

**Franklin School Committee  
Minutes  
January 19, 2017  
Municipal Building – Council Chambers  
SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH**

**Michael Gleason, Milford Daily News was present.**

Call to order: 8:45a.m.

Dr. O'Malley

**Attendance:** Mrs. Bilello, Mrs. Scofield, Mrs. Douglas, Dr. Bergen, Dr. O'Malley, Ms. Schultz, Dr. Jewell, Mr. Thomas Mercer, Council member, Mr. Paul Peri, Principal, Franklin High School, Ms. Donna Grady, FEA President, Ms. Sara Mulcahy, PCC/SEPAC member

**9:10 a.m. - Called to Order - Dr. O'Malley**

**Brief Update -**

Mr. O'Malley advised that they will Interview candidates and at end they will come together to decide on who is moved on in the process.

Mr. O'Malley reminded the Committee that any of their writings are discoverable. He also reminded them to not settle on a candidate. If we do not find someone we like, we go back out to search again.

This is a Semi-final vote, we may have finalists but we are not choosing a Superintendent.

We will be eliminating a candidate or two. He felt 2 would be ideal.

The Committee was reminded to not talk amongst themselves.

Dr. Collins and Mr. Macrino are appreciative of their time spent here.

Dr. Collins had 2 suggestions on the questions. He suggested that with the first question, to add, tell us about yourself' and why do you want to work here.

Dr. Collins also suggested that the answer to Donna's question, would be yes but the question is how.

He also reminded the Committee to be tactful in what is written on forms of questions.

Dr. Dr. Collins commented that after the first 15 seconds of entering the room, a first impression is formed but to keep an open mind.

Dr. Dr. Collins advised that after the interviews are done, the Committee will rate the candidates on a rubric from 1-4, these numbers will be tallied, the lowest scores are better, this will narrow down the candidates. We will focus on higher votes, the Committee should not put their names on form to rate

Dr. O'Malley asked if Dr. Collins will time the interview.

Dr. Collins advised that he will signal with 15 minutes remaining.

Dr. O'Malley asked if there is time left, would the candidate be able to ask questions of the Committee?

Dr. Collins indicated that yes, the last 5 minutes, the candidate could ask questions of School Committee. We do not have to fill the time if there are no questions. He advised that Dr. O'Malley advise the candidate that there are 14 questions.

Tom - if they do not get through questions?

<b>Question #1:</b>	<b>Please tell us why you are interested in this position and why you are considering leaving your present position?</b>
Hirsch	Franklin has Community values that she value, Can bring skill set to the community, Looking for a home, not jumping around, Familiar Franklin, knows where academics are. Really good fit, excited to have an interview.
Kutska	23 Years in field - Assistant for Human Resources, hires all staff, set salaries, contract negotiations. Visible in a district. Being a role model. Mentors Principal, continue to mentor Principals. Skills would enhance Franklin.

Thomson	Lives in Norton - teacher, Vice Principal, Principal and AS Blackstone Valley, - well positioned to Superintendent. Progressive School System, cutting edge, always looking forward, programs are top notch, innovative, match his goals, skills would be a good match
Shaver-Hood	Education is in her heart and is a passion. Believe in collaboration, respectful, kind, risk taker. Hold high expectations, Franklin has high expectations. Wonderful community. Came out 4th in safe place to live. Involved Community. Tremendous opportunity, her leadership style, take a great district to the next level.
<b>Question #2</b>	<b>Beyond high test scores and college acceptance rates how do we know if we've been successful as a school system?</b>
Hirsch	Her core values, one of her values, not just academics. what access to academics, through band, through practical arts, what are they interested in, what motivates them. Bring students into decision making process. Send out surveys. What are they bringing back to the community.
Kutska	Facilitates safety in the district. Social Emotional Needs of students is so significant. See the whole child. Greeting children at the door, small gesture. Training of staff. Help develop resilience, staying in college, military, being successful is the true message.
Thomson	How do they feel about their success and preparation, do it by surveys, interviews, what are the skills at each level, how are we assessing beyond test scores.
Shaver-Hood	Test scores are one snippet, look at many indicators. Meet with schools on a regular basis, attendance, discipline, visits to counselors, what can you tell me about the student, the family. Build relationships. Involving the community in success. Look ahead. Test scores, graduations, how students do in college. Look at the business, are we putting out students that are ready for the work force, skills to compete in society.

<b>Question #3</b>	<b>Please describe the methods you will use to keep the School Committee updated on important school and community issues between meetings, and the value you place on input from the Committee, parents, and community members.</b>
Hirsch	How does this affect everyone, value communications skills, variety of venues, conversation, electronic, text. What expectations that the School Committee is looking for. Collaboration is important.
Kutska	Sits on Committees with School Committee members, blog with them, text or email away. Always communicating. Strength is communicating. Not doing interest-based bargaining.
Thomson	Big proponent of regular meetings with Chair/Vice Chair, weekly updates re: issues - clear, open, consistent communication. Communicate back and forth, uses blog, social media.
Shaver-Hood	Send emails, make phone calls, text messages. Regular visits from the School Committee to talk about what's going on. Hub of information. She blogs on a regular basis. Believes in developing a trusting relationship. Not always agree, be professional.
<b>Question #4</b>	<b>Understanding the complex relationships with various governing bodies within the community is key. How would you prepare the committee to make a decision on a politically sensitive or controversial issue?</b>
Hirsch	Before it gets to controversy, do the frontloading ahead of time, keep school committee informed, parent outreach meetings, getting input or ask questions, how do you assess the decision? Doing leg work before hand. Make decisions that are good for students.
Kutska	Be sure all have information and data, educate. Good relationship with School Committee is important. Being visible. Getting to know stakeholders in town.
Thomson	Provides all of the information (both sides of argument/situation), open clear communication, build trust with all governing bodies, understand needs, why.
Shaver-Hood	Gather information, gather more information, gather more information. Weigh the decision, what is the ripple effect, can you live with the ripple effect. The number 1 decision, what is best for the students.

<b>Question #4</b> <b>Follow-Up</b>	<b><i>Follow up: How would you embark upon an initiative such as diversifying the teaching staff and administration to reflect the community demographic?</i></b>
Hirsch	There is a changing population in Chelmsford. How delivering the curriculum? PD on non academic piece. The Multi-Tiered System of Support. (MTSS). Social Emotional issues of students and staff. Core Values of access points for students. Respectful of diverse population and celebrating
Kutska	Follow-Up - Be aware of diversity and social justice is happening. Diversity at the teaching/staffing level.
Thomson	Follow - up - challenge, not a lot of diversity in programs, shortage of teachers, other alternatives, licensure programs available, active recruiting.
Shaver-Hood	Follow-up - Very difficult question in today's teaching world. Look at practices in the school system, are we culturally sensitive. Examine how we treat people. Publicizing, making sure the students and teachers feel welcome.
<b>Question #5</b>	<b><i>What is your philosophy regarding strategic planning? In particular, what are the critical components to establish long and short term goal setting practices within a district? How do you implement, monitor and evaluate such planning at the school and district level?</i></b>
Hirsch	Was on team that created strategic planning. Gain literacies around strategic plan. Common understanding. Timeline. Monitor and assess. Info on website.
Kutska	Previous district. SIP will be a 5 year plan with check ins mid year to align with DIP. Longer range plan is important. Regular check ins with Administrators. Increase communication back from the staff. Collaborative process.
Thomson	Loves strategic planning, brings community together to design a vision of where you want the schools to go. Living document, reassess, readjust benchmarks.

Shaver-Hood	Glad question was written - so many components. Gather a key group of stakeholders, highlight specific areas, develop a rubric, send it out to schools, go through and assess in the rubric, gather data community, students, rank it at what's important to us. Came up with 5 year plan, sent to schools to develop their plan. Strategic plan drives everything that is done. Progress monitor. Essential - it is live plan, reflect goals, vision and all have to buy into it. Work together to develop the plan, road map to future, re-visit, and tweak if needed.
<b>Question #6</b>	<b>Franklin provides a complex technology system for students, teachers and administrators that creates both advantages and challenges. In your experience, explain how you have utilized the availability of technology both as an advantage in education and administrative communication, as well as any challenges you might have encountered.</b>
Hirsch	Provide tools for access, communication, gain information. A technology person. Utilize to advantage. One spot. Access to many databases into the classroom. Uses AimsWeb plus. Technology excellence committee. Bring all the databases to one place. For communication it is key. Avid technology user. Not inundate people.
Kutska	Problem with technology staff, not enough technology staff, no training for staff, if teachers aren't comfortable, teachers won't use it. Blogs, email, professional development for staff
Thomson	Uses technology consistently, 2 different competing systems, students with Microsoft - staff/admin with google, chose google, volunteers for google leaders, trained - used for PD days, ran workshops after school. Principals use Google classroom as models for teachers to use in classroom, Google docs for School Committee - looking into Open Meeting Laws.
Shaver-Hood	Loves technology, brings life to classroom. Need to offer professional development for technology. Develop a plan to provide a strong infrastructure, nobody will use the technology. Advantages allows for personalization, provide teachers with tools to network with students, to engage with students, allow students to think deeper.
<b>Question #6 Follow Up</b>	<b>How would you monitor the system to make sure it remained current and was sufficient for its desired purposes?</b>
Hirsch	Have data meeting to find out what was learned.

Kutska	Follow-up - checking in on technology department, feel safe to tell you, band aiding approach catches up, be proactive than reactive
Thomson	Follow-up - Go Guardian on Chromebooks, re-did entire network through e-rate, information through internet, good network administrator who is monitoring it and solve problems, etc.
Shaver-Hood	Follow-up - Technology Plan, how do I maintain the infrastructure and keep devices updated. Make plan, stick to it, and follow through.
<b>Question #7</b>	<b>Describe your experience / knowledge of school finance i.e.: building a budget, budget management, budgetary controls and budget reduction.</b>
Hirsch	She would go through each line items. Budget analysis. Salaries, SPED, Health Insurance. Aware of timeline, soliciting feedback from community, school committee. Keeping all informed and aware.
Kutska	Reach out to Unions early for negotiations, used enrollment shift at Elementary level to fund Adjustment Counselors, being creative, sharing with School Committee the rationale, prioritize of a 3-5 year plan, work closely with the Town, identify the needs of the district, be transparent
Thomson	What do we need to move difficult moving forward, short from recession, good business manager, - putting budget together have contractual obligations, SPED, major budget drivers, has participated in the whole process
Shaver-Hood	Background, school business management license as well. It involves everyone, meet with committee, talk about negotiables. Putting out to Principals, look at budget trends, spending over 5 years, expenditures went over? Why? Budget management takes place on weekly basis, Being familiar with the budget. Reductions - be creative to save programs to do what is right for students.
<b>Question #8</b>	<b>What kind of authority do you give to principals and how do you hold them accountable?</b>
Hirsch	Works with Principals quite often. Mentors Principals. Go back to Core Values. Listen, trust plus verify. Go back to SIP. Support the work.
Kutska	Allows them and trusts them to make decision, hired 5 or 6, give tools that they need, evaluates them, honest in feedback. The Principal would feel free to come to her, if make a mistake, don't beat up, work it out, help fix it. Come to her first. Develop trusting relationships.

Thomson	Principal as the CEO of the building, mentor and supervise Principals, help Principal grow. Two-way street, approachable, open and honest conversation, come to him with problems and experiences.
Shaver-Hood	Build trusting relationship with administrators. Collaborative Leader, Servant Leader, Support. Very protective of district and students, if she sees trouble, there will be a conversation, part of the job is to groom leaders.
<b>Question #9</b>	<b>How would you maintain a collaborative relationship with the teachers' association? Do you currently collaborate with your teachers' association?</b>
Hirsch	Was on that Teacher side so understands. Present in the schools a lot. Relationship building, monthly management meetings. All trying to do the best for students and working to same goals.
Kutska	Meets monthly with unions, supportive, collaborative. Build honest relationships,
Thomson	Interest Based Bargain - not collaborative language, led to conflict, changed to reflect clear, monthly meetings, building collaboration. Open, clear, honest communication. Build relationships with all aspects, positive, trustworthy
Shaver-Hood	Importance of Trust and communication, respectful conversations. Being willing to listen, open door, keep students on the forefront. Meet with President. Emailing. Work to get out in the buildings and visible. Building collaborative relationship in all staff. Believe in Trust and work together.
<b>Question #9 Follow Up</b>	<b>Describe your negotiations experiences. Have you ever been involved in Interest Based Bargaining and if yes, what is your take-away from it?</b>
Hirsch	No experience in interest based bargaining. Listen and hearing what the concerns are, a lot of reading, a lot of studying.
Kutska	Follow-up - Not involved, is familiar with IBB, and doesn't want to caucus. Open conversations at the table. Start with Positive interaction, less formal.
Thomson	N/A
Shaver-Hood	Was involved in interest Based Bargaining, she was a counselor, appreciates collaboration. Collective Bargaining, sometimes smooth, sometimes dicey. IBB as a choice.

<b>Question #10</b>	<b>How important do you feel it is for the Superintendent to be visible throughout the community? How would you decide what school activities/community organizations are worth your presence and participation? This would include evenings and weekends, in an already busy Superintendent's weekly schedule.</b>
Hirsch	Presence in school, find out what's happening, see the kids. Starts off at school in the morning, learning walks (instructional rounds), walking around the schools, brings Principals, Department Coordinators, invites School Committee members. Being part of parent meetings, goes to band concerts, etc.
Kutska	Try to visit open houses and activities. Equity for all students. Planned a District-wide event. Get to each school, fair equitable, have administrator's tell her what she should be at. Model for students and staff. Not everything, know which events are important and critical.
Thomson	Very important to be visible. Plan and work on. Office is in the High School. In all schools once a week, partial to BB, makes it to concerts, plays. Shows that you are invested in the Community.
Shaver-Hood	Nice to be in town and say hi, sometimes need to set up meeting. Number 1 cheerleader, needs to be visible. Attend 1 or 2 sports events each season. On the Board on the Y, and the Boys and Girls Club in her community. Doesn't say no often. Needs to be there.
<b>Question #11</b>	<b>What is the role of the Superintendent in developing and innovating curriculum to meet the needs of all children?</b>
Hirsch	Are in alignment with the standards, they can be overwhelming. Look at data, how to improve
Kutska	Special Ed background helpful, training is happening, aware and be out in the programs, problem solve, weekly meetings with SPED.
Thomson	Superintendent sets the direction, multi layered - above standard, below standard and in between, oversee. Adopted and used well across the district. Consistent across the board.
Shaver-Hood	Role of Superintendent to oversee and get involved. How do we continually move the district ahead? Aware of needs of students. Aware of watson? Curriculum, benchmarks to tell you where weaknesses are.

<b>Question #11 Follow Up</b>	<b>How would you measure the success of the curriculum implemented across the district?</b>
Hirsch	Comprehensive programming. Professional development for teachers. Interventions for not quite getting it as well as the curriculum for the students who get it and more. Collaboration.
Thomson	N/A
Shaver-Hood	N/A

**9:30 a.m. - Linda Hirsch** - Thanked Committee for the time. Extra copies of resume if needed. Chelmsford, English Dept Coord. Teach online classes at graduate level.

**Following are the questions asked by the candidate at the end of the interview.**

Ms. Hirsch asked the Committee what is Franklin to them?

Ms. Bilello answered the question noting that there is growing diversity in Franklin that we are proud of. We make do and have an incredible workforce. Proud beyond academics, sports and music. Also proud that all our Schools have and individual identity.

Ms.Hirsch advised that she did read the leadership profile. Asked about retaining teachers. Noticed there is a strong hiring procedure and mentoring program. Do you have a strong mentoring piece.

Ms. Grady answered the questing indicating that Franklin does have a strong mentoring piece. The new Teachers are welcomed by FEA and District. New staff receives supports throughout the year.

Ms. Hirsch commented that the Town and Schools were in the same building. Do you have a good working relationship?

Mr. Mercer advised that it was the best thing we did.

**10:30 - Susan Kustka – Following are the questions asked by the candidate at the end of the interview.**

Ms. Kutska asked what are your important needs in your District?

Ms. Billello answered that the financial constraints are important. Working with limited resources, how most gains and thinking of the whole child.

Dr. Bergen indicated that two way communication is important as well as meeting the needs of all performance levels.

Starts the day with exercise, take care of yourself. Important to have a team she can trust when not in the district.

**11:30 - David Thomson - Following are the questions asked by the candidate at the end of the interview.**

Mr. Thomson advised the Committee that when he was in Raynham, the Middle School was in the lower  $\frac{1}{3}$  in State, it was brought to Level 1 school, now it is in the top  $\frac{1}{3}$  in State, built culture for whole child, proud of it. Values collaboration.

Mr. Thomson inquired as to the Responsive Classroom and that it was going to be brought into the Middle Schools, forward thinking process, where are we in that process?

Dr. Bergen answered that the 6th grade teachers have been trained.

Ms. Billello advised that it is currently being practiced Elementary Level, we are bringing that model from the Elementary level and moving it forward.

Mr. Thomson inquired as to advisory and was it cut back because of budget?

Mr. Peri advised that it is in its 1st year advisory at high school. There will be 3 more during the year. HS is brand new, excited about it.

Mr. Thomson commented that he has been doing research and there is a difficult budget process.

Dr. O'Malley advised that the process is not difficult, it's the amount of money at the end of the process. He advised that going forward it will be difficult in all districts, it's a skill we are looking for.

Mr. Thomson asked if Town side is feeling the same.

Mr. Mercer advised that yes, the Town is also feeling the fiscal constraints.

Mr. Thomson said in closing that it would be an honor to be here.

**Training Room - lunch (12:30 - 1:00 p.m.)**

Back in Session 1:00 p.m.

**1:00 p.m. - Kimberly Shaver-Hood – Following are the questions asked by the candidate at the end of the interview.**

Ms. Shaver-Hood inquired as to where do you see your district next year, what areas would be a high priority for the next Superintendent to address.

Dr. O'Malley advised that we are looking for a smooth transition of our retiring Superintendent and new Super to take us to the next level. Communication is high priority and working with the Town Administrator. Providing all ways for us to succeed.

Dr. Bergen also commented that they are looking into addressing the area or mental health, social emotional learning.

Dr. O'Malley commented that we are good here and want to be better.

**1:40 p.m. - Committee Deliberations/Decisions**

Dr. Collins asked the Committee to review their notes and rate the candidates 1-4.

**1:45 p.m. - Break**

**1:50 p.m. - Back in session**

Initial Feedback of Screening Committee -

Hirsch - 21  
Kustka - 26  
Thomson - 27  
Shaver-Hood – 36

Would come back for a day to meet with community in evening.  
Ms. Billello suggested that the Committee would like 2 candidates to return.

Dr. Collins advised since the Committee would prefer 2 candidates to be brought back, and 2 of the candidates were close in the initial feedback, why don't we go through all of you to try to find out which one of the two should be brought back, i.e. Kustka and Thomson.

Ms. Mulcahy thought she would like to see Susan Kustka brought back as she though her business was strong, talked about tough decisions, a lot of experience. Provided substantial examples vs. Thomson. Susan had SPED background.

Ms. Grady advised that she totally differed and advised that Mr. Thomson, in my opinion, that he would very well received, by staff and students, has things to learn, we are a system of support. She advised that she had concerns about Kustka, she talked too much about difficult conversations, not as personable, and inundated from Weymouth they are working under a system of fear with her at the helm. Quite negative, critical of Principals. Not sure the teachers would be comfortable.

Ms. Billello asked for clarification on Donna's opinion.

Dr. Collins advised that the Committee should be focusing on the positive.

Mr. Peri though Dr. Thomson showcased most Social Emotional Intelligence. His story in Raynham MS is outstanding work. He also though that his quote of "The magic is in the classroom" was something he will live by. He felt that the Dr. Thomson would be well received by the teachers and students.

Mr. Mercer echoed Paul's comments that Dr. Thomson had a lot of personality, big part of the job. Ms. Kustka used an awful lot of I's, ours and we were missing. Mr. Mercer also commented that he was disappointed in the lack of homework, none of them knew about the form of government we had.

Dr. Jewell felt that Dr. Thomson has ability to dream and go beyond exceeded the others. Ms. Hirsch was qualified but didn't sell him.

Ms. Schultz thought Dr. Thomson shared 10 years of advocacy in a school district. Very engaged in communications. Really liked Kustka, her answers were thought out. Ms. Hirsch was not number 1 choice, not ready.

Dr. O'Malley was pleased with 3, Hirsch was personable, liked it, answers shallow. Ms. Kustka gave best answers thus far, belongs in the final. Dr. Thomson hasn't sold him, presentable person, is a presence.

Dr. Bergen liked Dr. Hirsch, she had personality, is aware of similarities between Franklin and Chelmsford. She can connect with all at every level. Ms. Kustka had thoroughness about SPED, Dr. Thomson not thorough enough. Has concerns about Dr. Thomson's literacy skills concerned.

Ms. Douglas felt that Ms. Kutska is not a fit for Franklin. Dr. Hirsch possible. Dr. Thomson will get his hands in everything and be visible.

Ms. Scofield liked Dr. Thomson's comment that magic happens in the classroom. He uses technology consistently but not correctly. Ms. Kutska - not taken with her. But after hearing other comments worth being brought back. Ms. Hirsch - personality, good fit. Very well liked and respected in Chelmsford. Select 2 - Thomson and Hirsch, however Susan deserves a chance to be looked at.

Ms. Billello commented that she respectfully disagrees with Kevin, Hirsch revisits things. Chelmsford is closest match to us. Dr. Thomson lacked substance to his answers. Ms. Kustka used 'I' a lot, not mentioned curriculum. Ms. Hirsch stood out.

Dr. Collins commented that they are Assistants, not Superintendents. Choose top 2.

Vanessa - Hirsch/Kustka  
MJ - Hirsch/Thompson  
Cindy - Hirsch/Kustka  
Anne - Hirsch/Thompson  
Kevin - Hirsch/Kustka  
Denise - Hirsch/Kustka

John - Hirsch/Thompson  
Tom - Thompson/Kustka  
Donna - Hirsch/Thompson  
Sara - Hirsch/Kutska

Discussion ensued.

The final outcome was that 3 candidates will be brought forward to Franklin, meet parents, teachers, school committee. Chair and Vice Chair of School Committee will meet with HR Director to come up with plan for site visit. Be held on February 1st. The School Committee will meet on February 7th to select a preferred candidate. Background check will be done for the February 14th school committee appoint final candidate.

Meeting adjourned 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Childers