

Wednesday, July 24, 2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held July 24, 2019, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon and LaMar Kennedy.

Mr. Kennedy moved approval of the minutes of June 19, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.

Mr. Weldon said the remainder of the agenda was interviews for the position of assistant principal at various locations, with six candidates to be interviewed. He said each interview would be about twenty minutes.

The first candidate was Tiffany Ladson-Lang. Ms. Ladson-Lang did not require the interview to be held in public session.

Mr. Weldon moved to go into executive session for the purpose of interviewing Tiffany Ladson-Lang for the position of assistant principal. Those present would be the committee; Frank Chester, chief talent officer; and Ms. Ladson-Lang. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 6:07 p.m.

The committee resume in public session at 6:23 p.m.

Dr. Betsy Sisson was the next candidate. Dr. Sisson chose to hold the interview in public session.

Dr. Sisson said she went into education because she wanted to make a difference. She said she chose reading because of her background and the importance of reading to children. She said she obtained an elementary education degree, certifications as a reading specialist, remedial reading teacher, and a reading consultant. She said she then obtained a doctorate in educational leadership and policy studies and her administrative certificate.

Dr. Sisson said she worked initially at an international school in South Korea. She said in the U.S. she worked on federal grants in the area of after-school programs and parent engagement. She said she had been in the district for almost 19 years. She taught 7th grade ELA for one year at Marin School, then became a literacy coach at the school.

Dr. Sisson said she felt she could make a difference in kids' lives by being an assistant principal. She said she wanted to work with teachers in instructional work.

Dr. Sisson said she had been working with every grade level in Bridgeport and with every content area as a literacy coach. She said she understood how to move people forward in these areas.

Dr. Sisson said a successful school needs a warm, welcoming environment, and to be a safe space where kids want to be. She said she viewed a school as a learning family. She said effective schools are rigorous with curriculum being implemented with fidelity.

Dr. Sisson said her leadership style was collaborative. She said she would also use a term from her doctorate work: transformative, a notion that involves a common goal and a mission in place.

Dr. Sisson said a very coherent and consistent disciplinary plan had to be in place, which would make children more likely to adhere to rules. She said communication was vital in this area.

Dr. Sisson said the most important thing for promoting a positive culture is knowing that you care. If people don't think you really care about them as people it doesn't matter how good an instructor you are. She said kids who have the most severe behavior issues can be reached this way.

By way of summary, Dr. Sisson highlighted her 19 years in the district, working at every level and every content area, and her background in literacy.

Mr. Weldon said the committee was interviewing for three or four elementary school locations. A recommendation would be made to Mr. Testani, then he will interview the candidates over the next few days and decide where he wants to place people to be effective August 1.

The next candidate was Natisha Vidal. Ms. Vidal Lang did not require the interview to be held in public session.

Mr. Weldon moved to go into executive session for the purpose of interviewing Natisha Vidal for an assistant principal position in the district. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy. Invited to participate were the committee, Mr. Chester, and the candidate.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 6:41 p.m.

The committee resumed in public session at 7:02 p.m.

Christine Neary was the next candidate. Ms. Neary did not require the interview to be held in public session.

Mr. Weldon moved to go into executive session for the purpose of interviewing Christine Neary for the position of assistant principal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy. Invited to participate were the committee, Mr. Chester, and the candidate.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The executive session begins at 7:04 p.m.

The committee resumed in public session at 7:26 p.m.

Lisa Anderson-Andrews was the next candidate. Ms. Anderson-Andrews did not require the interview to be held in public session.

Mr. Weldon moved to go into executive session for the purpose of interviewing Lisa Anderson-Andrews for the position of assistant principal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy. Invited to participate were the committee, Mr. Chester, and the candidate.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 7:28 p.m.

The committee resumed in public session at 7:47 p.m.

The next candidate was Vernon Thompson. Mr. Thompson did not require the interview to be held in public session.

Mr. Weldon moved to go into executive session for the purpose of interviewing Vernon Thompson for the position of assistant principal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy. Invited to participate were the committee, Mr. Chester, and the candidate.

The executive session began at 7:49 p.m.

The committee resumed in public session at 8:01 p.m.

Mr. Weldon moved to go into executive session on the candidates and determine a final recommendation to send to the superintendent's office. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and unanimously approved. Invited to participate were the committee and Mr. Chester.

The executive session began at 8:01 p.m.

The committee reconvened in public session at 8:12 p.m.

Mr. Weldon moved that the chief talent officer convey the committee's recommendation of four candidates for consideration by the office of the superintendent. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and unanimously approved.

Mr. Weldon moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

*Approved by the committee on January 29, 2020*