

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 64
Minutes of the Special Meeting
at 6:00 p.m. on February 11, 2019
Jefferson School - Multipurpose Room
8200 Greendale Ave., Niles, IL 60714**

Board President Borrelli called the meeting to order at approximately 6:05 p.m. Other Board members in attendance were Fred Sanchez, Larry Ryles, Tom Sotos, Rick Biagi, Mark Eggemann, and Bob Johnson. Also present were Superintendent Laurie Heinz (arrived after roll call), Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Joel T. Martin, Public Information Coordinator Bernadette Tramm, and four members of the public.

The agenda and reports for this meeting are available on the website at <http://www.d64.org> or through the District 64 Educational Service Center, 164 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge, IL 60068.

Board President Borrelli stated the purpose of the meeting was to receive a report from School Exec Connect consultants on the community engagement undertaken to develop a new superintendent profile.

Pledge of Allegiance

Board member Ryles led the Pledge.

Public Comments

Board President Borrelli invited comments on non-agenda items; none were received.

Review of Community Engagement Results

Board President Borrelli welcomed Dr. Harry Rossi and Dr. Gary Zabilka from School Exec Connect (SEC) who together presented the results of the community engagement process undertaken following the January 14, 2019 special Board meeting. They noted that even with the extreme weather issues experienced in this period, the focus groups and forums provided many participants and excellent feedback and that the online survey had provided an unprecedented number of responses. They explained that SEC will use the profile to screen and interview candidates, and that the candidates, in turn, may use the profile to learn about the District's challenges and strengths.

Dr. Zabilka announced that the information was intended to be forward-looking as a portrait of the skills and sensitivities of what a new superintendent entering D64 at the present time should have, and should not be used in any way to compare the current superintendent's achievements and attributes.

Dr. Zabilka summarized the data collection including 15 focus groups with 135 participants and the online survey which garnered 821 responses. He reported on the District's strengths and challenges as expressed in the focus groups, and compared them with responses obtained through the online survey. Reporting on the focus groups first, Dr. Zabilka reported that he had categorized responses about the District's perceived strengths -- in no particular order -- as: community traditions and involvement, an attractive suburban location, engaged parents, quality of staff, students who perform well, and a fiscally sound district with a strategic plan in place. He noted that focus group participants identified the challenges as: quality communication between and among all District constituents; instability at Board/administration level due to elections and high turnover; less defined roles of Board, administration, staff and parents/community; a reactive environment giving voice to vocal minorities; and a perception of too many curriculum initiatives impacting the focus on the "whole-child." Dr. Rossi added that the feeling that teachers have too much on their plate, state and test requirements are burdensome, and a perceived emphasis on test performance is a recurring theme across the districts they work with. Dr. Zabilka then returned to his list and mentioned that rebuilding trust in the special education program, addressing aging facilities and increasing space for higher enrollment, as well as offering full-day kindergarten were further challenges.

Looking ahead, Dr. Zabilka reported that the focus group participants felt a new superintendent should give priority to: listening and learning about the District before taking action; building quality relationships with all constituents and demonstrating that all are valued; creating a clear, consistent communication plan; being visible in all schools to assess climate and quality of programs; and providing opportunities for Board member development focusing on their roles and responsibilities to the community and especially students. Dr. Zabilka concluded with a list of characteristics/attributes desired in a new superintendent as expressed in the focus groups: a quality relationship with Board members based on mutual respect and focused on what is best for all students; a high quality communicator who is empathetic to all; a collaborative team leader; and an experienced educator with a deep understanding of teaching at all levels of school district leadership, including knowledge of special education. Dr. Zabilka clarified that an experienced educator would be an individual with varied experience as a teacher, building level administrator, and central office level. He resumed by reporting that other desired attributes included being an approachable and trustworthy person; an active leader; and a "thick-skinned" individual.

Turning to the online survey, Dr. Zabilka reported that the 821 respondents were comprised of 63% parents, 24% teachers, 11% community members, and the remainder split among support staff, administrators, students, and Board members. He noted that the strengths were very similar to those expressed by the focus groups, with the top responses being the quality of teachers, community support, use of technology, quality of learning environment, student achievement, communication with parents, fine arts and District image. Dr. Zabilka reported that survey respondents identified the following challenges: high turnover of administrators, too much focus on test performance rather than learning, lack of diversity, Board governance issues, aging facilities, fiscal management (high taxes), curriculum, communication, and a collaborative environment. He further reported that the most desired characteristics

and skills for the new superintendent were: able to build good teams and bring out the best in others, deeply knowledgeable of curriculum and student learning, focused on the student, collaborative, accountable, with an inspiring vision of the future and excellent communication skills. Dr. Zabilka noted that this list was very typical of what many districts want to see in a new superintendent. He noted that the write-in portion of the survey showed several consistent themes as well: visibility throughout the District, evaluate the programs in place as well as needed improvements, such as full-day kindergarten, assess facilities, create cohesive teams, and develop a quality communication plan.

Discussion of New Superintendent Profile

Dr. Rossi affirmed that SEC synthesized this extensive input to create the profile, which will be a useful tool for the Board when evaluating applicants. The profile described 11 characteristics including: a person highly visible throughout the District and community who will develop authentic relationships; a genuine, empathetic, warm and approachable person; someone able to communicate effectively and timely; a collaborative team leader; a person who will work well with the Board and will be able to move the District forward; someone able to review past decisions and evaluate what is needed; an ability to listen to everyone as there is a feeling not everyone is heard; an experienced educator with a deep understanding of what is best for the student; financial knowledge in order to improve the facilities and programs; an active and thick-skinned leader; and someone who is able to make improvements by developing a vision that can be widely embraced. Dr. Rossi noted that although the list was ambitious and represents all the “ideal” qualities, it is reflective of a thoughtful community. Dr. Rossi, Dr. Zabilka and the Board discussed each of the characteristics in more detail. They confirmed that on balance, the D64 profile differed from other districts they have served by the absence of a strong budgeting financial management component, likely due to D64’s relative fiscal stability.

Dr. Rossi and Dr. Zabilka confirmed the next steps and timeline for the candidate interviews: SEC will conduct interviews and reference checks and recommend 6-8 best candidates to the Board during a closed session at the February 25 regular meeting; the Board will conduct the initial round of interviews on March 4 and 5 and select finalists; the finalists will go through the second round of interviews with the Board after interviewing with the Stakeholder/Confidential committee on March 11 and 12; and finally the Board will make its selection so that a new superintendent ideally could be confirmed at the March 18 regular meeting. They confirmed that all interviews will be conducted in closed session.

A Board discussion ensued on how to select members of the community to form the parent and community representatives on the Stakeholder/Confidential Committee as well as how to determine the criteria for choosing the participants. The Board stressed the desire for the process to be all-inclusive. Upon discussion, the Board reached consensus to add one additional parent representative and settled on the specific criteria for the five parents and two community members:

- 5 parents:
 - a parent of a current grades preK-5 student in D64

- a parent of a current grades 6-8 student in D64
- a parent of a current grades preK-5 student in D64 with an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- a parent of a current grades 6-8 student in D64 with an IEP
- a parent of a current D64 student in the Channels of Challenge program

- 2 community members (must not currently have a student enrolled in D64 or be employed by D64)

The Board noted that all seven parent/community members must have been a resident of D64 for at least one year. It was agreed that individuals could apply in all categories for which they might qualify. Further, the District was asked to create an online form to receive applications, and to publicize the availability of this opportunity. The Board directed SEC to select names randomly from among these applications.

Board President Borrelli invited public comments, which were received as follows:

- Miki Tesija, D64 parent, addressed the Board regarding whether special education experience should be included in the new superintendent profile.
- Joan sandrik, community member, addressed the Board regarding outreach for the community representatives for the Stakeholder/Confidential committee.

The Board also reached consensus that the full report from School Exec Connect be made public and shared on the D64 website.

Adjournment

At 7:30 p.m., it was moved by Board President Borrelli and seconded by Board member Sanchez to adjourn.

The votes were cast as follows:

AYES: Johnson, Eggemann, Biagi, Borrelli, Sotos, Ryles, Sanchez

NAYS: None.

PRESENT: None.

ABSENT: None.

The motion carried.

Date: February 25, 2019

President

Secretary