



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

November 14, 2018

The Boston School Committee held a special meeting on November 14, 2018 at 5 p.m. at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington Street, School Committee Chamber, Roxbury, Massachusetts. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org, email feedback@bostonpublicschools.org or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

School Committee Members Present: Chairperson Michael Loconto; Vice Chairperson Dr. Hardin Coleman; Alexandra Oliver-Dávila; Michael O’Neill. Jeri Robinson; Regina Robinson; and Dr. Miren Uriarte.

School Committee Member Absent: Student representative Evelyn Reyes.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Loconto led the pledge of allegiance and called the meeting to order.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

Agenda

Draft Request for Statement of Qualifications from Executive Search Firm or Consultant

Desired Characteristics in a Superintendent (2014)

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION: REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH FIRM/CONSULTANT

Ms. Oliver-Dávila provided a brief update on the Superintendent Search Process. The online survey is now available in both English and Spanish at www.bostonpublicschools.org/superintendentsearch. Ms. Oliver-Dávila incorporated feedback from School Committee members into the Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFQ) and updated deadlines. The RFQ will be open to search firms and consultants. It will be released immediately after it is approved by the School Committee. The Superintendent Search

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Committee will present an updated draft of the job description/desired characteristics in a superintendent at the November 28th School Committee meeting, with a School Committee vote to be scheduled for December 5th.

Mr. O'Neill said that he was pleased that the RFQ clearly states the district's current challenges, as well as strengths, and includes an aggressive timeline.

Following a review of the RFQ language and extensive discussion, the Committee agreed to make the following changes to the draft RFQ:

1. Section 1.2 Scope of Services – add “locally” after superior candidates
2. Section IV. Qualifications – Change language to read:
All firms and consultants that can demonstrate an ability to meet the basic scope of services in this RFQ shall be considered. It is preferred that applicant firms or consultants have recent experience in conducting a successful search (selection of a candidate and acceptance of a position, as facilitated by your firm) for a Superintendent of Schools for a comparably sized urban PreK-12 school district with at least 40,000+ students and which has authorized Charter Schools.
3. Section V: Search Committee Membership – change Dr. Freeman-Wisdom's title to accurately reflect her position as headmaster of the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science

ACTION ITEM

Approved – The Committee unanimously approved, by roll call, a Request for Statement of Qualifications from Executive Search Firms of Consultant, as amended, to assist with the superintendent search process.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION: BPS SUPERINTENDENT JOB DESCRIPTION

Ms. Oliver-Dávila reviewed a handout from the 2014 superintendent search listing the desired characteristics in a superintendent. She explained that the Search Committee will update the desired characteristics, incorporating input from the community listening sessions and online survey, and will present a revised document to the School Committee on November 28th. The Committee will offer its feedback before taking a final vote on December 5th.

Dr. Uriarte suggested removing language about the Boston Compact in Section II. She said that the next superintendent should be an education leader who is also politically savvy. She emphasized that the district needs a leader with experience and capacity in critical areas such as special education, opportunity and achievement gaps, and English Language Learners.

Ms. Jeri Robinson said that the language in Section 2 about developing partnerships effective and efficient partnerships should be fleshed out.

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Mr. O'Neill concurred with Dr. Uriarte about the importance of finding a leader with experience. He noted that BPS is unique because it is a dependent school district and that experience working with elected officials at the city and state level could be an important skill set for the next superintendent.

Ms. Regina Robinson emphasized the importance of finding candidates with experience effectively reorganizing a district to best utilize resources.

Dr. Uriarte suggested adding a narrative cover page to the desired characteristics that sets the scene for current issues facing the district. Ms. Oliver-Dávila suggested using language from RFQ.

Dr. Coleman encouraged the Committee to look broadly and think carefully about finding candidates who possess the right balance of skills in both teaching in learning and management.

Co-Chair Dr. Keith Motley said that the Committee must be clear on what qualities of excellence are essential in the next superintendent. He noted that the desired characteristics document is still draft and will be refined in the coming weeks based on input from BPS stakeholders and the School Committee.

Dr. Uriarte said that the Committee must be clear on the strengths and areas for growth that each candidate offers and be willing to provide support where needed.

Ms. Oliver-Dávila encouraged all BPS stakeholders to complete the online survey. She recognized the following members of the Search Committee who were present: Craig Martin, Carolyn Kain, Carlos Brown, and Elvis Rodriguez.

For more information on the superintendent search and to take the online survey, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/superintendentsearch.

Feedback and questions should be directed to: superintendentsearch@bostonpublicschools.org.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ruby Reyes, director, Boston Education Justice Alliance, testified regarding BuildBPS Phase II and the superintendent search.

Edith Bracille, president, Black Educators Justice Alliance (BEAM), testified regarding BuildBPS Phase II and superintendent search, and requested a moratorium on school closures until additional information is provided by the district, as outlined in a letter co-signed by BEAM.

Mary Battenfeld, parent, Boston Arts Academy, and member, Quality Education for Every Student (QUEST), testified regarding BuildBPS and requested moratorium on school closures

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until additional information is provided by the district, as outlined in a letter co-signed by QUEST.

Peggy Wiesenberg, former BPS parent, attorney and tax payer, testified regarding the desired characteristics in a superintendent, suggesting that language about the Boston Compact be removed and that public, not private, funding be used to support the superintendent search.

John Mudd, education advocate, testified regarding the RFQ and expressed concern that the timetable may be too aggressive. He emphasized the importance of the next superintendent having a proven track record.

NEXT STEPS

Mr. O'Neill clarified that the written statement by community partners was provided by Mr. Mudd as part of his public comment testimony. Mr. Mudd explained that the document originated from the search that ultimately brought Dr. Carol Johnson to Boston.

ADJOURN

At approximately 6:41 p.m., the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Elizabeth Sullivan
Executive Secretary