

Chair, R. Cohen, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Robert G. Doering School Auditorium.

Present: A. Bonavita, B. Burbank, D. Juzba, C. Mineo, S. Reed, W. Rua, & R. Clickstein

R. Cohen began by stating that the Committee would be conducting the second round of interviews with the two finalists for the position of Superintendent of Schools. He then welcomed the first finalist, Dr. Allison LeClair, and explained that each Committee member would be asking each finalist one question. At the conclusion of questions, each finalist will be given the opportunity for closing remarks.

The first question was asked by Mr. Bonavita regarding the development of school budgets in difficult fiscal times. Dr. LeClair said that she would look at the district's priorities to determine what an immediate need was and what could be deferred. She also said she would review what budget items are non-negotiable. Finally, if necessary, she would shift funds from the building based budgets to the priorities.

Next, Mrs. Rua asked a question regarding community pride. Dr. LeClair stated that she understands the importance of maintaining pride having previously taught at all grade levels and having had interaction with parents, students, and families as well as teachers. She would like to support and promote more school events on social media and to be more visible in the community. Finally, her enthusiasm for the position would help her to motivate others and to lead by example.

R. Cohen then asked a question about communication and leadership. Dr. LeClair said that she obtained her doctorate degree, which gives her a strong leadership foundation. She also believes in empowering others, looks to build consensus, strives to foster positive relationships, and values teamwork as well as the judgement of others. Finally, she said that she is excited to have the opportunity to obtain her dream/goal of obtaining the position of Superintendent of Schools.

Next, Mr. Burbank asked Dr. LeClair her plans for moving the district from a designation of Level 2 to Level 1. Dr. LeClair said that she would use data to determine the district's areas of weakness and strengths. She also said that she would develop an action plan for each school to follow.

Mrs. Juzba then asked Dr. LeClair to list her priorities relative to a hypothetical, busy-day scenario. Her responses were as follows:

- Call building principal first if it is a police issue
- Call the school committee member
- Call City Councilor
- Wait to call parent back in order to receive feedback from principal. Always return calls
- Speak with the Athletic Director at the Administrator's Meeting that morning

Next, Mr. Mineo asked a question regarding hiring practices and the retention of good teachers. Dr. LeClair said as having chaired several search committees in the past, she would form a committee comprised of parents, teachers, facilitators, school committee members and stakeholders to develop questions for interviews and surveys. She also said that she would continue to go to Westfield State University to speak with students who will be graduating from the education department. Dr. LeClair also pointed out that principals continually look for excellent practicum students to recruit in the future. In addition, she believes in mentoring new administrators and to promote leadership within the teaching ranks.

The final question came from Mrs. Reed, who asked Dr. LeClair what her goals/vision would be for the first 100 days, third year, and fifth year. Dr. LeClair then distributed her entry plan which included asking questions, listening to answers, and reviewing documents in her first 100 days. Her third year goals included building on programs, social and emotional well-being of students, moving forward with ALICE training, implementation of Science Standards, and bringing stability to the district. Her fifth year would focus on the whole child, retention of staff, and growing pride in the district.

In her closing statement, Dr. LeClair said she believes that she has the experience, training, strong background in education, dedication, and determination to be the next Superintendent of Schools. Moreover, she plans to remain in Agawam for the next 10 years and to end her career in the district, thereby providing stability. She concluded her remarks by thanking the Committee for their consideration.

Next, R. Cohen welcomed Mr. Steven Lemanski as the second finalist and explained the evening's format.

Time: 8:30 p.m.

The first question was asked by Mr. Bonavita regarding the development of school budgets in difficult fiscal times. Mr. Lemanski said that he would start by asking principals and administrators to look at areas where they could be more prudent. As a last resort, he would not fill positions of staff who were retiring. He also would develop a plan, in conjunction with the Mayor, to present to the City Council asking for additional funds.

Next, Mrs. Rua asked a question regarding community pride. Mr. Lemanski would work side by side with principals to learn their school stories. He also would continue to build trust and continue the theme, “Do the Right Thing”, to enrich the school district as a whole. Mr. Lemanski explained that he will keep people informed about what is going on in the schools and to build a positive culture for the district. Leading by example, he will be visible in the community and at the lower grade levels.

R. Cohen then asked a question about communication and leadership. Mr. Lemanski said that several crisis situations involving student deaths and a school evacuation have confirmed his leadership abilities. He also continues to find ways to work with families, teachers, and students to ensure that they can achieve. Mr. Lemanski also noted that during his tenure as principal the number of Advanced Placement students has increased, the graduation rate has increased, and the drop-out rate has decreased.

Next, Mr. Burbank asked Mr. Lemanski his plans for moving the district from a designation of Level 2 to Level 1. He said that he would work across the district with administrators, coaches, facilitators to access strong teaching and instruction. He would also set goals for each grade level. Mr. Lemanski noted the challenging areas are Special Education students and student attendance on testing days. Finally, he would rely on principals and teachers to motivate students to do their best.

Mrs. Juzba then asked Mr. Lemanski to list his priorities relative to a hypothetical, busy-day scenario. His responses were as follows:

- Develop a message to send to all school committee members
- Gather information before calling parent back or delegate another administrator to return parent call
- Speak to the athletic director about a coaching problem
- Speak to the principal about missing funds

Next, Mr. Mineo asked a question regarding hiring practices and the retention of good teachers. Mr. Lemanski answered that he would include all stakeholders in a search committee, utilize School Spring, and continue mentoring new teachers. In addition, he would continue SEI training and inclusive practices training for all staff. Finally, he would look at the changes taking place in the world with regards to technology ensuring teachers received the adequate training to keep them current.

The final question came from Mrs. Reed, who asked Mr. Lemanski what his goals/vision would be for the first 100 days, third year, and fifth year. Mr. Lemanski began by distributing his entry plan for the first 90 days. He then said he wants to build trust and grow the community with all stakeholders. He also wants to develop an understanding of the individual school cultures and histories. Next, he wants to become familiar with the various PTO groups, teaching and support staff, and the West of the River Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Lemanski’s third year goals include district-wide vertical alignment, as well as preparing students for college or career. His fifth year goal is to pursue the construction of a new preschool building.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Lemanski thank the Committee for all the time and effort that they put into the process of finding the right person to serve as the next Superintendent of Schools. He pointed out that he is extremely hardworking and dedicated to working with staff, students, parents, and the community at large. He concluded his remarks by stating that he believes greatness can be achieved by working together, building trust, and growing the community.

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Clickstein reminded Committee members that they need to bring all of their search materials to the next and final meeting at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 27, 2017, in the senior high school library, as those materials are part of the public record, which must be retained. R. Cohen then thanked Mr. Clickstein and Mrs. Ferioli for being great facilitators in the search for a new school superintendent.

There being no further business, on a motion made by W. Rua, 2nd by S. Reed, the Committee voted to adjourn.

Vote: 7 - 0

Time: 9:27 p.m.