



Superintendent Leadership Profile Report
Southern California Regional Occupational Center
March 13, 2023

This report represents the findings of the *Stakeholder Engagement Process* conducted by Education Support Services (ESS) from January 20 to February 28, 2023. Information in this report was collected from one-on-one interviews and was augmented with results from an online survey.

Data from this engagement process were used in the development of the following Leadership Profile. The profile will guide the Search Advisers and Board of Education in the recruitment, screening and selection of its next outstanding superintendent.

Desired Characteristics for the Incoming Superintendent

Essential Attributes:

- A sense of urgency and expertise in leading the development and implementation of a strategic plan
- Visionary and inventive, with a track record of success in exemplary CTE/ROC/ROP programs
- Experienced in communication and marketing strategies to attract, engage and maintain enrollment

Supportive Qualities and Characteristics:

- A collaborative team player, possessing strong group facilitation skills
- Hands-on, detail-oriented leader with a “big picture” vision
- Inspires and articulates a shared vision, while holding team members accountable for attainment
- Exemplary interpersonal and communication skills
- A proactive communicator and a responsive listener
- Cabinet-level experience in training and leading a governance team
- School finance and funding experience, with LCFF and grant resources
- Visible, personable, and accessible leadership style

In summary, the Board of Education is seeking a capacity builder who will bring diverse groups together to further the SoCal ROC mission, harnessing the collective energy and resources of member district superintendents and boards of education, cabinet members, employees, comprehensive high school leadership, students, and external partner organizations and agencies.

The following pages capture stakeholder voices representing the communities served by SoCal ROC.



SoCal ROC History and Community Profile

The Southern California Regional Occupational Center served as the model for the State of California when ROCs were founded in 1967. At that time the centers were intended to provide training for trades in traditional occupational settings. With the 21st Century came new challenges and higher expectations for the work force. Today, the wage earner has to be more educated, more technically dependent and more self-reliant than was his/her counterpart 40 years ago.

Located in Torrance, California, SoCal ROC is a Joint Powers Authority serving 6 school districts – El Segundo USD, Inglewood USD, Manhattan Beach USD, Palos Verdes Peninsula USD, Redondo Beach USD, and Torrance USD. Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, SoCal ROC was established to provide Career Technical Education to high school students and adults throughout the Greater South Bay.

Once a premier model in the State with a robust annual enrollment of approximately 7,000 students, SoCal ROC was impacted when California's program funding “flexed” starting in the 2009-10 school year. As resources shifted from ROC/Ps to local school districts across the state, districts became responsible for ensuring that Career and Technical Education program offerings met the eight key priorities of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). While SoCal ROC is well-positioned to meet these key priority areas, it has struggled to re-establish its position due to the combination of budget cuts, loss of direct funding, and a significant decline in enrollment. Enrollment for the 2022-23 school year is estimated to fall between 1,200-1,500 students.

The Governing Board of SoCal ROC remains firmly committed to the development of innovative programs that are key to local economic growth and maximize opportunities for students. A vibrant and engaging partnership among JPA districts and community partners is essential to fulfill the noble vision that has guided SoCal ROC for nearly 50 years.





Stakeholder Input

A cross-section of stakeholders recommended by the Governing Board was invited to participate in this process. 53 employees, parents, students, community partners, and public officials provided input through an online survey. In addition, 20 individual key leaders engaged in confidential individual interviews. These conversations focused on SoCal ROC's strengths as well as desired characteristics for the incoming superintendent.

Online Survey Respondents

ROLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Students, Current/Former	17	32%
Certificated Staff	10	18.9%
Administrator, Current/Former	8	15.1%
Classified Staff	5	9.4%
Board Member, Current/Former	5	9.4%
Community Member	3	5.7%
Parent	3	5.7%
Other	2	3.8%
TOTAL	53	100%

Individual Interviews/Focus Group

ROLE	PARTICIPANTS
SoCal ROC Board Members Focus Group	7
SoCal ROC Administrator Interviews	7
Member District Superintendent Interviews	6
TOTAL	20

Strengths of SoCal ROC

Participants expressed a deep sense of pride when describing the strengths of SoCal ROC, including its history of outstanding programs and services. Three themes emerged as high points:

A Shared Moral Imperative

A relentless commitment to reach students who aren't succeeding in traditional high school programs permeated every conversation with internal and external stakeholders. As one individual shared, "We provide options for students who can be overlooked or underserved. It's no exaggeration to say that we rescue lives." As career-oriented programs are increasingly focused on helping students get on a college track, there is a growing need to serve those who are not college-bound who need to be prepared to enter the work force or a post high school training program as soon as possible. This moral imperative drives the people of SoCal ROC.



The Right Time, The Right Place

The Southern California Regional Occupational Center's location and facilities have long been the envy of career preparation programs across the state. Situated in the heart of the South Bay, the ROC's service area provides a great place to live, work and raise a family. Major employers generate thousands of jobs, including the aerospace industry, the Port of Los Angeles, and oil refinement enterprises, while also serving as U.S. headquarters for several Japanese carmakers. Over the years, large investments have been made to customize the classrooms and specialized training spaces of the SoCal ROC facility and grounds, providing unique, flexible learning environments that fall under the auspices of the JPA's Board of Education.

An Opportunity for Innovation and Invention

A clear sentiment emerged in the individual interviews and online survey. Stakeholders of SoCal ROC are united in their understanding that transformational and fundamental change is necessary if the organization is to recover and flourish. The Governing Board, representing each of the member districts, has voiced the clear directive to recruit and engage a visionary, bold, and resourceful educational leader who will be supported in enlisting stakeholders in the development and implementation of an ambitious strategic plan.

SoCal ROC's Challenges and Issues

When asked to describe some of the challenges/issues a new superintendent might face in the ensuing years, three themes emerged.

A Need for Proactive and Timely Communication

Stakeholders described communication as an area that needs shoring up. Superintendents of the JPA expressed a desire to better understand the operations and vision of SoCal ROC, sharing that recommendations often arrive without context or time for study and consideration. Similarly, SoCal ROC staff feel a lack of connection and support from representatives of member districts, upon whom they rely for referrals and enrollment. The need for enhanced communication extends beyond the JPA to include business and corporate entities who have a shared interest in a well-prepared work force. From a long-time employee, "I remember when we had a vibrant foundation and great collaboration with our member districts. We need to build those bridges again."

The Fiscal Impact of Declining Enrollment

While participation is slowly recovering and stabilizing following a global epidemic, districts across California continue to experience a drop in student enrollment. This trend is exacerbated by the shift from direct funding to fee-based allocation that changed the ROC's ability to manage its own future. While several programs remain in high demand, smaller specialized classes have become increasingly difficult to staff and sustain. SoCal ROC must find ways to market current programs while inventing new programs to ensure long term viability and resilience. This will only be achieved by providing courses that meet compelling needs that are actively promoted and supported by member districts.



Harnessing the Resources of SoCal ROC and Member Districts for the Greater Good

It appears clear that, over time, the interdependent and collaborative relationships between SoCal ROC and its member districts have been tested. The competition for scarce resources, shifts in funding, changes in Career and Technical Education delivery models, and the complications of a global pandemic have combined to impact the mission and scope of the Joint Powers Authority. While these realities present significant challenges, there is great hope to be found in the fact that all stakeholders have voiced a deep commitment to come together to intercept this trend. The need is great, the significant investments already made must be protected, and a strong foundation exists on which to build.

Online Stakeholder Survey Results: Superintendent Attributes

In addition to Stakeholder Group input, respondents to ESS's on-line survey identified the top *Leadership Skills, Personal Attributes and Areas of Expertise* they believe to be most important for SoCal ROC's incoming superintendent:

Table 1: Most Important Leadership Skills

From your perspective, which leadership skills are most important for the new superintendent to be effective? (Select five you believe are most important.)

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Develops a clear and compelling vision. | 76% |
| 2. Is a forward thinker and open to new ideas. | 74% |
| 3. Ensures the ROC remains fiscally solvent. | 70% |
| 4. Is knowledgeable about and accessible to districts served by SoCal ROC. | 51% |
| 5. Is able to build internal capacity and teamwork. | 49% |

Table 2: Personal Attribute Rankings

From your perspective, which attributes should be given the most attention by the Board of Trustees when assessing applicants? (Select four you believe are most important.)

	Percentage
1. Strong Communicator	79%
2. Problem Solver	66%
3. Honest and Ethical	60%
4. Resourceful	51%



Table 3: Expertise and Experience

From your perspective, how much weight should the Board place on each area?

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | Is knowledgeable about fiscal management. | 82% |
| 2. | Skilled in public relations. | 79% |
| 3. | Is knowledgeable about teaching and learning. | 77% |
| 4. | Understands ROC and community culture. | 67% |
| 5. | Experienced in facilities management | 56% |

Online Stakeholder Survey Results: Organizational Factors

Rate the overall quality of education in SoCal ROC:

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
Total Responses	26%	36%	30%	4%	4%

Select the response that best describes your agreement with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. SoCal ROC provides a clear, compelling vision for the future.	15%	45%	23%	3%	6%
2. SoCal ROC maintains high expectations for student performance.	17%	58%	13%	3%	9%
3. SoCal ROC maintains a safe and orderly environment.	32%	51%	9%	3%	6%
4. SoCal ROC engages stakeholders as partners to improve the system.	15%	36%	9%	17%	23%
5. Communication from the SoCal ROC is transparent and timely.	6%	45%	23%	19%	8%
6. SoCal ROC embraces diverse racial, cultural, and socio-economic groups.	38%	49%	8%	0%	6%
7. SoCal ROC facilities are clean and well-maintained.	28%	45%	11%	8%	8%
8. SoCal ROC provides adequate technology to support student learning.	19%	40%	21%	8%	13%
9. SoCal ROC is heading in the right direction.	17%	38%	23%	17%	4%

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Gary Rutherford

Dr. Joe Condon