

February 28, 2023

The Newaygo Public Schools Board of Education held a special meeting on Tuesday, February 28, 2023 in High School Cafeteria for the purpose of conducting Superintendent Candidate first round interviews. Vince Grodus, President, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vince Grodus, Morgan Heinzman,, Jami Schultz, Melissa Swinehart, Reid Sherwood, Thomas Frisbie and Sara Smith

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Also Present: Christina Wetherell, Administrative Assistant  
Dr. John Scholten, MLI Representative

Visitors: 12

Pledge of Allegiance

Dr. Scholten explained to the Board and the audience the process for the first round interviews. He explained that each board member had a copy of the same set of interview questions and each question was assigned to one of the board members to ask the candidate. Each candidate would be asked the same set of questions. The audience was informed that they could fill out a public comment sheet located on a table near the entrance and indicate their thoughts and feedback on each candidate as well as questions they wish to be asked of the candidates for the final interview.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Mr. Heinzman, seconded by Mr. Frisbie, to approve the proposed agenda for the special meeting of February 28, 2023.

VOTE

Ayes: 7

Nays: 0

Motion: Carried

Superintendent Candidate Interviews

During this time, the Board interviewed five candidates using the same questions and interview format for each individual (attached as separate reference to the minutes). The interviews were scheduled separately at 3:30pm, 4:30pm, 5:30pm, 7:00pm and 8:00pm.

Candidates interviewed:

1. Mr. Jaym Abraham, Principal, Caledonia Community Schools – 3:30 p.m.
2. Mr. Martin Prout, Superintendent, North Huron Public Schools – 4:30 p.m.
3. Mr. Mark Brenton, Superintendent, Bellaire Public Schools – 5:30 p.m.

After Mr. Brenton's interview, the Board took a short dinner break and reconvened at 6:47pm.

4. Mr. Aaron West, Principal, Spring Lake Public Schools – 7:00 p.m.
5. Mr. Ben Gilpin, Principal, Western School District (Parma) – 8:00 p.m.

The Board took a short break to review their personal notes of each candidate.

Public Comment

During this time Dr. Scholten collected the public comment cards from the audience and read aloud the feedback from the public.

Board Deliberation

Dr. Scholten led the Board through the deliberation portion of the meeting. He asked for the board members to state their thoughts on the positives of each candidate and any concerns or potential challenges they foresaw.

Selection of Candidates for Final Interviews

Dr. Scholten polled the board on which candidates to bring back for final interviews.

Mr. Heinzman asked the audience to share any feedback before they made their motion on who to bring back.

Motion by Mr. Heinzman, seconded by Mr. Sherwood, to bring back the following candidates for a second interview:

Mr. Jaym Abraham  
Mr. Martin Prout  
Mr. Ben Gilpin

ROLL CALL VOTE

Vince Grodus, Aye; Morgan Heinzman, Aye; Melissa Swinehart, Aye; Jami Schultz, Aye; Thomas Frisbie; Aye, Reid Sherwood; Aye; Sara Smith, Aye  
Ayes: 7  
Nays: 0  
Motion: Carried

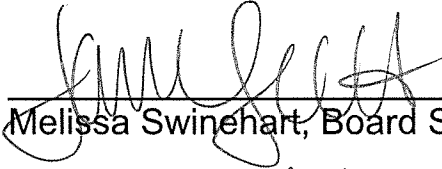
Specific dates and times for second interviews will be announced in the coming days. The Board discussed conducting second interviews around the end of March.

Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Heinzman, seconded by Mr. Frisbie, to adjourn the meeting.

ROLL CALL VOTE

Vince Grodus, Aye; Morgan Heinzman, Aye; Melissa Swinehart, Aye; Jami Schultz, Aye; Thomas Frisbie; Aye, Reid Sherwood; Aye; Sara Smith, Aye  
Ayes: 7  
Nays: 0  
Motion: Carried  
Time: 9:33pm

  
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Melissa Swinehart, Board Secretary  
Acting Secretary

**Newaygo Public Schools  
Superintendent Interview  
First Round**

**Agenda:**

-Candidates are greeted by NPS staff (Jeff Wright) and escorted to a waiting room until the Board is ready to begin (but please keep on schedule).

-Welcome and introductions (John Scholten will introduce candidate to the Board, and Vince Grodus will introduce Board members). (5 minutes)

-Vince offers a brief overview of the interview process: “We want to thank you for meeting with our Board this evening. Over the next hour, we’ll be asking you questions about your leadership, in hopes we find a best fit for our schools and the children we serve. Once we have finished our set of questions, you will have an opportunity to ask us about our community, our schools, or the process. We are interviewing five candidates from a fairly large pool of applicants this week, and will then work as a Board to narrow to a smaller group of finalists.”

**Interview Questions: 45 minutes (John Scholten will monitor progress and alert Vince to pacing concerns)**

“I will open the interview with the first question” (Vince)

Q1-Vince: While we have had the opportunity to review your resume, our audience has not. Would you briefly review your background and what brings you to be interested in this position at this point in your career?

Q2-Jami: How do you think various stakeholders (parents, community, staff) should be involved in our planning process and in setting directions for the district?

Q3-Morgan: What strategies would you employ in order to align our curriculum so that our children are well prepared to advance through our system and beyond?

Q4-Sara: What is your approach to understanding the perspectives of colleagues from different backgrounds?

Q5-Reid: Tell us about a time your staff and community was divided on an issue and how you worked to overcome the division?

Q6-Melissa: How do you embrace the staff and administrative team who have experienced significant change and give them hope for a sense of stability, positive change, and strong leadership?

Q7-Tom: Please share with us any experience you have had with school budgeting, bond issues or other millage issues? (Both politically and educationally)

Q8-Sara: How do you embrace the administrative team and staff who have experienced significant change and give them HOPE for a sense of stability, positive change, and strong leadership?

Q9-Reid: What experience do you have with contract negotiations and collective bargaining? Tell us how you have cultivated strong Association relationships.

Q10-Jami: How would you set priorities to address the needs of academically struggling students, while addressing the needs of high achieving students? Is it really possible to meet the needs of all students?

Q11-Vince: What do you believe are the two or three long term challenges our district will need to address in the near future? How would your background and skills help us to address those issues?

Q12-Melissa: What are the key elements needed to establish and maintain a good working relation between you and our Board of Education?

Q13-Tom: What do you believe has been the impact of standardized testing and teacher accountability on our education system in Michigan?

Q14-Morgan: How would you go about evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum, assessments and teaching methods in our district? What data should we be collecting in order to evaluate them?

Q15-Melissa: What is the biggest risk you have taken to do what is right for children?

Q16-Vince: Describe your style of leadership and talk about situations in which you might vary from that style.

Closing: (Vince) “This brings us to the end of our interview questions. We want to thank you for sharing your thoughts and a bit about your leadership. Do you have any questions for us?”  
(Vince should field, but feel free to defer to one or another fellow Board member to respond).

- Allow for Candidate questions (5 minutes)

Vince: “Again, we want to thank you for joining us tonight. Our Board will begin deliberations after the final first-round interview, and you can anticipate a call about your status shortly thereafter.”

John Scholten will escort the candidate to the exit.

Board members are reminded to hold off on deliberation until after the final interview and review of supplemental materials provided. I would recommend a break after the final interview for individual review of notes.

Deliberation and selection of finalists must occur in Open Session. The Board should also decide if there is a presentation topic for which finalists will be asked to prepare. John can assist in process and legal compliance. Once the pool has been narrowed to finalists, John will alert Pete Haines who will contact all candidates.