

Wednesday, June 19, 2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held June 19, 2019, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon and LaMar Kennedy. Committee member Jessica Martinez arrived subsequently as noted.

Mr. Kennedy moved to approve the minutes of May 15, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was interviews for the position of the Barnum School principal. There were three candidates.

The first candidate was Paul Tobin. Mr. Tobin did not require the interview be held in public.

Mr. Kennedy moved *“to go into executive for the purpose of interviewing Paul Tobin for the position of Barnum School principal.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.

Invited to participate were Mr. Tobin, the committee and Frank Chester, chief talent officer.

The executive session began at 6:02 p.m.

The committee reconvened in public session at 6:27 p.m. Ms. Martinez was now present.

The next candidate was David Purviance. Mr. Purviance did not require the interview be held in public.

Mr. Kennedy moved *“to go into executive session for the purpose of interviewing candidate David Purviance for the principal position at Barnum School.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez. Invited to participate were Mr. Purviance, the committee, and Mr. Chester.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 6:28 p.m.

The committee reconvened in public session at 6:57 p.m.

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

Mr. Kennedy moved *“to go into executive session for the interview of the position of Barnum School principal Christine Booth.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez and unanimously approved.

Invited to participate were the committee, Mr. Chester, and Ms. Booth.

The executive session began at 6:58 p.m.

The committee reconvened in public session at 7:29 p.m.

Ms. Martinez moved *“to go into executive session to deliberate on the three candidates.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and unanimously approved.

Invited to participate were committee members and Mr. Chester.

The executive session began at 7:29 p.m.

The committee reconvened in public session at 7:38 p.m.

Mr. Weldon moved *“to have Mr. Chester convey the Personnel Committee’s candidates in their ranked order to the superintendent for her consideration as she interviews the individuals herself.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was interviews for the position of director of Central Magnet. The two candidates were Shaun Smith and Wayne Alexander.

Ms. Smith did not require the interview be held in public session.

Ms. Martinez moved *“to go into executive session to interview Shaun Smith for the position of Central Magnet director.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and unanimously approved.

Invited to participate were Ms. Smith, the committee members, and Mr. Chester.

The executive session began at 7:40 p.m.

The board reconvened in public session at 8:10 p.m. Dr Wayne Alexander participated in his interview via speaker phone.

Dr. Alexander chose to have the interview held in public session.

Mr. Weldon said six questions would be asked and each candidate was allotted thirty minutes.

Dr. Alexander said he had served as a special education teacher, a building-level administrator, and a central office administrator for a total of 34 years. He said he has worked for the district for the last seven years in a variety of roles, including high school principal, where he reduced the failure rate and increased the graduation rate; the assistant adult education director; and director of alternative education, which graduated 20-plus students over two years. The last two years he has served as assistant principal at Read School.

Dr. Alexander said his interest in the magnet school is partly because of his background. He said he has opened magnet schools before for gifted children and developed magnet programs as a building-level administrator in Cape Cod, as well as serving as a superintendent of schools in a district that included magnets from middle schools to high schools.

Dr. Alexander said he brings a strong background in curriculum, instruction and assessment. He said he has some ideas to take a strong program and bring it to the next level.

In response to a question, Dr. Alexander said an example of handling a building crisis was a recent incident where a child

suffered an asthmatic attack. The child had a one-to-one paraprofessional who was not present. He said he turns to the board's policies and procedures and follows the steps to a T. He said he quickly utilized his available resources – social workers, school psychologist and the school nurse. He said in a crisis he falls back on those around him who have the skill and ability.

Dr. Alexander said the decision-making process is driven by summative and formative assessment results. He said he was a strong believer in using data to establish personalized learning plans for all students. He said he saw a correlation between establishing IEPs for students as well as individual learning plans for students. He said students at a very young age should have an academic plan in place that highlights strengths and areas that need support and reinforcement.

Dr. Alexander said he was a believer in buy-in from students and empowering them to play an active role in how we go about meeting their needs. He said when he was at Bassick High a senior teacher struggled with student failures and he suggested an individual meeting with each student to develop a plan using the available data. The teacher's failure rate subsequently plummeted.

Dr. Alexander said he has had extensive experience with NEASC in Massachusetts and Connecticut. He said he inherited Bassick when it was about to lose its accreditation, but working closely with the teaching staff and community members, as well as central office, the school was able to meet the accreditation responsibilities. He said the key is a school improvement plan and formula that is driven by our staff. He said he had been involved in about five NEASC accreditations and at least three or four versions of the same process in Florida.

In response to a question, Dr. Alexander said his main strength over the years has been in interpersonal relations. He said he said he was a strong builder of interpersonal skills.

Dr. Alexander said his shortcoming as an administrator is his patience. He said he does not have a great deal of tolerance for wasting time or not being focused on doing what we need to do. He said he was always trying to improve as an administrator and a person.

Dr. Alexander said he loves Bridgeport Public Schools, the kids and staff. He noted he travels an hour each day to get to work. He said he believed he had a lot more to offer than serving as an assistant principal at a K-8 school. He said he believed he could take the magnet school and bring it to the next level.

Mr. Weldon said he believed the objective is to make an appointment for the position by the end of the month.

Mr. Chester told Dr. Alexander that the superintendent would like to talk to him between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. tomorrow. Dr. Alexander said he would be available.

Ms. Martinez moved *“to go into executive session to deliberate on the two candidates for the Central Magnet director position.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and unanimously approved.

Invited to participate were the committee and Mr. Chester.

The executive session began at 8:26 p.m.

The committee reconvened in public session at 8:41 p.m.

Mr. Weldon moved “*to have Mr. Chester convey the committee’s sentiments relative to this position to the superintendent for her consideration as she interviews them herself.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Kennedy and unanimously approved.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod