OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE BOSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE’S SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING

November 14th, 2018

The Boston School Committee’s Superintendent Search Committee held a meeting on November 14th, 2018, at 7:00 pm, and located at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington St., Roxbury, 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), Dr. Tanya Freeman-Wisdom, Carolyn J. Kain, Carlos Brown, Pastor Samuel Acevedo, Jessica Tang, Katherine Grassa, Elvis Rodriguez, Michael D. O’Neill and Craig Martin.

Committee Members Absent: None

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED

1. Agenda
2. Meeting Minutes from October 24, 2018 Search Committee Meeting
3. Superintendent Search for Boston Public Schools: Request for Statement of Qualifications for Executive Search Firm (DRAFT)
4. Boston Public Schools: Superintendent of Schools Desired Characteristics
5. Superintendent Profile Notes from October 24, 2018 Search Committee Meeting

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Alexandra Oliver-Davila called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

-Alex introduces Michael Locanto

-Introduction of Michael Locanto to talk to the Search Committee
  -Michael thanked the committee for their work and time
  -Asked if anyone on the Search Committee had any questions
  -No questions
- Alex approved the minutes from the last meeting

- Alex provided a quick update about the preceding School Committee Meeting, and discussed the changes to the RFP that were made.

- Dr. Keith Motley: we are just beginning the process and taking in as much information from people as possible.
  - Welcomes all the Search Committee Members and guests

- Elvis provided an update from BSAC
  - He recommended getting a second student on the Search Committee to work on the job description
  - Provide a student perspective on the next Superintendent

- Michael O’Neil asked Elvis to have the students come to the BSAC meeting on November 20th, specifically ready to talk about the job description.

- Alex introduced Ken Rowe to provide communications update.

- Notes from Jordan Smith while Ken Rowe was discussing the communications plan with the committee

Committee members shared suggestions for spreading awareness about the process:

Michael O’Neil - Michael suggested that we blast a list of community partners with the survey and encourage them to share with their networks.

Katherine Grasa - Katherine suggested that we should create a robocall directing people to the survey. She also suggested translating the survey into 9 languages, and pushing it out on social media as much as we are pushing the community meetings.

Craig Martin - Craig asked whether there is a hashtag for the superintendent search? The group suggested #BPSSuperSearch.

Elvis - Elvis suggested that we find time in the school day for teachers to encourage students to take the survey.

Carlos Brown - Carlos suggested using a QR code to direct folks to the survey so that it could be completed during community meetings.

Updates:
- The school leaders on the committee are looking to host their own community meeting with other school leaders. All school leaders will be convening at the Bolling Building from 8am-4pm on 12/13. This is a potential date for that convening.

Suggestions:
- Michael O’Neill suggested that we start thinking about what we (and the community) value more: operational experience or academic/educational experience.
- Michael O’Neill suggested that the committee ask community members/parents/students “why”? Why have other Superintendents been successful? What skill set has helped them achieve success?
-Jordan Smith’s notes end

-Alex discusses moving forward to discuss the job description and possibly break up into groups

-Carlos Brown: discusses the notes they took on the job description from last meeting
  -Easiest approach moving forward is to cross reference what they came up with last time and what they already have

-Carolyn Kain: Strong Leader is most important to her (following notes provided by Carolyn Kain):

11/14/18 Suggestions from Carolyn Kain Search committee meeting

Has demonstrated:

- Exceptional leadership skills that demonstrate effective and deliberate communication skills; an ability to passionately motivate others; and maintains an openness to innovative ideas to advance the vision and mission of an organization with an annual budget in excess of one million dollars.

- A willingness to collaborate; to be open to accepting and acting on the expertise of others; while maintaining rigorous standards and intensive fiscal oversight

- The capability and experience to conduct a comprehensive review of existing and proposed plans of the organization as a whole, and develop alternative approaches and systematic changes to strategically effectuate the achievement of the organization's goal of excellence for ALL in education.

-Carolyn Kain’s provided notes end

-Sam: Inward facing vs. outward facing qualification discussion

-Jessica: recommend we highlight that this is a draft
  -When to start making adjustments based on what we are hearing from the public?

Alex: Need a draft by Nov. 28th and a final draft by Dec. 5th to the School Committee Meeting
  -Most people will apply during Christmas Break

Dr. Tanya Freeman-Wisdom: Wondering if the characteristics should be more specific on operations, academic, and a candidate’s ability for community engagement.

Katherine Grassa: a parent from the last meeting mentioned economic
  -Discussed the Boston Compact and how it was important last time, but Build BPS will be important and to work with BTU and the community.

Craig Martin: Wants to see an Exceptional Soul, advocate and presence when it comes to philanthropy
  -Operations/Management vs. Instructor, and this needs to be more of the conversation
  -Needs to engage the community and work with them on Build BPS, but we also need someone I can learn from
  -It needs to be someone with Boston familiarity
    -It doesn’t have to be someone specifically from Boston

Carlos: there needs to be a balance of candidates from Boston and people from the outside
-If they are not from Boston they need to be able to describe parallels from their current job or past experiences in different districts/cities

Michael O’Neil: From Boston or someone that can draw parallels to a program they are running now.
-Do they have self-awareness of their primary and secondary strengths?
  -Operations vs. Academic background, how do they hire other senior leaders to make up for their weaknesses

Sam: one of the most important things we do is craft this job description from the non-negotiables to the preferences
  -Boston native being preferred
  -If they don’t hit the top 5 non-negotiables, they aren’t a serious candidate

Michael: Required vs. Preferred (discussion on language and words to use in the job description)

Jessica: Possesses

Carlos: Survey matches the job description
  -Job description is a living document
  -Language about Build BPS
  -Summer reading list for the incoming Superintendent
  -Key terms in the job description that they need to know cold

Jessica: Survey results should drive the job description
  -Build BPS means a lot of things to a lot of people
  -Use different language because there are negative connotations to Build BPS, use other words

Alex: Recommends some language such as, effectively use our resources to maximize opportunity
  -Need to focus on the editing

Carolyn: Two listening session are after the school committee vote

Michael: Feedback from those sessions can play a role in interviewing and recruiting candidates

Carolyn: Recognize this fact and communicate that these sessions will drive the hiring process

Keith: we need to change the language we use that it is about recruitment of candidates and interviews

Michael: we need to publicly say that

Sam: Job description translated to different languages

Carolyn: we need to listen to people about what is important to them, and focus on the job description
  -We don’t need to get caught up on the specific comments
  -I use general language
  -We have a draft, but we want to get feedback from the community

Elvis: we won’t please everyone

Jessica: valid concern that listening sessions are after job description is approved
  -Meaningful Community Input throughout
Carolyn: We are seeking your input
- Be honest and up front about the purpose of the Community Listening Sessions and we will be the people that draft this document.
- Inform us on what the community wants

Sam: Job description is just a rough outline

Jessica: Communicate with the public throughout

Carolyn: These are the characteristics we want, but we understand no one will have all of them
- keep people involved and their input is meaningful

Elvis: Two listening sessions after the decision
- We need to make it clear that the job description has been approved before these meetings.

Katherine: at the first community listening session, people were less concerned about the job description, most people are more concerned about what they want in a Superintendent, and that will provide questions in the interview

Keith: move to the public comment portion of the meeting

Craig: can run Twitter
- Co-lead this conversation

Alex: officially moves to Public Comment

**Below comments were made after Public Comment

Michael: we do have a strategic plan but that should be included on the first page of the job description

Alex: Closes the meeting to have time for a discussion on Open Meeting Law

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. John Mudd, Advocate: RFQ turn around for 2 weeks due Nov. 30th over Thanksgiving that is a short turn around, if you don’t get the responses you want re-open the search.
   - Thorough and careful background checks on what they have done. Be careful to focus on how the search firm will do the background checks.
   - You need a thorough understanding

   - Too much aspiration. Be specific, “we face challenges in…”
     - What is their track record?
     - Success, Achievement, etc. this is the language you need to use

   - Suggest that when you go out to the community, where do you really want the input?
     - Managerial Strength vs. Educational Strengths
     - Be as real as you can about what you ask the community what you want

2. Aminah Sloan, Parent: She has three Students in BPS
- Looked at all of the documents that were available, but there is an absence of a Strategic Plan
- Why isn’t there a discussion of what will happen in the long term
- Void in strategic plan, business interests fill that void

3. Donna Bivens, UMN/BEAM: I think that one thing I notice from the meetings I’ve been to, we don’t talk about racism, class, and equity. At the time we are in in this country we need to be explicit about it. We need a leader who can help us work through this.

ADJOURN

At approximately 8:15 p.m. the Committee voted by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting.

Attest:

Kenneth Rowe
BPS Superintendent Search Committee Staff