



Superintendent Search Committee: Minutes

Date:

Tuesday, March 18, 2014

Time:

4:30 p.m.

Location:

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

Attendees:

- Bob Gallery, Co-chair
- Mike Contompasis
- Pam Eddinger
- Bill Henderson
- Michael O'Neill
- Laura Perille
- Jeri Robinson
- Regina Robinson
- Richard Stutman
- Dania Vazquez
- Andrew Vega

BPS and City Hall staff were also in attendance, as were three representatives from Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates (Bill Attea, Diana McCauley, and John Connolly).

Introduction of Search Firm

The co-chair called the meeting to order and asked the members to introduce themselves. Bill Attea, the lead representative from Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates (HYA), gave an overview of the search process. He said one of the purposes of this meeting would be to create a calendar that reflects the process and timeline for this search. He distributed a binder to each committee member and walked through the sections.

The HYA representatives described how they would not begin seeking candidates until they have defined the criteria that the Boston community is looking for in a superintendent, using both in-person engagement and an online tool. HYA will put together a Leadership Profile Report that summarizes the feedback from the community, and then the committee will be responsible for honing in and clarifying the criteria to seek in a superintendent. This criteria will help identify candidates and will also give candidates guidance.

After the criteria has been set, HYA will enter a heavy recruitment phase. Throughout the process, they will be asking stakeholders for suggestions of candidates, and they will also open up an application process for individuals to apply on their own. HYA will vet all candidates by checking with employers, colleagues, and others close to the candidates, although some candidates may not be vetted in their home districts immediately so as not to disclose their interest in the search. There may also be “pocket candidates” who do not apply but may be interested if the committee reaches out to them. A committee member asked how many candidates would be brought before the committee, and the HYA representative answered that Search Committees are usually interested in just the top 5-6 candidates out of the 80-100 candidates they’re expecting to apply.

The HYA representative discussed the system for reviewing candidates, explaining that each consultant will review all applications and assign candidates a rating of 1, 2, or 3, with a 1 indicating a solid candidate who matches much of the criteria, a 2 indicating a candidate who matches some of the criteria but may lack an extensive track record or experience, and a 3 indicating a candidate who neither has the requisite experience nor matches the criteria. Candidates given a rank of 1 will be pre-interviewed by HYA before they are presented to the Search Committee. The HYA consultant asked the members how they would like to be involved in the process.

One committee member asked about using community contacts to vet candidates, and another expressed concern about the uniformity of the vetting process (to minimize bias). The HYA representative explained that the consultants working on the Boston search would spend time reviewing paper applications together, so they can understand the nuances of each application. He said that the search firm usually pre-interviews 10-15 candidates and presents 4-7 names to the Search Committee to interview. A committee member asked how many candidates tend to fall into each of the three categories (1, 2, and 3). The HYA representative responded that about 20% will be classified as category 1, 25% as category 2, and the rest will be category 3.

The search committee and search firm representatives discussed the appropriate number of candidates to interview in order to establish a process for interviewing that would involve the Search Committee without overwhelming it. Members pointed out that it would be important to know the reasons for advancing certain candidates and that they would like to interview a wide and diverse pool of candidates. The search firm representatives proposed that they would rank the candidates and then meet with the Search Committee to share the resumes from top candidates (those in category 1), a listing with some data on candidates in category 2, and the list of names of candidates in category 3.

The HYA representatives noted that the application on their site will allow candidates to apply directly through HYA, and that this site should be linked to the BPS website as well. Once the criteria is determined, that will also be available through the link.

A committee member asked about the policy for internal candidates, and an HYA representative recommended that all internal candidates who are qualified be given an interview. Search Committee

members expressed the importance of treating internal candidates the same as other candidates. Some members pointed out the importance of seeing the homegrown talent in Boston and of the need for strong candidates to know Boston through experience. The HYA representative stated that internal candidates often know the issues of the district well, but that at the same time, community members already know any potential flaws of these candidates. Ultimately, the Search Committee and search firm agreed that they would treat internal candidates identically, including by classifying them as category 1, 2, or 3.

The HYA representative explained that they were anticipating about 80 candidates for the position. He summarized the agreement on the process so far, including that HYA would pre-interview candidates classified as category 1.

A committee member asked how the timeline of the search would impact the depth of the candidate pool, given the aggressive timeline that has been laid out so far. She asked how the committee could communicate this message so that if the search does not produce the pool we would like, it's not viewed as a failure. The co-chair confirmed that the most important thing is to get the decision right. The HYA representative explained that, as the process is shaping up, it sounds like there will need to be a major meeting where the candidate lists are presented to the Search Committee. At that point, if there is not the deep pool that we would like to see, there is an opportunity for the committee to hit the brakes rather than moving forward.

Calendar

HYA representatives and committee members discussed the need to invite community groups to participate in stakeholder interviews, which typically take place over the course of 4 days. They then planned out the timeline of upcoming meetings and engagements, with the anticipation of announcing the successful candidate by the end of June. The group jointly planned to use April 1st to 3rd for stakeholder interviews and to meet again as a full search committee on April 16th to review the summary of these conversations, the public hearings, and the online survey. In this summary, the input from stakeholders would be disaggregated by type of group.

The committee members and HYA representatives also agreed to meet on May 22nd to review the slate of candidates and determine the best way to proceed. Finally, they agreed to hold time on May 27-28 and June 2-3 for interviews of candidates. The group agreed that HYA should conduct pre-interviews of top candidates before the meeting on May 22nd.

The HYA representatives discussed the plan for the upcoming public hearings, including how members of the public would be invited to speak and who would be facilitating each meeting. They also asked committee members to share their suggestions of groups or individuals to invite for the stakeholder interviews.

Community Comment and Adjournment

One member of the community spoke, emphasizing the tight timeline for recruiting candidates and the enormous importance of vetting and background checks. He asked that the search firm be sure to check candidates against the criteria that the committee determines, using a variety of sources.

Following this comment, the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn.