

November 14, 2006

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**MARBLEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH**  
**FOCUS GROUP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*The following comments are distilled from the focus group meetings with the P.T.O site based team, Council on Aging, community forum, administrative team, central office support staff, faculty and town officials*

**Question # 1: I think the new superintendent should possess the following characteristics, background and experience**

**Not ranked in priority order**

- Has prior experience as a superintendent (this is not on-the-job training); an experienced educational manager, experienced through the ranks as a teacher, principal and superintendent; should know how to delegate tasks and hold people accountable
- Possesses financial and budgeting skills; understands the interrelationship between the finances of the schools and the town; understands how to balance high expectations with limited resources; exhibits creativity in an atmosphere where money is tight; has ability to make tough decisions; a good negotiator, currently working in an administrative structure with experience managing facilities and direct oversight for the budget
- Possesses strong leadership and management skills and a style that fits community expectations; has a successful record of working with the community; is able to communicate the needs of the district to the larger community; a “people person”; one who is visible and approachable; a good listener who is respectful of the community and its townspeople; appreciates Marblehead’s history and unique culture; willing to become involved in the fabric of the community; understands shared decision making; knows how to include teachers and parents in the dialogue leading up to a decision; a bridge builder with the ability to bring people together; knows and values teachers and is skilled at team-building; knows how to drive an initiative; adept at public relations
- A visionary with the ability to understand trends; knows Prek-12 education; understands child development and pedagogy; appreciates the arts, extracurricular activities and technology; has a philosophical/global understanding of curriculum and the ability to assess curriculum leadership needs; has a vision for the future and knows how to prepare students for a world of change; has ability to “think outside the box”; a charismatic leader who is willing to explore and try new ideas; tangible record of accomplishments as a change agent.
- History of successful hiring practices, particularly as those practices relate to hiring a new high school principal; understands and has experience and strong background in human resource development and allocation
- Appreciates and can work with the local charter school; experienced in dealing with a charter school with an open-minded approach; able to incorporate the charter school into the educational community

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- Has the ability to work within the political structure of the community; able to defend his/her beliefs; has the ability to deal productively with the school committee and will work collaboratively with the committee by guiding and supporting them; possesses the ability to develop working relationships with people of diverse backgrounds and divergent points of view

*NESDEC NOTE (January, 2006): While no candidate can possess all of the qualities and experiences noted above, considering candidates who best match the profile during the screening and interview process will help the screening committee recommend strong candidates to the school committee. The profile will also assist the school committee in selecting the candidate who is best suited for the position.*

**Question # 2: The following are the immediate challenges and tasks I think important for the new superintendent to focus upon in the first six to twelve months in the position:**

**Not ranked in priority order**

*November, 2006: Notes reflect school committee updates about the status of identified topics*

- Hiring a new high school principal (and middle school principal)
- *NOTE: In June, 2006, Dr. Devaux appointed Libby Moore as principal of the Veterans Middle School (she had been serving as interim), and hired John Ziergiebel to be the new High School principal*
- Involvement in teacher negotiations
- *NOTE: In May, 2006, the School Committee and the Marblehead Educators Association came to agreement on a new three-year contract.*
- Budget planning including long term facilities planning
- *NOTE: The School Committee has reconvened a Facilities Master Plan Committee to begin the process of facilities planning, focusing on the six preK-6<sup>th</sup> grade schools. The FMPC began meeting this summer and will continue its work throughout the school year in anticipation of meeting state deadlines for submitting schools needs assessments.*
- Be visible in the schools and community
- Get to know the key players in the town before determining next steps
- Get to know the town and townspeople and let them know you; “gel” with the community
- Establish a curriculum leadership structure
- *NOTE: Over the summer, at the direction of the school committee and working within its operating budget, Dr. Devaux hired the following curriculum leaders: Martha Bedrosian, science; Nancy Duclos, math; Michael Hanna, world cultures/foreign language; Kay Scheidler, English/language arts. They join Beth Delforge, fine arts; Mike Plansky, athletics.*
- Work closely with administrators to develop goals; goal development should be a fluid process in which opinions of others can be heard and embraced
- *NOTE: At the direction of the school committee, Dr. Devaux has convened a Steering Committee to review the district’s Strategic Plan. By the end of the school year, the school committee will have a revised Strategic Plan to show the new superintendent in order to facilitate constructive dialog with administrators and teachers about the needs and goals of the district.*