

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH

**WESTBURY UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
OLD WESTBURY, NEW YORK**

**FINAL REPORT
TO THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

APRIL 29, 2021

CONSULTANTS:

**DR. DEBRA HILL
DR. KATHLEEN WILLIAMS**



Westbury Union Free School District Superintendent Search

Consultants' Final Report

This report presents the results of BWP and Associates search for candidates for the position of Superintendent of Schools for Westbury Union Free School District in Old Westbury, New York and contains information to assist the Board of Education in conducting and completing the search process.

Shortly after the Board's February 17, 2021 appointment of BWP and Associates, we began the initial phase of the search process. A Board planning session was conducted on February 23, 2021 to outline and approve all aspects of the search as well as to generate a timeline for implementation. During the week of March 1, 2021 an official announcement was made, and recruitment efforts began.

Vacancy postings and ads were listed on the BWP national website and with national organizations including the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), The National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE), the Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (ALAS). The District website link would provide access to search documents, including a Leadership Profile. The application process concluded on April 16, 2021.

Commencing the week of March 8 through March 23, 2021, a number of community engagement activities and meetings and were conducted to gather qualitative and quantitative data about the District. The data collected was used to create a Community Audit and Leadership Profile that reflected the overall themes that emerged from input and feedback from School Board Members and numerous constituent groups. Information was gathered by BWP and Associate consultants via ten (10) individual phone interviews, fourteen (14) virtual focus group discussions, three (3) community forums, and an online survey utilizing SurveyMonkey in which eight hundred sixty (860) responses were received. Of the total number of survey responses, seven hundred seven (707) were submitted in English, one hundred forty-five (145) were submitted in Spanish, and eight (8) were submitted in Haitian Creole. In total approximately 1,000 stakeholders provided input and feed back in the search process.

In order to address Board and stakeholder concerns about engaging all segments of the community and insuring transparency as a component of the process, an excellent broad-based communications plan was created. The plan included a specified superintendent search link with a specially designed logo on the District website. This link contains all the information related to

the search, a link to the survey provided to individuals to enable them to share on their social media sites, a special press release, and a host of other contact activities. In some cases Focus Group participants were asked to serve as “search ambassadors”, and use their contacts and outreach efforts to inform and encourage participation within the entire community. The focus group facilitator team included Drs. Debra Hill and Kathleen Williams. Dr. Joseph Porto (BWP Director) participated in the community forum facilitation. All data was gathered and analyzed exclusively by the BWP team.

The consultants presented a complete report from the community engagement activities to the Board on April 1, 2021 and discussed the Leadership Profile which would guide the process relative to the screening, review, and selection of candidates for consideration.

As per BWP policy as a private entity and in keeping with the Letter of Understanding with the Board, information about the applicants has been kept confidential and is the property of BWP until such time as names and information are presented as potential candidates and approved by the Board. The information will remain confidential until such time that the Board determines information should be shared. This procedure serves to protect the applicants’ information and not place their current employment status in jeopardy should they choose not to apply, not meet the Leadership Profile criteria or decide not to pursue the position. Confidentiality is also important to protect the Board and the District from potential adverse or legal ramifications from intentional or unintentional inappropriate communication regarding the candidates.

The pre-established protocol, agreed to by the Board, indicated that if successful interviews were completed and the consultants felt that these applicants met the Leadership Profile at an approximate level of 80% or more, the consultants would recommend a slate of 4-6 possible candidates for Board consideration on April 29, 2021. If the consultants did not feel the pool yielded qualified candidates, they would recommend that the search application deadline be extended and continued and that the search calendar be modified and adjusted. The search would then continue until a finalist was identified and selected.

Within the search process there were approximately sixteen (16) individuals who inquired, were contacted, or attempts were made to contact them by the consultants, regarding this position. By the April 16 deadline there were forty (40) applicants. A breakout of the application information provides a listing of the positions held by those who applied, the location by state of their current employment and additional demographic data. This information demonstrates that this was a national search (Appendix A).

Drs. Debra Hill and Kathleen Williams reviewed applicants’ online information independently and collectively. Those who provided incomplete applications were not considered for further screening. Upon review, a number of candidates were identified for further review and examination. Screening interviews for fourteen (14) applicants were conducted between April 18 and April 21 via Zoom, a telecommunications application. Appendix B lists the BWP interview questions used which were correlated to reflect the Leadership Profile.

In order to reassure the Board that there were viable candidates who met the Leadership Profile criteria and to adhere to the Letter of Understanding regarding development of a slate, the names of six (6) highly qualified persons are being recommended to the Board for their consideration on

April 29, 2021 in separate confidential document. Reference checks of both a formal and informal nature were conducted by contacting other professionals in the field for verification and additional information. In our professional judgment, the candidates presented best meet the leadership characteristics and criteria published by the Board in the vacancy announcement and were best matches to the Leadership Profile. Using a triangulation process, we based our selections and opinions of each candidate on their application information, interview, and initial reference checks. We will present this slate of candidates for the Board’s consideration and further action.

Drs. Debra Hill and Kathleen Williams will discuss the recommended candidates with the Board in closed session at the April 29, 2021. At this meeting, the Board will be provided with Candidate Facts (a comparative data table) which provides demographics relative to the search and the proposed slate identifying the candidates in alphabetical order. To assist the Board in the selection process, a sample scoring rubric has been provided in Appendix C. A document highlighting “Protocols for Interviews and Other Phases of the Search Process” have been provided on a previous date and will be reviewed through the Board training session at the conclusion of the presentation.

The candidate listing will not be rank ordered. A summary document for each of the candidates will be presented and provided to the Board to further assist members in identifying and selecting candidates for further interviews. We conducted Google searches for all the candidates that we will be presenting. Please note our statement regarding Google searches in Appendix D. Once the slate is reviewed and candidates are identified for interviews by the Board, they will receive electronic access to the candidates’ files in preparation for interviews and further discussion. It is anticipated that the Board will conduct their first-round screening interviews May 3, 5, 6, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Debra Hill
Dr. Kathleen Williams
BWP and Associates, Ltd.

Appendices

Appendix A: Applicant Demographics

Appendix B: BWP Candidate Zoom Interview Questions

Appendix C: Applicant versus Leadership Profile

Appendix D: Candidate Internet Research

Appendix A

Superintendent Search Westbury Union Free School District

Applicant Demographics (36/40)

4 Incomplete Applications

Positions held currently by Applicants:		Educational Levels	
Superintendent	6	Doctorate	28
Interim Superintendent	3	Masters	4
Assist./Deputy/Assoc. Superintendent	11	Advanced Certificate	4
Commissioners/CEO	2		
Executive Directors/Directors	6		
Principal	6		
Asst. Principals	1		
Professors	1		
Total	36	Total	36

States from which applicants applied (9 states): Other Language Spoken (Polite P –Fluent F)

California	2	Arabic	1 (+ Spanish P)
Connecticut	4	ASL	2 (1 + Hebrew & P Spanish)
Indiana	1	French Creole	1
Maryland	1	French F	1
Mississippi	1	Hebrew	1
New Hampshire	1	Spanish F	6
New Jersey	2	Spanish P	8
New York	23	Turkish	1
Pennsylvania	1	None	16
Total	36	Total	36

Appendix B

Westbury Interview Questions for BWP ZOOM Interview Questions

Candidate's name _____

1. Give a brief and concise review of your career path and your current position and share why you are interested in this position.
2. Westbury is a K-12 medium size district with approximately 5,000 students in 6 buildings. It is considered the most diverse school district on Long Island, with a large majority population of Latino and Haitian-Creole students making this a unique multilingual and complex community. Based upon your research about Westbury briefly share 2-3 attributes that make you the best person to lead Westbury Schools and why you would be a good fit.
3. Describe how you advocate for, incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusivity as a part of the landscape and overall wellbeing of students, staff and the community.
4. Describe your oral and written communication strategies for both internal and external stakeholders.
5. What decision making strategies will you design and employ to unite the District and the leadership team?
6. Provide an example of your approach to problem solving that incorporated issues, solicited suggestions, and which resulted in a successful outcome. How were the results shared?
7. Describe a successful initiative which you led which demonstrates a student centered approach that inspired people to the highest levels of achievement and accountability.
8. What would staff say is your biggest strength? A weakness or an area where you could improve?
9. How familiar are you with New York state school finance and describe any experience you have had with taxing issues, school overcrowding, and appropriate budgeting.
10. What structures would you put in place to demonstrate support of staff and students, positive interactions with the Board, and an inner-connectedness with the school communities?
11. How do you manage conflict?
12. Would you like to tell us about your personal life? Your family, interests, spare time activities.
13. Anything we need to know or anything in your background that could be an issue?
14. Are you involved in any other searches at this time?
15. Questions for us?

Appendix C

Superintendent Search Westbury Union Free School District Applicant versus Leadership Profile Application Review

Name _____

Applicants	1 (L)	2	3 (H)
<u>Characteristics/Skills</u>			
Background as an educator			
a. Administrative			
b. Teaching			
Strong visionary leader – strategic thinker who would ensure equity, academic growth, high standards and provide optimal learning for all students through expertise, passion, and knowledge about teaching and learning.			
Committed to Equity - a person who will incorporate equity, diversity and inclusivity as a part of the landscape of the overall well-being of students, staff and community			
Accomplished leader - demonstrates integrity, compassion, honesty fairness, will make decisions and execute them and demonstrates the ability to unite the schools overall leadership – skilled motivator and collaborator-team builder, problem solver			
Communication Skills - would communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders in both written and oral			
Student centered leader - demonstrates human relations skills, would be visible, would inspire to achieve highest levels academic performance and accountability			
Politically savvy leader – understands the uniqueness and the landscape of a diverse complex suburban community with multiple languages – can work for consensus			
Personable leader – motivator - demonstrates a high EQ, shows appreciation for all staff and their efforts to provide students with opportunities for success			
Consensus Builder - is approachable, listens to all voices, and understands and appreciates different points of view			
Fiscal Leader – understands Indiana school finance; collaborate on seeking additional resources; can lead the community through its next referendum			

Applicants	1 (L)	2	3 (H)
<u>Other Attributes</u>			
a. No controversial issues noted			
b. Commitment to District			
c. Knowledge of educational trends and C&I issues			
d. Indicators of commitment and longevity			
<u>Overall Written Application</u>			
a. Cohesive			
b. Cover Letter			
c. References			
d. Complete			
Totals			

**Scoring/Rating Rubric for Application
(Matrix Score is placed in margin next to question)**

- 1- (Not Satisfactory) - Application information does not reflect the topic and are inconsistent with desired qualities.
- 2- (Good)- Application has some information and is connected to the topic component. Has provided some examples that are consistent with desired qualities.
- 3- (Outstanding) - Application provides strong responses to the topic areas and concrete examples are provided. Responses indicate an excellent match to desired qualities.

The totals of the ratings can provide quantitative data regarding how closely the written application information match the “Leadership Profile”.

Appendix D

Superintendent Search

Westbury Union Free School District

Candidate Internet Research

Included with our description of each candidate will be information that we found or did not find when conducting a Google search. The purpose of our Google research is to get an idea of what will pop up when your community searches the names of the finalists or when the Board researches the names of the recommended slate on the internet. We want to try to eliminate any surprises as much as possible.

We search particularly for articles that indicate controversy or raise questions that we may need to follow up on with the candidates to secure explanations.

Some of the candidates have hundreds of files listed under their names, and many are simply repetitive or just related to the ordinary functions of their jobs.

The stories in the Google files may not be in chronological order because they are not listed that way. Also, the name of the publication is not always listed. It is important to note that when a Google search is done some of the articles are from reputable, established news outlets, and some may be from personal, professional, or political blogs. Like all things on the internet, the reader needs to be judicious in factoring out truth. Writers and reporters sometimes have their own agendas in deciding what to report or write. Our inclusion of something from our research does not necessarily mean we have judged its content to be valid.

We will encourage you to do your own internet search if you wish. If you do, remember that there may be multiple people across the country with the same names as the candidate. Be sure you have the right person.

We hope these comments will help provide additional information about the candidates.