

October 14, 2010 - Superintendent Search Committee

George Conway of search firm Heidrick and Struggles (H&S) came prepared to present 4 “highly recommended” candidates for Supt. to the committee. He said that applicants were concentrated on the east coast, that they had 24 applicants, with a potential for 41 candidates who had expressed interest in the job. Two of the four he is prepared to present have asked for complete confidentiality, as they do not want to jeopardize their current jobs. Mr. Conway described that his presentation of candidates would include H&S analysis of how each one meets the WCPSS criteria, and that he would show a video clip of each candidate in an interview setting with H&S.

The committee discussed whether they were “ready” to have candidates presented, and decided to delay the actual presentations to the next meeting—scheduled for Monday, November 1, 4:30-8:30 p.m. (closed session)

Committee Chair Debra Goldman stated that she wants the entire Board to have input, not just the committee. Ron Margiotta suggested that the committee recommend the interview process, and make the first cut, and then bring a smaller number to the full Board for interviews.

Carolyn Morrison pointed out that the committee never did get a final copy of the “process and qualifications” developed August 9, that H&S revised and included in their search package, and requested that the final document be provided.

The committee agreed to finalize the process and criteria first, and bring that to the full BOE on Tuesday, Oct. 19, at the COW for approval. Mr. Conway noted that Search committees generally want to move fast, and he was surprised that Wake’s committee wants to move slowly.

Goldman noted that John Tedesco had not said a word, and wondered if he had a comment. He shook his head and he and RM left the room together, since no candidates were going to be discussed.

The **selection process** was discussed with the following agreed upon to present to the full BOE for approval. It was agreed that a final application deadline would be “soft”, so that the BOE could continue taking applications, if the first candidates did not meet their criteria.

1. H&S will screen all the applicants, and bring 5-10 “superbly qualified candidates” to the Superintendent Search committee for discussion of qualifications and review of their interview video, during the Nov. 1 closed session. Initial background checks will be completed by H&S before bringing these candidates to the committee.

2. The committee (but attendance by all BOE members is encouraged) will hear the summaries by H&S, and reduce the list to 3-5 candidates to be interviewed by the full BOE in closed session at an undetermined future date. Anne McLaurin suggested that the top three be interviewed publicly. (No decision was made on when or if candidates’ names will become public.) WCPSS will also do their own background check on these candidates prior to their interviews.

3. An evaluation rubric will be used by the committee for the process of reducing the list of candidates to those to be interviewed. It was noted that Carolyn Morrison had submitted 2 examples of job interview rubrics for committee consideration, and those were distributed. The Board's attorney then suggested that the committee consider using the new Rubric for Evaluating NC Superintendents just approved by NCDPI in September 2010. (Note that this same suggestion was previously made by Carolyn Morrison and voted down at a BOE meeting!) Copies of the NCDPI rubric were distributed, and the committee voted unanimously to use it in the evaluation process for the WCPSS Superintendent.

I could only locate a draft version of the Rubric can be found on the NCDPI website at:
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/stateboard/meetings/2010/09/tcp/09tcp02.pdf>

The main difference in the draft and final version is that the headings of the proficiency levels was changed to "Developing, Proficient, Accomplished, and Distinguished". It is interesting to note that the criteria include things like: "...result in improved achievement for all students", "...assessment based on research and best practices...", "...achieve high expectations for students", "...ensures that the district is a professional learning community", "...ensure high-quality, high-performing staff", "...focus on improving performance and student achievement", "...inclusion of all stakeholders in decisions about resources", "...improved student achievement" (mentioned 3 times).

4. The full BOE will interview the 3-5 finalists, using secret, common questions for all candidates. H&S will also help frame questions in order to get the best information. Follow-up questions might be specific to individual candidates. The BOE attorney will review questions to ensure that they are within legal bounds. BOE might ask final 2 candidates to return for a second interview. Candidates might also be asked to make a presentation on a "hot" issue.

Mr. Conway reminded the committee that the candidates will also be checking out the WCPSS on their own.

Committee members and BOE members are to send suggested general interview questions to Chairman Goldman, to be reviewed by the BOE attorney. Additional questions might become evident after committee members learn about the candidates.