

Cleveland City Schools
Board of Education Special Called Meeting
January 23, 2024 4:30 PM
Annex Offices



1. **Welcome**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Public Comments**
4. **Approval of January 20, 2024 Minutes**
5. **Regular Agenda**
 - A. **Search Firm Decision**
 - B. **Review of Interim Director Candidate Recommendations**
6. **Adjourn**

Chairman Tucker adjourned the meeting at XX

X _____
Nate Tucker, Chairman
Cleveland City School Board

X _____
Carolyn Ingram, Vice Chair
Cleveland City School Board

Cleveland City Schools

Board of Education Special Called Meeting

January 20, 2024 9:00 AM
Administrative Office Building, Board Room



Attendance Taken at 9:00 AM.

Mr. Matthew Coleman:	Present
Ms. Carolyn Ingram:	Present
Mr. Andy Lay:	Present
Ms. Krista McKay:	Present
Mrs. Peggy Pesterfield:	Present
Mrs. Jodi Riggins:	Present
Mr. Nate Tucker:	Present

1. Welcome

Chairman Tucker welcomed everyone and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Tucker asked for a motion to approve minutes from the Special Called Meeting January 8, 2024. Matthew Coleman and Andy Lay responded. Minutes are approved.

2. Regular Agenda

Discussion of Hiring Process

2. A. Discussion of the hiring process

Dr. Tammy Grissom from the Tennessee School Board Association (TSBA) joined the meeting via Google Meet. Dr. Grissom went over the presentation she sent to each Board Member through email. Dr. Grissom thanked the board for this opportunity to speak about what services TSBA can offer them during this search. She reminded them that if they decide on purchasing one of the plans shown today, TSBA doesn't require them to use any of these plans and will still be available to assist during this search at no additional cost if we have any questions or concerns.

She reviewed the presentation and highlighted the following pages;

Page One (1)- General Consultation; during this time a timeline will be developed, working backwards from when the start date is decided.

Page Two (2)-Community Meetings; this would allow input from the community members with only three questions being asked.

1. What are the good things happening in Cleveland City Schools (CCS)?
2. What are the problems or challenges CCS is facing?
3. What are the personal characteristics you think a Director of Schools should have?

Board members are not required to attend community meetings, but they are welcome.

There should be a luncheon of some kind where the Board members attend.

Once the community meetings have taken place. TSBA will come back with notes to review with the Board members. After that takes place, TSBA will post the job description for (3-4) three-four weeks. TSBA will advertise on their website and other national sites which are listed on page four (4) of the presentation.

A brochure will be created by TSBA, and it will include community information, school district information and our developed criteria for the next Director of Schools.

TSBA will open a portal for applicants where they can submit items required, such as letter of interest, resume, certificates, licenses and five (5) letters of recommendation. Once the portal closes, TSBA will choose its members who remain anonymous. The committee will recommend three to five (3-5) applicants and provide sample interview questions specifically designed by the criteria the board requires. TSBA will work through the timeline with the Board until the end.

Page Six (6) - Plans offered: There are three plans that are offered. Plan One (1)- TSBA will provide all criteria , develop the brochure, post the job on their site and other national sites they are members of. There is no candidate screening in this plan, the plan of Plan 1 is \$3000. Plan Two (2) includes all the plan one includes with the additions of online screening, recruitment, interview dates. This plan doesn't include community meetings, the cost of Plan 2 is \$7,500. Plan Three (3) includes everything in Plan 1 and 2, in addition to in-person community and employee meetings, report results on all meetings including online survey and make any recommendation to the board as needed. This plan will also come with a guarantee that if the selected candidate leaves CCS within a two-year period, TSBA will conduct a new search at no additional cost to the system.

That is the end of Dr. Grissom's presentation and Chairman Tucker opened the floor to questions from the Board.

Nate Tucker (NT) - Will services online and in person be available in any other language than English? What was the last plan that we used with TSBA?

Dr. Grissom (DG) - Online survey could be translated. I will look into that. The in-person CCS will need to provide a translator. Apologies, I am not prepared with that information. I will look into it and get back to you.

NT- If we have someone in mind who is local but another district, would TSBA be willing to assist?

DG- Yes, we can reach out to them on your behalf.

Krista McKay (KM) - Do all these plans include travel for the TSBA and the

candidates? Are you currently thinking of any candidates?

Dr. Grissom (DG) - Yes. There are some in the Prospective Superintendents Academy (PSA).

KM- If the interim doesn't apply to be a candidate, do you feel that will impact candidates? Can we customize search areas for diversity?

DG- No, other candidates feel like they have an advantage, and we will have to decide if you want to waive the policy if you have a interim and want to use that person. Yes, however, you will need to pay any additional costs that may be charged to broaden the search.

KM- Back when Dr. Denning was hired. Wasn't he out of state? Concerns that TSBA doesn't recruit out of state or get many candidates from out of state.

DG- Yes, he was, and we can get you a solid number of out-of-state candidates.

Peggy Pesterfield (PP) Are many candidates out of state?

Dr. Grissom (DG) - Yes, most of them are, there may be one or two who are in the state. We are struggling to find quality candidates and that is why we launched the PSA.

PP-If we had a candidate in mind, what would we need to do?

DG- Save the cost and don't go through a firm and hiring process. Remember that all interviews have to be conducted in public, possibly at a Board Meeting, and you would be responsible for the cost of travel for the candidate.

Matthew Coleman (MC) - Who is on the search committee?

Dr. Grissom (DG) - We will not share the names but rest assured they are employees of TSBA and qualified outside people, no one from CCS.

MC- What is the optimal time to apply?

DG- No, if they want to be superintendent they will make it work.

MC- Are there any up-coming conferences or conventions that you can have in-person recruitment?

DG- We have a few coming up, but I don't think we have active recruitment, but we have brochures and searches going.

MC- Do you have a pay bracket for what competitive pay is to get the best candidate?

DG- We can get the information to show you what similar sized districts are offering.

Andy Lay (AL) - What kind of response do you get from community meetings?

Dr. Grissom (DG) - Honestly, attendance has significantly dropped. It could be a hit or miss. Online surveys and feedback forms will get you more information.

Jodi Riggins (JR) - In your last search for CCS how many candidates did you have?

Dr. Grissom (DG) - Maybe 5-6 but I don't recall, so I will get that information for you.

Nate Tucker thanked Dr. Tammy Grissom for her time and the information provided. He asked that she follow up with the information she was asked for but not able to provide today. Dr. Grissom responded with her gratitude and acknowledged getting the information out as soon as possible.

Ray & Associates joined the meeting via Google Meet.

The board welcomed Dr. David Faltys, Managing Director, Ms. Minnie Forte-Brown, Regional Search Associate, and Dr. Patricia Garcia, Regional Search Associate who was not on the call but would be part of this team. The board members introduced themselves.

Dr. Faltys began his presentation with gratitude for allowing the team to present what their company had to offer. Dr. Falty's presentation shared five (5) stages they provided, which included a 30-45 minute call with each board member for feedback and answer questions, CCS district profile creation, 31 Qualities Survey, sample questions and schedule for community input, online and in person community meetings with stakeholders. The candidate pool will be screened based on CCS board criteria, background investigation, Ray & Associates will plan to bring the top 10-12 candidates to the board for their review. Once the board has narrowed down their search and communicated their choices, Ray & Associates will then do a deeper background investigation at no additional cost for the board to review. Ray & Associates asks the candidates to provide a one-way 90-second video, Spark Hire Video), where they introduce themselves and are asked to tell the board why they are the best candidate. Ray & Associates will build a matrix of the qualities the board members are seeking in the next Director of Schools. He spoke of the diversity inside this company and how there will be a continued effort in this search. Base fee is \$18,500. Ray and Associates will agree to match the price of any competitive bid as long as the bid is for a comparable level of services and support (both time and process). Breakdown of costs on page 16.

That is the end of the presentation. Chairman Tucker thanked Dr. Faltys and Ms. Forte-Brown for their time. Chairman Tucker open the floor for questions from the board members.

Peggy Pesterfield (PP): Do we need to watch the spark videos together or on our own?

Dr. Falty (DF): That will be decided by your board members.

PP- What are candidates looking for?

DF- Candidates are looking at your online board meetings to see how the board gets along and what kind of atmosphere they would be in. It's great that Dr. Dyer has been DOS for six (6) years, as that is great because the typical time a DOS stays is about three (3) years. They are looking to bring their families into the community and settle in. They want to see what great things CCS is doing for the kids.

PP- How do you handle current district candidates?

DF- Current district candidates should follow the same process as anyone else for full transparency and fairness. If it comes down to multiple current district candidates, we can use an A/B process which we will develop based off another district that this happened in.

Nate Tucker (NT) mentioned bringing the top 10-12.

Dr. Falty (DF) - Yes, after we do the initial screening we will send the top candidates to you to review.

NT- On average, how many apply?

DF- We average 30-45 applicants

NT- Are these kinds of searches all your company does?

DF- Yes, this is our only job.

NT- If we have someone in mind, would you reach out to them?

DF- If you have someone who you think would be great, please send us their information and we will reach out to them.

NT- Where do you get candidates from?

DF- We advertise on websites, social media, and we have regional contacts who we can ask to send us candidates,

Matthew Colman(MC)- Is there an optimal time window?

Dr. Falty (DF) - You're in a good time period right now for good candidates to apply.

MC- What is the timing for your company? We are looking at February-March?

DF- Looking ahead at the calendar for March, you have to get around or ahead of Spring Break. A sample timeline was provided in the presentation, and you are really ahead of the race right now. Keeping your momentum timetable, we are in a good place time wise.

Carolyn Ingram (CI) - Why should we hire you over TSBA?

Dr. Falty (DF) - TSBA would be a great source to assist you in this search. It's really your choice. Our process over the last 50 years is tried and true. We give you the opportunity to find talent around the country. We can bring national candidates. Our goal is to bring you the best candidates that you would love to have for your DOS.

Chairman Tucker thanked Dr. Falty's and Ms. Forte-Brown for their time and we will get back with them soon.

Chairman Tucker asks for thoughts on the two presentations given today.

Jodi Riggins- No difference. Ray & Associates may get more candidates, but it is more costly. Where does this money come from?

Peggy Pesterfield- TSBA knows our system.

Carolyn Ingram- TSBA found us Dr. Denning and Dr. Dyer. They've done a great job, and it seems more affordable. Tammy is really knowledgeable and knows CCS.

Matthew Coleman-This is our greatest job, and we need to use the best firm to find the best candidate to continue to provide the best services for these kids. If it's a cost issue, we should look at this without cost being an issue.

Carolyn Ingram - We have to think about all the cost, think about the moving costs for someone out of state.

Krista McKay - Money wise, the price difference isn't my main concern. Ray & Associates, all fees are included, such as consultants. TSBA is used to us and will bring candidates to us as well. I would prefer meetings in-person all around. TSBA seemed to lean towards online meetings. Ray & Associates searched for a more diverse candidate and if we went with TSBA, I would want to see them bring more diversity.

Matthew Coleman - TSBA and Ray & Associates can both come in person, depending on how many associates we want with be there.

Andy Lay - TSBA pulls from the same pool, Tammy even said at least ten of the candidates are the same every time? Ray & Associates. This is their only job.

Nate Tucker - Our leadership should match our student population. Both TSBA and Ray & Associates do not know what we want or the problems we face or are dealing with, as these are Cleveland City School concerns, issues, and problems, not just anyone. He likes what Ray & Associates has to offer and money shouldn't be an issue. We have the budget, and we will not be wasteful of that in either case. This is the time to be resourceful. He asks Dr. Elliott of the budget and how we can work the budget and in response, he was told that Cindy Geren could make an amendment to the budget if needed and bring it to the next board meeting. We could use the remaining balance of Dr. Dyer's salary minus some fees per an email Nate Tucker received from Cindy.

Krista McKay - Ray & Associates has a price match in their proposal. Can we make a counter? We have the budget.

Discussion between BMs:

Two main questions for the board:

Do we want community meetings? (All BM's agree, YES)
Search for a diverse candidate? (Yes)

Adjust timeline

Krista McKay would like to move the start date to July 1, 2024.

Matthew Coleman states that he is fine with whatever dates but subject to the professional services' advertisement date for the search start and Interim Director Decision.

Requirements:

In person -Less technology (search firm and candidate)
In person community meetings (search firm and candidate)

Tasks:

Mathew Coleman will contact Ray & Associates to talk about their matching requirements and bring it to the next special called meeting on January 22, 2024. This information is to be used to make a more informed decision on what firm to use.

Interim Director Discussion:

Carolyn Ingram makes a motion to evoke Policy 1.600 lines 23-25, Suspension of Policies in reference to Policy 5.801 Director of Schools Recruitment and Selection, lines 6-7. Peggy Pesterfield seconded this motion.

Andrea McMackin performed a roll call for the board members to cast their vote on waving Policy 5.801.

Krista McKay- Yes
Nate Tucker - No
Peggy Pesterfield- Yes
Carolyn Ingram - Yes
Andy Lay - Yes
Jodi Riggins- Yes
Matthew Coleman- No
5-Yes 2-No It Passes.

Matthew Coleman asks if the board can direct the question to Dr. Jeff Elliott since he is in the room.

Dr. Jeff Elliott responded: I will not go against transparency and I will be here if I am Interim Director or not. I will work with the board's decision. He would be happy to be Interim Director if the board so chooses.

Krista McKay asked: Would you be interested in being Interim Director?
Dr. Elliott - Yes, I would be happy to.

Carolyn Ingram: Would you be able to do both jobs; Director of School and Chief of Staff?

Dr. Elliott, Yes I would be available and willing.

Matthew Coleman - Do you have any relationship with Johnny McDaniel's or Bob Taylor?

Dr. Elliott - Yes, I've worked with Bob in the city and with Johnny as a consultant.

Comments regarding having an internal Interim Candidate verses a candidate outside CCS:

Carolyn Ingram - Our staff would be more confident and feel safe with an internal candidate.

Matthew Coleman - Having an outside candidate can bring a fresh set of eyes to our schools.

Carolyn Ingram - Not sure what someone can learn in two-three (2-3) months, would it be needed or worth it? Would it just be a disruption to our system?

Krista McKay - We will not be doing this search halfway. An outside person could pose a disruption to our staff. Our school system needs support. We don't need someone "judging" us or a change agent. Collierville used an internal candidate for Interim Director who went through the whole process to be hired, and he wasn't chosen to be DOS. We can also hire now without going through a search if we have a good candidate.

Matthew Coleman - No one is questioning Dr. Elliott's confidence or ability. Questions will come from optics and transparencies.

Peggy Pesterfiled- We need to do what's best for our system. I've worked with this system for a long time and I have no doubt Dr. Elliott can do this and he has the community support.

Nate Tucker - We will not rush an interim director decision.

Interim Director Recommendations from the Board.

Jodi Riggins- Mr. Johnny McDaniel's

Matthew Coleman- Mr. Bob Taylor
Krista McKay- Mr. Kelly Kiser
Peggy Pesterfield- Dr. Jeff Elliott

Matthew Coleman asked if we could contact each recommendation and have a discussion with them.

The board responded - Yes that is acceptable.

Can we place a limitation on the interim's abilities?

Board-We will look into that.

Krista McKay would like a bio of each nomination. Asks if we can get a job description from TSBA for an Interim? Or our human resources department.

Tasks:

Please send a bio and picture of your candidate to Andrea McMackin no later than Noon, Tuesday, January 23, 2024. She will provide the board with a presentation on all recommendations via email prior to the next meeting.

A Special-Called Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 4:30 pm being held at AOB.

Farewell to Dr. Dyer Plans

Dr. Elliott and the Administration team will do something at the next Administration meeting, February 14, 2024 at The Denning Center.

AOB staff will do something the last week he is in the office.

Caroline Corrigan will work on a Memory Book.

The Board of Education will get together and come up with what they would like to do for him.

At the March 4, 2024, BOE meeting there will be a reception that will have light refreshments and desserts. This will be open to the community, staff, students and community leaders prior to the meeting that begins at 5:30 pm. Andrea McMackin is working with CHS Staff to see where we can host this event.

3. Public Comments

Permission was given to each person by Chairman Tucker as they were to ask based off the current topic only.

Hal Taylor - Looking back on COVID, Dr. Dyer was not in the country when we were dealing with this. Dr. Elliott stepped up and did an amazing job getting this district in its place, and he took care of the staff. He knows what's taking place throughout the district, and he is respected and supported by this community and recommends Dr. Jeff Elliott for Interim Director.

Kellye Bender - Our team works well together and there is an open-door policy. We all help. If Dr. Elliott becomes Interim Director. We1 will all do whatever is needed so that nothing changes. He is surrounded by a team. We will continue to work as a unit.

Doug Moore - We've got work to do still, nothing stops. We have planning to finish for this year and begin working on next year. Having Dr. Elliott brings consistency and, as an interim, it just makes sense to have him at the wheel.

Michael Kahrs- I am in agreement with what has been said. As a team we will work through anything.

Hal Taylor- Specifically, would the interim from outside be able to approve large dollar contracts and terminate employment. Johnny and Bob are outstanding people, but I worry about their background on what CCS does.

4. Adjourn

Chairman adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

X _____
Nate Tucker, Chairman
Cleveland City Schools Board

X _____
Carolyn Ingram, Vice Chair
Cleveland City School Board