

Minutes of June 14, 2017.

Present – Caroline O'Neill, Nancy DeLuca, Jane Martin, Michelle Durrance, Jacqueline Weisman, Dr. Lisha Cabral, Christine Pruitt

The only item on the Agenda is the School Committee interview of Assistant Superintendent Finalist Christine Pruitt.

Chair Weisman opened the meeting at 3:30 and welcomed Ms. Pruitt. Chair Weisman informed Ms. Pruitt of the format to be followed which was: the introduction of School Committee Members, followed by Ms. Pruitt's opening statement (5 minutes), School Committee questions and follow-up (40 minutes), Ms. Pruitt's closing statement (5 minutes), and questions for the Committee (10 minutes).

Ms. Pruitt made an opening statement. As part of her statement she said that she was not looking to leave her current district but when the opportunity came up in Easton she applied. She has wanted to work in Easton for a long time. In her current district she works with four communities, 24 school committee members and each town has its own budget and a separate set of collective bargaining agreements. These factors can make it difficult to make any advances.

Ms. O'Neill asked the following questions:

1. Please describe your involvement, if any, in the recruitment and hiring of teachers or other staff. Our building principals are primarily responsible for overseeing the selection process of new faculty, but what specific practices would you encourage to promote consistency across schools? What ideas do you have about how a district can attract and retain outstanding educators?

Ms. Pruitt answered that she led the search for a new high school principal.

Ms. Pruitt said that she thought it was vital for an applicant to do a demonstration lesson to see how the applicant interacts with children and then for the applicant to reflect after the lesson to talk about what was done well and what did not go as planned. Ms. Pruitt said that she learns a lot about an applicant through watching the demonstration and listening to the reflections. She also thinks it's important to do a site visit.

2. Can you describe a time when you tried to convince the administrators and faculty of an individual school, or of an entire district, to adopt a significant change in practice? How did it go? What did you learn from the experience?

Ms. Pruitt answered that when she was hired as a principal her new school was underperforming (at level 3). She collected and analyzed data to see in what areas

the students were consistently struggling. Based on what she learned she determined that it would be better if they wrote their own literacy units. She had to get all the teachers on board with this.

3. What experience do you have in grant writing? Have any of your grant proposals resulted in funding?

Ms. Pruitt answered that she recently was awarded a \$20,000 grant – it is a 144 grant from the State, which is designed to support districts to build professional learning opportunities for teachers to engage in reviewing the revised ELA-Literacy and math curriculum framework and the science/technology/engineering standards.

She also was awarded a Project Lead the Way Grant for \$30,000 at the middle school.

Ms. DeLuca asked the following questions:

1. What has been your experience with the educator evaluation process? What impact do you think the process has on the quality of instruction in the classroom?

She enjoys being able to go in to the classroom unannounced to see what is happening in the classroom and to use those observations to process and reflect with the teachers. She uses these opportunities to build a relationship of trust with the teachers.

2. Describe the methods of communication you have found to be most effective when communicating with students, faculty, staff and parents. How do you adapt when your methods don't seem to be working?

With parents Ms. Pruitt says she has an open door policy. She will call or meet with parents.

With students the best way to communicate is face to face and going in to the classroom.

With teachers – they do not yet have instructional rounds so she asks the teachers if she can come in to the classroom and help out.

As a principal she wrote a weekly newsletter.

She sends emails to the staff and uses twitter. She also visits the buildings to have face-to-face interactions as often as possible.

3. How have you demonstrated an ability to establish a positive change in the overall performance of a district? How did it turn out? What would you do differently?

Ms. Pruitt answered that when she became principal in Rockland, her school was underperforming and she was given the assignment by the Superintendent to bring the school up to a level 1 school and to establish a full day kindergarten program. Within 6 months, her school had a for fee full day kindergarten program and after another year the kindergarten program was free. Within 2 years the school was a level one school and remained so for the next 3 years.

Ms. Martin asked the following questions:

1. How have you motivated staff members who may be struggling with their instructional practice? Can you give some specific examples and how have you followed up to ensure there has been improvement.

Ms. Pruitt answered that as a principal she would do observations and give immediate feedback and help the instructor to set goals. She gave an example of a curriculum coordinator who had good content knowledge but was struggling with leadership skills. Through the evaluation process she set goals for this administrator, observed him and gave immediate feedback. She monitored him by attending his staff meetings and she did see progress.

2. What programs have you implemented that have used technology to improve the educational process? What were the outcomes? What would you change about these programs to make them more effective?

Ms. Pruitt answered that she has brought more technology in to the high school and had professional development on implementing technology in to the classroom. She created an action plan to implement instructional strategies that went along with the implementation of PARCC.

3. Describe some ways that you have been involved with your school community outside of your job responsibilities. How has your school district benefited from these activities?

Ms. Pruitt said that she attends as many afterschool and evening family events as possible and as a result she meets more families and they get to know her and her family.

Ms. Durrance asked the following questions:

1. Describe the involvement you have had in developing and evaluating curriculum. Describe the process you used, who was involved, and how you evaluated whether or not the curriculum resulted in improved student learning.

Ms. Pruitt answered that she currently is working to pilot new science curriculum and is bringing in professional development from the publisher of the curriculum. Her curriculum coordinator is involved in this process with her. She evaluates the curriculum by doing reference checks on the publisher and speaking with districts, which are using the curriculum.

2. What, if any, programs in your current district do you think would work well in Easton and how would you implement those programs?

She has been having the specialists from the McLean Anxiety Mastery Program come to her current district to work with the adjustment counselors, therapeutic learning center teachers, and psychologists to help them with the social emotional issues that are increasing in her schools. She would bring this program to Easton.

Chair Weisman asked the following questions:

1. The assistant superintendent's busiest time of the day is usually 2:30 to 5:30 because that is when teachers and staff are available to meet with her. In addition, the assistant superintendent also must attend a number of evening events and meetings (including school committee meetings). Do you see a problem in maintaining that schedule?

Ms. Pruitt answered that she would not have a problem with the schedule as that is the schedule she currently keeps.

2. Why are you looking to make a lateral move?

Ms. Pruitt answered that she has never before made a lateral move. She believes that to be the best at what you do you need to draw from other communities. She applied to be a principal in Easton several years ago and has always wanted to work in Easton. She also would like to work with Dr. Cabral.

3. Based upon what you have learned about the Easton Public Schools, what is your impression of our district?

Ms. Pruitt answered that she looked at our strategic plan and believes our goals are the goals she is working on in her current district. She said based on our strategic plan it appears that we have the same philosophy.

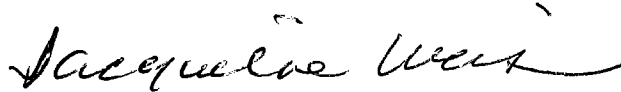
Ms. Pruitt made a brief closing statement. She again stressed that she has not previously made a lateral move but this opportunity was too good to let pass by. She has wanted to work in the Easton school system for a long time. She also stated that she believes her experience as an Assistant Superintendent will help Dr. Cabral in her transition into her new role as Superintendent.

Chair Weisman asked Ms. Pruitt if she has any questions for the Committee.

Ms. Pruitt asked the Committee what we are looking for in an assistant superintendent. Ms. O'Neill responded someone who would work well with Dr. Cabral. Dr. Cabral said she was looking for true partner.

On a motion by Ms. DeLuca, seconded by Ms. Durrance, with a 5-0 vote, the Committee adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacqueline Weisman".

Jacqueline Weisman  
Secretary