

FINAL MINUTES
SAU 39 School Board Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2010
Souhegan High School Annex, Room A222

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Chris Jansen, Steve Coughlan, Jeanne Ludt, Pim Grondstra, Mary Lou Mullens

Amherst School Board:

Mont Vernon School Board: John Quinlan, Bruce Schmidt, Kim Roberge, Janet Gramatges

Administrative Team: Mary Jennings, Betty Shankel, Nancy Macguire, Carrie Moreau, Jon Ingram, Renea Sparks, Colleen Meaney

Guest/Presenter: Mark Joyce

Public: David Villiotti

Minutes Recorder: Janet Gramatges

Chris Jansen called the board meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PRESENTATION

There was a presentation by Dr. Mark Joyce, Executive Director of the NH School Administrators Association on the superintendent search process. He made suggestions for a smoother search process, and a better way to encourage success for a new superintendent after the board has hired one.

The suggestions he made were to be clear on the application and interview process, spelling out when the applicants would be made public and what would be involved in the full process, detailing the compensation package rather than leaving it vague, and making it competitive with other similar school districts.

He also suggested taking the time to assess the district's needs for a superintendent, being sure to focus not just on areas in need of improvement, but the areas of current strength, so that they do not become new weaknesses.

He also strongly suggested careful checking of candidate references.

He recommended using a professional hiring agency and stated that other districts that had done so had found it very useful. The costs he said were anywhere from eight thousand to over fifteen, depending on the agency.

He recommends using the state department of education's website to help determine an appropriate compensation package. He said to be sure to consider the school type, size, and region of the state, and to note that some of the districts now use part-time superintendents, so to take that into account when finding a much smaller salary. He suggested to look at current competition in both NH and MA, because both sides of the border are possibilities for candidates.

After a candidate is found and hired, he suggested several steps to help assure success and longevity for the new superintendent.

He suggested encouraging and allowing participation in professional networking with other administrators.

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He also suggested funding and promoting professional development opportunities, both to provide continued learning and to help the superintendent keep abreast of new laws and legal precedent.

He also suggested the board consider appropriate mentoring opportunities, which his organization offers for an estimated annual cost of \$3000-\$4000. The mentors are experienced, successful retired superintendents from within the state and he says other districts that have done it have benefited. He noted that New Hampshire is unique from other states in some ways, educationally, and that a mentor can be especially useful for a candidate coming in with little or no direct NH experience.

He also stressed the importance of implementing a regular annual school board and superintendent goal setting process, as well as establishing a rigorous, clear, and fair annual evaluation cycle that promotes communication and delivers a written product. He pointed out that both of those are free of cost for the district, but do require time and effort on all parts. Still, he stressed their value to the district and encouraged both.

III. QUESTION AND

ANSWER Jeanne Ludt asked if there is better success in finding someone with prior New Hampshire experience?

Mark Joyce answered that he hasn't seen it. Out of state candidates are also very good, but he recommends a professional development course on the ways in which NH is unique. He said that out of state candidates often need that sort of special assistance. The program is called NH Way.

Jeanne Ludt noted that SAU 39 used to have an Assistant superintendent, and asked if in most places, if those people are usually the ones groomed for a superintendent position.

Mark Joyce answered that it depends on the district. He noted that Bedford, Londonderry, and Merrimack are all known for a tendency to promote internally.

Jeanne Ludt commented that she remembers SAU 39 did have one of the recruiters mentioned earlier, and that they chose to work with the NH School Boards Association, and that they did a superb job.

Steve Coughlan recalled going through an inclusive phase for asking what people want. He said they took everything people said and ended up needing a superman. He said they couldn't set search priorities due to too many opinions.

Mark Joyce answered that other districts have found it useful to first educate people on the seven

key areas of responsibility for a superintendent, (general leadership, curriculum and instruction, personnel management, finance, student services, communications and community relations, and maintenance and capital improvement,) and then ask them for current strengths and weaknesses. He reiterated the need to be clear on what is needed in a candidate.

Mark Joyce also noted a website, edjobsnh.com , and said that SAU 39 already participates in it, and that it is a great place to use in a candidate search.

IV. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Steve Coughlan to adjourn the meeting. Pim Grondstra seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. (9 -0 -0). The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.