



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Special Meeting

April 27, 2021

Called for 5:00 p.m. for the purpose of interviewing finalist candidates for the position of Interim Superintendent of Schools.

Members Present: Vice Chair Bowman, Member Fantini, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, Mayor Siddiqui

Also Present: Ms. Richardson, Chief Talent Officer of Human Resources

Mayor Siddiqui in the Chair

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

The Chair read the call of the meeting and explained that this meeting is being televised, votes will be taken and there will be no public comment. Mayor Siddiqui gave background information on the search process and how they got to the two finalists: Dr. Victoria Greer and Dr. Brian Metcalf.

The meeting proceeded to the first order of business with the following roll call for the purposes of a sound check: Member Rachel PRESENT; Member Wilson PRESENT; Member Weinstein ABSENT, Vice Chair Bowman PRESENT; Member Fantini PRESENT; Member Rojas ABSENT; Mayor Siddiqui PRESENT

Using a round-robin format, the Members interviewed the two finalists using following questions, each member asked two questions:

Mayor Siddiqui

1. Talk to us about your leadership style and management style. How do you work with and evaluate principals? How do you balance the accountability and autonomy of school leaders?
2. Describe your ideal working relationship between the School Committee and the Superintendent.

Vice Chair Bowman

1. Please speak to your experience and philosophy around labor negotiations and your relationship with the teachers' union.
2. How do you work across differences to move people forward?

Member Rachel

1. The Special Education and Student Support Subcommittee recently discussed approaching errors as windows into student minds and how children learn. What is your philosophy of error and how do you look at your own mistakes? Please give us an example of an error of leadership that you have made and how you respond and lead differently now.
2. Looking at the barriers to racial equity Building Equity Bridges identified, which one resonates with you today? For what reason? (candidates should have this list for reference: inequitable school experiences; lack of focus on relationships; youth are not centered; educators of color are not valued, centered and supported; whiteness, privilege and bias; power in decision-making is inequitably distributed; existing structures and policy perpetuate inequities; lack of coherence has disproportionate and inequitable impacts; equity work has lacked commitment, coherence, and accountability)

Member Wilson

1. (Dr. Metcalf) Talk about a conflict you had and how you handled it. (For Dr. Greer) One thing we know is that change can oftentimes be challenging although extremely necessary. You spoke about your leadership style being *Situational*. When thinking about your previous role here in Cambridge, what were some of your challenges and successes? How have you/will you improve on your challenges and build consensus when appropriate?
2. Please share your best practices of working with Community partners; specifically Out-of-School time providers? How do you hope to build upon the existing relationships for the betterment of our scholars and their families?

Member Rojas

1. What is your philosophy around the current and potential relationships between charter and public schools?
2. Describe the budget making process you have used. What has been your experience with budget management, budgetary controls, and budget reductions? (Dr. Greer) You indicated in your resume that you implemented a zero-based budgeting approach, can you please explain what that is and how it worked in Sharon in terms of realignment of funds. Is it still in place?

Member Fantini

1. What techniques have you used to promote accelerated learning? How would you think innovatively about getting all children reading by third grade quickly?
2. What kind of data, both qualitative and observational, do you use to improve student outcomes and better understand what is actually happening in the lives of individual students? If data shows that someone in leadership has not been able to deliver for students, how would you make the tough call to move them out of their position?

Member Weinstein

1. Given the timeframe of an interim role with a one-year contract, how would you effectively support educators and families to meet the SEL and academic needs of Cambridge students in a new stage of this pandemic, while moving us forward with our ongoing priorities -- particularly closing racial and economic opportunity gaps?
2. **For Dr. Metcalf:** How has your work as an educator, as one of the Chiefs of School in Chicago Public Schools, and as CEO of the three Tindley Accelerated Schools prepared you for the role of superintendent, specifically for the Cambridge Public Schools? Why Cambridge, and why now?
For Dr. Greer: What is your approach to establishing and supporting shared priorities and goals and policies when there is not complete consensus within or between stakeholder groups? How would you make sure you are hearing and responding to the concerns of individual students, caregivers, and educators in this large, diverse school district?

Member Killian

1. What do you think stakeholder groups would say are your non-negotiables in terms of working as a Superintendent in Cambridge?
2. Do you believe that workforce experiences matter during a scholar's academic journey? How would you ensure that our scholars engage in meaningful internships before their high school graduation?

Member Vera-DeGraff

1. As an educator, how do you define equity?
2. (Metcalf) You comment in your resume how you achieved great success in decreasing absentee rates, discipline infractions, keeping first year students on track and increasing graduation rates by significant percentage, all noteworthy. Please explain how this was accomplished, and was there any particular skills you employed that helped you?
(Greer) Please talk about how you increased the representation of teachers of color in Sharon. What systems did you put in place to do this? As Superintendent, do you interview every teacher hired?

Mayor Siddiqui welcomed Dr. Greer (6:10 p.m.) The members proceeded to ask her the questions. After the questions, the Mayor opened the meeting to Dr. Greer if she had any questions for the School Committee.

Dr. Greer asked if she was given the opportunity to be Superintendent what needs or concerns would the School Committee agree that she should address with a level of urgency.

- Mayor Siddiqui navigating post COVID challenges and relationship building.
- Vice Chair Bowman talked about equity, social emotional support for our kids. The question is how to achieve these things.
- Member Rachel discussed kids reading by third grade, kids doing algebra by 8th grade and college/career ready for high school. She wants bold quick movement on these goals-bold movement but brings the School community along.
- Member Weinstein discussed benchmarks.
- Member Rojas talked about healing the community after this past year and a half.

Dr. Greer then made her closing statement. She thanked the Members for the opportunity and their questions/remarks. She discussed how she is a committed, passionate leader with a proven track record. She's not afraid to make difficult decisions, she is student centered. She talked about how she is collaborative and team orientated leader. She discussed how she is a fearless, bold leader.

The Committee then took a fifteen minute break. Mayor Siddiqui welcomed Dr. Metcalf. The members proceeded to ask them their questions. After the questions, the Mayor opened the meeting to Dr. Metcalf if they had any questions for the School Committee.

Dr. Metcalf asked the Committee what the evaluation rubric is for principals and how that was developed. Lisa Richardson discussed how she has not gotten to principal evaluations: Dr. Gittens and Dr. Medera are the ones that coordinate this.

Dr. Metcalf asked the Committee what are their three priorities/non-negotiables for the interim to accomplish?

- Mayor Siddiqui discussed relationship building and navigating post COVID challenges.
- Vice Chair Bowman discussed diversity, equity and inclusion, social emotional support for our kids. The question is how to achieve these things.
- Member Weinstein discussed the importance of moving forward with the strategic plans and what the benchmarks also ensuring a smooth transition from remote to in-person learning.
- Member Fantini discussed ESSR funding and union contracts.
- Member Wilson discussed individualized success plans.

Dr. Metcalf made his closing remarks and thanked the Committee. They discussed how he is looking forward to and doing the work and he dedicated his entire life to this work.

Mayor Siddiqui thanked Dr. Metcalf for his time.

Mayor Siddiqui announced on May 6th at 6:00 p.m. will be the next meeting.

On a motion by Vice Chair Bowman, seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote, it was voted to adjourn the meeting: Member Rachel YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Weinstein YEA, Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA

Attest:

Allison Daley

Confidential Secretary to the Office of the School Committee.