



## Board Special Meeting

### **Work Session: School Board District VII Appointment Process**

Monday, July 15, 2019, 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.

Board Office Conference Room, John Stanford Center

2445 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue South, Seattle WA 98134

### **Minutes**

#### **Call to Order**

Director Harris called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. Directors Harris, Burke, Pinkham, DeWolf, and Geary were in attendance.

Staff in attendance were Sherri Kokx, Special Assistant to the Superintendent; Ellie Wilson-Jones, Director of Policy & Board Relations; Ronald Boy, Acting Chief Legal Counsel; and Tori Sommerman, Communications Specialist.

Director Geary moved approval of the agenda. Director Burke seconded. This motion passed unanimously.

#### **Work Session: School Board District VII Appointment Process**

- Written Candidate Questionnaire

Director Harris noted that the intent is to send a short questionnaire to District VII appointment candidates. Directors and staff discussed the proposed questions that were submitted by community members for potential inclusion in the questionnaire. Director Burke noted the richness of the proposed questions and suggested providing candidates with a set of uniform questions and also asking them to select a number of additional questions to respond to from the community-submitted questions. Director DeWolf noted that this would show Directors where the candidates' focus areas are. Directors DeWolf, Pinkham, and Harris noted their agreement with this approach.

Director Geary stated that she had previously reviewed the list of questions submitted by community members and synthesized a list of seven key questions. Directors reviewed the questions proposed by Director Geary and those submitted by community members.

Director Burke noted that the Board would need to determine whether to include questions submitted by community members verbatim or whether to condense them. Director Burke noted his general support for the questions as framed by Director Geary and suggested that the questionnaire ask candidates about their history of working toward solutions and for examples. Directors DeWolf and Burke discussed asking questions that get at internal board relationships and having a solution-oriented mindset. Director DeWolf suggested these are addressed through Director Geary's third proposed question regarding how candidates foresee working with fellow Board members and their role.

Directors discussed including a question that gets at the constraints that Directors and the district work under, including a limited budget.

Director Harris asked how race and equity are addressed in the questions and whether Directors considered them to be encapsulated in Director Geary's fourth proposed question addressing the

Strategic Plan. Directors Burke suggested race and equity infuse all the proposed questions. Director Geary noted that she saw racial equity also being central to the proposed question about the Strategic Plan. Director Harris distributed photocopies of Director Geary's proposed questions as a handout.

Directors discussed Director Geary's first proposed question regarding connections to the Southeast Seattle community and Southeast Seattle schools. Directors proposed the additions of families and students to this question. Director Geary agreed to these additions. Director Harris asked whether Directors support the proposed question regarding connections to the Southeast Seattle community, schools, families and students. Directors indicated their support for including the question on the questionnaire.

Directors discussed Director Geary's second proposed question, regarding candidates' motivations for running for the School Board, which she noted was drawn directly from those submitted by community members. Director DeWolf suggested not including the question. Director Pinkham noted his interest in the question. Director Harris suggested leaving this question off the questionnaire.

Directors again discussed Director Geary's third proposed question regarding how candidates foresee working with fellow Board members and their role. Directors discussed how the question addresses the role of Directors as well as the collaboration that is required. Directors reviewed the fourth question included on a handout of community member-submitted questions: "What do you see the roles and responsibilities of serving on the school board? Please cite past examples of how you carried out these roles and responsibilities in other settings."

Director Harris noted that she would like the questions to address the themes of budget and policy as well. Director Harris asked whether Directors support including a question that synthesizes Director Geary's third proposed question with the community member submission on the same topic. Directors indicated their support for including such a question on the questionnaire.

Directors discussed Director Geary's fourth proposed question related to familiarity and support for the Strategic Plan. Director Geary suggested adding "What does focusing on students that are the furthest from educational justice mean to you?" to this question. Director Pinkham stated that he sees this question about the Strategic Plan as being related to Director Geary's seventh proposed question about how Seattle Public Schools is doing and whether it is on the right or wrong track. Director Geary proposed combining questions about the Strategic Plan with the seventh question. Directors discussed asking candidates about their experience with Seattle Public Schools. Director DeWolf suggested instead asking "Do you support the Strategic Plan and why or why not?" Director Harris suggested asking about candidates' thoughts about the racial equity policy and how the district is carrying it out. Director Burke suggested asking "what does focusing on students that are the furthest from educational justice mean to you?" Directors indicated their support for including a question synthesizing this discussion.

Directors discussed how a question that asks directly about racial equity could be incorporated. Director DeWolf suggested asking a question about how racism effects education in Seattle and for ideas about implementing School Board Policy No. 0030. Directors indicated their support for including a question as framed by Director DeWolf.

Directors discussed Director Geary's sixth proposed question, regarding what the candidates wish to focus on as a School Board Director and how they would move that work forward. Directors indicated their support for including a question on this topic.

Ms. Wilson-Jones read back her notes about the questions that had been agreed upon by Directors. Director Geary agreed to work from the meeting notes to develop a list of five questions. Director Harris noted that she would provide a final review of the questions.

Directors agreed to ask candidates to answer each of the five questions developed by Directors and to also select three questions to respond to from those submitted by community members. Director Harris stated that the deadline for the questionnaire should be Monday, July 29, 2019.

- Appointment Process Meetings

Directors discussed the August 7, 2019 candidate forum to be held at Rainier Beach High School. Director Harris stated that candidates should be provided a two-minute introductory statement and a one-minute closing statement. Ms. Kokx noted the limited time that will be available for questions, given the number of candidates. Directors agreed to ask nine questions. Director Pinkham asked how candidates will be ordered. Director Harris stated that each question will be asked of all the candidates before moving on to the next question with the candidate that gets to speak first rotating each time. Directors discussed that one candidate would not have the opportunity to speak first, given the number of statements and questions and the time constraints. Director Harris asked that Directors meet between July 29 and August 7 to select questions for the August 7 forum. Directors indicated their availability for a meeting to select questions on July 31.

Directors Burke and Pinkham indicated that they had conflicts, or potential conflicts, with the originally announced date for the Board's appointment vote, August 14. Directors proposed delaying the selection of a new Director until additional meetings could be held. Director Harris confirmed that the original meeting date of August 14 should be canceled.

Directors discussed holding a meeting to select three finalists. Directors agreed to hold a Board Special Meeting August 21 to select three finalists. Directors discussed holding this meeting in the JSCEE Auditorium or in the Board Conference Room, depending on room availability.

Directors indicated their interest in holding an additional forum during which the three finalists would take questions from community members and identified September 11 as the date. Directors requested staff identify an available meeting space, starting with Rainier Beach High School and, if necessary, considering other options at other schools in District VII. Directors agreed to hold this meeting from 6-9 p.m. Director DeWolf recommended inviting students from the Student Advisory Board to act as moderators. Ms. Kokx indicated she would reach out to Student Advisory Board members.

Director Harris invited members of the public to offer comments.

Ms. Wilson-Jones read back her notes regarding the questions that had been agreed to and the timeline for appointment meetings. Directors confirmed the questions and timeline. Director Harris confirmed that Ms. Wilson-Jones should work with Directors Geary and Harris to finalize the questionnaire and that Directors from the Executive Committee could be consulted on other issues related to the appointment process.

### **Adjourn**

Director Harris adjourned the work session at 6:16 p.m.