

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

August 29, 2011  
Monday, 1:30 p.m.

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING

The School Board of Broward County, Florida, met in special session at 1:45 p.m., Monday, August 29, 2011, in the Board Room of the Kathleen C. Wright Administrative Center, 600 Southeast Third Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Present were: Chair Benjamin J. Williams; Vice Chair Ann Murray; Members, Robin Bartleman, Maureen S. Dinnen, Patricia Good, Donna P. Korn, Katherine P. Leach, Laurie Rich Levinson, Nora Rupert; Interim Superintendent Donnie Carter (was absent) and J. Paul Carland, II., Esq.

**Call to Order** The call to order was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

**Close Agenda** Upon motion by Ms. Dinnen, seconded by Mrs. Bartleman and carried, the Agenda was approved and declared closed. (9-0 vote)

1. Selection of Semi-Finalists for Superintendent of Schools Position (Approved)

Motion was made by Ms. Dinnen, seconded by Ms. Murray and carried, to review qualified candidates' applications and select semi-finalists for Superintendent of Schools position. (9-0 vote)

Ray and Associates, Inc. will provide the recommended semi-finalists for Board consideration the morning of August 29th. For proposed semi-finalists, a candidate report will be provided along with the application, resume and letters of reference.

Ray and Associates, Inc. will guide the Board through the selection process by utilizing the Matrix for Reaching Candidate Consensus.

Once the Matrix for Reaching Candidate Consensus is completed, the Board will be requested to review and discuss the findings and to vote on the final candidates for the semi-finalist interview process.

The select semi-finalists will be invited to an interview at the Special School Board meeting to be held at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, September 12, 2011.

There is no financial impact to the district.

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Ms. Gracie M. Diaz, Associate Superintendent, Human Resources, introduced Mr. Gary Ray, President, Ray and Associates, Inc., and Dr. Bill Adams, Associate, Ray and Associates, Inc., who will present information to the Board regarding the Superintendent's Search process.

Providing an overview of the candidates, Mr. Ray stated he was pleased to address the Board regarding the Superintendent's process. Mr. Ray informed that his staff of 140 associates took the traits and characteristics that the Board desired in selecting a Superintendent and made a number of contacts, advertised in professional journals and recruited to that profile, asking individuals to look at that position and telling candidates about the position and the Sunshine Law, and that there would be complete exposure to the process. Through the publications and contacts by associates around the country, there were 225 contacts for the position, traditional educators and hybrid candidates from business, military or other fields who entered the education field. Mr. Ray stated that 47 completed files were compiled, and a team of seven individuals reviewed the various resumes and developed different questions regarding the profile, narrowing down the field that applied for the position.

Mr. Ray spoke of the candidates' previous experience, education and background. As a result, the candidates were narrowed down to 20, then 14 individuals, looking at a microscopic view of their career. The final candidates for presentation to the Board were 7 individuals, a diverse pool of candidates from across the country. Mr. Ray stated that his firm was open to any other candidates the Board would like to review.

Dr. Adams informed the Board that all 47 files are available for the Board's review; there were two withdrawals, and there are now actually 45 potential candidates. Dr. Adams discussed the importance of the review of the data and the information of the seven candidates. He stated that the current information will be provided regarding the scope of the diversity of the candidates' current districts.

Dr. Adams provided a short informational capsule of each candidate which includes the Candidate's Report, application, resume and four letters of reference for each of the seven candidates.

Dr. Adams provided information on **Bryan Bowles**, Superintendent, Davis Schools District, Farmington, Utah; district enrollment (ethnicity in district and state average), budget, and education.

Referring to the first letter of reference for Dr. Bowles, Mrs. Bartleman stated that the first letter of reference, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, is out of context.

Dr. Adams responded that the letter was written by the employee of the district regarding bad press about an employee of the district; good and bad employees working for the district. Dr. Adams stated that the person did not want to sign the letter, as explained in the last paragraph.

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Mr. Ray stated that the letter was a positive letter and Dr. Bowles thought it would be a good piece to submit.

Mrs. Good voiced concern over a reference letter being submitted that was not signed and dated; everyone has a right to know who they are. Mrs. Good stated that it does not say too much about an individual, including a letter that is 11 years old even though they did not want to be identified. Typically when applying for a job, current letters of reference are expected.

Mr. Ray responded that the key is interviewing the candidates, which goes beyond references.

Mrs. Rich Levinson stated that the letters refer to when he was applying for a principal position. She inquired whether there were references regarding his application to the superintendent position.

Responding affirmatively, Dr. Adams stated that undated letters do not speak well, yet staff felt that Dr. Bowles should not be eliminated because of the background and because of the vetting that was done by the individual gathering the information. Dr. Adams stated that the people who wrote the letters of reference were contacted and they do know the individual from the district, and they were asked for additional references. There were at least Eight (8) letters of reference checked for Dr. Bowles. Dr. Adams further stated that he generally advises people, when submitting letters of reference, to look at the criteria established by the Board and address what can be legitimately addressed based on what the Board is looking for. Dr. Adams informed that the candidate was thoroughly vetted and staff (Ray and Associates) is satisfied that the person has the credentials that he says he has.

Ms. Dinnen stated that as far as part of the inclusion, the references include prestigious individuals, such as the Lieutenant Governor, a state representative, and a Superintendent from the State Office of Education, but it was not shown in the written letters. Ms. Dinnen inquired whether the candidate chooses what letters are to be included and no letters were included from those other references.

Dr. Adams responded that the candidates submit the letters they want submitted in the packet. In Florida, Minnesota and other Sunshine Law states, a candidate report is done versus a confidential report. If it were a confidential report, the other letters of reference would be included, but for legal reasons most of the people are not going to want something published as part of their responses.

Mr. Ray informed that contacts were made above and beyond those listed.

Dr. Adams provided information on **Debra Brathwaite**, Deputy Superintendent, Richland County School, District 1, Columbia, South Carolina; district enrollment (ethnicity in district and state average), budget, and education.

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(See comments below by Ms. Dinnen regarding Dr. Brathwaite, under Dr. Art Johnson discussion).

Dr. Adams provided information on **James Browder**, Former Superintendent, School District of Lee County, Fort Myers, Florida; district enrollment (ethnicity in district and state average), budget, and education.

Dr. Adams provided information on **Art Johnson**, Former Superintendent, The School District of Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach, Florida; district enrollment (ethnicity in district and state average), budget, and education.

Referring to question 13 in Dr. Johnson's Candidate Report, Mrs. Rupert stated it is well known that his communication skills with teachers in Palm Beach County was not exactly stellar. She stated that it is important to have teachers "with you" as part of the stakeholders. Mrs. Rupert inquired why Dr. Johnson was a top candidate pick.

Dr. Adams responded that Dr. Johnson's history and success in the district is well known and it was considered, trying to balance some of the issues during his 10-year tenure. One of the things that are reviewed for all candidates are tough issues the superintendents will face, issues that Broward is facing, and it was felt that Dr. Johnson was one option, looking at his strengths and weaknesses.

Mr. Ray stated that there will be differences of opinion of a superintendent in a ten-year period, but he falls in the criteria of someone the Board should review.

Mrs. Rupert stated that one criteria for Broward is to move the district forward in a positive perspective in the community, how they view the district.

Dr. Adams stated that a review was made of his success over a 10-year period and he is one candidate that can be compared to the other candidates, at least at this point in time. Dr. Adams further stated that the next phase of the process will include questions and responses submitted by the stakeholders and through e-mails to Ray and Associates, and the Board can expand upon the candidate's responses during the one-on-one interviews.

Referring to question 16 of the Candidate's Report, what is considered the greatest challenges and assets of the district, Ms. Dinnen noted that Dr. Brathwaite and Dr. Johnson did not emphasize their experience of working with employee groups and they did not emphasize trust of the community. She stated that it was not a disqualifier for her but that it "jumps" out in both of these cases.

Dr. Adams stated that is why the responses are provided, for the Board to consider a diverse and strongest possible field.

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Mr. Ray responded that question 20 relates to the establishment of trust and mutual respect. He stated that a series of questions is developed, based on the Board's criteria, so the Board can screen the candidates.

Referring to Dr. Johnson's resume, page 6 of 7, Mrs. Korn stated that he owns and operates East Boca Properties but he does not mention any experience in real estate or owning a company. Mrs. Korn inquired whether this issue was explored with Dr. Johnson.

Mr. Ray responded that is the only information provided and it may be an issue that the candidate can expand upon. Mr. Ray stated that the candidates know that the responses are public information and they try to answer them as best they can. If the candidate is selected, some of the responses can be more deeply explored.

Dr. Adams provided information on **Robert Runcie**, Chief of Staff to the Board of Education, Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, Illinois; district enrollment (ethnicity in district and state average), budget, and education.

Mrs. Good inquired whether the non-Florida candidates understand the dynamics of Florida as far as educational reform.

Mr. Ray responded that the candidates were very well versed in the state of Florida, that files are open in Florida. He stated that in today's job market the candidates do a lot of research into the positions; many knew that two Board Members had not yet been appointed.

Dr. Adams provided information on **Thomas Seigel**, Superintendent, Bethel School District, Spanaway, Washington; district enrollment (ethnicity in district and state average), budget, and education.

Mrs. Bartleman requested the diversity breakdown (Free and Reduced Lunch) for Mr. Seigel as former Superintendent for Boulder Valley School District. She stated that as superintendents move from district to district the diversity would be different and she wants a full flavor of the diversity.

Mr. Ray responded that that would apply to almost all candidates. He stated that it was known what the diversities would be at the time of review, but from a criteria standpoint the leadership skills were reviewed.

Responding to Mrs. Good's inquiry, Dr. Adams stated that Mr. Seigel is the current Superintendent for Bethel School District.

Dr. Adams provided information on **Bernard Taylor**, Superintendent, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Grand Rapids, Michigan; district enrollment (ethnicity in district and state average), budget, and education.

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Remarking that Ray and Associates did a very good job, Mrs. Bartleman stated that these were very good candidates to choose from, the resumes fall in line, and some were very, very impressive.

Referring to Dr. Taylor, Ms. Murray stated that in question 5, whether his board offered to renew his contract, Dr. Taylor responded that he planned to leave and the board wanted a transition leave. Ms. Murray stated that Broward School Board is eager to get someone on as rapidly as possible. She inquired whether the timeline is negotiable.

Dr. Adams responded that this issue was discussed with Dr. Taylor, and he has indicated that he would like to move on to a greater challenge and has informed the board that he will be an active candidate and is giving his board a year transition. Dr. Taylor does not plan to renew his contract, if it is offered, and Ray and Associates did not see that as an issue as far as 30/60/90-day notice to a district.

Ms. Murray stated that she reviewed the 44 resumes and she was pleased that Ray and Associates came up with hybrid candidates, which is something the Board had indicated they wanted, a well-rounded candidate for review.

Mrs. Rupert stated that Dr. Taylor indicated that the earliest he can begin is January 2012. She inquired whether he can begin earlier than that date.

Responding affirmatively, Mr. Ray stated that there is some flexibility in that date. He stated that once a candidate has made a decision to leave the district, the district that they are leaving is starting to move and transition right away.

Referring to Mr. Runcie, Mr. Williams stated that upon his review of this candidate he discovered there was a change in structure in Chicago Public Schools. Mr. Williams inquired whether Mr. Runcie is still working for Chicago Public Schools.

Dr. Adams responded that Mr. Runcie is indicating, through text message, "Yes, I am still at Chicago Public Schools. I just started a new role as Chief of Staff to the Board."

Ms. Dinnen inquired what is a Chief of Staff to the Board, whether that is a Deputy Superintendent or is that a Superintendent.

Dr. Adams responded that Chicago Public Schools technically does not have a superintendent. There is a Chief Executive Officer and he is the Chief of Staff for the Chief Executive Officer.

Mr. Ray informed that Chicago Public Schools has undergone a change and they hired someone from the East Coast, and they are still going through re-structuring. Mr. Ray stated that this candidate was discovered and the firm is excited about him and that is why he is in the pool.

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Mrs. Bartleman stated she was impressed that Mr. Runcie has held every major role, beginning with Public Information Officer, in a district double the size of Broward County.

Mr. Ray responded, if Mr. Runcie continues to look for a superintendent's position he will not be in the "mix" too long.

The following individuals addressed this item:

Jeanne Jusevic  
Michael Rajner  
Bernie Schultz

Mr. Ray responded that some of the top superintendents in the country have come from the Broad Academy; he has visited the Broad Academy and some of their candidates and they do believe in parent involvement.

Mrs. Rupert informed that she included Dr. Dennis Thompson on her short list of candidates.

Mr. Ray advised the Board that he placed Dr. Thompson in his previous position prior to Collier County and he conducted the Collier County search. Remarking that there was some controversy when he left the district and there was a buy-out and a lawsuit was involved. Mr. Ray stated that Dr. Thompson is a good candidate but due to the recent events of Broward School District, the firm did not think he was a good match and the timing was not right.

Concurring, Ms. Murray stated that Dr. Thompson's credentials were good but he was not ready for Broward County School Board.

Dr. Adams discussed and explained the Matrix for Reaching Candidate Consensus, which compares each candidate against other candidates. He explained the process for ranking the candidates.

Mr. Williams inquired whether there are other recommendations that Board Members would like for consideration.

Mrs. Leach stated that she spoke with Mr. Ray about candidate Dr. Thomas Geismar, Superintendent, Exeter-West Greenwich School District, Rhode Island. She informed that there was a concern about the size of the school district.

Concurring, Mr. Ray stated that he was a good candidate at some point in time but the size of the school district is 1,800 students, he has been a superintendent since 2007, and his only previous experience was in Broward County. Mr. Ray noted that Dr. Brathwaite has the experience of four large districts, and Dr. Geismar is the least experienced person as superintendent. Also, there is very little diversity within the school district of 1,800 students.

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Ms. Dinnen stated that Dr. Geismar was on her short list and she weighed the Florida experience. Ms. Dinnen stated that maybe he was not included on the final list because people have been so definite about going outside the district entirely, even though Dr. Geismar left Broward School Board in 2003 and he had a very good reputation.

Mr. Ray opined that during his experience, someone moving from a larger district would move to a district a little larger than a school district of 1,800 students, though there may be personal reasons for the move. Mr. Ray stated that whoever is presented to the Board for consideration makes an impact on the person's career as well as the district. He stated that the Board may add him but the firm chose not to include him.

Mrs. Leach stated that Dr. Geismar has a stellar reputation from her contacts in the community and the comments have been positive. She stated if the Board were going to consider someone who had internal experience, Dr. Geismar would be someone to consider.

(A pause in the proceedings was taken at this time to tally the matrix vote).

Following a tally of the matrix, the following proceedings continued:

Mr. Ray informed that the matrix is the paper selection of candidates who will receive an interview by the Board. He stated it is obvious that the Board can agree that Dr. Art Johnson scored low (11) as a group and could be eliminated and Mr. Runcie scored very high (45) who will be brought in for an interview. Mr. Ray stated that eliminating Dr. Johnson will leave six (6) candidates to interview, and the numbers are pretty close for the remaining candidates.

Mrs. Good stated that she would like to potentially interview as many candidates as possible, as the Board has a fairly short list. She concurred that Dr. Johnson is distant from the main pack of candidates and the other 6 are fairly close. She said she would not oppose interviewing 6 or five (5) candidates, as it is difficult to interview based on what is seen in the resume and back-up information. Mrs. Good further stated that part of being a superintendent is being dynamic and being able to reach the general public in a way which deals with the representation before the Board and the community.

Mrs. Rich Levinson stated she would like to drop the two lowest scorers, as it would be very hard to choose from 6 to 2 or 3 candidates, with 5 being a good amount. The other two are within a point of each other, and four from 26 to 29. Mrs. Rich Levinson suggested interviewing the top 5 candidates.

Ms. Murray noted that Mr. Seigel is on the cusp and is only a couple of points behind anyone else, and he is a hybrid candidate and comes from a diverse background; she was impressed with his responses to questions. Concurring that interviewing 5 candidates is a good amount, Ms. Murray stated that Mr. Seigel is someone that the Board asked the screening committee to bring to the Board for consideration.

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Ms. Dinnen stated that one more candidate may cloud the issue somewhat, but that one more person may be the quality person that the Board wants. She said she will support 6 candidates.

Voicing concern about interviewing 5 candidates, Mrs. Bartleman inquired what is a good number of candidates to interview.

Responding that there is a shortage of top-flight candidates, Mr. Ray stated that this is the most important decision that the Board is going to make. He stated what will usually happen in most cases is the Board will interview 5 or 6 the first time around, narrow it down, and then complete another matrix to reach the top two candidates for the public to meet. Mr. Ray further stated that this is a fairer process for the candidates and it shortens up the time for the community to look at people that the Board may not be interested in hiring. He suggested the Board interview the 6 candidates, complete a matrix, and pick one or two candidates for the community groups' input. Mr. Ray noted that a candidate may drop out in the process and the Board does not want the process to drive a candidate away. The candidates will come and speak to the Board if they feel they have a chance of getting the job.

Dr. Adams informed that on September 13, 2011, whether there are 2 or 3 candidates, each Board Member will individually interview the candidates (9 interviews), followed by a Meet and Greet, followed by a public forum. Dr. Adams stated that the energy and stamina level will be tested of the candidates.

Ms. Murray stated that when the Board goes through the first process of reviewing the candidates they need to all be reviewed.

Mr. Ray recommended that 6 candidates be presented to the Board, based on the majority of the Board's discussion.

### Motion (Carried)

Motion was made by Ms. Dinnen, seconded by Mrs. Leach and carried, to put forth 6 candidates - Bowles, Brathwaite, Browder, Runcie, Seigel and Taylor to be forwarded for the interview phase of this process. Mrs. Rich Levinson voted "no." (8-1 vote)

A vote was taken on the motion.

Dr. Adams stated that the next phase will be to contact each of the seven (7) candidates and notify the 6 candidates that they should make plans to be scheduled for the interview on September 12, 2011. They will also be advised that at the end of the day in all likelihood there will only be 2 candidates coming back on September 13, 2011 and September 14, 2011 for the final set of interviews.

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Mrs. Korn inquired about potential costs for the district for travel expenses.

Mr. Ray responded affirmatively, stating that the candidates will fly coach to the district for one or two nights, as most of the candidates are superintendents and they want to leave as quickly as they can. Two candidates will stay over if they make the final round of interviews. Mr. Ray stated it will cost approximately \$1,000 per candidate. He informed that sometimes the Board will bring in a spouse if they are selected, because the spouse will have input in the area, especially if they have children.

Discussing the costs, Ms. Dinnen stated that choosing a superintendent is one of three important functions of a School Board Member, and bringing spouses will only occur when there are 2 or 3 candidates.

Responding to Ms. Murray's inquiry, Mr. Ray stated that his firm has been saving on trips with the consultants and the Board will be in pretty good shape, even if the Board brings the spouses in, from a budget standpoint in comparison to most searches.

The following individual further addressed the Board:

Michael Rajner

**Adjournment** This meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m., by way of motion by Mrs. Good and seconded by Mrs. Rupert.

RT