

Lynn Superintendent Search Committee
Meeting of April 12, 2018
Mayor's Conference Room
Lynn City Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Thomas McGee (Chair), Donna Coppola, Bob Buontempo, Meghan Collins, Miki Divirgilio, Anthony Frye, Mark Johnston, Jen Lange, Sheila O'Neil, Magalie Rowe, and Peter McGinn (participating remotely).

ALSO PRESENT: Robin Ennis, Office of the Mayor; Glenn Koocher, MA Association of School Committees

The chair called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in Room 314.

The mayor called attention to the questions that had been prepared following the meeting of April 3 and invited recommendations for consolidations and edits. After discussion a list of questions for the upcoming interviews was approved on a motion by Ms. Coppola, seconded by Mr. Johnston.

That list is attached to these minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas McGee, Chair

Lynn Superintendent Search Questions
CONSOLIDATED AND EDITED PER MEETING OF APRIL 3, 2018 & revised 4/12/18

These questions need to be rearranged in a way that will help the interview flow. If people limit their questions to not more than one follow up and introduce their questions with a minimum of explanation, you could get them all in, but as a contingency, you may need to identify 2-3 questions as "time permitting" questions.

A good step is to practice on the first couple of interviews to measure the time and adjust the interviews going forward.

QUESTION 1: Educator Evaluation - Sheila O'Neil - SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

What do you consider to be an effective use of the evaluation process? What examples would you offer for effective evaluation processes for teachers and administrators that actually work to improve performance and motivate teachers and administrators?

Follow Up - Describe a process that would work best, in your opinion over a reasonable period of time.

QUESTION 2: Collective Bargaining - Sheila O'Neil - SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

What do you think is the greatest difficulty facing our teachers, paras, therapists, nurses, and staff? How can this difficulty be improved through collective bargaining in our current financial situation?

Follow Up - What is the most significant element of collective bargaining?
How involved should superintendents be in the collective bargaining process?

QUESTION 3: Parent Engagement - Sheila O'Neil -- SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

What resources, supports, expertise, and other factors would make the biggest difference in increasing parent involvement?

Follow Up - Are they different for.....

- families of non-native English speakers;
- parents of students with disabilities;
- students at various grade levels
- How do these differences affect parent involvement?

QUESTION 4: Before/After/Out of School Time - Tom McGee SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

Quality and afterschool programming for students is going to be an important piece for the next superintendent and the need in Lynn is critical. Do you have a plan to address this need *in an urban district* like our city?

Follow Up - Are you open to utilizing the school buildings to implement these programs?

- What experience do you have building accessible Afterschool and out of school time programming and establishing partnerships with outside providers to expand and enhance afterschool programs offered to our students in the school building setting and in community based organization settings?
- How do you maximize use of school buildings with outside providers/what successful models of afterschool implementation and community partnering are you aware of/ What experience do you have with the Mass Afterschool Partnership?

QUESTION 5: Relationships with the School Committee - Peter McGinn SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

The roles and responsibilities of school committees and superintendents are sometimes clear and sometimes ambiguous. Can you describe some situations where these roles and responsibilities have challenged you and how you would work to address them?

QUESTION 6: Budget and Finance & Relationship with Municipal Government (Mayor McGee) SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

What experience do you have working with school and city finance teams to develop a budget recognizing that both the school and the city have challenges that need to be met?

Follow Up:

- What does a successful relationship with the municipal finance team (City CFO, & Mayor) and the school finance team look like to you and what direct experience do you have in forming and sustaining this relationship.
- Describe a tough financial problem you have faced in your job and tell us what you did about it.

- How would you ensure that school finance information is regularly open and accessible to the City CFO, mayor, and finance team?

QUESTION 7: Technical School Questions: Bob Buontempo SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

What is your philosophy of a vocational technical education vs. a traditional academic education?

Follow Up Question:

Many vocational teachers leave LVTI to the higher paying regional tech schools after gaining teaching experience, teacher mentoring and obtaining certification. How would you address the common loss of investment in time, talent, and resources to attract and retain instructors for Lynn Tech Students?

QUESTION 8: School Safety Questions: Bob Buontempo SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

LVTI acquired a third building (Annex) in 1999, before 9-11-01 and the student safety concerns that our country is facing today. Students walk 2/10 of a mile and cross Neptune Boulevard at varied times between the buildings to classes and shops seven periods every day. Scheduling efforts have minimized some student travel but there are still many students who walk between buildings regularly.

What experience have you had in keeping all schools safe, and what would you look to assure is in place or look to implement?

Follow Up:

- Some of our school buildings and grounds are deteriorating and have become unsafe, such as worn out stair treads, walkways with holes in the concrete and pavement. There is often a long delay or no response to requests to remedy these hazards. What would you do to assure that such requests for repairs is responded to in a timely manner?

QUESTION 9: Personnel Issues – Anthony Frye

Since money spent on hiring central office administrators is not money spent in the classroom, how will you affectively measure the value of administration, minimize expenses that do not directly influence student learning and social emotional wellbeing, and maximize the funds going into classrooms?

QUESTION 10: Accountability – Meghan and Anthony SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

As you lead the district, how will you use student performance data to prioritize use of resources including money, technology, facilities and most importantly human capital to maximize student outcomes?

Follow Up:

How will those resources be balanced to address the needs of low performing schools while maintaining services and resources at higher performing schools?

QUESTION 11: Special Education – Miki Divirgilio SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

Lynn Public Schools (“LPS”) has an exceptionally diverse population, containing a broad spectrum of ethnicities, race, and languages. In addition, many LPS students require additional assistance and services to become successful learners.

What are your thoughts and long-term strategies to successfully address LPS’ diverse and unique student populations?

Follow up:

- How will you support continuous and consistent improvement in and advancement of Special Education in LPS?
- How will you consistently support appropriate staffing, hiring, and training of Special Education teachers, administrators, and staff?
- What background, qualities, and characteristics will you look for when hiring a new Director of Special Education?

QUESTION 12: Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Students - Miki Divirgilio SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

Over the last several years, LPS has experienced a significant increase in the number of students presenting social and emotional difficulties and behavioral challenges. While many of these students are not technically qualified to receive special services, addressing their needs have strained the capabilities and budgets of LPS’ teachers and administrative staff.

Please describe your experience in assessing and addressing these sorts of demands placed on teachers and staff.

Follow Up:

- What programs or strategies would you immediately suggest to steer LPS in a new direction to be better able to address the needs and circumstances of this growing fraction of LPS students?
- What long term strategies would you propose and implement to alleviate the strain this student population places on teachers and staff?

QUESTION 13: Equity – Jen Lange SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

Having visited many schools within our city, it appears that there is not a consistency in the physical, academic, or emotional environment among them. How would you create a system of standards and expectations that are implemented throughout the district?

Follow Up:

- How would you create a system where each student has equal experiences to extra-curricular activities, field trips, enrichment, support staff and fine arts?
- What actions would you take to ensure relevant training for our faculty and staff?

QUESTION 14: Working with the Leadership Team – Meghan SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

Over the past year the city has struggled to garner enough confidence from the community to support the building of new schools. Give us an example of how you have partnered with community leaders to build support for a district-wide initiative such as this, and describe what steps you will take to work towards this initiative should you become Superintendent.

Follow Up:

- What is your vision for the district and how would you motivate teachers, school administrators and support staff to work toward that vision?
- What strategies would you use to incorporate the educators' knowledge and opinions into your decision making process?

QUESTION 15: Support for Administration – Meghan SEMI FINAL ROUND QUESTION

What does the concept of “school support” mean to you?

Follow Up:

Describe your experience with structured school support systems, whether it be implementing a system for support or working within a district that provided a support structure.

QUESTION 16: Cultural Competency/Cultural Proficiency [Magalie] - SEMI FINAL QUESTION

After learning about how diverse the student body of the Lynn Public Schools currently is, can you describe the steps you will take to create a cultural competency training program for ALL educators and administrators within the Lynn Public Education system?

Follow Up: Based on that information, what steps will you take to proportionately recruit, train, and retain educators and administrators that reflect our student body, to work for the Lynn Public School system?

QUESTION 17: Technology Infrastructure [Mark] SEMI FINAL QUESTION

In our meetings, surveys and focus groups, a major area of concern within the district was its technology infrastructure.

Describe how you plan to improve the technology infrastructure of the district? i.e lack of hand held devices, reliable internet access, access to cloud based resources, etc.

Follow up:

- As the district leader, describe how you plan to enhance students' learning through the use of technology?
- What do you see are the most promising technologies on the horizon for today's educational environment?

QUESTION 18: Curriculum [Mark]

In trying to reduce our achievement gap in all needed subgroups, what curriculum changes would you implement in the first years of your administration?

Follow Up:

- What new strategies would you implement to ensure that students and their parents are fully engaged in our district wide curriculum?
- Please describe changes in curriculum that you feel are needed in preparing students to achieve 21st Century Skills.

Additional Follow Up from “Teaching and Learning”

- What does “good” teaching look like? How would you rate the importance of curriculum maps, timelines, standards/objectives/, instruction, and student engagement?
- How would you incorporate the different teaching styles of the teachers to allow them the autonomy to use their experience and expertise in the classroom?
- What new strategies would you implement to ensure that students and their parents are fully engaged in our district wide curriculum?

To accommodate the Department of Education’s periodic updates to the curriculum framework, LPS teachers and staff receive supplementary training and guidance. Often times, however, LPS Special Education teachers and staff are late in receiving such training.

- What is your position on providing such training to Special Education teachers and staff?
- What will you do to ensure that Special Education teachers and staff timely receive such training?
- How will you measure the effectiveness and utility of such training?
- What will you do to hold administrators accountable for such training?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS REFERRED TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Safe Learning Environment – Sheila O’Neil

What are some strategies you have seen utilized to create a safe learning environment in classrooms and buildings and as superintendent how would you implement them in Lynn?

Relationships with the School Committee – Peter McGinn

1. What do you see as the key characteristics of a successful superintendency and school committee collaboration?
2. How did you go about setting objectives for your district last year? Explain how you involved your school committee.

Technical Education Questions – Bob Buontempo – left over from follow ups possibly not used.

Lynn has three high schools with LVTI being a school of choice. What advice would you give a grade 8 student trying to decide whether or not to apply to LVTI?

What is your vision for the future role that Lynn Tech should play in providing community enrichment to Lynn residents?

Data suggest that teachers often burn out in their first year or two and leave the profession. As a candidate for Superintendent, how will you work to retain new teachers in a large urban district such as Lynn? And, what is your vision of an “effective” mentoring program?

What are the characteristics a strong teacher mentor should possess, and how would you go about ensuring that mentors in the City of Lynn meet these characteristics before being assigned to mentor a new teacher?

Research shows that a strong relationship between a mentor and a mentee will likely provide a mentee with the support necessary to feel successful. What do you see as the most important aspect of a strong mentoring program, and how will you ensure its application in the Lynn Public Schools?

If you walk into a top performing Vocational Technical School what key elements would you expect to see?

Personnel – Unused Follow Up Question

As our community continues to evolve in its diversity, when hiring new teachers and administrators in the district how do you see yourself effectively recruiting and hiring qualified applicants that reflect our current student population?

STEM Education – Anthony Frye

We have one STEM focused elementary school in the district. What experience do you have with STEM education? How do you see yourself supporting STEM education at Washington STEM as well as making sure the rest of the schools in the district have an opportunity increase their STEM opportunities?

Achievement Equity for All Students – Mark and Meghan

What strategies have you used in your current or past positions to attract qualified candidates that reflect the student body?

How will you ensure an equitable education for all student achievement levels, in both elementary and secondary schools?

How would you utilize the technology infrastructure to improve student achievement for students, K - 12?

Cultural Proficiency and Diversity

How do you envision supporting schools in the district with the added challenges of test prep, student behavioral issues, aging school buildings, and an increasing population of English Language Learners and transient students?