

**TRENTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Retreat at Rutgers University**  
**Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy**  
**33 Livingston Avenue – Room 261**  
**New Brunswick, NJ 08901**  
***BOARD RETREAT MINUTES***  
**Friday – July 29, 2016 – 10:00 a.m.**

10:13 meeting called to order

Roll Call: DA Graham, Gerald Truehart, Lucy Vandenberg, Jane Rosenbaum, Jason Redd

10:44 BOE member Guillermo Gomez Salazar arrives, Fiah Gussin arrives at 11:06

Also in attendance, Lucy Feria, Les Richens, Perry Lattiboudere and Francis Blanco, Chief of Staff. Dr. William A. Watson and Dr. Joseph Youngblood served as facilitators.

Quorum established at 10:15

Motion to approve agenda made by D.A. Graham with Second by Gerald Truehart.

Roll Call: DA Graham, Gerald Truehart, Lucy Vandenberg, Jane Rosenbaum, Jason Redd carries 5-0

Public participation: Twanda Taylor

Comments: The Board is keeping the public out by having a meeting in New Brunswick. Why not get buses to get parents here. As a parent appalled at the way things are going. Not giving up on children or board but you are making it difficult. I live across the street from the Board offices but the meeting is here. Board must make an effort to be more inclusive.

Dr. Youngblood gives overview of agenda.

Jason Redd discusses the purpose of the retreat which is to discuss board performance, motivation of Board members, the superintendent search, board members took time out of work schedules with the expertise for a guided discussion. This is a first step and not the last step in the process.

Mayor's welcome remarks given and a framing of the process, Chief of Staff Francis Blanco on behalf of the Mayor. The Chief of Staff noted that the work of coming together is critical as education is critical to the Mayor. He understands the urgency of getting great leadership to lead us. We are here to learn from past experiences, clarify process and the characteristics needed in the next leader. We are also here to ensure that the process is collaborative, transparent and will determine the collective understanding to include parents and city administration, including the voices of our children. How do we communicate it to all? Outline the collective plan for the next 5 or 10 years and discuss how we hold each other accountable and how we remain inclusive. Identify the stakeholders, are we recruiting in a passive or active way. On behalf of the Mayor let's learn and build on the lessons learned.

Facilitator Dr. Youngblood explained the Thomas Edison Watson Institute's role supporting the City of Trenton and the Trenton BOE. Dr. Youngblood explained that he is a Former Assistant Superintendent at Trenton BOE but he is currently affiliated with the NJ urban mayors association which engages 32 districts in discussing education issues. Dr. Youngblood explained his background and noted that the Institute and he are doing this work gratis and not as paid consultants, as this facilitation work is part of the Institute's role. Process was to interview the participants for baseline data and qualitative feedback to shape the agenda. The goal is to deconstruct the search and improve on the next one. The three Ps -

**TRENTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Retreat at Rutgers University**  
**Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy**  
**33 Livingston Avenue – Room 261**  
**New Brunswick, NJ 08901**  
***BOARD RETREAT MINUTES***  
**Friday – July 29, 2016 – 10:00 a.m.**

priorities, person, process. The interactive discussion will give the search firm the blueprint which guides the outcome. We will rely on the TPS 2015-18 academic plan and the HYA January 20, 2016 superintendent search planning meeting summary as guiding documents.

Co-facilitator Dr. Watson introduced himself and explained that he has lived in City for 40 years and is still considered an outsider. He heard about the struggle in the first round of the search and got together with Jay Redd to take the opportunity to bring the Board together to figure out how we perform a more informed, engaged search.

Participants then engaged in a visual exercise with framing questions. Board members and administrators and the monitor DAG, GGS, JR discuss images selected and how they relate to the three questions in the exercise.

Discussion of how the list of priorities is developed and how they define the search

Board members discussed the fact that continuity is critical and a new leader should focus on structural and programmatic continuity. They don't want teachers to have to start over again. Question raised about whether this approach would box a person in before they get in the door? Isn't it better to have the leader assess existing programs? The community engagement needs to be explored more deeply, we should focus on community schools and assessment of resources. The selected leader should relate on all different levels such as talking to community members as well as State and Municipal leaders. Parent engagement was discussed. What are reasonable expectations of collaboration? What can the board do to create an environment of engagement? We also have to address labor relations issues.

Board discussed ongoing board development and explored the kind of preparedness that a board member needs to have before each meeting. Was there due diligence of going to committee meetings and preparing by reviewing the materials. Labor relations issues assisted in derailing the last search, what are we doing to address that? How does the Board define the media interaction and allow us to define the process and develop communication strategy that will not allow others to define candidates and malign the process. The Board discussed whether better communication would have really assisted. The Board also discussed how they should deal with the engagement of the next search firm. How do we get the search firm to execute a plan that the Board develops. Does the Board select a finalist and then allow community to assess? The Board also discussed the need to review the limited timeframe for the application process. Was it open long enough for quality candidates to find out and apply? Target date discussed January 1 and it's important to fully define the process now so we don't feel a time crunch. We have to be careful in the search firm we select.

The Board further discussed how to define the experience the candidate needs, how that leader defines a plan to get us out of focus and priority status, how do they address the immigrant community and understand the demographics of Trenton and can be a well-rounded champion.

In terms of the person, besides having a multiple audience orientation, the person must be a champion for students and have credibility with the community.

**TRENTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Retreat at Rutgers University**  
**Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy**  
**33 Livingston Avenue – Room 261**  
**New Brunswick, NJ 08901**  
**BOARD RETREAT MINUTES**  
**Friday – July 29, 2016 – 10:00 a.m.**

The Board also questioned how they would process stakeholder assessment and define the people the Board needs to engage in the process such as civic associations, parents of existing students, alumni parents as well as charter parents. There also needs to be engagement of chambers of commerce and local businesses. The unions and staff also need to be engaged as well as elected officials, media and university partners. Social organizations such as NGOs, the health care community and municipal agencies.

Next the board discussed how we collect this qualitative and quantitative feedback from the community. Generalized and targeted surveys. Feedback could also include comments from focus groups and town hall meetings

Can the board also get direct feedback from the public by asking questions at bus stops and other places in the community such as barbershops or visiting homes? Feedback could be done by BOE members and not by search firm representatives. There was also a discussion about whether you partner with municipal leaders and union leaders when the BOE members directly engage the public. Should there be a public meeting to discuss the process?

How do we make sure that we are proactively searching? The Board also discussed connecting with national organizations that can help us connect with the best pool of talent out there. Discussion around firms that consistently use the same list to provide candidates to other districts.

There was also a discussion about how the Board would design the final part of the process. How much power do we give the Board versus the search firm to screen the candidates? Perhaps the Board reviews all candidate resumes after they have been categorized by the search firm. Discussion of the past search firm and how they narrowed the candidates down. For example a regional superintendent in a large district may have as much experience as a sitting superintendent in a smaller district. The Board also discussed whether to consider internal candidates. The Board also debated a public meeting on the kickoff process and at the back end a public meeting to present the candidates and/or finalists. The Board also discussed the follow up from today's meeting and how the facilitators would digest and convey the information to the Board at the August 10<sup>th</sup> special meeting.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Gerald Truehart and seconded by Lucy Vandenberg. Meeting adjourned at 2:16 p.m.

***Minutes taken by Perry Lattiboudere, Board Counsel***

Respectfully submitted

*Jayne S. Howard*

Jayne S. Howard  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary