

**Knox County Board of Education  
Superintendent Search Committee Meeting  
December 17, 2021**

**Minutes**

The Knox County Board of Education Superintendent Search Committee met on December 17, 2021 in the 1st Floor Boardroom of the Andrew Johnson Building at 912 S. Gay Street, Knoxville, Tennessee. The meeting could be viewed in its entirety on the video located on the Knox County Board of Education webpage at knoxschools.org.

Present:            Evetty Satterfield, Committee Chair, Board of Education Member, District 1  
                      Betsy Henderson, Board of Education Member, District 6  
                      Patti Lou Bounds, Board of Education Member, District 7

1            Call to Order

Ms. Satterfield called the meeting to order. She stated the purpose of this meeting was to form solid recommendations regarding the Superintendent job description, salary, and contract in preparation for the January 2022 Board of Education meetings.

2            Superintendent Job Description

Knox County Deputy Law Director Gary Dupler noted he had reviewed the Tennessee School Boards Association's (TSBA) sample Superintendent contract which referred to the Superintendent's job description. He noted the current job description was attached to the agenda for reference and pointed out that TSBA's policy contained a description of the Superintendent's job, as did the Board of Education's policies regarding the Director of Schools. Mr. Dupler said the Board could pull the job description into policy and/or the Superintendent's contract if desired.

Ms. Satterfield asked if the Board could just do away with the current Superintendent job description and only list the description in policy. Mr. Dupler affirmed that could be done. Ms. Henderson said she would like the description streamlined and noted she also liked how TSBA's policy listed the qualifications and duties of the Director of Schools. Ms. Satterfield agreed and said a job description was simply what a person did, and that was already in the Board's current policies. Ms. Bounds asked if the recommendation would be to cut any current job description and clarify the job duties in policy. Mr. Dupler said the Board could add any sections of the TSBA policy to Board policy to make sure everything was included. He said he would review the current Board policies and make amendment recommendations.

Ms. Satterfield made a motion to remove the current Superintendent job description and adopt Knox County Board of Education policies regarding the Director of Schools as a job description. Ms. Bounds seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0 Passed

3            Superintendent Salary Range

Ms. Satterfield pointed out that Superintendents were in high demand and since current Superintendent Bob Thomas did not take the full worth of salary because of his humble nature, it put the Board in a peculiar position regarding the salary for a new Superintendent. Mr. Dupler concurred and recalled the Board had ultimately offered Superintendent Bob Thomas a starting salary of \$200,000. It was noted Superintendent Thomas' current salary was \$216,321 plus an annual travel supplement of \$7,200.

Ms. Bounds said the Board needed to keep in mind that candidates may have an attorney representing them during any negotiations, so they definitely needed to make sure the Law

Department was involved. Mr. Dupler agreed and recalled that TSBA Executive Director Tammy Grissom had even stated their contract was slanted toward the Board, so he was happy to add things from that sample contract to a new Superintendent's contract. He also noted that the Superintendent's benefits must align with other Knox County Schools employee benefits.

Ms. Henderson noted that Knox County may receive applications from some of the same candidates as Hamilton County had received during their recent Superintendent search, so they may want to approve a range close to what Hamilton County had offered. Ms. Satterfield said she was good with setting a range close to that as well. Mr. Dupler recalled that Dr. Grissom had recommended a \$50,000 salary range. Ms. Bounds asked if a salary range of \$225,000 to \$275,000 would be acceptable to other committee members. Ms. Satterfield expressed concerns that the proposed range may not be high enough. Mr. Dupler noted that the benefit package would add an estimated \$25,000-\$35,000 in value. Ms. Bounds also noted that Knox County teachers were paid less than many surrounding counties and it could cause irritation if that was not factored into the Superintendent's salary as well. Ms. Henderson suggested \$250,000 may be a good place to start. Mr. Dupler pointed out that candidates may tend to ask for the maximum amount of any set salary range, so a minimum salary may just want to be considered.

Ms. Satterfield made a motion to recommend a starting salary of \$250,000. Ms. Henderson seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0 Passed

4 Superintendent Contract

Mr. Dupler noted the sample TSBA contract had sections the Board may want to consider such as covering moving and/or housing expenses, requiring a candidate to have a medical exam, and requiring a candidate to have a criminal background check. Committee members had discussion on sections regarding a medical exam and a criminal background check, connecting evaluations to the contract, and incentives. Mr. Dupler recommended that any incentives be considered when contract renewal was considered. Ms. Bounds said she would prefer to leave out any sections regarding housing, but she did like how TSBA's sample contract clarified the employment term. Mr. Dupler noted the Board had initially approved a two-year contract for Superintendent Thomas and then later offered two yearly extensions. He said the Board could consider an initial contract of 1 to 4 years. Ms. Bounds said the trend was to offer a shorter contract, but noted it was a balancing act when attracting candidates.

Ms. Bounds said she would like the Board to have discussion regarding the contract to give the Board Chair and Law Department guidance on the contract negotiation. Further discussion was had regarding a medical exam section in the contract. Ms. Satterfield made a motion to adopt the current Superintendent contract with the addition of the medical exam clause and the criminal background check clause from TSBA's sample contract. Ms. Henderson seconded the motion.

**Vote:** 3-0 Passed

Mr. Dupler stated he would work to finalize a draft contract for Board consideration.

5 Other Business

Ms. Satterfield stated that TSBA would be working with the new Superintendent on the evaluation plan, but noted the Board may want to agree on an evaluation framework. Ms. Bounds suggested the Board may want to do that through the work of a committee. Ms. Satterfield concurred and said she would be willing to continue that work with this committee. Ms. Bounds agreed the Board could allow the Superintendent Search Committee to continue their work to establish an evaluation framework with TSBA.

6 Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.