How to Work Effectively with School Boards and Search Firms to Advance Your Career

WEBINAR
June 6, 2018
2-3pm ET

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Welcome!

Thank you for joining us for today’s webinar!

HOST:
Vera Turner
Project Manager
AASA Women in School Leadership Initiative

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Logistics

• Access the audio for today’s webinar either via your computer or phone.
Webinar Participation

• We have allotted time for Q&A, but you can submit questions at any time.

• Please use the chat window to submit questions. In the dropdown menu, select “All Participants” and then type your question in the chat box.
Presenters

**MODERATOR**
Patricia E. Neudecker, Director of Administrative Leadership, Assistant Professor, Alverno College

**PANELISTS:**
Allison Schafer, Legal Counsel/Director of Policy, North Carolina School Boards Association
Carmella S. Franco, Search Consultant, Hazard Young Attea and Associates
Susan Enfield, Superintendent, Highline Public Schools (Burien, WA)
MODERATOR

Patricia Neudecker
Director, Administrative Leadership
and Assistant Professor
Alverno College

@NeudeckerPat
AASA Women In School Leadership Initiative

Two-Year grant from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:

• To help mitigate the impact of social barriers women face in ascending to the top leadership positions within our school systems

• To increase the number of women seeking and becoming CEOs and superintendents of schools.

www.aasa.org/WomenInSchoolLeadership.aspx

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National Women’s Leadership Consortium Findings

5 Major Barriers/ Challenges

| • Navigating Pathways to the Superintendency   |
| • Finding Work-Life Balance                  |
| • **Navigating Boards/Political Dynamics**   |
| • **Working with Search Consultants**        |
| • Networking and Mentoring                   |
Allison Schafer
Legal Counsel/Director of Policy
North Carolina School Boards Association

Director of Superintendent Search Services
Past Chair of National Affiliation of Superintendent Searchers (NASS)

@NCSBA
NCSBA and NASS

- 162 NC Searches Facilitated Since 1999
- Worked with 79 of 115 School Systems in NC

- National Affiliation of 40 State Associations That Provide Search Services to Member Boards
- Over 100 Search Consultants
- [www.nassconnect.org](http://www.nassconnect.org)
- (see NASS handouts)
Working with Search Firms

• Seek out national and state aspiring superintendent programs

• Develop a supportive mentor/coach relationship with an experienced/retired superintendent

• Get to know state association search consultants as well as those from private search firms
  • Attend AASA Job Fair
  • Ask to meet face-to-face with consultants and request advice on how to stand out through search process

• Familiarize yourself with vacancy listings on popular K12 websites/publications (e.g., AASA Job Bulletin, K12JobSpot, Education Week’s TopSchoolJobs) as well as individual state association and search firm websites
Barriers for Women

- Less experience in budget and operations
  - More experience in teaching/curriculum
- Willingness to move family or work away from family
- Boards who want experienced superintendent have fewer female superintendents to choose from
- Women seek superintendent opportunities less
  - Approximately 25% of applicants in NC are women despite majority of women in K12 overall

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Working with Boards

• Understand, appreciate, and respect complementary roles of board and superintendent
  • Know the board is your boss/supervisor and can terminate you

• Understand the board’s need for communication and establish agreement on communication protocols
  • Be open and forthcoming with information – NO SURPRISES

• Admit, apologize, and accept responsibility for mistakes of your staff as well as yourself
  • The buck stops with you
Carmella Franco
Search Consultant
Hazard Young Attea and Associates

@Carmella_Franco
The Search Firm Wants to Know Who You Are

- Identify key firms, locally, regionally and nationally
- Send the firm a copy of your resume
- State in your cover letter you will be following up with a call within a few weeks
- Find out if a Skype or FaceTime interaction can be arranged
- Try to meet with Search Firm Consultants
- Send the Consultant a thank you note
Application Process

- Varies from firm to firm

- HYA and Associates has a prescreening interview with 12-15 applicants who most closely match the Desired Characteristics, as approved by the Board

- It is important for applicants to be familiar with the Desired Characteristics and to match all or close to all of those characteristics

- The search firm takes its cues from the Board
Consultant Role During the Search Process

With the Board

- Keep the process equitable
- Provide the Board with outstanding women candidates and spotlight their skill sets
- Ensure the interview questions are fair and objective and are not skewed towards one gender
Consultant Role During the Search Process

*With the Candidate*

- Cast as wide a net as possible
- Identify highly qualified women candidates
- Encourage women candidates to apply for specific positions for which they are a match
- Provide guidance and helpful information relevant to the search
Barriers Faced by Women

• Lack of mentoring
• Initial placement in dead-end jobs
• Different standards for performance
• Lack of access to informal networks
• Perception about some not being able to handle the workload
Strategies for Effecting Personal Change

• Develop a network of support
• Seek out mentors, both female and male
• Seek “promoters” within and outside the workplace
• Form your own informal network to obtain important information
• Connect with search firms that you have identified, as appropriate to where you would like to work
Know the Board: Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

- Let the Board know who you are
- Be transparent and authentic
- Clearly delineated roles help to define this important relationship
- It is critical to develop a trusting relationship; it will take time, but immediate steps will facilitate this
- Hold a Board/Superintendent workshop in the first month where roles and responsibilities can be discussed and an understanding developed; the Search Firm Consultants can assist to allow the Superintendent to be an active participant
Know the Board: Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

• Based on individual meetings with Board Members, implement your communication plan for interacting with and informing them, both individually and collectively

• Check with the Board at the end of each Board meeting to ascertain that there are no issues left in question to fester; always be alert to red flags

• A mid-year checkpoint and the end-of-year formal evaluation are a must
Know the Board: Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

- Your contract will set the stage for how things will operate; get it right the first time
- “Remember, so goes the Board and Superintendent, so goes the District”
- Keep in touch with the Consultant that led your search - we are here to support you!
Susan Enfield
Superintendent
Highline Public Schools
Burien, WA

@SuptEnfield
The Recruiting Phase

- Research the search firm
- Research the district and board yourself, don’t just rely on the firm
- Consult other superintendents you trust who might have information
- Beware of being moved forward as a candidate just because you are a woman
The Negotiation Phase

• Know your predecessor’s compensation and know the district context
• Beware the “you don’t have prior experience” claim
• Ask other superintendents for copies of their contracts to use as models
• If necessary, hire a good lawyer to negotiate with and/or for you
The Entry Phase

- Create an entry plan and share with your board before making public
- Learn how the board likes to engage with the superintendent
- Learn what issues are important to each board member and build cohesion
- When in doubt, over communicate (because there really is no such thing)
The Working Phase

• Create systems for ongoing communication and feedback
• Establish Routines (especially the “no surprises” rule)
• Foster relationships with the board as a whole and as individuals
• Build relationships between the board and your senior team
Q & A and Panel Discussion

Join the conversation!

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Resources

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Women In School Leadership Awards
Superintendent Award; Central Office/Principal Award;
School-Driven Leadership Award
Deadline to apply: October 12, 2018;
Visit: http://womensleadership.aasa.org/

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Thank you for your participation!