



## Board Special Meeting

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

Monday, August 5, 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 4:30 p.m. Directors Harris, Burke, DeWolf, Geary, and Mack were in attendance. Director Pinkham arrived at 4:50 p.m.

Staff in attendance were Erinn Bennett, Executive Director of Government Relations and Strategic Initiatives; Ronald Boy, Acting Chief Legal Counsel; and Ellie Wilson-Jones, Director of Policy & Board Relations.

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

- Questions for the August 7, 2019 Board Special Meeting: School Board District VII Candidate Forum

Director Harris addressed the logistics for the August 7 Candidate Forum being moderated by Ron Sims, former deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and former King County executive. Director Harris noted that candidates were asked how they would like to be referred to by the moderator, and one candidate recommended that all candidates be referred to as “Candidate” followed by their last name, and that input was needed from Directors on how the moderator should call on candidates.

Director Harris noted that the forum was currently scheduled to run for three hours, without breaks, and that Directors had previously agreed that each candidate would be provided two minutes for an opening statement and one minute for a closing statement. Director Harris explained that Directors previously discussed asking nine questions, but timing may only allow for eight questions. Director Harris stated that one minute will be allowed per response, as discussed during the July 15 work session.

Director Harris stated that candidates will be given the questions on paper at the forum to facilitate timely responses, given that the questions are being predetermined and will be known by candidates in attendance at the Work Session.

Director Harris drew candidates’ names from a bowl to randomly select the seating order as follows:

1. Sofia Voz
2. Brittany Williams
3. Brandon Hersey
4. Jason Hahn
5. Patricia Cheadle
6. Barbara Rockey
7. Emijah Smith
8. Chukundi Salisbury
9. Dionne Foster

10. Julie van Arcken
11. Romanita Hairston

Ms. Bennett explained that the candidate speaking first will rotate with each statement and question, but that the exact ordering is still being determined based on microphone availability and will be announced at the forum.

Director Burke stated that he was concerned about not providing candidates with any breaks and recommended adding a five-minute break.

Director Geary stated that she would prefer more than one minute be given for candidates to respond to questions.

Director Harris asked whether there would be enough time in the program for a five-minute break and 1.5 minutes per question response if fewer questions were asked. Directors and staff discussed the time available and number of candidates. Ms. Wilson-Jones noted that one candidate had asked to withdraw from consideration.

Directors discussed questions for the August 7 forum. Director Geary recommended asking candidates which two committees they would be interested in and why.

Director DeWolf suggested asking questions consistent with functions of the Board, such as responsibilities with respect to the Superintendent, policy-setting, and fiduciary duties.

Director Mack stated that a question should specifically address operations and recommended asking a question about the Strategic Plan's operations priority.

Director Harris noted that it was important to her to ask a question related to inclusion, special education.

Director Burke stated that he would like to ask a question related to curriculum.

Director DeWolf suggested asking for ideas about embedding equity in policy.

Director Mack suggested asking what equitable access to program and services means to the candidates.

Director Geary noted the Board's work with task forces and advisory committees and suggested asking a question related to that work.

Ms. Bennett addressed the time available for questions if response times were lengthened and a break were provided. Ms. Bennett noted that the Board could develop a longer list of questions than there may be time for and move through the questions as time allows.

Director Harris asked whether there was consensus from the Board to lengthen response times to 1.5 minutes. Director Mack suggested keeping responses to one-minute each and asking seven questions. Director Harris asked whether there was consensus to limit responses to one-minute. Directors indicated their agreement. Directors confirmed that a break should be provided.

Director DeWolf suggested asking who candidates believe is the most important constituent voice and how they would center that in decision-making. Directors discussed asking a question related to constituent voice and stakeholders. Directors did not reach consensus on asking the recommended question on constituent voice and stakeholders.

Directors discussed Director Mack's suggested operations question. Director Harris noted the tension with the district's limited budget. Director Mack suggested referencing policies and procedures related to nutritional services, transportation, and buildings. Director Pinkham recommended listing out operational systems in the question to see where candidates believe more consistent and predictable systems are needed.

Director Geary suggested framing a question related to operations as follows: Given the Strategic Plan's focus on predictable and consistent operational systems, which of the district's operational systems do you think we should focus on and why (for example, transportation, nutritional services, and buildings)? Directors indicated their consensus with asking this question.

Directors discussed how questions will be made available to candidates. Ms. Wilson-Jones and Ms. Bennett noted that the plan as discussed so far would be to provide candidates with printed copies of the questions during the forum given that they are being predetermined in public during the Work Session. Directors discussed whether questions should be posted in advance or provided to candidates. Ms. Wilson-Jones noted that the questions could be provided or posted online, but that direction would be needed from Directors on the method and timing for distribution of the questions. Ms. Wilson-Jones confirmed with Directors that the questions would be provided in writing at the forum unless an earlier distribution method was requested. Directors Harris indicated that the questions could be provided at the forum as there was not consensus on providing the questions further in advance.

Director Mack suggested asking a question about student assignment and boundaries.

Director Harris reiterated her suggestion of a question focused on special education services. Director Mack noted that the range of service needs is broad and asked what information is wanted from candidates. Director Burke asked whether the intent is for candidates to discuss programs and processes or community engagement. Director Geary noted the intersecting issues of special education requirements under federal law and insufficient funding and the difficulty of answering a question on the topic in one minute.

Director DeWolf suggested asking candidates about a Board decision they disagreed with and why. Director Geary cautioned the question assumes candidates are tracking the Board.

Director Harris asked whether special education would be too broad a topic to ask about.

Directors and staff discussed the September 11 candidate forum, which is planned to include the three finalists and questions asked by community members.

Directors further discussed how to frame a question related to special education. Director Harris suggested asking: What are your comments and concerns about special education delivery in Seattle Public Schools? Directors indicated their consensus with asking this question.

Director Burke suggested asking candidates about themselves and about their favorite Seattle Public Schools success story. Director Harris stated that opening and closing statements would provide candidates with an opportunity to address this.

Director Mack suggested asking a question related to candidates' qualifications. Director Geary noted that candidates have provided resumes. Director Harris stated that this could be addressed in candidates' opening and closing statements.

Director Burke asked Directors if they support asking a question about candidates' favorite SPS stories. Director Geary suggested framing the question to get at how the candidates have collaborated. Director Pinkham noted that collaboration could be shown through work done outside the district. Director Harris suggested about asking a question about disappointment with SPS. Directors did not come to consensus on asking a question on these topics.

Directors further discussed asking a question related to curriculum. Director Burke suggested asking candidates to "Tell us about the impact of curriculum and instructional materials on student success." Directors indicated their consensus with asking this question.

Director DeWolf noted that the district would be facing difficult budget conversations in the coming year. Director Geary suggested asking a question related to prioritization as follows: Given the aspirational language of the strategic plan and budget limits, how will you manage stakeholder priorities and requests? Directors indicated their consensus with asking this question.

Ms. Wilson-Jones reviewed her notes on the questions Directors had agreed to ask and confirmed the wording for questions on operations, special education, curriculum, and the budget.

Directors discussed asking a question related to equity. Director Mack suggested and Director Geary assisted in framing a question related to racial equity as follows: What is your experience around utilizing racial equity analysis in decision-making? Directors discussed whether to ask specifically about racial equity or to speak about equity more broadly. Directors indicated their consensus with asking this question on racial equity as framed.

Directors discussed asking a question regarding advanced learning. Director Burke suggested asking about equitable access to high quality advanced learning. Director Mack noted her discomfort with the term high quality in the context. Director Burke suggested asking the question as follows: What are your ideas for equitable access to appropriate advanced learning services? Directors indicated their consensus with asking this question.

Directors discussed issues that have been noted as priorities by District VII constituents, and Director Geary suggested asking a broader question as follows: What do you understand to be the highest priorities for your District VII constituents? Directors indicated their consensus with asking this question.

Director Harris suggested and Director Burke assisted in framing a question related to charter schools as follows: What is your position on charter schools in Seattle? Directors indicated their consensus with asking this question.

Directors discussed further question suggestions. Director DeWolf suggested asking candidates for their recommended areas for an internal audit. Director Harris discussed asking a question related to task forces.

Ms. Bennett confirmed with Directors that the intent would be to ask seven questions and to have two additional questions that could be asked as time allows.

Director Burke suggested asking a question as follows: What are your thoughts on the student assignment plan and boundary adjustments in District VII and the rest of the school district? Directors indicated their consensus with asking this question.

Ms. Wilson-Jones confirmed the wording of the remaining questions with Directors.

- Appointment Process Meetings

Directors discussed how public input would be collected from the August 7 forum. Director Mack suggested an online form. Director Burke suggested having comment forms for attendees of the forum to provide feedback. Director Geary noted that forms may not reach those voices that are furthest from educational justice and instead may reach those who best understand the system. Director Geary suggested a facilitated discussion. Director Mack noted the resources and time required for meaningful engagement. Director Geary asked how people should be informed about options for providing input. Director Burke suggested asking for feedback in the talking points for the opening and closing of the forum. Director Geary suggested having attendees provide feedback to a district representative who could capture input. Director Harris asked about putting signage up.

Ms. Bennett noted the suggestions from Directors and requested direction on how Directors would like input to be gathered on August 7. Director Harris recommended the use of an online form and noted that specific questions would be needed. Director DeWolf suggested asking who would you recommend and also asking why. Director Burke recommended also collecting feedback at the forum. Director Geary asked whether Directors want to collect information about whether respondents are District VII residents and about their race or ethnicity. Director Mack noted that Directors are elected district-wide in the general election. Director Burke noted that he liked centering on District VII residents and asking about race and ethnicity, should respondents choose to provide that information. Ms. Bennett confirmed with Directors that they wish to ask whether the respondent is a resident of District VII, about race/ethnicity, who respondents would recommend, and why. Ms. Bennett confirmed with Directors that paper forms would be available at the forum and that a web form would be created. Director Burke asked that candidate names be listed on the paper forms.

Ms. Wilson-Jones asked Directors how candidates should be called on during the forum. Directors indicated their consensus with calling on candidates as “Candidate” followed by their last name.

Director Harris invited a comment from a member of the public.

### **Adjourn**

Director Harris adjourned the work session at 6:25 p.m.