

Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
January 13, 2009
REVISED

The Transylvania County Board of Education met in special session at 6:00 p.m. on January 13, 2009, at the Morris Education Center. The meeting was a continuance of the recessed meeting of January 12, 2009 for the purpose of hearing proposals regarding superintendent search services. Present were Mike Rogers, Chairman; Chris Whitmire, Vice Chairman; Tawny McCoy, Shelia Norman, and Cindy Petit. Also present were Leanne Winner, Director of Governmental Relations, NC School Boards Association; Attorney Dean Shatley, Roberts & Stevens, PA; Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant; Lenora Moody, *Transylvania Times*, Dr. Jeff McDaris; and Dr. Scott Elliott. Chairman Rogers welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Roberts & Stevens, PA

Attorney Dean Shatley presented an overview of the superintendent search services available from the firm of Roberts & Stevens, PA. The firm can provide assistance in creating job descriptions, applications, packets about the school system, advertising, background checks, applicant screening, and setting up interviews. Billing is by the hour and varies according to the scope of services provided. Mr. Shatley informed the Board that some school systems choose to use a consultant to perform a stakeholder needs assessments. Dr. Roger Metcalf, retired Director of WRESA, is currently performing a needs assessment for Buncombe County Schools and would be available for Transylvania, if the Board so chooses. The cost for this optional service would be \$5,000. Advertising would be a direct pass-through cost and could be local, regional or national. Selection process services include criminal and credit background checks, telephone reference checks and other screenings for the top five candidates. Roberts & Stevens staff typically do not attend interviews, but would help prepare interview questions and provide tips on interview techniques. Additional direct costs would be the customary and normal reimbursements for candidates' travel and lodging expenses. Roberts & Stevens staff would coordinate travel arrangements. They would also send rejection letters as directed by the Board. A general breakdown of costs is listed below. The Board may select all or any combination of the services as best suit its needs and budget.:

Set-up and administrative costs	\$1,500 - \$2,000
Consulting cost (optional)	\$5,000
Advertising costs	\$500 - \$5,000
Selection process costs	\$4,000 - \$6,000
Interviews	Per hour if attendance is requested. No charge for list of interview questions and tips on interview techniques.
Additional direct costs	Travel/lodging reimbursement as needed

Mr. Shatley noted that there are 6-7 searches currently taking place in the southeast region, which will likely produce a large pool of high quality candidates. He recommended limiting national advertisements to one or two national publications unless the Board is serious about having a national pool of candidates. He noted that the application process is extensive and

time-consuming, and candidates do not wish to invest time and effort into the process unless their prospects are serious.

NCSBA

Leanne Winner, Director of Governmental Relations for NCSBA, gave an overview of the superintendent search services available from the North Carolina School Boards Association. She prefaced her presentation with the following advice to the Board:

1. You are preparing to make the single most important decision for your community. Your decision will set the tenor and future for your community for years to come.
2. If you already know the person that you want, then there is no need to go through a search.
3. Community engagement/input is very important. However, applications are personnel records and must be kept confidential. Boards must get permission from the candidates to share this information. We do not recommend having anyone but the Board members participate in the interview process. Otherwise, word will get out and candidates will withdraw from the search. We recommend that the Board not involve the community in this part. It is the Board's responsibility.

NCSBA services include developing a timeline, designing the application form, advertising, sending out application packets, collecting and duplicating application information, speaking with applicants, helping with surveys, arranging interviews, checking references, ensuring confidentiality of the process, and generally helping the Board as they request. NCSBA does not participate in contract negotiations for legal reasons. Search services cost an \$8,000 flat fee plus any incurred expenses. The expenses generally include around \$649 in advertising costs, travel costs for out-of-state candidates, any greater than incidental out-of-pocket expenses such as large-scale copying (\$300-\$500), and mileage and hotel expenses for NCSBA staff. Ms. Winner noted that she travels frequently from Raleigh to Asheville and could minimize travel expenditures by coordinating visits to Brevard within those trips.

Both firms advised that an application window of 6-8 weeks would be sufficient to gather a good pool of candidates. Ms. Winner and Mr. Shatley observed that Transylvania would be a very attractive superintendency due to the stability and quality of the school system and the beauty of the area.

The Board thanked Ms. Winner and Mr. Shatley for their presentations.

The Board discussed the options and agreed on the following:

- Limit the amount spent on advertising. Focus on regional advertisement.
- The Board would probably not use a consultant.
- Use both electronic and paper surveys as well as public forums in order to involve as many stakeholders as possible.
- Hold public forums at several locations throughout the county, possibly at each school. Have no more than two Board members present at each forum in order to comply with the Open Meetings Law.
- Set parameters for discussion of personnel matters and confidentiality.
- Use suggestion boxes for anonymity.

There was much discussion about the use of surveys versus public forums to gather community input. Ms. Winner pointed out that both methods are effective; however, one advantage to surveys over public forums is convenience. People cannot always attend forums, while surveys may be completed at one's leisure. She added that online surveys can be designed to include sections for open-ended comments/suggestions.

The Board discussed funding for the search. Chairman Rogers noted that since this was an unexpected need, funds for this specific purpose had not been set aside. However, fund balance should be sufficient to cover the costs. He estimated that the search would cost between \$10,000 and \$12,000.

The Board will meet again in approximately one week to announce the firm that will be assisting with the search. In the meantime, Mr. Rogers will contact other Boards for recommendations on services. Board members indicated that they were looking forward to the challenges ahead.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MRS. NORMAN, SECONDED BY MRS. PETIT, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary