

Andover School Committee
Minutes –Interim Superintendent Interview

Date: June 4, 2015

Location: School Committee Room

SC Members Present: J. Blumstein, P. Colby-Clements, T. Teichert, S. McCready, A. Gilbert

Others Present: Nancy Duclos, Candace Hall, Paul Szymanski

Invited Guests: Dr. Paul Ash

Chairman A. Gilbert called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. Tonight’s only agenda item is the interview of Dr. Paul Ash for the Interim Superintendent / Transitional Leader position. Mrs. Gilbert introduced Dr. Ash to the members of the School Committee.

Dr. Ash was asked to tell the School Committee about himself

Dr. Ash has worked in education for the past 42 years and is passionate and deeply committed to providing the best education for children. He started his career in education as a high school teacher at Dover-Sherborn, spent nineteen years in Wellesley where he learned the full breadth of Central Office through his roles as the Director of Professional Development, Human Resources, Finance, Administration, and Assistant Superintendent. Dr. Ash has been the Superintendent at Lexington for the past ten years. Having worked in high-performing districts he is very interested in the interim position in Andover and is committed to building trust through collaboration and communication and building teams.

Andover has five high-level entry positions to fill and it is critical to have the right people in these key roles. People are looking for a sense of confidence at AHS and trust has to be built. He would do that through conversations, high visibility, and focusing completely on the issues and sorting out all concerns. The transitional leader in Andover will spend more time working with Central Office staff and school principals and administrators. Dr. Ash cares about people he works with and for and it would be the Transitional Leader’s role to make sure the organization runs at a high-level and beyond that builds a culture of working together as a team.

His approach to the hiring process includes gathering information beforehand on the qualities and attributes needed for the position, networking, developing questions, and in-depth reference checks. If considering hiring an in-house candidate, Dr. Ash would approach those who appear to have leadership skills. Hiring within reduces training time, is more effective, as well as being a morale booster.

Communication

Dr. Ash communicates best by listening and talking, both of which present opportunities to collect information, learn about needs within the District, and promotes sharing of ideas. He likes working interactively with various boards and committees and Town and School leaders. Dr. Ash is confident his experience as a Central Office Administrator for the past thirty-six years and having dealt with similar issues many times over provides him with the experience to solve problems and make decisions.

How do you help support what teachers do without micro-managing

Dr. Ash would offer coaching, mentor opportunities, and professional development for job-alike group leaders and teachers to support them in their present fields so they can be more efficient. A thoughtful induction program for teachers, administrators, and principals, would be one where participants would

meet over a period of time and a program that provides opportunities to gain trust, to build relationships, and to work together in an atmosphere that is supportive of each other. Dr. Ash believes in delegating work to provide more time for the Superintendent to do their job, and hiring good people.

Managing Areas in Special Education

Special Education is the most regulated area in education with many areas where you have to be in compliance. He would broach Special Education by following all regulations and in consideration of the essential question of what does the child need and the legal expectations of providing only what the law provides. Special Education has been properly funded to avert crises in the districts where he has worked. There is often tension when making decisions on Special Education needs, but properly setting guidelines guides the budget priorities; the process works.

It is very important to that in-house programs are successful in year one, and are more effective and cost less than out-of-district programs. It is especially important to have conversations with parents before formally bring the program in-house. If parents feel the Special Education staff is honest and trustworthy, they will know that the program will succeed.

How would you foster relationships with principals, support jobs and move the district forward

Dr. Ash would foster relationships, support jobs, and move the district forward through communication with school principals on their thoughts on the school system, and what they want to see accomplished. He would support teachers by providing clear K-2 curriculum, building teams that work towards the same goals, having the tools to assess students, and afford teachers opportunities to work together instead of being islands of education.

Andover has a history of always caring about children and their goals, Dr. Ash would meet to discuss needs and determine the costs needed to accomplish the goals then work with the Town Manager for support of additional funds if needed. If a decision doesn't go as anticipated it is important to put it behind you and not conceal information and then determine what happened, fix it, and move forward.

Questions for the School Committee

Dr. Ash thanked the School Committee for their hospitality. He is very interested in the position and feels he would do a good job by setting goals, learning about the district and would work with new hires for a smooth transition.

Motion to Adjourn

T. Teichert moved that the School Committee adjourn the meeting of June 4, 2015. The motion was seconded by S. McCready. Roll call: J. Blumstein, P. Colby-Clements, T. Teichert, S. McCready, A. Gilbert.

Respectfully submitted,

Dee DeLorenzo
Recording Secretary