

Montecito Union School District
Leadership Profile Report
February 13, 2017

DISTRICT BACKGROUND

The Montecito Union School rests on an eleven-acre site nestled between the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Pacific Ocean and serves the community of Montecito. The Montecito Union School District is a public elementary school district with one school serving children in grades kindergarten through sixth grade. In 1998 and again in 2014 the school was awarded the State of California's "Distinguished School" status. The school is also one of five schools in the United States to be named an International Habits of Mind School of Excellence, as well as a California Gold Level Green Ribbon School. Montecito Union is governed by a five-member board of trustees and administered by a district Superintendent, a Principal and Assistant Principal. There is a supportive PTA and Educational Foundation that supports the Strategic Plan. The school boasts a school-wide teacher/pupil average of 1:18 students in grades K-6 with a certificated teacher and a three-hour instructional assistant in each classroom. In addition, the school's staff includes credentialed specialists in art, library, math, music, physical education, reading, technology, science and Spanish.

A Board of Trustees committed to high expectation of success for all students' leads the District. The District's vision statement states: "The vision of MUS is to set a global standard of educational excellence. Our students will have the academic foundation to creatively solve complex problems, to apply interpersonal and collaborative skills and to demonstrate a genuine sense of curiosity in a student-focused and supportive environment. Our students will be empowered thinkers who positively impact and adapt to our ever changing and diverse world."

INTRODUCTION OF FINDINGS

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) on January 30 and 31, 2017 for the new superintendent in the Montecito Union School District. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The survey, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the Board in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new superintendent.

Additionally the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the District; some of the challenges it will be facing in the coming years and what characteristics the stakeholders desire in the new superintendent.

The consultants commend the efforts of the Board for casting a wide net which generated a clear expression of interest in the District and the superintendent search process, as conveyed by all with whom they interacted or who completed the online survey. Stakeholders demonstrated a clear commitment to the education and success of all of the District’s students as they shared what they perceived to be the strengths and challenges/issues of the District. Constituent groups also formulated a preferred list of characteristics and experiences that they felt would be desirable for the next superintendent to possess.

Participants in Focus Groups

Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) met with Board Members, administrators, teachers, parents, and community representatives on January 30 and 31, 2017, to gather information to assist the consultants in formulating a leadership profile desired of the new superintendent. The number of participants, by stakeholder group, is listed below:

Stakeholder Group	Participants
Administrators	4
Board Members	5
Classified staff	21
Parents/Community	126
Teachers	28
Total	184

The responses provided by the individuals and focus groups during the interviews are listed in two additional documents that are titled: Consistent Themes and All Responses. They are listed alphabetically with no attempt 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 respective groups to which they are attributed. Items are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the Board's attention.

Strengths

There were several consistent strengths identified. Most all stakeholder groups identified an outstanding teaching staff with tremendous resources and a strong curriculum. Additionally, there was a strong consensus that the district's instructional program is moving in an excellent direction with cutting edge programs offered to students. A strong and supportive community has consistently provided resources to support students learning both inside and outside the classroom. There is a strong co-curricular program and excellent extra-curricular opportunities for all students. Parents are involved in all aspects of the school from supporting classroom instruction to fundraising for programs. Finally, it was clear that students with special needs are accepted, integrated and valued by the school community.

A strong strategic plan is seen as an important part of the district with the belief that moving forward can be accomplished by following that plan where there is a clear focus on meeting the needs of all students and supporting teachers in their classrooms. Professional learning is an important part of the district's culture.

Challenges

Addressing an aging facility with needed repairs and maintenance was a consistent message. The ability to determine what the scope of a possible bond measure and to work with the community to get the bond passed was mentioned by several stakeholders. The challenge will be to determine, with community input, exactly what facility improvements the Montecito community would support. Stakeholders believe that the support of parents represents both strength and a challenge. Maintaining the high expectations, understanding and supporting the unique Montecito culture will be important.

Clearly articulating the roles and responsibilities of the administrative positions in this single school, school district will be important for both internal and external stakeholders. Being able to clearly separate the positions and provide a rationale for their need will be an important activity for the next superintendent. It was suggested that the new superintendent invest their time with the community that

‘voted no’ on the last bond measure because the vote was more about the scope of the project list as opposed to supporting the school district.

Characteristics for the Next Superintendent

Stakeholders had many different ideas regarding the characteristics for the next superintendent. However there were several common themes that did emerge. Understanding how to work with a board of education and having had previous administrative experience are important characteristics. Being an excellent communicator and an active listener is expected.

Engaging the community and continuing to keep the school as the center of the community will be important. Stakeholders indicated that they did not believe a ‘change agent’ was appropriate but that having good ‘diplomatic’ skills would be essential. It would be preferable that the new superintendent have had experience working with high wealth communities and be excited to work with the neighbors of the school and wider school community.

Being visible, having students at the center of all decisions and being able to build trust amongst staff, community and the board of trustees will be essential. It will be important that the new superintendent sustain the student centered climate and work to have positive relationships with every student in the district. Having a deep knowledge in curriculum and instructional strategies is very important, as is the ability to work with a professional and sophisticated teaching staff.

HYA consultants agree with many of the identified characteristics that would assist a new superintendent in successfully leading the Montecito Union School District. The focus groups revealed a consensus that they want a leader who is engaging, collaborative, visible, a visionary, and a good communicator. The stakeholders want a leader that will continue and enhance the work being done at the school. They desire an experienced educational leader who communicates effectively with all stakeholders and has demonstrated the ability to work positively with the Board of Trustees. The new superintendent should have a deep knowledge of innovative curriculum and instruction and be an instructional leader committed to improving student achievement. This individual must be visionary and be able to foster a team concept, treating all people with respect and professionalism. The new superintendent should understand basic aid school district finance and be able to continue to both balance the budget and move the district forward. It is important that the new superintendent be approachable, accessible, and transparent. The stakeholders want a superintendent who comes to stay and be part of the Montecito community for many years.

HYA cannot promise to find a candidate who possesses all of the characteristics desired by respondents. However, HYA intends to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses many of the skills and character traits required to build on the District's successes. HYA will address the concerns expressed by the constituent groups and present them to the Board for its review and consideration.

The consultants thank all the participants who attended focus groups meetings or completed the online survey. We also thank all of the Montecito Union School District staff members who assisted with our meetings and for their efforts in facilitating our time in the District. We would like to especially recognize Autumn Noe and her tireless work to accommodate both HYA associates and the stakeholders who gave of their time to speak with both of us.

Respectfully submitted,

Rudy Castruita and David Cash