

**Redmond School District
School Board Meeting
October 3, 2012**

In Attendance: Chair Cathy Miller, Vice-Chair AJ Losoya, Directors Jim Erickson, Ric Little, Bob Perry, Superintendent Mike McIntosh, RSD Staff; Linda Seeberg, Martha Hinman, Chris Morton, David Burke, Trish Huspek, Association Representative – MaryAnne Agee, Media - Leslie Pugmire-Hole (*Spokesman*)

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

Citizen Participation for Non-Agenda Items

None

PRESENTATIONS

Transition Team Recommendation Regarding Superintendent Position

Linda Seeberg was present to provide the board with a review of what the Transition Team was charged to do as well as the team's recommendation regarding the superintendent position.

The team was originally convened when Superintendent Mikalson submitted his resignation. They were to be a "sounding board" as a new leadership model was created. During their meetings clear themes surfaced in regard to clarifying, prioritizing and simplifying what the district does. An additional theme was sustainability and concerns about being able to maintain good leadership in order to achieve continuity and support on the things that are important in the organization. The dialogue from these conversations informed the placement of Mike McIntosh as the interim superintendent. In addition, there was "reworking" of the organizational structure to address the issue of sustainability.

The next charge of the team was to meet in the fall to discuss how the district should move forward regarding the superintendent position. Linda Seeberg reported the team met on October 1. She provided the board with an overview of the meeting agenda as well as the processes used to lead the discussion. The meeting was divided into two parts. In part one, Superintendent McIntosh reviewed the work that was being done regarding the district's mission, vision, goals and academic priorities. During the second part of the meeting Superintendent McIntosh excused himself from the room to allow the team to discuss next steps. "We used a process that allowed all voices to be heard. We continued using the format of "floating trial balloons" to have the team process the positives and concerns of an idea.

Trial Balloon One: Mike McIntosh continuing as the permanent superintendent

Positives:

- Mike has the right skill set for what Redmond needs right now
- A stabilizing force
- Good people skills, man of character and honesty
- Knows Redmond and the RSD which provides continuity in the system
- Well liked and invested in the community
- Pre-existing relationship with both associations
- Reinforces a culture of growing from within

Concerns:

- Need to make sure that familiarity does not lead to complacency
- Address sustainability – this is critical to preserving good leadership and for continuity/stability in the district
- Clear delineation of roles and responsibilities in the new organization chart
- Prepare for big changes in the next 18-24 months

Trial Balloon Two: Initiate a superintendent search

Positives:

- Fresh perspective – greater objectivity
 - For bargaining
 - For budget cuts

Concerns:

- Another leadership change
- More time on the learning curve for the new candidate
- Another potential change of direction – clarify the model and fit the candidate to the model vs. the other way around
- Can we get a good candidate pool?
- Time, energy and money spent on a search

After this discussion each member stated their preference for which of the options they supported. By unanimous decision, the team expressed support for Mike as the continuing superintendent. The team was then asked for their opinion on either a one year contract or three year contract. The preference was a three year contract.

Linda Seeberg reported the recommendation of the Transition Team to the School Board is to offer Mike McIntosh the position of superintendent for a term of three years.

Mike McIntosh stated that he would like to continue as the superintendent. “Two weeks ago it was easy to say I was good for one year. That was a simple answer and then over the last two weeks I have realized there is a skill set that exists in the district that is unmatched. The organization chart that is being fleshed out has promise and I believe this could be a very rewarding position. My mind has shifted from I don’t know, to absolutely. There is confidence that we can make a difference in the lives of our kids in this district - we can change the culture and climate and move the educational priorities forward. I think we are in this for the long haul and I accept all of those things as what our district wants. I am someone who isn’t going to spend a few years in the district and then leave to climb whatever ladder is out there.”

Bob Perry asked why team members were not allowed to express their preference via a secret ballot. Linda Seeberg reported that they were prepared to offer a secret ballot and then one of the team said he would like to have the vote open. She didn’t see any reluctance from the team about that. Each team member then provided their preference. She reported that one team member stated that she came into the meeting thinking that she wanted to go out for a superintendent search and then during the conversation, she changed her mind. Bob Perry stated that he understands that but he would still have liked to have seen a private ballot provided.

AJ Losoya asked Linda Seeberg to share some of the weaknesses the team identified regarding Mike continuing as superintendent.

1. Will we be able to identify new thinking?
2. Will people protect Mike because they want him to stay? Will he not be expected to do the work he should be doing in order to make sure he doesn’t leave?

Bob Perry stated that it is clear the team thinks Mike is well thought of but will the fact that he has these wonderful relationships keep him from doing the job ahead.

Linda Seeberg stated, “Mike has great relationship skills but he also has the ability to have straight talk with people even when that is not comfortable. While he does have strong relationships with the associations sometimes you get into tough conversations and there has not been any indication that Mike has shied away from those conversations. Your greatest strengths are also your biggest weaknesses. Always need to know what your blind sides are.”

Mike McIntosh stated the team that we have assembled has become that team that looks out for the blind spots – they have the ability to say “we need to do this differently next time. There is a healthy attitude of guiding based on their best knowledge and skill set.”

Linda Seeberg stated that, “Feedback in our district is individualized for both students and staff. We provide that feedback so that it is about learning and growing them – we are committed to that. In this team there is a high level of respect and feedback.”

Cathy Miller stated, “We have a transition team recommendation and the board has heard Mike’s goals during the last work session. As a board do we need to have a discussion regarding the expectations of the role of superintendent to make sure everyone is clear about those expectations? Knowing there have been different styles in leadership do we, as a board, need to provide and articulate our strategic instructional direction? If the answer is yes, what are our expectations regarding Mike’s goals and priorities and our commitment to rigor and relevance? Do our expectations involve clearly identifying the functional relationships, the direction of where we are going, so that we can communicate that to our stakeholders? Do we want to see these things in writing including a timeline? I believe we need to engage the superintendent candidate knowing what we expect him to do when we hire him.”

Bob Perry stated that he feels additional conversation is needed. “Not to micro-manage but to make sure everyone has the same understanding.”

AJ Losoya reported that there has been a great deal of conversation regarding goals and expectations but the board hasn’t heard about what roads will be taken to get the district to those goals.

Jim Erickson stated it is the board’s responsibility to set the priorities of the district. To determine what we care about. It is the responsibility of the superintendent and his team to provide the roadmap to the board. “The board should say that by a certain date, based on the goals we establish, Mike and his team would present to the board how they intend to get there and then the markers that will be used over time to measure progress. At that point there is accountability before the board.”

Superintendent McIntosh stated, “My attraction to this job has gone from an obligation to a desire. In the process of ‘falling in love with the work’ the longer this position is an unknown the less progress we can make toward gaining progress for the students. This conversation is the launch pad to a long range plan. It hasn’t made much sense to develop a three to five year plan without knowing who will be in leadership roles. If this team gets to stay in place, we will launch into the hard work of determining the “what and how” the district moves forward.”

Cathy Miller stated that this is a new organization and that functions and responsibilities will evolve. “I am comfortable that the expectations may be modified based on this shared leadership model. What I don’t want is that in January to have the board provide you with an evaluation and to have you not know what you were expected to do.”

AJ Losoya stated that the superintendent is the CEO. “He will need to know what is happening in all of those arenas. If the board has questions, they need to go to him.”

Superintendent McIntosh stated, “The board has set an expectation and the team will then create the roadmap to get to those expectations. We have a group of people who are going to implement and get to where the board wants to get. What the board has given me is very clear. The board shouldn’t worry about the work getting done. I am very clear on the expectations of the board.”

Jim Erickson reported there need to be clear outcomes and checkpoints established.

Superintendent McIntosh further stated, “The board will paint the lines and identify the target and then we are going to take our skill set and resources to get the job done. It won’t be a straight line because there will be some midcourse adjustments as more information comes in. We are going to live within that expectation with some license to make adjustments regarding resources and time.”

Bob Perry asked the other board members if they, as a board, “have put enough meat on the climate and culture that we want in the district. I don’t believe we have.” He asked Superintendent McIntosh to describe what he has heard from the board regarding the kind of climate and culture they want him to create. Superintendent McIntosh stated that “trust” captures a big portion of what he has heard - there must be a confidence level based on trust and relationship building.

Bob Perry stated, “It is one thing for people to come here and like it here. However, the climate and culture need to be more than that. It needs to include the students and community.”

Cathy Miller reminded the board that because of recent events Superintendent McIntosh hasn’t had the opportunity to come back to the board with his plan.

Linda Seeberg reported that it makes sense for the board to establish clear expectations and then from there the team creates the strategic map. “That is where the board gets to see the details. Goals are the meat on the bones detail.”

Cathy Miller stated the district team is going to be asking the board for guidance on where resources are allocated. “I will need more information before I can help prioritize.”

AJ Losoya expressed concern about making a decision on a long-term superintendent appointment prior to seeing what the “meat and bones” of the strategic plan is. “I believe we need to hear that before a decision is made.”

Superintendent McIntosh reported that to him that expectation feels backwards. “I believe you establish the team and then it is our job to deliver on that. The ownership and buy in is in limbo. Write us in or write us out because that is what we need to move this district forward based on what the board expects. You are going to hire someone eventually that you either know or don’t know – they can either deliver or not.”

Jim Erickson stated that in offering a three year contract to a superintendent there are “opt out” options for both parties. “A board has the right to hold our superintendent accountable. We have written expectations that he is held accountable for. That is the only way to judge Mike and his team. From there you decide if it is a good fit or not. I would ask us as aboard is make sure there is a clear articulation between the mission, vision, boards beliefs and values and strategic plan. If that is all in place all you need is a tool to evaluate.”

Ric Little stated, I think we need Mike’s plan and then compare it to what the board’s goals are and then adjust it so we are where we want to be three years from now.”

AJ Losoya stated, “I don’t want anyone to think I have doubt about the team. I just want to stress the importance of needing to know what the strategic plan is. I need to know how we are going to get there. If I go out and interview a manger for a branch, I am going to get what their plan is. How do we go forward without that? We need to see that sooner than later.”

Cathy Miller, in summarizing the conversation to this point, reported it appears there is absolute confidence of all board members to endorse the transition team’s recommendation in terms of Mike being offered a permanent contract. However, there is also a desire of the board to have Mike and his leadership team present a strategic plan so there can be concurrence with the board prior to a three year contract being entered into.

Bob Perry stated, “The first point is that we have complete confidence in Mike to do that job. There shouldn’t be a “time pressure” in making the decision. The length of the contract doesn’t matter.”

Superintendent McIntosh stated, “It does matter because there are people outside this room who want an answer because they are needing stability. The choice the board makes today is do you have confidence in me and the leadership team or not. There is a major stumbling block if the people I am trying to move see this as the board not supporting where we are trying to go. There is a momentum factor that is real and needs to be factored in. I am not trying to put pressure on the board but it is difficult to rally the troops without giving them a clear direction. I represent 700 employees and 7000 students who deserve some steadiness in this. I don’t want you to make a decision you don’t want to make. If we are going to do the work, let’s make it meaningful. I don’t think we can do that with an interim.”

Ric Little reported that the measurement process will be a work in progress over the next two years. “You need to put processes in place in order to measure. We can’t do that today but if we hire someone today, we can start the process.”

Jim Erickson stated, “I think we owe it to Mike and his team to not wait two or three years to put the measurements in place. We have had superintendents who have gone after our goals in ways that didn’t fit our policies. We owe it to the people to create policies about what we want and what we believe in respect to how they get done. Once that is in place you set the operational roadmaps. We expect that every adult knows the mission, embraces it and knows their part in that. If they don’t, that is a systemic failure.

Superintendent McIntosh stated, “Our day job sometimes doesn’t have anything to do with the mission. It is the distracting minutia. Education is a people business which brings in a different element. What I think we have heard is that there is a lack of understanding, buy-in, and ownership. Until you get some traction we spin our wheels. In an effort to get traction there is a factor of confidence or trust that needs to happen. We need to figure out how to build a system that is defined by its role and when we have a person leave, we find someone to replace that position. We don’t reinvent the system around that person. I don’t know that we can overstate the importance of confidence being built by stability. People want to know that this isn’t a trend. They need to know if it will change or if it is here to stay. That to me is the issue that moves our organization toward success. We are tired of change. We want to simplify, prioritize, and clarify this organization. The people we are trying to lead are hesitant to follow if they are suspicious of the track.”

Cathy Miller stated, “It is important as a board to acknowledge that if a superintendent is placed in a position and that person does not perform it is our responsibility to hold them accountable. If we don’t then that falls on us. I am absolutely comfortable and believe in your leadership. While I am not comfortable with not having a strategic plan in front of me, I saw the strength in the district with John’s passing. It was top down and it was a belief that we were all in this together. That style of leadership spoke volumes. I am comfortable with making a commitment today because I know how important that commitment is if we want to get to our goals. I believe we know where we want to go. The problem has been our ability to articulate that message. I am ready to commit because I have seen the commitment given to this district by Mike. In the past we allowed a terrific superintendent to deplete their resources and they have burned out. That is our responsibility and we should have done something about it. Our conversations with Mike have been broader and deeper than in the past. Not only is the superintendent expectation being modified and grown, that same growth model needs to be applied to the board as well. We need to be one district, one team. Having the staff and board being separate entities has been the problem in the past. I am not walking behind or in front of Mike – I am walking beside him.”

AJ Losoya stated that the people he has spoken with have a greater excitement than in years past. “That is a result of each person on the leadership team. We are all sensitive to change and the thing the only thing I can say is that there will continue to be changes. We need to trust everyone’s passion and know that everyone is working hard. I know that everyone will strive to make this the best school district. Because of that I am comfortable moving forward today.”

Bob Perry expressed that his only reservation is if “Mike is too close to the teachers to be able to wield the hammer.”

AJ Losoya stated that there are pros and cons with that concern. “But his relationships with people are a huge benefit in moving the district forward. That is part of that special magic that is in place now.”

Bob Perry moved to offer Mike McIntosh the position of superintendent beginning in July, 2013 through June, 2016. AJ Losoya seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.

Votes: Jim Erickson-yes; Ric Little-yes; AJ Losoya – yes; Bob Perry – yes; Cathy Miller – yes

Superintendent McIntosh thanked the board for their confidence in him.

Bob Perry will work with district legal counsel to draft the three year contract.

ACTION ITEMS

Consent Agenda

- Personnel Changes
- School Board Regular Minutes from August 29, 2012
- Gift to the District

AJ Losoya moved and Bob Perry seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

Votes: Jim Erickson-yes; Ric Little-yes; AJ Losoya – yes; Bob Perry – yes; Cathy Miller – yes

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Requests for Agenda Items

- Achievement Compact Team Recommendations – October 10
- Discussion: Parent Conversation Format/Topics – October 10

ADJOURN

Jim Erickson moved and AJ Losoya seconded the motion to adjourn at 1:24 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Votes: Jim Erickson-Yes; Ric Little-Yes; AJ Losoya – Yes; Bob Perry – Yes; Cathy Miller - Yes

Cathy Miller, School Board Chair

Trish Huspek, Executive Assistant