

Monday, January 12, 2015

APS Employee Meeting

3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Ryan Ray and Stan Paz, facilitators from Ray and Associates

1. What do you consider as the significant strengths of the school district?
  - That the district is able to educate many students effectively is always a positive and an accomplishment
  - Diversity and talent are the biggest strengths
  - We have a strong staff both at schools and in departments
  - Community schools with wrap-around services
  
2. What do you feel are the positives of the community?
  - Investment in the community - people care about APS and care about education
  - Invest with capital dollars and bonds
  - The community really participates in the process whenever they can
  - Dr. Winter has helped to reinvigorate the connections with the community
  
3. What are the three qualities you would like to see in a new superintendent?
  - Approachable, visible in community and schools
  - Good listener
  - Cannot hide behind his or her desk - needs to be an active participant
  - Collaborative, problem solver
  - Understands diversity - it must be celebrated, not tolerated
  - Concentration on the arts and extracurricular activities - need to make sure we have a balance between the core and the things that kids get excited about
  - Committed to increased parent involvement in the schools - particularly in secondary schools - doesn't come without monetary commitment
  - Need to be able to work with the state to garner enough funds necessary to actually make the district function - especially in light of decreasing revenue in the state
  
4. What is the management style you would like to see implemented by the new superintendent?
  - Collaborative, open door policy
  - Trusting
  - Schools have gone through having a lot of site control v. almost no control - would like to see it go back to more site management - trying to do everything one way doesn't work
  - Flexibility and open mindedness
  - Do they have to be a teacher? If they haven't been a teacher they need to have a lot of experience working with teachers - if they cannot feel the

support and buy in from the teachers then there will be a danger that we continue the divide between the classroom and City Center (APS Admin building)

- May be better if they have been a teacher and moved up but not a requirement
- Being an educator gives people credibility - if they aren't, then they have to build the credibility

5. What are the critical issues the new superintendent will face in this position?

- Achievement gap is the number one obstacle
- Size is our strength but it is also our biggest challenge - it is hard to initiate things on a large scale
- Public confidence and able to address the lack of confidence in public schools
- Teacher accountability - high stakes testing - everything that is being initiated in a way that teachers think is being done to them, feel like things are out of control
- Teacher evaluations and negative morale
- Teachers don't feel empowered by the evaluation process
- Principals feel strained
- Concerns that school staff don't have freedom to make decisions
- Truancy - need fresh perspective and more resources
- Poverty is huge - community schools and addressing the whole student is really important - data is important to drive where we go instructionally, but it doesn't drive what gets a kid to come to school - we have to address social needs
  - Health center, dental work, mental health needs, coordinators - community school really does make a difference - important to understand community services be based in the school
  - Helps get kids to stay in school when they have real challenges - enriches everyone
- Transportation needs - have to transport kids to extracurricular activities
  - Poverty causing parents to work more than one job and not be available to provide transportation to get students to school, sports, extracurricular activities and back home
- Nursing and behavioral health needs

6. Is there any other information you would like to share concerning the community, school or superintendent position that would impact the search process?

- Should they be bilingual? Helpful but not a requirement - would be a bonus
  - Going beyond language being the lynchpin; really need to talk more about culture competence - understand poverty - understand affluence - understand where different people come from and how people speaking different languages impacts the way we do things is important

- Example - we place stakes in testing but we don't even test in the home language
- Don't have to be bilingual but does need to be able to communicate with the community and understanding language helps that