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CLERK OF  
THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
20 IRVING STREET  
WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS 01609

AGENDA #33

on: Monday November 22, 2021  
at: 5:45 p.m. - Regular Session  
virtually in: Room 410 at the Durkin Administration Building

ORDER OF BUSINESS

ACTION

I. CALL TO ORDER

INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

NATIONAL ANTHEM

II. ROLL CALL

V. GENERAL BUSINESS

gb #1-232.1 -Mayor Petty  
(November 18, 2021)

To consider options, if necessary, to begin the process and engage with a search consultant to conduct a national search to recruit and hire a Superintendent of schools for the Worcester Public Schools with an effective start date of JULY 1, 2022. Prior to the commencement of the search process, the School Committee, in collaboration with the consultant, will develop and implement a comprehensive, inclusive, public process to solicit input from all members of the Worcester community regarding the needs of the district and the characteristics and skillsets required in the next Superintendent of schools.

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X. GENERAL BUSINESS  
Mayor Petty  
(November 18, 2021)

ITEM - gb #1-232.1  
S.C. MEETING - 11-22-21

ITEM:

To consider options, if necessary, to begin the process and engage with a search consultant to conduct a national search to recruit and hire a Superintendent of schools for the Worcester Public Schools with an effective start date of JULY 1, 2022. Prior to the commencement of the search process, the School Committee, in collaboration with the consultant, will develop and implement a comprehensive, inclusive, public process to solicit input from all members of the Worcester community regarding the needs of the district and the characteristics and skillsets required in the next Superintendent of schools.

PRIOR ACTION:

9-2-21 - Mayor Petty stated that Superintendent Binienda has been a dedicated public servant for 46 years and has done a wonderful job taking care of the students in the Worcester Public Schools. It was not an easy decision to make but the School Committee has voted not to renew her contract. He also stated that the search for a new Superintendent will be transparent, public and a nationwide one. In order to start the process, an RFP will need to be put in place in order for the School Committee members to vote on a search consultant at the next meeting of the School Committee. He further stated that an Ad Hoc Search Committee for the next Superintendent will be established with Ms. McCullough as the Chair person and Miss Biancheria and Ms. Novick as members.  
Mayor Petty requested that the School Committee develop a timeline for the selection of the next Superintendent of Schools.

BACKUP:

RECOMMENDATION OF MAKER:

RECOMMENDATION OF ADMINISTRATION:

Discuss.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-2-21 - Ms. McCullough stated that the item on the agenda should not be seen (continued) as a disapproval of Superintendent Binienda's performance. She has been a dedicated and compassionate educator which has proven true in all of her evaluations. She also stated that she feels that it is the right decision for the district to start the search for a new Superintendent.

Mr. Monfredo stated that Superintendent Binienda deserves a one-year extension on her contract. She is committed to education, the community and has done an exemplary job leading the school district through the pandemic.

Mrs. Clancey stated that she feels that the school district needs to have a strong leadership team in place to move in a positive direction over the next several years. She would like to see the new Superintendent work with the School Committee to implement long-term goals for the district without further disruption and educational loss to the students.

Mr. Foley stated that he would like to see the new Superintendent bring together all members of the community to work in collaboration to improve academic achievement for all students. He also stated that the School Committee is looking for a leader who will be able to build a strong coalition across the community with a shared vision and responsibility for the success of all students. He suggested that the business community, parents, community leaders, colleges, universities and the faith community be included in the selection process.

Ms. Novick stated that MASC will not be able to respond to any Request for Proposals for the Superintendent search due to the fact that she is employed by them and it would be considered a conflict of interest. She stated that she would like the School Committee to conduct a fully comprehensive and inclusive public input process to include involvement of students, families and educators. She would like translators at all public input sessions which should be at different times, locations, handicapped accessible and possibly involve child care and public transportation, if needed.

Miss Biancheria stated that Superintendent Binienda has accomplished a lot as Superintendent of the Worcester Public Schools but believes it is time to pass the baton to the next superintendent.

Superintendent Binienda stated that she is honored to be the Superintendent of the Worcester Public Schools and is very proud of all her accomplishments. She is also proud of the staff and teachers in the system and would encourage them to aspire to be Superintendent. She also stated that she will continue to work with the School Committee to lead the school system through another challenging year.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

- 9-2-21 (continued) Mayor Petty made the following motion:  
Based on action taken Executive Session, request that the School Committee vote not to renew the Superintendent's contract and to let it expire on its own terms on June 30, 2022.  
On a roll call of 6-1 (nay Mr. Monfredo), the motion not to renew the Superintendent's contract was approved.  
Mayor Petty made the following motions:  
To begin the process and engage with a search consultant to conduct a national search to recruit and hire a Superintendent for the Worcester Public Schools with an effected date of July 1, 2022. Prior to the commencement of the search process, the School Committee, in collaboration with the consultant, will develop and implement a comprehensive, inclusive, public process to solicit input from all members of the Worcester community regarding the needs of the district and the characteristics and skillsets required in the next Superintendent of Schools.  
To also begin the process for the Ad Hoc Search Committee for the next Superintendent and provide a timeline of the search within the next month.  
On a roll call of 6-1 (nay Mr. Monfredo), the motions were approved.  
Miss Biancheria requested that the word national be defined.  
Mayor Petty made the following motion:  
Refer Miss Biancheria's request to define the word "national" to the Ad Hoc Search Committee for the next Superintendent.  
On a voice vote, the motion was approved.
- 9-17-21 - AD HOC SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT  
Miss Biancheria asked how many public meetings will be taking place to which Chairperson McCullough responded that the proposed RFP recommends four to ten meetings. She also inquired as to the process for reporting the updates to the public and full School Committee. Dr. Friel stated that the information will be reported out to the public at School Committee meetings in the format of a Standing Committee Action Sheet.  
Ms. Novick stated that she understands that the search firm will be recruiting its own applicants but wants to be sure that all applications will be accepted.  
Ms. McCullough moved to approve the following timeline:  
SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH TIMELINE  
**September**
  - Ad Hoc meeting held on 9/16 and a timeline and RFP will be approved to be considered by the full committee at the 9/23 meeting.
  - 9/24 -Worcester Public Schools issues an RFP for a search firm. Allow thirty days for the bid process to conclude.**October**
  - Bids should be received by 10/27. Special meeting of the School Committee to be held 10/28 to approve firm.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-17-21 (continued)

November & December

- 11/17- Firm contract should be completed and a special meeting will be held. School Committee meets in public session with search firm to discuss and decide on timeline and process.
- Search Committee Appointed and Orientation
  - The Search Committee is a public body and subject to Open Meeting law.
  - Meetings are public and will be posted.
  - The Search Committee needs their own clerk that they can appoint or the search firm can provide this service.
- The search firm should use the remainder of November and December to meet with district stakeholders.
  - Central administrators
  - All principals
  - Teachers in staff meetings
  - Other staff in sessions during their work day
  - Student councils
  - Parent-specific sessions in multiple languages, at easily accessible spaces throughout the city via public transit, at multiple times of day, including weekends, with childcare at a minimum
  - Community sessions, also with all of the above
  - Other stakeholders: consider individual meetings with Committee members, with city staff that works with the district, with the delegation, etc.
- Focus surveys planned and on-line survey developed; materials development completed and ready for distribution
- 12/21 - Search firm comes back to Committee with proposed position description. Committee deliberates and approves posting.

January

- 1/4- position posted. This must be shared nationally.
- Search Committee will organize to prepare for screening of candidates, scheduling of interviews, and preparation of questions with the search firm in executive session.

February

- 2/4- Deadline Set for Filing Applications (3:00 p.m. EST via mail, e-mail, fax or personal delivery to search coordinator)
- Applications are compiled and prepared for the Search Committee to review. Review begins immediately. Search committee meets in executive session to review confidential applications with search firm and to select semi-finalists for confidential interviews.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-17-21 (continued)

- Weeks of February 14 and 21 Semi-finalist interviews with search committee in executive session. Care should be taken that the identities of the semi-finalists are not known outside of the search committee. After final interview, search committee makes selection of finalists.

March

- 3/3- Search committee announces finalists to School Committee
- Weeks of 3/7 and 3/14 non-quorum subset of Committee visits finalist's home districts.
- Weeks of 3/21 and 3/28 finalists visit Worcester; finalists are interviewed by full Committee in public session

April

- 4/4- School Committee makes hiring decision and announces the next Superintendent
- Contract negotiations take place in a timely manner.
- New superintendent participates in budget development process, including goalsetting

May & June

- New superintendent transitions in, meeting with district staff, participating in administrative work as necessary/possible. Coordination with current administration is crucial.
- New superintendent participates in planning for summer.

July 1, 2022

- Superintendent takes office.

On a roll call of 3-0, the proposed timeline was approved.

Chairperson McCullough provided information regarding the Report for Proposal for an executive search firm. She stated that the proposals must be received by October 27, 2021 and will then be approved by the School Committee on October 28, 2021. Interviews will take place during the week of February 14, 2022 and a finalist will be selected on April 4, 2022.

Ms. Novick moved to amend the RFP as follows:

Change the title to read: **Superintendent Search for the Worcester Public Schools**

Request for Proposals for Executive Search Firm

Candidate Selection Criteria

Under 2c, delete the word **town** before government officials.

Candidate Selection Criteria,

Under 2e, add the words **in multiple relevant languages** after conduct an online survey.

Timeline

Under 3b iii, add **and** before submission and delete **and timelines**

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-17-21 (continued)

Candidate Screening

Under 5g, add **finalist** after semi-finalists.

Final Candidate Selection Process

Under 6j, replace Public Schools of Worcester to **Worcester Public Schools.**

General Information about the District

Add **the first and last paragraphs of page 49 of the FY22 WPS Budget** for general information regarding the district as follows.”

As of January 1, 2021, there were over 27,582 school aged children (Kindergarten to Grade 12) residing in the City of Worcester, and of that, over 23,326 of the students, or about 84.6%, attend the Worcester Public Schools (or specialized collaborative placements). When including pre-school students of 910 students, the district enrollment is 23,872 on January 1, 2021 1 which includes students within 44 schools and 5 alternative pathway programs. With 4,753 employees, including 2,546 teachers, the district is the third-largest school district in the Commonwealth (behind Boston with 48,112 students and Springfield with 24,239 students) and the second-largest employer in the City of Worcester behind UMass Memorial Health Care with 11,491 employees.

The student demographics in Worcester include 43% Hispanic, 29% White, 17% African American, 6.5% Asian, and 4.4% of other or multi-race designation. More than 58% of the district’s students have a first language other than English. Poverty is common in urban school districts, and in Worcester, about 81% of the student body is classified as high needs (unduplicated count of students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL) and former ELL students, or low-income students (eligible for free/reduced price school lunch). Of the district’s enrollment, 64% of students are categorized as economically disadvantaged (students’ participation in one or more state-administered programs, such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children, the Department of Children and Families’ foster care program, and MassHealth program). Upon return to full in-person instruction, the district is expected to serve nearly 4.8 million school meals annually which equates to 9,860 breakfasts and 17,100 lunches daily, along with afternoon snacks/dinner and summer meals. Also, approximately 11,400 students, including charter schools, parochial schools, and private school students are provided transportation to and from school daily with approximately 230 buses and pupil vans traveling over 11,500 miles per day.

On a roll call of 3-0, the Request for Proposal was approved as amended.

PRIOR ACTION (continued)

9-17-21 (continued)

Miss Biancheria requested that when using the words "national search" to include the City of Worcester, the State of Massachusetts and New England.

9-23-21 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING - The School Committee approved the action of the Ad Hoc Committee as stated.

11-9-21 - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Ms. McCullough stated two proposals were submitted from the search firms of Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates and Greenwood/Asher and Associates. Using the rubric that was developed as part of the criteria that was listed in the RFP, an evaluation was done and it was decided that both firms met the minimum criteria. Each firm provided five references to contact but only four were contacted based on outreach. Those contacted for HYA stated that they were satisfied but there were some issues regarding the vetting of candidates.

She presented the financial proposals and stated that the services that Greenwood Asher would provide are much more substantial.

Miss Biancheria and Mr. Monfredo voiced their disappointment in only having two firms for consideration.

Ms. McCullough made the following motion:

Request that the School Committee move forward with the recommendation from the Ad Hoc Committee of Greenwood Asher and Associates and send it to the City purchasing director for final approval.

On a roll call of 7-0, the motion was approved.

On a roll call of 7-0, the Action Sheet was approved.