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## Superintendent Search Process Committee Minutes 09/16/2008

Approved 10/3/2008

### Superintendent Search Process Committee September 16, 2008 Minutes

**In attendance:** Leba Heigham  
Jeff Thielman  
Kathleen Bodie (Interim Superintendent)

**Excused:** Denise Burns

Leba Heigham called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. Ms. Heigham outlined the three purposes for the meeting: a) to review areas of discussion for the interim contract, b) any additional language or consideration for the contract, and c) an executive session to discuss the terms of the contract.
2. Review of the Interim Contract Discussions
  - a. Ms. Heigham said that in the previous meeting Ms. Burns proposed a one-year contract for Ms. Bodie, pro-rated from August 7, 2008 (the date Mr. Levenson resigned and Ms. Bodie was selected as Interim Superintendent). Ms. Burns proposed awarding Ms. Bodie a stipend for her service as both interim superintendent and Assistant Superintendent beginning on August 7<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. Ms. Heigham stated that the consensus in the previous meeting was to award Ms. Bodie a salary that was somewhat less than the \$158,738 Mr. Levenson was earning during the 2008-09 school year because Mr. Levenson was beginning the fourth year of his term as superintendent.
  - c. Ms. Bodie said that she just obtained a copy of Mr. Levenson's contract today and needed time to review it. She indicated that the language of Mr. Levenson's contract differed from the language in her contract as Assistant Superintendent.
  - d. Mr. Thielman said that a goal of the contract negotiations in 2005 with Mr. Levenson was to provide him with a salary that was near the middle of salaries for Superintendents of our "peer communities." Mr. Thielman indicated that in the 2005-06 negotiations with the Arlington Education Association, the School Committee and the AEA agreed to the following "peer communities" – Belmont, Beverly, Brookline, Cambridge, Lexington, Marblehead, Medford, Melrose, Somerville, Stoneham, Swampscott, Wakefield, Waltham, Watertown, and Winchester. Mr. Thielman pointed out that Mr. Levenson's salary was near the bottom of the peer communities in 2005 but jumped to the middle of the communities by September of 2006 after he was awarded a "merit pay" increase by the School Committee based on his performance during the first year of his contract.
  - e. Ms. Bodie said she would not accept a merit pay provision in her contract. She felt the best thing for Arlington was for the Superintendent's salary to simply start approximately in the middle range of the peer communities. If the goal of contract negotiations was for teachers to be in the middle range, then it would be appropriate for the Superintendent's salary to be in the middle range, increasing at a yearly percentage rate equal to what the teachers get in their contract.
  - f. Ms. Bodie suggested that it would be good to research the salaries for Superintendents in these communities.
  - g. Mr. Thielman said he felt somewhat uncomfortable providing Ms. Bodie with a stipend for doing double duty as Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent from August 7<sup>th</sup> to the present. He said that it may create a precedent we don't want to set. "What happens when a Department Head resigns suddenly and teachers and perhaps other department heads pick up the slack? Do we award them a stipend as well?"
  - h. Ms. Heigham said that in the previous meeting the subcommittee discussed providing professional development days to Ms. Bodie so that she could finish her Ph.D. at Boston College. Ms. Heigham suggested that the contract contain two fixed professional days and five floating days.

3. Additional Terms for Consideration

- a. Ms. Bodie said that she needed to think about the annuity provision. She noted that Mr. Levenson's contract contained an annuity.
- b. Ms. Bodie said that she feels it is important that the three ½ day board retreats in Mr. Levenson's contract remain in her contract.
- c. Ms. Heigham said that the Committee had yet to determine whether it would do a search for a permanent Superintendent this year or next year. She said this decision would impact the terms of the contract. Ms. Heigham suggested a rollover provision that would state that if the committee did not begin a search by a date certain then Ms. Bodie's contract would be extended through the 2009-10 school year. Ms. Heigham said that uncertainty over who would serve as Superintendent next year (2009-10) was not good for the District and could cause Ms. Bodie to pursue a position as Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent in another district.
- d. Mr. Thielman pointed out that the current contract language, which was recommended by Stoneman, Chandler and Miller, was that the Superintendent is notified by no later than December 15<sup>th</sup> of the last year of the contract if s/he is being renewed. This gives the Superintendent and the Committee time to plan. Mr. Thielman noted that if the contract with Interim Superintendent Bodie is signed on September 23<sup>rd</sup> or at the first meeting in October (October 14<sup>th</sup>), it would leave about 8 weeks before the standard rollover date went into effect.
- e. Mr. Thielman said the "Transitions" program sponsored jointly by the MASS and MASC will help the School Committee decide whether it wants to do a search this year or next year. The School Committee needs to decide whether it wants to undergo this process first. Mr. Thielman said that in his opinion the search should be conducted by either the committee sitting from April 2008 to April 2009 or the Committee elected to serve from April 2009 to April 2010. He noted that the 2004-05 search began at the end of the 2003-04 School Committee term because no one had taken out papers to run against incumbents Suzanne Owayda and Paul Schlichtman.
- f. Mr. Thielman said that his brief research on the Transitions Program, a joint program of the Massachusetts Associations of School Committees (MASC) and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) was that the School Committee would undergo a program that includes: i) an initial presentation by MASS and MASC to the School Committee, ii) consultant training, iii) assessment by the consultant of the District, including interviews with key players, iv) kick off session in which the consultants present key findings, v) planning sessions in which the Committee develops specific plans to address at least one high priority issue, vi) coaching for the Superintendent and School Committee Chair, vii) a team building session, and viii) ongoing coaching, updates, and information exchanges.

4. Motion to adjourn by Mr. Thielman. Second by Ms. Heigham. Approved 2-0.

The subcommittee meets next on Monday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00 p.m.

Submitted by Ms. Heigham