MEMORANDUM

TO: Fellow Boston School Committee Members
FROM: Michael Loconto, Chairperson
SUBJECT: 2018-2019 Superintendent Search Committee Membership and Charge
DATE: October 10, 2018

I am writing to follow up on my memorandum of September 26, 2018. As you will recall, that memorandum outlined the proposed process for the Search Committee to pursue the next permanent Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools, with a goal to have a permanent leader in place for the start of the 2019-2020 academic year.

This memorandum is intended to provide a full list of the proposed members of the superintendent search committee. First, I want to thank you again for your input on membership. The eleven proposed members represent a broad and diverse set of constituencies from across the City that reflect the strength of Boston. Included in the proposed membership are:

- School leaders with a wealth of teaching and administrative experience at elementary and secondary levels representing a broad cross-section of our district, including: alternative education, inclusion settings, exam schools, and strong parent-school relationships;
- Leaders from the teachers’ union, higher education, business and the faith community;
- Three current Boston Public Schools parents; and
- Individuals with a broad array of backgrounds in special education settings, non-native speakers and high concentrations of socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

Additionally, and in consultation with Mayor Walsh, the proposed search committee will include a student representative. In an era of student voices leading nationally on issues of gun control, immigration policy and climate change, and locally on issues of restorative justice and education funding, the time is right for the Committee to elevate student representation among those who will select the next permanent Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools. I want to thank Mayor Walsh in recognizing the importance of our students in this decision.
As a process reminder, my September 26 memorandum noted that the Search Committee will hold a series of public hearings throughout the city to solicit public feedback and input into desired candidate’s qualities. Community and District partners will be invited to present, and the public at-large will have opportunities to comment. There will be additional opportunities to solicit public input on the finalists in early 2019. Both phases will provide opportunities 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 at the beginning and the end of the search process. School Committee members have made clear that opportunities for youth voice and non-English speakers to be heard must be included during these phases.

As a further reminder, 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, the former Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

The full list of recommended members for the search committee, including brief biographical sketches, is included below. I will formally present this list for your consideration in public session at our meeting this evening. As I indicated at our last meeting and in the memorandum that was distributed for your review, per past practice I will ask you to also take up a vote on the full search committee membership tonight so that they may immediately get to work.

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

As we discussed at the School Committee meeting on September 26, the proposed co-chairs for the Superintendent Search Committee are:
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, Alex 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, Ms. Oliver-Dávila 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, Ms. 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, Ms. 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, Ms. 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, Ms. 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
inclusion among its key missions. He 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 bachelor’s 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.

- - -

The proposed members of the search committee are (in alphabetical order):

**Pastor Samuel Acevedo.** Pastor Acevedo is the founding executive director of the Boston Higher Education Resource Center (HERC), which provides high school students with out-of-school academic enrichment, career advising, and support to help them graduate from high school and college. He is co-chair of the Boston School Committee’s Opportunity and Achievement Gaps Task Force and previously served as a member of the 2014 BPS superintendent search committee. Pastor Acevedo serves on the boards of the Ten Point Coalition, Boston Trinity Academy, and the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary’s Center for Urban Ministry and Education (CUME). He holds a Bachelor’s Degree from Stetson University and a J.D., cum laude, from Boston College Law School.
Carlos Brown. An active resident in the East Boston community, Mr. Brown and his wife are proud parents of three children. Their oldest daughter is enrolled at the Curtis Guild Elementary School in East Boston. Carlos and his wife are active members of the school’s Site Council and Parent Council, which he has co-chaired for three years.

Mr. Brown is an experienced educator, working with students in a range of programs that include 14 years as a classroom teacher in every grade level from 1st through 12th grade, 11 years as a department head, coaching, and leading groups in travel abroad. He is currently in his sixth year as the Curriculum Team Leader for the Wilmington Public Schools, where he teaches Spanish and Latin and directs the World Languages Department for grades 6-12. He was a member of recent search committees for the Wilmington superintendent and assistant superintendent. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association.

Mr. Brown holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science (International Relations) & Economics from Boston University, and holds a Master’s Degree in History from Monmouth University and Masters’ Degrees in Education and Spanish from Salem State University.

Dr. Tanya Freeman-Wisdom. A resident of Hyde Park, Dr. Freeman-Wisdom began her BPS career as an English Language Arts teacher at Hyde Park High School. She also served as assistant headmaster of the school for two years before being named director of curriculum, assessment, and placement at the Community Academy of Science and Health (CASH). In 2009, she became the headmaster of CASH, and in April of 2017, Dr. Freeman-Wisdom was appointed as the permanent headmaster of her alma mater, the John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science.

A lifelong learner, Dr. Freeman-Wisdom earned her doctorate from the Boston College Lynch School of Education’s Professional School Administrator Program. She earned a master's degree in educational leadership from Simmons College, where she has taught as an adjunct professor, and holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Dr. Freeman-Wisdom and her husband, Richard Wisdom, are the proud parents of two BPS students. Their daughter, Nya, is a freshman at Boston Latin School and their son, Richard Wisdom Jr., graduated from Boston Latin Academy in 2017.

Katherine Grassa. A lifelong resident of Dorchester and a graduate of the Boston Public Schools, Ms. Grassa is in her sixth year as principal of the Curley K-8 School in Jamaica Plain. She is working to develop teacher leadership, implement inclusive practices across the school, and create a positive school climate. She previously worked as an administrator at the Dever-McCormack K-8 School where she concentrated on turnaround initiatives such as extended
learning time and early warning indicators. She began her teaching career at the Richard J. Murphy K-8 School in Dorchester where she served as a teacher leader.

Ms. Grassa attended the University of Massachusetts Amherst where she earned a BS in Elementary Education and received the Dean’s Recognition Award for the School of Education. She explored leadership on a broader level first with a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a focus on literacy from Lesley University, then as a Conant Fellow at the Harvard Graduate School of Education where she earned a Master of Education in School Leadership.

Carolyn J. Kain. A resident of Dorchester, Carolyn J. Kain has been an attorney for more than 24 years, with over a decade of her professional life focused on representing families of children with special needs. Ms. Kain currently serves as the first executive director of the Autism Commission for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She has served as the volunteer chairperson of Boston’s Special Education Parent Advisory Council for the last 10 years. Ms. Kain previously worked as the chief operating officer at a non-profit organization that provides services to adults with developmental disabilities and respite services to families of children with special needs. She has over 20 years of professional experience in the public sector. She served on the Boston School Committee’s Inclusion Task Force, the BPS External Advisory Committee, the Boston School Committee Citizens Nominating Panel, and various other educational groups. Ms. Kain is also the parent of a BPS student with special needs, and she successfully advocated with other parents to have the Henderson Inclusion school expanded from a K-5 elementary school to a K-12+ (up to age 22), which now serves over 850 students of all abilities in an inclusive setting.

Craig Martin. A resident of Jamaica Plain and a native of New Orleans, Louisiana, Craig Martin is the 2018 Massachusetts Elementary Principal of the Year and 2009 Boston Public Schools Educator of the Year. He currently serves as the proud principal of the Michael J. Perkins Elementary School in South Boston. This is his sixth year as BPS principal and 14th year as a BPS educator.

With strategic professional development and investments in 21st Century technology skills development, blended learning, and social media presence, the Michael J. Perkins School’s student achievement has improved over 320 percent, leading to reversals in achievement gaps among English Language Learners and Latino American Learners.

Mr. Martin serves as co-president of the Boston K-8 Principals Association, and is the founder of the School Leaders of Color Think Tank and the Brown Boys Network. Mr. Martin is also the founder of the Brown Boys of Boston EdCamp, an educational Think Tank of best practices and
approaches to how we educate, elevate, and empower African American and Latino American male youth to their full potential.

Mr. Martin holds a B.A. in Elementary Education from Dillard University and a M. Ed in Educational Leadership from Lesley University.

**Michael D. O’Neill.** A product of BPS and a Charlestown resident, Mr. O’Neill was first appointed to the School Committee in July 2008, and went on to serve five terms as Chair. He has spent over 25 years as a leader in Boston’s banking and insurance industries, currently serving as executive vice president of Business Development at 451 Agency. He is also active in Boston’s nonprofit community, focusing on youth advocacy. Mr. O’Neill served a member of the 2014 BPS superintendent search, and currently holds the position of Secretary-Treasurer on the executive board of the Council of Great City Schools. He is a graduate of Boston Latin School, Boston College, Babson College and the Stonier Graduate School of Banking.

**Elvis Rodriguez** is a junior at Snowden International High School. He is currently in his first year as a member of the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC). Elvis has already exhibited great leadership qualities and has a keen passion for advocating for youth voice and empowerment. He participated in the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) Leadership team, where he was empowered to become an effective leader, learned how to develop and communicate thoughts and ideas effectively, gained problem solving skills, and recognized the essence and benefit of community service. Elvis plans to use his influence and platform as a youth leader to continue advocating for youth voice and rights. He aspires to pursue a career in law.

**Jessica Tang.** A resident of Dorchester, Ms. Tang is the president of the Boston Teachers Union, representing over 10,000 active and retired educators. She began her teaching career at the Gavin Middle School and also taught at the Young Achievers K-8 Pilot Schools. She is a co-founder of the Teacher Activist Group-Boston and serves as a board member for several civic and labor groups, including Citizens for Public Schools, Private Industry Council, Boston Partners in Education, and the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance. As a teacher-activist, she has been involved in many different community organizations that are working to advance racial, social and economic justice. Ms. Tang serves as a vice president of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and American Federation of Teachers-Massachusetts, as well as the national American Federation of Teachers. She earned her Bachelor’s degree at Harvard University and holds an Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.