



## Superintendent Search Committee: Minutes

Date:

Thursday, October 2, 2014

Time:

5:00 p.m.

Location:

Winter Chambers  
26 Court Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02108

Attendees:

Hardin Coleman, Co-Chair  
Bob Gallery, Co-Chair  
Michael Contompassis  
Pam Eddinger  
Bill Henderson  
Michael O'Neill  
Jeri Robinson  
Regina Robinson  
Richard Stutman  
Dania Vazquez  
Bill Attea, HYA

BPS and City Hall Staff, as well as community members, were also in attendance.

### HYA Update on Search Calendar and Application Status

Co-Chair Bob Gallery called the meeting to order and thanked those who were able to attend. He explained that the purpose of this meeting was for HYA to provide an update on where we are and what they have doing regarding the search, go over the timeline, and re-frame where are in the search.

Bill Attea of HYA shared a revised calendar and stated that the revised timeline has interviews happening throughout January with candidates presented to the School Committee in early February. He asked if the Search Committee was comfortable with this revised calendar.

A member of the Search Committee asked how the calendar will affect the status of applicants. Specifically, will the number of candidates increase or do we run the risk of losing candidates based on the dates?

Bill Attea decided to talk about the status first and then revisit the calendar. He shared that HYA is getting applications every day. As of 10/1, 42 applications have been started– 25 completed, 17 in process. He shared demographic information of the applicants, which is available in the October 2 Superintendent Search Update Memo.

HYA is very pleased with these responses, which are in addition to candidates who are being actively recruited (approximately 40 individuals, many of whom have expressed interest in the position). The list of candidates who are being actively recruited is constantly being added to adding to.

Bill stated that some of the best and most qualified candidates aren't going to submit an application until they know when the deadline is. Even though this is a confidential search, many candidates still don't want to take a chance on going public. Therefore, many applications will be tied to the application deadline and will come in at the last possible date. Bill stated that he doesn't think the deadline will make much of a difference in the candidate pool.

One member of the Search Committee asked how many applicants we gained since the last meeting in May. Bill stated that the number of applicants has doubled, and that of the 40 people we are talking to, about half are very seriously interested. HYA is confident that at least 20 more people will apply. He is not aware of anyone who has withdrawn their application based on the extension of the search.

The most frequent reason for people saying no is family circumstances. The second most frequent reason is stage in career. The third most frequent is salary. Boston is probably a more attractive urban district than most urban districts in the country. The only factor that makes other urban districts more attractive is climate. Boston has a history of long tenure of superintendents compared to other urban districts. An appointed rather than elected School Committee is also more attractive to a potential candidate. HYA is therefore confident that the Search Committee will be pleased with the slate of candidates in January.

The revised calendar also puts Boston in the first wave of nationwide searches for 2015. According to Bill, the first wave of searches tends to be in January. This is an advantage for Boston.

A member of the Search Committee asked what percentage of the people have applied versus how many were recruited. Bill stated that probably about 20% were recruited. By the end of the search, between 60 and 80% will apply because they were recruited. Honestly, not all 40 of these people who have applied so far are qualified – probably only 10 or so will turn out to be good candidates. As HYA matches applicants to the Search Committee's criteria, applicants will drop off.

A Search Committee member noted that there is currently a low percentage of Hispanic/Latino applicants, and asked how we can change that. Bill stated that a large number of candidates that HYA is talking to now are Hispanic/Latino. HYA is focusing recruitment efforts on urban settings and people who have experience addressing achievement gaps, which tends to reveal more Hispanic/Latino and African American candidates.

A Search Committee member asked what HYA is doing to make sure that we are not overlooking emerging talent. Bill stated that there are rising stars in the field who HYA is keeping its sights on. He expects that the Committee will see at least one or two of those in the pool, but the probability of them being in the final three is probably less than someone who is a step above, since the Committee told HYA that they are looking for people with demonstrated track records of success. Experience was very

high in the list of criteria. Bill assured the Committee that they will not going to see 12 cookie-cutter images of people and will have very different candidates. Bill further stated that since the three finalists will engage in a public community forum/interview, it may not be fair to bring emerging talent to be vetted in a public forum. Those people will have to make the case of their competence not only to the School Committee but to the public at large. Bill stated that if HYA does its job well, all three finalists will be prepared to make their case.

Returning to the revised calendar, it was decided that the Committee would hold the evening of January 13<sup>th</sup> for a 4 hour interview seminar. It was also decided that the weekend of January 23<sup>rd</sup> will be held for initial interviews and the following weekend for follow-up interviews. Bill cautioned that it is difficult to do more than three interviews in one day because they start to blur together. Two on Friday evening and three on Saturday would be ideal.

It was also decided that HYA will meet with the Committee for another status update meeting in November.

#### Public Comment

A member of the community stated that the best indication of success is past success and asked Bill how many of the candidates have demonstrated success in closing racial achievement gaps or with ELL/SPED students? Also, will HYA be talking to parent groups/advocacy groups/social justice organizations when performing reference checks? Bill answered that HYA will mostly be talking with people in the education field. It is important to know reference givers well enough to be sure that confidentiality will be going both ways. HYA will therefore mostly be talking to people who they know well and who know them well. As candidates progress, they will start going deeper into other networks. Before someone is hired, HYA will be sure to reach out to all of those groups. In terms of those indicators of urban education, those are the issues that HYA is looking at, and those are the criteria that the Committee has identified as most important.

Another member of the community stated that there is a tone of distrust and concern about the lack of transparency regarding the superintendent search. A lot of concern is coming from a lack of trust over decisions that have been made in the district recently. The individual stated a desire to consider adding people to the Committee, including parents and advocates to engender a new feeling of trust. The individual stated that this meeting has been very encouraging, but cautioned that the way that this process is viewed will have a lot of impact on how a new superintendent is welcomed.

Another member of the community stated that in addition to the emphasis on diversity, it is important to pay attention to the size of districts where candidates are coming from. The individual also encouraged the Search Committee to add public hearings to the calendar in order to increase transparency. The individual asked who from HYA is actually in charge in terms of outreach? Bill stated that he is in charge of the search, as are John Connolly, Diana MacAuley, and Thelma Melendez de Santa Ana. We are all primarily responsible for recruiting and reference checks, plus all of the support staff.

Another member of the community stated that because the clientele of BPS is the students, there should be a student voice on the panel.

There being no further public comment, Co-Chair Hardin Coleman adjourned the meeting.