

**Sudbury Public Schools
Sudbury, Massachusetts
School Committee Special Meeting
January 18, 2003**

Present: Rich Robison, Chairperson, Karen Krone, Vice Chairperson
Members: Bill Braun, Kathy Precourt, Jane Santinelli

Rich Robison called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

The Committee discussed strengths and considerations of each of the four finalists for the Superintendent position.

Andre Ravenelle, Assistant Superintendent, Barnstable Public Schools

Strengths

creative-problem solver
builds partnerships with business
energized, willingness to take on any situation head-on
experience in difficult circumstances
leadership style appears to be calm and reasoned in crisis situations
strong communicator - builds a culture of empowerment
"everyone takes ownership of the good times, but you also need to own the bad times"
"parents are our customers"
big picture thinker
Knows Massachusetts
built trusting relationship with Town officials
at times, acts in role of superintendent

Considerations

most experience has been in middle and high school, not Pre-K-elementary
no track record of continuous, sustained day to day management
in light of our significant leadership change, may be difficult to step in without superintendent experience
pros and cons to charter school initiatives
Do his solutions fit our problems given the differences between Barnstable and Sudbury?

Nancy Young, Superintendent, Holliston Public Schools

Strengths

reflective, thoughtful
highly intelligent
extraordinary educational visionary
highly competent at implementing a vision and strategic plan
negotiated contracts to goal based performance systems tied directly with strategic plan
buildings designed to meet educational needs; consolidated resources
courageous decision maker during difficult times
extremely hard worker
committed to being present in classroom
creative in Special Education service delivery
clear communication

Considerations

responses were more philosophical; lack of specificity in answers
large group communication is less effective
slow to respond to critical situations
communication style may be perceived as remote

Mag Giffune, Superintendent, Uxbridge Public Schools

Strengths

a do-er style, pragmatic, "it is what it is"
superintendent in two different scenarios, lots of opportunity to practice craft energized
could grasp educational research and create initiatives that were successful
collaborative style; approachable; sense of humor
extraordinary command of numbers
understands best practices and upcoming initiatives
positive relationships with unions, teachers, and other staff
decisive
made dramatic improvements in educational quality under tremendous financial constraints
focused on individuals as well as system
"one person at a time"; "one decision at a time"
"surgical decisions" vs. "amputation"
emphasized importance of class size and classrooms
active leader at the state level
answered questions directly and succinctly

Considerations

acted too quickly on educational initiatives without building support
controversies not always improved upon
sense of humor could get in the way; confusion; could lead to misinterpretations
less consistency in impressions from Sudbury visit; different groups reacted in different ways
some inconsistent behavior was observed, level of attention, engagement to different groups

John Bracket, Superintendent, Lake Shores, MI, Public Schools

Strengths

strong visionary
consistent impressions/behavior
extraordinary interpersonal skills; charismatic
experience dealing with different demographics
strong problem solving skills, track record of improvement
current district identified by Standard & Poors as "best bang for your buck"
very strong presence; made very positive connections with people
coached others to perform at a high level; strong leadership development
business, private sector, and budget background a huge asset
wants time to talk to children built into his schedule
comfortable in multiple settings; genuine with all people
conducts staff forums; visits schools on a regular basis
answered questions carefully and conscientiously
"he can learn the things he doesn't know, but he has all the skills that can't be taught"
perceived as a community leader
created supervisory leadership council
initiated improvements without benefit of existing structure
experience having to learn a new state system
consensus of observations among Sudbury groups including administrators and teachers

Considerations

question of differences in Michigan and Massachusetts; learning curve
connections to resources here
would Sudbury present enough of a professional challenge?
needs to understand the culture of Sudbury
question about decision making style/timing
moving an already high performing district to the next level
"I'm not a curriculum guy"

Open Forum

Susan Post, 14 Belcher Drive, PTO co-Chair Nixon, stated Nancy Young did not present with a high level of enthusiasm.

Alexa Crow, 268 Old Sudbury Road, felt that Mag Giffune is passionate about her job and John Brackett would bring a fresh perspective.

Linda Karpeichik, Early Childhood Coordinator, didn't see a high level of enthusiasm in Mag Giffune.

Ron Eckel, Loring Principal, congratulated everyone involved for such a thorough process.

Gay Gibson-McDonald, Noyes School, appreciated being able to participate in the process from the beginning. She commended the School Committee on their efforts.

Karen Krone commented that her efforts around consensus feedback was to summarize feedback from various groups and not to represent or misrepresent any individual.

Rich Robison asked Committee members for their choice.

Kathy Precourt chose John Brackett. She felt he represents more of a fit regarding what is needed here in Sudbury. He can be superintendent and also function as a community leader. He has the ability to interact at all levels, being a manager as well as leader. "He is a politician in the best sense of the word."

Karen Krone chose John Brackett. Karen reported she had also received consensus around John Brackett from the following groups: Curriculum, Technology & Instruction people, the Administrative Leadership Team, the Teachers, and Town Leaders. She noted that parents did not have an opportunity to give feedback as a group.

Jane Santinelli chose John Brackett. He has strong leadership development skills as well as a strong track record.

Bill Braun chose John Brackett. He has strong interpersonal skills, he is a competent executive, and he has an extraordinary ability to interact with children.

Rich Robison chose John Brackett. He represents the best fit for Sudbury at this time. He will build collaboration and consensus.

VOTED: On a motion by Jane Santinelli, seconded by Karen Krone, to proceed to offer the position of Superintendent of Sudbury Public Schools to, and negotiate a contract with, John Brackett, current Superintendent of the Lake Shore Public Schools, St. Claire Shores, MI. The vote was 5--0 in favor.

VOTED: On a motion by Karen Krone, seconded by Jane Santinelli, to adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of Contact Negotiations, not to return to open session. The vote was 5-0 in favor. The time was 10:55 a.m.

Yes Bill Braun
Yes Jane Santinelli
Yes Rich Robison
Yes Karen Krone
Yes Kathy Precourt

Submitted by Joanne Bleiler, Recording Secretary