

**OWOSSO PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**Board of Education Minutes**  
**Special Board Meeting**  
**February 23, 2024**  
**Report 23-125**

Present: Easlick, Henne, Krauss, Mowen, Ochodnicky, Quick, Webster  
Absent: None

**Call to Order**

President Rick Mowen called the board of Education Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was held at the Washington Campus Administration Building, 645 Alger St, Owosso MI 48867.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Public Participation**

President Mowen stated that the Board of Education is a public body and recognizes the value of public comment on education issues. Time has been included in the meeting's agenda for public participation. Members of the audience were reminded they should announce their name and group affiliation when applicable and to limit their participation time to three minutes or less. Comments should be directed to the Board and be relevant to the business of the Board of Education. This is not an opportunity for dialogue with the Board of Education. The rules of common courtesy should also be observed.

The following participant addressed the board:

Tom Manke - Owosso Township

**Overview of Search Process and Roles – Mr. Dave Moore, MASB Consultant**

Mr. Dave Moore, MASB Search consultant provided an overview of his experience. He reported he has worked in several educational roles as a teacher, building administrator and a superintendent. Districts he has worked at include Fenton, Holly, Clio Ovid-Elsie, Corunna, Mt. Morris and Saginaw Swan Valley. For the past six years he has been working as a consultant for Integrated Designs Inc., which is an architectural firm whose primary business is with K-12 schools in addition to being a search consultant for MASB and an area rep for MASB.

Mr. Moore reminded the Board that he is not a decision maker, but the facilitator. His role is to go through materials and present the information to the Board of Education. The Board will have an opportunity to ask questions along the way. Ultimately, it is the board that makes the decision. Mr. Moore provided the Board of Education information from MASB of the legal do's and don'ts and explained the importance of following the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and important to note it is a public vote of the Board.

## **Review of current dates in agenda**

**February 7, 2024** – The Board of Education approved the MASB Service Agreement, the contract for the interim Superintendent, Mr. Dave Schulte, implemented the Stakeholder Survey and the internal posting of Superintendent.

**February 8 – 15, 2024** – Internal Superintendent posting and Survey of Stakeholders.

**February 16-19, 2024** – MASB compiled the results of the stakeholder survey and internal candidate(s).

**February 21, 2024** – The Board of Education received the survey results and internal candidate materials. Mr. Stephen Brooks was the only internal candidate.

**February 23, 2024**- Special Board Meeting to go through stakeholder input and part of Mr. Moore's role as MASB facilitator is to provide the Board some ideas. The Board will have an opportunity to process this, review the candidate materials and then determine the next steps of the possibilities provided in the Superintendent search.

## **Review Stakeholder Input**

[Superintendent Search Survey](#) The Superintendent Survey Results are available on the Owosso Public Schools website [www.owosso.k12.mi.us](http://www.owosso.k12.mi.us) under Board of Education.

**Q 1. If you are a resident, how long have you lived in the school district?** A lot of people who have lived in district for a long period of time who answered this survey is a pertinent piece, 73% are residents of district. Important to note these are residents of district.

**Q2. How long have you worked for the school district?** According to the survey 65% do not work in district. This is far and above from what you might see in a survey.

**Q3. Which type of stakeholder are you?** Parents of elementary (150 responses), high school (150 responses) and middle school students (105 responses) are at the top of the list.

**Q4. Strengths of the District.** Searched through the survey to find key words found in the survey as strengths of the district; teachers, students and staff were found as strengths. Mr. Moore stated, in his opinion he saw the following as strengths of the district as key words found in the survey; dedicated staff, offering of programs, specifically band, choir, and art, the high school and middle school facilities and the offerings and opportunities of the district.

**Q5. Challenges of District.** Curriculum, culture within the district and funding. Funding tends to be at the top of the list and the fourth item was declining enrollment. This survey is one of many pieces you are going to use in the decision-making process. As we go through this it is important to realize this (survey) is only one component. This is the perspective of the community members. Important to realize that this is just one component of the decision-making process. As part of the decision-making process you are also going to look at references and experience.

**Q6. Minimum level of education.** Opinion of parents the minimum level of education; 50.23% Masters plus administrative certification/endorsement, 15.58% Master's degree, 12.79% Bachelor degree, 12.56%. We are going to look at the qualifications you want. Explained difference between required and preferred requirements. If qualification is required and applicant does not have the required qualification they will not be considered. Preferred is you may have the qualification but it is not required to be considered.

**Q7. Experience in prior positions.** The community believes that being a building level principal and teacher is important for experience.

**Q8. Areas of Expertise.** Budget and curriculum were at the top of the list; 88% viewed budget, 82% Curriculum, 81% public relations, human resource management and facilities management were in the 60% percentile. When you develop selection criteria you are telling the applicant what you are looking for. The Board was given a sample of selection criteria to review.

**Q9. Leadership styles.** Collaboration and working together was important. Secretary Krauss asked how does that work out since on the graph nothing is higher than 50%. Mr. Moore stated that percentile is what was listed on the survey, as respondents had the opportunity to list two leadership styles.

**Q 10. Experiences and skills.** Exceedingly responsive and follow through were at the top of the list. Most, 94% felt that was the most important quality and 92% felt the keen ability to think outside of the box.

**Q11. Personal Characteristics.** The top four were over 90%; honest and ethical, at the top of the list; a problem solver, being transparent and approachable were all over 90%. Very important to your community. Strong communicator at 87%.

**Q12. Selection Strategy.** Very interesting as I read through this, in my opinion the numbers are deceiving as the first is at 47%; *find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the current administration, but who can make some necessary changes.* Then the next at 35%; *find a very different kind of candidate – one who is ready to take the district in a significantly different direction.* The final is at 17% *find a candidate who will stay the course and continue the good work of the current administration.* As you look through the survey there were some comments regarding the service. The culture we have, the way we are working together, that is what we want to change. We always want to change and we always want to get better. Remember, the district has done a lot of great things and as a community member I have seen those changes. As I read through the comments, I do not believe that we want to totally change. Approachable, honesty and of good character, those are some of the things that I think they are talking about and certainly curriculum is one of them. A group of them are saying we need to get rid of IB. I think when you look at the survey the numbers are bit deceiving. I think there are some things to change but not totally change and start all over again, but some things to improve, again a personal opinion.

**Q13. Find a candidate with the same basic educational and management philosophy as the administration, but who can make some changes.** The schools, the community, the changing;

respects and cares for students, listens to staff, someone who is willing to work with staff, those were some of the changes people were talking about in my opinion. Again, remember you are getting a Dave Moore opinion and you have to interpret the results. You may interpret it totally different. The difficult thing is as you are going through it you need to look at the perspective yourself. You are the ones doing the voting, you are the ones that are making the decision.

No questions on survey results

### **Develop Selection Criteria**

Mr. Moore reviewed the Selection Criteria Explanation as it relates to the DRAFT of the Superintendent Selection Criteria. This criterion is needed whether internal or external search. Items with no numbers reflect the opinion and experiences of Mr. Moore from his experience of other superintendent searches. All of the numbers after the selection criteria are based upon the survey results.

Mr. Moore asked the Board to review and decide what items to keep and to delete. Required must meet criteria to be considered as a candidate and preferred is not a required criterion to be considered a candidate.

There was discussion amongst board members during the review of the selection criteria. Mr. Moore advised that this would be the document that will be used throughout the process.

### **Review the Candidate Materials**

The Board of Education reviewed Mr. Stephen Brooks candidate materials. Once the board had reviewed them, Mr. Moore asked the Board to compare candidate information to the draft selection criteria.

President Mowen reported it had been requested of the Board to post the highlights of the superintendent survey on the Owosso Public Schools website.

Moved by Quick, supported by Easlick to post the highlights of the superintendent search survey on the Owosso Public Schools website. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Determine Next Steps**

The Board of Education deliberated at length on the three options in moving forward with the Superintendent search.

- Option 1 – Appoint the candidate
- Option 2 – Meeting with the candidate on Thursday, February 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.
- Option 3 – Use the services of MASB and do both an internal/external search for a new superintendent.

During deliberations, the Board discussed at length the following:

- The need for improved culture and building trust. The Board acknowledged receipt of a signed letter by every person in the central office, administration, multiple teachers and

some of the most substantial leaders in the community of support for the internal candidate, Mr. Steve Brooks.

- Expressed concern of only having one internal candidate apply and not having any other candidates for comparison.
- The timeline of an external search taking several months and finalizing contract negotiations to have a superintendent in place by July 1st. Discussion of issues currently facing the district; upcoming contract negotiations, several leadership vacancies in the central office, specifically the CFO and Superintendent.
- Mr. Moore reported on the existing Superintendent searches.
- Selecting a Superintendent is one of the most important jobs of the Board of Education. The importance of honoring the search process. Discussion of interviewing the internal candidate rather than appointing without an interview. If the Board opts to interview the internal candidate, the Board is not obligated to offer the position.
- The internal candidate was compared to the presented selection criteria and believed to have met those requirements. Acknowledged of the 438 survey responses there were no negative comments of the internal candidate, but several positive comments.
- The District has a devastated central office with current vacancies of Superintendent, CFO, recommended accountant and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent. Therefore, time is of the essence. The timeline of an external search will take the district out three to six months. Discussed the importance of the Superintendent vacancy being filled first, as inquiries have been received from CFO applicants asking who is the Superintendent. Applicants are hesitant because they do not know who they will be working for.

Moved by Mowen, supported by Easlick to interview the internal candidate, Mr. Stephen Brooks on Thursday, February 29th at 5:30 p.m. Secretary Krauss conducted a roll call vote: Henne, Ochodnicky, Easlick, Krauss, Webster, Mowen voted aye; Quick voted nay. Motion carried six (6) aye and one (1) nay.

Mr. Moore asked the Board to review the interview questions. Select the questions they would like to ask of the candidate in addition to any other question(s) and submit to Mr. Moore no later than close of business on Monday, February 26.

### **Public Participation**

President Mowen stated that the Board of Education is a public body and recognizes the value of public comment on education issues. Time has been included in the meeting's agenda for public participation. Members of the audience were reminded they should announce their name and group affiliation when applicable and to limit their participation time to three minutes or less. Comments should be directed to the Board and be relevant to the business of the Board of Education. This is not an opportunity for dialogue with the Board of Education. The rules of common courtesy should also be observed.

The following participant addressed the board:

John Pappas

## **Board Comments**

Trustee Easlick remarked it was a productive meeting

Treasurer Quick also expressed a productive meeting.

Secretary Krauss thanked Mr. Moore and expressed his appreciation.

Trustee Henne thanked Mr. Moore and Mr. Schulte.

Trustee Ochodnicky remarked the challenge we have as the district was left not prepared coming into the time of year for the budget. It is very disheartening. Trustee Ochodnicky appreciated the comments and those in attendance.

Vice-President Webster remarked as a recap; we looked at every single survey item and the criteria we developed came from the community and we are going to be evaluating how the candidate compares. We want to know the person. We are considering all of the questions and answers from this. We all received the resume at the same time. I do not want the work we did tonight to be dismissed and I am so grateful to the 438 people who responded to the survey. Most of us read every comment. I am grateful for all the work we did and Mr. Moore for all that we have accomplished.

President Mowen remarked, Mr. Moore you have done so much for the Board in such a short period of time. President Mowen thanked Mr. Schulte for stepping up as the Interim Superintendent.

## **Adjournment**

Moved by Quick, supported by Ochodnicky to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Bev White

Respectfully submitted,

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Ty Krauss, Secretary