

**Franklin School Committee  
Minutes  
March 17, 2017  
Municipal Building – Council Chambers  
SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH**

**Michael Gleason, Milford Daily News was present.**

Call to order: 9:30 a.m.

Dr. O'Malley

**Attendance:** Mrs. Bilello, Mrs. Scofield, Mrs. Douglas, Dr. Bergen, Dr. O'Malley, Ms. Schultz, Dr. Jewell, Mr. Thomas Mercer, Council member, Mr. Paul Peri, Principal, Franklin High School, Ms. Donna Grady, FEA President, Ms. Sara Mulcahy, PCC/SEPAC member, Dr. Randall Collins, and Mr. Donald Macrino

**9:30 a.m. - Called to Order - Dr. O'Malley**

**Brief Update -**

Dr. O'Malley asked Randy for process.

Dr. Collins indicated that the pool of candidates is much stronger than last time. Keeping the search open was clearly the right decision. He is encouraged by the candidates. He noted that regarding at the end, he didn't think the rating worked up front, the Committee was making decisions without hearing others. This time at the end, we will hear from the 4 non-voting members before School Committee members. The School Committee will then weigh in. He noted that ideally moving 2 forward was best. Regarding comment, everything is public, comments should be focused on strengths that will meet the needs of Franklin, keep comments positive. Dr. Collins thought none of the candidates interviewed last time were a fit for Franklin, we looked at paper. Concerned that the last time candidates referred to Selectman, they did not do homework.

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**Franklin School Committee  
March 17, 2017  
Final Minutes**

Ms. Scofield asked where the rating sheets were to take notes?

Dr. Collins advised that Mr. Macrino had them, we were not sure if they worked.

<b>Question #1:</b>	<b>Please tell us why you are interested in this position and why you are considering leaving your present position?</b>
John Marcus	Thanked committee for the opportunity. Got into the business to make the world a better place and work with children. Wonderful experiences as a teacher, came from family with adopted black sister, work through racial issues as a family. Taught for 12 years at Milton, moved from private to public school. Focus on the experience in the classroom the best that it can possibly be. Why Franklin? Looking at other Central Office in other district. looking for a place that matches the skill set I have. Finding the strength and passions of each person to build them up and arrive at excellence. Franklin is committed to those kinds of things. Continue the great work that has happened and bring to the district new ways of thinking to the classroom.
Sara Ahern	Thrilled to be here. Drawn to Franklin because of School Department and community and opportunities for children. Extra Curricular offerings. Variety of opportunities for students and adults with LifeLong Learning. Community is one of my core values. Knows a little about district. Heard nothing but positive things from colleagues. She noted that she loves her present position, enjoy the work there, etc. although feels she has more to contribute in a Superintendent role. It is the next step in her career and contribute more broadly. Very happy in Holliston, looking for right fit.
Jay Cummings	In Grafton for 6 years. Lots of changes in Grafton, Been fantastic in Grafton. Looking for a larger district. Had his eye on Franklin since Assistant Superintendent. Looked for district with great results and less resources. Really interested in Franklin for 8 years.
Peter Light	Incredible place to be. Committed to Franklin. As High School Principal under a microscope, held in comparison as Superintendent. Bring a Commitment in our district to student, faculty member and community member. Feel strongly in relationship model. My lack in experience can be

	made up with relationships.
<b>Question #2</b>	<b>Beyond high test scores and college acceptance rates how do we know if we've been successful as a school system?</b>
John Marcus	All district wrestle with this. Find ways to make sure that students are not just leaving with a set of skills, add more to the community. Set of skills, set of belief, sense of community and to make the world a better place. Instilling set of skills, tremendous writers, math skills, set of belief or values to make the world a better place through hard work, understanding others. Does not know what the community service is in Franklin, but it is a hallmark of his efforts that there is a sense of community service, not only helping but what are you learning.
Sara Ahern	Preparedness piece of life beyond school. Prepare to be innovators, with respect to STEM skills, increased areas of job growth for children. Pay attention to social innovators, students to shape the future. SEL skills are mastered and walk away with from our schools, be more collaborative, communicative, cope with change in society. Curriculum is focused on 4 c's. Ask graduates are you prepared, reaching out to those students. Use that information to move forward.
Jay Cummings	Great question. Keep strong connection with students in college and beyond college.
Peter Light	Not here to test kids, we are here to make them passionate for what they look for, did school system do everything they could, took care of me as an individual, everyone was behind me for what was best. Personalization. Gave example of student success team.
<b>Question #3</b>	<b>Please describe the methods you will use to keep the School Committee fully informed in between meetings.</b>
John Marcus	Firm believer of honest, open communication. Any electronic/technological form. Using something like google with a drop box, putting info in there to be informed. Value is to insure that we have frequent face to face

	communication, management style in classrooms all the time, talking to students, out in the community, take ideas and bring back to Committee. Not just in Superintendent's office, talk out in the community, walk throughs, etc.
Sara Ahern	Regular communication by email, guaranteed mechanism that all would receive same information, all at the same time. It would be an update and pro-active with things happening in the district. Email or phone call. Making sure you are informed.
Jay Cummings	Think he knocks it out of the park. Meetings are important, information in advance. Every Friday sends a memo to School Committee, will call School Committee with an emergency to inform them.
Peter Light	Important because you are the eyes and ears of the Community. Accurate information at their disposal is critical. Quick email, taking time to work with School Committee as a body, really doing some entry planning. Revisit some of the topics, come to a census. Two way dialog.
<b>Question #4</b>	<b>Part of the role of the Superintendent is to work with the appropriate governing bodies within the Town to achieve the best outcomes for our students. Financial resources continue to be challenging. How would you prepare the committee to approach a politically sensitive or controversial issue within the community?</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Maximum amount of communication with stakeholders. Through surveys, online communication, etc. It is two-way and it is honest communication.
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Wouldn't forget roots as an educator, educate the stakeholders including School Committee. Think about and preempt what you might want to know about the situation. Gave example.
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	Always an issue, works in a district that is in dire state maybe more than Franklin. Constant communication. Team approach. Boards work closely together. Pushing for 10 year projection with Town.
<b>Peter Light</b>	Gave quick example for something recently regarding dress code. And another example on memorials. Be consistent with process and the community is informed.

<b>Question #4 Follow-Up</b>	<b><i>Follow up: Franklin has an increasingly diverse population. How would you approach an initiative to diversify the teaching staff and administration to reflect the community demographic?</i></b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Participated in Milton Public Schools job fair. Focus on regionally, gather together as a group helps to find folks who are interested. Mr. Marcus was going to have a question for the Committee how has diversity impacted the Town, how are you handling that. He was glad the Committee asked the question. Approach the classroom or Superintendent and whole district with openness and understand and welcome automatically open to and welcoming of diversity. See it as an opportunity. Ask more difficult questions, supported a wonderful project by new English Coordinator asked what the experience as a student of color, video tape, show the video, have the honest and difficult conversations.
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	It is commonly happening across the Commonwealth. First steps and important Superintendent can do is work on school culture, support for new staff members who come on board, internal culture. Recruiting more diverse staff, written component in how the position is posted. Hiring process with multiple steps, model lesson, student feedback. Reaching out to community organizations. and colleges who are placing student teaching.
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	Struggling with the same thing in Grafton. Reaching out to State schools.
<b>Peter Light</b>	At the High School we have increased diversity. Teaching staff to look like your students for a message for students to receive. Can be a district that actually seeks diverse workforce. Create cultures within the schools. Professional Development workshops. Great resources, teaching kids what diversity means and the value of that and the teaching staff of the value of a diverse workforce.
<b>Question #5</b>	<b>What is your philosophy regarding strategic planning efforts? In particular, what are the critical components to establish long and short term goal setting practices within a district? How do you propose implementing,</b>

	<b>monitor and evaluate such planning at the school and district level?</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Involved in strategic plan in Sharon. Important to have an outside consultant to offer outside perspective. Bringing in a broad diverse group of constituents. Set short term goals and look out on horizon. Reaching out to the community. Communication is critical, more folks participating.
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Favorite areas to be participating. New strategic plan in Holliston for 5 years and participated on the committee. Each town is a little bit different. It is forward thinking. Provides a roadmap for the next 5 years. It is referred to often. Process in place for feedback.
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	Looked at Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plan. Appears that Franklin has a living document. At meetings, choose a goal and focus on that strategic plan.
<b>Peter Light</b>	Huge opportunity to develop on a Strategic Plan at district level. Start with core values, to uphold a living, breathing set of values. Using database approach. Decide on doing it yourself or bring in a consultant.
<b>Question #6</b>	<b>Franklin is a very technical system for students, teachers and administrators. A system of this complexity has special needs and special advantages. Using your own experiences, please explain how you have utilized technical availability as an advantage in education and administrative communication, as well as what issues you might have encountered.</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Can you describe more what you mean by technical.  Dr. Jewell explained all students have computer, homework is online.  Was Director of Technology in Sharon. Lots of experience, what is the technology going to look like in new middle schools. Instituted the one to one program. Professional Development is important to folks to understand what you can do with devices.
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Sara asked to clarify what you mean by technical system.  Recognize the tools that students are working with, the remarkable information these tools provide. Make sure we are using technology wisely,

	help students navigate the social avenues as well. Present material to individualize students. Technology is an interest of hers, feels comfortable and confident. Demonstrate the return on investment to the community. Franklin is doing a great job keeping the community informed. Franklin is leading the way in using the channels.
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	Too many individual systems and apps. Worked hard with a data coordinator to bring all the pieces together. Streamlined and self explanatory. Use Power School, train the staff, automatically calling system. Trying to do a better job in Grafton in communicating what is going on.
<b>Peter Light</b>	One to one initiative at fundamental level has changed how we are educating students. Accessing information, increasing education and collaboration. Professional Development on technology.
<b>Question #6 Follow Up</b>	<b>How would you monitor the system to make sure it remained current and was sufficient for its desired purposes?</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Looking at the Wayland model in current district. Looking at free cash and roll into operating budget, looking at leasing devices.
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Relying on her presence in buildings, touching base with the people who are using the devices. Make observation data. How is technology being used in the classroom. Keep apprised of what is happening in other districts regarding technology.
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	Electronic inventory system, hard to keep it up to date.
<b>Peter Light</b>	Would be a huge challenge. Look at different opportunities.
<b>Question #7</b>	<b>Describe your experience / knowledge of school finance i.e.: building a budget, budget management, budgetary controls and budget reduction.</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Been involved in budgets in different ways.
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Not a dreaded question, it is a realistic question. Has been prepared by mentors of this part of being Superintendent. Has done Professional Development in Budgets in MASAC. Collaborative and does participate, work closely with School Committee and Budget Sub Committee. Explained

	Holliston's process. Would envision something similar to Holliston. Monitoring spending over the year.
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	Took on 99% of budget when he went to Grafton, nothing budget wise that he doesn't consider himself an expert, except health insurance. Explained process in Grafton.
<b>Peter Light</b>	Spoke to budget at High School, different phases of looking at a budget. Be in touch with Town officials. Budget Sub-Committee meet often. It's about communication. Strategic Planning is missing from budget process. It's about transparency, clarity, to send clear message.
<b>Question #8</b>	<b>What is your process in working with and supporting principals in decision making and please provide an example of this in practice.</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Was a Principal for 13 years and worked hard with colleagues, to make wonderful things happen, work hard to collaborate with peers. Broader perspective and understand how the High School and Middle School Principals worked. Understand secondary in a powerful way. Tries to meet with all principals face to face each week. Always starts at a building in the morning, not in the office.
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Try to be thoughtful and the decision and the context of that decision. Principals should have the authority to make decision about, and sometimes the District would make the decision. Articulate thought process, communicate with Principals. Support as needed.
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	Came to a game and saw the student body and the great rapport. Came to 8th grade orientation. Couldn't be more impressed. Everything matched up on Strategic Plan. Shoot for two hours a day in schools usually. Getting to know people, Principals, teachers, students. People don't learn by micro managing. Meetings are important, gave examples. Some meetings focus on core leadership.
<b>Peter Light</b>	Principals are the primary leader of the school and the educational leader of their school. Very deep belief in trust and accountability. To be in schools with Principals. How can I support their work. Being visible for staff. Get to know Principals like a member of the family. Coaching, supporting in the background. Transparent with them for growth in the buildings. Meeting regularly with Principals and convey feedback to move building forward.



	Being present and having conversations. Coach to building relationship with staff.
<b>Question #9</b>	<b>How do you currently collaborative with the teachers' association? Would the association agree with your summation? The Franklin education Association has established a very collaborate relationship with administration over many years. How do you envision maintaining that collaborative relationship?</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Forms relationships as a leader, broad perspectives, rather than a data driven. person. Support what the teachers want for kids in the best way possible. The current association would agree with his summation.
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Very collaborative relationship with Holliston and they would agree. Regular practice of getting together on a monthly basis. Consultation process is critical to maintaining relationship. Collectively learning together to solve complex problems.
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	Right now lousy with negotiations. Pro-teacher Superintendent. His values and approach work well with Teachers Union. In 6 years no grievance. Communicate to all staff. Interview every person hired. Pro-active approach and have open discussions.
<b>Peter Light</b>	Continue regular meetings with FEA. No substitute for face to face meetings. Establish protocol. Establish trust with FEA. Need to place value on individuals. Every employee feels like we value them when they come to Franklin. Communication and Trust.
<b>Question #9 Follow Up</b>	<b>Describe your negotiations experiences. Have you ever been involved in Interest Based Bargaining and if yes, what is your take-away from it?</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	not asked
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Not interest based bargaining, no experience. would see it as a learning opportunity. Traditional bargaining has been positive.
<b>Jay</b>	Went through the full training 3 years ago. No HR Director in Grafton. Has

<b>Cummings</b>	worked against us. Thought it was positive in the training, has not used it.
<b>Question #10</b>	<b>How important do you feel it is for the Superintendent to be visible throughout the community? How would you decide what school activities/community organizations are worth your presence and participation? This would include evenings and weekends, in an already busy Superintendent's weekly schedule.</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Loyalty is important. Give 150 percent all the time. when it is time for celebrations of individuals, basketball game, school play, he will be there. Incredible important part of the Superintendent job to celebrate what is going on the district. Excited about the schools, town celebrations.
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Really important, enjoy doing. Key places to invest time, cannot do anything, realizing what those key places are. Wherever possible, mix personal and professional for a win win situation. Key groups in the schools and seek out as Superintendent.
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	It's huge. Went K-8 Science night. Likes it all. Important to be seen and connect, with the coach, the kids know that you were there and appreciate.
<b>Peter Light</b>	Experience as High School Principal speaks to it. Being present in the preschool, elementary, middle and high school. Cannot be at everything. Important to be around. Active in community events, the Superintendent is the ambassador of the community and shows commitment to the community. Past experience speaks to it.
<b>Question #11</b>	<b>What is the role of the Superintendent in developing and innovating curriculum to meet the needs of all children?</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Key role of Superintendent to build community and to set a vision for an educational opportunity for our students. Back to communications, listening to constituents and stakeholders, hopes and wishes people have, finding ways through financially or volunteerism, etc. to make it happen. What's good for the best, is good for the rest.
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Not any one person can do it, role of Superintendent is to inspire, make

	connections, provide resources, skills, etc. Establishing, nurturing an administrative system.
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	Role is critical. SPED Teachers, a lot of experience and comfort level in SPED. Direct relationship between Special Ed and finances. What's working, what's not, how can we make it better. Talked about Grafton age 18-22 program. Try to keep students in district if can. Send out 26 students, Franklin sends out 79. May be able to bring back 3-6 students. 4 students tuitioning in to the district. Having a presence there.
<b>Peter Light</b>	Principals are the educational leader of the building and the Superintendent is the education leader of the District. Talking about your vision at a meeting. Focus on personalization for every student. Staying current in the field. Set a tone and provide strategic direction.
<b>Question #11 Follow Up</b>	<b>How would you measure the success of the curriculum implemented across the district?</b>
<b>John Marcus</b>	Not asked
<b>Sara Ahern</b>	Not asked
<b>Jay Cummings</b>	Not asked
<b>Peter Light</b>	Not asked

**Following are the questions asked by the candidate at the end of the interview.**

**10:00 - John Marcus – Not enough time for questions.**

**11:00 - Sara Ahern -** Interested in getting a sense maybe 3 key focus areas that your incoming Superintendent would be important for that person to work on.

Ms. Bilello answered that to have a strategic plan in place, second area inclusive in our practices, diverse areas, and third meeting all needs for all students, with high learners

and struggling learners.

Dr. Bergen advised that the questions reflected the areas we are looking for, the whole child, more than test scores and the budget as well.

Mr. Peri commented that not only the whole child but also the whole employee, whole teacher.

Dr. O'Malley commented that we have come a long way, we have a ways to go.

Dr. Jewell commented that the Superintendent would learn as soon as possible that we have town council that may have a different view than the school committee has or superintendent may have, how would you work within the political realm, what is important, strategic plan, get everyone on board.

**2. What those things that you want to make sure that your Superintendent would protect at all costs.**

Ms. Mulcahy commented that to meet the needs of all learners along with the SEL, coping skills and resilience.

Ms. Bilello commented that we are a diverse town, a lot of schools, how would you create and keep the individual identifies and also respect all Franklin.

Dr. Jewell commented that our teachers give more than is expected, they work hard for not excellent salaries, would not want to break the encouragement we have that we can get it done when we do not have a lot.

Ms. Ahern thanked the Committee and wished good luck to the Basketball team tomorrow.

**Training Room - lunch (12:00 - 12:30 p.m.)**

Back in Session 12:40 p.m.

**Dr. Cummings** – No questions except asked the Committee if there is anything that you would like to know about me that I have not addressed.

**Mr. Light asked the Committee what their thoughts as a Committee would be on how to work with the Superintendent coming in about communication, roles and providing a platform of entering the system.**

Dr. O'Malley advised that we have to have a transition program.

Dr. Bergen advised that the first step is selecting then sitting down where do we go from there with regard to the transition.

Ms. Bilello commented that your answer to -----answered your own question.

New Superintendent Induction Program from MASC was suggested by Mr. Light.

### **2:30 p.m. - Committee Deliberations/Decisions**

Dr. Collins advised that they would start with the reaction from non-voting members and then Committee and focus on positives.

Ms. Mulcahy commented that she thought all candidates were stronger, the last two she felt Mr. Light and Dr. Cummings had a balance of idealism and pragmatism at the same time. With Dr. Cummings passing an override, direct experience and having that done is important. Very comfortable with last two from parent perspective. Both personable, transparency, consistency and honesty.

Ms. Grady commented that she agreed with Sarah, that candidates were stronger. She felt that the form of communication with Ms. Ahern and Mr. Light about current systems. She could see both personified what an educational leader could be. Management styles would be a great fit for Franklin. Very realistic and creative when necessary. Ms. Ahern and Mr. Light and looking at population that we deal with, could see both of them working with them very easily. Productive members of the Franklin Community.

Mr. Peri also commented that they were all wonderful candidates. Ms. Ahern and Peter impressed me and knowledgeable. Ms. Ahern was very positive. Mr. Peri advised that he worked with Peter at the High School and in his new position and feel that he has found his niche. Dr. Cummings with dedication to finding about the district. It was impressive. Dr. Ahern and Mr. Light stuck out.

Mr. Mercer felt that Peter Light was far above, all candidates were great, he was outstanding, he answered every single question, actually answered the question. A lot of positives for Peter. Mr. Mercer thought Sara Ahern, did a fine job, Dr. Cummings did a fine job and did the most homework. No one held themselves up to Peter Light.

Ms. Bilello commented that she was conflicted with 3 candidates that did very well, all 4 were impressive, however, Dr. Marcus and Dr. Ahern were actually most detailed. Right behind 1 and 2 in presentation and go way beyond because of his time here. Peter's commitment to the District speaks to itself. Marcus, Ahern and Light are my recommendations.

Ms. Scofield commented that she thought she would like to see Dr. Marcus, Ms. Ahern and Mr. Light to move forward. Such a difference from the last time, opening search was the right thing to do. Dr. Cummings taken aback by stalking the events. It was fabulous.

Ms. Douglas commented that Dr. Ahern very well prepared, comfortable in own skin. Mr. Peter Light and his commitment to Franklin, the students, community.

Dr. Bergen commented that she thought it was great that Dr. Cummings chose us. Did the work by visiting the community. The Communication with Town Administrator. Being a Special Educator was important. A Building Principal. Mr. Peter Light is second and an idea of a fresh perspective. Ms. Ahern was articulate, knowledge of technology and response to Special Ed.

Dr. O'Malley commented that it was not easy decision to go back out, however, it was clearly the right choice. Thinking of fit, the strategic planning our biggest need, Marcus was excellent, restrained personality that was thoughtful. Dr. Cummings had sense of hands on, moving the district forward. Ms. Ahern was a very strong candidate (one of my 2), good leadership and Peter except for experience. His answers were overall the

best, experience. Peter and Ms. Ahern.

Ms. Schultz commented that she was impressed with Dr. Ahern but concerned that she is a finalist in another community. wonderful answers, unique visions, she was impressed with Peter to hear other ideas that he had. She suggested Dr. Cummings was good despite his medication. He had done more research on the community, attending events.

Dr. Jewell advised that he is not confused, he can clearly make a decision. Dr. Ahern stood out, not above Peter, but he wants both. She answered every single question. Her answers were very good. Experience that Peter hasn't had on the strategic plan, innovative ideas. Personally very greedy. Dr. Cummings did an excellent job in coming here, did not emphasis like others. Did not have set of priorities.

Ms. Bilello commented that she liked that Dr. Jewell had the strength behind what she didn't want to say. Wanting Ahern and Light. Peter is committed but want to have some fresh ideas.

Dr. Collins advised that clearly Peter and Ms. Ahern are dominate. He noted that he did ask Sara if she would drop out of Wayland if Franklin made an offer. She said yes. Dr. Collins suggested moving to meeting to 27th of March.

Ms. Bilello was comfortable in having internal candidates if we didn't have a strong pool but having someone to bring something new into the system.

Dr. Collins suggested to keep both of them.

Ms. Schultz asked if we could speed up the process and put forth 2.

Ms. Douglas agreed with Ms. Schultz, it would be bad publicity if only one candidate.

Discussion ensued.

The School Committee will be bringing back two (2) candidates, Ms. Ahern and Mr. Light.

Dr. O'Malley reiterated the timeline:

March 20th - Community forum with Peter and Sarah.

March 21st for Peter and March 23rd for Sarah

March 24th - John, Kevin, Anne for site visit to Holliston

Dr. Bergen asked what usually constitutes the site visit.

Dr. Collins advised that the candidate sets it up.

Discussion ensued.

Dr. O'Malley advised that the School Committee has decided to not have a site visit.

Mr. Macrino advised that Site visits are a thing of the past.

Community Meeting - 20th

Peter - 21st

Dr. Ahern - 23rd

On the 28th to vote on the final preferred candidate.

Meeting adjourned 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Childers