

**The Hamilton Wenham Regional School District
School Committee Meeting
Buker Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room
Tuesday, April 30, 2019 7:00 PM**

Present:

Michelle Horgan, Assistant Secretary

Michelle Bailey

Gene Lee

Kerry Gertz, Vice Chairperson

Stacey Metternick, Secretary

Peter Wolczik

David Polito, Chairperson (late arrival at 8:15pm)

Also Present:

Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary

Dorothy Presser, MASC representative

1. Call to Order

Kerry Gertz calls the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

2. New Business

School Committee members decide Kerry Gertz, vice-chair, will ask 5-6 questions (decided through discussion, below) of candidates.

A. Develop questions for the Superintendent Interviews

School Committee members discuss the questions provided in the handout, *Draft Questions for Interim Superintendencies*, with the majority of members agreeing to include question #8 & #6. Dorothy Presser, MASC representative, notes that open ended questions tend to elicit better, more informative responses. Gene Lee notes that more probing questions might be best held until second round interviews. Further discussion regarding amount of time allocated and the number of questions reasonable to ask in that time frame. School Committee decides they will not accept candidate's questions at this stage in the process.

School Committee agrees to ask the following:

1. What made you apply to this position?
2. Based on what you have learned about our district, what would be your top 3 goals during your interim superintendency?
3. Please describe your management style, and how you think this may work within our regional district?
4. Have you ever had to assist a school committee in the superintendent search process as a facilitator, advisor, or in an administrative capacity?
5. What is your experience (if any) negotiating union contracts and land use purchases?
6. How familiar are you with the needs and issues of a regional school district, and what is your experience managing these complexities?
7. How would you describe the differences between permanent and interim superintendent roles?

Discussion regarding considering feedback from community members.

B. Interview Candidate William McAlduff for the Interim Superintendent

Exhibit A

Kerry Gertz, vice-chair of the Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee, introduces herself and welcomes candidate William McAlduff.

Q. What made you apply to this position?

Mr. McAlduff thanks the School Committee for the opportunity this evening. He has spent 4 of the last 5 years as an interim superintendent in Dover-Sherborn Regional and Acton-Boxborough Regional. Mr. McAlduff states he became interested in interim positions because of how much he enjoyed work in regional districts. He provides details of his time in both districts, noting his management style encompasses a motto of “let them do their job” (referring to leadership teams). Mr. McAlduff describes his interim superintendencies as successful, and further elaborates that he misses working and believes he can offer a great deal to Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, a district that demands an interim superintendent with his particular skills.

Q. Based on what you have learned about our district, what would be your top 3 goals during your interim superintendency?

- (1) Develop a Strategic Plan for Hamilton Wenham Regional School District.
- (2) Ensure that there are no surprises throughout the year; keeping all parties informed and prepared through open communication.
- (3) Work with administration, finance, the School Committee, town finance committees, and other officials to develop a responsible FY21 budget.

Mr. McAlduff adds that it is imperative to be visible and support staff as much as possible in whatever needs they may have, particularly in a role as interim superintendent.

Q. Please describe your management style and how you think this may work within the regional district?

“Collaborative” Mr. McAlduff states that he works well with all stakeholder groups, believes in the benefits of letting the leadership teams do their jobs, and simply acting as a resource for them. As both a principal and assistant principal, he is particularly aware of the vital role of these positions and how important mentorship is. Mr. McAlduff works hard to develop positive partnerships, especially with municipalities, further highlighting the importance of positive relationship with towns in the face of disagreement. He is committed to open communication and believes the School Committee should be kept abreast of all issues as they come up.

Q. Have you ever had to assist a school committee in the superintendent search process as a facilitator, advisor, or in an administrative capacity?

Mr. McAlduff has moved through the process of the superintendent search process three times. He details the climate, timeline, and special considerations for each search process, highlighting his role in ensuring a successful search. He’s particularly proud of his experience at King Philip Regional School District and Wilmington Public Schools, as both resulted in the hiring of a superintendent under Mr. McAlduff’s supervision. He has served in an advisor capacity in numerous other searches. Mr. McAlduff notes that perhaps the most important aspect of an interim superintendent is to work through the transition period and help guide the permanent superintendent in leading a successful future.

Q. What is your experience (if any) negotiating union contracts and land use purchases?

Mr. McAlduff states that he has been negotiating contracts for 21 years, in most cases assuming the lead negotiator role. With his extensive experience, he is very comfortable in negotiations. Although he has not been directly involved in any land purchase negotiations, Mr. McAlduff explains his involvement in the Winchester Public Schools MSBA project involving 3-4 parcels of land for consideration.

Q. How familiar are you with the needs and issues of a regional school district, and what is your experience managing these complexities?

Mr. McAlduff considers himself very familiar with regional issues. He considers regional budget development a much more complex process, and understands the complexities inherent in regional agreements. Mr. McAlduff also notes the issues regarding state funding, transportation funding, how regional districts exercise the efficiency costs year to year, E&D, enrollment calculations, and challenges in developing/maintaining unity between towns.

Q. How would you describe the differences between permanent and interim superintendent roles?

Mr. McAlduff considers his interim superintendent roles as “acting” as the permanent superintendent. He further explains that there is not much of a difference, as the work still needs to be done, and decisions still need to be made in the best interest of the students. The one difference he would point to is that interim positions slow down and not make major changes during their time, because buy-in from a permanent superintendent is crucial in major decisions.

Q. If desired, please provide any closing statements, final thoughts, or information you would like us to consider that we have not asked.

Mr. McAlduff notes that none of his references will claim that brevity is a strength of his!

Mr. McAlduff summarizes his qualifications and what he can offer to Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District. He adds that the learning curve would be steep, as his experience allows him the understanding of how to do the job he'd be hired for.

Mr. McAlduff asks the School Committee what they are looking for in an interim superintendent. Kerry Gertz responds that in fairness to all candidates, the School Committee has collectively decided not to field questions at this time.

Mr. McAlduff thanks the School Committee for their time and the opportunity to speak with them. Ms. Presser escorts Mr. McAlduff out of the room.

School Committee discusses finalist decisions, timelines, details of search process, etc.

David Polito, chairperson, enters the room at 8:15pm.

C. Interview Candidate Herbert Levine for the Interim Superintendent Exhibit B
Kerry Gertz, vice-chair of the Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee, introduces herself and welcomes candidate Herbert Levine.

Herbert Levine introduces himself briefly. He has served as interim superintendent in both Peabody Public Schools and Blackstone-Millville Regional, as well as permanent superintendent in Salem Public Schools, and deputy superintendent in Wakefield Public Schools.

Q. What made you apply to this position?

Mr. Levine states that he has a record and reputation suggesting that he excels in this line of work, and adds that he would like to continue working for as long as he is healthy enough to do so.

Q. Based on what you have learned about our district, what would be your top 3 goals during your interim superintendency?

- (1) “Do no harm” Mr. Levine explains that Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District does not need to be fixed, and he therefore does not intend to make any decisions to negatively impact the District’s level of success;
- (2) Develop a plan/goals alongside the School Committee to ensure everyone is on the same page;
- (3) Build relationships: Mr. Levine elaborates that relationships of trust are absolutely critical, and he would foster these relationships by being present in the schools to interact with principals, teachers, and students; meeting with parents and administrative team over the summer; and regular walks throughout the schools. He would plan to develop an “entry plan” and implement common sense and good judgment throughout the process of building relationships.

Q. Please describe your management style, and how you think this may work within our regional district?

Mr. Levine states that his management style works well anywhere, because it encompasses embracing kindness, compassion, decency, and dignity. His management style involves respecting the talent that each person brings to the table and considering and listening carefully to the opinions of others (particularly important in interim role). He further explains that as an interim, he would need to rely on the people who have a history with the district and understand the school systems, as their knowledge will help him to learn and implement what is most important to prioritize in the best interest of the students. His leadership style prioritizes students, seeking to make their lives more fulfilling.

Q. Have you ever had to assist a school committee in the superintendent search process as a facilitator, advisor, or in an administrative capacity?

Mr. Levine assisted with 3 searches in Peabody, 2 of which failed. He would be happy to assist Hamilton Wenham in their search if deemed appropriate and if he was asked to do so.

Q. What is your experience (if any) negotiating union contracts and land use purchases?

Mr. Levine explains that his experience in Peabody’s building process involved land that the school already owned. There was no land use purchase involved.

He has a significant amount of experience in negotiating union contracts, as he was raised in a “union house” where his father held the position of union president. This gave Mr. Levine the perspective of compromise: he likes to ask a lot of questions, ensure mutual agreement and remain respectful. He knows contract language very well, and is aware of the fact that everyone wants the best for their people. Mr. Levine worked with Bruce Nelson, union leader, on a daily basis.

Q. How familiar are you with the needs and issues of a regional school district, and what is your experience managing these complexities?

Mr. Levine states that he is very familiar with the needs and issues of a regional school district, having served as superintendent in Blackstone 11 years ago. He admits that he would need refreshers on nuances of budgeting in a regional district, but is certain that he would learn this quickly. He does not believe he would be surprised by anything involving regional district procedure, as in his experience, he didn't find it very different than working for a city or rural/suburban district.

Q. How would you describe the differences between permanent and interim superintendent roles?

Mr. Levine states that once an interim is hired, there is no difference. If hired, Mr. Levine would consider the word "interim" removed from his title. He notes that the only difference would be that an interim superintendent is not going to make substantial changes, "turning everything upside down" in their time with the district. He goes on to suggest the district participate in a climate study every 10 years.

Q. Is there anything you would like the School Committee to know, or any final remarks?

Mr. Levine states that he is a good guy who treats all people well. He is kind, decent, and compassionate, and believes that others would describe him in this way as well. Mr. Levine states that he will be consistently present throughout the schools, talking shop with teachers, and enlisting an immediate communication style across the board. Mr. Levine detests phone calls left unreturned, or emails left unresponded. As such, he will be an active and consistent communicator with all parties. As evidence, he describes "Friday Jottings" a summary of weekly happenings he wrote and disseminated with school committees and leadership teams in his previous roles. He adds that he never undermines a principal. Mr. Levine knows he is good at his job, he knows his job well, and has done this job locally. Mr. Levine thanks the School Committee for their time this evening.

Ms. Presser escorts Mr. Levine out of the room.

School Committee discusses the search process, specifically scheduling finalist interviews and the selection of an interim superintendent. Discussion re: scheduling deliberations; candidates this evening also holding positions as finalists in Marblehead's interim superintendent search; length of time between interviews and deliberations; etc.

David Polito will contact Bill@ HWcam in order to (hopefully) watch the interview of William McAlduff tomorrow in allow for School Committee's deliberations tomorrow evening after the final 2 interviews.

School Committee will hold second round interviews on Friday, 05/10/2019 at 6:00pm.

Dorothy Presser suggests that each member of the School Committee choose a topic, and develop their questions surrounding that topic to formulate the second-round interview questions. Ms. Presser will email a set of sample questions to Michelle Bailey.

David Polito will amend the agenda tomorrow.

Kerry Gertz leaves the meeting at 9:14pm.

3. Vote to Adjourn

I MOVE THAT THE HAMILTON WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADJOURN AT 9:15 PM.

**MOTION by Gene Lee; SECONDED by Michelle Bailey.
Unanimously approved by 6 members present.**

Respectfully submitted June 6, 2019 by Mahala Lettvin, Recording Secretary.