

**Andover School Committee  
Workshop  
Minutes of Thursday, January 28, 2021**

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**Participants from the School Committee:** Shannon Scully, Susan McCready, Tracey Spruce, Paul Murphy, and Lauren Conoscenti.

**Also participating:** , Assistant Superintendent Sandra Trach, Assistant Superintendent Sara Stetson, Chief Operations Officer Stephen Nembirkow, HR Director Jessica Porter, HR Recruitment Coordinator Gillian Chartier,

**Others in attendance: Ray & Associates: Molly Schwarzhoff, Mike Collins**

The Workshop will be broadcast by Andover TV and on Comcast Channel 99, Verizon Channel 43 or streamed: [www.andovertv.org](http://www.andovertv.org). Public Participation: [scremote@andoverma.us](mailto:scremote@andoverma.us)

**I. School Committee Workshop: Open Session/Call to Order/Moment of Silence**

Shannon Scully called the Andover School Committee to order at 10:00 A.M. The one agenda item is for the discussion on the Superintendent search with Molly and Mike from Ray Associates who will provide information on the feedback from the several focus groups that will be used to form the profile of the Superintendent qualities desired by the district.

Molly reviewed the replies listed on the ranking recommendation sheet derived from the survey responses from teachers, administrators, students, and non-parent community members. Out of the thirty-three qualities listed on the Characteristics Report, the top qualities ranked included, someone who is strongly committed to a “student first” philosophy in all decisions, has knowledge of emerging research and best practice in the area of curriculum, and instructional design and practice. Someone who inspires trust, self-confidence, and models high standards. Someone who is a strong communicator, promotes a positive and professional environment for district employees and the School Committee, and someone who possesses the leadership skills required to respond to the opportunities presented both ethnically and culturally.

The Committee discussed recommendations to consider for the Superintendent Profile and how to combine and refine like qualities listed and ideas the School Committee is committed to. It is important that we don’t have someone who would come in and somehow think we are not going in the right direction with regard to cultural climate and diversity.

The themes heard in the various focus sessions held across the District where shared by Mike Collins. It is very clear that there is an interest in hiring a superintendent with real interest in school and educational leadership, and that this person has a significant role and seat at the community table for leadership and partnership. Because of the integration and relationship in the budgetary world, they need to have a real sense of how to be an advocate for the financial situation, concerns, and requests. There are some key elements that need to be addressed; individual student needs; special education, equity and inclusion, and common interests in specialty worlds.

This person should be someone who listens to input and makes decisions they stand by, someone who doesn't undo what has been done to help build the climate, atmosphere and structure, and someone who can build a culture of cooperation between all staff.

There is real respect in the community for commitment and building leadership. There seems to be a real desire to have someone lead the District who has an ability to move us from good to great, taking us to the next level. Someone who has a presence within the community and within the school structure. Facility and infrastructure concerns surfaced in all of the focus groups.

The groups Molly participated in all spoke about transparent communication. They want to know what's going on so they don't feel like they are in the dark. They don't want someone to come in and de-rail all of the good work being done. In the elementary/middle school group, one person commented that they want a humble leader who learns and someone that teachers and parents are comfortable with.

The Committee discussed the responses to the survey and the qualities to incorporate into the Superintendent's Profile:

- Is willing to listen to input, but is a decision maker.
- Possesses the leadership skills required to respond to the opportunities and challenges presented by an ethnically and culturally diverse community.
- Inspires trust, self-confidence, and models high standards of integrity and personal performance with the ability to develop and communicate a vision of quality education for the future to the Committee, staff and community.
- Is a strong communicator; speaking, listening and writing
- Promotes a positive and professional environment for district employees and Committee
- Commitment to and experience dealing with all genders, races, socio-economic groups.
- Has experience recruiting and maintaining exceptional staff for the district and schools.
- Has experience dealing with employee representative groups/unions.
- Has knowledge of and successful experience in sound fiscal practices and management of district resources, including appropriate participation of others in planning and decision-making.
- Is strongly committed to a "student first" philosophy in all decisions.
- Has knowledge of emerging research and best practice in the area of curriculum/instructional design and practice and makes recommendations and decisions that are data informed.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of special education that meets the individualized needs of each student

Email Comment: Lauren Kinney, 6 Scotland Drive. Molly indicated that since the SC works most frequently and closely with the Superintendent, the qualities selected by the SC are given greater weight in their analysis. Can the results be presented without such weighting to see whether there are large discrepancies between the SC and the community at large? And further, to urge you to consider adding weight to the results of our principals and educators. If they feel supported by and in alignment with our next superintendent, our students will surely reap the benefits.

Molly responded that they do not weigh the numbers; they add credence that this is the SC's one hire. They show exactly who selected each quality.

After a review of the recruitment flyer presented by Ray & Associates, the SC discussed changes to consider to the wording, layout of pictures, and adding pictures that are more reflective of the school community.

Lauren Conoscenti moved that the Andover School Committee approve the profile for the Superintendent of Schools as discussed. Motion seconded by Susan McCready.

Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, P. Murphy-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, S. McCready-Y, and S. Scully-Y.

Motion passes 5-0.

When asked about the appropriate composition of people on the Screening Committee, Jess Porter suggested having a variety of groups of stakeholders, but not too large a group that it becomes logistically difficult. The Town Manager and other department heads should be involved with a good mix of town and school people. The Screening Committee should consist of no more than 9-13 members. The School Committee should discuss if they want to include people from the general public.

Shannon is not sure if we will have room to include a lot of people from town leadership. Confidentiality is a very important concern. How do we balance that with committee members? Susan agreed that it is critical that we have absolute confidentiality.

Email received from Krystal Solimine ,2 Surrey Lane: Having as much community diverse representation input would be the best, People could sign a confidentiality agreement.

The School Committee will include this topic on the agenda for their next meeting on February 4, 2021.

Next Steps:

- Flyer will be updated and posted.
- Salary amounts to be provided.
- Recruiting will take place through February 28<sup>th</sup>.
- Molly will provide updates on the candidate pool to Shannon every Friday.
- Ray & Associates will review all files and conduct background checks.
- Presentation of the files of the candidates will be provided by Ray & Associates.
- Interview process begins.
- Selection of new Superintendent.

## **II. Adjournment**

Tracey Spruce moved to adjourn the Workshop Session of Thursday, January 28, 2021.

Motion seconded by Paul Murphy. Roll call: T. Spruce-Y, L. Conoscenti-Y, P. Murphy-Y, S. McCready, S. Scully-Y. Meeting adjourned at 12:20 P.M.

Dee DeLorenzo  
Recording Secretary

