



Superintendent Search Committee: Minutes

Date:

Monday, March 10, 2014

Time:

5:30 p.m.

Location:

Winter Chambers
26 Court Street, 1st Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Attendees:

- Hardin Coleman, Co-chair
- Bob Gallery, Co-chair
- Mike Contompasis
- Pam Eddinger
- Bill Henderson
- Laura Perille
- Jeri Robinson
- Regina Robinson
- Richard Stutman
- Dania Vazquez
- Andrew Vega

BPS and City Hall staff were also in attendance.

Selection of Search Firm

The co-chairs called the meeting to order and asked the group to introduce themselves. He announced that the bulk of the meeting would be for the committee to work, with time reserved at the end for public comment. The purpose of the meeting tonight is to make a recommendation to the School Committee on a search firm. A co-chair described the process that the Search Committee engaged in, from releasing a Request for Proposals to reviewing the results to interviewing three final candidates. The three finalists had been Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates (HYA); ProAct; and Ray & Associates. After concluding these interviews, the members involved in the process recommended the firm Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates (HYA). The co-chairs asked for any questions from committee members.

One member asked about HYA's track record in vetting candidates confidentially. The co-chair responded that HYA has been very clear about the need to balance confidentiality with making sure that information is available publicly. In fact, HYA stood out as a search firm because of their understanding of the need for such balance. A member asked who from HYA would be working on the search process, and another member replied that they had met with the team from HYA, and all of them have had extensive experience, including one of the founders of the firm. The HYA representatives had shared stories about their experiences, both successes and challenges, and Search Committee members felt this experience would be a valuable asset in the process.

A member asked about how HYA would help facilitate outreach during the process, and a co-chair answered that they had talked about how they would reach out to people. He added that the Search Committee members had questioned HYA about their ability to work in large urban districts, since this isn't necessarily their area of expertise. HYA representatives had responded to this question and about their ability to attract diverse candidates. A co-chair added that the head of Council of the Great City Schools had spoken highly about all three candidate firms.

A committee member asked about HYA's success in recruiting candidates who remain in districts, and a co-chair responded that they have a very impressive retention rate. Another member asked about how many simultaneous searches they operate and whether these would create competition for the best candidates. A co-chair responded that most of the firm's other large searches are coming to an end. He also referred to a statement that the search firm representatives had made about how the differences among urban districts are as great as the differences between urban and non-urban districts. According to all of the search firm representatives interviewed, candidates are already interested in Boston, and the district will be a good draw.

One committee member asked whether there are any areas of concern with HYA. The co-chairs mentioned that the price they're seeking is not cheap, but that you get the quality you pay for. They mentioned that no negative reviews had come back about HYA's work. The interviewers' most salient concern had been the ability to work in large, diverse districts, and the search firm representatives from HYA had responded well to those questions. Another member who had participated in the interviews added that there was good diversity among the three leads for HYA, and that they would be able to engage the community in a diverse way. A co-chair noted that the HYA consultants were prepared to help facilitate the community process as soon as they were approved by the School Committee.

The Search Committee unanimously approved the selection of HYA as superintendent search firm by a voice vote.

Preparation for Community Meetings

A co-chair stated that for the first public hearing tomorrow night, at WGBH in Brighton, that he would like to keep the conversation open-ended and then iteratively build on that in upcoming hearings. A member asked to review the format for the hearing, and a co-chair stated that there would be the opportunity for open public comment, with each speaker getting 3 minutes to speak. The members discussed the need for interpreters to be present at the hearings and the importance of scheduling a youth hearing. Members also asked about recording the public hearings. The co-chairs reiterated that the hearing would be primarily about seeking open public comment, using the same protocol that is

used at School Committee meetings. They also pointed out the future meetings would be facilitated by HYA, so Search Committee members would be active listeners.

A co-chair asked whether there were any other questions from members. A member pointed out the importance of using ConnectEd and other tools to remind people about the hearings, including sending out information from hosting schools. The members also discussed media announcements and the need for an online form for community members to submit written testimony. The committee agreed to schedule an initial meeting with the search firm on Tuesday, March 18th.

Community Comment

A member of the community spoke to thank the committee for discussing the need for interpretation at meetings. She also expressed concern about the small size of the Search Committee and the lack of diversity (particularly parents and community members). She pointed out that the public hearings do not need to be formal but can have more give and take, depending on the size of the crowd.

Another community member spoke, expressing hope that the new superintendent would continue some of the key district priorities. He added that he would want to know candidates' credentials in addressing those priorities, and that he would like to obtain a copy of the HYA proposal.

Upon unanimous agreement of the members, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.