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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Results of the Superintendent Search Leadership Profile

At the October 11, 2017 Board of Education Work Session, Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA), the executive search firm hired by the School Board to conduct the district's search for the next permanent Superintendent of Schools, presented a Leadership Profile Report. HYA representative Dr. Robert Roelle shared the results of input collected during 74 face-to-face meetings he conducted with colleague Deborah Raizes (a former Scarsdale Board member) and members of the administration, staff, parents, and students, input from two Community Forums, and the results from 599 respondents who completed HYA's online survey. The same three questions were posed to all participants: What are the strengths of Garden City Public Schools? What are its challenges and issues? What are the preferred characteristics and experience desired in the next Superintendent of Schools?

All responses were combined to create a Leadership Profile that will be guiding Dr. Roelle and Ms. Raizes as they seek out a slate of candidates to present to the Board. "As we pulled together the characteristics, we began thinking of superintendent candidates we were aware of," shared Dr. Roelle. "Very soon, we will be interviewing candidates."

Dr. Roelle, a 20-year Superintendent of Schools in Westchester County, provided highlights of the district's strengths at the summary presentation. "Ninety-one percent of respondents rated Garden City Public Schools in the two highest (most favorable) categories. We found that nearly everyone indicated the district had strong public school governance." Dr. Roelle shared that many explained that they enjoyed a legacy in Garden City - their fathers and grandfathers graduated from Garden City High School. Others responded that they moved to the district for the schools and ended up staying for the community, emphasizing the district is a "destination" location. They felt the school district embodied a "professional learning environment" with a rigorous curriculum, strong faculty and administration, a "students come first" culture, and included "outstanding students who care about each other." Additional strengths included "highly educated and involved parents with high expectations," "strong cultural arts, athletic and activity opportunities for students," a "high level of confidence in business operations" (a frequent question HYA receives from prospective candidates - "What's the Business Office like?"), well-maintained school facilities, and that "Garden City School District is a good place to work."

In terms of challenges the district faces, Dr. Roelle stated that respondents indicated maintaining excellence in the tax cap era was the biggest challenge: "Just about everyone talked

about this, everyone is aware of this - How long can you maintain the district under the tax cap?"

A recent increase in student enrollment that came as "a bit of a surprise" was another concern of respondents. For example, the district enrolled 36 new students in late August/early September – an increase that was not predicted in a recent demographic study. As the tax cap does not take into account increases in enrollment, an influx of students can and has put increasingly more financial pressure on the district. Third in concern for respondents was the district's aging school facilities. Although the 2010 School Investment Bond and Energy Performance Contract did much to address health, safety, and programmatic issues at every district building, the district's aging infrastructure requires ongoing maintenance and upgrades. Leadership challenges were another concern – the district has "a strong base of school administrators; the next superintendent must work and lead a highly competent team," said Dr. Roelle. Additional challenges stated by respondents included selecting a candidate who can support parents, yet be able to respectfully articulate a contrary view; work collaboratively with bargaining units; review technology needs; and maintain and expand STEM (especially for girls).

When it came to the preferred characteristics sought in the new superintendent, interviews yielded three key components: an instructional leader who possesses a vision for excellence and is a collegial problem solver, an experienced leader (superintendent experience preferred), and a leader with strong interpersonal skills who fosters a culture of trust and respect. Additionally, interviewees mentioned a candidate who is visible and approachable, a good listener and keen observer, technologically savvy, a strong manager and motivator, and a leader who will work well with and provide leadership for the Board. The community survey results echoed the face-to-face interview results with a few additions: a leader who fosters a positive, professional climate; recruits, employs and retains effective personnel; demonstrates a deep understanding of educational research and best practices; provides transparent communications; and establishes a culture of high expectations. The community also felt the successful candidate would be an accomplished central office administrator and possess the appropriate NYS certification.

Moving forward, as HYA seeks out candidates who meet the community-developed Leadership Profile, they are also generating interview questions the Board can use during the interview process. "We believe the Leadership Profile is crucial to the entire process," Dr. Roelle explained at the conclusion of the presentation. Dr. Roelle and Ms. Raizes will conduct an interview workshop with the Board to help members be consistent in their approach with each of the five or six finalist candidates HYA will bring forward.

The Board would like to thank all those in the community who participated in the interview process, attended the Community Forums, and completed the online survey. Creating the Leadership Profile was truly a team effort, and the board is deeply grateful.

To view the complete Leadership Profile Report, survey results, and HYA's October 11th Work Session presentation, please visit the district website: www.gardencity.k12.ny.us, "GCPS Superintendent Search" under the "Board of Education" drop-down.