



**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

(Official Minutes)

Special Meeting

February 25, 2021

Called for 7:30 p.m. broadcast from the Media Arts Studio, 454 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of adopting any recommendations of the Ad-Hoc Superintendent Search Sub-Committee.

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

Also Present: Lisa Richardson, Chief Talent Officer; Student Member Vera-DeGraff, Student Member Anais Killian

Mayor Siddiqui in the Chair

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

The Chair provided a statement to the public regarding Governor Charlie Baker's Executive Order on guidelines for remote participation and then read the call of the meeting.

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

1. Public Comment:

The following individuals were heard:

- Dan Monahan, CEA President, on the job description he appreciates the collaboration and would like the word collaboration to be in the third bullet in the third section. He wants to help identify the educators that will be panelists on the interview committee

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

2. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information):

#21-74 Motion by the Ad-Hoc Superintendent Search Sub-Committee

That the School Committee adopt the attached job posting for the Interim Superintendent.

Cambridge Public Schools Interim Superintendent

The Cambridge Public Schools are committed to rigorous, joyful, and culturally responsive learning as well as the social, emotional, and academic supports each student needs to achieve their goals and post-secondary success as engaged community members. **The School Committee is searching for a leader who will continue the District's work to be antiracist, including addressing opportunity gaps and meeting the needs of all students. The Committee also seeks candidates who will lead us through the continual challenges the District will face due to the COVID 19 pandemic. With dedicated stakeholders throughout the community, including students, families, community**

partners, educators, and administrators, the Interim Superintendent will have the opportunity to move the needle with wide community collaboration and support.

The Interim Superintendent may be considered as a candidate for the permanent Superintendent role.

CPSD invites qualified candidates to apply for the position of Interim Superintendent from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. The successful candidate for the position must:

- Ensure leadership and continuity of education and services provided by Cambridge Public Schools
- Hold high expectations for all students and staff
- **Possess a track record of excellent communication with stakeholders, including students, families, community members, staff, faculty, administration, and both in-person and remotely**
- **Bring a history of successful leadership in advancing anti-racism, racial equity, and education for liberation**
- Possess knowledge and experience of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; school finance and budget development and management; and instructional technology
- Possess knowledge of collective bargaining and experience reaching collaborative agreements
- Quickly gain an understanding of the Cambridge instructional models for hybrid and remote learning, and associated safety protocols under evolving COVID-19 conditions
- Demonstrate willingness to make difficult decisions in the best interests of students

Top candidates also will:

- Articulate bold vision for strengthening public education in the 21st century
- Possess a history of closing opportunity and achievement gaps
- **Possess direct experience working with families of scholars with special needs**
- Bring a proven track record of effective collaboration with staff and community partners
- Demonstrate familiarity and relevant experience with the current short-term and long-term initiatives in Cambridge

Qualifications:

- Master's degree; advanced degree preferred
- Massachusetts DESE Superintendent licensure or license eligible
- Five years' experience as a Superintendent of Schools and/or relevant experience as an Assistant Superintendent of Schools or similar

The School Committee offers a contract and salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. Applicants should include a letter of interest, résumé, 3 current references, and appropriate MA DESE licensure to Lisa Richardson, Chief Talent Officer. The Screening Committee anticipates it will begin to review applications the week of March 8 and begin interviews the week of March 15. The posting will remain open until the position is filled.

Discussion followed on #21-74.

Mayor Siddiqui provided context on the process of the posting and asked if anyone has any suggestions.

Member Weinstein brought Mr. Monahan's suggestion on the third bullet of the job description but instead of getting rid of the word communication to add the word collaboration.

Member Wilson suggested for stakeholders adding The School Committee. Additionally, to add “possess direct classroom experience.” Member Weinstein suggested adding that language to the “top candidates also will.”

Mayor Siddiqui discussed the challenges of trying to find a candidate that checks all these boxes. Lisa Richardson concurred and changed in the first paragraph to “must” to “may”. Lisa Richardson changed “possess direct classroom experience” to “possess a deep understanding of the classroom experience.”

Vice Chair Bowman added “demonstrate strong decision making skills” to the “top candidates also will.”

Member Fantini asked if there has been any consideration on doing a separate process for available in house candidates. Mayor Siddiqui responded how at the moment the people they spoke to there no one was interested in becoming interim. Member Fantini asked if people were asked. Mayor Siddiqui stated how she thought that if people were interested they would have reached out to her. Member Fantini suggested doing an in-house posting for five days. Member Fantini discussed how putting the Interim Superintendent may be considered as a candidate, would have the unintended consequence of deterring people away who were interested in the permanent position.

Lisa Richardson brought up the point of internal candidates and being made public would deter internal candidates. Member Rachel discussed how this gets into process and only serious candidates are going to be made public.

Vice Chair Bowman shared her concerns about the timing. Member Rachel suggested to move to the timeline. Vice Chair Bowman discussed how the Ad-hoc Sub-Committee should take up the process of what to do with school committees, if there is a small pool then appoint someone then start the permanent search process.

The following amendments were taken up as a whole and voted on by the Committee:

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The Interim Superintendent may be considered as a candidate for the permanent Superintendent role.

CPSD invites qualified candidates to apply for the position of Interim Superintendent from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. The successful candidate for the position ~~must~~**may**:

- Ensure leadership and continuity of education and services provided by Cambridge Public Schools
- Hold high expectations for all students and staff
- Possess a track record of excellent communication and **collaboration** with stakeholders, including students, families, community members, staff, faculty, administration, and **the School Committee** both in-person and remotely

- Bring a history of successful leadership in advancing anti-racism, racial equity, and education for liberation
- Possess knowledge and experience of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; school finance and budget development and management; and instructional technology
- Possess knowledge of collective bargaining and experience reaching collaborative agreements
- Quickly gain an understanding of the Cambridge instructional models for hybrid and remote learning, and associated safety protocols under evolving COVID-19 conditions
- Demonstrate willingness to make difficult decisions in the best interests of students

Top candidates also will:

- Articulate bold vision for strengthening public education in the 21st century
- Possess a history of closing opportunity and achievement gaps
- ***Possess a deep understanding of classroom experience***
- Possess direct experience working with families of scholars with special needs
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On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Rojas on the amendments: Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson ABSENT; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini NAY; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

On the following roll call vote, #21-74 was adopted as amended: Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson ABSENT; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini NAY; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

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#21-75 Motion by the Ad-Hoc Superintendent Search Sub-Committee

That the School Committee adopt the following timeline for the Interim Superintendent Search.

CPSD Interim Superintendent Search 2021

Timeline	Action
By 2/19/21	Draft posting and timeline
2/23/21	Ad-Hoc Subcommittee meeting for feedback on posting and timeline

2/25/21	Special Meeting to adopt Ad-Hoc Subcommittee's recommendations
By 3/1/21	Posting goes live
By 3/8/21	School Committee vets applications, decides whom to interview (ongoing if needed, first round)
By 3/17	School Committee Members (up to 3) have screening calls with top candidates, checks some references
By 3/19	<p>Organize panelists and design forms for submitting questions as well as scoring candidates (Google form)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which (6-8?) people represent each of the three stakeholder groups? How are they selected? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For students, consider asking CRLS Deans to select a representative group inclusive of diversity of student demographics, experiences (e.g. feeder school), interests (e.g. athletics/arts) ○ For families, consider representation across schools from caregivers in SEPAC, ELAC, CFCC, SICs/CCPS ○ For educators, perhaps a Cabinet rep, 2 principals, teachers from each grade span - identified internally ● Once selected, groups will determine whether they ask up to four questions (to allow for follow-up questions from panelists/the candidate) or ask candidates to prepare/lead a presentation or exercise
By 3/26/21	<p>For candidates in whom we have sufficient interest, organize a convening for them to interact with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students b. Families c. Educators (including staff and administrators) <p>If we have multiple candidates, we could have breakout rooms for each stakeholder group and the candidates could move between them.</p> <p>At the end of each session, panelists and participants will be asked to score candidates on a series of criteria. We will also have an open-ended question for broader feedback/impressions.</p>

By 3/30/21	Chief Talent Officer compiles feedback from community convening, School Committee digests feedback, and continues checking references
By 3/31/21	School Committee decides whether to advance candidate(s) or keep posting up, recruit more
By 4/9/21	School Committee interview(s) and decision
By 4/30/21	Interim Search regroups to revise RFP for search firm, formulate Search Committee, and outline process for permanent hire

Discussion followed on **#21-75**.

Member Rachel explained the fine details on creating the timeline from the beginning to the end.

Ms. Richardson is concerned about the timeline being too tight and that it may have a “chilling” effect on the candidates feeling confident to get their paperwork together quick enough.

Vice Chair Bowman mentioned adding parent to caregiver and shared her concern about the timeline and that it is a lot of an interim process especially the feedback piece. Mayor Siddiqui clarified that it would be for the finalist. Member Rachel discussed how this is hard to do because they do not know what the landscape will be. Mayor Siddiqui suggested it may helpful just to get some dates. Vice Chair Bowman discussed the importance of having a finite date then appointing someone and then launching the permanent search. Member Rachel discussed not having an end date on the posting but to Vice Chair Bowman’s point to have a date on when they would consider someone internally.

Ms. Richardson made it clear that the posting and the process are two different items.

Member Fantini asked whether this timeline leaves enough time to hire a superintendent in this term. Mayor Siddiqui discussed how it might not give them enough time.

Member Fantini asked whether we need to hire a firm. Ms. Richardson responded how for the permanent superintendent search there should be a professional firm. For the interim, the panelists gives her pause.

Member Rojas stated we need to decide on how much we want to include the community due to the time constraints of the Committee and that the timeline is based off Glen Koocher’s guidelines.

Member Fantini asked if the interim does an incredible job, why would we go forward with the process and hire that interim. Mayor Siddiqui discussed that could be a possible outcome but there would need to be a conversation.

Member Weinstein advocated for community involvement even in the interim role.

Vice Chair Bowman stated as much as possible from a vetting process, it should go through the Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee then the Committee as a whole.

Member Rojas discussed how the School Committee vets applications that would be through human resources and to come up with a short list but then he was told that there was a conflict of interest and this needs to done by Committee, if the ad-hoc happens in public then they couldn’t do in private. Lisa Richardson was unsure about where the conflict of interest came from and they’ve done the early vetting, the initial candidates who meet the minimum requirements.

Ms. Richardson spoke about looking for a way to keep the candidates private until they are considered for assignments. Member Rachel discussed how they've heard from two different search firms that there shouldn't be one person in charge of ruling out candidates. Member Fantini advised for executive session. Mayor Siddiqui has been in talks with Maureen McFarlane on how to achieve this. Member Rachel asked if we could include Attorney McFarlane on these conversations.

Discussion continued specifically on what needed to be changed on the timeline. It was discussed how the job posting would go live on March 1st and seeing what applicants we get and then decide to go to the next stage.

Vice Chair Bowman discussed how you can leverage the Regular meeting to update the calendar instead of a special meeting.

It was decided that on or before April 30th the process would be complete for the interim.

Vice Chair Bowman asked for clarification of the contract negotiation. Lisa Richardson said it was the Chair of the Committee. Mayor Siddiqui said she would follow up with the outstanding questions.

The Committee voted on the following amendments as a whole:

Timeline	Action
By 2/19/21	Draft posting and timeline
2/23/21	Ad-Hoc Subcommittee meeting for feedback on posting and timeline
2/25/21	Special Meeting to adopt Ad-Hoc Subcommittee's recommendations
By 3/1/21	Posting goes live
By 3/8/21	School Committee vets applications, decides whom to interview (ongoing if needed, first round)
By 3/17 March	School Committee Members (up to 3) have screening calls with top candidates, checks some references
By 3/19 March	Organize panelists and design forms for submitting questions as well as scoring candidates (Google form) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Which (6-8?) people represent each of the three stakeholder groups? How are they selected? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For students, consider asking CRLS Deans to select a representative group inclusive of diversity of student demographics, experiences (e.g. feeder school), interests (e.g. athletics/arts) ○ For families, consider representation across schools from caregivers in SEPAC, ELAC, CFCC, SICs/CCPS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For educators, perhaps a Cabinet rep, 2 principals, teachers from each grade span - identified internally ● Once selected, groups will determine whether they ask up to four questions (to allow for follow-up questions from panelists/the candidate) or ask candidates to prepare/lead a presentation or exercise
<p>By 3/26/21 Late March/early April</p>	<p>For 1-2 candidates in whom we have sufficient interest, organize a convening for them to interact with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Students e. Families f. Educators (including staff and administrators) <p><i>If we have multiple candidates, we could have breakout rooms for each stakeholder group and the candidates could move between them.</i></p> <p><i>At the end of each session, panelists and participants will be asked to score candidates on a series of criteria. We will also have an open-ended question for broader feedback/impressions.</i></p>
<p>By 3/30/21 Late March/early April</p>	<p>Chief Talent Officer compiles feedback from community convening, School Committee digests feedback, and continues checking references</p>
<p>By 3/31/21 April</p>	<p>School Committee decides whether to advance candidate(s) or keep posting up, recruit more</p>
<p>By 4/9/21 April</p>	<p>School Committee interview(s) and decision-public interview (s)</p>
<p>By 4/30/21</p>	<p>Hire/appoint internally Interim Superintendent-process is complete</p>
<p>By 4/30/21 May</p>	<p>Interim Search regroups to revise RFP for search firm, formulate Search Committee, and outline process for permanent hire</p>

All dates are subject to change.

On the amendments, Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson ABSENT; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

On the following roll call vote, **#21-75** was adopted as amended: Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson ABSENT; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

By 2/19/21	Draft posting and timeline
2/23/21	Ad-Hoc Subcommittee meeting for feedback on posting and timeline
2/25/21	Special Meeting to adopt Ad-Hoc Subcommittee's recommendations
By 3/1/21	Posting goes live
March	School Committee Members (up to 3) have screening calls with top candidates, checks some references
March	<p>Organize panelists and design forms for submitting questions as well as scoring candidates (Google form)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Which (6-8?) people represent each of the three stakeholder groups? How are they selected?</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>For students, consider asking CRLS Deans to select a representative group inclusive of diversity of student demographics, experiences (e.g. feeder school), interests (e.g. athletics/arts)</i> ○ <i>For parents/families/caregivers, consider representation across schools from caregivers in SEPAC, ELAC, CFCC, SICs/CCPS</i> ○ <i>For educators, perhaps a Cabinet rep, 2 principals, teachers from each grade span - identified internally</i> • <i>Once selected, groups will determine whether they ask up to four questions (to allow for follow-up questions from panelists/the candidate) or ask candidates to prepare/lead a presentation or exercise</i>
Late March/early April	<p>For 1-2 candidates in whom we have sufficient interest, organize a convening for them to interact with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students b. Families c. Educators (including staff and administrators) <p><i>If we have multiple candidates, we could have breakout rooms for each stakeholder group and the candidates could move between them.</i></p> <p><i>At the end of each session, panelists and participants will be asked to score candidates on a series of criteria. We will also have an open-ended question for broader feedback/impressions.</i></p>
Late March/early April	Chief Talent Officer compiles feedback from community convening, School Committee digests feedback, and continues checking references
April	School Committee decides whether to advance candidate(s) or keep posting up, recruit more
April	School Committee public interview(s)
By 4/30/21	Hire/appoint internally Interim Superintendent - process is complete

May	Interim Search regroups to revise RFP for search firm, formulate Search Committee, and outline process for permanent hire
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*All dates subject to change

It was voted to suspend the rules for the purpose of the foregoing vote. On suspension: Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson ABSENT; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

The rules having been suspended for the purpose stated a motion to reconsider the foregoing vote, hoping the same would prevail, failed on adoption: Member Rojas NAY; Member Rachel NAY; Member Weinstein NAY; Member Wilson ABSENT; Vice Chair Bowman NAY; Member Fantini NAY; Mayor Siddiqui NAY.

On a motion by Vice Chair Bowman seconded by Member Rojas, it was voted, by roll call, to adjourn the special meeting: Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA. (8: 52 p.m.)

Attest:
Allison Daley
Confidential Secretary to the School Committee