

Prepared Notes for Board Meeting – Superintendent Search

June 1, 2011

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My friends, it is a great tradition of the Worthington Board of Education that the incoming President meets with the Superintendent to discuss the ground rules of the new year, new initiatives, items that may consume the board's time and so forth. On a bitterly cold day in December, Melissa and I met at Le Chatelaine and spoke for 2 hours on dozens of different issues and towards the end of the conversation, she mentioned in passing that she might be retiring and that we may need a new Superintendent. This was classic Conrath, downplaying her role in the district these last six years and implicitly acknowledging the reality that no one person, not even the Superintendent, is Worthington Schools but rather, our district is what it is through the combined efforts of our wonderful teaching staff, committed administrators, caring and talented classified workers, parents and, of course, the taxpayers who fund our efforts. Dr. Conrath understands this at her core so to her, a change in the Superintendency is just a minor event on a shared journey.

3 ½ months ago, our board began its search for Dr. Conrath's replacement. A "Search Committee Committee" consisting of myself, Dr. Conrath and Charlie Wilson selected the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio as our search consultant in part because of their willingness to target candidates who were not necessarily looking for other jobs. I never once regretted that decision and I want to thank Dr. Ralph Johnson and Dr. Bill Reimer for their knowledgeable insights and guidance every step of the way. I could not have asked for more from our consultants. Please join me in acknowledging their efforts on behalf of our district.

We have so many people to thank for their contributions to this process.

I first want to thank the members of our community who participated in our profiling exercise. A Superintendent Search is, by necessity, an opportunity to take a look at where we are and what we aspire to be. The profile tool attempted to capture that information in a usable format. Those community members who took the time to come to one of our meetings or respond online provided significant, thought provoking input that would later be used as a screen for candidates.

I want to thank every candidate who took the time to file an application. In all, we had 19 applicants from as far away as California and as close as the second floor of this building. The ESCCO application process provided a window into the qualifications of each of these talented educators and helped us determine which ones could be a match for Worthington Schools.

I want to especially thank the 6 candidates who participated in our first round of interviewing. Trust me on this, these interviews were not a trivial exercise but I found it personally rewarding to listen to the perspectives of our candidates on 21st century education, what education is and can be, their vision and leadership.

Our consultants also arranged informal conversations with a number of targeted candidates who ultimately chose not to apply for our Superintendentcy. These individuals took time, in some cases, significant time to jointly determine with us whether our district was a good fit for them and in the unlikely event that they are reading these remarks, I wanted to thank them as well.

At the end of the process, we were left with four enormously talented and qualified individuals. Over 30 members of our extended school community consisting of our administrators, teachers, classified workers and community members put in two very full evenings meeting our candidates and later sharing their thoughts with the board. I thank them for their efforts as well.

Lastly, I want to give a special shout-out to Vicki Gnezda for providing administrative support and guidance during this entire process.

Now, Worthington Schools will move forward under the leadership of Dr. Thomas Tucker, an educator with impeccable credentials an impressive history of success. Dr. Tucker will be entrusted, as is every member of this board, with the temporary guardianship of a tradition of academic excellence that dates back 200 years. During his tenure, state funding will ebb and flow, levys will be won and lost, Democrats and Republicans will come in and out of power at various levels of government ushering in or out the educational fad of the moment, Worthington's demographics will continue to shift, enrollment will increase in some areas and decline in others and change will be a constant, but one thing that will never change here is that tradition of excellence. We are and will continue to be a lighthouse school district and together, we're going to show Central Ohio and the rest of the state how it's done.

Before turning this over to my colleagues, I'll close by extending my personal welcome to Dr. Tucker and his family and in pledging my support to do everything possible to ensure a smooth transition and an overwhelmingly successful tenure as together; we write the next chapter in the storied history of Worthington Schools.