

OFFICIAL NOTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE'S SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION

November 20, 2018

The Boston School Committee's Superintendent Search Committee held a meeting on November 20, 2018, 4:30 pm, Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington St., Roxbury, MA 02119. For more information about any of the items listed below, visit www.bostonpublicschools.org/superintendentsearch, email Ken Rowe at ken.rowe@boston.gov or call the Boston School Committee Office at (617) 635-9014.

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members Present: Alexandra Oliver-Davila (Co-Chair), Dr. Keith Motley (Co-Chair), Michael D. O'Neill, and Pastor Samuel Acevedo.

Committee Members Absent: Carolyn J. Kain, Elvis Rodriguez, Craig Martin, Carlos Brown, Katherine Grassa, Jessica Tang and Dr. Tanya Freeman-Wisdom.

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Search Committee Timeline (Draft)
3. Superintendent Desired Characteristics
4. Community Listening Session Flyer

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Dr. Keith Motley called the meeting to order at 4:44pm.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

The Summary of Discussion was written by Niall Murphy:

Matt introduces himself - youth community organizer at Sociedad Latina and a senior at BLS

Stanley introduces himself - senior at BLA and president of the Boston Student Advisory Council

Matt introduces the committee members and goes over the agenda for the night

Dr. Keith Motley calls the meeting to order and introduces himself

-Honored to be here to speak to you all about our superintendent search process and hear your voices, input, and feedback.

-Listening sessions are for you to give us feedback on what you're thinking about and for us to deliberate and include into the process.

-Thank you for coming out today two days before Thanksgiving.

Alex Oliver-Davila

-Thank you for coming out tonight in this drizzly cold weather before Thanksgiving. Thank you to search committee members and staff.

- We have put out a RFQ for a search firm that will help us do reference checks, recruit candidates and come up with interview questions that will incorporate what we've heard from community members
- Alex lists dates and times for additional search committee meetings and community listening sessions and invites the public to attend them.
- We want to hear back from all of the community for what you want to see and what can't be negotiated when selecting our next superintendent.
- Also looking for responses on the survey we have put together. We are connecting with BPS on helping us distribute the survey to all students.
- We will be taking the info received on the survey when crafting questions and thinking about what we want to see in the next superintendent. You can also add questions you want us to ask the candidates.
- Job description will be out in December for candidates to apply during winter break.
- Now at 4:52pm we will split into groups to work on a project. There will be a facilitator there to move the conversation and a note taker there to record your thoughts.

Stanley

- City councilor Kim Janey is here and Tim McCarthy is here. I want to welcome them.
- Now we will report back on our groups. Can the person who is supposed to debrief come up and present?

Group 1

- Some people taking tests weren't doing well. We want the superintendent to give them test prep before they take the test to help with advancement to college.
- Teacher/student ratio in classes needed to be better.
- Need superintendent to be more involved and active in the district. People need to know who the superintendent is. Superintendent needs to represent district and city.
- Want superintendent to be engaged, active, transparent, work in an urban environment, open minded, interested in mental health, disciplinary, and help schools meet the needs of students.
- Follow through - superintendent that develops plans and follows through on them. Plans that are currently incomplete are a concern. Need to follow through and finish the work.

Group 2

- What we would like to see in a super, like a wish list.
- Strengths that we have – AP classes, homework help, teachers supporting us.
- Challenges - lack of sleep, unnecessary classes, bullying, teachers can't relate to youth
- Everything we want to see in the future super - bps experience, better listener, money spent on resources for teachers to provide a better education, safety of students, and putting students first.

Group 3

- Strengths – good classes and electives, AP's we like that, small or reasonable size classes, choice of school in your neighborhood, M7 and use of them to have opportunities to sports and clubs.
- Challenges - school lunch isn't good, schools offer T passes and M7's, but students need more opportunities to get around the city. Bathrooms are disgusting. Transportation is an issue.
- If you're late because of the MBTA you don't get an excused tardiness.
- What we want - someone who knows Boston, transportation, and all that is in it. Familiar with BPS and its policies. Willing to get involved in the community and with the youth. Someone who gets to know the students, goes to events and puts students first.
- Should explore learning opportunities inside and outside of the classroom. Culturally diverse in how they think and is open minded.

Group 4

- Strengths - whenever superintendent was involved, good things came out of it. Need more involvement from superintendent.
- Challenges - transportation and M7's - how far you have to go for afterschool problems. Schools look prison based with metal detectors and pat downs. Intimidating for students entering.
- Phone policies are not great, because phone are used to study, do research, or check the time. -- Sports teams having to share programs and space with other schools is an issue. Teachers need to know what is ok and what is not ok when dealing with students.
- What we want to see - engagement, planning events for students, consistent and dedicated to working on these issues. Working for the students. Getting involved with principals.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Public Comment notes were taken by Ken Rowe:

1. Question: What does the Superintendent actually do?

- Michael O'Neil: How many students met Dr. Chang? It's tough to be present; he sets the example for the District. The Superintendent is a leader, inspires the teachers and students. They should listen and actually hear. A Superintendent sets that trend. There are 10k employees, you have to get it right from the top. Not everyone is going to know the Superintendent, you may only see them once
- Keith: How many of you know the Principal or the Headmaster of your school? How many don't know their principal?
 - Students don't know their Principal, some Principals should represent the Superintendent if they can't come to all of the schools.
- Michael: School leader sets the tone for schools
- Alex: Every superintendent wants to know every student, but there are 56k students. They can't know everyone, but they want to. It's a big job.

Question #2: To what extent are our suggestions going to be taken into the process?

- Alex: We are taking all your suggestions and writing them down. Note takers, we are keeping in mind your themes, and you can take the survey as well. It will be a part of the overall picture.
- Keith: the focus is always about students and their voice, we want to hear your voice, it doesn't stop today. It is your and our responsibility to ensure these conversations continue. When people are being interviewed, do background checks. There are so many ways to be present without showing up. As a Search Committee we see you as part of the process. Everything is going to be transparent and online. You can come to other meetings. Use your voice
- Michael: I will be interviewing candidates, and we are recruiting and encouraging people to apply. Some of the things I heard at one of the tables will be questions that I ask candidates in interviews. Adulthood, someone that talks to not with, I will use this. Do they have examples you want to see? Confidence and inspire you? Is BPS preparing you for College, Military, and work?
- Sam: Whatever you do in life show up on time! Amazed how many of you there are, and thank you for showing up. Share with your family and continue to share.

Question #3: What are the things/qualities that you look for? Who makes the final decision?

- Michael: Superintendent is voted on by the School Committee, majority vote. That will be done in the spring. Last time the Committee brought in 4 finalists to do public panels, and all of them were livestreamed, and then there was a 5 day process. BSAC took a vote and shared the vote results with the committee.
 - The Mayor weighed in as well. Ultimately, determined by the 7 School Committee members.
 - BSAC members were a part of the process, and we have one BSAC rep on the Search Committee.

Question #4: How is it possible the students find out where the money is going? Where is the budget and funding coming from?

-Alex: BSAC does a budget piece every year, where they explain budgets to students. There are student formulas. The budget is put together with the parent council and headmaster. We are a dependent district, we get money from the State and we apply to grants. Everything is all online. It comes down to how many students are at a school and what that school needs. We have meetings when people come to testify. We also have additional services and meetings this last year based around mental health.

-Keith: Is every school a part of the BSAC?

-Michael: No, not every school.

-Alex: You don't have to be a part of the BSAC.

-Michael: Every budget follows a formula.

-Some schools have certain programs based on needs.

-BSAC will be holding budget meetings in December. That budget goes to the Committee in February.

Question #5: We need more opportunity engagement with BPS leadership, not just the Superintendent, how do we do that? We want to hear from other leaders not just the Superintendent.

-Alex: How would you like to be engaged? What are your ideas?

-Keith: Learn how the Boston Public Schools are organized, determine the entry points as students. Start at a certain level. Never think someone is too high to be engaged. How frequently do you meet? "0Weekly"... Take advantage of the opportunity.

Student follow up question-"It's not that easy, we need a set meeting. It's hard to get a meeting and get your word in. There are a lot of people on their staff that can come and visit schools and report back to the Superintendent."

-Alex: As you've seen in the last 2 years in this country. It's inspiring to see the voice and the power young people have. You can set up meetings with any of the 7 School Committee members. You can be part of these programs. I don't know everyone that works in BPS, the organization chart is crazy. There are 126 schools and headmasters, maybe that is someone you want to meet with? You can go to the State House. Invite School Committee members to your meetings. I encourage you to keep on asking. You are right, there are a lot of other people.

-Michael: 21 high school representatives in BSAC. Consistently make this a point. Make sure you have student representatives from every school on BSAC.

Student Host: Our voices matter. We are asking for a vote on the School Committee. There are other ways our voices can be heard. We are youth and we can make a difference.

BSAC Engagement Manager: Thank you Stanley and Mathew, facilitators and BSAC. Thank you to the Committee.

ADJOURN

At approximately 6:17 p.m. the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:



Kenneth Rowe
BPS Superintendent Search Committee Staff