



Weymouth

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Weymouth School Committee

[ZOOM Meeting](#)

February 18, 2021

MEETING MINUTES

(approved 2/25/21)

Members In Attendance: Lisa Belmarsh, Chair; Tracey Nardone, Vice Chair; John Sullivan, Secretary; Kathy Curran; Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw; Carrie Palazzo;
Members Absent: Mayor Hedlund

Also Present: Kathleen Smith, Interim Superintendent; Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent;
John Brackett and Ed Gotgart; Collins Center

The Meeting Came to Order At 6:00pm.

Chair Belmarsh led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chair welcomed members of the screening committee and turned the meeting over to Mr. Brackett

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Present the Profile that was composed from the Superintendent Surveys and Focus Groups - John Brackett, Collins Center**

Mr Brackett reviewed the profile which compiled data from various stakeholders throughout the community by focus groups, discussions and surveys to help decision makers with characteristics and core values that the community feels is important for the new Superintendent to have. Reminding that the Superintendent has to serve all stakeholders across the community. The profile is intended to inform the screening committee and applicants of what is important to the position of Superintendent and is not meant to be used as a checklist.

Mr. Brackett advised that the pandemic is at the forefront of most comments and surveys. There were 78 community members who took part in focus groups. Participants were parent/guardians, Faculty/Administrators/Staff, Students, community members and city officials. He added that the student focus group was an amazing group that was thoughtful and well spoken. Over 800 points of data were collected, of which 477 were from parents/guardians, and 154 from faculty/staff. 21 surveys were received in Portuguese. Mr. Brackett advised that the data will help in determining a 'best match' and recommended thinking long term, not just considering short term needs.

Desired characteristics, experience and core values were summarized. The data determined that the most important characteristics are integrity and strength of character. Mr. Brackett shared that this was a clear need across all stakeholders and the new Superintendent would present as a leader and bring 'gravitas' to the position.

Second most important and key factor is that the new superintendent be a clear, timely and effective communicator. That when a decision is made that it will be communicated effectively as to why and how it was made to all community stakeholders in and out of the schools; communicate clearly the vision of where and how the district is going. Hope was expressed that the new superintendent would be an effective listener as well. Mr. Brackett quoted a student comment received, "We don't necessarily know how things work so students need to be informed about opportunities to be heard."

Having an established track record of experience in (re)building a culture of trust and strong relationships was of high importance. Interpersonal understanding and being able to bring diverse groups together. A core value and commitment to anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion is also of utmost importance. Hiring practices to ensure make up of staff is more in line with the demographics of the community was also mentioned.

Other desired characteristics included:

- Demonstrated background in valuing and improving teaching and learning.
- Experience in a Weymouth-like district. Data is unclear if the new superintendent should be from the Weymouth community or out.
- Prior teaching experience.
- A commitment to Weymouth. To have a strong visible presence and committed to the district.

Over 250 comments were received regarding the pandemic that the new superintendent will be addressing in the first 6-12 months; especially loss of learning, social emotional needs and mental health of students and staff.

Re-establishing trust and (re)building and maintaining relationships with and amongst all stakeholders is a need that will need to be addressed. Possessing political acumen is an additional required trait for the new superintendent.

Major relationships to be worked on are between:

-The superintendent (administration) and union leadership and staff:

Mr. Brackett shared that trust is 'shaken' and that staff feel that the superintendent should fight for them, citing a staff comment, 'a superintendent who cares about us as people and relates with us personally. He also shared a community member comment, 'there are exceptional teachers at every level.' Hopes for visibility in the community, schools and classrooms was also mentioned.

-The school committee and the superintendent/administration:

Mr. Brackett advised that the roles of each; the superintendent and school committee need to be clear.

-The school committee/district and the town

Mr. Brackett shared that the data reflects that the relationship is perceived as not being strong. It will be a key role for the new superintendent to bridge the gap and work closely with the town as objectives are the same for both entities.

-The district and the community:

Parent and community stakeholders shared that they were unclear on how decisions were made and are 'ready to start with a clean slate' and that when encountering a breakdown in communication, those involved had their 'hearts in the right place'.

-Recognizing the need to continue to acknowledge diversity, equity and inclusion of all.

-District reorganization due to Chapman construction and redistricting.

-Budget and Finance; some feel the budgeting needs to be more careful and others feel the district needs more resources. Budget improvement will come as relationships with city officials improve.

A strong sense of pride in the community would need to be preserved by the new superintendent.

Mr. Brackett quoted a community member, 'Weymouth is a prideful community, and the next leader needs to nurture it.' Other examples of points of pride to preserve are:

-The teachers and staff. 'Phenomenal staff at every level'.

- Arts, Sports, WHTC and extracurricular programs

-The level of special education programming and staff

-School pride, especially with the New Chapman

-Programs and pathways available to students

-CTE program

Mr. Brackett summarized that the profile of the new superintendent would be an experienced educational leader with strong and clear core values which include integrity and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion for all. That he or she presents as a strong leader with gravitas to advocate for a position and ensure clear rolls and understanding. A leader that is an effective communicator who has the demonstrated ability to build relationships of trust and support. He also advised conversely that the Superintendent needs the support of the whole community and for the community to do their part so that students can be successful. The Superintendent is a complete leader addressing issues of today and tomorrow while continuing to grow and learn.

Chair Belmarsh acknowledged all the hard work and time due to the large community response that The Collins' Center has put in and expressed her thanks and appreciation and that they are a pleasure to work with.

She shared her agreement of the characteristics, experiences and core values as well as the issues the new superintendent will face and reiterated that the community helps in the success of the Superintendentship. Ms. Belmarsh also shared how lucky the district has been in the leadership of Dr. Curtis-Whipple who also possesses the same traits and characteristics that are being looked at for the new superintendent.

Mrs. Curran expressed her thanks for the report and for the community being able to provide written feedback to the school committee on finalists prior to a decision being made. She reiterated the importance of strength of character, trust with all stakeholders and proven experience is. Ms. Curran verified that interview questions will be worked on at the next screening committee meeting in open session, February 24, 2021 and that the school committee will also be formulating questions.

Mr. Brackett recommended no less than 3 and no more than 5 finalists being selected to move on for public interviews with the school committee

Screening committee member Kim Ferriera clarified that the profile is available on the website:

<https://www.weymouthschools.org/district/school-committee/pages/school-committee-meeting-documents>

b. Superintendent Salary Review (action requested)

Dr. Sullivan provided a Superintendent compensation analysis.

Mr. Gotgart expressed his thanks and appreciation for the analysis and shared that the goal is to recruit and retain a new superintendent for the long term. To do that, current and future salary must be competitive in the market. Surrounding communities, as well as Weymouthlike districts were included in the analysis. Methuen is comparable to Weymouth.

Dr. Sullivan explained that all information is publicly available through the Department of Education. He did have to make 2 public records requests to Medford and Peabody. Dr. Sullivan divided individual superintendent salaries to determine the per pupil cost. The median salary was determined at \$193,875.50, the per pupil \$40.85. The Weymouth student population is 5763 x \$40.85 = \$235,437.20.

The Collins Center suggested a range of \$210K-\$235K to be competitive to attract well qualified and experienced candidates who can be retained.

Dr. Sullivan shared that to prevent a Superintendent from using Weymouth as a 'stepping stone' and in order to retain them that the salary does need to be competitive.

Mrs. Curran advised that Weymouth does have low property taxes and expressed her concern for the high salary as there is already difficulty in finding funding for full day kindergarten. She suggested building in contract incentives.

Mrs. Nardone, although expressing concern for the high salary, advised that the position is 24/7 all consuming, and that the community is asking for the new superintendent to be completely visible justifies the cost.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw shared that the district is already competing with other districts for a well qualified and experienced candidate, and that to continue community pride, investing in the Superintendent comes with a cost.

There are at least 30 districts currently looking to fill open Superintendent positions.

Ms. Palazzo shared that with the New Chapman, new education plan, and redistricting that the investment is not only financial but also in talent and retention.

The Chair agreed that position is 24/7 and the compensation reflects the high level projects that an experienced Superintendent will be dealing with. Sharing that prior administrators have gone to smaller districts for more money.

Mrs. Curran shared that the deadline for application submission is tomorrow, February 19, 2021 and inquired if the deadline would be extended. Mr. Brackett advised that it would not and that some candidates may withdraw depending on the voted salary range. Mrs. Curran advised that she would not support the salary range unless it was explained how it would be paid.

The range is the base salary and does not include longevity or vacation time.

Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that currently the Superintendent budget line is \$185K and that if a decision could be made sooner rather than later as the budget will be up for public hearing in 3 weeks. The superintendent salary is .25% of the budget.

Motion by Dr. Sullivan to follow the recommendation of the consultants and to offer the superintendent salary range of \$210-235K. Seconded by Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw. Roll call vote. Motion passed 5-1. Mrs. Curran voted no.

The committee thanked the Collins Center for the presentation.

Announcements:

Superintendent Search Committee Meeting-February 24, 2021, 7pm ZOOM

Weymouth Market-March 3, 2021-3:30pm-WHS Gold Cafeteria in a drive thru manner

Next School Committee Meeting:

Regular Meeting: Thursday, February 25, 2021 - 7:00pm

The Meeting adjourned at 7:44pm on the motion of Mrs. Nardone, seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote - passed unanimously.

Documents Attached to These Minutes:

- Superintendent Profile Report
- Superintendent Compensation Analysis

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John P. Sullivan", is written over a light gray dotted rectangular background.

John Sullivan
Secretary