

April 18, 2023

Members of the Memphis Shelby County Schools Board of Education
160 S Hollywood St.
Memphis, TN 38112

Good afternoon:

Following the MSCS April 15 board meeting, all individuals who originally expressed interest in the position were contacted and asked if they wanted to move forward as an applicant in the public process. All individuals responded and the responses were mixed. Eight decided not to be a part of the public process.

HYA provided three finalists to the board at the April 15 meeting as directed. While there were seven individuals that HYA would have placed on an expanded slate (including the three finalists which the Board directed we name), of those seven, four remain. One of the seven withdrew over the weekend and another of the seven withdrew this morning. Also, Dr. Cassellius, one of three finalists, withdrew this morning. Finally, we want the Board to know that of the remaining four, one applicant has communicated finalist status in another search. In sum there are four slated applicants, one of which may be offered another position in another district.

Please note, it is not uncommon that the Board would want to include individuals not slated for an interview. This is perfectly acceptable as the Board and only the Board decides whom to interview. For example, some Boards interview all internal candidates, regardless of whether they are slated or not. There are eight current or past employees of MSCS.

We respectfully recommend the Board interview the four slated candidates and any additional candidates it so chooses. The candidates are qualified and can be in place to start the new school year.

If there is not a consensus choice on a final candidate, we recommend that the Board continue with an interim superintendent and re-open the search at the beginning of the school year. This will be an optimal time to obtain a broad and deep candidate pool.

Although HYA's rubric is proprietary, we are happy to share that the seven candidates all scored in the top band and are best aligned to the Community and Board's shared desires.

Candidates were evaluated in 16 areas, each with a proprietary 4 point rubric. Categories were:

1. Cover Letter
2. Resume
3. Relevant Experience
4. Academic Leadership
5. Operational Leadership
6. Board Leadership
7. Community Engagement
8. Internet/social media
9. Interview Response
10. Interview Presence
11. Memphis Connection
12. References
13. Writing Sample
14. Video Introduction
15. Overall Preparation
16. Fit with MSCS Needs

The interview questions were as follows:

1. Let's start with the why and what. Why do you want to take on this challenging leadership responsibility and what excites you about this job?
2. What are a couple of accomplishments that are particularly relevant to the MSCS school board and other stakeholders?
3. Describe a leadership mistake you made, how you rectified it, and what you learned from it.
4. What do you see as the district's highest priority needs?
5. Describe how you built and developed a talented leadership team as well as how you ascertained their collective and individual success.

6. What evidence can you share that demonstrates how your leadership has directly and positively: 1) closed opportunity gaps or disproportionalities, 2) improved the achievement of marginalized students, 3) positively impacted student mental health and wellness?
7. Please describe your experience in handling culture war issues.
8. How will you prepare the Board for a difficult decision that may not result in a 9-0 vote?
9. Explain how you onboard new members to the Board and your team?
10. Describe a challenge you had with a Board member and how it was resolved
11. How do you communicate effectively with Board members? With administrators? With teachers? With parents and the community? How do you assess the effectiveness of you and your district's communication strategies and tactics?
12. Describe a crisis you had to manage, what you did, how it was resolved, and what you learned from the experience.
13. What is an innovative program or service that will be sustainable after you leave?
14. What will they say about you when you leave?
15. In preparing for this job what surprised you?
16. How does this position fit into your career trajectory?
17. Do you have any questions for us or closing comments you would like to make?

We look forward to our continued work with the Board. Please reach out if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Max McGee, President