



**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
Charlotte, North Carolina
Community Engagement Audit and
Leadership Profile Report
March 14, 2023**

**Presented by
Dr. Kevin Castner
Dr. Debra Hill,
Dr. Percy Mack
BWP and Associates Consultants**

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
Community Engagement Audit and Leadership Profile Report
March 14, 2023
By: Dr. Kevin Castner, Dr. Debra Hill, Dr. Percy Mack
BWP and Associates Consultants

The following is a written report which provides data and information gathered through an additional community engagement and audit process for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS). This report serves as an addendum to an engagement process and report conducted and completed by the Civility Localized organization which was presented to the community and the Board of Trustees in December 2022. An oral summary will be presented to the Board on March 14, 2023. The purpose of this component of the search process was to conduct a second tier audit that would enhance the activity completed by the Civility Localized organization in the fall of 2022. By incorporating both sets of qualitative and quantitative data representing the thoughts, ideas, concerns and profile of a quality leader, a “Leadership Profile would be developed to be approved by the Board of Trustees. This profile will be used by all those engaged in the search process as the basis for the recruitment, identification and selection of the next superintendent. A special note of thanks is given to the Civility Localized Organization (Christine Edwards and Khrystle Bullock); CMS Board Search Committee - (Summer Nunn – Committee Chairman, Elyse Dashew - Board Chairman, Stephanie Sneed – Board Vice - Chairman and Lenora Shipp – Board Member). Our thanks are also extended to Charles Jester, Ahjae Yates, Andre’ Mayes, Shawn Williams and all the staff who extended their gracious hospitality, planning support and assistance in such an efficient and hospitable way.

The information provided reflects the overall themes that emerged from input and feedback provided to the Civilized Localized organization September – November 2022 and gathered in the extended audit conducted March 2 through March 9 from School Board Members and numerous constituent groups in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County;

The purpose of the Civility Localized organizations’ activities was similar to that typically used in a superintendent search process and was designed to:

- A. Engage stakeholders and key constituents from diverse communities in shaping the job description for the ideal CMS superintendent
- B. Collect lived experiences of those most impacted by the hiring decision for the next CMS

A summary of the methodology and participation data found in the extensive document prepared by the Civility Localized organization in partnership with the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council reported the following data:

1. On-line Survey period: September 27 - November 18, 2022 - Responses: 1,714

2. Stakeholder Interviews – 21 participants
3. Listening Sessions for the general public; one in person, one virtual and one in Spanish 64 participants
4. 6 Focus Groups for key audience types: a. Youth; b. Educators; c. 2 Faith Focus Groups; d. Non-Profit Organizations; e. Business Leaders - 120 participants

While not accounting for duplication in participation in multiple activities it appears that approximately 1,919 constituent members of the community were engaged in this process.

In review of the Civility Localized organizations information, it was determined that additional input from stakeholders across the district but most especially from underrepresented communities could be supportive of the results of the prior fall engagement process.

A meeting was held by the CMS Search Committee Chairman, BWP consultants with representatives from Civility Localized who had shared their summary report, raw data, and who offered suggestions on additional outreach efforts that could occur with this extended process.

The extended community engagement process was developed and qualitative data was gathered by BWP and Associate consultants via eight (8) individual phone interviews with Board Members and two (2) interviews with the Board/district support personnel March 4-7.

Twenty-seven (27) of twenty-nine (29) scheduled focus group discussions were conducted on March 8 and 9 of which fourteen (14) were conducted virtually. Thirteen (13) were conducted at various sites in the community two (2) of which were open community forums. Where appropriate, language assistance was provided. A schedule of the sessions was posted on the Board/Superintendent Search link of the District website which enabled any member of the public to join or listen to any of the discussions.

In order to address Board and community concerns about engaging all segments of the community and most importantly those individuals considered to be in “marginalized” groups, community leaders were asked to serve as “search ambassadors”, to use their contacts and outreach efforts to inform and encourage participation from the entire community. The focus group facilitator team included Drs. Kevin Castner, Debra Hill, Percy Mack and Anne Noland a BWP Director. All data from the extended community engagement activity was gathered and analyzed exclusively by the BWP team.

Finally, while notes were taken, they were not meant to be provided as verbatim statements but rather summarized thoughts while capturing the essence of the participants’ perceptions as related to the question prompts. This qualitative information when paired with the Civility Localized organizations qualitative and quantitative data provided the consultants with information regarding common themes that emerged through these two community

engagement processes and enabled the development of a Leadership Profile (Appendix B) using a frequency distribution analysis model.

Readers are also invited to review the Civilized Localized report which can be found at <https://www.civilitylocalized.com/our-projects>

Appendix A provides the themes which emerged from both the qualitative and quantitative data that was collected. The themes listed are not in priority order or all inclusive, but summarize and capture the essence of the community’s perceptions about the CMS community and what will be required for success for the new superintendent.

Appendix B presents the “Leadership Profile” which emerged from the analyzed data collected. This information will be presented to the Board on March 14, 2023. It is hoped that the after review and any minor modifications, the document will be approved by the Board. This approved “Leadership Profile of Skills and Characteristics” will be used as a recruitment and screening tool for all applicants by the consultants and Board of Education.

Appendix C provides demographic data for the constituent participants of the interviews and focus groups. Ten (10) Board Members and 3 Board support staff were invited for one-to-one conversations of thirteen (13) interviews proposed a total of ten (10) were conducted. Approximately seven hundred sixty-eight (768) spaces were available in twenty- eight (28) identified focus groups. Twenty-six (26) groups were conducted with a total of three hundred eighty-nine (389) participants. In addition, the consultants received six (6) comments emailed from community members directly to the consultants bringing the total number of participants to **three-hundred ninety-five (395)**.

Appendix D provides the feedback transcript of comments from all interviews, focus groups and ancillary community member participants in the extended activity. It is important to note that names of specific individuals are not included. In order to protect individual statements, the comments have been provided in focus group clusters but are not organized so that any groups can be associated with specific comments. In summary, twenty-seven (27) groups, including the Board, were represented and participants provided qualitative data by responding to the following prompts:

1. What are the strengths of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS)?
2. What are areas of challenge concern or issues?
3. What skills and characteristics will the next Superintendent need to possess to be successful in CMS?

4. What other information needs to be considered by the Board in screening and selecting a candidate for CMS?

A general frequency distribution strategy of both the qualitative and quantitative information was used to analyzing the response data from members of the community across groups and to develop themes.

Summary

With the completion of two community engagement processes, there were approximately two thousand three hundred fourteen (2,314) individuals (not including duplications) who participated in the interviews, focus groups and survey which were used to identify the aforementioned themes and formulate the development of the recommended Leadership Profile.

The CMS community should be proud of the extent to which multiple segments of the population participated in this search process.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Themes from the Community Engagement Activities

Appendix B - Recommended Leadership Profile

Appendix C - Invited Community Organizations and Individuals List

Appendix D - Interview and Focus Groups Responses

Appendix A

Major Themes from the Extended Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Engagement Process

Summarized Identified Strengths of CMS

- A community proud of its diversity of students and families with a focus on equity and inclusion
- Excellent caring, talented teachers and staff committed to students and families
- A multitude of great educational options, schools and programs for students
- A growing community and population with excellent and diverse business options and higher- level educational opportunities and partnerships (industry, health care, etc.)
- Supportive, committed, interested parents and community members
- The availability of resources and strong community partnerships
- A large district with a small-town feel – everyone knows each other
- The history and legacy of CMS being innovative and forward thinking
- A great place to live and raise a family
- A focus on student achievement

Summarized Identified Issues and Challenges of CMS

- Student achievement gaps most especially beginning at 3rd grade
- School safety and behavior issues
- Focus and direction for the district – Board’s role - instability in leadership
- Size – impact on the needs of the varying communities when one size fits all
- Financial projections for funding
- Recruiting and retaining quality staff
- Professional development for staff
- Staff salaries and compensation
- Communication across all levels
- Voice for all groups – staff, parents, students and community

Other information to be considered by the Board Summarized

- Doctorate preferred, but not required
- Experience matters (especially here in this large diverse, urban district)

- Prefer a seated superintendent, or deputy superintendent
- Knows the history of Charlotte and CMS
- Has a proven track record of success in many areas and is high on accountability
- Need for stability and self-reflection on why such turnover
- Large urban school district experience
- Has come through the ranks and has classroom, management and business experience
- Demonstrates a commitment to stay
- Experience with diverse populations and communities

Appendix B

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE Charlotte- Mecklenburg SUPERINTENDENT

BWP and Associates consultants, after gathering data and incorporating the data gathered by the Civility Localized organization and consulting with staff, students, and members of the community, have identified the qualities we believe are desired in a new superintendent. All of these characteristics are important and are not in any ranked order. The individual appointed should be:

- an experienced leader who will be highly visible in the schools and the community, will be committed to the community; is knowledgeable and exhibits an understanding of the rich history and legacy of Charlotte and CMS;
- a student-centered leader who will demonstrate a belief in the merits of diversity, inclusivity and equity as a necessary part of the landscape of the overall wellbeing of students, staff and the community;
- a visionary leader who is a collaborative team builder; with the vision and passion to address achievement gaps for all students in a large diverse urban community;
- a leader who has good managerial and business skills, who will promote and engage in community partnerships and work well with the Board to bring about unity to CMS;
- a strong leader who is approachable, culturally competent and is knowledgeable about curriculum/instruction and professional development based on their expertise, passion, and understanding of teaching and learning;
- an educator who is a good communicator/spokesperson and listener with all constituent groups and will be transparent in their actions and demonstrates a high level of integrity and flexibility;
- a focused leader who believes in accountability, has excellent interpersonal skills, makes decisions, executes them with courage and has the ability to work successfully with community partners;

- an individual who will stay the course and who will be transparent in their actions inviting multiple constituent groups to the table in the decision-making process and who listens to all voices, understanding and appreciating different points of views;
- an individual who is politically savvy, is sensitive to multiple political agendas and recognizes the superintendent's role in the political arena;
- a person who understands North Carolina's school finance, collaborates on seeking additional resources and has good financial skills and experience in district and school budgeting.

Appendix C

Charlotte Mecklenburg Community Engagement Invited Focus Groups

March 8th	Group(s) *Unable to Attend	Location	Est Attendance	BWP Facilitator
10:00	Eastside (Hidden Valley)	CMGC - Room 286	6	Kevin Castner / Percy Mack
11:30	CMS Staff	CMS Ed Center Stuart Andrew Blvd	13 - 20	Kevin Castner / Percy Mack
12:00	Young Life Charlotte*	Virtual	8	Debra Hill
1:00	High School Students	Virtual	13 - 30	Debra Hill
1:30	Lake Norman Chamber	Lake Norman Chamber	13 - 30	Kevin Castner
2:00	CMS Certified Staff	Virtual	13 - 30	Debra Hill
2:00	Strive Charlotte	3400 Griffith St, Charlotte, NC 28203	8	Percy Mack
3:00	CMS Executives in Residence	Virtual	8	Anne Noland
4:00	Carolina Youth Coalition - CMS Junior & Seniors	Virtual	10	Kevin Castner
5:00	CMS Principals	Virtual	13 - 20	Debra Hill
5:00	KEFA Academy	Community of Employee Services 2201 Caronia St	13 - 20	Kevin Castner
6:00	Steele Creek Association	Virtual	13 - 30	Debra Hill
6:00	Eastside Forum	Weeping Willow AME Zion - 2220 Milton Rd	50-75	Percy Mack

6:30	Promise Youth Development	Albemarle Road Recreation Center - 5027 Idlewild Rd N Charlotte, NC 28227	13 - 20	Kevin Castner
7:00	My Brother's Keeper	Virtual	8	Debra Hill
March 9th	Group(s)	Location	Est Attendance	BWP Facilitator
8:00	CMS Cabinet	CMS Ed Center - Stuart Andrew Blvd	13 -20	Kevin Castner / Percy Mack
9:30	CMS Staff	CMS Ed Center - Stuart Andrew Blvd	13 - 25	Kevin Castner / Percy Mack
11:00	Jessica Davis - Westside Community Leader	Virtual	13 - 25	Debra Hill
12:00	Municipal Employees	Virtual	13 - 50	Anne Noland
1:00	NAACP	Little Rock AME Zion - 401 N McDowell St, Charlotte, NC 28204	20- 30	Kevin Castner / Percy Mack
2:00	Retired Teachers	Virtual		Debra Hill
3:00	MEC PTA *	Virtual		Debra Hill
4:00	Our Turn Youth - CMS Middle & High School	Virtual	25	Kevin Castner
5:00	CMS Non-Certified Staff	Virtual	13- 50	Percy Mack
6:00	Delta Sigma Theta Social Action Committee	Virtual	13 - 25	Debra Hill

6:00	Universal Institute for Successful Aging of Carolinas (UISAC) (Asian/Hindu Community)	Hindu Center 7400 City View Dr	13 - 75	Kevin Castner
6:00	Westside Forum	Reeder Memorial Baptist Church - 3725 Beattles Ford Rd, Charlotte, NC 28216	50 - 100	Percy Mack
7:00	Students	Virtual		Debra Hill
7:30	Spanish Language Forum	Charlotte Bilingual Preschool - 6300 Highland Ave	20 - 40	Kevin Castner/ Interpreter

Appendix D

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Superintendent Search Interview and Focus Group Responses

BOARD OF EDUCATION TRUSTEES - 9

Strengths:

- strong academics
- diversity
- location
- outstanding district
- people care about public education
- student outcome/governance model culture
- qualified central office
- caring teachers who differentiate instruction;
- community who wants to do it right
- good teachers
- growth
- willingness to do better
- support of County Commissioners
- funding
- surrounding colleges
- pleased with new board members and how they are working together as a Board as a group
- they seem to have great potential to be one of the strongest boards based on the governance work that is taking place
- staff – executive stave some are extremely strong
- very supportive community – especially the corporate and philanthropic sector – seem to be more aligned with Board goals – a different relationship is developing than what it has been in the past
- the CMS legacy makes it a special place – a history of great things that have happened in public education that started here – it has great potential as a school system
- a process is emerging to help rebuild the system
- a staff that cares - they care about children and believe they are doing the right things for students – they are dedicated, hardworking and committed
- staff who are dedicated to kids but some are not sure what to do with Black students
- pockets of success from staff who in the past were highly educated –
- magnet schools are great – they can utilize and capture student interest can keep them

- motivated
- we have had great and dedicated teachers
- agreed upon student outcome governance focus – keeping us moving in the same direction
- diversity – one of the fastest growing cities in the country can attract and absorb global students
- a robust department to help those from diverse populations
- teachers able to support diversity
- we offer a variety of programs that can attract a variety of students
- magnet schools give students options – we don't get enough credit for the excellent and variety of options and programs i.e., more AP and Early Childhood programs than found in other states
- good level of community support
- diversity (2)
- good direction
- great programs – CTE, Magnet schools, Apprenticeships
- strategic management
- student achievement
- on the right track
- committed staff
- new board focus and dedicated on changing the outcomes for students
- buy in from Board and staff to implement strategies focused on student outcomes
- inclusive
- leader in being pro public school
- large district

Issues or Areas of Concern

- lack of funding
- new Board
- building trust in the community
- concerns about Board and short tenure of superintendents
- tensions coming out of COVID and impact of keeping students out of school
- system not competitive in funding teachers
- lower expectations impacting district
- top heavy
- severe staff shortage;
- charter schools;
- keeping up with growth
- lack of superintendents' ability/accountability to drive improvement;
- board not representative of district
- lack of trust and transparency
- good programs but we don't do all of them well
- the Board talks about what they think they want but it is not what they really want

- the superintendent does not have the power or authority typical superintendents' have by virtue of the job description – not in charge of policies – is not allowed to do the full job
- Title IX issues
- cronyism – buddy promotions of staff who may not be qualified for the positions they are hired for or who move up through the ranks – occurred with previous administrations
- departments are a mess due to lack of previous administration monitoring and dishonesty
- 3rd grade students are not being successful and discipline is an issue
- some teaching methods seemed to have been abandoned
- Covid created a gap in administrative successes
- more consideration of using a program like “Turning Point” which provides one-to-one student support – seems successful but is limited in the time students can stay in the program
- executive staff – some weak members who may be in over their heads – largely not use to having focused attention upon their work – enabled some not to be held accountable
- the Board has been unclear about priorities
- processes and systems have broken down but are being rebuilt
- lot of scrutiny from the community
- tough media market sometimes – focus on drama and controversy – can be helpful
- can be politically challenging
- being transformational and getting people out of what they are doing
- get staff to move with intentionality out of what they have been doing
- culture change – not having a deficient view of children some staff and leaders
- Title One schools sometimes elicit perceptions of low outcomes and low expectations
- leadership and tools
- carrying people who are not performing
- how to identify students who are not well prepared and address their academic gap without sacrificing the academic programs and achievement needs of the rest of the students who are on grade level or above
- grades K-4 is where the challenge is
- school safety – migration of guns to campus – need for conflict resolution strategies with help and support from all segments of the community
- teachers need to know that classrooms are safe and that a new superintendent will maintain that
- parental involvement
- consistency and fidelity
- turnover
- teacher shortage
- keeping a superintendent
- inequities across the district
- diversity of learning communities
- culture between the board and cabinet
- extremely punitive discipline practices across the district
- protective culture among staff

- teachers don't feel respected
- large district rapid growth
- communication
- needs some fixes

Desired Skills and Characteristics

- someone who knows our community
- good communicator with Board, staff and community
- transparency
- someone who will be invested in community and will be here
- instructional knowledge
- decisiveness

CABINET and STAFF - 107

Strengths:

- commitment to the community
- diversity
- addressing equity
- focus on what's best for children
- dedication of people
- resources available to support schools and multiple programs to meet diverse needs of students
- strong core curriculum
- innovative and progressive district
- focus on student outcomes
- strong strategic focus
- guard rails
- equity mindset
- financial stability
- passionate caring for our students
- loyalty of staff
- strong learning environment
- _____
- district with a structure
- innovation
- many programs – magnet schools, apprenticeships
- _____
- passion for the primary mission
- teaching staff committed and resilient
- staff and buildings have opened their doors to us

- district well positioned in county
 - programming/college and career
 - quality of teachers/4th highest number are nationally teachers in the country
 - magnet programs
 - supported by businesses
 - pride of graduates
 - Charlotte is a melting pot
 - direct leadership style of current leader
-

- students
 - employees
 - diversity
 - many programs – magnet schools, apprenticeships
-

- has the potential to draw top teaching talent
 - diverse – award winning – second largest district in the state
 - has produced a number of prominent people
 - has a wide variety of schools and programs for student growth
 - usually on the cutting edge of great initiatives to move forward student achievement.
 - you will find a home somewhere and a school in CMS - there are an abundant number of magnet schools in Mecklenburg you can find a home that fits you near a school
 - opportunities for industry partnerships and other opportunities can be both a positive and a hindrance
 - but the community involvement - community is heavily involved in the success of CMS opportunity exists
-

- diversity of students
- dozens of programs offered – especially magnet schools
- cohesive and consistent acclimating and respectful to subject areas
- monitoring levels of constant stability for students
- diverse and adaptable
- options for parents and students
- a variety of systems in place to support educators where they are for classroom success to support staff
- innovative with resources – great technology group to support staff and students
- athletic programs – especially for female athletes
- people that work here are smart – resources available for staff and employees – support systems in place
- long term staff can share history

- value professional development opportunities
 - growth of economy – a support a diverse population for students and staff – growing as a unit for 21st century learners
-

- great programs
 - great resources
 - have had some great leaders – wonderful leaders at all levels
 - great impacts working with the U>S> Department of Ed.
 - a growing community open to all kinds of opportunities or any entity that would want to whether it from the business sector of family -partnerships around other educational events – it is the relationship growing across a higher ed community
 - overall values are very strong
 - a large melting pot here in Charlotte
 - if you are looking for the birth kind of community, Charlotte is definitely one you want to be in
 - presents a global perspective offers all the things that a community needs to be highly successful
 - best place to be
 - will find people willing help and work with you
 - have weathered each crisis over the years very well
 - a very welcoming community – some naysayers but love being diverse with so many cultures – have culture days and invite all kinds of families to share
 - involve the community in the schools - volunteers come from the business community and work and employees are allowed to come, help and be a part of the system – so you have support
 - a good place to raise children and families
 - has the potential to be the premier district across the entire United States
 - we have all the amities to make everything happen in education for our children
 - we are all committed and dedicated
 - as a teacher in CMS, we were a successful forward group of educators with strong leadership in every aspect - and we were trendsetters
-

Challenges - Issues - Areas of Concern

- the compensation of staff is a major concern - has been a barrier to recruiting people and keeping people across the board from principals, custodians - non instructional positions - some of the folks that we're looking to hire just below the poverty line - many of our TAs or 10 months secretaries only make \$15 - \$16 per hour - been a major challenge - they require a two year degree or 48 credit hours for those roles - we have other roles within our district who only require a high school diploma and make much more than that - just the compensation plan overall and looking at where we have equity across the board is extremely important
- building and facilities as we're going through this current - capital Improvement

- tend to be Jacks of all trades and masters of none because we are on absolute compliance and initiative overload - we often create the illusion on paper that we're doing great things but whether we are actually doing great things is questionable because we are stretched so thinly at every single rank
- we used to be a district that was standards driven and professional development was a major emphasis - we've gone away from that - instead of our standards driving instruction and instead of us developing our human capacity we are we've moved to the curriculum, a packaged curriculum, driving instruction and everything is compliant to that curriculum - that may be good for new teachers, but it may also give new teachers a false impression of what teaching really is our instructional focus needs to change - we need to be more student centered in curriculum
- we are top heavy - we need to put people that are the high-quality people in front of children
- we've lost our singularity of purpose - we were never perfect but we used to know who we were and it was always around student achievement, whatever that meant, and we knew our direction and our purpose - I just I don't know who we are anymore - it's almost like we've lost our own voice is as far as being leaders are concerned - we've lost the ability to actually lead and we were primarily just managers - just doing we don't get to bring in an initiative - we're given the initiative, several initiatives that we must comply
- HR is broken and we need to find a way to fix it - it's important that the superintendent knows that they have a department that is really challenged in doing what's necessary for schools - if we're able to get the right people in our buildings in a timely manner, then that would definitely help us on the in the schoolhouse
- we have this us versus them model where it's District versus schools - have to get into a place where like the school house actually matters - the school leadership voice actually matters – not this idea of its district way or no way - and that district office folk are not in positions to be support and to serve school - they are here to support schools and not just push down initiatives and push down compliance – more of an attitude of we are here to serve you what is it that you need, how can we assist you in lieu of a more compliance
- the achievement gap in our schools is a definite concern - just where you live determines how well you do in school - the way that the whole city is set up you know if you live in particular parts of the city, you get more benefits and a better-quality education than you might get in other areas.
- inconsistency of communication across departments - you've got one department saying one thing and then you've got a learning community saying something else – some people in some buildings are trying to do the same thing but it sounds different and it looks different depending on who told them to do it - that communication across departments, even at the cabinet level would be helpful
- the achievement gap – our achievement gap is widening instead of getting smaller, because we're not really focusing on students - we're doing a one size fits all approach - we tried that one time before years and years ago and it didn't work then we got rid of that - it's an equity issue - we said we want to be equitable but we're giving everybody the same treatment

- no matter what we were doing at individual schools, we were a district that was standards driven for years now it's all about the prescribed curriculum, and we rarely hear about the standards
 - professional development – for beginning teachers back through professional development special area coaches did more than just check off - they came in and they team taught and they worked with side by side with staff - then School Improvement Plans actually plans fit the needs of our schools and was not a cookie cutter plan
 - professional development that principals used to receive – principal induction program free spanned from the classroom to the leadership within buildings - was a five-year program. of strategic professional development
 - professional development monthly for Dean's and assistant principals - it wasn't just to sit and get
 - because we're so top heavy, so often the right hand never knows what the left hand is doing - they have no idea the toll that it's taking on principals - it just speaks to this theme of being incredibly top heavy and not understanding the burden that's being placed on school leaders and how incredibly thin we are spread
 - we have all of these universities and executive leadership businesses that we used to engage in supporting and developing leaders - that could be a draw to the person to understand the universities and businesses that are around to help us but it's also a concern regarding how are we leveraging them to support principal leadership at the school level
-

- employee market/especially in highly competitive areas such as HR and technology
 - there is not a baked in systems approach to continuous problem solving
 - physical structures
 - ability to control own narrative/articulating how well things are going
 - culture in central office and schools
 - resources/capacity
 - being reactive instead of proactive
 - availability of data
 - 182 “branches” need both flexibility and monitoring
 - accountability at the leadership level, but things are improving
 - lack of confidence from community
 - sense of cultural consistency across the board
 - staff training for all roles
-

- teacher retention
- more response to teacher input
- more promotions from within the district
- size of the district
- keeping a superintendent

- inequities across the district
-

- not enough staff
 - negative perception issues
 - student learning gaps throughout the district
 - differentiated instruction needed
 - low staff morale
 - inequities across the board
 - incentives for new people employees but not for current employees
 - communication between the superintendent and the rest of the district
 - HR department does not function properly
 - school board does not work together
-

- diversity – not meeting the needs of some members of this diverse population
- some teachers are overburdened – staffing is an issue
- need more man power to address the needs of students
- communication across some departments to better serve children and families
- equitable access to functional technology resources and accessibility to all classrooms
- teacher/student ration especially across ML, ESL, Title I
- safety – a major issue
- educator’s handbook
- consistency across the board
- effective communication across all departments especially related to diversity
- educators need to feel valued and appreciated to improve morale – need to be seen as the experts in the room – how we are treating people as professional
- geographical size of the school district
- process in attendance settings has failed
- work with the Board on students as a part of the juvenile justice system – accommodate but address the needs and create a plan on how to work with all stakeholders
- better school community partnerships and involvement
- pay respect to the lives of teachers – the curriculum is outdated and needs to be reviewed
- think ahead and plan for new curriculum
- work with the Board
- CMS not following guidelines for Counselors (ASCAS)
- raise teachers and counselors pay to attract good counselors
- certificate certified for digital team staff
- small class sizes needed
- provide small incentives to motivate teachers with help from companies
- need to model high expectations for global diversity an set the standard

- needs to address issues and concerns that are masked – equity should be at the forefront for every classroom and every teacher
 - safety in schools
-

- supporting growing EL programs
 - communication to all segments of community
 - size of district
 - attracting and maintaining staff – bus drivers and support staff
 - staff to support EL and special needs students
 - need for consistency across district
 - effective district-wide communication
 - new Board finding their way
 - ability to control the narrative and address negative press
 - not having taxing authority
 - superintendent turnover
-

Desired Skills and Characteristics

- understanding that the district needs to be run as a business while still prioritizing education students
 - focus on academics and be resourceful enough to hire talent
 - promotes organizational excellence
 - servant leader
 - passionate about education
 - data, factual and scientific approach
 - combine business acumen with a passion for education
 - able to engage the entire community
 - executive presence/commands the room as a leader
 - passion for the community
 - strong enough to drive culture
 - thought leader
 - innovative enough to get things done
 - understands how state functions
-

- transparency
- innovative; approachable
- personable; want to and is committed to doing the work
- politically savvy; experienced superintendent from a comparable district with a track record of success

- character
 - understanding the complexities of district
 - ability to establish relationships; ability to hire talent and create strong executive leadership team
 - skill set to understand the importance of maintenance and expansion of infrastructure needs to support growing diverse populations
 - clarity of focus; thought leadership
 - ability to create sense of optimism; strong communication skills with ability to engage with all segments of community
 - ability to have difficult conversations – courage
 - can lead above the noise; courage
 - will always make decisions in best interests of all students
 - ability to work with the Board
 - ability to bring people together
 - ability to hold people accountable
 - understanding of historical context of district
 - ability to collaborate with all stakeholders
 - transparent; understanding of best use of technology
 - instructional leadership; experience in the trenches
 - ability to create clear vision for moving forward
 - advocate at state level for public education
-

- career from teacher to superintendent
 - courageous
 - integrity
 - change maker
 - can work with school boards
 - someone who plans to stay in CMS
 - focus on students and parents
 - experienced leader
 - evaluates first to determine the need
-

- career from teacher to superintendent
- passionate
- patient
- integrity
- courageous
- team builder
- holds people accountable
- can work with school boards

- culture builder
 - relationship fixer
 - can translate data throughout the district
 - visible
-

- strong legal mindset
 - strong financial knowledge for managing a school system
 - cross-cultural knowledge
 - good business acumen
 - can partner with others especially related to career development and access to local employment
 - strong understanding of socio-economic growth in Charlotte and the dynamics of the community
 - understands systems and the operational aspects of a large city district – has the ability to delegate
 - cultural awareness – can communicate with diverse families
 - nice if bilingual
 - highlights bilingual in CMS and can keep up with the changing population with more equitable access
 - experience in education as a leader and teacher
 - has high curriculum content knowledge
 - has awareness of what the day-to-day job is like
 - is a proactive planner
 - will address day to day needs
 - shows respect]
 - builds relationships with teachers (i.e., wellness fair)
 - an advocate for education at the state level – will command the attention with state legislators
 - understands daily work and can advocate for public schools
 - has a heart for being and staying in Charlotte for the kids
 - will raise and have high values
 - great leader – great listener
 - will lead passionately and understands what education and learning is all about as well as the history of CMS – where it’s been, where it is now and where it needs to go
 - does not have I versus we thinking
 - can resolve issues
 - understands the dynamics of the position
 - willingness to be a continual researcher and learner
-

- someone that can stand up to the community and the Board
- someone who knows instruction

- someone who knows the Charlotte area as well as CMS
 - somebody who knows about the history of the city of Charlotte in public education - people have scars because of some history issues and because of the way that children were treated in knowing that and knowing that the family still live here is so extremely important
 - that person has to be able to communicate to a very diverse group of citizens whether it's wealth or poverty or just access because we represent every part of the melting pot somewhere in this city
 - has to be a leader to not be afraid to speak truths in a respectful way and work towards solutions.
 - needs to have educational experience beyond the classroom - need to have some sort of school leadership experience and not from a lens of the outside looking in and what can be done to fix schools - somebody that has actually walked in shoes and can speak from experience - having experience at the different levels and progressing through so they understand the classroom, the leadership potentially within the school and then potentially outside of the school - they understand all aspects
 - we have so many kids where English is not their first language, we need someone that has experience working with populations from different cultures - having a wealth of knowledge in that area would be helpful
 - can create a sense of belonging for all
 - can provide space for community partnerships
 - understands what can be taught and learned – sees instruction as most important
 - understands what it's like to be in a classroom and in the schoolhouse
 - understands the Board, Executive Team and understands policy and decision making for day to day – understands Board not managing schools versus superintendent and staff roles
 - has vision and a mission and will be clear in strategic guidance
 - understands the importance and will stay in the know of education policy across the board
 - can move the district in to the modern day for schools and will need an outward looking approach with a broaden view and will reach outside the city
 - ready to do it for the long haul – committed to staying
 - can listen, observe and tap into skills that are already available
 - has a larger focus on teaching, learning and student achievement
 -
-

Other Considerations for the Board

- doctorate not required
 - we need to view everything through the lens of we are the 17th largest district in the country
 - we need to sell the value of a large district
-

- should be running towards CMS and not away from someplace else
- a seated superintendent compliments a district as large as CMS

- we need stability
 - someone who has a proven success rate
 - will to continue to work and not hide behind the position
 - what will the action look like behind the letters
 - should have knowledge of what the superintendent's job entails in CMS
 - doctorate is essential although experience is most important
 - should build schools not trailers
-

- bringing back the diversity summits that we used to have at different schools
 - a diversity equity person that works on just that in the schools
 - stop the revolving door
 - a doctorate is not necessary but expertise outweighs the degree
 - Board needs to stop constantly changing leadership
 - appropriate compensation for the skills and expertise
 - see the person has demonstrated success in similar roles in comparable districts
 - would like to be a seated superintendent – they would have the experience
 - has already experience
 - someone to come in able to work
 - someone who takes the time to get to know Charlotte
 - mandate speaking with communities
 - not make up policy and a plan before its time
-

- humility
- someone who can recognize strength of staff
- ability to communicate
- high expectations for excellence
- ability to communicate strengths of district
- measured innovation – not looking for change agent
- sense of time management with ability to prioritize what is important
- ability to tell people no
- vibrancy
- cultural competence with ability to engage entire community
- understands and promotes equity
- understands the culture of the South
- charismatic
- address academics
- can set expectations and hold people accountable
- can review strength of central office
- approachable
- needs succession plan

- need strong leader
- visibility
- experience in diverse community
- politically savvy
- ability to work with Commissioners
- good people skills
- experience in large district with track record of success
- team builder
- good listener
- ability to put top of the house in order
- can create a positive vision and energize and lead district
- innovative
- ability to evaluate programs and determine what works and what does not work and make needed changes
- career from teacher to superintendent
- strong record
- bold and courageous
- change maker
- experience in urban district (2)
- someone who plans to stay in CMS
- has an entry plan
- has worked with diversity (2)
- evaluates first to determine the need
- can hire well
- can develop partnerships
- data driven
- equity focused
- great leadership skills (2)
- ability to motivate the staff
- visible
- understands business
- communication skills (2)
- can unite the district
- will embrace the opinions of the teachers
- ability to recruit and maintain good teachers
- extremely effective communicator to individuals, addressing issues, community members, shareholders and students
- big into coalitions and coalition builder – with all those who support the school system
- operates with forethought in addressing backlash from major issues such as COVID
- willingness not to share the spotlight
- strong academic focus

- able to lead the management and operations of the schools with a special focus on academics and safety
- willing to do all the work and share the credit with the Board – will not have full control of the Board
- will be able to get along with a Board that is and always been active
- willingness to stay out of the drama – a strong but silent type
- demonstrated excellence in leadership – leads all the same
- will need to be able to recruit strong knowledgeable staff
- needs to be strategic
- needs to be a process person
- has the ability to build a strong team
- should love kids and public education
- the position can be politically challenging so needs to focus on the teaching, learning and running of the district - needs to be appropriately visible but get pulled into the politics and try to keep staff to staff and politics to politics posture
- needs to have an education background with a business aptitude or ability to bring someone in with business expertise
- good communication skills
- disciplined- able to pace his/her self and has an inner strength
- humble and hungry
- resilient and responsive and has the ability to adapt and pivot
- will be confident enough to not be threatened by executive staff
- tough enough to send those not performing on their way
- honesty, and integrity
- experiences and being successful with turnaround schools and staff
- will staff with educators with whom students can identify but who will exhibit tough love and students will have to toe the line
- can't have a deficit view of children
- a leader who demonstrates strong leadership skills
- will be bold in decision making
- will have a focus on students and outcomes
- is able to connect with the all members of the community both grass roots and affluent
- not afraid to make changes
- a transformational leader who is strong in character
- believes in being transparent and accountable
- monitors for change and moving things forward
- has the ability and skills to communicate with students, government and the press
- has curriculum-based knowledge
- good judge of effective and quality talent
- seasoned superintendent with a proven and demonstrated track record of accomplishments and achievements

- doctorate preferred
- the community will say a doctorate is needed, however integrity and character are more important
- the candidate does not have to be a seated superintendent but should have demonstrated successful and extensive type of superintendent activities
- doctorate not necessary
- doesn't need to be a seated superintendent but ability to manage and lead
- the pool could contain young deputies who have had experience and possess the right ingredients
- law requires them to live in Mecklenburg County
- has limited bad press and does not have a pattern of problematic issues
- a doctorate is important but can be made up with other skills
- demonstrates they have knowledge and skills to manage and lead
- does not necessarily need to be a seated superintendent
- the Board will want a person to have a doctorate or terminal degree
- good quality people can do good quality work and not have a doctorate
- does not have to be a seated superintendent but it would weigh heavily in their favor if paired with a candidate who is not one
- doctorate not needed but the person needs to be an effective communicator with a breadth and depth of scope of organizational management
- if not a seated superintendent they must have evidence of their potential to address issues and improve the academic programs

Students - 28 (9th, 10th, 11th and 12th graders)

Strengths

- there are some diversities in the CMS - Rocky River High School, they're starting to make a place for us Muslims to pray
- the diversity that's happening
- how some teachers are there for the students and administrators as well
- in Broward County North Carolina, there's an option or virtual online school called Charlotte Mecklenburg virtual Middle School - in high school for those people that are in need of help whether going to school or not
- that they let you do accelerated programs, i.e., math one in seventh grade and eighth grade
- it's really easy to meet a lot of brand-new people that don't even go to your school - I met people all the way from Providence - that's really important for a school system
- it's very hard to feel like you can't get help with something because I can go to school and I can ask anybody and they offer help - like it's very hard to feel alone in Mecklenburg
- it allows students to express themselves through like clubs and student led organizations - so you find those at every school

- they have a diverse academic range - there are a lot of programs for different people that are interested in pursuing different fields
- how people are able to do what they love and they aren't limited by their teachers and principals - they can choose their career and go through with it
- in Maricopa County there's a class call or ritual touring call in NCVBS it is teacher aligned with teaching subjects that you may be overwhelmed by and they give you advice and tips on assessing those materials
- a lot of like really capable teachers whom students can have a good relationship with
- a lot of students feel very comfortable with our teachers
- CMS is also such a large district that really serves students and the number of opportunities that the district is able to provide their students

Challenges - Issues - Concerns

- a very high English learner population - it's very difficult for those students they work hard sometimes they just have trouble assimilating to schools and jobs – some have trouble with the current program - it's good to make support systems to help them just have a better transition into the American school system
- there are great opportunities here but it's also very easy to get lost in such a large school system so really working to address those kids so they don't get lost in the crowd it's super important starting from the elementary school level in the middle school level - once they get to the high school level it's so different and hard to build those students back up that are already so far behind
- there's a certain level of disconnect between CMS the government entity compared to the school district
- there are many times where the students' concerns are not actually brought up before the school board and superintendent - some things that are considered issues for the students are actually positives for our school board
- the attendance policy, which has many youth council members riled up about that – had a conversation with the interim superintendent about it - it just seems like there's a large disconnect and there are not clear lines of communication - CMS is big, but we are the beneficiaries of whatever the school board superintendent decides on and our voice is not being heard - feel like I'm wasting air sometimes if I'm just talking and no one's going to listen
- CMS may have some sort of negative reputation attached to it, for charter or private schools because my school has the metal detectors and they're a bit “judgey” of that
- safety has become more of an issue - more prominent in schools and it's been not necessarily dangerous, but I think everybody's little stir crazy from postcode - people been doing some not so safe thing
- traditional classrooms made it hard to go to school, especially with the 20 kids in the classroom
- if you are having anxiety with testing, and you're overwhelmed you have to have a note from a psychiatrist – having a note for something that is very common in most kids is inhumane

- it usually feels like you're working with a bunch of people who only care about the paperwork instead of like what's actually happening now
- a lot of teachers tend to blame the students for not being interested in their classes when it I feel like the teacher's job is to reach the kid and to make their schooling more personal and more meaningful to them - we need some teachers that can actually motivate the students - normalize not giving them too much work - we're too young to be stressed out - it's okay to give out work but like not too much
- because of the weather, the hotness the coldness, our mental health problems start happening the way administration is handling attendance could be better - it gets very cold sometimes and most people can't handle being cold - even though you have excused absences, some absences they can't be controlled because of sickness
- sometimes people can't make it to the class because of how many kids are in the school - the superintendent could do something about that because it's not fair - we only have five minutes
- sounds like school and district policy issues
- we don't have the enough personal supplies for some students – how are you going learn if you having this issue and nobody is there to help you and understand how you're feeling
- you don't have any way of either telling somebody about them or having them addressed some of your issues - we keep on telling some of these teachers and administrators they don't listen to us
- student voice is needed
- making sure the teachers are nice and not yelling at students
- school safety - something to address is to how harassment is being treated - whether it be physical or in other manners - the way administration is handling that hasn't really been the best- a lot of physical hazards have broken out over bullying including emotional harassment over stuff that has been related to discrimination
- CMS like policies and stuff need to be for individual for schools and even inside the school, because sometimes it's like too general - what works for like, one group doesn't work for another but you can't really change it - sometimes adjusting it so it works better with specific groups or specific students - things should be more individualized for each school and each student
- not all children get treated equally and bullying doesn't get talked about a lot like harassment - sometimes you can tell the teacher and they just avoid the problem and think, everything's gonna be alright, but it still keeps happening – sometimes the teachers can get upset because of the students' behavior and attitude changes
- we have people that have different learning styles - teachers in general should have to be open to all learning styles - a lot of classes feel like they're specified for just a few people and then the rest of them are struggling really hard - some classes need to be more subject to what students want to do after they leave - some things that we learned in some of our core classes we're not going to really need in the real world
- the school should have places or people kids could talk to if they ever get like, traumatized or feel like they're in danger - there are counselors in our school I know a lot of people can go to

but most people can't talk to people because they don't know how to or they just simply don't like communicating with other people

- is there's something that could be done with like the walls possibly creating a mural only because I don't feel like our school is an environment where it feels creative - it doesn't feel like a creative space - it doesn't provoke any creativity when you walk in the schools and everything is just white with like, paper signs
-

Desired Skills and Characteristics

- I think most importantly a willingness to engage with students honestly and eagerly
- transparency is very important - it's important that the superintendent is willing to explain why certain things are happening
- is willing to be collaborative
- CMS is so large with different economic populations and social populations within one school they will need to know how to and is willing to work with and make decisions that is best for an area instead of trying to treat the whole problem at one time – this hasn't worked
- should be able to like listen to how the students and teachers feel and involve them
- needs to be tough because CMS is a very large district - we are under a microscope and everyone is looking at us – there are so much so many different needs within different areas of Charlotte within different schools it ultimately comes down to who's going to be able to handle that stress
- should be humble
- be good at communication and communicate well with this all the schools and the teachers
- a good listener who will listen to students and their issues and concerns
- self-controlled and respectful
- will offer more stability – a stable person who can take the stress
- open minded, understanding and thoughtful – will listen to multiple answers
- action oriented- explains why something has been recommended or does not happen
- understands the community and what students have to say
- needs to be able to take criticism and is willing to change – shows flexibility
- mature has their own mindset
- caring – cares for others and is supportive

Other Considerations for the Board

- doctorate yes – the title will make people take them more seriously
- no – experience is needed more
- title does not matter they need to be supportive
- I don't think that a doctorate is necessary as long as they have experience as a teacher or a principal or a district leader - it's more of the experience versus the schooling

- we're looking for a superintendent who knows CMS and who knows what we need so it would be more important to find someone who has a lot of experience and who may come from a different county or district with a higher degree
- experience and someone who's going to best serve the students is what's best if it comes down to
- if you're between someone with a doctorate someone who's not who doesn't have one, and they're equally qualified, then having a doctorate does add credibility amongst parents, teachers, students - ultimately, it should be whoever is best qualified
- I think they should have more experience
- maybe someone who has been in CMS for a while
- I don't believe it's necessary, but if someone is really good experience would be better because they understand the environment and how the system is strong
- I think that it really depends case by case - I think coming in as a superintendent from a very, very small district is going to have a really hard time acclimating to that bigger district – is a previously seated superintendent who was working with a very small district better off than a teacher who then became an administrator, who then became like a school board member or really advocated as an administrator to the school board member for a large district better because they have that experience regardless of whether it's in CMS they should definitely want someone who's worked in larger district
- I also feel like there should be room to grow more leaders so that CMS could have more potential superintendents in the future - I feel like there could definitely be a viable candidate who has never had stepped into that role but has enough experience and qualifications to do a great job you just never know who can surprise you out of the blue

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS COMPOSITE SUMMARY - 245 * (See Participants listing)

Strengths

- encouraged by the current board and appreciate the direction - good leadership – commitment to governmental relations and understanding how the whole process works
- extremely diverse – needs to be viewed as a tremendous asset
- celebrate those differences - children from those families are valued – working for those children as well as the majority
- most diverse city in the south according to the “Atlantic” – diversity in demographics, financially and social emotionally – should be put on the radar of the new superintendent
- job opportunities and the job market unique perspective with an immediate educational return on the education investment
- large companies willing to work with students and prepare them for the work force
- great relationships with colleges and universities for higher ed opportunities
- also, the industries whether it's a degreed skill or certified skill – diverse business unit that is ready to hire our students - immediate return on those investments

- amazing educators – committed – does not have the highest teacher pay – willing to show up every day and do even more – fall short in pay
- committed educators who have either gone through the system or have relocated from neighboring areas to be a part of this amazing district
- the programing we have within CMMSD makes it a plus – students can leave CMS with certifications
- we have diverse students who have great teachers – people really committing themselves to doing the best they can with what they have – not fair to do that
- we have volunteers and community partners who are not parents that dedicate time in helping in schools
- anticipated medical school and an active banking community

-
- many strong teachers
 - district values and wants strong school district

-
- diversity

-
- diversity
 - melting pot district that is growing and become more diverse
 - location
 - community support
 - CTE programs

-
- size of district
 - diversity
 - growth
 - resources
 - many good teachers who care

-
- progressive city
 - beautiful place to live
 - many successful students
 - great passionate teachers
 - CMS is addressing equity
 - recognized as a top performing district
 - resources
 - support of grass root organizations

-
- staff and principal leadership
 - size of district
 - educational options

- diverse district
 - growing population
 - meshes well with charter schools
 - ability to add programs/open to trying new things
-

- teachers
 - diversity
 - resources
-

- district runs well
 - choices
 - teachers
 - principals
 - great schools are great
 - district is in Charlotte
-

- teachers care about us
 - students have choices from a variety of programs
 - like our school
-

- we offer a lot of courses
 - kids at CMS are exposed to all kinds of like race nationalities
 - size – large enough to offer so many things to students – lots of courses - if a student has some kind of special ability, he has that opportunity to go and direct to what he wants to be in life
 - stability of some staff at some schools
-

- regional strength – business growth – CMS primary talent source
 - strength of the business community to fuel growth in the region
 - availability of small organizations – the work they do – want to partner with CMS
 - willingness to think out of the box – cutting edge
 - a practice thinking eco-system with the district, schools and partners learning from one another
 - opportunities in every walk of life
 - individuals who are talented
 - resources
 - passion to help schools, families and students
 - engaged
 - growing school system and community
 - chamber and leadership team want to be involved in making students the best they can be
 - being large
-

- large district but strong and family oriented
 - plethora of opportunities for families to be involved not just their individual respective schools but also with the board - not uncommon to see the board out in the community engaging with parents, families, children and teachers
 - large district with a small district type of feel to it
 - resources are available in the city and community to strengthen CMS -not a district where a superintendent would feel like a person without a country
 - community based school district with a very rich history of how we got to where we are the angle being the education of all students in this county
 - large district but small enough with a family feel
 - approachable Board in most instances – becoming more approachable – a work in progress
 - corporate entities that CMS can partner with to provide what our students need, i.e., Google, Apple, Microsoft can sit at the table to figure out how collaboratively and collectively they can assist with the education of students
 - private and public universities and a community college including one HBCU – need to be more connection and in collaboration with them
 - major sports entities that should be factored into the formula i.e., players, coaches, staff, statisticians
-

Challenges - Issues - Concerns

- lack of a strategic plan – lack of time spent on student achievement – absence of true goals, lack or absence of true goals, that really impedes progress – lack of clarity around goals and support of goals
- lack of efficiency – teacher pay is an easy scapegoat – no strategic plan and not spending money strategically – wasteful- when asked for raises told no money in the budget
- inefficient – teachers sit in workshops and use systems already determined – costs millions just to execute – need to spend more strategically
- educators who have to execute decision are never involved but told what they had to do and are judged by it through reviews and assessments – never have a say in whether it is useful tool or not - district makes the decision, say we're going to do it, and because of the money and time invested it happens
- teachers do not give the right amount of input – not given the appropriate respect of their opinion, their input and execution
- there is a strategic plan in place but it's the development of that plan that needs to be strengthened - everybody needs to be included – needs to be more development and not so narrow or solid – not inclusive – not equitable because only talking about certain races, ethnic groups and grade levels – not just Black male and Hispanic men.
- expectations are not always where they should be – expectations of children, of administrators and across the board – when expectations are not high, they will underperform
- need to be open to change in a positive direction

- more mental health professionals are needed - increase the partnership with Atrium and Nova Mental Health
- need some bursting curriculum and instruction – not just one size fits all
- what will be the development and support for the new superintendent – what can be done to help that person stay in place once they have selected and hired – definitely need stability
- this is an opportunity for the district as a whole to be innovative and engage in a new approach
- it's always a bureaucracy to get some simple improvements done which becomes a little disconcerting to people who want to come in and make positive changes
- need to pay attention to what this district needs
- needs to incentivize or figure out a way to have our best teachers and leaders in front of student especially those who need the most help

-
- racism throughout district
 - competitive salaries
 - white supremacists
 - inadequate housing
 - lack of commitment to teaching CRT
 - transition of Board
 - board needs to be more involved in schools
 - intentionality in addressing equity issues where needed
 - inequity in addressing discipline issues in schools
 - serious lack of diversity in staff

-
- bussing issues
 - funding not being allocated fairly for schools in the South
 - need more security in schools
 - how to engage more students in schools
 - need more school counselors
 - teachers need to go beyond just teaching to the standards
 - need to address issue of school safety haves and have nots with programs to support diverse needs
 - need equitable access to all programs and pathways; accountability
 - improving communication across district
 - not using a band aid approach to solve problems

-
- attracting and retaining teachers
 - school safety
 - maintaining high expectations for our students both for academics and behavior

-
- need to support our teachers
 - not having them fearful of parents

- loss to teachers
 - teachers overworked and not respected enough
 - lack of staff diversity in schools
 - only 3% Hispanic staff in schools
 - instability caused by revolving superintendents
 - concern for school safety
-

- having an informed board who understands the issues and challenges of all segments of our community
 - need more parent outreach
 - need to better address mental health issues of our students
 - training for teachers – trauma training
 - more funding in low-income schools
 - charter schools
 - safety and security issues need to be addressed
 - accountability to community in spending school bond money
 - need more after school activities
 - lowering standards for our students
 - understanding the importance of differentiation in meeting needs of a diverse student
 - testing causes anxiety that impacts our kids
 - lack of follow up
 - kids living in the moment
 - lack of strong family structures
 - lack of Black male teachers/staff to serve as role models
-

- why have we had so many superintendents leave (even though tenure is above average)
 - size of district
 - geographic and social/economic disparities
 - teacher retention and burnout
 - charter schools may have an unfair advantage
 - limited financial support from the general assembly
 - teacher salaries
 - all staff retention
 - 3rd grade reading scores are below grade level
 - finances
-

- not enough staff
- negative perception issues
- student learning gaps throughout the district

- low reading levels of students
 - poor principal selection
 - inequities across the board
 - high suspension rate of black male students
 - need a dress code for teachers
 - lack of accountability
 - school board does not work together
 - needs more Black teachers
 - transportation issues
-

- teacher retention due to being underpaid
- competing with charter schools
- more promotions from within the district
- size of the district
- keeping a superintendent
- inequities across the district
- help for the Hispanic community
- Title IX issues
- high dropout rate
- need more afterschool programs
- school board members do not come in the communities
- literacy
- team building – developing relationships in all areas and all the communities in Charlotte – sometimes poorer communities get left out of the decision making or their concerns are not addressed or answered – we need the time to come that will include all of Charlotte and not just the squeaky wheels
- we are an urban school system with all the problems that come with being large
- reading – especially at the third-grade level
- we need an action plan and not just talk because we have the pieces in place
- we can see more progress than what we have seen for our children of color
- there seems to be a disconnect – everyone in their own area – factors are not really brought together – leadership needs to bring these pieces together
- need to see the intersect of how through the school system we are preparing our students to enter higher education and moving to become part of the work force and beyond
- breakdown in the way things are communicated – sometimes what is sent from the state is understood but the nuances breakdown when the information trickles down to the classroom
- need to make sure when things are being implemented across the district it should be done so in an equitable way – there is a break down in that
- how teachers understand what is to be done needs to really be intrinsically and intimately looked at

- how movement happens between the central office and the school and between all of the different entities has to have someone at the helm who truly understands the nuances of all of these issues through an education lens understanding having to have a business mind as well
 - there are disconnects coming from every aspect across the district which is concerning
 - we don't always remember why we are in business which is to provide a quality education for all children – the victory is in the classroom – we need to change and turn schools into achievement centers – it starts with the leader and it can't be done alone
 - need to empower teachers to teach
 - need to address the mental effects of the pandemic
 - we need to stay the course when we put something in place – give it more time to work – you never know if it is going to work if you do not nurture it, train teachers, principals, central office on what to do with it, - have an error correction built in – we don't stay the course
 - flip flopping all over the place when it comes to instruction and extra curriculums can become confusing to students and teachers – they throw up their hands and say it's gonna change in a few months
 - everybody needs to be on the same page
 - focus on content, frequent monitoring, and adjusting of instruction
 - having an intervention perspective will only put a band aid on the problem
-

- like the size is a strength it is also a weakness – there are different sides of Charlotte and the county – inclusive of a number of sections, Charlotte, Pineville, Net Hill, Matthews, Cornelius Davidson – multiple towns come with a variety of issues
- a pain point is when a decision made to close schools due to inclement weather – inches of snow in one place and none in another but all must stay home when some could go to school – somewhat moot now that we have virtual learning
- Title IX with athletics and ensuring the safety of our kids when it comes to sexual harassment – hot point at least at the high school level
- concerns with the inequity in suspensions based upon the side of town that our students are coming from
- Increase in Title I schools – a need to engage with the community and legislative partners to figure out what the root cause is because we are seeing more and the impact on our students which will trickle down to test scores
- need to be mindful of how we're gauging and measuring how we're attacking the different issues that exist across this large district
- funding – on going battle with county commissioners to provide needed funding – several schools that are aging – have a bond package – need financial support locally also state level
- while considering ourselves progressive the “who you are” can be off putting to people coming from outside this area especially if you're not used to that networking aspect - it is going to be more than just engaging with the board and principals – a matter of engaging with the community
- the community is very large and loud in our school system

- majority of the district is overwhelmingly Black and Brown their needs to be emphasis on how our children are going to be able to compete in the county, state and global economy by being well educated – how will our corporations assist so that they have a ready base of employees and don't have to ship them in from another state
 - perceived as the “great state” of Mecklenburg – put that moniker to rest
 - we need to prepare students for all types of employment opportunities
 - we are losing educators – need to figure out a way to retain quality educators at all levels with a culture that that they are fostering success – ingrained in the mind of all staff – instill a culture of success – hemorrhaging educators - need to recruit and support those recruited and work on retaining them
-

- large size district – things move slow in time
 - need to move along quicker in process and procedure – now it takes a while for initiatives to get started
 - being a whole system – if not together nobody wins - together we all do
 - divided community -n needs to be brought together sharing resources - everybody together for success
 - growth has been a gift and curse and can mask some things
 - growth has prohibited the organization from being honest and transparent when sharing data – needs to be honest with itself
 - superintendent has to look back to the last election and the dynamics with the new Board
-

- the violence at the schools
 - a lack of responsibility from the kids
 - limited transparency on what happens with leadership
 - violence in the schools – lack of responsibility for kids – need to address bad student behavior
 - teacher shortage – impacting student learning - we are failing the kids – could be doing more with creative solutions
 - stability with the leadership – frequency of change
 - staff maybe in and out – bringing in people from the outside
 - the struggle between the Board and superintendent
-

Desired Skills and Characteristics

- be ready to be the type of leader that leans into diversity, can appreciate diversity and thinks about the needs of all children – not just racial diversity or economic diversity or socio-economic diversity but really neuro divergence of all of these different elements
- has some knowledge of mental health

- a genuine leader – open to understanding what is being said and what is being meant - can get to the why and who’s solution base and create applicable solutions to deal with root causes
- has leadership skills to teach leaders - people do not leave institutions but leave managers or leaders
- has great communication skills to reach everyone and skills needed in the business world
- has really developed leadership skills
- understands the need for vertical alignment – an area we have not executed well from the district level down
- will allow more voices at the table
- has very clear interpersonal skills and is very receptive to feedback from all
- someone who takes into consideration the more that people know about other cultures the more they can also respect themselves
- someone who is accessible and open to listening and hearing the needs of families and CMS
- transparency and the ability to build a strong team network
- the ability to communicate with students, families, and staff
- will need to be a trust builder in order to get buy in to whatever strategic plan is going to be implemented
- flexible and nimble
- look at diversity on their team
- is a face that the community knows and recognizes and is not just a name recognized in the news when things are not going well
- will not operate in silos – incorporate all areas for success
- is able to connect with communities and students
- has a student-centered approach (theories of Dewey and Mann) and understands how the theories relate to student achievement - therefore needs to be very knowledgeable with a skill set of at least 10 years
- not afraid and knows how to get their hands dirty
- someone who knows what instruction is and knows how to run a business especially the business of teaching and learning
- someone formally trained as a leader – formalized leadership training, leadership coaching, leadership instruction, so they know how to lead
- someone who is willing to actively adjust how we think about our learning here in Charlotte

-
- experience in a similar system with ability to address diverse needs of all students – like our children
 - will support high expectations
 - will address safety issues in our schools
 - will continue to support and expand community partnerships

-
- compassionate
 - committed

- collaborative
 - creative
 - competent ability to build relationships
 - ability to address affordable housing issues
 - operational expertise
 - someone outside of district
 - open door policy
 - instructional leader
 - knowledge of CMS and understanding of Black context
 - focus on eliminating school to prison pipeline
 - strong instructional background with expectation of alignment of curriculum across all schools
 - attention to sustainable building and climate issues
 - understanding of and commitment to improve diversity in staff
 - emotional intelligence
 - experience in developing support to address growing mental health issues
 - will hold people accountable
-

- visibility of superintendent in schools
 - someone who will understand how kids feel
 - will engage with students
 - good listener
 - would like vending machines and more school lunch options
 - will be proactive and make changes to make better district
 - will support more hand-on curriculum not just teaching to the standards
-

- measured change
- understanding of our community good and active listener
- will always focus on what's best for students
- understands economic development and importance of a strong school system
- transparent
- think-skinned
- traditional values
- nonpartisan
- ability to build relations with Board, elected officials and business community
- master communicator
- leadership to move district forward
- a strong leader with a good track record in a similar type district
- not looking for miracle cure but someone willing to do the work and create positive stability
- ability to work with state legislature

- understanding that one size doesn't fit all and the need for diverse programs to support the needs of all students
-

- excellent communication skills
 - will hold teachers accountable
 - can determine what resources are needed to address equity issues in schools
 - someone who comes from us and understands our community – not someone who doesn't have that understanding
 - approachable
 - will address special needs students
 - will fight for equality
 - multicultural awareness
 - understanding of EL population and programs to support our students
 - can fight for competitive salaries and can recruit diverse staff more like us
 - boots on the ground
 - will fight in Raleigh to get what we need
 - good personality
 - someone whose actions will show support for us
 - visibility in our communities – will come to us like tonight moral values humility
-

- wants the job and will put in the work
 - ability to respond to challenges and crisis situations
 - passion for all kids
 - integrity
 - visibility in all schools
 - can relate to students
 - understanding the importance of differentiation in meeting needs of all students and programs to support them
 - ability to review existing curriculum to determine if it's working
 - will advocate for 5th grade swim program
 - will work towards equity to serve the needs of all of our students
 - will hold parents accountable
 - will support expanded after school programs
 - fortitude to make radical needed changes
 - courage
 - understanding what needs to be done to improve district through an equity lens
 - ability to be visible and build relationships in marginalized communities
-

- problem solver
 - can keep a balance and align various stakeholders
 - creative
 - able to engage team members
 - excellent communicator
 - relationship builder
 - able to develop positive board/superintendent relationships
 - responsive and available
 - can manage a 2-billion-dollar budget
 - listens
 - understands finance
 - can hire subject experts
 - strong leader
 - comfortable with change and can sustain the enthusiasm for change
 - accountable
 - owns mistakes and learns from mistakes
 - honest
 - high expectations
 - empathy
 - be aware, but stay out of politics
-

- career from teacher to superintendent
 - courageous
 - integrity
 - supports teachers
 - creates a culture for excellence, creativity, and connectivity
 - can work with school boards
 - someone who plans to stay in CMS
 - focus on students and parents
 - experienced leader
 - focuses on diversity and equity
 - evaluates first to determine the need
 - public school advocate
 - recruitment and retention plan especially black male teachers
 - address white flight
 - can handle politics
 - committed
-

- career from teacher to superintendent
- passionate

- can develop partnerships
 - courageous
 - team builder
 - holds people accountable
 - bold leadership
 - can work with school boards
 - understands title 9
 - relationship fixer
 - can restructure the organization
 - visible
 - technology skilled
-

- needs to know or have previous experience with CMS – maybe from the inside
 - needs experience in superintendent leadership role
 - knowledge of the CMS system
 - can hit the ground running – knows the terrain and organizational structure
 - humble listens 3 times as much as you speak
 - listens well and can demonstrate good comprehension of the situation
 - has experience in human direction
-

- nimble and agile – can build teams to shift the culture
- adaptable and can move people quickly
- strong and willing to learn about all of the communities
- can make some decisions – expands decision making capabilities for other staff
- visionary – needs to look forward
- collaborative – pulling together all the political parts city, county, sheriff, police
- culturally competent – understands challenges for staff and students
- culture of city and schools
- values transparency
- community builder
- growth mindset and instills that in those around them
- into celebrations both vertical and lateral
- has been in a school system and knows education
- has a balance of leadership and academic experiences
- needs to understand the history of Charlotte to avoid repeating the same mistakes
- can surround themselves with good people and who will have a preventive perspective to fix an issue from the get go and don't let kids get down the road and let them get behind and then try to put in a prevention initiative
- will need to have a business administration side
- has a really strong educational background and fundamentals

- needs to understand the it's a very challenging position and will need to understand zoning and redistricting because sometimes things have to change in certain areas - like the infrastructure in a building or moving based on housing
- will need cultural awareness of the different lifestyles and families across many sectors
- strong superintendent who comes in and really has a vision, goals and objectives and to see these areas achieved can bring the pieces together
- will be accountable with a belief system that really believes that children can learn and learn at high levels – all of them
- one who will work with the school board and the school board will be listening
- will bring parents into the fold – critical
- will work with the US Department of Education
- a leader who can bring all the components together, board, media, teachers, principals, politics in order to effect change
- someone to guide us into meeting the needs of our children – caring for all children even those difficult to teach
- a good listener - sometimes people are angry with what has happened in the past – need to listen to their concerns, wants, and needs, they will know what's going on and will include them in what we do and what our focus is
- have the love to lead children
- has high expectations
- has integrity
- will practice what they preach as far as what they are going to do and how they are going to treat teachers, administrators and the community

-
- success is dynamic and multifaceted so one needs to be an innovator and be able to get the message out
 - qualified with the necessary back ground and experience and can step into the job and learn while leading
 - ability to be a cheer leader – master motivator
 - not afraid to push back and say NO we're not going to do that, it doesn't make sense – has the ability to stand on their own two feet and not worry about, concern themselves, or be swayed by the exterior forces
 - needs to understand the funding formula for CMS – understands how important it is for a legislative relationship
 - will have a positive, assertive, productive impactful relationship with MC delegation related to the budget and receiving state funds – majority funds come from the state and then the federal government and then the local county
 - will lobby the General Assembly for more money – knowledgeable about that process and will in to learn about that process – willing to develop those relationships - cultivate those relationships
 - will be willing to work with a team to lobby for MC

- will need to be a sales person – going to have to be able to sell CMS – we are bleeding students– we are losing our non-minority students and losing them to charter and private schools - NC is trying to make it easier for charter schools to get to open
 - knowledgeable about the way our legislature and Department of Public Instruction works
 - knowledgeable about issues within the school district or within a large urban school setting
 - a master communicator – not just with the schools but with the public and our legislative and corporate partners
 - has a track record of being present,
 - longevity in positions
 - ability to learn and adapt quickly
 - ability to communicate with the various factors of components existing in this district – first and foremost communicate with parents – customer service is extremely important – direct and indirect communication on a regular basis
 - a demonstrated ability to foster a positive culture of success – demonstrating what success looks like with the knowledge that success from 2019 may not be our measuring stick for success and for the 2020 pandemic – mindful and knowledgeable of what success looks like in this day and age- we are in a different world
 - in tune with social and emotional learning skills, practices and methods with parents and our educators
 - believes all children have the right to learn
-

Other Considerations for the Board

- past performance is not a direct indicator for future results
 - flashy resumes and promises should be well vetted
 - doctorate may be overrated – may not be a leader - should not be a deal breaker
 - look for someone who has a history of results and a positive track record and can validate experiences and skill sets – it is important because this is a crucial position but is not easy
 - look at director set
-
- questions to be asked, why are candidates not coming – why have they left – need to look introspectively at why they are not staying
 - we have not had A+ talent
 - a doctorate is a nice to have but not always an essential
 - need to understand how they intend to run the organization
 - they may have access to others at the doctorate level without having the degree themselves
 - needs a proven track record of strong leadership
 - it can't be a bad thing to value experience and ideas that are more cutting edge
 - not necessarily a seated superintendent but needs experience executing leadership at a high level
 - not necessarily seated but demonstrates leading successfully in large organizations
-

- the revolving door – why are we not able to keep qualified individual at the superintendent and area superintendent level
- should not have the expectation of a superintendent to come in ready to start – especially without knowing the history – should have skills that to be able to get up to speed in a rather short amount of time having a background knowledge of the history of CMS
- keep in mind our area superintendents who are boots on the ground
- maybe a series of round table meetings by the superintendent across the region
- a doctorate is more than a title – set of skills and knowledge base that is instrumental and provides you with the tools to be able to navigate agate all the different areas – honorifics bring with the certain levels of respect – I think that it is necessary
- not exactly necessary - there are qualified candidates who hold graduate degrees in other subjects such as a JD that gives them a skill set that would suit them as well as a superintendent– they might have an EDS – it will depend on how they have supplemented their degrees with experience so it should not be a requirement – bare minimum undergraduate and a graduate degree
- it makes sense to include people who are not necessarily seated superintendents right now because your pool expands - someone who is from a large urban district and has or is serving as an area or deputy superintendent and has the experience of a superintendent
- we need someone who is committed to this position for at least the next five years - a seated superintendent might be willing to leave at the next opportunity and not be in it for the long haul
- CMS should seriously consider candidates who are not already in CMS – sometimes if we promote from within, we don't see the change and innovation that is really needed
- would be great to have someone who is comfortable within their own skin – someone who can bloom where they are planted – they can talk with the person on the street just like they can talk to the chairman of the board or CEO

-
- plans to improve schools
 - don't want someone who thinks they can use trigger words such as CRT – will address the needs of students
 - all students need to be addressed properly we need to teach proper education and principles
 - has to have a doctoral grip not necessarily the doctorate – should have a teaching background and experience
 - someone who understands the
 - day-to-day struggle of what happens in the classroom
 - degree isn't necessary but the knowledge and skill set and how to run a large school district as well as instruction and curriculum are important
 - a doctorate is a plus that would be preferred
 - does not have to be a seated superintendent now however needs someone that understands all of the components of organizational leadership, community involvement, and engagement

- should be a seated superintendent who has the expertise and not just experience – needs a proven track record
 - we are losing teachers, administrators and top people because we have to get back to building up our capacity within our profession who makes a pass
 - seated not necessarily a requirement but has experience with complex change management
-

- additional ways of providing transparency
 - more cursive in reading and writing
-

- a doctorate would be great but we need someone to come in to embrace leadership and hold people accountable for the work they are doing
 - the leadership piece is important but not all of the degrees
 - they had to demonstrate success so we can see it and the accountability and monitoring and adjusting that took place along the way
 - someone who truly understands the fundamentals of mitigation or they miss what the classroom is all about
 - advanced degree may be optional if they have a background and understanding of the educational research
 - great leaders are having a hard time
 - a diverse district – would be good to have someone who reflects that diversity
 - please consider a plan where “There is the one Superintendent with a networking Team of 4 District Superintendents for the Education Win for All”.
 - to be a superintendent in the CMS system is beyond a tremendous job of leadership, and futurism
 - it takes a village to “RAISE, TEACH” a Child and takes a fine-tuned engine of superintendents networking with each other to have students, teachers, parents humming in the “Education Happening.”
 - should look at the person’s background - what have they done – that tells the story whether they are a seated superintendent or not – what does their track record look like – have they been effective
 - we need to stay the course when we put something in place – give it more time to work – you never know if it is going to work if you do not nurture it, train teachers, principals, central office on what to do with it, - have an error correction built in – we don’t stay the course
 - flip flopping all over the place when it comes to instruction and extra curriculums can become confusing to students and teachers – they throw up their hands and say it’s gonna change in a few months
 - everybody needs to be on the same page
 - focus on content, frequent monitoring, and adjusting of instruction
 - having an intervention perspective will only put a band aid on the problem
-