



# ST. PAUL CITY SCHOOL

Draft Board Meeting Minutes

April 1, 2024

5:00-7:00 PM

215 University Ave W, St. Paul, MN 55103

Media Center

- 1) Establishment of a Quorum – Call to Order at 5:08 pm by Michael Dorner.
  - a) Board Members Present: Michael Dorner, Sheila Williams Ridge, Dayan Hernandez, Maria Lopez & Sky Davey
  - b) Board Members Absent: None.
  - c) Non-Voting Members Present: None.
  - d) Guests: Esteban Rodriguez-Hefty
- 2) Public Comments – None.
- 3) Declaration of Conflict of Interest – None.
- 4) Approval of Meeting Agenda – Sheila, seconded by Maria.
  - a) Michael Dorner – Aye
  - b) Sky Davey - Aye
  - c) Discussion – None
- 5) MSBA recommended the presentation candidates to the board
  - a) Sheila wondered about the process and why the recommendations for candidates started off. John from MSBA
  - b) Sky wonders what rules and guidelines were used to select the highlighted candidates. John allows the board to see the applicants credentials and believes that the board should be able to question the candidates.

- c) Sheila wanted the board to examine the stakeholder survey first in order to make an informed decision about the applicant selection process.
- 6) Stakeholder Survey
- a) Ended up with 70 respondents total (believed to see 10-15% of respondents), which is in line with MSBA's goals.
  - b) Criteria seen in stakeholder survey: Ethical, experience in implementing educational priorities, visible and accessible to all, fosters a strong administrative team, experience in school district management practices. Experience as an Executive Director was beneficial - 70% of respondents said so.
  - c) Challenges: Retention and attraction of top talent is difficult, student behavior and ensuring safety, curriculum and instructional practices, safety at the forefront.
  - d) John from MSBA encourages the school to place the survey on the public website for applicants and stakeholders to see before the interviews occur.
  - e) Dr. Dorner found it interesting to read the comments regarding the school merger in 2019. Sheila talks about internal candidates in her work being helpful at times or sometimes that being harmful. John advises against sharing the raw data with the board due to data privacy reasons. Sheila would like to see the aggregated data regarding the question about the merger. Sky believes that it should be approached in the way of building community and a common culture that can be built between the different floors and programs in the form of an interview question rather than being a point of consideration for what candidate should be selected or not. Sheila agreed with Sky's point about making it a point of emphasis as an interview question.
- 7) Applicant Discussion
- a) Dr. Dorner wonders how the boards should proceed regarding the discussion surrounding applicants. Maria talks about reviewing the recommended candidates first.
  - b) John from MSBA talked a bit about how the process typically goes.
  - c) Sheila asked whether Candidate C was hired after or before the merger.
  - d) Sheila had a question regarding Candidate B and that they weren't able to come in to interview. John said that they talked about most likely not being able to

attend an interview in person in St. Paul. The candidate was asked if they would be able to interview via zoom. MSBA connected with the board to see if that could be an option. If selected the board could decide to offer an interview via Zoom.

- e) Maria asked whether it's helpful for the board to rank the candidates and select the strongest ones. John from MSBA cautioned the board against it.
- f) Dr. Dorner stated there were two candidates from out of state but Maria clarified that they were in the process of getting a MN license which John stated was not required to be a Superintendent in Minnesota. Maria talked about the other candidate being in the process of moving back to Minnesota. John stated that only one candidate (Candidate E) had no connection to Minnesota and St. Paul. Dr. Dorner asks if there were relocation would the school pay for that to happen since it's a common practice.
- g) Sheila shares that Candidate G is out of state as well but was not selected as a recommended candidate by MSBA. Dr. Dorner wonders how an interview would be arranged for an out-of-state candidate.
- h) Dr. Dorner is surprised about Candidate B's listing of the terminal degree. Also as far as it's shown, their only work experience lists information from 2022. Maria spoke about being able to expand on the work history in the portal. Sheila said that she was able to see the experience and work but not the time periods that the work experience happened at. Sheila believed that the resume on Candidate B is not as strong as some of the other candidates that were not selected.
- i) John:
  - i) Candidate A: ED, Principal, Social Worker, Bachelor's, Masters; SPCS aligns with the assets and passion of the school. Can bring a new vision to support the growth and development of diverse learners.
  - ii) Candidate B: AVID Director, Principal, Assistant Principal, Bachelor of Science, Master. Will establish a strong leadership team.
  - iii) Candidate C: Interim Director, Special Ed Director, Special Ed Teacher. Schools must be innovative and responsive to the changing needs of learners.

- iv) Candidate F: Principal, Assistant Principal and Teacher. Masters, Bachelors, Doctorate. Innovation and responsiveness. Must foster a team of individuals with optimism.
  - v) Maria wonders if the board has the ability to look the candidates up on Linked In or social media. John talks about it being normal for board members to look up the candidates on Social Media and that it is legal to use that information to inform their decision.
  - vi) Sheila asked John which members of MSBA did the screening phone calls. John spoke about the members that did the screening calls. John talked about only the selected candidates being the ones that were called for an applicant screening call.
  - vii) Sky liked Candidate B's experience and credentials.
  - viii) Sky wanted to discuss Candidate G who was not previously highlighted. John believed that the other candidates were farther along or could be a better fit for the position. There was a belief of lower experience relative to the other candidates that were recommended.
  - ix) Sheila asked why Candidate D was not selected. John talked about that candidate.
  - x) Maria and Dayan believe that there is a good mix of candidates with external and internal candidates in the mix.
- 8) Motion to interview the four recommended candidates to the board - Dayan Hernandez, seconded by Maria Lopez.
- a) Dr. Dorner - Aye
  - b) Sky Davey - Aye
  - c) Sheila Williams Ridge - Aye
  - d) Applicants selected and now made public:
    - i) Ben Magras
    - ii) Chai Lee
    - iii) Eric Fergen
    - iv) Justin Tiarks

9) John Ward presented the option of going down to a limited search as a cost saving method. Maria and Dr. Dorner believes that since the board has never undergone the process that. Sheila, Sky and Dayan agree with having an outside perspective

10) Discussion about interview guidelines:

- a) John Ward from MSBA provided a summary of the interview preparation do's and don'ts.

11) Discussion around interview question selections:

- a) Sky wondered whether the board should select 10 questions for the first round interview and select another 5 questions that are more significant for the second round. John Ward talked about the board being able to have flexibility on how to proceed. Sky wonders if the board has flexibility to create specific questions for the second round of interview questions based on the first round.
- b) Maria liked question 1.
- c) Dayan wanted to discuss the question regarding the merger and whether that should be included or not even if it paints a negative picture of the school. John believes that it's fair to be open about it. Sky and Maria believe that question 8 speaks to the idea of school culture with the add on of language surrounding the merger. Sheila liked question 9 better to encapsulate the idea of staff culture. Sky believes that question 9 doesn't get to the issue about the merger and building culture and community.
- d) Sky wants a question asking about how a leader takes dissenting opinions from their leadership team.
- e) Sky wants to add a question: "What questions do you have for us?"
- f) The board selected the following questions:
  - i) Sheila
    - (1) 1, 3, 8, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 26, 30
    - (2) Sheila believes that 3 extra questions should be considered regarding their management style, the perception of their employees and their experience working with different developmental areas.

(3) Sheila believes that asking questions about experience in different categories is valuable due to the fact that candidates could give a textbook answer.

ii) Maria

(1) 1, 8, 14, 16, 20, 25, 26, 30, 31

(2) Maria wonders if question 26 can be tailored to speak to the knowledge and experience regarding the different developmental levels.

iii) Dorner

(1) 1, 8, 9, 15, 16, 19, 21, 24, 29, 31

iv) Dayan

(1) 8, 11, 16, 17, 23, 29

(2) Dayan would like to see the vision of the candidate rather than the experience as well.

v) Sky

(1) 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 26, 28, 31

(2) Sky believes that having questions about vision versus experience is more beneficial due to the nature of upper and middle management taking care of specifics.

vi) The board agreed upon 10 questions to use for the interview. John Ward will end an email to the board with the finalized questions and will send the EMD form. John Ward will email the audience input members.

12) Motion to adjourn the meeting - Sheila Williams Ridge, seconded by Dayan Hernandez.

- a) Dr. Dorner - Aye
- b) Sky Davey - Aye
- c) Maria Lopez- Aye

Meeting Adjourned at 7:26 pm

Submitted respectfully by Esteban Rodriguez-Hefty