

Morris Hills Regional School District

Superintendent Search Update
BOE Meeting: March 13, 2023

Frank V. Auriemma, PhD

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Strategic Educational Advantage, LLC

Strategic Educational Advantage:

- ❑ will present an analysis of the Survey Results.
- ❑ will present an analysis and summary of the Stakeholder Notes.
- ❑ will present drafts of the Profile of the Candidate and an Advertisement for the position based upon our findings.

Meeting Agenda . . .

The survey was comprised of 16 questions requiring a rating from: Most Important, Important, Neutral, Not Too Important or Not At All Important. 565 stakeholders completed the survey.

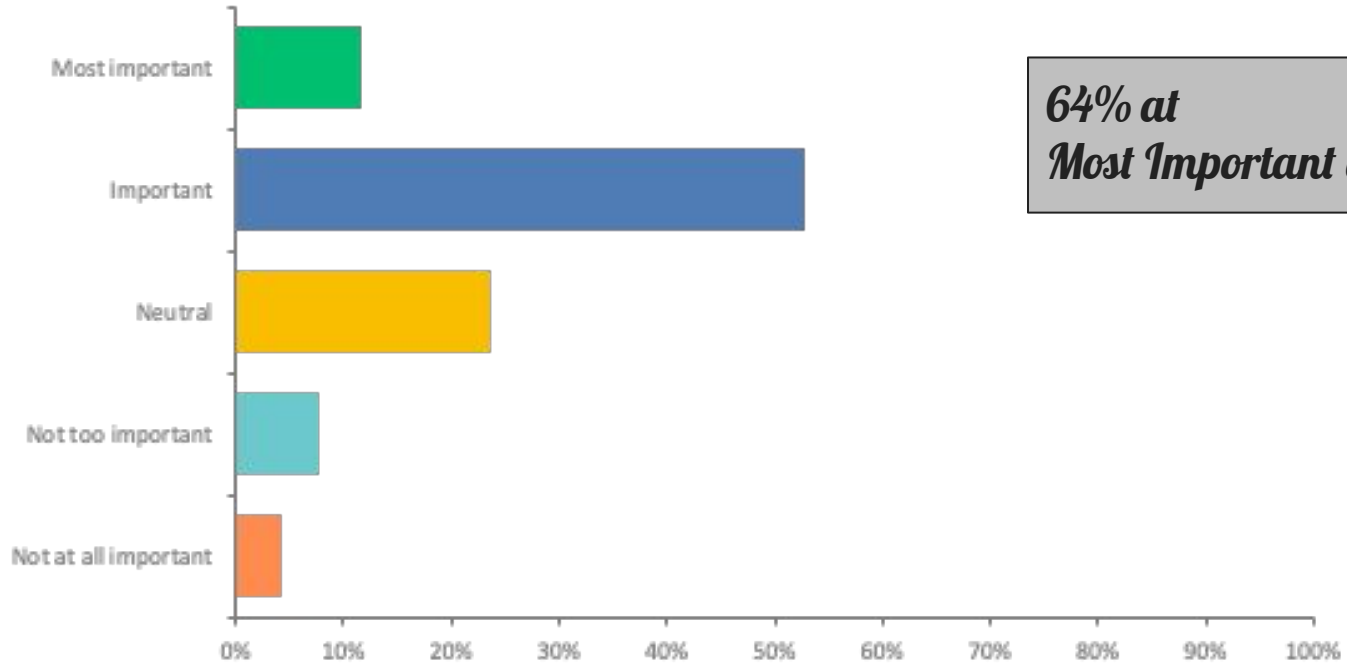
Respondents indicated their stakeholder group as: Parent, Community Member, Student, Teacher/Ed. Specialist, Support Staff or Administrator.

The survey results were disaggregated by group. An aggregate report representing the entire Morris Hills School Community was also generated and will be reviewed this evening. An analysis of the stakeholders and community forums will also be presented.

Overview . . .

Group	Completed Survey
Parent	216
Community Member	14
Student	141
Teacher/Ed. Specialist	130
Support Staff	46
Administrator	18
Totals	565

Survey Respondent Breakdown . . .

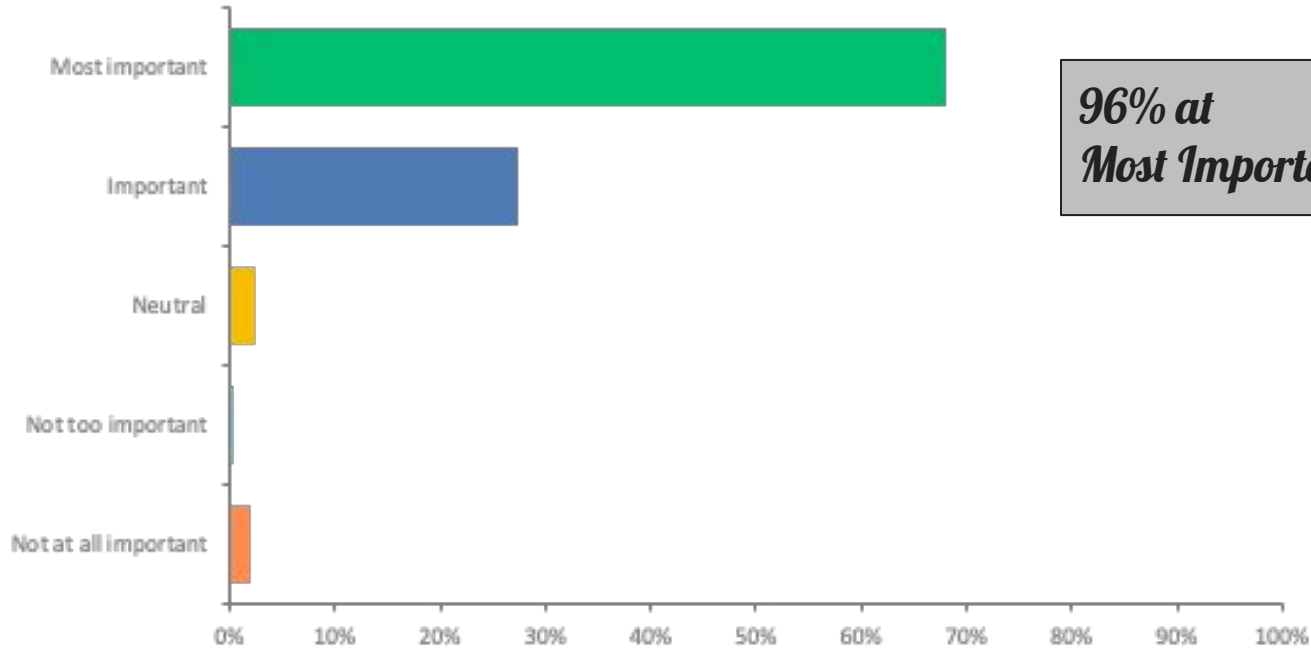


***64% at
Most Important or Important***

Q 2: Has experience as a school district Superintendent

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	11.68%	66
Important	52.74%	298
Neutral	23.72%	134
Not too important	7.61%	43
Not at all important	4.25%	24
TOTAL		565

Q 2: Has experience as a school district Superintendent

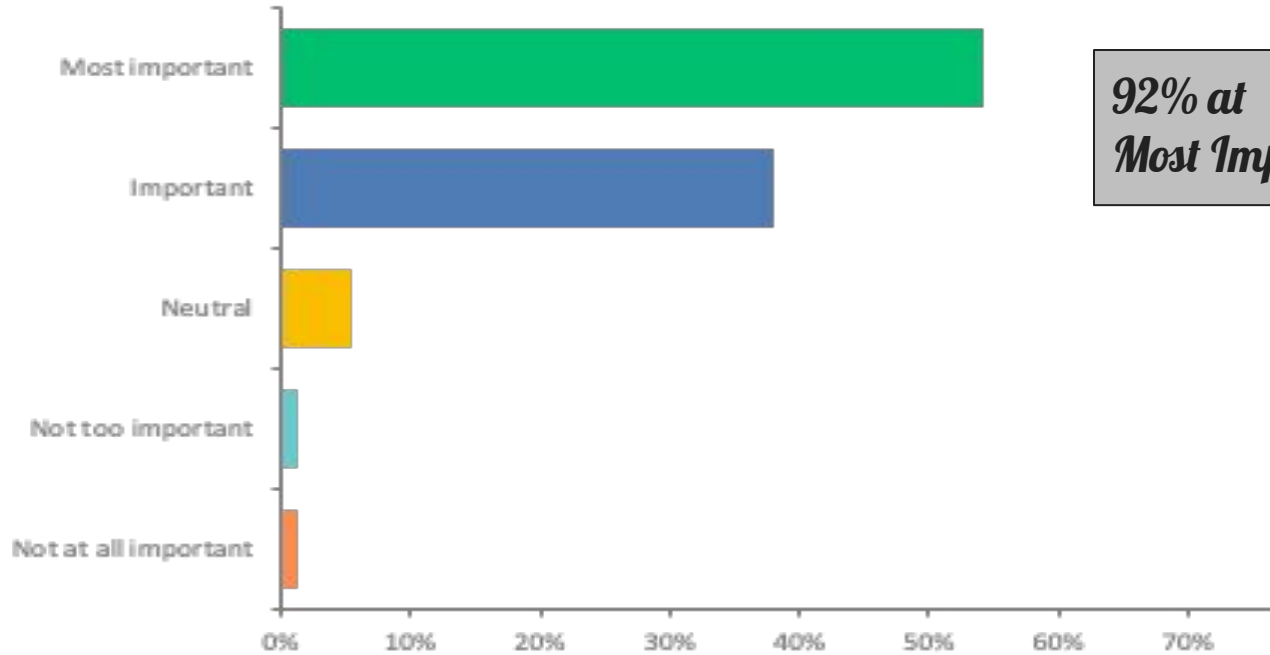


***96% at
Most Important or Important***

Q3: Actively engages and effectively listens to and addresses the concerns of all students, staff, parents, and community members

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	68.14%	385
Important	27.43%	155
Neutral	2.05%	49
Not too important	0.62%	1
Not at all important	0.74%	11
TOTAL		565

Q3: Actively engages and effectively listens to and addresses the concerns of all students, staff, parents, and community members

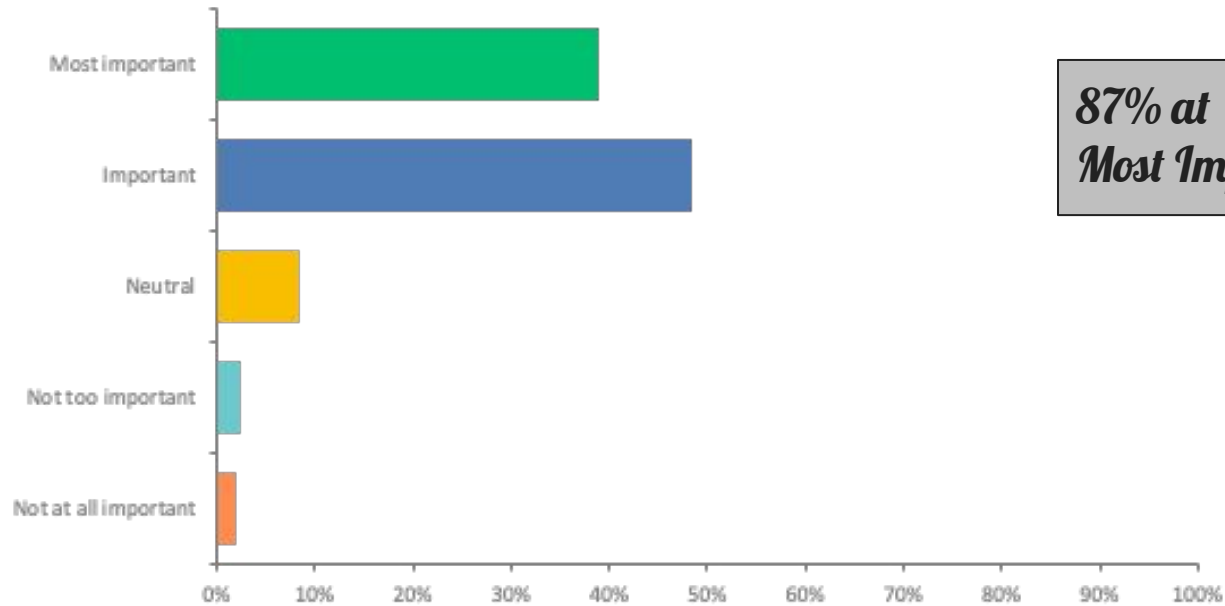


*92% at
Most Important or Important*

Q4: Has a clear vision of what is needed to provide exemplary education to all students

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	54.16%	306
Important	37.88%	214
Neutral	5.49%	31
Not too important	1.24%	7
Not at all important	1.24%	7
TOTAL		565

Q4: Has a clear vision of what is needed to provide exemplary education to all students

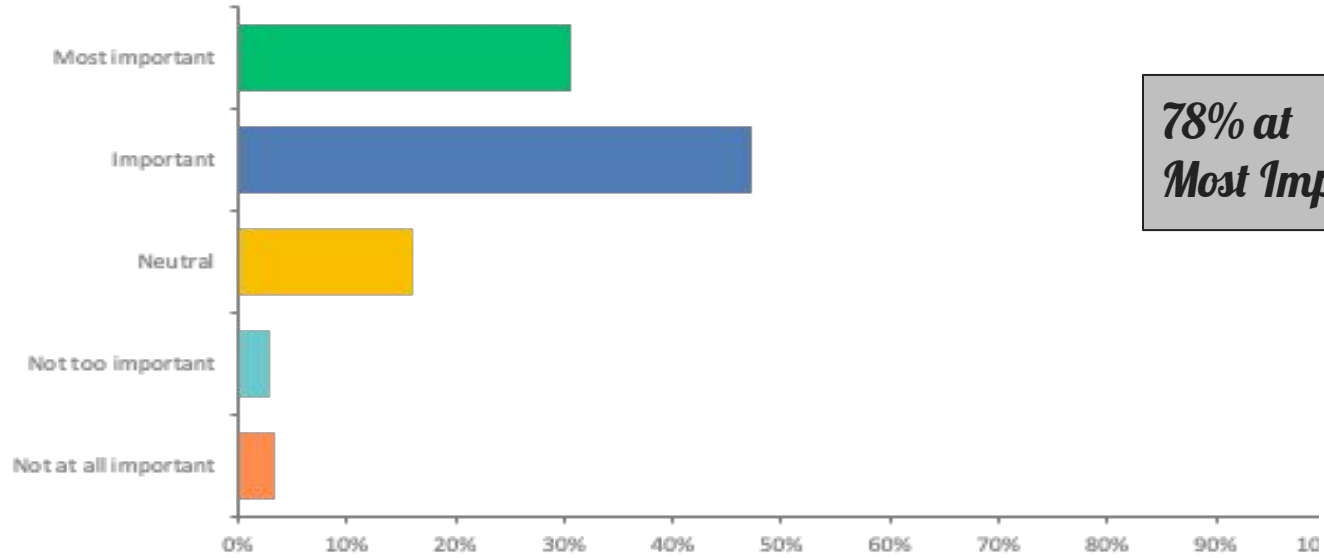


***87% at
Most Important or Important***

Q5: Demonstrates expertise in and up-to-date knowledge of effective curriculum, instructional practice, and special education programming

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	38.94%	220
Important	48.32%	273
Neutral	8.32%	47
Not too important	2.48%	14
Not at all important	1.95%	11
TOTAL		565

Q5: Demonstrates expertise in and up-to-date knowledge of effective curriculum, instructional practice, and special education programming

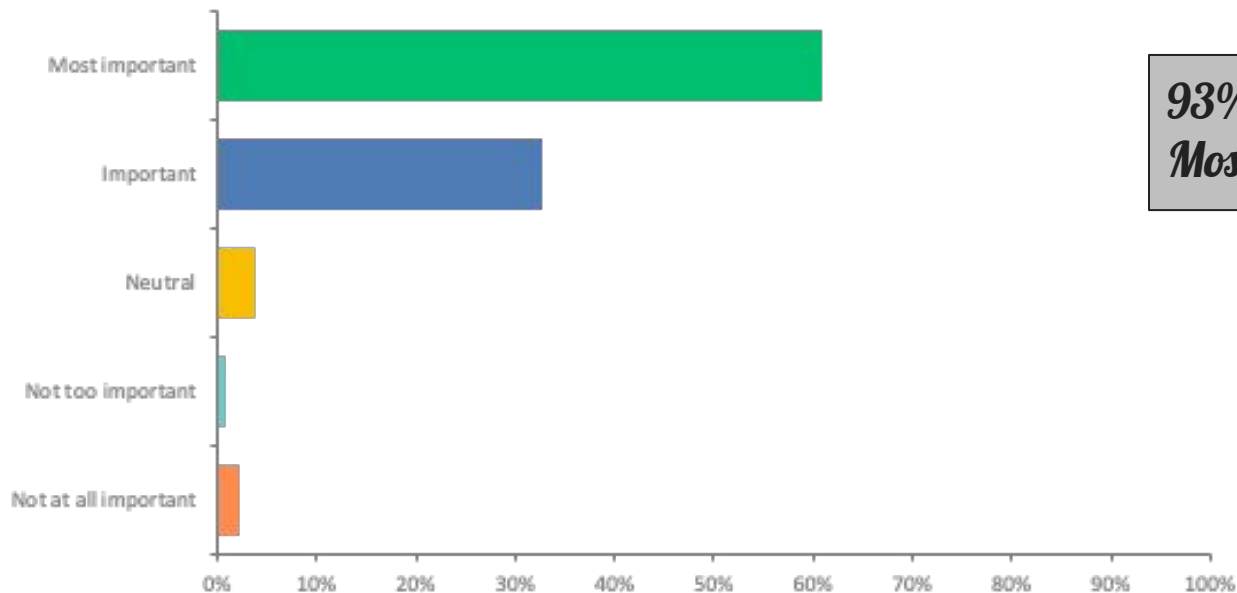


***78% at
Most Important or Important***

Q6: Has classroom/teaching experience

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	30.62%	173
Important	47.26%	267
Neutral	15.93%	90
Not too important	2.83%	16
Not at all important	3.36%	19
TOTAL		565

Q6: Has classroom/teaching experience

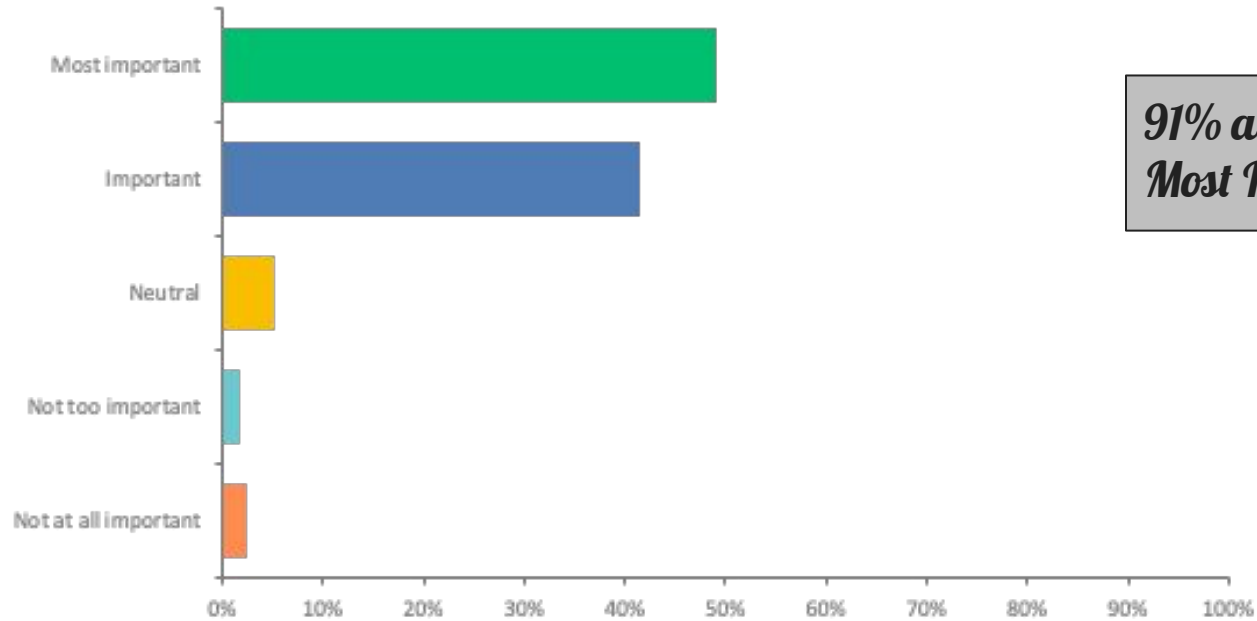


***93% at
Most Important or Important***

Q7: Prioritizes and is able to support positive school climates where all staff, students, and families feel valued, respected, welcomed, and able to learn

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	60.88%	344
Important	32.57%	184
Neutral	3.72%	21
Not too important	0.71%	4
Not at all important	2.12%	12
TOTAL		565

Q7: Prioritizes and is able to support positive school climates where all staff, students, and families feel valued, respected, welcomed, and able to learn

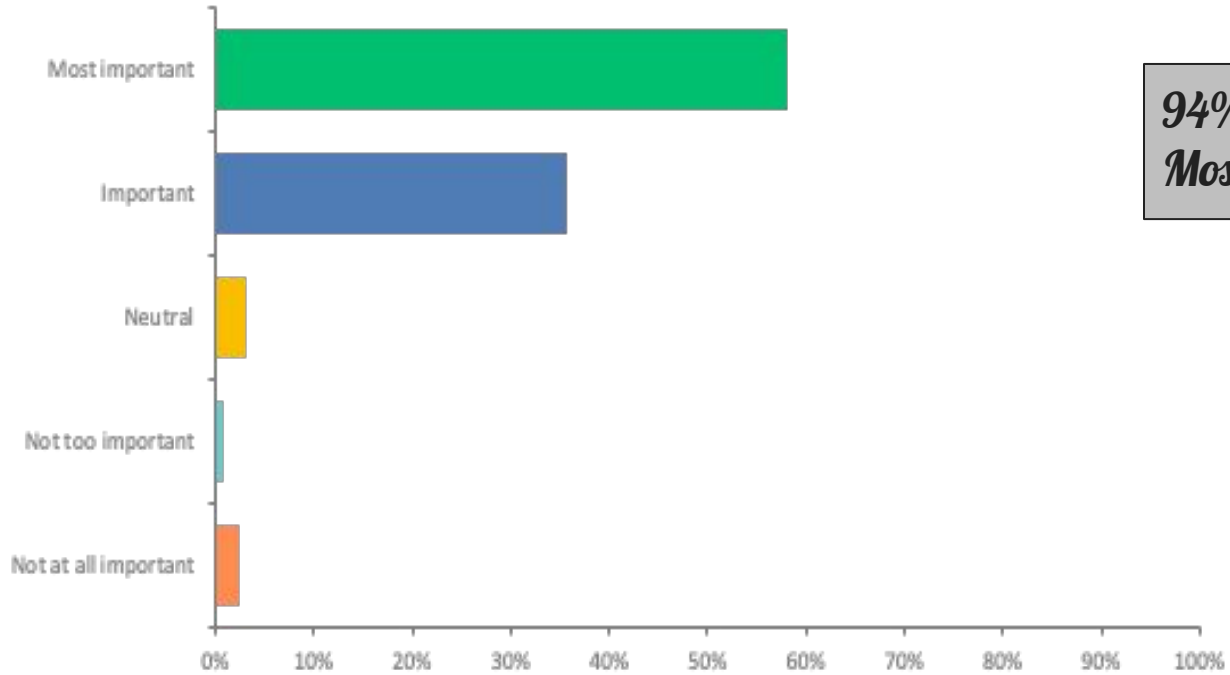


***91% at
Most Important or Important***

Q8: Values and prioritizes growth, achievement, inclusion, and excellence for every student

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	49.20%	278
Important	41.42%	234
Neutral	5.13%	29
Not too important	1.77%	10
Not at all important	2.48%	14
TOTAL		565

Q8: Values and prioritizes growth, achievement, inclusion, and excellence for every student

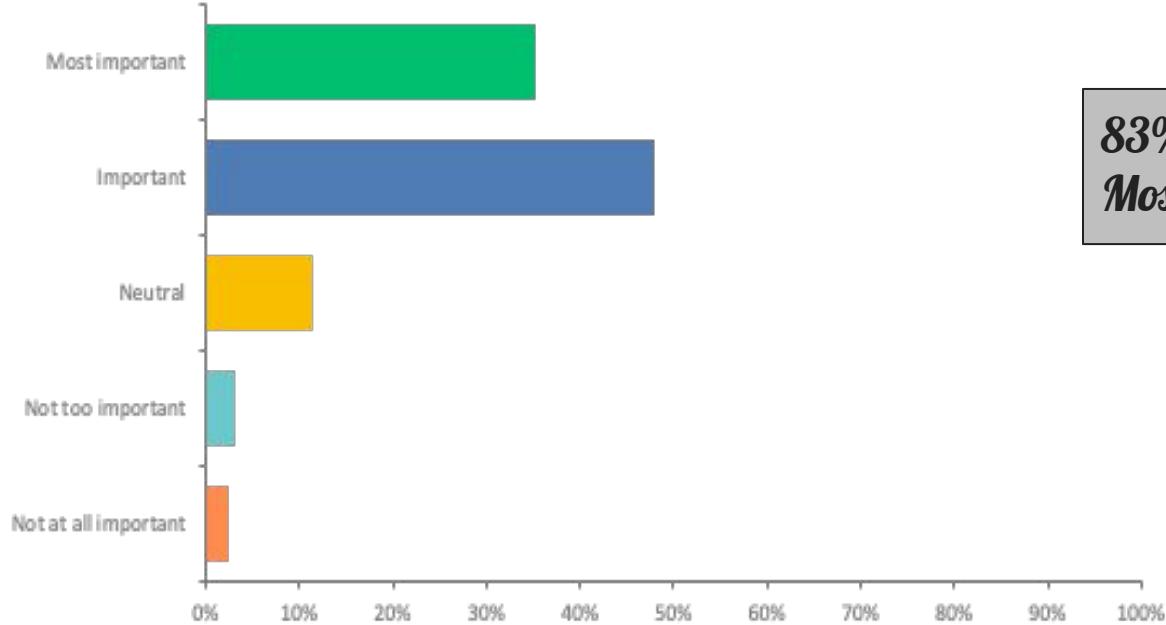


***94% at
Most Important or Important***

Q9: Demonstrates integrity and compassion as a district leader

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	58.05%	328
Important	35.75%	202
Neutral	3.19%	18
Not too important	0.71%	4
Not at all important	2.30%	13
TOTAL		565

Q9: Demonstrates integrity and compassion as a district leader

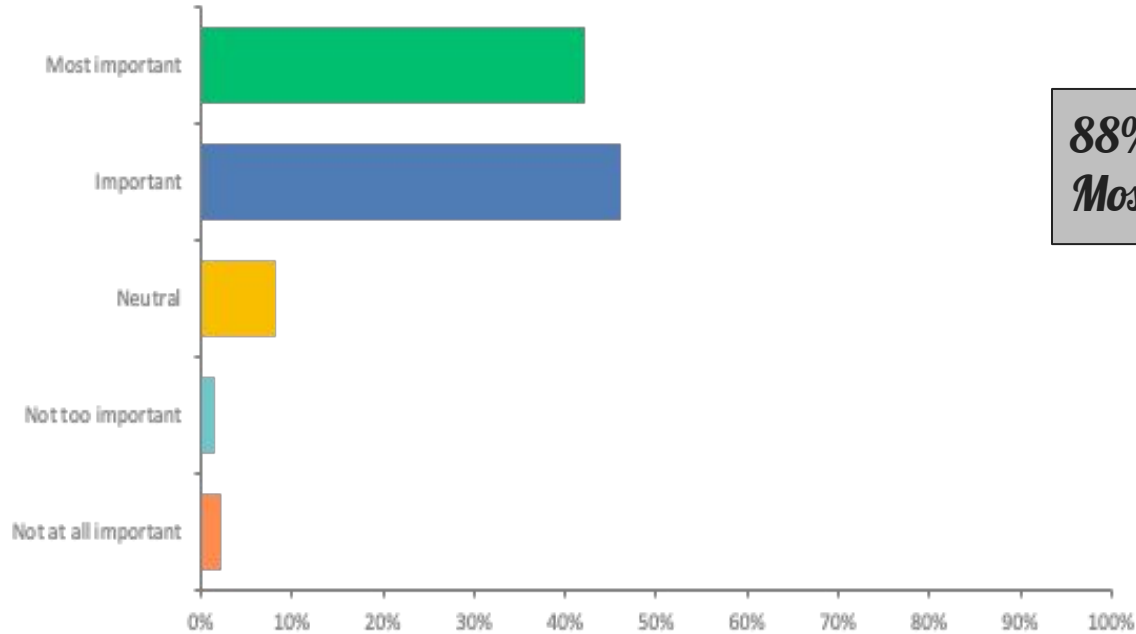


**83% at
Most Important or Important**

Q10: Possesses strong skills in recruiting, hiring, and retaining effective district and school personnel

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	35.22%	199
Important	47.96%	271
Neutral	11.33%	64
Not too important	3.01%	17
Not at all important	2.48%	14
TOTAL		565

Q10: Possesses strong skills in recruiting, hiring, and retaining effective district and school personnel

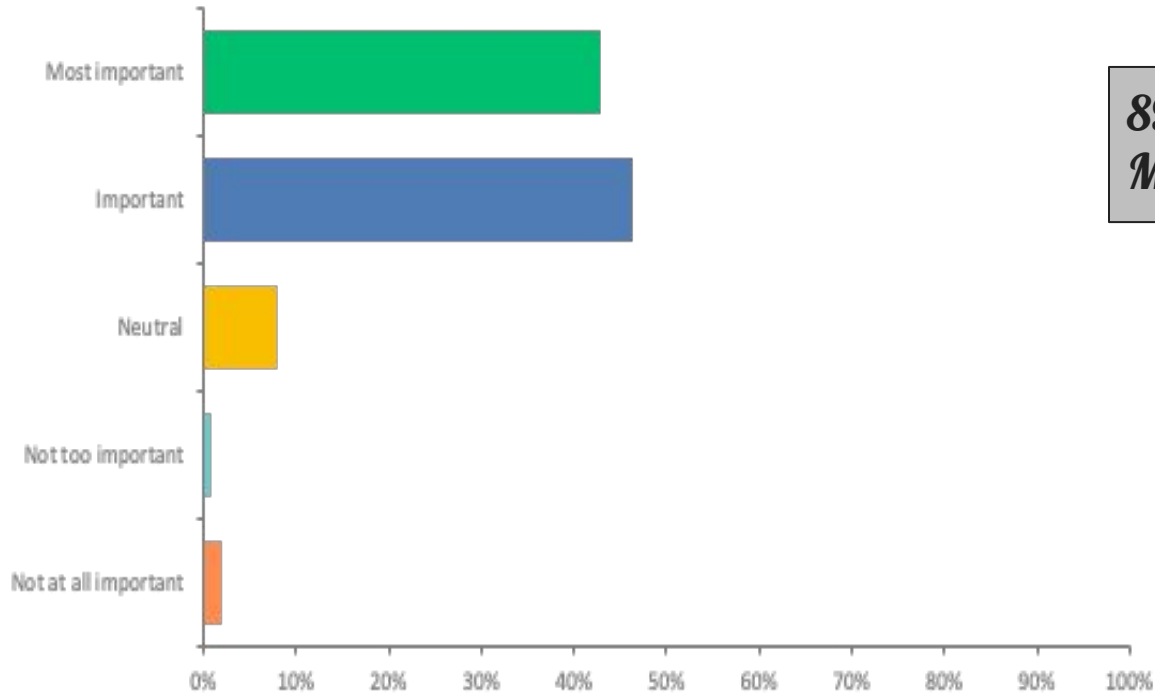


***88% at
Most Important or Important***

Q11: Communicates effectively and inclusively orally and in writing with staff, parents, and community members

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	42.12%	238
Important	46.02%	260
Neutral	8.14%	46
Not too important	1.59%	9
Not at all important	2.12%	12
TOTAL		565

Q11: Communicates effectively and inclusively orally and in writing with staff, parents, and community members

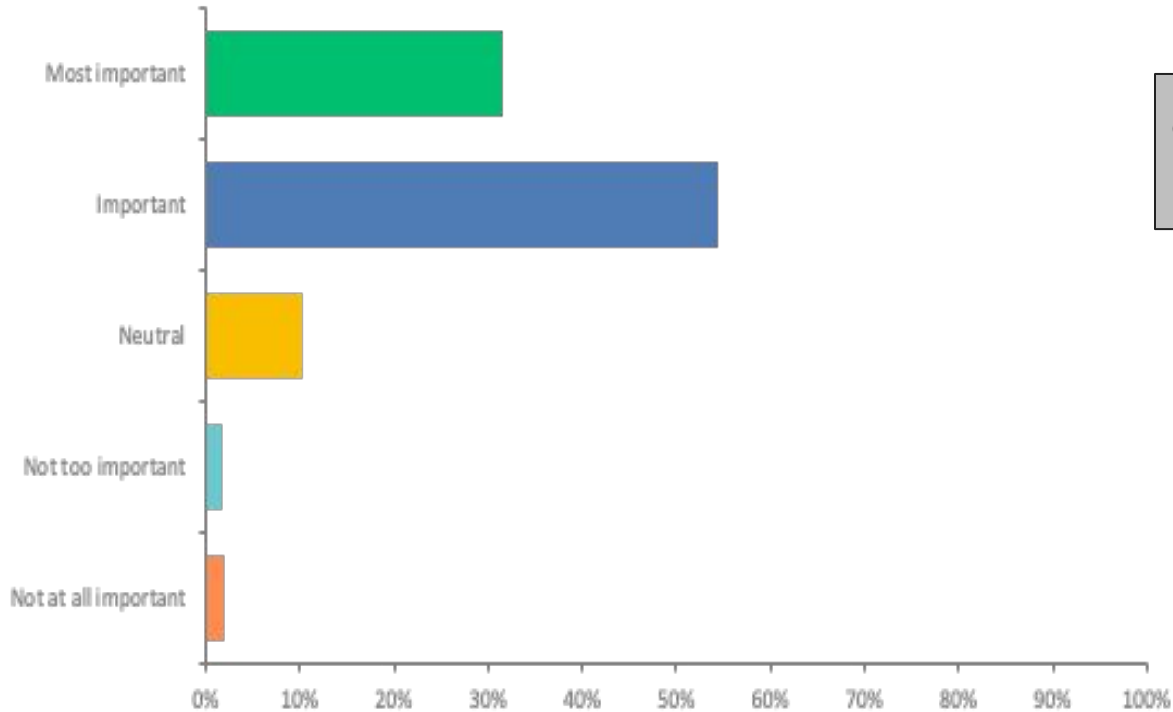


***89% at
Most Important or Important***

Q12: Demonstrates experience, competence, and commitment to continuous improvement across all areas of the school district

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	42.83%	242
Important	46.37%	262
Neutral	7.96%	45
Not too important	0.88%	5
Not at all important	1.95%	11
TOTAL		565

Q12: Demonstrates experience, competence, and commitment to continuous improvement across all areas of the school district

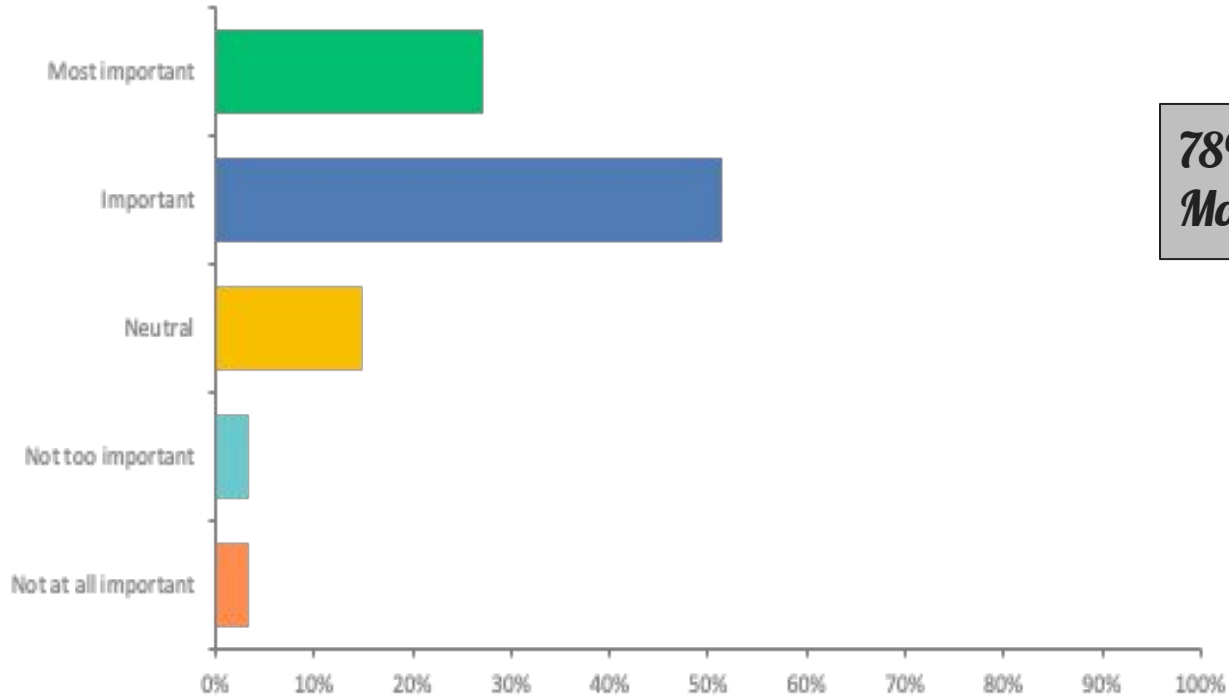


***86% at
Most Important or Important***

Q13: Understands the connections among district finances and budgets, strategic plans, and academic goals

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	31.50%	178
Important	54.51%	308
Neutral	10.27%	58
Not too important	1.77%	10
Not at all important	1.95%	11
TOTAL		565

Q13: Understands the connections among district finances and budgets, strategic plans, and academic goals

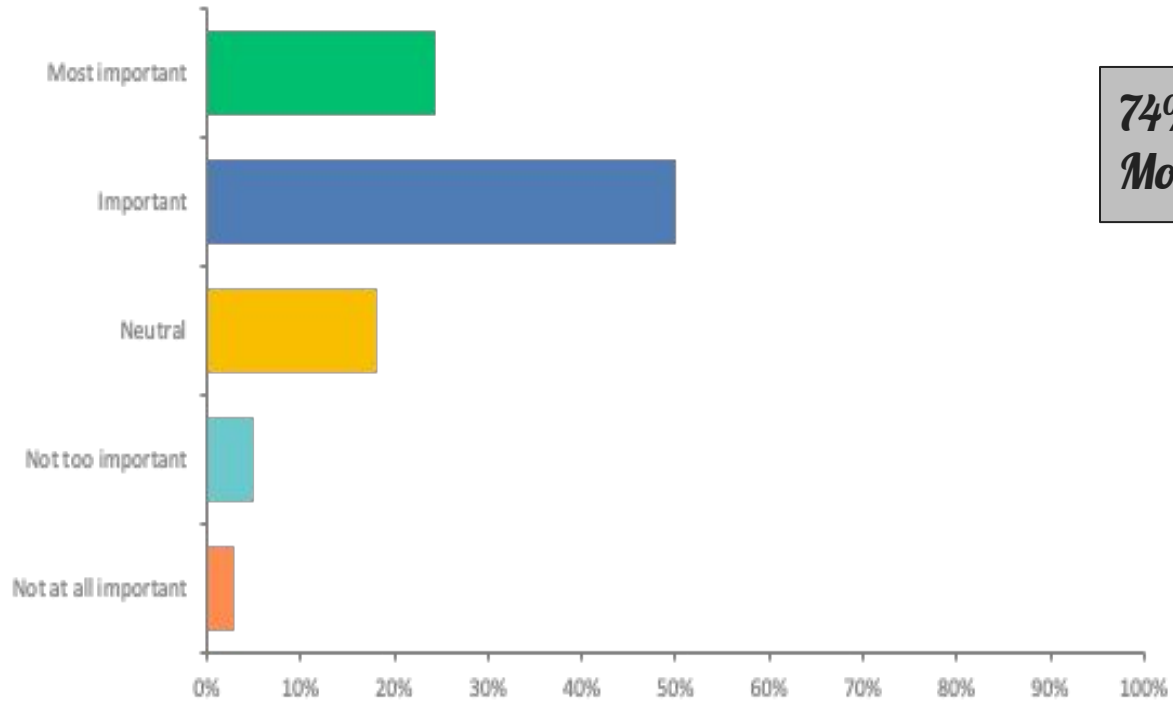


**78% at
Most Important or Important**

Q14: Is able to maintain a positive and productive relationship with the Board of Education

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	27.08%	153
Important	51.33%	290
Neutral	14.87%	84
Not too important	3.36%	19
Not at all important	3.36%	19
TOTAL		565

Q14: Is able to maintain a positive and productive relationship with the Board of Education

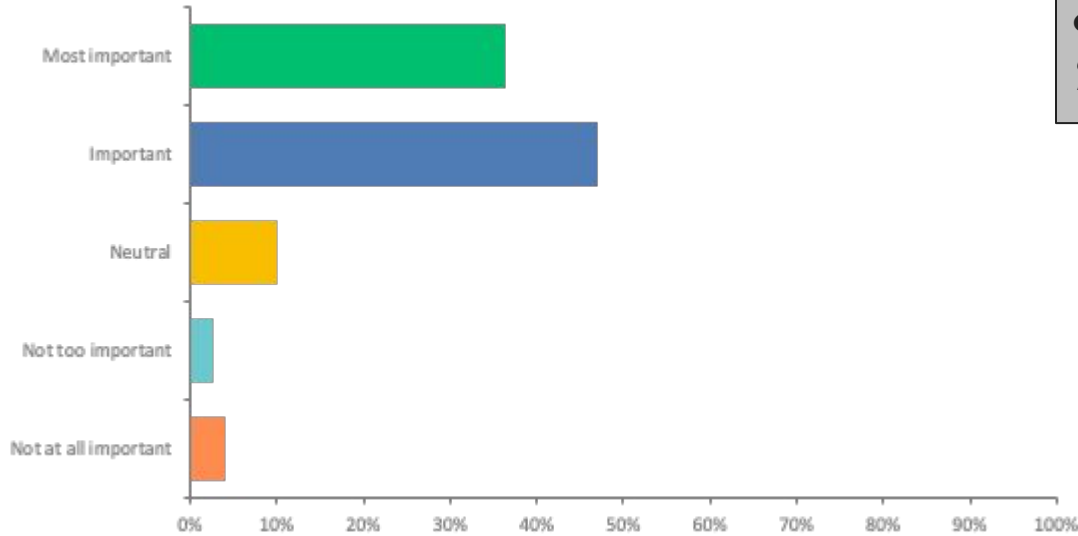


**74% at
Most Important or Important**

Q15: Demonstrates knowledge of the unique aspects of a regional high school district

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	24.25%	137
Important	49.91%	282
Neutral	18.05%	102
Not too important	4.96%	28
Not at all important	2.83%	16
TOTAL		565

Q15: Demonstrates knowledge of the unique aspects of a regional high school district

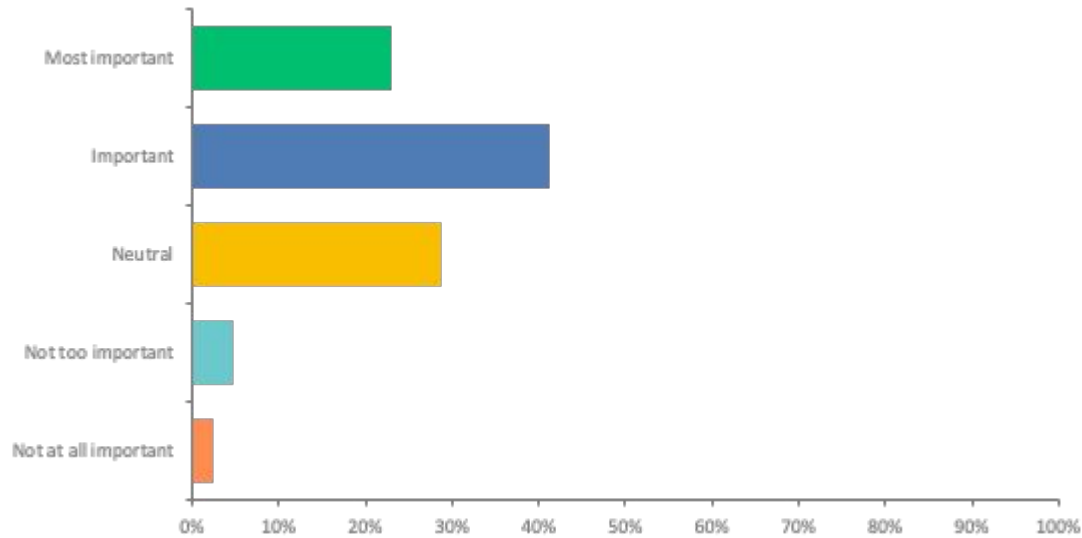


**83% at
Most Important or Important**

Q16: Is committed to ensuring that both district schools have equitable opportunities and access

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	36.28%	205
Important	46.90%	265
Neutral	10.09%	57
Not too important	2.65%	15
Not at all important	4.07%	23
TOTAL		565

Q16: Is committed to ensuring that both district schools have equitable opportunities and access



**64% at
Most Important or Important**

Q17: Has knowledge of or experience with magnet/vocational specialty programs and budgets

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Most important	23.01%	130
Important	41.24%	233
Neutral	28.67%	162
Not too important	4.78%	27
Not at all important	2.30%	13
TOTAL		565

Q17: Has knowledge of or experience with magnet/vocational specialty programs and budgets

Comparing Aggregate Data to Individual Groups

Respondents: Parents - 216; Students - 141;
Community - 14; Teachers/Ed. Specialists -130;
Support Staff - 46; Administrators -18

Question/Topic	All Groups: Most Important/Important	Groups with Differences of More than 5% (+ or -)
2. Experienced Superintendent	64%	Support Staff: 72%, Parents:73% Administrators: 78%, Community:50%, Students:51%
3. Listens and addresses concerns	96%	Students: 90%
4. Vision	92%%	Administrators: 100%, Students:83%
5. Curriculum, Instruction and Special Ed. Programming	87%	Community:79%,
6. Teaching experience	78%	Teachers:95%, Administrators:89%, Students:56%
7. Positive School Climate	93%	Community:86%, Students:86%, Administrators:100%

Comparing Aggregate Data to Individual Groups (con't.)

Question/Topic	All Groups: Most Important/Important	Groups with Differences of More than 5% (+ or -)
8. Excellence for all	91%	Students:84%
9. Integrity and Compassion	94%	Students:85%
10. Personnel, recruitment and hiring	83%	Administrators:89%, Students:65%
11. Communications	88%	Administrators:94%, Students:78%
12. Continuous Improvement	89%	Student:82%

Respondents: Parents - 216; Students - 141;
 Community - 14; Teachers/Ed. Specialists -130;
 Support Staff - 46; Administrators -18

Comparing Aggregate Data to Individual Groups (cont'd.)

Question/Topic	All Groups: Most Important/Important	Groups with Differences of More than 5% (+ or -)
13. Finances and Strategic Goals	86%	Support Staff:96%, Students:72%
14. Positive and productive relationship with the Board of Education	78%	Community:86%,Administrators:89% Support Staff:91%,Students:67%
15.Experienced in a Regional District	74%	Community: 64%, Students:64%
16.School Equity	83%	Administrators:94%, Teachers:89%, Students:76%,
17.Experienced with Magnet/Voc. Programs	64%	Administrators:72%, Teachers:48%,Support Staff:70%, Students:72%

Summary of the Forum Notes

Coding is an important technique in qualitative research such as anthropology, ethnography and other observer and participant-observer methods. In summary:

- ❖ Identify and name codes with [open coding](#).
 - codes are identified without any restrictions or purpose other than to discover meaning
- ❖ Collect notes and ideas with [memoing](#).
- ❖ Identify [categories](#) and sub-categories. A core category should:
 - Be *central*, with many relationships to other categories.
 - Be *easy to relate* to other codes and categories.
 - Appear *frequently* in the data, denoting its importance.
 - *Supports theories* that already appear and which might be proposed.
 - *Moves ideas forward* as links and more meaning is uncovered.
- ❖ Find relationships with [axial coding](#)
 - open coding is about identification and naming, axial coding is about links and relationships
- ❖ Seek the [core category](#).
- ❖ Integrate categories with [selective coding](#).
- ❖ [Triangulate](#) to confirm ideas for validity. (Used Survey Data Results)
- ❖ Iterate to develop a [grounded theory](#). (Profile of Candidate)

Focus Group Interview Process

Type of interviews: Individual and group interviews that included: Morris Hills Students; Morris Knolls Students; Board of Education Members; Faculty/Staff; Central Office Administration/Staff; Morris Hills Administrators; Morris Knolls Administrators; Members of Bargaining groups; Parents; Faculty of both schools; and Community Open Forum. All stakeholders were asked 3 Overarching Research Questions:

- 1) What are the strengths of the Morris Hills School District?
- 2) What are the challenges or areas of growth for the district?
- 3) What are the characteristics that you would like to see in the next Morris Hills Superintendent?

Strengths of the Morris Hills School District

- Multitude of offerings and opportunities for all students regardless of interest or ability. “There is something for everybody” offered via a variety of co-curricular and extracurricular activities.”
- Stability/Commitment/Cohesiveness of Board of Education
- Stability and status of the district (financially/educationally/politically) as Morris Hills maintains a reputation/public perception of being a high performing school district
- Great school spirit both within school and the larger community
- District strength lies in its people - Morris Hills is known as a great place to learn as well as a great place to work
- Parents are involved and supportive of the schools and have high expectations of the students and staff
- Students are respectful, caring, involved, and high achieving while staff is dedicated and committed to student success

Strengths of the Morris Hills School District

Among the most recurrent themes was a universal belief that the Morris Hills School District provides a tremendous amount of opportunities both co-curricula and extra-curricular for all students' especially special needs students. These opportunities include but are not limited to the Performing Arts Academy, practical arts such as metal, wood and auto shops, a vibrant work study program, extensive Advanced Placement and IB Programs, a robust Gifted and Talented Program as well as a rich offerings of extra-curricular programs to extend learning beyond the classroom. As one student said it best, "if there is a program that we would like, the school would make sure we will get it."

Strengths of the Morris Hills School District

There is great pride in the special education program in the district where inclusion is an integral part of the school culture. Special needs are included in everything as paraprofessionals are well-trained and helpful and there is a *Peers helping Students on the Spectrum* that ensures meaningful participation as well as a Unified sports program.

Morris Hills truly is a distinctive place that makes students and staff feel welcome and safe. There is strong school spirit where the community supports the schools and everyone supports each other. Faculty and staff tend to stay and many graduates return to raise their families here. There is a healthy rivalry and respect between the two high schools and the two schools have their own special cultures, a graduating senior summed it up by saying, “that what makes Knolls- Knolls and what makes Hills-Hills ”

Strengths of the Morris Hills School District

The district has a veteran and dedicated Board of Education that, trusts each other, does not show partisanship nor micromanages, and leaves the administration of the schools to the administration and staff. They are focused on ensuring that the school district is well run and that all students are achieving at the highest levels.

Morris Hills Regional District is in strong fiscal and academic standing. It needs a leader to be committed to be part of this special community and work with all stakeholders on continuous improvement.

Challenges/Areas for Growth

- Add more rigor to curriculum
- Superintendent and Business Administrator leaving at the same time
- Too much focus on sports
- Academic rankings not as high as similar districts
- Open more pathways beyond college
- Hold people accountable
- Increase communication with parents and faculty/staff
- Parking/School traffic
- Lunch food needs improvement
- Class size increasing
- Lack of classrooms
- More IT personnel
- Easier access to Central Office
- Equitable and fair with all staff
- Eliminate fear of retribution

Challenges/Areas for Growth

There is concern regarding the superintendent and business administrator positions are open at the same time as they have served with distinction the Morris Hills Regional District for many years. The new administration will be charged with increasing pathways for after high school besides college as well as increasing rigor and relevance to a well-developed and established curriculum to meet the rapid changing demands of the 21st century. Several participants who wanted a renewed focus on academic achievement scores as compared to other nearby districts.

Challenges/Areas for Growth

A number of stakeholders expressed concern about the growing student population/expanding class size as well as the growing needs of incoming students to high school. Increasing collaboration and coordination with sending districts will be essential. The English Language Learners have been growing steadily and has increased from 6 to 100 students and many feel now is the time to assess the efficacy of the 88 minute block schedule and the efficiencies to adapt to an ever-changing world - technologically develop new teaching strategies, be resilient in testing techniques, learning and communicating. The students, parents, and some staff talk about elevating teaching strategies to “21st century learning” to help students master skills such as problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and digital literacy.

There is agreement among all stakeholders for improved two way communication that is welcomed, timely, and informative.

Morris Hills Themes

1. Visible and Skilled communicator who listens
2. A relationship builder who is willing to take calculated risks as well as admit mistakes
3. Fair/Honest/Integrity/Trust/Compassion/Humble
4. Listens and addresses concerns of all constituents
5. Vision of Exemplary Education for ALL
6. Strategic and Systems Thinker
7. Collaborator
8. Continuous Growth Mindset
9. A leader who puts students first
10. Use Strategic Planning to monitor district initiatives
11. Instructional Leader
12. Strong finance/budget skills
13. Entrepreneurial person who understands: Choice School/ Send-Receive districts/Uniqueness of a Regional HS
14. Supportive and nurturing culture and environment
15. Personal traits that befit a small and involved community
16. Strategic thinker/planner who uses data/evidence as part of their leadership style.
17. Collaborative Leadership

1) Has the leadership vision that:

- Is a strategic leader who is able to develop a clear vision for the district through collaboration with all stakeholders and who possesses the ability to motivate and hold all accountable to achieve the vision.
- Demonstrate leadership that is dynamic, principled, respected, and trusted.
- Skilled positive leader who serves and leads collaboratively to identify, lead, manage, and sustain necessary changes.
- Systems thinker who can bring overall academic improvement efforts/programs to the district.
- Has a proven track record of success in improving academic rigor and reputation.
- Demonstrates the ability to address all aspects of learning that includes addressing social, emotional, and mental health needs of students and staff.
- Encourages student voice, values their perspective, and uses a system-wide, child-centered approach to support the needs of all children.
- Articulates a clear vision that puts students at the center of the district's work.
- Understands the needs of send/receive districts as well as the choice school program.

Has the personal traits of:

- Trustworthy-Respectful-Honest-Compassionate with impeccable character and integrity. Possesses confidence with humility.
- Is a Leader who does not have an ego, is humble and not self-centered or self-serving.
- Genuinely likes people, is deeply caring, authentically passionate about students.
- Is a Leader who does not have an ego and provides leadership that inspires and motivates.
- Is a stand up person who has the ability/self confidence to admit mistakes.

Has the technical skills that:

- Displays the fiscal acumen and experience to responsibly manage a complex public education enterprise through the equitable allocation of resources.
- Displays the skills needed to attract, recruit, retain and maintain a highly qualified, diverse staff.
- Has experience in managing budgets and capital projects.
- Is experienced in contract negotiation, transportation, and capital improvement planning.

Has the communication skills that:

- Is a trust-builder who is visible, present, and collaborative through interactions with students, teachers, staff, Board, parents, and community members.
- An extraordinary communicator who will listen to, engage, value, inspire and engage a diverse group of stakeholders.
- Visible, approachable, and relatable through involvement, being an active presence in schools and a collaborative, outgoing presence whose community involvement leads to being a recognized community leader.

Has the leadership traits:

- A visionary leader who Inspires, motivates, supports, and empowers a leadership team to facilitate continuous improvement with transparency.
- Collaborates by seeking input prior to making decisions and communicates the rationale behind decisions. A creative innovator yet deliberate and purposeful.
- Exhibits the ability to build relationships, motivate staff, and to improve staff morale while earning their trust.
- An exceptional communicator and committed consensus-builder who establishes trusting and meaningful relationships with all segments of the district and the community while demonstrating courage in the face of adversity.
- Exhibits the ability to build relationships, motivate staff, and to improve staff morale while earning their trust as well as holding everyone accountable.
- Lead the community to implement a shared vision towards positive student outcomes.
- Demonstrates success in working and partnering with the governing body.
- Has the willingness, conviction, and courage to make and stay with tough decisions that are in the best interest of all students.