

# **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH**

**EVANSTON/SKOKIE SCHOOL DISTRICT 65**

## **FINAL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**OCTOBER 28, 2019**

**CONSULTANTS:**

**DR. MARK FRIEDMAN**

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# **Superintendent Search Evanston/Skokie School District 65 Evanston, IL**

## **Consultants' Report**

This report presents the results of BWP & Associates' search for candidates for the positions of Interim and official Superintendent of Schools for Evanston/Skokie School District 65 and contains information to assist the Board of Education in conducting and completing the search process.

Shortly after the Board's June 17, 2019 appointment of BWP & Associates, we began the initial phase of the search process. A Board planning session was conducted on July 18 to outline and approve all aspects of the search as well as to generate a timeline for implementation. Interim Superintendent candidates were identified and interviewed by the consultants. The names of four prospective candidates were provided to the Board who conducted their interviews on August 6. A vote on the candidates was conducted on August 19 with a start date of August 20. Dr. Phillip Ehrhardt and Dr. Heidi Wennstrom were appointed and will co-share the position until June 30 2020. Both are retired superintendents from school districts in Illinois. The shared position enables the District to have full-time coverage by experienced superintendents rather than the limited 120 days that could be utilized by one retiree in this position.

Between July 15 and September 16, 2019, a number of community engagement meetings were conducted to gather quantitative and qualitative data about the District. The information gathered was used to create a Community Audit and Leadership Profile. Approximately forty-eight (48) constituent groups participated in interviews and focus groups. From these groups, one hundred eighty-six (186) individuals responded to the prompt questions provided. In addition, there were a total of eight hundred fifty-five (855) responses to the online survey. These activities were designed to receive input from all identified constituent groups; furthermore, to provide the community and public with an update on the search process and progress. In total, one thousand forty-one (1,041) participants were actively engaged. The Community Engagement and Leadership Profile Report was presented to the Board on September 23, 2019 and unanimously approved with language revisions provided by Board Members.

Vacancy postings and ads were listed on the BWP national website, District 65 website, submitted to four educational institutions, mailed or e-mailed to educational professionals, and sent to potential applicants by request. A unique link for the search was established on the District website which provided access to search documents, including the Community Engagement and Leadership Profile Report and two progress updates that were submitted to the Board.

As per BWP policy as a private entity and in keeping with the Letter of Understanding with the District 65 School Board, information about the applicants has been kept confidential and is the property of BWP until such time as their names and information are presented as potential candidates and approved by the Board. The information will remain confidential until such time that the Board determines information should be shared. This procedure also serves to protect the

applicants' information and not place their current employment status in jeopardy should they choose not to apply, not meet the Leadership Profile criteria or decide not to pursue the position.

The pre-established protocol, agreed to by the Board, indicated that if successful interviews were completed and the consultants felt that these applicants met the Leadership Profile at an 85% or more level, they would recommend a slate of 4-6 possible candidates for Board consideration on October 28, 2019. If the consultants did not feel the pool yielded qualified candidates, they would recommend that the search application deadline be extended and continued and that the search calendar be modified and adjusted. The search would then continue until a finalist was identified and selected.

Within the search process there were twenty-two (22) individuals who inquired or were contacted by the consultants regarding this position. By the October 6 deadline there were thirty-six (36) applicants, thirty-one (31) had complete online applications, five (5) did not complete the process. There was one late submittal which was reviewed but not considered. A breakout of the demographic data including: positions held by the thirty-one (31) applicants; the states from which they applied; size of their current districts/work populations; highest levels of education; and language experience demonstrates the diversity of the applicant pool (Appendix A).

Drs. Mark Friedman, Debra Hill and Anne Noland reviewed applicants' online information independently and collectively. Upon review, a number of candidates were identified for further screening and examination. Screening interviews were conducted on October 12, and 13, 2019 via Zoom, a telecommunications application. Appendix B lists the interview questions used relative to the Leadership Profile.

In order to reassure the Board that there were viable candidates who met the Leadership Profile criteria and to adhere to the Letter of Understanding regarding development of a slate, the names of five (5) highly qualified persons are being recommend to the Board for their consideration on October 28, 2019 as a separate document. These persons, in our professional judgment, best meet the leadership characteristics and criteria published by the Board in the vacancy announcement and were best matches to the Leadership Profile. We also contacted other professionals in the field for additional information. Using a triangulation process, we based our selections and opinions of each candidate on their application information, interview, and initial reference checks. We present this slate of candidates for the Board's consideration and further action.

Drs. Mark Friedman, Debra Hill, and Anne Noland will discuss the recommended candidates with the Board in closed session at the October 28, 2019 meeting. The Board will be provided with Candidate Facts (a comparative data table) which provides demographics relative to the search and the proposed slate identifying the candidates in alphabetical order. To assist the Board in the selection process, a scoring rubric has been provided in Appendix C. Protocols for Interviews and Other Phases of the Search Process have been provided and will be reviewed through the Board training session at the conclusion of the presentation. This training will include a process for further community input.

The candidate listing has not been rank ordered. A summary document for each of the candidates will be presented and provided to the Board to further assist members in identifying and selecting candidates for further interviews. Once the slate is reviewed and candidates are identified for

interviews by the Board, they will receive electronic access to the candidates' files in preparation for interviews and further discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Mark Friedman

Dr. Debra Hill

Dr. Anne Noland

BWP & Associates, Ltd.

# Appendix A

## Superintendent Search Evanston/Skokie School District 65 Evanston, IL

### Applicant Demographics (36)

**Total # Completed Applications (31)**

**Total # Incomplete Applications (5)**

**Positions held currently by Applicants:**

Superintendent	8
Assist./Deputy/Associate Superintendent	6
Interim Asst. Superintendent	1
Department Director	4
Executive Director	1
Principal	1
Asst. Principal	1
Teacher	1
Chief/Deputy Chief	3
Business CEO	1
Consultant	1
Field Services	1
Professional Development	1
Financial Design	1

**States from which applicants applied (11 states):**

Georgia	1	North Carolina	1
Illinois	20	New Jersey	1
Indiana	1	New York	1
Kentucky	1	Texas	1
Minnesota	1	Wisconsin	2
Montana	1		

**Highest Size of Student Populations**

**Applicants Degrees**

**Other Experience**

400 - 1,000	4	Masters	6	Speaks Another Language	3
1,000 - 5,000	6	Doctorate	10	(Polite or Above)	
6,000 - 12,000	4				
12,000 +	8				
Charter School	1				
Other	8				

## **Appendix B**

### **Evanston/Skokie School District 65 BWP Interview Questions 10/12 – 10/13**

1. Why are you interested in the D65 superintendent position?
2. Briefly describe your major professional accomplishments that have prepared you for this position.
3. Please describe your experiences in working with a Board of Education.
4. What does the word equity mean to you?
5. How familiar are you with restorative practices and social justice issues in education?
6. Please share your experiences in working with diverse populations?
7. What are some of the things you would do to address a long-term achievement gap?
8. What do you consider your greatest strengths?
9. What areas do you feel that you need to work on?
10. What was a trying experience as an Admin.? How did you handle it?
11. What experiences have you had with facility improvement items?
12. Can you share what your entry/transition plan might look like?
13. Is there anything in your background that might be construed as embarrassing to a potential employer?
14. Do you have any questions for us?

## Appendix C

### Evanston/Skokie School District 65 Applicant versus Leadership Profile

Applicants	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Characteristics/Skills</b>					
<b>Background as an educator (10)</b>					
a. Administrative					
b. Teaching					
<b>Good Communicator (10)</b>					
a. Written					
b. Oral					
<b>Experience with Diverse Students &amp; Community Populations – size (10)</b>					
a. Urban					
b. Rural					
c. Suburban					
<b>Good Financial Skills (10)</b>					
a. Budgeting					
b. Grants					
<b>Board/School Committee Work (10)</b>					
a. Relationships					
b. Training/Experience					
<b>Personal Qualities (10)</b>					
a. Student focused					
b. Passion for the Profession					
c. Confident					
d. Trustworthy and Ethical					
<b>Interpersonal Skills (10)</b>					
a. Good Listener					
b. Collaborative					
c. Accountability					
<b>Leadership Skills (10)</b>					
a. Team Builder					
b. Innovative/Creative Thinking/Vision					
c. Community Visibility					

**Evanston/Skokie School District 65**  
**Applicant versus Leadership Profile (*cont.*)**

Applicants	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Characteristics/Skills</b>					
<b>Other attributes (10)</b>					
a. No Skeletons					
a. Considers Living in the Community					
b. Commitment to Lewiston					
c. Knowledge of Educational Trends and C&I Issues					
<b>Overall written application (10)</b>					
a. Cohesive					
b. Cover Letter					
c. References					
d. Complete					
<b>Total Percentage</b>					