

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL OPEN MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Field School Small Gym
3131 Techny, Northbrook, Illinois 60062
8:00 PM, June 18, 2019

CALL TO ORDER

The Open Session Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order by President Melissa Choo Valentinas at 8:05pm.

ROLL CALL

Board Members:

Present:

Robert Resis
Daphne Frank
Jeffrey Steres
Nancy Hammer
Maria Vasilopoulos
Melissa Choo Valentinas
Laura Greenberg

District Administration:

Present: None

A quorum of the Board was confirmed by Board President, Melissa Choos Valentinas.

RECOGNITION OF AUDIENCE

President Melissa Choo Valentinas summarized the rules to address the Board of Education wherein she stated to state your name and address and that the Board of Education does not engage in conversation and to please keep your comments to three to five minutes due to anticipation of a long meeting. The Board of Education will listen and take the comments into consideration.

Parent in the district, Kim Alexopolous residing at 3465 Garden Street, Northbrook, requested clarity as to what has been happening and asked for a brief summary of what is happening before everyone starts to speak. She speaks of side conversations with other parents regarding process for a superintendent search. She states that she is in favor of Dr. Murphy as superintendent but would like to see transparency from the Board of Education on what they are doing.

President Melissa Choo Valentinas stated that Dr. Alexandra Nicholson resigned effective June 30, 2019. This is a year before her contract was up. This left the School Board in a situation of trying to manage an unexpected resignation. This has been challenging for the Board of Education due to much of this cannot be discussed in open session for privacy reasons. This is the third special meeting since May in efforts to manage through this situation and what the impact would be.

Parent in the district, Karina Gitlevich residing at 2033 Cambria Court, Glenview, stated that she was involved in the search processes in the past and stated how they didn't work out. She also stated that we are lucky to have Dr. Murphy as superintendent. Ms. Gitlevich spoke of Dr. Murphy's interactions with the community.

Resident and past parent in the district, Heather Abels, residing at 3090 Floral Drive Northbrook, spoke in support of Dr. Murphy as superintendent. Mrs. Abels spoke to Dr. Murphy's experience both personally and professionally as a teacher. She spoke about the positive in hiring internally.

Parent in the district, Margo Schwartz-Newton, residing at 3044 Oxford Lane, Northbrook, stated that the email that was sent out was not clear regarding the position of Dr. Murphy. It was unclear.

Parent in the district, Victoria Bardic, residing at 3540 Merle Lane, stated the support of Dr. Murphy but is concerned about her replacement as a principal. Ms. Bardic stated that she would be willing to volunteer her time to be on a committee for the principal search.

Parent in the district, Patricia Fallon, residing at 3500 Merle Lane, agreed with the statements made by Victoria. She stated she is happy with Dr. Murphy as superintendent but would like to help with the principal search.

Parent in the district, Debbie Silverman residing at 2137 Clover, Northbrook, stated that because she does not understand what is going on and she does not hear positive feedback on Dr. Murphy, she is in favor of a superintendent search.

Parent in the district, Allison Slade residing at 2117 Valley Road, Northbrook, spoke of her experience in schools and advised that we have a sign in sheet for speaking and the posting of meeting is not enough. She spoke about needing a process regarding Dr. Murphy's position as a superintendent. She stated that she is concerned of transparency and the open meetings act which refers to posting notes from previous meetings.

Parent in the district, Michael Rothstein residing at 2117 Valley Road, Northbrook, spoke in support of a search for a superintendent.

Parent in the district, Heather Glowacki residing at 4001 Miller Drive, Glenview, stated to

consider an interim principal position for Field Middle School.

Parent in the district, Meredith Estes, residing at 4330 Ivy Drive, Glenview spoke of experience on the board and points out the lack of transparency. She believes it was a wise choice to get Dr. Murphy in a quick manner. She agreed in having an interim for both principal and superintendent positions. She asked of community education and involvement. She spoke of protecting Dr. Murphy from gossip and suspicion.

Parent in the district, Darrin Stern residing at 3015 White Pine, Northbrook spoke of improving communication and transparency. Mr. Stern thinks a communication person should be hired rather than a search firm.

President Melissa Choo Valentinas went through each parent's questions and answered them to the best of her ability. She stated that this meeting tonight is going to be geared towards discussing the contract for Dr. Murphy. The Board of Education needs to be very careful because it involves an internal candidate and needs to remain confidential. She also stated that parents should reach out to Dr. Murphy regarding the principal search. An email will be going out tomorrow stating that if you would like to be on the committee for the principal search to contact Dr. Murphy. President Melissa Choo Valentinas stated that the Board of Education is not sure why some of the minutes are not posted on the website but will find out and have them posted.

INFORMATION and DISCUSSION

President Melissa Choo Valentinas stated that there are two options. The two options are to conduct a search in the Fall of 2019 for the 2020-2021 school year or to not begin a search process at this time.

Member Jeffrey Steres expressed his thoughts that given the situation the Board of Education has with the superintendent vacancy, the path has changed from what was previously planned. Member Jeffrey Steres stated that he fully supports Dr. Erin Murphy as the District 31 Superintendent for the 2019-2020 school year. He feels fortunate to have a leader within the district with such knowledge to be called upon to step into this unexpected vacancy. As the Board and community was planning to begin a superintendent search later this year, Member Jeffrey Steres stated that he began a process of inquiring search firms and inquiring what the search would look like. The search would include what our difference constituencies; families, staff, administration and Board members are seeking in a superintendent and methodical process to recruit, identify candidates, conduct interviews and select this district's future leader. This would result in a community involved process and able the Board to decide our superintendent from a collection of applicants. Member Jeffrey Steres stated that the district should begin a superintendent search for 2020 and beyond immediately. The outcome of a search is to have the Board of Education choose the best candidate for the superintendent of District 31. The Board of Education has chosen to spend \$80,000 for a benefit of single grade for a single year but is not willing to spend \$15,000 for a

benefit for multiple years for hundreds of staff members and over 800 students. Member Jeffrey Steres stated that his objective is to find the best possible candidate for District 31.

Member Robert Resis stated that the best time to do a superintendent search for the fall is to start the search in the preceding year. The fact that we received a resignation a year earlier should not be a reason to deviate from that timeline. Candidates that have experience with the district should be considered but it should not be a reason to not do a search. Member Robert Resis agrees with Member Jeffrey Steres that the Board of Education should open a superintendent search.

Vice President Laura Greenberg stated they had multiple conversations about this topic and it comes back to having a suboptimal situation. The concern is putting Dr. Murphy in the role for one year and a search is done and a different candidate gets that role, then we lose her as a principal. The benefits that Dr. Murphy brought to Field Middle School we feel would be brought to the District level. The district needs stability and a new hire takes 6 months to get familiar and learn. The question is, is there a way of getting community involvement and not risk what's working well?

Member Maria Vasilopoulos express that she is in full support of having Dr. Murphy as superintendent for the 2019-2020 school year if that is the direction we go. Member Maria Vasilopoulos reminded the Board of Education the duties of the Board. One of the main things is to hire and evaluate our superintendent. Member Maria Vasilopoulos stated that she wants to serve her due diligence to her community and does not want to use District 31 as a training ground for a superintendent. There is value in experience. There are different roles of teachers, principals and superintendent and because you make a great principal may not mean you make a great superintendent. Member Maria Vasilopoulos wants to be able to find the best candidate. By not engaging our community, staff and Board of Education in a formal superintendent search would be reminiscing our duty to do our due diligence to secure the best person for our district. While in the end, that may be Dr. Murphy. Member Maria Vasiloplous urges the Board of Education to pursue a detailed search to appoint a more permanent superintendent for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond.

President Melissa Choo Valentinas agrees that the Board of Education does realize the duties of the Board. The position now of the superintendent vacancy is different given the circumstances. The Board of Education has spent multiple hours discussing different options and ongoing consulting with the attorney. President Melissa Choo Valentinas stated that given her human resource experience, District 31 is in a fortunate situation that we do not need to have a search. Data shows having knowledge of the district puts Dr. Murphy in a position to hit the ground running.

Member Nancy Hammer stated the district has had continual consistency at Field due to Dr. Murphy. The district needs to heal and we have a great opportunity that we have someone that knows our aches and pains and can help us grow. Dr. Murphy's heart is in Field and she will be able to mentor the new Principal with the best of intentions. A search too soon might

muddy the waters in that it can make Dr. Murphy's focus less because of the preparedness of going through a superintendent search instead of focusing on being the superintendent.

Member Daphne Frank stated that her support is in favor of not having a search and states that Dr. Murphy has been acting as superintendent several times already and has been in situations that she needed to take over because the acting superintendent was not available.

Member Maria Vasilopoulos stated that the Board of Education should not make a decision based on if something would be too stressful. Member Maria Vasilopoulos believes that Dr. Murphy would be able to handle acting as an interim superintendent while preparing to be a candidate for the superintendent search.

MOVE INTO CLOSED

Member Laura Greenberg made a motion to move into closed session to consider information regarding the appointment, employment, compensation, or performance of specific employees. Member Nancy Hammer seconded the motion. Final Resolution: Aye: Robert Resis, Melissa Choo Valentinas, Nancy Hammer, Laura Greenberg, Jeffrey Steres, Daphne Frank, Maria Vasilopoulos. Nay: None. The motion passed 7:0 at 9:39pm.

ACTION ITEMS REGARDING THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, COMPENSATION OR PERFORMANCE OF SPECIFIC EMPLOYEES

Member Jeffrey Steres made a motion for doing a search for superintendent effective 2020-2021 school year starting in the fall. Final Resolution: Aye: Robert Resis, Jeffrey Steres, Maria Vasilopoulos. Nay: Melissa Choo Valentinas, Nancy Hammer, Laura Greenberg, Daphne Frank. The motion failed 3:4.

ADJOURN

Member Steres made a motion to adjourn. Member Laura Greenberg seconded the motion. Final Resolution: Aye: Robert Resis, Melissa Choo Valentinas, Nancy Hammer, Jeffrey Steres, Daphne Frank, Maria Vasilopoulos, Laura Greenberg. Nay: None. The motion passed 7:0 at 9:43pm.

Board President

Board Secretary

Date