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October 5, 2017

VIA E-MAIL ONLY

Mr. Michael Faulk
Superintendent
Central Community School System
P.O. Box 78094
Baton Rouge, LA 70837

RE: Superintendent selection process
Our File No.: CCSS-1049-A&C

Dear Mr. Faulk:

As we have discussed by telephone, we feel that the proposed "Procedures for Accepting Applications and Interviewing Process" should be amended in certain regards in order to better ensure an orderly and professional superintendent search process.

Please find attached a revised set of procedures which is more specific in nature than the original draft but not as specific in nature as procedures we have sometimes recommended in the past. By way of comparison only, we have also attached a set of procedures we recently prepared for another school system undergoing a superintendent search.

If the Board members or you should have any questions about either of the attached documents, please do not hesitate to contact this office. We will be out of town and unable to attend your meetings on October 9 and October 18, but Evan Alvarez has already placed both of those meetings on his calendar.

With kindest regards, we remain

Very truly yours,



ROBERT L. HAMMONDS

RLH/tlw
Enclosures
cc: Evan Alvarez, Esq.

CENTRAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL BOARD
Superintendent Selection Process

1. On October 16, 2017, the Chair of the Human Resources Committee and the Board President will open submitted applications. All Board members will receive confidential copies of the submitted application packets of all candidates.
2. The Chair of the Human Resources Committee and the Director of Human Resources will review the applications to determine qualified and unqualified applicants and will redact from those applications all confidential information (i.e., social security numbers, private cellphone numbers, medical records, college transcripts, etc.). The redacted application packets of all applicants are subject to public release if requested.
3. The Board secretary will prepare a letter for the Board President to sign acknowledging receipt of each application and informing each applicant as to whether he/she meets the advertised qualifications for the position. For qualified applicants, the letter will also inform them that the Board intends to meet on October 18, 2017 to discuss their character and professional competence and that such discussion would take place in executive session unless an applicant objected thereto.
4. During the School Board meeting on October 18, 2017, the Board will go into executive session to discuss the character and professional competence of the qualified applicants. Following this executive session, the Board will select the applicants to be interviewed and the order, dates, and times for such interviews. The order of interviews shall be randomly selected.
5. On or before the School Board meeting on October 18, 2017, Board members will submit prospective interview questions to the Chair of the Human Resources Committee. Members of the public may also submit prospective questions by mail addressed to:

Central Community School System
Superintendent Search
P.O. Box 317
City of Central, LA 70837-0317

The Chair of the Human Resources Committee will review the proposed questions, eliminate duplications, and compile a list of questions to be posed during the interview process.

6. The following process will be followed to conduct the interviews:
 - a. Each applicant will be permitted to make an opening statement which shall not exceed five (5) minutes and which shall be made in public session.

- b. Each applicant will then be asked three (3) questions by the Board in open session. Applicants will not be allowed to hear the answers of other applicants to such questions.
 - c. Unless objected to by an applicant, the Board will then go into executive session for additional questioning of that applicant.
 - d. Upon conclusion of questioning of an applicant, the Board shall return to public session and give that applicant three (3) minutes to make final remarks.
 - e. The Board shall repeat the process for each of the other applicants to be interviewed.
7. After questioning of all applicants has concluded, the Board shall decide in public session whether another round of interviews shall take place and, if so, the number and identity of the applicants to be invited back for a second interview. If a second round of interviews is conducted, the interview process outlined above will be followed.
8. Following all rounds of interviews, the Board will elect a Superintendent through a ballot procedure. The balloting shall continue until one applicant has received a majority vote of the total membership of the Board.

SUPERINTENDENT SELECTION PROCESS

Once the Applications Have Been Received

Section A - Determining Applicants to be Interviewed

1. The Human Resources Director or other person to whom applications are directed should review each applications to determine whether the applicant is certified as a superintendent in Louisiana and should notify the Board President. Some Boards elect to have this review performed by someone from another school district so as to avoid any later suggestion of bias.
2. The HR Director should redact from applications those bits of information not considered to be public record (i.e., social security numbers, transcripts, letters of recommendation, unlisted phone numbers, medical records, etc.) and should make a copy of each application for each School Board member.
3. The School Board should meet to determine the procedures that will follow thereafter. Suggested procedures would be as follows:
 - a. The Board should determine how many levels of interviews will be conducted, how many applicants will be interviewed in each round, and how many finalists will be selected.
 - b. Depending on the number of applications received, the Board should either:
 - (1) interview all applicants who meet the qualifications for the position; or
 - (2) vote to reduce the field of applicants after review of written documentation.
 - c. If the Board wishes to reduce the field of applicants, then the number of applicants to be included in that field should be determined in advance. If, for example, the Board should desire to initially interview only five (5) people, then the School Board members in public session should vote as to the five (5) to be interviewed. Each School Board member should cast five (5) votes, the votes of all the School Board members would then be tallied and those receiving the top five (5) vote totals would be brought in for initial interviews.

Section B - First Round of Interviews and/or Otherwise Reducing Number of Applicants

1. No more than 5 interviews should be conducted on any one day. If there are more than 5 applicants chosen for interviews, it will be necessary to break up the interviews over multiple days. If possible, try to schedule the interview days back to back.
2. For the first round of questioning, we recommend that all questioning of applicants take place in public session. This gives the public and the media the same opportunity to view applicant responses as is provided to the Board members, and the openness of the process should be applauded.
3. For the first round of questioning of applicants, we also suggest that each School Board member formulate one question for each day of interviews. In other words, each Board member should formulate 2 questions if the interviews are to take place over 2 days. Each Board member would ask the same question to each applicant being interviewed on the same day, so that a comparison of their responses to those questions can be made. In order to keep the applicants being interviewed on the second day from having access to the questions posed on the first day, a different set of questions would be presented to the applicants on the second day of interviews.
4. At the outset of each interview, the applicant should be given up to 10 minutes to tell the Board about himself/herself, his/her background, and any other information that he/she would like to present to the Board. After each applicant has answered the questions from the Board members, he/she should be given up to 10 minutes to provide any other information to the Board that he/she wishes to present. It is estimated that each such interview would last one (1) hour.
5. After the first round of interviews has been completed, the Board will need to decide if it wants to name “finalists” for a second interview or whether it is ready to elect its next superintendent. Should it decide to interview finalists, it must determine which of the applicants should be invited back for the second round of interviews. With regard to the number of “finalists”, we would recommend that such number be 3 if the Board interviewed 9 or fewer applicants in the first round. If the Board interviewed 10 or more applicants in the first round, then we would suggest 4 or 5 “finalists”. Of course, this is a Board decision and the Board could invite all of the applicants back for a second interview should it choose to do so.
6. Once the number of finalists has been determined, the identities of those finalists must also be determined by a vote of the Board.
7. After those determinations have been made, the Board should schedule another meeting approximately one week later for the purpose of conducting the second round of interviews. Prior to the second round of interviews, the references of the “finalists” should be contacted and as much information as is possible should be obtained on them. There are several different ways to review references. All Board members could contact all references listed by the “finalists”, but that leads to

duplication of effort and requires a substantial amount of School Board member time. Another method of checking references that we have seen successfully utilized involves a division of the School Board members into teams with each team responsible for checking references on one “finalist” and reporting back to the other Board members on the results of their inquiries. The teams could be selected by lot or appointed by the Board President, but the make up of the teams should be finalized before selection of the finalists in order to avoid any claim that the teams were “stacked” in favor of or against any applicant. In addition, the teams should be randomly assigned to individual finalists for the same reason.

8. Applicants must pay their own expenses for the first round of interviews, but applicants who are invited back for a second or subsequent round of interviews should be reimbursed their reasonable travel expenses.

Section C - Final Set of Interviews

1. Each of the finalists for the position should receive a letter signed by the Board President notifying him/her of the possibility of an executive session pursuant to La. R.S. 42:17(A)(1) to discuss the “character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of a person” at least 24 hours prior to the date and time of the meeting at which final interviews of the applicants will be conducted.
2. Prior to the public meeting, a “meet and greet” session could (but is not required) be conducted which would allow members of the Board and public to talk informally with the finalists in a social setting. Typically, cookies and punch or other light snacks are provided.
3. After the “meet and greet” session, the Board meeting would begin. During that meeting, some questions should be posed to each of the finalists in public session. While one of the applicants is answering such questions during the meeting, the other applicants should be kept outside of the room. The order of the questioning of the applicants can be determined by lot.
4. After each applicant has been asked his/her questions in public, then the Board should vote to go into executive session to ask more probing, personal, and confidential questions to that applicant. The applicant again has the right under Louisiana law to insist that such questioning take place in public session, although we have never seen a serious applicant for a position do so. At the conclusion of questioning of each applicant, the Board should return to open session and should repeat the process of going into executive session for each of the finalists.

Section D - Voting Procedure for Selection

1. When it comes time to vote for selection of the superintendent, each School Board member should write on a slip of paper his/her vote and should sign his name to the paper. The paper should also indicate whether it’s the first vote, second vote, etc. for the position.

2. All the slips of paper would then be forwarded to the Board President who would read out loud the selection of each School Board member and the name of the School Board member who made such selection. The votes for each applicant would be tallied, and, if any applicant received the vote of a majority of the total membership of the Board, then that applicant would be elected.
3. If none of the finalists receives majority vote of the total membership of the Board of the first ballot, then the finalist receiving the fewest votes would be eliminated. A second ballot would then be conducted using the same process.
4. The Board would continue to use this voting process until such time as one applicant received the majority vote of the total membership of the Board. All ballots must be retained and attached to the official minutes of the School Board meeting.
5. The selection of the Superintendent should be made contingent on successful negotiation of a contract with the individual selected.

Section E - Negotiating and Ratifying Contract

1. The Board President and Vice-President and its legal counsel can meet with the superintendent-elect and his/her counsel, if any, to discuss the terms of his/her contract.
2. If the Board officers and superintendent-elect are able to reach tentative agreement on the form of a contract, then that contract would be presented to the full Board for ratification at the next School Board meeting.