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Ad Hoc Committee Members

Molly McCullough - Chair

Tracy Novick

Jermoh Kamara

OFFICE OF THE  
CLERK OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
20 IRVING STREET  
WORCESTER, MA 01609

AGENDA #3

The Ad Hoc Search Committee for the next Superintendent will hold a virtual meeting:

on: Friday, March 25, 2022

at: 11:00 a.m.

in: Room 410 at the Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL
- III. GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #1-232 – McCullough  
(March 22, 2022)

To review and approve the questions for the applicants for the position of the next Superintendent of Schools.

- IV. ADJOURNMENT

Helen A. Friel  
Clerk of the School Committee

STANDING COMMITTEE: **TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORTS**

DATE OF MEETING: Friday, March 25, 2022

ITEM:

To review and approve the questions for the applicants for the position of the next Superintendent of Schools.

ORIGINAL ITEM: Mayor Petty (August 31, 2021)

To consider options, if necessary, to begin the process and engage with a search consultant to conduct a national search to recruit and hire a Superintendent of schools for the Worcester Public Schools with an effective start date of JULY 1, 2022. Prior to the commencement of the search process, the School Committee, in collaboration with the consultant, will develop and implement a comprehensive, inclusive, public process to solicit input from all members of the Worcester community regarding the needs of the district and the characteristics and skillsets required in the next Superintendent of schools.

PRIOR ACTION:

9-2-21 - Mayor Petty stated that Superintendent Binienda has been a dedicated public servant for 46 years and has done a wonderful job taking care of the students in the Worcester Public Schools. It was not an easy decision to make but the School Committee has voted not to renew her contract. He also stated that the search for a new Superintendent will be transparent, public and a nationwide one. In order to start the process, an RFP will need to be put in place in order for the School Committee members to vote on a search consultant at the next meeting of the School Committee. He further stated that an Ad Hoc Search Committee for the next Superintendent will be established with Ms. McCullough as the Chair person and Miss Biancheria and Ms. Novick as members. Mayor Petty requested that the School Committee develop a timeline for the selection of the next Superintendent of Schools.

BACKUP:

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-2-21 - Ms. McCullough stated that the item on the agenda should not be seen (continued) as a disapproval of Superintendent Binienda's performance. She has been a dedicated and compassionate educator which has proven true in all of her evaluations. She also stated that she feels that it is the right decision for the district to start the search for a new Superintendent.

Mr. Monfredo stated that Superintendent Binienda deserves a one-year extension on her contract. She is committed to education, the community and has done an exemplary job leading the school district through the pandemic.

Mrs. Clancey stated that she feels that the school district needs to have a strong leadership team in place to move in a positive direction over the next several years. She would like to see the new Superintendent work with the School Committee to implement long-term goals for the district without further disruption and educational loss to the students.

Mr. Foley stated that he would like to see the new Superintendent bring together all members of the community to work in collaboration to improve academic achievement for all students. He also stated that the School Committee is looking for a leader who will be able to build a strong coalition across the community with a shared vision and responsibility for the success of all students. He suggested that the business community, parents, community leaders, colleges, universities and the faith community be included in the selection process.

Ms. Novick stated that MASC will not be able to respond to any Request for Proposals for the Superintendent search due to the fact that she is employed by them and it would be considered a conflict of interest. She stated that she would like the School Committee to conduct a fully comprehensive and inclusive public input process to include involvement of students, families and educators. She would like translators at all public input sessions which should be at different times, locations, handicapped accessible and possibly involve child care and public transportation, if needed.

Miss Biancheria stated that Superintendent Binienda has accomplished a lot as Superintendent of the Worcester Public Schools but believes it is time to pass the baton to the next superintendent.

Superintendent Binienda stated that she is honored to be the Superintendent of the Worcester Public Schools and is very proud of all her accomplishments. She is also proud of the staff and teachers in the system and would encourage them to aspire to be Superintendent. She also stated that she will continue to work with the School Committee to lead the school system through another challenging year.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 9-2-21 Mayor Petty made the following motion:  
(continued) Based on action taken Executive Session, request that the School Committee vote not to renew the Superintendent's contract and to let it expire on its own terms on June 30, 2022.  
On a roll call of 6-1 (nay Mr. Monfredo), the motion not to renew the Superintendent's contract was approved.  
Mayor Petty made the following motions:  
To begin the process and engage with a search consultant to conduct a national search to recruit and hire a Superintendent for the Worcester Public Schools with an effected date of July 1, 2022. Prior to the commencement of the search process, the School Committee, in collaboration with the consultant, will develop and implement a comprehensive, inclusive, public process to solicit input from all members of the Worcester community regarding the needs of the district and the characteristics and skillsets required in the next Superintendent of Schools.  
To also begin the process for the Ad Hoc Search Committee for the next Superintendent and provide a timeline of the search within the next month.  
On a roll call of 6-1 (nay Mr. Monfredo), the motions were approved.  
Miss Biancheria requested that the word national be defined.  
Mayor Petty made the following motion:  
Refer Miss Biancheria's request to define the word "national" to the Ad Hoc Search Committee for the next Superintendent.  
On a voice vote, the motion was approved.
- 9-17-21 - AD HOC SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT  
Miss Biancheria asked how many public meetings will be taking place to which Chairperson McCullough responded that the proposed RFP recommends four to ten meetings. She also inquired as to the process for reporting the updates to the public and full School Committee. Dr. Friel stated that the information will be reported out to the public at School Committee meetings in the format of a Standing Committee Action Sheet.  
Ms. Novick stated that she understands that the search firm will be recruiting its own applicants but wants to be sure that all applications will be accepted.  
Ms. McCullough moved to approve the following timeline:  
**SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH TIMELINE**  
**September**
  - Ad Hoc meeting held on 9/16 and a timeline and RFP will be approved to be considered by the full committee at the 9/23 meeting.
  - 9/24 -Worcester Public Schools issues an RFP for a search firm. Allow thirty days for the bid process to conclude.**October**
  - Bids should be received by 10/27. Special meeting of the School Committee to be held 10/28 to approve firm.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-17-21 (continued)

**November & December**

- 11/17- Firm contract should be completed and a special meeting will be held. School Committee meets in public session with search firm to discuss and decide on timeline and process.
- Search Committee Appointed and Orientation
  - The Search Committee is a public body and subject to Open Meeting law.
  - Meetings are public and will be posted.
  - The Search Committee needs their own clerk that they can appoint or the search firm can provide this service.
- The search firm should use the remainder of November and December to meet with district stakeholders.
  - Central administrators
  - All principals
  - Teachers in staff meetings
  - Other staff in sessions during their work day
  - Student councils
  - Parent-specific sessions in multiple languages, at easily accessible spaces throughout the city via public transit, at multiple times of day, including weekends, with childcare at a minimum
  - Community sessions, also with all of the above
  - Other stakeholders: consider individual meetings with Committee members, with city staff that works with the district, with the delegation, etc.
- Focus surveys planned and on-line survey developed; materials development completed and ready for distribution
- 12/21 - Search firm comes back to Committee with proposed position description. Committee deliberates and approves posting.

**January**

- 1/4- position posted. This must be shared nationally.
- Search Committee will organize to prepare for screening of candidates, scheduling of interviews, and preparation of questions with the search firm in executive session.

**February**

- 2/4- Deadline Set for Filing Applications (3:00 p.m. EST via mail, e-mail, fax or personal delivery to search coordinator)
- Applications are compiled and prepared for the Search Committee to review. Review begins immediately. Search committee meets in executive session to review confidential applications with search firm and to select semi-finalists for confidential interviews.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-17-21 (continued)

- Weeks of February 14 and 21 Semi-finalist interviews with search committee in executive session. Care should be taken that the identities of the semi-finalists are not known outside of the search committee.

After final interview, search committee makes selection of finalists.

**March**

- 3/3- Search committee announces finalists to School Committee
- Weeks of 3/7 and 3/14 non-quorum subset of Committee visits finalist's home districts.
- Weeks of 3/21 and 3/28 finalists visit Worcester; finalists are interviewed by full Committee in public session

**April**

- 4/4- School Committee makes hiring decision and announces the next Superintendent
- Contract negotiations take place in a timely manner.
- New superintendent participates in budget development process, including goal setting

**May & June**

- New superintendent transitions in, meeting with district staff, participating in administrative work as necessary/possible. Coordination with current administration is crucial.
- New superintendent participates in planning for summer.

**July 1, 2022**

- Superintendent takes office.

On a roll call of 3-0, the proposed timeline was approved.

Chairperson McCullough provided information regarding the Report for Proposal for an executive search firm. She stated that the proposals must be received by October 27, 2021 and will then be approved by the School Committee on October 28, 2021. Interviews will take place during the week of February 14, 2022 and a finalist will be selected on April 4, 2022.

Ms. Novick moved to amend the RFP as follows:

Change the title to read: **Superintendent Search for the Worcester Public Schools Request for Proposals for Executive Search Firm**

Candidate Selection Criteria

Under 2c, delete the word **town** before government officials.

Candidate Selection Criteria,

Under 2e, add the words **in multiple relevant languages** after conduct an online survey.

Timeline

Under 3b iii, add **and** before submission and delete **and timelines**

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-17-21 (continued)

Candidate Screening

Under 5g, add **finalist** after semi-finalists.

Final Candidate Selection Process

Under 6j, replace Public Schools of Worcester to **Worcester Public Schools.**

General Information about the District

Add **the first and last paragraphs of** page 49 of the **FY22 WPS Budget** for general information regarding the district as follows."

As of January 1, 2021, there were over 27,582 school aged children (Kindergarten to Grade 12) residing in the City of Worcester, and of that, over 23,326 of the students, or about 84.6%, attend the Worcester Public Schools (or specialized collaborative placements). When including pre-school students of 910 students, the district enrollment is 23,872 on January 1, 2021 which includes students within 44 schools and 5 alternative pathway programs. With 4,753 employees, including 2,546 teachers, the district is the third-largest school district in the Commonwealth (behind Boston with 48,112 students and Springfield with 24,239 students) and the second-largest employer in the City of Worcester behind UMass Memorial Health Care with 11,491 employees.

The student demographics in Worcester include 43% Hispanic, 29% White, 17% African American, 6.5% Asian, and 4.4% of other or multi-race designation. More than 58% of the district's students have a first language other than English. Poverty is common in urban school districts, and in Worcester, about 81% of the student body is classified as high needs (unduplicated count of students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL) and former ELL students, or low-income students (eligible for free/reduced price school lunch). Of the district's enrollment, 64% of students are categorized as economically disadvantaged (students' participation in one or more state-administered programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children, the Department of Children and Families' foster care program, and MassHealth program). Upon return to full in-person instruction, the district is expected to serve nearly 4.8 million school meals annually which equates to 9,860 breakfasts and 17,100 lunches daily, along with afternoon snacks/dinner and summer meals. Also, approximately 11,400 students, including charter schools, parochial schools, and private school students are provided transportation to and from school daily with approximately 230 buses and pupil vans traveling over 11,500 miles per day.

On a roll call of 3-0, the Request for Proposal was approved as amended.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-17-21 (continued)

Miss Biancheria requested that when using the words "national search" to include the City of Worcester, the State of Massachusetts and New England.

9-23-21 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the action of the Ad Hoc Committee as stated.

11-3-21 - AD HOC SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT  
Chairperson McCullough stated that the Ad Hoc Committee received two proposals from the search consulting firms of Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates and Greenwood/Asher and Associates. She asked Ms. Novick to present her reviews of the firms.

Ms. Novick stated that both firms met the minimum criteria and submitted valid proposals. She felt that Hazard/Young has a record of keeping the same group of applicants to fill the positions. She felt the Greenwood/Asher proposal included community engagement and recruiting from non-traditional backgrounds.

Chairperson McCullough stated that she contacted the references provided by Greenwood/Asher and received positive feedback.

Chairperson McCullough made the following motion:

Request that the School Committee approve Greenwood/Asher and Associates as the search consulting firm in the hiring of the new Superintendent of the Worcester Public Schools.

On a roll call of 2-0-1 (absent Miss Biancheria), the motion was approved.

11-9-21 - **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING** – The School Committee approved the action of the Ad Hoc Committee as amended.

Ms. McCullough stated two proposals were submitted from the search firms of Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates and Greenwood/Asher and Associates. Using the rubric that was developed as part of the criteria that was listed in the RFP, an evaluation was done and it was decided that both firms met the minimum criteria. Each firm provided five references to contact but only four were contacted based on outreach. Those contacted for HYA stated that they were satisfied but there were some issues regarding the vetting of candidates.

She presented the financial proposals and stated that the services that Greenwood Asher would provide are much more substantial. Miss Biancheria and Mr. Monfredo voiced their disappointment in only having two firms for consideration.

Ms. McCullough made the following motion:

Request that the School Committee move forward with the recommendation from the Ad Hoc Committee of Greenwood Asher and Associates and send it to the City purchasing director for final approval.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motion was approved.

On a roll call of 7-0, the Action Sheet was approved.



PRIOR ACTION (continued)

1-13-22 - AD HOC SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT  
Chair McCullough stated that the listening sessions regarding the selection of the next Superintendent will be held virtually from January 18<sup>th</sup> through January 26<sup>th</sup>. These sessions, which will have interpreters available, will be held for community members, administration, staff, students and parent groups. She stated that the information regarding the listening sessions is contained on the WPS website and on social media. If individuals are unable to attend any of the listening sessions, they can contact Ms. McCullough at [mcculloughm@worcesterschools.net](mailto:mcculloughm@worcesterschools.net) or Dr. Greenwood, Co-founder of the search firm Greenwood/Asher and Associates at [jangreenwood@greenwoodsearch.com](mailto:jangreenwood@greenwoodsearch.com).

Ms. Drennan stated that the questions that will guide each session are as follows and are on the website:

- What are the professional leadership competencies needed in the position as superintendent or the Worcester Public Schools?
- What are the interpersonal competencies needed in the position as superintendent?
- Is there a particular background you think is needed in the position as superintendent?
- What are the accomplishments you would like to see the new superintendent achieve in the next few years?
- What do you see to be the main challenge(s) facing the new superintendent?
- What are your points of pride within the system?

These questions will be asked of each applicant for consistency.

Chair McCullough stated that an artificial intelligence survey, which is in the process of being finalized, will provide additional input for the search firm and the search committee. The anticipated deadline for applicants is March 4, 2022 and the search committee will be conducting the initial screening of applicants, as well as the initial rounds of interviews in Executive Session, due to confidentiality.

Ms. Drennan stated that once the listening sessions are completed, the search firm can formulate the job description based on the information it receives from the sessions. She also stated that the search firm will have the job description ready for the School Committee's approval on the February 3 2022 School Committee meeting. The firm would like to advertise for the position in February. Ms. Novick stated that she would like to make certain that the full search committee understands that they are subject to the Open Meeting Law. Individuals that are serving on it cannot have conversations about the superintendent search outside of the search committee meetings. She asked that a copy of the confidentiality statement be forwarded to her so she can sign it.

Ms. Kamara asked if there will be a demographic breakdown of participants for the meetings.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

1-13-22 (continued)

Chair McCullough stated that the artificial intelligence survey could track the demographic breakdown of participants. The goal is to have all community partners share information regarding the listening sessions to encourage all community members to participate.

Ms. Novick asked if a quick summary of the listening session information could be translated into multiple languages to be shared with community groups.

Ms. Kamara asked if the listening sessions will be recorded and if individuals are able to access the chat feature. If so, will that be part of the stored data?

Ms. Drennan stated that the chat feature will be on for the listening sessions and the meetings can be recorded. When the sessions begin, the questions will appear in the chat feature so individuals can see them as they log on to the meeting.

Chair McCullough stated that if the meetings are being recorded, they would not be for public viewing.

Ms. Kamara asked if the recorded meetings, chats and the written information by the firm would be part of the collected data.

Ms. Novick stated that, if the meetings and chats were recorded, that would undermine the confidentiality of staff members and they may not feel comfortable submitting an honest answer to the questions. She also stated that if the Zoom meetings are being done by the search firm, those documents belong to the firm not the Worcester Public Schools.

Chair McCullough stated that the search firm understands the importance of collecting and keeping the data but also wants to make sure people are sharing their thoughts freely.

1-20-22 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the action of the Ad Hoc Committee as stated.

2-28-22 - AD HOC SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

Chair McCullough proposed the following changes to the Superintendent Search Schedule:

The Prospect Review Meeting - change from March 9, 2022 to March 21, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom in Executive Session.

The Round-One of Interviews – change from March 23 and 24, 2022 to March 29 and 30, 2022 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. via Zoom in Executive Session.

The Reference Feedback Meeting – change from April 14, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. -6:30 p.m. via Zoom to April 14, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. via Zoom in Executive Session.

School Committee Member Novick asked if the application deadline will give enough time for applicants to submit their paperwork and if the committee members will receive the applications once the search firm categorizes them.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

2-28-22 (continued)

Chair McCullough stated that ideally the Search Firm would like all applications in by March 4, 2022 but will accept them until the process begins for the Prospect Review Meeting on March 21, 2022. From March 22nd through March 28<sup>th</sup>, the candidates will be contacted to set up an interview time which will take place on March 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>. She also stated that based on the qualifications that were set forth in the Job Description that was approved by the School Committee, individuals may submit applications even if they don't meet some of the requirements and will still be included in the review process. This is a confidential process, so the committee members can't discuss the applicants and is the reason why these meetings are in Executive Session. The Search Committee will have access to a password protected website where it can review the applicants once the search firm puts it together.

School Committee Member Novick asked when the School Committee members will be notified of the selection of the finalists.

Chair McCullough stated that April 14, 2022 is the date when the finalists will be selected and it is her understanding the School Committee Members will be notified at the next School Committee Meeting.

Chair McCullough made the following motion:

Request that the Superintendent Search Schedule be approved amended.

**Worcester Public School, Superintendent  
Updated Search Schedule 2-28-2022**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Date: November 22, 2021<br/>(Monday)</b><br><i>Time: 5:45-6:45 pm Eastern</i>  | <b>Orientation with the School Committee:</b>  |
| <b>Date: December 8, 2021<br/>(Wednesday)</b><br><i>Time: 9:30-11:30 am Eastern</i>   | <b>Search Committee Start-up Meeting</b><br>search process is outlined, and expectations are reviewed  |
| <b>Date: December 13-17, 2021</b>   | <b>Schedule listening session groups</b>   |
| <b>Date: January 18-26, 2022</b>  | <b>Conduct listening sessions</b>  |
| <b>Date: February 4, 2022<br/>(Friday)</b>  | <b>Launch survey in English/Spanish</b><br><br><b>Finalize Position<br/>Description/Advertisement<br/>Place Advertisements<br/>Nominations Sought<br/>Recruiting Conversations Held</b>                                      |
| <b>Date: March 21, 2022<br/>(Monday)</b><br><i>Time: 5:00-7:00 pm Eastern</i><br><i>Via zoom</i><br><i>Executive Session</i>                | <b>Prospect Review Meeting:</b> Search Committee meets to review leading prospects for consideration; The committee selects candidates from preliminary review to move to interview phase and discusses interview strategies |
| <b>Date: March 29-30, 2022<br/>(Tuesday and Wednesday)</b><br><i>8:00 am-4:00 pm Eastern</i><br><i>Via zoom</i><br><i>Executive Session</i> | <b>Round-One of Interviews:</b> Search Committee and G/A&A conducts interviews of leading candidates, and the Committee selects candidates for referencing.  |

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

2-28-22 (continued)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Date: April 14, 2022 (Thursday)</b><br><i>Time: 3:00-4:30 pm Eastern</i><br><i>Via zoom</i><br><i>Executive Session</i> | <b>Reference Feedback Meeting</b><br>Search Committee hears preliminary referencing feedback and recommends candidates to the School Committee for further consideration and interviews. |
| <b>Date: April 25-28, 2022</b><br><i>Location: TBD</i><br><b>Will need to flex here</b>                                    | <b>Round Two of Interviews</b><br>Finalists interview with The School Committee  |
| <b>Date: April 2022</b>  | <b>Appointment</b>   |
| <b>Date: July 1, 2022</b>  | <b>Start Date</b>  |

On a roll call of 3-0, the Superintendent Search Schedule was approved as amended.

3-17-22 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING – The School Committee approved the action of the Standing Committee as stated.