
REPORT TO THE NEW BEDFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE ON THE SEARCH FOR A NEW SUPERINTENDENT

Submitted by

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Chair, Search Committee

The search for an exceptional superintendent for the New Bedford School District began last fall with the formation of a seven-person search committee appointed by Mayor Mitchell and the New Bedford School Committee. The search committee was balanced with educators, administrators and volunteers, all of whom have considerable experience in education. They did an outstanding job, investing time and contributing their invaluable knowledge and experience to help facilitate this important process and present the School Committee with three very well qualified candidates. I'm proud to have the opportunity to chair this committee and to work with such exceptional professionals. Please allow me to introduce the members of the Committee, some of whom are here tonight:

- Manthala (Matt) George – The former Superintendent of the Brockton Public Schools
- Isaiah Houtman – Teacher and coach at New Bedford High School
- Kathryn Rezendes – Housemaster and coach at New Bedford High School
- Josh Edelman – A senior Program Officer for the Gates Foundation
- Karen Treadup – Principal of Carney Academy
- Dr. Lawrence Finnerty – Former Assistant Superintendent and current School Committee member in New Bedford.

In November, the search committee began working with Future Management Systems, a consulting firm from Beverly, Massachusetts with considerable experience in conducting superintendent searches. Dr. Richard Warren and Bill Garr of FMS have worked closely with the Committee in advertising nationally and locally and recruiting potential leaders for the District. A total of thirteen focus groups were conducted with nearly every constituency including, teachers, administrators, community members, union leaders, government officials and business leaders in New Bedford. Numerous personal interviews were initiated with each school committee member and a survey of the community was conducted with more than

three hundred respondents. The results are summarized in a Leadership Profile designed to be used as a guiding document for the search.

There were a total of thirty-six candidates who completed the application process. Of the thirty-six candidates, none were New Bedford residents and there was only one applicant from within the district. The Search Committee reviewed detailed information from the thirty-six applicants including extensive Internet informational checks on each one, and chose six highly qualified candidates for screening interviews. Three of the six candidates were interviewed and the committee decided not to advance their candidacy in this search. The Committee is pleased to present three excellent candidates to the School Committee for further consideration. We consider this group to be exceptional in every aspect of urban educational leadership and believe that they align with the leadership needs of the district. They are presented here in alphabetical order:

1. **Dr. Kriner Cash** – Dr. Cash has been the Superintendent of Schools for the Memphis, Tennessee City Schools for the past four years. The district serves over 110,000 students. Prior to Memphis, he served as the Chief of Accountability and System-Wide Performance for the Miami Dade Public Schools from 2004-2008, was the Superintendent of Schools in the Martha's Vineyard Public Schools from 1995-2004 and an Associate Dean in the Howard University School of Education from 1993-1995. He has a Doctorate in Education from University of Massachusetts; a Master's in Education from Stanford University and completed his undergraduate work at Princeton University. His accomplishments included posting impressive gains in accountability subjects in Memphis and being named a finalist for the 2012 Richard R. Green National Urban Educator of the Year award.
2. **Dr. Pia Durkin** – Dr. Durkin has been the Superintendent of Schools in Attleboro Massachusetts, a system of 6,000 students, since 2006. Prior to that, she served as a Principal Associate for District Redesign at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University from 2004 to 2006, the Superintendent of Schools in Narragansett Rhode Island Public Schools from 2003-2004 and was a Team Leader (Assistant Superintendent) for Unified School Services in the City of Boston. Dr. Durkin was awarded a Doctorate in Educational Psychology from New York University and completed her undergraduate work at Queens College in New York. The Attleboro School District has made impressive gains under her leadership, including a significantly

lower dropout rate. Attleboro also had three schools removed from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education watch list during her tenure.

3. **Dr. Steve Zrike** – Dr. Zrike has been the Chief of Elementary Schools in the Chicago Public Schools since 2011 leading a network of twenty six K-8 school serving over 18,000 students from predominantly low-income families. Prior to his work in Chicago, he worked as a Turnaround Principal in the Boston Public Schools and focused on the leadership task of turning around the lowest performing schools in the district. Dr. Zrike also worked as Leadership Coach and Principal of two schools in the City of Boston. Prior to his six-year tenure in the Boston Public Schools, he served as Interim Superintendent of Schools in Spokane, Washington Public Schools for a brief period. He completed his Doctorate of Education in the Urban Superintendent's Program at Harvard University and his undergraduate work at Dartmouth College. He has considerable experience mentoring, training and hiring principal leaders and evaluating and redesigning schools to significantly improve performance. His work in improving student literacy in the Chicago Public Schools was recently presented to a national audience at a Great City Schools Forum.

Resumes are attached to this report for your review and discussion. As you move forward with final stages of the search, the Search Committee and I remain available to help and support the School Committee in choosing a high performing leader from this exceptional field of candidates. Thank you again for placing your faith and confidence in us to complete this important task and for your assistance in helping us achieve this most important milestone.