

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #71 (200-2001)

September 25, 2000

TO: SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
SUBJECT: SUPERINTENDENT'S SEARCH UPDATE

PERTINENT FACTS:

At the School Board meeting on September 11, 2000 Board members voted unanimously to postpone any discussion of a superintendent search to the meeting on September 25. Board President Peggy Robinson and member Tom Anderson were to gather information about search firms and related information to assist in the discussion at that meeting.

SEARCH FIRMS:

Very preliminary information has been gathered to this date (September 15). An e-mail to the Council of Great City Schools for referrals has not yet been answered, nor a phone call to the Large City Schools Executive Director.

Joseph Reeves from the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) shared with Peggy Robinson via phone his suggested approach. He would meet with the Board to identify school district priorities and then selection criteria that would make that happen. A timeline and salary range would be determined. He would then facilitate forums for community members and staff to gather input and test the Board's tentative selection criteria. After the Board finalizes the criteria, the position would be advertised broadly throughout the United States. He would suggest having the position open for at least 8 weeks to attract more applicants. He has volunteered to provide us with a written proposal, including costs. Attachment A is an article he wrote in 1999 outlining the search process.

A Wisconsin-based executive search firm has contacted Peggy Robinson. They assist private sector firms and corporations, non-profits, and school districts in recruiting high level executives. They only represent management, not individuals. They will also partner with state school board associations. They charge either on a fixed fee basis, usually a percent of the executive's first year base salary, or on an hourly basis.

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) has a web site listing currently open superintendent positions throughout the nation. Some of those listed are being coordinated through the school board, while others are through the state school board association. Others have consulting services listed as the contact. Some of the services listed are Richard Lerer Educational Consulting Services in Tarrytown, NY, The Bickert Group in Glen Ellyn, IL, and Harold Webb Associates in Austin, TX.

Attachment B from the American School Board Journal (December 1998) is a good summary of one board president's experience with four different superintendent searches. For a more detailed one, I can make copies of the one written by the Portland, Oregon board president also published in the ASBJ on December 1998.

SUPERINTENDENT CRITERIA:

As part of Senate Bill 36, passed in June 1998, school districts are no longer required to employ a "chief school administrator". (AS 14.17.130) Regulations adopted by the State Board of Education on September 24, 1999 repeal the requirement that superintendents hold an administrative Type B certificate with a superintendent's endorsement. School Boards are allowed to hire chief school administrators who do not hold teaching or administrative certificates if they do not have direct supervisory responsibilities related to instruction. Instead, a professional educator must be hired to supervise the educational personnel and programs. In the Anchorage School District, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction would meet the requirement.

Attachment C is an article from the Seattle Times regarding hiring "Nontraditional" superintendents to lead school districts.

COMPENSATION AND DEMAND:

Board Memorandum #8 (August 28, 2000) outlined comparison compensation information for superintendents in large school districts across the country. The information came from The Council of Great City Schools (GCS) publication: Second Biennial Survey, March 2000: Urban School Superintendents: Characteristics, Tenure, and Salary. The average salary for GCS superintendents in districts with less than 50,000 students was \$135,000 in 1999. For districts with 50,000-100,000 students, the average salary was \$149,050. Over 40% of the superintendents receive bonuses and the average amount was \$11,360. The average benefit package cost was \$37,000.

Fairbanks (16,200 students) pays their superintendent about \$120,000.

The Board was provided earlier this year articles from USA Today (January 25) on the increasing demand for superintendents. Attachment D is an article from the National School Boards Association Council for Urban Education (CUBE)'s Urban Advocate March 1999 summarizing some of the other large urban districts' superintendent searches. Time Magazine's February 7, 2000 article (Attachment E) is also a good summary.

TIME LINE:

Due to all of the budget preparation and holidays in November and December, it has been suggested to Board President Peggy Robinson that the District delays the search until January. That would still give us six months before the beginning of the new fiscal year. With Carol Comeau as a very competent Acting Superintendent, we do not need to be in a hurry to begin the search. We may want to however, decide on a search firm in the fall so they would be ready to begin the process at the beginning of the new calendar year.

mt/PRW

Attachments

Prepared and Approved by: Peggy Robinson, School Board President