

*Stakeholder Input Report for*

***Howard County  
Public School System  
Ellicott City, Maryland***

*submitted by*

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# **MCPHERSON & JACOBSON, LLC**

## **EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Howard County Public School System Ellicott City, Maryland District Stakeholders Report, April 2024**

#### **Executive Summary**

On April 3 and 4, 2024, two McPherson & Jacobson consultants conducted face-to-face meetings with stakeholder groups. In the executive summary section below, themes and ideas are recorded which represent input that was consistent to all or most of the groups and could be considered to have broad support. The online survey responses are included at the end of the document.

#### **1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- Great school system, high quality education system, education is valued, great school system to meet/address special needs students
- Family oriented, best place to raise a family
- Diverse, which was the founding principle of Columbia, melting pot of culture, wide ranges of socioeconomic statuses; multicultural
- Voted one of the top cities to live in, place of belonging, great restaurants, friendly, great amenities, wildlife preserve, community center, military base close by, colleges and universities
- Many outdoor opportunities, parks and recreation centers, outdoor spaces for families (i.e., walking trails), a lot for all ages
- Largest homeowner association in the nation, 10 villages in Columbia, property value is high
- Centrally located, close proximity to Baltimore and Washington
- Ever changing population, more an urban setting even though it has a blend of suburban and rural
- Tremendous amount of opportunities, great job opportunities
- A lot of involvement from the community in a democratic way, highly engaged
- Stakeholders are invested, collective nature to achieve a mission, want the best for everyone

- Very engaged community, connectivity, many organizations, a place to be innovative, spirit of collaboration
- A lot of services for people who may need them, senior citizen support, a lot of people who care a lot, health care access
- Opportunities for youth, Leadership of Howard County, scholarships are available for youth
- Community who loves their teachers

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- People have moved here because of the Special Education program
- Gifted and talent, strings at the elementary level
- Challenging curriculum
- Student achievement program, Applied Research Laboratory (ARL), after-school programs, support for Special Education, fine arts program, head start program, dual enrollment, strong MTSS, EL support, Great Minds Foundation, Biotech, cyber security
- Every school is offered the same program, equality is definitely high on the list
- Fine art is huge, every school has some form of arts, value the arts
- Students are graduating with academic honors to be competitive nationwide
- Strong extra-curricular activities
- Great PL opportunities for teachers
- Making Change Club, inclusivity clubs, formal and informal programs to support diversity
- Offers different academies, Jump Start (dual enrollment) classes at the community college, a lot of different course offerings, STEM options, AP and honors courses
- Extra-curricular activities even at the elementary level, various clubs at the high school, theatre and dance at the middle school level, world language at the middle school, computer science in the middle school, ARL program
- Early intervention for Special Education, most inclusive model in the state, amount of support in the schools (Special Education, ELD, arts)
- A lot of community partners, community mentoring opportunities
- Innovative pathways
- Model district (respond to crisis, operation, curricular ideas, respected in the state)
- Social and emotional learning support, school-based mental health services/support
- Fine arts, well-rounded, every school offers gifted and talented, opportunities for string in the early grades
- College readiness programs, dual enrollment w/ Howard County Community College
- Howard County Association of Student Council, LBGTQ specialist, Black Student Association
- Advocacy is expectational, intentional and deliberate, parent and staff are invested in the school system
- World class Special Education program, inclusion program
- Many programs for diverse groups
- Black Student Achievement program

- Great teacher/student ratio
- Student clubs to support the various culture, Student to Student Jewish program, ROTC, APL
- Happy employees, support for teachers

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Budget constraints and crisis, surplus, RIF, furloughs
- Changing populations
- The need to reorganize school management to focus on division/grade level specific
- Need to move from equality to equity, navigating equality
- Address the vocal parents without the board involvement
- Schools in need of renovation, develop a timeline for ongoing renovations, equity throughout the school system, ensure all students have access to the same resources
- Class size, redistricting, balance the support needed to ensure equity across the system
- Transportation issues (bus route times and/or eliminated, shortage of drivers)
- Long-term planning is an issue
- Address needs for groups who may not have all the necessary resources
- Open opinionated parents, over-crowdedness, re-districting every 3-4 years
- Achievement gaps between schools based on property values
- Budget gap that will occur based on **Blueprint for Maryland Future**
- Advocate at the state and federal level for funding
- Budget cuts that will impact some of the programs and staff, how to keep the programs
- Teacher shortage, resignations
- Gaps in black and brown students' performance
- Behavior issues, children in crisis, diversity and equity, student behavior code not addressed, high ratio of suspension of African American students
- Board is all about politics
- Weapons in the high school
- Anti-Semitism, increase 57 incidences of anti-Semitism in school and/or bus, needs to be addressed system-wide Jewish and Indian, under the guidance of freedom of speech anti-Semitism has increased, book ban
- African American staff not able to get an administrator job
- Infrastructure of the schools
- **The Blueprint for Maryland Future**
- Low staff morale due to potential budget cuts
- Challenging budget season
- Parents wanting more, limited resources, a lot of people who advocate for things, vocal communities vs silent partners (i.e., low socioeconomic population)
- Strong and empowered teacher union, collective bargaining, prolabor city
- Work with the BOE, two new board members
- Assess the effectiveness of operation of the district, developing a 5-year strategic plan
- Learn what the challenges are/were and ready not to repeat those challenges

- Some people will bypass the superintendent and go to elected officials
- Safety issues, mental health crisis, students are in crisis, self-defense issue
- Bus crisis with vendor, increased walking distance
- Finding talent for the school district
- Community dynamic changes
- Budget challenges, equity disconnect
- Educational debt to the marginalized student population, supporting the black and brown student population
- Enrollment has declined, about 1000 parents have sent their children to private school, safety issue

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Have school-based administration experience, experienced leader, innovative leader, visionary leader
- Experience in education, instructional leadership, successful as a leader
- Someone who can maximize the resources
- Lead with EQ
- Connect with people, level of care and support
- Change agent who can lead in the way the district operates
- Someone who can make the tough decisions
- Collaborative, inclusive with decision making
- Work with county government
- Someone who sees the big picture
- In it for the long haul, all in
- Deep knowledge of the **Blueprint for Maryland Future**
- Experience with collective bargaining
- Someone who is willing to get in the trenches
- Someone who has been in the classroom
- Aware of the community needs
- Good at partnering with agency, collaborator
- Humility, not to be the star
- Strength to draw people around the school system, able to connect with various audiences
- Someone who is willing to see things through, in it for long-term, here for the schools
- Transparency (public hearings, data driven decisions, no politics)
- Willing to speak on accountability about the central office
- Strategic planner (3-5 years out), not afraid to seek grants and other funding, innovative thinker, especially on the Special Education side
- Proactive, bring in new ideas
- Empathy, humanity of the work, connection to the students, passion about students
- Be a leader who will make the hard decisions and take a risk
- Attentive listener to the staff, parents, and community
- Stand on their decision, focus on what's best for the students, student centric focus

- Hands-on leader, visible in the schools
- Value the teachers, create a culture/environment where people want to work
- Create stability, conflict resolution
- Check and balance of the board
- Data driven decisions, vet critical data that is floating in and out, consistent deliverable
- Able to communicate effectively with the board on what really works
- Hold people accountable, fix HR department, hiring staff takes too long
- Able to retain staff (teachers)
- Effectively place staff and hold them accountable
- Able to drive change and adapt to change
- Analyze the effectiveness of programs to meet the needs of special needs students
- Innovative, out of the box thinking to be successful, flexible thinker and nimble
- Strategic, collaborator
- Willing to say the hard truths around budget, school system, management
- Analytical, utilizing data to hold people accountable
- Focus on instruction, student center first
- Must want to be a superintendent in Howard County. Howard County must align to their beliefs, they must want to be here and stay to build HC
- Relationship building, understand the perspective of a school leader, listener, advocate at the state and national level, an influencer
- Get in the trenches with the teachers, ask the teachers their concerns
- Needs a backbone, ask for more funding, maintain some of the diversity initiatives that have started
- Use data to make informed decisions
- Attentive listener, take criticism
- Show empathy for the students who are in crisis
- Able to negotiate contracts (i.e., bus contract), experience in balancing budget
- Value student voice, truly understands equity
- Create a strong team that can add value
- Integrity, not a people pleaser, guide the board in understanding the data, courageous, transparent, speak on behalf the school district
- Surround themselves with individuals who are knowledgeable, willing to make hard decisions and choices, able to communicate, approachable, organized, managerial skills, mission and vision
- Interpret data, manage the budgets, personable, great listener, integrity, visionary and responsible, strategic, transparent, clear communication skills, articulate their vision, focus on equity and outcomes for students who are underserved
- Thinking outside the box, operational and capital budget, aware of extra funds
- Willing to learn about the needs of the county, committed to DEI, respect all religions and races, recognize oppression, experience with dealing with these issues
- Invested in the broad Howard County community, build relationship with the various religious and civic groups, long-term commitment
- Listens to all stakeholders and manage their concerns respectively

- Effective communication with the board of education
- Trustworthy, willing to do the internal work to grow personally to be more responsive and open

## **Stakeholder Group Responses**

**Name of Stakeholder Group: *HCASA – HoCo Assoc of Supervisors & Admin***

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- The diversity is like no other. - socioeconomic and racial diversity. Columbia, MD is the largest homeowner's association. High expectation of a leader. High knowledge and high collaboration. Howard county is at a crossroads
- Changing population that is taking place.
- Ten places to live because school system, park and rec. Low crime rate

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- Special education program is exceptional
- Well-funded but now in a budget crunch; they provide the extra bells and whistles
- Black and Latinx student achievement program. Support for students of color. CTE program, AP, Gifted and Talented, Bio Tech, Cyber Security
- Every school is offered similar programming. No need for magnets.
- Fine arts is huge, well supported. Value the arts!
- Athletics supported and high levels of participation

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Changing population
- strong cry for reorganization of school management
- How to be innovative and forward moving
- Programming innovation and equity is needed. - too much carbon copying
- Budget and budget challenges
- Managing parents and community expectations
- Managing the governance of the board and the administrative functions
- Getting the school-based leadership on board
- Navigating equity in an equality focused district

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Leads with EQ and IQ.
- Level of care and support with high level of drive
- Change agent
- Tough decision maker
- Collaborative and transparent leader



- Inclusive leader
- Politically polished
- Playing the long game (all in leader)
- Deep knowledge of blueprint of Maryland future
- Good negotiator - navigate collective bargaining

**Name of Stakeholder Group:** *Community Action Council, Horizon Foundation, Leadership HC, Howard Community College, Association of Community Services, Community Associations (Village Centers), Columbia Association (CA), Chamber, HC Library*

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- Diversity and the collective nature of the community
- Best schools in the country
- Well-resourced community and lot of services for people who may need them
- Property value is high
- Lot in involvement from the community
- Everyone feels they are heard and democratic process
- Engaged and diverse community in many ways
- Planned community fostering connectivity
- Vested stakeholder groups that support the individuals who live here.
- Special place - you can try things

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- Applied Research Lab.
- CTE program
- Special education program
- Small ratios
- Arts are alive and well
- Great partnerships are in place
- Dual enrollment program
- Literacy and intervention - MTSS
- Great ESL support
- Good education foundation Bright Minds Foundation
- PD for teachers
- Support
- Student led clubs and organizations (formal and informal)

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Facilities need addressing - developing a reno timeline
- Balance between equity and equality
- Equity in terms of resources and class sizes
- Practicing equity
- Closing of existing equity gap
- Transportation (shortage of drivers)

- High maintenance parents who will push for what they want
- Long-term planning is needed (financial, facilities, etc.)
- Addressing the needs of the hidden underrepresented group

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Not afraid to get into the trenches
- A former educator who is current in best practices
- A person who has an eye for the hidden community
- Good collaborator and partner
- Humility
- Collaborator ...
- Strength and conviction
- Visionary leader
- Fun
- Connect with your audience
- Committed to the job - wants to be here
- Comfortable in a variety of settings

**Name of Stakeholder Group: *CAC – Community Advisory Council, PTACHC – PTA Council of HoCo, SECAC – Spec Ed Assoc., FEI – Families for Ed Improvement***

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- Reputation of schools
- Job opportunities
- Blend of suburban and rural
- Diversity in county
- Parks and recreation
- Military families
- Great place to raise family x2
- Melting pot of culture
- Community
- Planned community
- Access to resources between choc and charm
- Special education program and support for them
- Nature
- People care a lot about a lot of things - diversity

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- Different academies offered at the high school
- Special education program
- Fine arts
- Gifted and talented
- Course offerings at the high school
- Extra curricula STEM programs
- AP offerings at high school
- CEU at the elementary levels
- Clubs
- World Language and CS in middle school
- Dual Enrollment
- Certification opportunities for students

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Budget - how do we maintain level of excellence with unfunded mandates
- Looking for additional funding/opportunities
- Human Resources
- Vacancies in Special Education

- Teacher and employee morale
- Establishing of clear and concise SOP
- Take care of flagship programs
- Equality of showcase

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Transparency
- Data driven
- Big on accountability
- Strategist - long term planning
- Advocate
- Innovative thinker
- Proactive leader
- Empathic leader
- Cares about students
- Having a HC connection
- To become a part of the community
- Leader who takes the strategic risk
- Student centered
- Courageous leader
- More hands-on leader
- Creates a culture value for all
- A good listener
- Conflict resolution skills
- Check and balance of BOE
- Data informed decision making
- Vet critical data
- Value the skills and abilities of community
- Drive change

**Name of Stakeholder Group: *HCPSS Admin Groups (Cabinet, Central Office Adm)***

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- School system and district
- Diversity of family
- Tremendous opportunities offered by the county
- Great location
- Employment opportunities
- Lots to do here
- Healthcare access
- General infrastructure
- Access to high education

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- Special education
- Fine arts education
- Inclusive as a district
- Amount of support in the schools to support students
- Community partnerships
- Mentorship opportunities
- Curriculum

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Budget
- Special education (service needs to continue to grow)
- Demanding parents
- High level of expectation/managing expectations
- Resource limitation
- Unfunded mandates
- Aware of the hidden populations
- Strong and empowered teacher union
- What's best for students vs. stakeholders
- Assessing how effective our P&S are - Evaluate
- Need for long term planning (vision)
- Quickly assessing the challenges of last year and not to repeat them.
- Managing community expectation
- Morale
- Building positive relationships with elected leaders

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Flexible thinker
- Nimble
- Collaborator
- Someone who delivers the hard truths
- Data informed
- Student centered/instructional leader
- Proven success as a leader
- Wants to be the superintendent in HC
- Align to values and beliefs of HC
- Wants to be here as first choice
- Relationship builder
- Understand the importance of the perspective of school leaders
- Advocate at the state and national level
- An influencer

**Name of Stakeholder Group: *Jack and Jill Club***

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- The school system, academic rigor.
- Moved into Howard County because of the school. The dollars per student
- Like the diversity of Maple Lawn
- Walkable schools
- Lots of entertainment
- Proximity to DC and Baltimore
- The parks and recreation and camps for children
- Outstanding public library system. Actually, adding to the system
- Easy to get around with transportation.
- There is so much to do in Maple Lawn.
- Great area for a spouse to find a good job.

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- Experienced private schools and was amazed at coming back to public schools shows what more the public schools do.
- Opportunity for participating in community college classes as well as vocational programs. Lots of variety for student interests.
- Excellent with gifted and talented children and those who have special needs. We could improve the services to children in the middle.
- Important that all schools address the students on grade level.
- Lack of diversity of the teaching staff is a good area for improvement
- BSAP program Black Student Achievement Program

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Bussing and Budget
- Loss of programs like speech and debate
- Redistricting due to under enrolling and over enrolling. Push back from groups who pushed back before and do not want change.
- Achievement of black and brown students is not what it should be.
- County budget allocation has been getting cut

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Should be willing to listen to the students' point of view
- Good at problem solving.



- Can hear student opinions.
- Cares about students
- Keep the superintendent student advisory council.
- A love for all children and their success
- Wise enough to have the right people to support him or her.
- Someone who has an understanding of real diversity.
- Can balance the diversity of school populations.
- Someone who is innovative and can inspire innovations.
- Cares about the arts.

**Name of Stakeholder Group: *Community Open Session***

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- School systems
- Location between B Moore and DC
- Park and recreations
- Lots of things go do
- Access to sports
- Large homeowners association
- Diversity
- Place of belonging and inclusiveness
- Highly engaged residents
- Great amenities
- Open to student voice
- Leadership opportunity for youth
- Parks and recreation
- Diversity and multicultural
- Resources
- Challenging curriculum
- Community (strong)
- Supportive community
- Diverse partners
- Schools
- High level of support
- Community that supports education and teachers

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- Special Education program
- G and T program (district and school based)
- Athletics
- Performing Arts - String and Band
- School Based Mental Health Services
- College Readiness Program
- Dual Enrollment Program
- HCASC - student voice
- Gifted and Talented Program
- Multi-cultural programs
- Advocacy of parents is exceptional
- Special education (world class)
- Performing arts

- LGBTQ
- Affinity groups and programs
- Athletics
- Staffing ratios
- Paraprofessionals

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Budget concerns/deficit
- Evaluate competing priorities based on funding
- Teacher shortage is looming
- Class size increases
- Avenue to listen to teacher concerns
- Aware of underserved students
- Opportunity gaps
- Aware of student behavior
- Aware of teacher and staff morale
- Feelings of not being heard
- Students in crisis
- Hidden issues that have the potential to challenge the districts reputation
- Parent engagement
- The work around diversity and equity
- Aware of issues of the board
- School safety and security
- The mask of HC
- ELD programs
- Mental Health Crisis
- Self Defense policy
- Busing crisis
- Plan for equity is needed
- Budget challenges
- Visiting all 74 schools
- Understanding the needs of admin at central office and school level
- Understanding the local context
- Special educational teachers push and pull
- Finding and attracting talent to the district
- The changing needs of education
- Being aware of the pulse of the community
- Connecting with the community to maximize the resources to the changing needs
- Accessible but not in the weeds
- Responsive to the board
- Budget challenges
- Strong core value in equity and what it means

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Visionary leadership
- Communicator
- Backbone as a leader
- Ability to listen
- Resource savvy
- Empathy
- Contractual expertise
- Business savvy
- Experience
- Problem solver
- Innovation
- Value of student voice
- Lens on equity
- Building a team
- Integrity
- Tough decision maker
- Courageous leader
- Transparent
- Present
- Surrounds themselves with knowledgeable people in their areas of focus
- Courageous leadership
- People focus
- Good communicator
- Approachable
- Upper managerial skills
- Organized
- Personable
- Good listeners
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Visionary
- Strategic
- Transparent
- Communication skills
- Responsive

**Name of Stakeholder Group:** *CAPA-HC – Chinese Amer. Parent Assoc., Howard County Chinese School, HCMC – HoCo Muslim Center, IONHoCo – Indian Origin Network, Howard County Jewish Federation, League of Korean Americans Howard County Chapter (LOKA), Conexiones*

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- Safety county
- High performance of schools
- Centrally located between DC B more
- Inclusivity and open
- Diverse county in all aspects
- Voice of citizens
- Rich in resources
- Small enough for leaders to know communities they serve
- Park and recreation - outdoor activities
- One of the top places to live
- Community library
- Open to partnerships

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- G&T
- Strings
- AP classes
- Dual enrollment
- Programs to meet the needs of range of students
- Fine and performing arts
- Strong culture of student acceptance
- JROTC
- Vocational training

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Highly opinionated stakeholders in the county
- People are going to the extremes
- Schools are becoming overcrowded because of desire to live in county
- Achievement gap between schools within district and its impact on home values
- Increase in Anti-Semitic attacks since 10/7 (57 reports) 80-90 percent happen in schools
- No one is taking this issue seriously... Needs to be addressed.

- Hindi and Indian populations being attacked (from fellow students, teachers, and administration).
- Training on how to handle cases of hate speech and actions
- Book banning
- Meeting the promise of the excellence of school district
- Budgeting issues and Maryland Blueprint for education - need to be well educated on this (unfunded)
- Retaining talent
- Keeping up with teacher pay
- Student behavior
- AA student suspension ratios
- AA staff and administration recruitment and glass ceiling
- Aging infrastructure
- Decreasing enrollment
- Too much emphasis on gender at early age

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Outside the box thinking
- Strong financial manager
- Appreciate clear communication across the board
- Open to learning
- Respectful to all affinity groups
- Committed to DEI
- Respectful of all affinity groups
- Someone with experiences dealing with these major issues
- Believe Holocaust education is important and added to curriculum.
- A person who is invested in HCSD and the community.
- A person is committed to the district - long-term commitment
- A person who can managing the expectation of a number of stakeholders successfully
- Strong communication skills
- Understands the roles of administration and governance
- Trustworthiness
- Introspective and reflective person who is well to grow

**Name of Stakeholder Group: *CARY – Community Allies of Rainbow Youth***

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- Diversity of culture
- Lots of food options
- Inclusion
- Commitment to equity
- Strength of the school systems
- Academic experiences of students
- Support of public education

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- Performing and fine arts
- Music education program
- Cyber security program (ARL)
- Differentiated learning
- Access to programs for students (no mags)
- LGBTQ
- Health Care and Well visits
- Nurse practitioner pilot program
- Judy center (birth - 5)
- Gifted and Talented Program
- Gifted program for math students
- MESA

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Racism, transphobia, homophobia- staff training to handle
- Bullying
- Inclusive school experience
- LGBTQ (students being bullied)
- Live up to reputation of being inclusive and diverse
- Use of resource of space and facilities
- Space issues
- Working with board to address the challenges of the district
- Equity for maintenance
- Impoverished schools treated differently

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Willing to stand for what's right and equitable
- Willingness to make the right decision even when it's not popular
- See how decisions impact others
- Has school level experiences
- Humanitarian approach to leadership
- Champion for morale
- Listens
- Thinking outside the box
- Champion for equity



**Name of Stakeholder Group: HCEA – HoCo Educ Assoc**

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- Diverse population
- All are welcome
- Growing populations
- Library system is fantastic
- Quality of public education
- Progressive and welcoming
- Inclusive and tolerant of differences
- Good place to raise a family
- Investments have been made in teaching and learning
- People come here and stay
- Geographic location is desirable
- Good quality of life
- Public parks

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- Performing and fine arts in elementary school
- Music education
- Gifted and Talented
- Special education
- World languages
- Elective activities
- Clubs and organizations
- Rainbow representatives in every school
- Employ high quality teachers
- Excellent special education

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Maintaining the quality and fidelity of programs
- Special education program is in crisis
- Special education is out of compliance
- 97 vacancies in special education
- Staffing ratio in Special Education is becoming a concern
- Look at staffing and reorganization
- Budget issues and constraints
- Behavioral issues

- Equity issues
- Deferred maintenance concerns very disproportionate
- Infrastructure stains
- Hard conversations around staff and parent concerns.

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Advocate for schools with other elected officials
- Hold all staff accountable
- Collaborative with all stakeholders, parents, etc.
- Someone who is a partner
- Set aside ego/person who understands they are in a position of service
- A person who is willing to put in the work and roll up their sleeves
- Knowledgeable about the budget and the budget process.
- A person who is invested in improving
- Not a pit-stop
- Vision for the future of HC
- Understands how their decision impacts the classroom

**Name of Stakeholder Group: *Student Leadership Group***

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- For my family, education was a big thing. Parents were immigrants and education was number one from teachers to facilities.
- Moved from Silver Springs, MD. A safe school environment.
- Coming from China my parents could have gone anyway. Great services like the county library system.
- Dynamic between the county elected officials and others.
- Everyone is committed to making the district great and how they listen to student voices.

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- Internship program with independent research
- Great sports program but some schools have deeper interest in arts and music. Schools respond to their interests.
- Gifted programs. As well as student voice programs
- Mock Trial
- FBLA
- Howard County parks systems.

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Bus transportation. Mostly lack of communication
- Communication. The first year will set the agenda for years going forward.
- Current budget situation.
- Concerns over cutting second and third grade strings program.
- School safety. Hearing of teachers being assaulted. A teacher shortage is looming.
- Mental health issues after Covid. Students doing extreme things.
- Definitely getting bullied because of political issues.
- The self-defense policy is a problem.

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Need someone who can sympathize with all families.
- Would like an experienced Superintendent.
- Someone who can handle tough decisions and stay with the community.
- Courageous and be out there. Must go headfirst.
- Address loss of funding
- Transparency

- Communication. The reason the budget is a problem is that it was coming out all at once and without explanation. Lack of transparency.
- Can they focus on the details and programs
- Compassionate. Dealing with diversity. Help students and keep them at the front of their minds
- Good team player.
- See the bigger picture not just the more affluent.
- Relevant experience
- Someone who can think outside of the box.
- The podcast was a good start.
- The bus contract wasn't done appropriately.

**Name of Stakeholder Group: *Howard County Elected Officials***

**1. Tell us about the positive aspects of living in Howard County? Why is Howard County a great place to live?**

- Full-service multiple parks
- Entertainment venues
- Smallest geographically
- It is bordered by six counties.
- Highest medium housing
- Diversity - Maryland is the most diverse state and Howard County in Maryland
- We are all about diversity.
- The people and diversity. Educated population.
- Close to DC and Baltimore
- It is a pleasant place a safe, reasonable climate
- The western part of the county has lots of preservation. Clean air
- Intentionality around the community. Appreciation for what we have.
- High level of community engagement

**2. Tell us about all the excellent programs and educational opportunities that the district offers to its students?**

- The reputation of being among the best in the country
- A demand for excellence
- Diversity is a strength in the schools.
- Engaged parent population
- A lot of advanced courses but some courses not available at all schools

**3. What are the issues and challenges that the new superintendent is going to have to address if he/she is going to be successful?**

- Some schools are becoming segregated.
- Redistricting battles may come back.
- The board asks for millions more than the county executive allocates. Causing concerns over funding
- Under the Maryland blueprint, money follows the student, not the school. Schools have little parent participation. But no one is auditing the MD blueprint plan.
- The effects of the pandemic on schools across the country are more troubling than we thought they would be. Howard County has this as a problem.
- We need to figure out new ways to involve students actively.
- Given the resources, special education could be much better.
- Parents shouldn't spend so much energy demanding resources; they should be provided for special needs students.

**4. What are the personal characteristics, experiences, etc. you would like to see in your next superintendent of schools?**

- Coat of armor.
- It's not very big, so everyone knows the superintendent.
- Be prepared to be approached anywhere they go.
- Has to be a leader who is not afraid to bring in new ideas
- Needs to know how to deal with an elected board of education.
- Blueprint must be understood deeply by someone coming from outside MD.
- Someone who has experience in a place with high expectations and diverse needs.
- Ability to work with the board and not overrun the board.
- It cannot be at war with the board.
- Someone who genuinely enjoys people.
- Someone who embraces change.
- The last Supt. and current interim have the qualities.
- Comfortable with transparency
- A perception is that the budget is a shell game
- Transparency is key for the County
- More work is needed to listen to the teachers, not just the union.
- Should live in Howard County

K12 *Insight* 

# Superintendent Search Survey Howard County Public School System

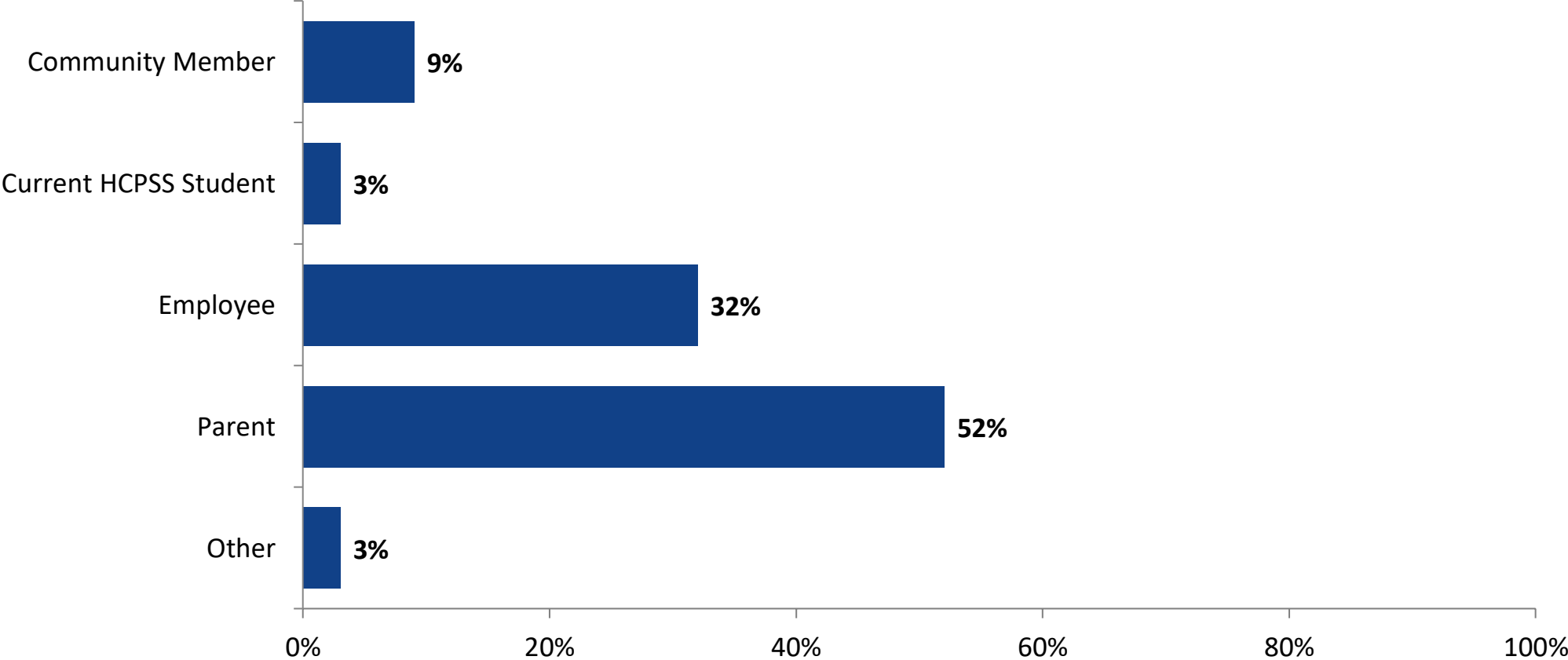
Results and Analysis

McPherson & Jacobson



# Relationship to the District

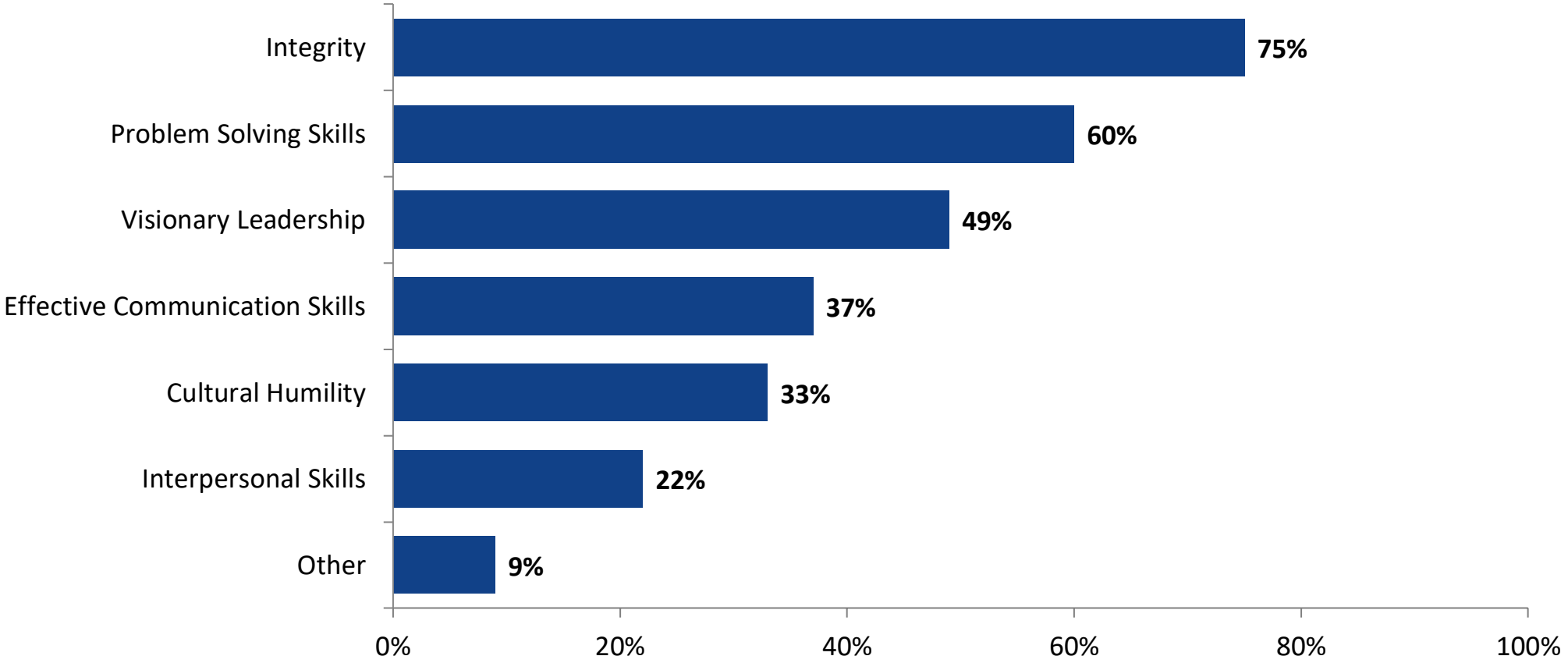
What is your role in relation to the Howard County Public School System? (N=3,202)





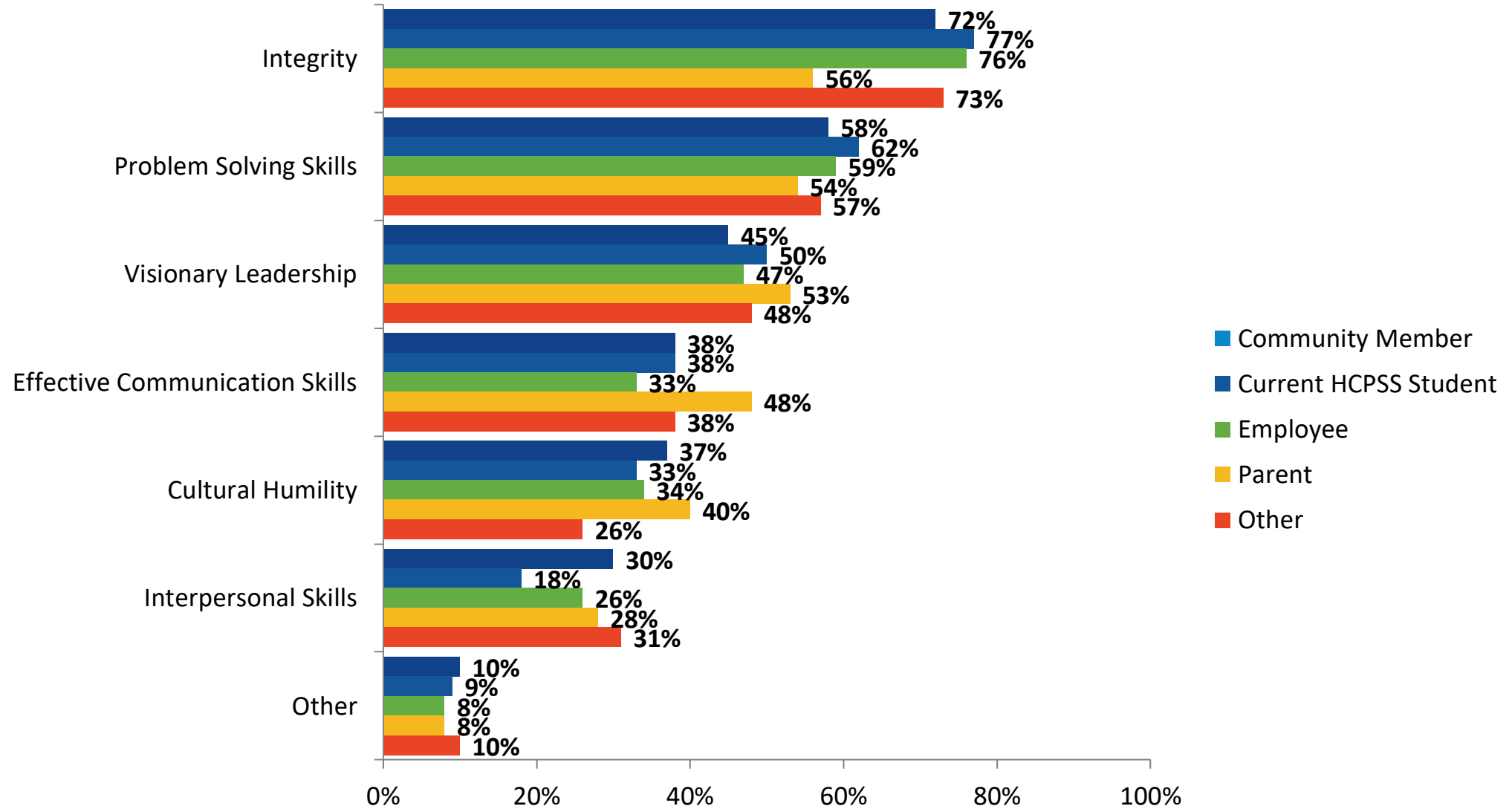
# Leadership Qualities

I would like our Superintendent to have the following Leadership Qualities: (N=3,200)



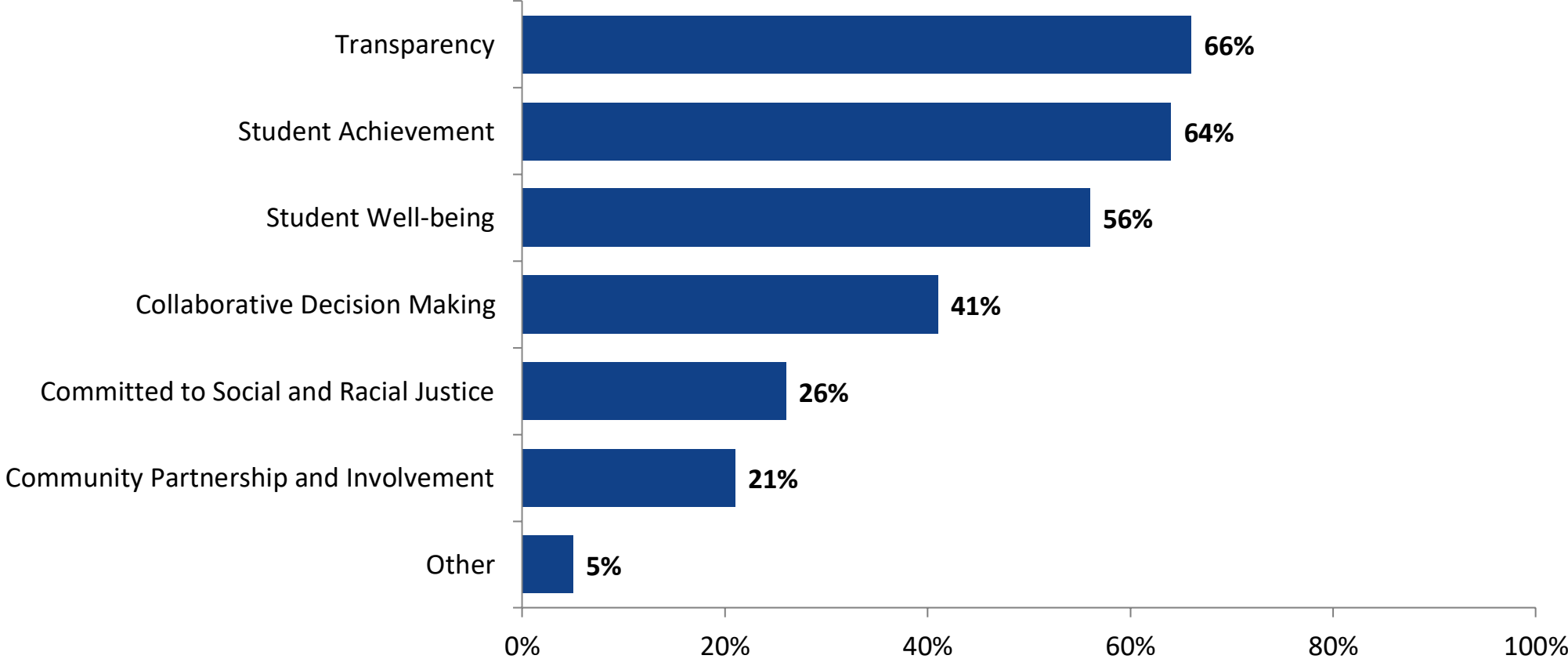
Note: Participants were able to select up to three answer options. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.

# Leadership Qualities by Relationship



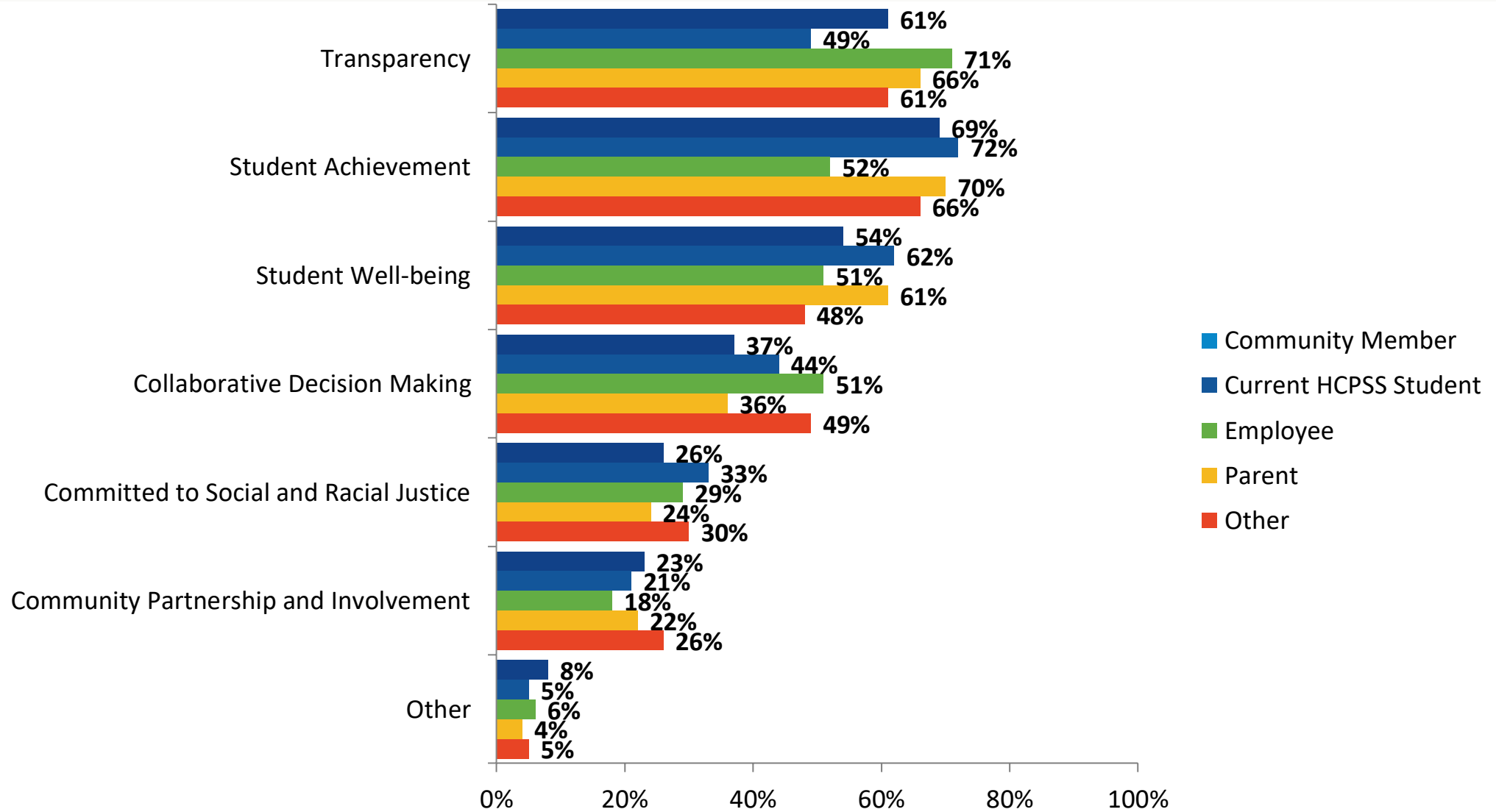
Note: Participants were able to select up to three answer options. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.

# Community Engagement



*Note: Participants were able to select up to three answer options. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.*

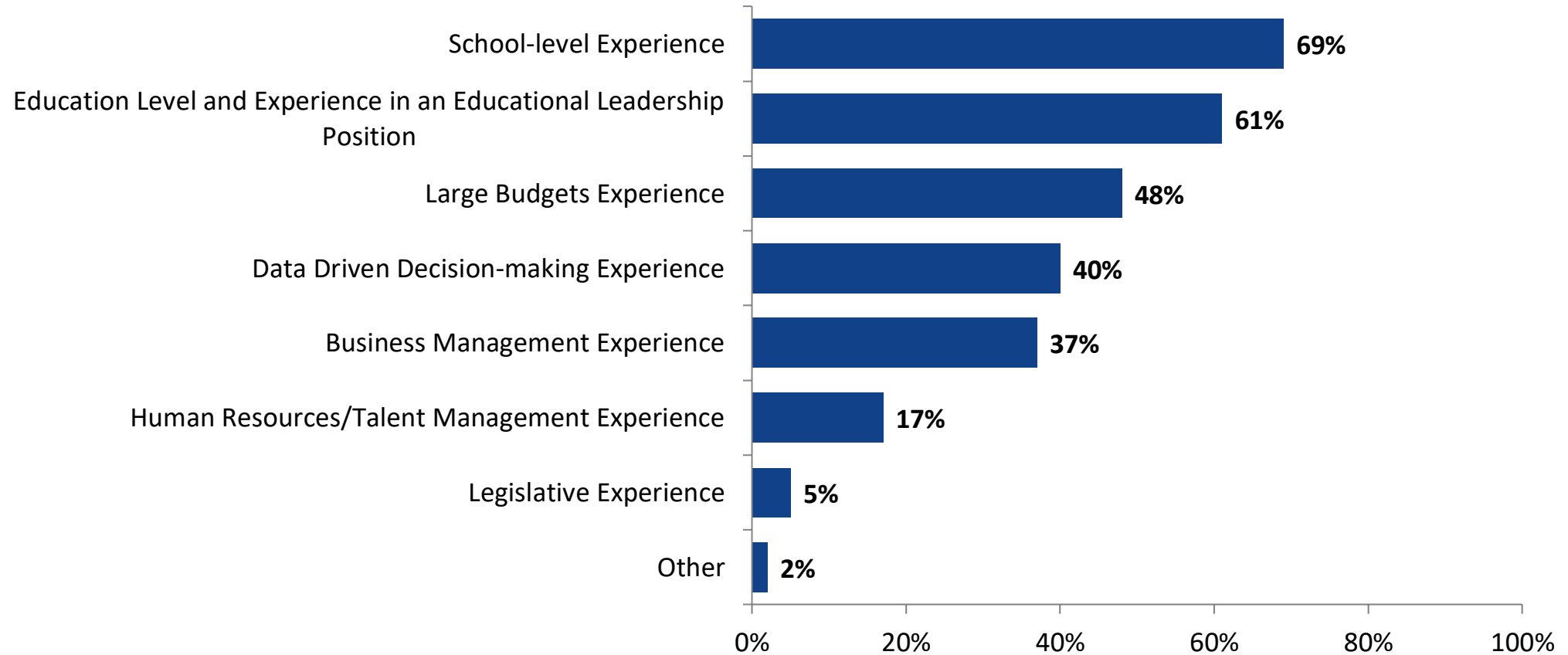
# Community Engagement by Relationship



Note: Participants were able to select up to three answer options. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.

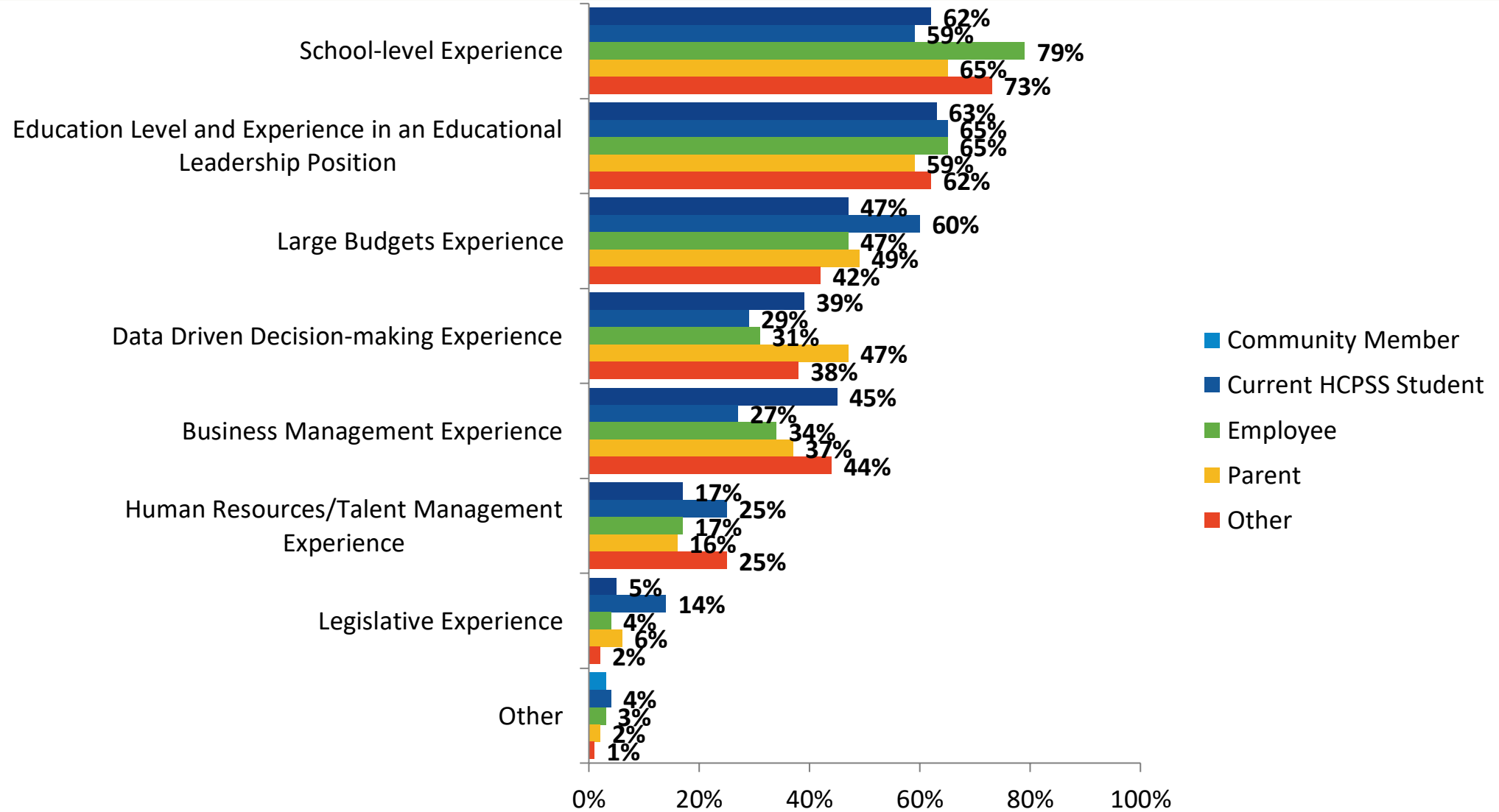
# Experience

It is important to me that our Superintendent have experience in the following: (N=3,181)



*Note: Participants were able to select up to three answer options. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.*

# Experience by Relationship



Note: Participants were able to select up to three answer options. Percentages added may exceed 100 since a participant may select more than one answer for this question.



# Priorities



# Priorities

Please write the top 3 things the Superintendent should prioritize moving the school system forward.

## **Budget and Funding:**

- Concern about budget shortfalls, staff reductions, and overcrowded schools.
- Increased funding for schools and better management of resources.
- Improve the bus system.

## **Communication and Transparency:**

- Clear and timely communication from the school system on all issues, including budget, transportation, and decision-making processes.
- Parents feel unheard and want more input.
- Provide opportunities for input from all stakeholders.

## **Support and Well-being:**

- Improving academic achievement, including core subjects and critical thinking skills.
- Programs that address the social-emotional well-being of students, including mental health resources.
- Safety and well-being of students and staff. Address bullying and implement clear consequences.
- Provide adequate support for teachers, staff, and mental health professionals.



# Priorities

Please write the top 3 things the Superintendent should prioritize moving the school system forward.

## **Positive Environment and Overall Well-being:**

- Concerns about mental health, safety, behavior, and overall well-being for both students and staff.
- Desire for a positive learning environment, effective discipline policies, strong social-emotional support, and resources to address mental health needs.

## **Staff Support and Retention:**

- Staff feel under-valued and under-resourced.
- Competitive salaries, manageable workloads, a voice in decision-making, and better support for burnout.
- Superintendent who is visible on campus and works to understand their needs.

## **Transparency and Leadership:**

- Clear, honest, and timely communication from leadership.
- Lack of trust and want a superintendent who prioritizes student and staff well-being, listens to concerns, and works collaboratively to find solutions.
- Leader who is transparent, collaborative, and listens to their concerns.

# Priorities

Please write the top 3 things the Superintendent should prioritize moving the school system forward.

## **Academic Excellence and Student Well-Being:**

- Academic rigor, providing diverse opportunities for student success, and prioritizing student well-being.
- Curriculum revisions to reflect present-day needs, supporting mental health resources, promoting safety in schools, and fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.
- Addressing issues such as bullying, equity in education, and environmental sustainability.

## **Budget and Resource Management:**

- Concern and emphasis on managing the budget effectively to ensure equitable access to resources for all students and schools.
- Funding for essential programs, teacher salaries, school facilities, and educational opportunities is crucial.
- Reducing unnecessary administrative expenses, distributing funds based on student needs rather than demographic factors, and addressing budget cuts while maintaining important academic and extracurricular programs.

## **Communication and Transparency:**

- Clear, timely communication and transparency from the superintendent's office to the community, including students, parents, and staff.
- Engaging with students directly, being accessible to the community, and involving stakeholders in decision-making processes.

# Priorities

Please write the top 3 things the Superintendent should prioritize moving the school system forward.

## **Communication and Transparency:**

- Parents and students both want to be heard.
- Clear communication from the school system about decisions and to create opportunities for stakeholder input.

## **Staffing and Support:**

- Paraeducators want better pay.
- Hire more teachers, especially in western Howard County.
- Support with workload and better working conditions.

## **Student Focus:**

- Concerns about student safety, especially after bus cuts.
- Strong academic achievement for all students.
- Smaller class sizes, better support for struggling students, and a focus on practical skills, mental health, and core subjects.



# Additional Comments



## Additional Comments

**Academic Excellence & Equity:** Ensure high standards while providing equal opportunities for all students. Focus on core subjects while offering a well-rounded education, support students with special needs, and potentially reduce class sizes.

**Effective Resource Management:** Advocate for funding, manage budgets well, and address concerns about class sizes and staffing. Advocate for funding, address aging buildings, hire qualified staff, and ensure proper resource allocation for special education.

**Strong Leadership:** Experienced educator focused on the whole child and student well-being, and a leader who prioritizes academics, mental health, and inclusion. Strong advocate for teachers and staff, ensuring proper training and support. Provide a clear vision, navigate challenges, and build relationships.

**Student and Staff Well-being:** Prioritize safety, mental health, and a positive learning environment. Implement clear expectations and consequences, provide support for struggling students, and consider alternative approaches to discipline.

**Transparency & Communication:** Be honest and listen to the concerns of all stakeholders. Committed to open communication and transparency with all stakeholders.

## Additional Comments

**Communication and Transparency:** Better communication and transparency from leadership. Opportunities to provide feedback and be involved in the decision-making process.

**Leadership Concerns:** Current lack of trust in current leadership. Superintendent with experience in the school system and a focus on student and teacher well-being.

**Student Focus:** Importance of supporting special education programs, balancing focus on STEM with arts and world languages, addressing achievement gaps in Title I schools, and ensuring a smooth transition for students between elementary, middle, and high school. **Better discipline policies and enforcement,** as disruptive student behavior is negatively impacting learning and there is an overall difficulty managing student behavior.

**Teacher and Staff Concerns:** Staff morale is low due to workload, lack of support, and stagnant salaries. Staff feel undervalued compared to central office staff. More resources and professional development.

## Additional Comments

**Cultural Sensitivity and Mental Health Support:** Calls for policies to address Islamophobia and racism, as well as to provide mental health resources for affected communities, are raised.

**Leadership and Accountability:** Students emphasize the need for an effective leader who is strong on accountability and can confidently address the demands of the community. There's a strong emphasis on conducting comprehensive background checks on superintendent candidates and ensuring transparency in the selection process.

**Resource Allocation and Budget Management:** There's a desire for more teachers, equitable resource distribution, and addressing the significant budget deficit.

**Safety Concerns and Transportation:** Concerns about safety and transportation arise, particularly regarding recent incidents involving students waiting for buses and changes in bus services without proper public consultation.

**Student Input and Communication:** Students emphasize the importance of the superintendent valuing student growth, being communicative, and open to student testimonies.

## Additional Comments

**Academics and Student Support:** Feedback indicates dissatisfaction with certain curricula, suggesting a need for improvement and alignment with research-based practices. There is a call to refocus on education and core academic priorities, rather than peripheral initiatives, and to ensure that decisions prioritize the well-being of students and teachers. Additionally, perceptions imply stakeholders feel there is a gap between minority and white student achievement, unequal opportunities for different student groups, and limited mental health services.

**Communication:** Stakeholders emphasize the importance of transparency, collaboration, and meaningful input from various stakeholders in the decision-making process. Parents, teachers, and administrators don't always feel well-informed or heard.

**Local Hiring Preference:** Many believe the new superintendent should be hired locally to better understand the community's needs.

**Resources:** Concerns about budget management, resource distribution, and the need to prioritize student and staff needs are prevalent. The district has a small/tight budget. Several buildings need to be updated.

**Student Behavior:** Issues related to parental involvement, student behavior, and the role of discipline in schools are raised as significant concerns.

**Teacher Morale:** Issues related to employee satisfaction were raised. Specifically that teachers feel underpaid, unsupported, and disrespected.



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