (should be counselor in every school)
- Develop a new enrollment process the decouples charter and regular public schools
- Develop twilight programs and more after school programs
- District too focused on exams and assessment – not enough focus on actual education
- Diverse enrollment among Magnet Schools
- Emphasis on “differentiation” doesn’t give teachers time to give all students time they need
- Empower the teachers
- Ensuring a more balanced curriculum (Black history, library, cursive handwriting)
- Equity in support staff among schools
- ESL Program availability in all schools
- Everyone not receiving clear communication(s) from district
- Experienced classroom leadership to support curriculum
- Explore policies that limit homework
- Extended after school program should be lengthened
- Focus on early education
- Gross inequity of schools
- Having every child perform at grade level
- How “One Newark” impacts the traditional public schools
- Identify long and short term fiscal challenges
- Identifying and removing ineffective teachers
- Ignite learning throughout the entire family
- Impact of “One Newark” magnet schools on enrollment
- Implement 15 min school-advisory period
- Implementation of AMISTAD Act
- Improve access to technology
- Improve the food and nutritional program of the district
- Improved communication between departments
- Incorporate Newark’s history into curriculum
- Increase availability of college fairs for students in lower grades
- Increase district support for Pre-K education
- Increase funding for school trips
- Increase qualifications for aides
- Increase services for IEP (Classified) students
- Increasing social and emotional programs
- Invest in the skill sets for administrators
- Lack of college and career readiness
- Lack of parental involvement and parental engagement
- Lack of penmanship instruction
- Lack of synergy among district leadership
- Lack of training for support staff
- Long-term attention to facilities
- Look into using certified subject area subs

- Low morale for teachers
- Meaningful communications with families outside of social media
- Meeting the need for resources across all curriculum areas (Bilingual; Special needs)
- Middle school(s) should be in separate building
- More bi-lingual leaders
- More culturally responsive to school teachers, curriculum and school appearance
- More parental involvement
- More support services i.e. guidance counselors
- More time for parents to interact with teachers
- Need for after school coach classes, or homework center(s)
- Need for attendance counselor and truancy counselor
- Need for safe spaces for children/families to play
- Newark Public Schools need to reorganize
- One Newark Enrolls need to be phased out
- Parents access to schools (often seems as if they can't get in
- Preparing children for a new world where technology is "key"
- Preparing for the demographic changes in Newark
- Providing "state-of-art" security measures in the schools
- Providing resources so parents may access GED's and adult ESL classes
- Qualified subject matter teachers
- Rebuilding capacity
- Re-evaluate/Audit Child Study Team processes
- Re-introduce vocational programs geared toward developing 21st Century skills
- Remain cognizant of how/why Newark was taken over in the first place
- Remove and replace "One Newark"
- Retaining high quality less experienced teachers
- Return students with disabilities back to the district
- Review of graduation requirements (PARCC; Credits, etc.)
- Salaries and benefits need to be made competitive for recruiting purposes
- School budgets should be used for their intended purpose
- Separation of siblings needs to be addressed
- Social workers to address the needs of youth
- Special education students should have the same choices as other
- Stakeholders feel their interests are not considered
- Stakeholders should be focused on children's education
- Stakeholders should be involved in education and not in politics
- Standards need to be enforced in every school
- Stop nepotism/hiring of friends
- Strategic Plan in focus
- Strategy to deal with aging facilities
- Stress STEM programs
- Stronger attendance plan
- Stronger communication
- Stronger parental engagement
- Student failure rates
- Students need community schools
- Students need to be given a voice

- Students should have earlier emersion into foreign languages Give schools additional finances
- Success mentors
- Talent office needs to be assertive and conscientious about teacher recruitment
- Teacher absence
- Teacher retention
- Teachers needs to be vested in the community
- Teachers should not have to purchase books and supplies they need to teach
- The issue of nepotism needs to be addressed
- Truancy and attendance officers needs to return
- With schools closing and population increasing, places need to be found to place students

Desired Characteristics:

- A leader who is accessible to meet children's and parent needs
- A multi-language leader who understand the culture of the community
- A professional who is invested in the community
- Ability to increase test scores and graduation rates
- Ability to revitalize energy in the district
- Able to build bridges across the city
- Background in dealing with diverse populations
- Believes all stakeholders are important and wants to hear from all of them
- Capability to monitor funds and be sure they are expended in the right way
- Cheerleader for students
- Clearly articulates the vision for Newark Schools
- Committed to high student academic achievement
- Communicates with and engages all stakeholders
- Compassionate in the execution of duties
- Connects with and understand the challenges of residents
- Courage – integrity – fiscal responsibility
- Creative, intellectual with common sense
- Cultural relevance, understanding, sensitivity
- Culturally sensitive
- Demonstrated capacity to support children, parents, and community
- Demonstrated history of strong ethics and integrity
- Demonstrated professional achievement
- District/School turn around ability
- Doctorate degree
- Doesn't settle for mediocrity
- Effectively communicate with philanthropic community
- Engages all stakeholders
- Engages with students and hears the voices of students
- Engaging, listener
- Experience in an urban environment
- Experience in hiring quality personnel
- Experience in overseeing a large school district
- Extensive experience in the field of education/pedagogy

- Fair, consistent, honest, flexible
- Familiar with social emotion challenges
- Familiarity with kids (students) from specific neighborhoods
- Familiarity with Newark
- Genuine care for scholar's success
- Good listener - listens to the heart of the community
- Good listener, flexible
- Great communicator
- Guarantees equity for all schools throughout the city
- Hands on – visits schools
- Has a vested interest in Newark
- Has knowledge of the city and how it functions
- Has or will develop a strategic plan for Newark
- Has the "heart of a teacher and the mind of a business person"
- Heart of a lion
- Holds every single employee accountable for their jobs
- Interested in Public education
- Invested in the education of community children so they are prepared to attend GREAT colleges/universities
- Is a listener
- Is a people person who is involved with community and all schools
- Is able to stay the course of change
- Is pleasant and often meets with community leaders
- Know the big city-small city
- Look to people who may not be certified
- Makes sure students are part of the school processes
- Meet families where they are and communicate clearly
- Must live in Newark
- Newark born and raised and product of the Newark School system
- Not a dictator
- Not all certified people are qualified to be superintendent
- Not someone from outside (of Newark Public schools)
- Open and transparent
- Parent friendly
- Passion for the job and Newark
- Passionate and dynamic
- Possess bilingual capabilities (Spanish and Portuguese)
- Prior experience in school leadership
- Promotes community service
- Proven ability to build strong professional and community relations
- Relationship building
- Representative of the community
- Respect for a community of diversity
- Respects children and their development
- Responsible trend setter
- School leader that is bilingual

- Sees the value in vocational opportunities for students
- Solution oriented
- Someone who can relate to the students of Newark
- Someone who conducts need assessments before instituting changes
- Someone who is a product of Newark Public Schools and understand the school system
- Someone who understands Newark
- Someone with vision, goals and high expectations for teachers/educators/students
- Strategic planner, goal setter, able to evaluate success
- Strong communicator
- Superintendent personally visits each school and meets with parents for their feedback
- Superintendent who has a full commitment to the students of Newark
- Takes time to see what works in Newark
- Trend setter – not an imitator
- Understand and uses best practices
- Understand mutual respect
- Understand personal challenges of students
- Understand the importance of making curriculum relevant to Newark community
- Understand what instructional leadership looks and how it should be delivered
- Understanding, trusting, respectful, honesty and faithful
- Understands data and can turn numbers into “next steps”
- Understands Newark and its people
- Understands social challenges that students deal with on a daily basis
- Understands the culture of each ward
- Understands there is talent in Newark and wants to build upon that talent
- Uses title to move he district forward
- Values education and those who can teach
- Values quality teaching
- Vast experience in urban communities
- Visionary enough to value partnerships with corporate, academic, and philanthropic organizations
- Visits schools herself/himself and doesn’t necessarily listen to perspectives of other administrators
- Welcomes parental involvement but holds them accountable

Group 9:

Strengths:

- Autonomy given principals in building seems to be working better than previous top down direction of the NPS
- Some fundraising issues are working better, but will need to be sustained to assist the district

- Students performance has improved

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- "One Newark" destroyed Newark enrollment in regular public schools
- Addressing the need for a forensic audit to assist new Superintendent
- Addressing the number of contracts for services provided by "outside" vendors
- Charter schools are made to look like private schools because of enrollment and rules not consistent with NPS schools
- Continuing and enhancing the gains in student performance
- Creating public/private partnerships to address facilities issues (long term lease agreements, buy backs, etc.)
- Equitable resources should be a practice for all schools with emphasis on the South and West Wards
- Financial deficits – holes and deficits left by the State. Tragic how they handled it
- Gaining funding for and improving deteriorating facilities
- Inability to differentiate and/or pace instruction when basics have not been covered
- Reducing a 'top heavy" Central Office
- Re-instate some of what has gone by the wayside through poor administration: dictatorial/top-down practices; not fully staffing schools; addressing the loss of talent; loss of student enrollment; school building structural integrity; mentoring for new teachers; male teacher role models
- Students desire for quality teachers – students don't want to lose their excellent teachers
- The process of school choice should be for everyone. Current system may assist in people segregating themselves
- While the cost per pupil is higher the funding is not getting to the classrooms

Desired Characteristics:

- A leader who can decide the number of assistants needed
- A local leader whose come through the ranks (teacher, building admin., Central office)
- Ability to take the "pulse" of what's going on in the community
- An honest, fair, flexible, and firm builder (upon positive foundations already created
- Be creative with courage
- Build positive relationships with union leaders
- Can garner the support of the entire educational community
- Candidate who is disconnected from State takeover

- Demonstrated excellence in current position within a school district
- Develop a relationship with students and parents that opens up an honest dialogue
- Embraces the richness of diversity
- Engage and communicate with parents, staff, students, politicians
- Favorable to not breaking up the district.
- No one from the outside (of Newark)
- Someone who knows how "to talk to" the various groups in the community
- Think "outside the box"
- Thinks trajectorially
- Understand the nature of putting Policy into practice

Group 10:

Strengths:

- A real community/family feeling
- Ability to partnership with non-profit
- Amazon to Newark
- Artistic side of the community way for youth and community to express themselves through art
- Board is empowered
- College connections that benefit children
- Community should stay involved in keeping the district in one positive direction
- Connecting the study of relevant history to people of color Access to Transportation
- Connections to Amistad legislation and cultural competencies
- District has come a long way since 1995 weathering all the bumps and bruises
- Excellent students ready for the challenge
- Great Diversity
- Great Pride in Newark
- Great teachers – value the veteran teachers
- Leaders outside the district who provide opportunities for our students
- Legacy of the schools – people/students proud of schools they attended
- Moving to local control
- Newark is warm and friendly city
- Newark's rich history
- Opportunity to rebuild the culture around local control
- People are coming together
- Political leaders have a vested interest in the schools
- Potential of the city that has the 3rd largest flow of goods services traveling through it
- Pride in the city

- Sense of community support
- Size-largest school district
- Student advocacy on behalf of many stakeholders

Challenges/Concerns/Issues:

- Ability to Partner with non-profits
- Absenteeism of staff and students
- Address a long-range facilities plan effectively
- Addressing the oldest infrastructure (buildings)
- Celebrate teachers for what they do
- Central office culture – Superintendent now reports to the Board
- College entries should be more prevalent for Newark students
- Continuing on the path of not being fully funded (last 4-5 years has eaten up budget surplus)
- Curriculum not in a good place even though reformed over the past 6-7 years
- Curriculum should serve Newark's students – not be a "boxed program off the shelf
- Dealing with cafeteria staff in terms of quality
- Dealing with expected flat State aid
- Developing a mutual respect between the Board and administration
- engagement
- Enrollment going up and per pupil allocations going down
- Filling vacancies in Central Office, particularly in curriculum
- Get students connected to the goods industry. It is often missed as an asset of the city
- Improve the attendance rate
- Insuring that administration understands the role of the Board with the return of local control
- Insuring there is a diverse pool of Superintendent candidates
- Maintaining local control over the long term Thinking out-of-the-box when solving issues
- Promote community and parental involvement
- Public charter schools taking funds away from regular public schools
- Rebuild the culture around local control
- Staying on track and making progress toward a better Newark – stay focused
- Students should benefit more from port taxes
- Understand budgeting/funding
- Understand why schools are failing
-

Desired Characteristics:

- Able to develop equity between schools
- Able to lead with a love for the city
- Able to move forward with a strong relationship with the Board
- Able to work with the Board
- Admin/supervisory

- An out-of-the-box thinker who doesn't accept the term "underperforming"
- Background in urban education as well as suburban and rural to understand all types of districts
- Commitment to Newark
- Communicator
- Data driven in terms of addressing curriculum
- Demonstrated success in building relationships with everyone
- Engaging
- Experience in classroom,
- Experience with culturally responsive schools
- Great leader, reliable, accountable
- Inclusive thinking
- Know the District, culture, staff and
- Local control visionary with track record of addressing needs of urban kids
- Not authoritarian – more cooperative
- Open and willing to work with the Board
- Politically savvy
- Proven track record of student success
- Relatable to mental health issues
- Should live in the City
- Someone who has been in the ranks (teacher, building administrator, central office)
- Someone with Superintendent experience (at least 2 years as direct supervisor of Assistant Supts.)
- students
- Superintendent experience
- Team leader who will work with Board to achieve goals where they succeed
- Understand social emotional learning as well as the social atmosphere of the city
- Understands the City and community
- Understands the issues of the community
- Urban experience

Newark Public Schools
Superintendent of Schools
Desired Characteristics

After seeking input from its Board members and community via focus groups, interviews, and an online survey, the Board of Education of Newark Public Schools seeks an experienced educational leader who possesses the following ***characteristics***:

- Teaching and building level experience that serves as a foundation for understanding meeting the needs of a caring professional staff and diverse student population in an urban environment.
- Humility, resilience, and political savvy in dealing with difficult decisions and varying opinionated personalities.
- Excellent financial acumen supported by an understanding of long and short-term budget planning and implementation.
- Adaptability and accessibility in developing a professional presence that is transparent and welcoming.
- Understanding of the ongoing necessity to build and maintain a productive working relationship with the Board that is focused on a shared vision with common goals.

With regard to leadership ***experiences and accomplishments***, the successful candidate will:

- Demonstrated experience in focusing on students first, while creating or working within a shared vision on how to improve learning and outcomes for diverse learners in an urban environment.
- Demonstrate excellence in building, supporting, and maintaining a strong working relationship with a Board of Education.
- Demonstrate community engagement and transparency built upon trust, honesty and integrity, regardless of issues at hand and/or problems to be solved.
- Demonstrate proven skills in developing a budget that addresses a long-term plan for dealing with current budget shortfalls while preserving resources that continue to support achievement growth for students.
- Demonstrate an ability to recruit and retain high-quality staff that will be able to execute a student-focused vision for success.
- Demonstrate district-wide achievement results that continue to raise the bar of accomplishment while reducing achievement gaps between and among diverse student groups within multiple school settings.
- Demonstrate success as a change agent that can address system level issues with a problem-solving, “outside the box” mentality