

**LEADERSHIP PROFILE FOR**  
**PRINCIPAL**  
**DOUGLAS MACARTHUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**January 31, 2020**

**1. Purpose**

This LEADERSHIP PROFILE defines the specific attributes for the next principal of Douglas MacArthur Elementary School. The profile reflects the input from several stakeholder groups to include staff, parents, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members and the community residents. Applicants and selection panels will use this profile to assess the candidate qualities of the position.

**2. Introduction and Background**

The Alexandria City Public Schools initiated a search for the position of principal of Douglas MacArthur Elementary School in the summer of 2019, to replace the principal who retired after five years in the position.

ACPS gathered information for the leadership profile from the community using an online survey and focus groups with staff, parents, and community members. The online survey was open to the public and available in English and Spanish. The survey requested participant comments about strengths of the school, challenges facing the school and qualities/attributes desired in a new principal. The online survey was open from June 21, 2019 through December 13, 2019.

In December 2019, separate focus group meetings were held with the MacArthur PTA and staff to provide additional opportunities for input using the same format as in the online survey. Those attending were asked to follow-up with written comments to further focus their thoughts into the three most important in each area.

One last group opportunity for input—a Community Focus Group session—was offered on January 14, 2020 at the school. Those who attended any meeting were also invited to send individual thoughts/comments to the search coordinator via email. Feedback was also sought through a follow-up staff session on January 22, 2020.

Most of the feedback provided was through the online survey with approximately 100 parents, community and staff members responding. The PTA focus group was attended by approximately

15 parents, and/or family members while approximately 20 staff members provided input at their group sessions. In some cases, staff members indicated they were speaking for their team/grade level/subject area colleagues who had met prior to my meetings to provide group input to the process. The Community session in January had approximately 10 attendees with most being current MacArthur parents.

As there were no requirements for participants to provide personal identifying information, there was certainly overlap and duplication through the various means provided for individuals to offer their comments. There were, as will be evidenced later, several consistent themes throughout the various modes of response. It is also important to note that parents, staff and community were very much “on the same page” with their comments.

It is important to note that the data provided are not a scientific sampling, nor should they necessarily be construed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups providing feedback.

As search coordinator, I have reviewed the comments made through the various modalities offered and provided a summary of consistent themes in a concise manner to support the application, interview and selection process for the new principal. This report, by its nature, cannot include all comments made. However, the detail of all feedback is available and will be maintained for an appropriate period.

The search coordinator intends to meet the challenge to identify individuals who best possess the skills and traits sought by the school community. This successful candidate will be one who, through the interview and selection process, best fits the leadership profile. Ultimately, the selected principal will be a school leader who can provide superior educational, social and personal outcomes for students, staff, parents and the community.

### **3. Consistent Themes from the On-line Survey and Focus Group Meetings**

#### **Strengths of Douglas MacArthur Elementary School**

- Strong, supportive, engaged community
- Experienced, supportive and dedicated staff
- Excellent, supportive PTA
- Diverse community and student body—race, ethnicity and socio-economics.
- New building in the future
- Creativity
- After-school programs

#### **Challenges for Douglas MacArthur Elementary School**

- Diversity of needs of students, staff, school and community
- All aspects of upcoming move, transition, and return to new building to include safety/security concerns

- Achievement gap
- Internal and external communications
- Administrative turnover

#### **Desired Personal Qualities/Attributes of Principal**

- Caring, warm and compassionate
- Approachable and welcoming
- Energetic
- Passionate/inspirational
- Good listener
- Openminded
- Flexible/adaptable
- Enjoys children
- Calm
- Confident
- Engaging

#### **Desired Professional Qualities/Attributes of Principal**

- Previous experience as elementary teacher and building administrator in setting similar to Douglas MacArthur
- Understands educational trends, diversity of needs, research/data, instruction and best practices
- Understanding of and a plan to positively address the achievement, knowledge and opportunity gaps for maximum achievement for all students
- Focused on and advocate for children
- Experience with organizational change
- Trusts staff—doesn't micromanage
- Organized
- Excellent listener and communicator
- Strong and supportive leader
- Strategic thinker
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Collaborative problem solver
- Visible in the school and community
- Holds high expectations for all

#### **4. Sample Comments from Online Survey and Focus Group Meetings.**

This comment from a parent summarizes the thoughts of many in relation to expectations of the successful candidate:

“The right captain will be able to sail this ship in uncharted waters with the right knowledge, experience and instincts.”

The following statements provide an overview of feedback from the online survey and focus groups:

a. Online Survey: June-December 2019

- Forward thinking communicator
- Community builder
- Equity mindset
- Someone who demands the highest academic standards from each student.
- Experienced in working in a school in physical transition
- A transparent principal who is willing to make parents aware of school issues and is open to help
- Confident Leader
- Someone who displays diplomatic leadership with a tireless dedication to kids
- Someone to work with staff to create a loving, supportive and safe environment for the students
- Charismatic
- Equity mindset
- Leadership and vision to drive excellence
- Someone who understands how systemic racism impacts learning environments and creates educational inequities.

b. Staff Focus Groups: December 16, 2019 and January 22, 2020

- Trusts and empowers staff—not a micromanager.
- Open and approachable
- Experienced elementary educator who knows instruction
- Innovative educator who is forward thinking
- Warm, caring and calm
- Committed to strong, useful professional development
- Knows how to get things done.
- Inspiring, like a great coach whom we don't want to disappoint
- Enjoys what they do—happy
- Has a strong sense of community
- Team player
- Compassionate but strong disciplinarian

c. PTA and Community Groups: December 18, 2019 and January 14, 2020

- Experience in a diverse school setting... addressing gaps that come from socio-economic differences
- Someone who has a sincere passion for this work
- Strong communication skills
- Energizing and engaging
- Organizational change management experience
- Experience with racial inequities
- Strong communicator
- Openminded, flexible, kind, creative and fun
- Experience as a teacher, specifically with early learners
- Someone looking for a long-term commitment
- Technology fluent
- Analytical mind—strategic thinker
- Family oriented
- Independent yet accountable

## **5. Instructions to Applicants.**

A candidate should use this profile to make a self-assessment and determine how she/he best fits the qualities sought by the school community. These characteristics should be reflected in the content of the application. Should the applicant be selected for an interview, that candidate must demonstrate these qualities in the screening process. Generally, a strong principal should demonstrate leadership and management skills, inspire trust, and build support in the school and across the community. We seek a principal who can do adapt these qualities for the Douglas MacArthur community.

## **6. Closing.**

The leadership profile outlines the qualities, characteristics and attributes that the community seeks in the permanent principal. Written applications will be screened using this report as a guide. Selection panels will also use this report during the in-person interview process of top candidates.

As your search consultant, I extend my thanks to all participants who provided feedback via the online survey and focus groups. Your time, effort and care are most appreciated. We look forward to the selection of the best candidate as your next school principal.

Sincerely,  
 John Porter  
 School Principal Search Consultant  
 Department of Human Resources, ACPS