

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the special meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee of Wednesday, September 26, 2018, held at Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, 5 p.m.

This earlier meeting is scheduled to meet with representatives of Massachusetts Association of School Committees and the New England School Development Council to discuss their services relative to conducting or assisting school committees with a superintendent search.

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Mary N. Antocci, Vice Chair, was absent
Pauline J. Aucoin, Chair
Cathleen Carmignani
Catherine M. Kabala
Elaine M. Rabbitt
Stephanie A. Reed, arrived at 5:06 p.m.
Jamie L. Terry, arrived at 5:04 p.m.

Also in attendance were Kristine E. Nash, Ed.D., Interim Superintendent of Schools; Sally Dias, NESDEC, at 5 p.m., and Glenn Koocher at 5:53 p.m. Rich Earle, Audio-visual coordinator; Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.

The chair called the meeting to order at 5 p.m. Dr. Nash said this is time for committee members to ask questions to help determine whether they wish to contract with one of these organizations, or conduct their own search with some assistance from either group.

NESDEC Staff Associate, Executive Search, Planning Representative Dr. Sally Dias reviewed the process wherein NESDEC could either manage the search process or assist if the committee wishes to do it themselves. Dr. Dias said this is the school committee's search, but NESDEC is willing to alter the process based on the school committee's decision. Candidates can be recruited nationally, through such sources as School Spring, and online EdWeek, and the American Association of School Administrators website. A brochure is an extra expense. Dr. Dias said you don't really need a brochure, as people usually look online. NESDEC also recruits through person to person referrals.

Once recruiting is done, NESDEC works with the search committee. An online survey is part of the search, focus groups are conducted at an extra cost. NESDEC does not screen applicants, the committee sees all submissions. NESDEC sets up interviews and works with the committee on a process to help them ID those who they want to put forward, and schedules the finalists. NESDEC will schedule onsite visits if requested. The association can conduct preliminary reference checking, but encourages school committees to conduct those. There is ongoing communication throughout the process, and support after the search is optional. The cost includes a year membership of NESDEC. If no candidate rises to the top, or if the chosen candidate leaves after one year, NESDEC will conduct the search again for free.

The cost for this service is \$10,796, with the potential of an additional \$2,900 for extra items.

Mrs. Terry asked if the committee decides not to go for the full service, can help be requested for certain tasks, such as the community profile.

Dr. Dias said she is sure that can be done.

Mrs. Kabala inquired about the timeline if the committee wants a superintendent on board by June.

Dr. Dias said the committee is on target for that schedule. A speedy process can have its benefits.

Dr. Nash said from beginning to end, it takes three to four months to select a superintendent. She asked if the committee chooses a sitting superintendent, what the timeline might be.

Dr. Dias said the superintendent's release time depends on their contract, but that she has not experienced a problem with that.

NESDEC recommends the committee use its own attorney in guiding contract negotiations.

NESDEC has most recently assisted in searches for Acton-Boxborough, Sharon, North Smithfield, RI, and Westerly, RI. Dr. Dias said the candidate pool is not as broad or as deep as it once way.

Dr. Dias left the meeting at 5:27 p.m.

The committee recessed at 5:27 p.m.

The committee reconvened at 5:53 p.m.

Glenn Koocher, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees said the superintendent search is among the most important school committee tasks, and MASC can assist with a range of services, from full and extensive consultancy to services that are included with membership.

Mr. Koocher said the process begins with developing a position description, selection criteria and promotional material. In the meantime, MASC conducts focus groups and online surveys, then aggregates this information, and assists in forming and facilitating the work of a search committee. MASC recruits from large databases, including from MASC's own lists. MASC searches only for superintendents — no other school administrators. Mr. Koocher provided samples of promotional material. Once advertised, applicant information is collected, reviewed, and selected for search committee to determine who to interview. Some search committees ask MASC to determine the first round of candidates. MASC will conduct some background and reference checks. MASC guides the search committee in the second phase once it concludes its work.

Mr. Koocher noted the only way to have a confidential process is through a search committee. Mr. Koocher suggested the district may have someone on staff able to handle the process.

The cost for MASC services is \$9,500 for the full package of consulting services, conducted onsite and via staff resources from the Boston office.

MASC provides sample questions, and a procedure guide is available free of charge.

Mrs. Kabala asked about MASC's free services.

Mr. Koocher said if the committee elects to conduct the search itself, MASC will assist in orienting the search committee, help put together and create promotional materials, distribute information on the list, and develop advertisement and place it but the district would pay the cost. Today, potential applicants look on electronic outlets.

Mrs. Rabbitt asked about applicant programs other than School Spring.

Mr. Koocher said an online application available via the MASC website, which would link to the district has proven to be successful in other searches. In this way, the district can ensure that applicants are providing the necessary documents and information.

MASC conducted a focus group during the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District's recent interim superintendent search process. The facilitator spoke with parents, administrators, central office personnel, civic officials, and invited faculty to drop in throughout the day.

Mr. Koocher said he firmly believes in online surveys as it allows those who work outside the home to participate.

Mrs. Aucoin explained to both representatives that the committee will likely make a decision later this evening during the school committee regular meeting.

Mr. Koocher left the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by C. Kabala to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 6:26 p.m.

