LACHSA BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles County High School for the Arts offers a specialized program combining college-preparatory academic instruction and conservatory-style training in the visual and performing arts. Founded in 1985, the tuition-free public school is run by the Los Angeles County Office of Education in partnership with and on the campus of California State University, Los Angeles.

Recognized as one of the premier public arts high schools in the U.S, LACHSA is the recipient of numerous awards, these include California Distinguished School for Academic Excellence, Golden Bell Award, Grammy Signature School, Bravo Award for excellence in the arts education and the Exemplary School Designation by the Arts Schools Network. LACHSA is also routinely identified as one of “America’s Best High Schools” by Newsweek Magazine and one of LA’s best high schools by Los Angeles Magazine.

The school serves 600 culturally and socioeconomically diverse teens from more than 85 school districts in the county. Prospective students must meet minimum academic, attendance, and behavior standards, and must audition for acceptance into one of five departments: Cinematic Arts, Dance, Music (vocal and instrumental), Theater, or Visual Arts. Each department selects its own students through a juried audition or portfolio review process. Once admitted, students can audition to dual-major in Musical Theater productions.

LACHSA is a model small learning community fully integrated with the campus of CSULA, offering students a direct connection to higher education. More than 98% of graduates matriculate to college and many are recruited with scholarships to the world’s finest institutions.

The non-profit Los Angeles County High School for the Arts Foundation raises funds to support the conservatory-style arts training offered to students free of charge. Each year, the Foundation works to bridge the
gap between available state funding and the actual cost of the arts programs by cultivating and soliciting gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations.

The Mission of LACHSA is for students, through powerful learning experiences, to embrace and excel in the arts and academics while working towards their visions of the future.

**INTRODUCTION OF FINDINGS**

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates on August 7th, 2014 for the new principal at the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts. The data contained herein was obtained from input the HYA consultant received when he met in either individual interviews, or group settings, or by telephone. The structured meetings were to gather input to assist the County Superintendent in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new principal. Additionally the stakeholder meetings collected information from the following groups: academic teachers, Deans of various artistic departments, Foundation member, LA Phil, existing administration, past administration, representative from the Board of Supervisors, a graduate from LACHSA (a current employee), officials from Cal State University Los Angeles, and LACOE administration. All contributed information regarding the strengths of the school; some of the challenges it will be facing in the coming years, and what characteristics the stakeholder groups desire in the new principal.

The consultant commends the efforts of the County Superintendent to engage stakeholders to give critical input into the process of listing what they believe is the perceived strengths/challenges/issues that face LACHSA. The stakeholders also listed characteristics and experiences they felt would be desirable for the next principal.

In summary, there appears to be strong artistic faculty with longevity at the school. There are strong department chairs of Cinematic Arts, Dance, Music, Musical Theater, and the Visual Arts. It was clearly recognized that LACHSA has a strong student body. Cultural diversity of the students is seen as strength. It was also pointed out that students have a passion for the arts. The YOLA (youth orchestra LA) is seen as strength
of the school. It should be noted that LACHSA has been recognized nationally for its excellence. The academic program was also seen as strength by having 98% of their graduates going on to colleges. It should be noted that LACHSA is known for preparing students for the artistic world as well as college.

Communication is always an issue in any organization. There is a need to have better communication with department chairs and University administration. A desire by the stakeholders to establish protocols for better communication with both the academic faculty and the artistic staff should be a priority. A strong desire to integrate faculty from the arts and academics was expressed.

A challenge expressed was the need for an established hiring practice that will attract good faculty. Funding is always a challenge that will need to be addressed. Seen as the most challenging issue facing the new principal is having an understanding of all the facets of LACHSA; the foundation, arts programs, academic programs, the university, parent community, and working with LACOE.

The stakeholder group agreed on many of the attributes that would assist the new principal in successfully addressing issues that confront LACHSA. The leader should be a good communicator that can maintain good relationships with all stakeholder groups of the school. He/She needs to communicate with outside agencies to develop partnerships. They desire a leader who will not sacrifice the arts program vs. the academic program. One who is accessible and who will engage all in the process of information and decisions of the school, a principal who visits classrooms and gives input into the instructional program, and a principal who can engage with the arts community. The stakeholders want a firm leader who will also be a good listener. Most importantly, a principal who understands what their job is and what it is not.