



## **Superintendent Search Recruitment and Interview Update**

### **Community Engagement**

Denver Board of Education members participated in more than 100 meetings with stakeholders to learn first hand the expectations that stakeholders have for the new superintendent. The board also conducted an online survey to gather input from stakeholders who could not attend one of the in-person meetings. Over 4,500 individuals shared their thoughts and input with the board.

Dimension Strategies, the company that facilitated the community engagement meetings, identified three primary themes regarding the new superintendent which include:

- Prioritization of Issues Facing the District
- Experience with Diverse Communities
- Teaching and Administrative Experience

Numerous other issues and ideas were shared during the input process and the board used the information gathered during the community engagement events to guide their vetting of potential candidates and the selection of candidates to be interviewed. The complete report can be found on the superintendent search page of the Denver Public Schools website.

### **Initial Recruitment Efforts**

Throughout the month of September and during the first half of October, board representatives reached out to 95 potential candidates with the assistance of the HYA consultants. The purpose of these contacts was to assess individuals' potential interest in and match for the position. Additionally, 27 candidates independently applied for the position. Out of this group of 122 potential applicants, 44% were females and 55% were candidates of color.

### **Applications**

By October 15, 2018, the deadline from submitting final applications, 41 individuals had officially applied for the position. The board reviewed all 41 sets of application materials

and fourteen individuals were selected to be considered for interviews. The HYA consultants conducted initial reference checking and Internet searches on these candidates. That group of fourteen candidates was comprised of eight superintendents, four in deputy roles, two non-traditional candidates, three women, 11 men, and 11 candidates of color, from 10 states with four coming from Colorado.

### **Slate Interviewed**

From the review of these 14 sets of materials and background reviews, the board selected seven candidates to be interviewed. This group was comprised of two superintendents, one state superintendent, two deputy superintendents, and two non-traditional candidates.

### **First Interviews**

Board members spent over two hours interviewing each candidate by focusing on what the candidate had accomplished in his/her previous positions and how he/she would translate that knowledge and experience to the needs in DPS. The interviews were structured to include question/answer formats, delving deeply into critical questions through probes and follow up, and responses to scenario situations.

The questions/scenarios were derived from the themes identified during the community engagement phase as defined in the Community Engagement Report created by Dimension Strategies along with other topics important that are critical to the superintendent's role. The topics covered included:

#### **Prioritization of Issues Facing the District**

- Closing achievement gaps
- Serving special student populations, particularly ELL and special education students
- Experience with and views on the portfolio of schools approach
- Accountability with a focus on how to identify and measure the most important priorities for DPS
- Plans for moving DPS forward

#### **Experience with Diverse Communities**

- Communication skills and advocacy experience with a variety of groups
- Knowledge of and views on how to address institutional racism
- Strategies for building relationships and engagement with diverse communities
- Understanding of differing student, school, and community needs

### Teaching and Administrative Experience

- Knowledge of instructional and leadership practices
- Understanding of varying school needs
- Balance between school level autonomy and district direction
- Experience building relationships with all employee groups and union leadership
- Creating and maintaining a diverse workforce

### Other Topics

- Financial knowledge and expertise
- Crisis/Emergency management - given a scenario
- Working relationship between the Superintendent and the board
- How the candidate defines and handles his/her strengths and potential weaknesses in leading and managing an organization

After each interview the board spent 45 minutes debriefing the strengths and potential concerns, issues, and questions they had about the candidate.

### **Second Interviews**

From the debriefing discussions of each the candidates the board identified a pool of candidates they wanted bring back for another two-hour interview and discussion. These discussions will delve even more deeply into the general issues of interest to the board as well as the specific issues the board identified regarding each candidate. Without going into more specific detail, the Community Engagement Report will be used again in the second round of questions.

### **Next Steps**

From this point forward the board will be identifying the finalist or finalists they wish to consider for the position and for additional vetting and reference checking. The board is considering a variety of scenarios to gather additional community input in this hiring process. A decision regarding how community engagement will take shape will be made soon.