

Charlottesville School Board Advisory Commission

Report
to the
Charlottesville School Board
and the
Charlottesville City Council

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Introduction

The City Council created the Charlottesville School Board Advisory Commission to “*advise and assist the School Board in the search for a new superintendent.*” The Commission broadly represents the interests of the community formed by the many diverse constituencies including students, parents, faculty, staff and city residents served by the city’s schools.

In its charge, the City Council identified three areas of responsibility for the Commission. They are as follows:

- *“Review and advise the School Board on the qualities and qualifications of the next superintendent.*
- *Review and advise the School Board on the search process for a new superintendent.*
- *Provide the core component of public involvement in the interview process.”*

The Commission has met regularly at a series of publicly noticed meetings to discuss each of the items outlined in the Council’s charge. In discharging its duties and responsibilities, members of the Commission have thoughtfully and constructively discussed the opportunities and challenges posed by the upcoming search.

What follows are a series of specific recommendations and a timeline representing the consensus of the Commission discussions about the qualities, qualifications, process, and community involvement required in the next search. These proposals are offered to the City School Board with the strong recommendation that it implement these suggestions (and others arising from the discussion generated by this report) to ensure that the next search:

- Secures a creative and qualified candidate who will be able to successfully lead the City’s public schools.
- Utilizes a process which necessarily balances the need to honor the confidentiality of candidates and engages the community that the successful candidate will serve.

Charge 1: Review and advise the Board on the qualities and qualifications sought in the next Superintendent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that a professional search firm reviews the 2002 community surveys and materials compiled by the School Board for the past two Superintendent searches that list the qualifications and qualities chosen by the community for a Superintendent. The selected professional search firm should present a condensed version of this material to the community for review and input at an open meeting in late August.

Qualities and Qualifications:

- Has demonstrated the ability and skills required to lead a diverse community.
- Has demonstrated the ability to develop and communicate a vision of quality education that is understood and accepted by the community, staff, and Board.
- Has demonstrated the ability to enhance student achievement through the curricular process.
- Has demonstrated the ability to build consensus and commitment among individuals and groups with emphasis on parental involvement.
- Has demonstrated strong interpersonal and communication skills and is sensitive and decisive.
- Has demonstrated experience and skill with creative management practices, including appropriate participation of colleagues (subordinates and peers) and others in planning, budgeting, and implementing decisions and policies.
- Has demonstrated the ability to develop and direct an effective administrative team, with a commitment to the professional growth and development of team members.
- Has demonstrated the ability and experience to formulate and implement creative and successful educational policies consistent with priorities, interests and needs of the students, staff, Board and community.
- Possesses a strong academic background and has demonstrated an understanding of contemporary educational issues and innovative policy response. Doctorate preferred.
- Has demonstrated the ability to inspire trust, has high levels of self-confidence and optimism, and models high standards of integrity and personal performance.

Charge 2: Review and advise the Board on the process to be followed in the search for a new superintendent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- We recommend hiring a professional search firm which guarantees a deep and diverse pool of highly qualified candidates who match the profile of the city of Charlottesville. The position for superintendent should be advertised nationally.
- We recommend hiring a professional search firm that welcomes community involvement at one or more stages in the process and honors candidate confidentiality. The School Board should determine how to involve the community and should specify that information in its Request For Proposal for professional search firm.
- We recommend a process that provides evidence of accurate and complete background checks on candidates at the appropriate time, as well as documentation of past job performance, educational leadership and interpersonal skills. The professional search firm should specify its procedures for the completion of background checks, including appropriate review of candidate finalists by the Virginia School Board Association and the Virginia Association of School Superintendents.
- We recommend that the Board interview qualified internal candidate(s).

Charge 3: Provide the core component of public involvement in the interview process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- We recommend that the School Board in concert with the search firm hold an open meeting in late August to allow the community to offer input on the qualifications for the new Superintendent.
- We recommend that a small representative group of community members interact with the finalist candidates at a point as determined to be appropriate by the School Board during the interview process and provide feed back to School Board members.
- Should the School Board wish it to do so, the Charlottesville Advisory School Board Commission is open to extending its services to the School Board in any appropriate capacity.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

July	Identify/ Select professional search firm using RFP if required. Advertise superintendent position nationally.
Late August	Public meeting facilitated by the professional search firm on qualifications for superintendent for screening/interviewing purposes.
September	Professional search firm screens applications for first interview. (6 to 10 applicants)
Late September	*School Board interviews for finalists.
October	Professional background checks completed on finalists. *School Board interviews finalists (2 to 4 applicants)
Early November	Offer position.
Early December	Announce new superintendent.

*Refer to Charge 3, item 2 public involvement recommendation