

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 3, 2011
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Jen James, Carol Perkins (Boston Representative). Also present: Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).

Absent: Lisa Pizarro (Hanscom Civilian School Liaison Officer).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

II. Beginning Planning for Superintendent Search Process

Document: Discussion Outline, Superintendent Search, November 3, 2011

Ms. Glass welcomed Michael Gilbert from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees [MASC] to discuss the superintendent search process from the School Committee point of view. Mr. Gilbert explained that a search takes 3-4 months in general. If the Committee chose to use their services, MASC would prepare a marketing brochure, advertise the position on their web site and in Education Week in print and online, and send the posting directly to superintendents and assistant superintendents, school committees, and key universities statewide. They would train a Screening Committee to review applications.

Mr. Gilbert recommended that they get community input early using electronic surveys and focus groups. While the entire School Committee could screen applications, there is a quorum of members, making all the meetings and interviews public. It is crucial to keep candidates' names out of the public eye as long as possible because it damages their current position and relationships, especially if the person is a superintendent at another district. He advised that the Committee appoint a separate Screening Committee, composed of staff, administrators, and parents with no more than 10-12 members, for the sake of time and the confidentiality of the applicants. With the Screening Committee, only the finalists' names become public.

Mr. Schmertzler left at 7:25 pm.

Mr. Gilbert recommended that they give enough time for travel plans and build in snow dates, while noting that MASC does not pay for out-of-state candidates to travel unless they become finalists. School Committee members need to budget for traveling to finalists' work places, which he recommended be visited before interviewing them.

Of the 280 superintendentcies in the state, less than 10 superintendents have served their current districts for more than 10 years. The superintendent stays in their position on average four years, and their average age is 57.

Ms. Glass welcomed Tom Scott from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents [MASS]. Mr. Scott said there are 25 districts looking for superintendents so far this year, including Harvard and Belmont, and he recommended that they advertise in early December and aim to hire someone by mid- to end of February. In his experience, the better quality candidates apply early. He suggested they hire a consultant that will aggressively recruit for the position as opposed to simply advertising. MASC does a good job, but they do not actively recruit candidates the way that consultants do.

Mr. Schmertzler rejoined the meeting at 8:13 pm.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their information.

Ms. Glass talked with search firms to get an idea of the services they could provide. The price range is \$15,000-\$35,000, but they recruit talented people who have not applied. Mr. Brandmeyer was an assistant superintendent who was actively recruited.

Mr. Creel noted that costs over \$25,000 for a consultant would require them to issue a Request for Proposals [RFP] and publish the RFP in the Central Register with its established timeline. They have two choices: 1) invite firms to bid for less than \$25,000, and in that case they would have to take the lowest bid as long as the firm was qualified, or 2) issue a RFP with a scope of work not to exceed \$25,000, which provides a technical proposal and each firm is scored. The competition becomes one of value and not price, and it gives them the chance to interview firms.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to use the Request for Proposals process to invite search firm participants to propose their services in the range of \$5,000 to \$25,000. The Committee voted unanimously to use the RFP process to invite search firm participants.

Mr. Creel presented a draft RFP. Ms. Glass said there are four areas to be covered: 1) description of district; 2) scope of work; 3) criteria and how to weight them; 4) time frame. She noted that the Committee evaluates the firms' proposals. The Committee discussed ways to modify the draft to suit the district. The revised draft could be used to score the firms.

Mr. Sander moved, and Ms. Glass seconded, the motion to accept the RFP as revised for a consultant to help the School Committee to hire a new superintendent. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the RFP as revised.

Mr. Creel pledged to get the revised document out. They will make the RFP document available by November 7 and will wait until November 14 to look at the proposals and choose the firms to interview. Search firm finalists will be invited to the November 17 meeting for interviews.

Mr. Sander moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to delegate to Ms. Glass to meet with Mr. Creel to score the proposals and to choose the firms to interview. The Committee voted unanimously to delegate the choice of firms to Ms. Glass and Mr. Creel.

They will write a press release for the *Lincoln Journal* to inform the community.

III. Adjournment

On motion by Mr. Schmertzler, seconded by Ms. Glass, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary