MEETING MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD MEETING
September 29, 2016

PRESENT: School Board: Z. Ellis, C. Baker, J. Brodrick, C. Vue, Jon Schumacher (arrived 4:43 p.m.)
S. Marchese & M. Vanderwert listened in via conference call

Staff: J. Thein, K. Her

Other: J. Robicheau, J. Verges, T. Lonetree, E. Hinrichs

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:36 p.m.

II. AGENDA

A. Suggested Superintendent Search Protocols

Vice Chair Jerry Robicheau from the Faribault District made a presentation on suggested superintendent search protocols for the SPPS Board members.

He stated this would be one of the most, if not the most important, decision the Board will make. The search is for not only an educational leader and team member but a community leader as well. A strong advocate for the children within SPPS.

The Board must do its due diligence in this process. It will take a great deal of time and the Board should be prepared to take the time required. He noted a hasty search is not the way to proceed as it could result in doing it all over again in a matter of a couple years (or sooner). He also told the Board to be prepared for possible disagreement between and among Board members. These disagreements should be resolved before moving forward as even a small disagreement can build to a large one. The decision is a collective decision of the seven Board members.

QUESTION/DISCUSSION:

- When the final vote is made, how important is it that the final vote selecting a new Superintendent is unanimous? Response: Any disagreement must be resolved so the vote is 7-0 not only for the perception of the community and staff but for the selected candidate as well. Anything less than 7-0 will signal a lack of confidence on the part of the dissenting members and undermine the selected candidate from the beginning.

Hiring a superintendent is the Board's decision. He went on to outline five basic foundations to consider:

1. The process must be transparent (do not give the impression of transparency but be transparent!). Keep community informed of the process.

   QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:
   - What are examples? Response:; Engage stakeholders (internal and external) in the process, allow them to make input. Stay within established process. The more

engaged the community the more ownership they will have in the final selected candidate.

- Input into what? Response: The interview process, select a group of stakeholders to be involved in the process as a committee.

2. Engage the internal and external communities/stakeholders in the process. This should include current students and alumni. Give stakeholders some ownership in the process and who is selected.
3. Keep in mind the Board is searching for an educational leader and a community leader. Someone who embraces and is engaged in the community.
4. Be very clear from the start what experiences, qualities, characteristics, attributes and dispositions the Board is seeking in the next superintendent. Build a leadership profile and stay true to the profile. Should understand teaching and learning.
5. Establish the length of time to complete the search.

He then moved on to recommended steps.

1A. The Board will decide if they are to conduct the search themselves or contract with a search firm. There are advantages and disadvantages to both processes.

- Confidentiality/Comply with Open Meeting Laws
- Recruiting (outside agency usually has national network of candidates)
- Qualification of search firm (be sure committed to SPPS and profile of candidate)
- Time commitment
- Experience
- Staff availability
- Knowledge of St. Paul community
- Commitment to St. Paul schools
- Costs - search firm fee plus expenses
- Orchestrating the search - ; person within District working with search firm must keep Board updated.
- Who is in charge -- The Board

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- How deep should the Board get into the search with search firm? Response: Considerations include such things as it would be difficult for the Board to screen if they have a large pool of candidates; the search firm can do that to narrow the field. Board members will recognize some names coming through the process. It is important to have one or two Board members in constant contact with the search firm. Be sure to find out how many searches the firm is involved in at that point in time. What is their commitment to SPPS?
- Concern was expressed if the search firm had a wider focus than education, would they have subject matter experts that focus on education? What kind of review can the Board make to be sure they are getting what they want? Response: 1) references on search firm – vet them to know what their history is. 2) all applications should go to the search firm, this ensures greater confidentiality. 3) the Board can ask for updates on the number, diversity, where candidates are coming from, gender, etc. 4) when selection gets to semi-finalists the Board has the right to review applications and to ask the search firm to give reasons why these were selected.
- Do firms have a sense of the industry? Can the Board have confidence in the selection of Superintendents looking for jobs? Response: Applicants will hear of the opening via word of mouth, through search firms, advertising, etc. Candidates should contact the search firm first when they know an opening is available. The search firm will look at who is out there.
- Is there a difference between educational search firms and head hunters in general? Response: There are firms specializing just in education. If a firm is more general,

they almost always will have a branch dealing specifically in education. The Board needs to be sure the firm has a broad understanding of what is involved in education.

- How much should the Board expect school district staff to do in terms of work necessary to do the search? Response: The could be a source of tension. If the Board uses a search firm there must be clear of expectations of the firm and of staff involvement. Generally, the District would handle arrangements for community engagement The logistics of the search are the work of the search firm.
- Do most search firms have a process? Response: They will have a process laid out The Board needs to have the "5 foundations" laid out so the search firm understands what is expected. Note: Be sure to have recent graduates involved.
- Is the standard process to come to an agreement on what the expectations of the firm are. At what point does that committee participate and then what? Response: The search firm will provide an outline, if the Board sees something missing the Board needs to step in and discuss where the search firm is not meeting expectations. The committee comes in once the candidate pool is narrowed down.

1B. Establish a timelines and how the community will be involved.

2. The Board should begin the process by considering the following draft of a leadership profile; such things as:
   - Experience (requirements of licensure in Minnesota) – is candidate eligible
   - Attributes
   - Skills
   - Disposition
   - Evidence of addressing student achievement
   - Evidence of working in a diverse learning environment
   - Cultural competency
   - Other factors important to the Board (i.e., leading a strategic planning process to develop or revised/update current plan.)

   QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:
   - Evidence of a knowledge of strategic planning is very important. How can the Board get down to the knowledge level of a candidate, do they understand the process and what examples can be asked for so the Board knows they led the process. Response: The Board can ask to see their strategic plan, they can ask who was responsible for developing the plan. Can the candidate articulate what a strategic plan is about and why it is important to have one. (A strategic plan should take a district off the status quo and move it to the next level. It should provide a look at what a district will look like in three to five years. A strategic plan engages stakeholders extensively. It is the accountability document for the district. The District has to own it and be able to articulate it.)
   - Is it appropriate to have questions on a candidate's strategic plan or ask what their vision might be? Response: Ask both, what has been going on in their district, has the community been involved in the strategic plan process, etc..

3. The Board should decide how to solicit input from the district's stakeholders to assist in the draft of the Leadership Profile.
   - Community meetings
   - Survey
   - Community forums
   - Newspaper
   - Discussion at school board meetings
   - Discussion on the radio
   - Social media
   - Selected stakeholders meetings - District unions, community leaders, etc.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION:

- The Board will be doing an analysis of the district through this community engagement. Be sure to engage the "behind the scenes" leaders in the process.
- Invite the community to participate – electronic surveys will give a broad outlook. Use any and all means to get input from the community.
- How does the Board manage expectations? Response: Let the community know up front that the decision is ultimately the Board's decision. Make it clear the Board wants input from the community then it needs to assess how that fits into the aggregate of information being collected. The Board wants the community as a partner.
- What are the expectations when engaging community groups? Response: You do not want them to rank candidates, you want them to assess strengths and note concerns about candidates.
- Is there any way to prevent a particular group from announcing who their candidate is? Response: The Board needs to make clear from the start of the process that groups do not do this. The Board needs to keep the integrity of the process.

4. Finalize the Leadership Profile - a profile can be used to screen and select candidates that fit what the St. Paul District is seeking in its next leader. The Profile is a collection of suggestions from district stakeholders. The profile should reflect the collective consensus of the community, this allows for no surprises for anyone.

5. Recruiting - this is where either the search firm or District will seek out individuals who match the Profile the Board has established. Because of technology today recruitment is a national and even international process.
   - Recruiting is the first step in vetting potential candidates
   - Recruiting is done by reputation, nomination and advertising in selected publications
   - The best recruiting is face to face so the Board is able to sell St. Paul's story. The search firm should get St. Paul's story out -- what are the good things happening in the district.

   Mr. Robicheau went on to say it is highly recommended that individual Board members do not recruit candidates. If they are aware of a potential candidate they should let the search firm or the individual(s) internally heading up the search know and let them contact the candidate(s). Otherwise it could jeopardize the integrity of the process.

6. Selection of individuals - the selection will include individuals for the first round of interviews.
   - Set up screening, vetting and interviews – why selected this person
   - Review how the community/stakeholders will be engaged
   - Determine the final candidates to be interviewed
   - Review the next steps and who will be involved.

7. Final interviews - this is more than an interview, it will be time for the candidates to interview the district as to a fit as well. The interviews should be comprehensive, involve a broad range of stakeholders and include meet and greets.

   Before the interviews the Board and others should conduct site visits to all finalist districats. Data collected there can be used as additional vetting. This is part of the Board's due diligence.

8. The contract is negotiated and a start time set along with working on a transition process. What are expectations of working with individual moving from current position to new position. Search firm can help with candidate's expectation of contract, etc.

- If the Board goes with a search firm, will it give parameters of what the contract will be? Response: In Minnesota a Superintendent contract can only be granted for three 3 years. The Board should establish a salary range it is willing to pay for its next superintendent of schools, what benefits are, etc. The old contract is public information. Salary range needs to be regionally competitive and competitive on district size. The Board needs to inform the public "the candidate" is contingent upon contract negotiations. The contract is In the hands of the Board Chair and the district's attorney (and possibly one other Board member).
- The candidate has a lot of power in the negotiation timeframe. Where is the Board's leverage? Response: Generally, the best contract is the first contract. The Board needs to be clear when it gets down to finalists that the Board would accept any one of them, that you can live with any of them so if negotiations hit a roadblock with candidate X the Board can move to the next candidate.
- The Board needs to be prepared for every step in the process.
- If negotiations hit a "rock" what is the perception of the community if the Board gives away the ship? Response: The Board needs to exercise fiscal responsibility for the district.
- How much time from negotiation to start? Response: Look at a couple months. Get the contract settled as soon as you can (two weeks is not unrealistic). Remember the public pays attention to benefits within the contract as well.
- The Board can use the profile to establish first year goals along with district priorities coming into the evaluation as well. Goals need to be establish up front.
- Concern was noted that the Board needs to get this right and it might be more advantageous to go with an external search firm considering all that is going on within district.
- Mr. Robicheau noted the longer the Board waits the more competitive the position becomes; the sooner this gets into the market better off the district will be.

The consensus of the Board was to go with an outside search firm. Directors Marchese and Vanderwert will work with the Board Administrator to develop and RFP with a draft of the document to all Board members for review on October 6 with the RFP being issued on October 10.

B. Communication Protocols

1. The Board discussed various ways to enhance their representation across the district and how best the Board Administrator can support Board members. The Administrator suggested Board members might consider each taking an "SPPS area". The Board asked the Administrator to bring back the area map with the District Council areas outlined as well.
2. Travel/Conferences - the Board decided to divide available conference funds equally among the seven members.

III. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and passed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Polsfuss
Assistant Clerk