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WAYLAND SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Approved
DRAFT MINUTES
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Date and Time: Friday, October 21, 2014 at 10 a.m.
Place: Wayland Town Building, School Committee Room

Present: Ellen Grieco and Malcolm Astley

Malcolm and Ellen called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

1. Election of a Chair Ellen had nominated Malcolm as chair at the previous meeting, and he had accepted. Since we had not put the item on the agenda, we will plan to put the item on the next agenda and have the election at the next meeting. Malcolm agreed to take minutes.

2. Public Comment There was no public comment and no one else present.

3. Approval of Minutes of October 3, 2014 Upon a motion made by Malcolm, seconded by Ellen, the Subcommittee voted 2-0 to approve the minutes of October 3, 2014 as written.

4. Discussion of Last Year's Process for Evaluation of the Superintendent and Planning for the Current Year, 2014-2015

The Subcommittee continued discussion both of the process last year and considerations for the current year. Sub topics to be discussed included continued consideration of a "360 degree" process through which employees in a variety of roles would be asked about feedback regarding the superintendent's performance; a timetable of work to be performed in the evaluation process; and Malcolm's reservations about aspects of a 360 degree process. The hope was expressed that the process be substantive and not convoluted like the state system seemed to be.

Malcolm urged that the approach be considered a pilot and that perhaps a neutral third party be identified to collect information in a neutral manner. The third party approach would help avoid the interference of hierarchical power issues in the process, for instance, if a retired superintendent or an organizational specialist carried out the data collection. The matter was discussed as to how such a 360 process, common in the hierarchical business world, would or would not work well in the more horizontal structure of a school system. Ellen noted that it was significant that the

issue of the superintendent's community engagement had taken on a disproportionate importance in her view because the state evaluation process was easily scattered instead of focused clearly on substance and pertinent significant data.

It was decided that Malcolm would check with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees regarding their knowledge and guidance of such a 360 approach. Do other systems use the approach? Are their suggestions as to procedures? What costs are involved? Do they have suggestions for identifying appropriate knowledgeable and neutral third parties? \$2,000 was considered a rough starting point to entertain in terms of possible costs. Do we have those funds?

Ellen brought up the challenge school systems seem to face in perhaps inadvertently preventing sound focus on the delivery of needed criticism that could lead to progress and merit. Malcolm noted that often criticism could readily be delivered, but did not necessarily lead to growth and a stance of proactive pursuit of constructive criticism and self improvement, an important goal in the long run for the whole system and ideally nurtured in the process of the superintendent's evaluation.

Ellen noted that criticism was appropriate and potentially helpful for improving performance. She also noted that an additional new process on top of the ~~many~~^{many} other initiatives in the system could "spook" personnel and that we had to proceed with care. She said receptiveness to criticism was important in all professions. Malcolm noted that building that receptiveness and proactive seeking and reflection was also important, and that many corporations were clearly causing harm through some of their approaches. Ellen emphasized the importance of reflection in her own evaluations and growth. Malcolm asked: How do you nurture a proactive stance in the professionals to be seeking growth and helpful critiquing of performance?

The committee began to work on a possible list of those who might be tapped for this pilot effort, and eight employees in various roles were identified for possible inclusion in the process, not named here since inclusion or exclusion could be a sensitive matter. Malcolm noted an option of asking the superintendent to collect the data, reflect on it with a peer, and report findings to the School Committee.

Ellen suggested the designated employees be asked to provide information on: three main projects they had worked on along with the superintendent, the three best and worst aspects of the projects and the

superintendent's performance in relation to those projects; and employee's reflection on the superintendent's broader strengths and weaknesses.

It was decided to continue to ask the School Committee about its interests as a body in terms of indicators and elements they thought important to be part of the evaluative process and just how "deep" they wanted the examine of data and its relation to the superintendent's work to be.

It was noted that this effort might be too much for this year, but could be discussed as a way of preparing for the evaluation process next year. The ideas would all be reviewed with the whole School Committee and with Superintendent Stein for their reactions and the design of an appropriate course for this year and looking to the next.

The following dates were identified tentatively for future meetings at 10 AM: 11/5, 12/3, 1/7, 2/4, 3/4, 4/1, 5/6, 6/3.

5. Adjournment Upon the motion of Ellen seconded by Malcolm and with a vote of 2-0, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Grieco

Malcolm Astley

Documents:

1. Agenda for meeting October 21, 2014
2. Draft Minutes of October 3, 2014 meeting of Superintendent Evaluation Subcommittee