

## **MEMORANDUM**

To: Emily Ackman, Co-Chair, Somerville Superintendent Search Committee

Andre Greene, Co-Chair, Superintendent Somerville Search Committee

From: Glenn Koocher, Executive Director, MASC

Date: February 1, 2023

RE: Vetting Process

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The final stages of the search process will occur when candidates spend their day in the district and have a public interview. During this time, MASC is vetting candidates with intensive reference and background checking now that the public has been informed of candidates' identities and the expectation of confidentiality for the candidates is no longer a legal issue.

In addition to reviewing letters of references, which are followed-up with a phone call when vetting candidates, we will be consulting with listed references and relevant unlisted sources to provide feedback. These include current and previous district administrators, colleagues, previous employers, professionals who work with aspiring superintendents, or others. MASC often does this work, but it is not unusual for school committee members to follow up on research of their own. In the case of Somerville, MASC has been making calls since the public announcement and will continue through the week.

If any concerns or issues arise over the course of reference checks, we raise those questions directly with the candidate(s). We may follow up with candidates regarding factors including but not limited to direct responses from named references and/or other professionals who are contacted, media or social media articles in which a candidate is named, and questions raised to or through the school committee members during the interview process.

When I am speaking with a reference, the questions posed include the following:

- How long have you known this person?
- In what capacity have you known this person?
- How effective was the candidate as a manager?
- Do people want to work with this person?
- What is the candidate like as a person?
- Have you seen this person in collaborations?
- Is this person intellectually curious, or how does this person think?
- Has the candidate engaged in some of the more controversial topics of the day, such as LGBTQ, Social and Emotional Health of Students

MASC will prepare a reference summary for the School Committee's use during final deliberations. This document will be considered a confidential personnel document.

Beyond standard professional records checks, districts and School Committees may opt for additional steps for finalists.

School Committees often visit the "sending district" to speak with local stakeholders. These can be arranged quickly, but there are important diplomatic elements to visiting a district with the possible intent of taking away a valued administrator. Site visits to the sending district can be helpful in being able to speak more frankly with colleagues in other districts, validate impressions from earlier parts of the process, or learn about local issues that may have affected positive or negative elements of a candidate's work history. Site visits should be made by the school committee, usually a sub-majority of the members.

In some cases, candidates may not have a place to visit. For example, employees of a state agency, former employees no longer in a district, or non-traditional candidates may not be able to host a site visit since no relevant site exists.