

# THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF THE CITY OF BOSTON



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Fellow Boston School Committee Members  
**FROM:** Michael Loonto, Chairperson  
**SUBJECT:** 2018-2019 Superintendent Search Committee  
**DATE:** September 26, 2018

---

As outlined in the by-laws of the Boston School Committee, a search committee is currently in formation to assist us with our search for the next permanent superintendent of the district. At our meeting on October 10th, I will request that the School Committee vote its approval to formally name the search committee, its charge and timeline.

### Search Committee

As Chairperson, I have solicited input from fellow members and a wide variety of people with knowledge of, and interest in, Boston Public Schools to put together a potential pool of people to consider for this Search Committee.

In reviewing the four superintendent searches conducted in the past 20 years (1995, 2005, 2007 and 2014), I noted the size of each committee (9, 12, 6 and 12, respectively) as well as the background of the individuals involved. I have spoken with several members of the previous search committees to learn best practices, potential pitfalls to avoid, and have spoken with previous School Committee Chairs to learn about interactions between the two committees. I have reviewed the timelines, minutes, votes and public announcements of each search committee. Lastly, I have consulted with the Council of Great City Schools, the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and the City and District legal offices on legal issues regarding searches, particularly the applications of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and the specific interpretations of that law with regards to Superintendent searches as opined on by the Massachusetts Attorney General's office.

In keeping with past practices and as allowed by our by-laws, close cooperation with the Mayor with regards to the search committee is both advisable and worthwhile for the District. This recognizes that the Superintendent, though hired, evaluated and paid by the School Committee, is also a member of the Mayor's cabinet and is responsible for the single largest line item in the City's budget and oversees the largest number of City employees. Thus, the recommended make-

up of the search committee was done in discussion and cooperation with Mayor Martin J. Walsh and his team.

The proposed search committee will be co-chaired by our colleague, Alexandra Oliver-Dávila, the executive director of Sociedad Latina, and Dr. J. Keith Motley, former Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Boston. The remaining proposed search committee members will be publicly announced for your consideration prior to the October 10 School Committee meeting.

### Search Process

This Search Committee, when approved, will begin the process to solicit, vet and narrow the list of candidates for superintendent. It is specifically charged with naming finalists for the Boston School Committee, Mayor Walsh and the greater public to consider, with a final decision to be made by the Boston School Committee.

Additionally, the co-chairs have agreed to strive to make the process as transparent as possible, incorporating public input, while still preserving candidate confidentiality when necessary.

This Search Committee will begin its work at a significant advantage over its predecessors, given that each of us were School Committee members at the completion of the last search in 2015. Expected steps in the search committee's work ahead are as follows, once approved by the Boston School Committee:

- Search Committee reviews potential search firms and other consultants who may respond to a request for proposals to indicate interest in providing recruiting and/or human resources administrative services to support the search.
- Search Committee selects and presents a search firm to the Boston School Committee for approval.
- Search Committee holds a series of public hearings throughout the city to solicit public feedback and input into desired candidate's qualities. Community and District partners are invited to present, and the public at-large will have opportunities to comment. This will be helpful for groups who may feel that they were not fully represented on the Search Committee (due to size limitations) to make sure their voices are heard early in the process. School Committee members have made clear that opportunities for youth voice and non-English speakers to be heard must be included during this phase.
- Building on input from the Search Committee public hearings, the Search Committee will draft a job description and present it to the Boston School Committee for approval. It is anticipated that a job description will be approved by the end of November.
- The Search Committee will issue a call for candidates and actively work to create as wide a pool of potential candidates as possible. As you will recall from the 2014 search, the annual market for large urban school district superintendents typically develops in early winter. It is anticipated that a call for candidates in early December will put the district in an ideal position to take advantage of available candidates.
- The search consultant will conduct initial vetting and background checks on candidates and then will assist the Search Committee in its work to select candidates for initial interviews.

- The Search Committee will conduct a round of interviews (in executive session to preserve candidate confidentiality at this level) and select an appropriate number of suitable final candidates for public presentation.

### Next Steps

It is expected that the Search Committee will operate under a timeline that will allow for the presentation of final candidates in early 2019, with additional opportunities to solicit public input on the finalists at that time. Please note, however, that time frames can and will be adjusted if necessary (based upon the response to the call for candidates), in order to best ensure that Boston has obtained the highest caliber of candidates for consideration as our district's next permanent superintendent.

As earlier noted, it is requested that this Search Committee, its membership, charge and timeline be approved at the next School Committee meeting on October 10 in order to allow the Committee to begin their process as soon as possible. During the interim period between now and October 10, the proposed search committee members will begin training on ethics, open meeting law, conflicts of interest and search processes.

Lastly, and consistent with the 2014 search, several local and regional foundations are considering or have tentatively agreed to provide funding for the costs associated with this search process to ensure that public funds are focused on BPS schools. More details will be provided to the School Committee when commitments are finalized.

### Final Thoughts

The selection of the next permanent superintendent for the Boston Public Schools will be our Committee's most important decision in the coming months. I look forward to tonight's discussion as we embark on a process that builds upon and advances Boston's reputation as a national leader in urban public education.

As you know, the daily work of the district will continue during the search. I want to close by recognizing and thanking our central office and school leaders, teachers and staff who, under the leadership of our Interim Superintendent, will continue doing the important work that sustains and improves student outcomes for all students. As a Committee, we must continue to aggressively support urgent and necessary initiatives to close achievement and opportunity gaps.

I know that each of you share these views. I remain honored to continue our work together on behalf of the 57,000 students and community of parents, teachers, administrators and staff in the Boston Public Schools.

**Boston Public Schools Superintendent Search Committee Co-Chairs, 2018-2019**

The Superintendent Search Committee will be co-chaired by:

**Alexandra Oliver-Dávila**, Boston School Committee member. For more than 20 years, Ms. Oliver-Dávila has worked to create a community that supports young people, values their input, and believes in their ability to create positive social change. Serving as executive director since 1999, Oliver-Dávila has transformed Sociedad Latina into a cutting-edge youth development organization. Under her leadership, Sociedad Latina has quadrupled its budget, increased the number of youth and families served, and created the innovative Pathways to Success model. Through her grassroots community-based approach, Alex has also forged cross-sector collaborations with dozens of partners, including the Colleges of the Fenway, the hospitals of Longwood Medical Area, Boston Public Schools, and several community centers, libraries and churches.

Currently, Oliver-Dávila serves as co-chair of the Boston Youth Services Network – a group of 13 youth service providers committed to working together to support young people. She also sits on the boards of Margarita Muñiz Academy, Emmanuel College and the National Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color. In addition, Oliver-Dávila serves on the Community Advisory Boards for Boston After School & Beyond, Boston Private Industry Council, Boston Public Schools' Wellness Committee, Greater Boston Latino Network, and several Longwood Medical Area hospitals. In 2014-2015, she was selected for the National Council of La Raza's Workforce Advisory Council and the National Institute for Latino School Leaders.

In recognition for her hard work and dedication to Boston's Latino community, Oliver-Dávila has received numerous honors and recognitions over the years. In 2014, she was recognized by the Boston Public Schools' Office of English Language Learners and the Newcomer Assessment & Counseling Center for her exemplary work on behalf of the youth of Boston. In 2012, Oliver-Dávila received an Honorary Doctorate from Emmanuel College. She holds a Bachelor's Degree from Emmanuel College and a Master's in Public Policy from Tufts University. She is bilingual in English and Spanish.

**Dr. J. Keith Motley** served as Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Boston from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2017. Following a recent sabbatical, Dr. Motley has returned to campus to serve as a tenured Professor in UMass Boston's College of Management and has secured a \$5 million donation from New Balance to support the J. Keith Motley Academic Chair in Sports Leadership and Administration at the institution. Previous to his appointment as Chancellor, Dr. Motley served in a variety of senior academic management roles at UMass Boston, the University of Massachusetts System Office and Northeastern University.

As Chancellor, Dr. Motley oversaw a strategic planning initiative to enhance the university's academic offerings and research enterprise, grow enrollment to meet the increasing demand for a well-educated workforce, and build the university as a resource of knowledge and public service. As the first African-American chancellor of UMass Boston, which is considered the most diverse public university in New England, Dr. Motley highlighted academic excellence, access and

Boston School Committee Memo  
2018-2019 Superintendent Search Committee  
September 26, 2018

inclusion among its key missions. Dr. Motley also oversaw UMass Boston's 25-year master plan to enhance the campus and improve its layout on Columbia Point.

Dr. Motley has also served on numerous boards of organizations with local, regional, and national reach, including current roles as a director of Eastern Bank Corporation, Steward Healthcare Carney Hospital (as chair of the board of trustees), The Boston Foundation executive committee, the Boston Sports Museum, and the Freedom House.

Dr. Motley is the founder and education chair of Concerned Black Men of Massachusetts, Inc., and The Paul Robeson Institute for Positive Self Development, an academic and social enrichment program for school age Black male youth. He has served as chair of the Newbury College Board of Trustees. He was appointed as the co-chair of Success Boston, a nationally acclaimed college-completion initiative founded by former Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and served for several years on the Boston School Committee Citizens Nominating Panel.

He is a past chair of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and has served on the boards of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) and the American Council on Education. Dr. Motley also chairs the Boston Committee for the "Do the Write Thing Challenge," an initiative of the National Campaign to Stop Violence.

A product of the Pittsburgh public schools, Dr. Motley is also a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh Upward Bound Program. He holds bachelors and master's degrees from Northeastern University and a doctor of philosophy from Boston College. He also holds honorary doctorate degrees awarded by Northeastern University, Stonehill College, Robert Morris University and the President's Award for Distinguished Civic Leadership from Emerson College. He is married to Angela Motley and is the proud father of Keith Allyn, Kayla Iman and Jordan Kiara, and grandfather of Maya and Michael.

##