

School Reform Commission

Criteria for next SDP Leader

MODERATOR REPORTS

West Philadelphia High School
February 6, 2012

Group 1

Moderators: Germaine Ingram and Matthew Mumber

Moderator's description of the group:

There were 9 members of the group: 2 School District high school teachers; two parents; 4-5 residents of the W. Philadelphia High neighborhood; 2 work in education-related non-profits; one person in marketing; one identified himself as a parent leader in his child's school; one was U. of Penn professor of education; one was a 21 year-old graduate of Mastery Charter School; one lives in Fishtown---a good distance from the forum site (there are no forums in his neighborhood and he wanted to be part of the process). All but one participant stayed for the duration of the session. From appearances, four of the participants were "white", and the rest were African American.

There was steady energy and engagement in the discussion. There was respectful exchange of views and attentive listening. The group appreciated the Penn professor's occasional comments relating education research to participants' views and recommendations. There was optimism about the district's potential to improve the quality of education.

Hopes and Fears for next leader of the SDP:

Hopes:

- That the new leader grasps the needs, and diversity of the needs of today's students;
- That he/she believes in student potential;
- That he/she is committed to using new and proven models of teaching;
- That he/she improves and strengthens the organization;
- That he/she is an educator, rather than a business person;
- That he/she is involved in communities, and recognizes the connection between poor education and crime;
- That he/she will hold politicians and corporations accountable for supporting education.

Fears:

- That the new leader might think it's fine to treat public education like a business;
- That the new leader will be handicapped in his/her ability to lead if the SRC is unable to reposition itself and retreat from its current role of running the operations of the district;
- That the new leader will engage in risky business practices;
- That he/she won't receive the resources he/she needs in order to implement a vision of effective education;
- That the leader will be handicapped in the ability to assemble his/her own team dedicated to implementing his/her agenda.

Parts of the Framework that Make sense to participants, and why:

#8 – Ability to influence the public, business community, higher education community, and legislative leaders on the value of public education and the commitments necessary to achieve notable progress

This statement had a lot of appeal for a variety of reasons.

- Leader must be savvy about business and politics. Leader needs to be able to engage business/industry in defining the kinds of “21st Century” (such as critical thinking, communication, comfort in a global marketplace, and technical literacy) skills that students need to attain in order to be marketable, and needs to engage business leaders in helping young people to develop marketable skills.
- Leader needs to be able to forge relationships with higher education----both academic and vocational. Leader needs to be an effective advocate for education as an important public benefit.
- Leader needs to improve the reality and perception of the School District's “product”, i.e., student achievement----needs to overcome the perception of mediocrity.
- Needs be able to address and work with state legislators to get more resources for the School District.

#7 – Ability to rethink the district's service model, moving closer to autonomy for individual schools and decreased centralization

- There was substantial support for driving authority to the school level---give schools the capacity to support teachers; there should be school-based decision-making boards.
- But there was some anxiety about whether decentralization might lead to abuses of power (teachers mentioned concern about potential for run-away principals).

#3 – A clear understanding of the way management decisions affect teaching, training and leadership development among principals

and

#4 – A team-builder able to coordinate and motivate a diverse group of managers and educators of different types of schools in different types of settings

- The leader needs to understand that effective education occurs when there are effective relationships, especially relationships with parents, and also students.
- Leader must reach out to communities and be attuned to the characteristics and needs of Philadelphia’s diverse communities and neighborhoods.
- Similarly, community members must reengage with schools. (Group members expressed frustration that more people from the local community were not present at the forum.)
- Leader must be accessible to constituents.

1 – A commitment to education and an overall passion to ensure learning for all children.

- Leader must be a “cheerleader”, must exude passion for high quality education for all children.
- Leader must foster different teaching approaches in order to respond to the diverse learning styles of students.
- Must be advocate for addressing the needs of children with special challenges.

Parts of the Framework about which participants are concerned, and why:

#7 – Ability to rethink the district's service model, moving closer to autonomy for individual schools and decreased centralization

- Leader must guard against abuse of power.

#8 – Ability to influence the public, business community, higher education community, and legislative leaders on the value of public education and the commitments necessary to achieve notable progress

- One or two group members had concerns about the connotations of the word “influence”. They thought that a better word would be “engage”.
- The criteria express no explicit expectation that the Leader will be of the highest integrity, trustworthy, and dependable.
- There was also concern that the criteria do not address “emotional intelligence”.
- The leader must be able to rise above his/her personal agenda, if necessary, in the interest of getting things done on behalf of students.
- To assess finalists, the SRC should do interviews at the ground level to see how candidates are perceived in his/her current post by multiple constituent groups.

What difference it would make if the successful candidate is/is not from Philadelphia, and why:

- It's more important to have the best person than to have a Philadelphian. Being a Philadelphian should be a tie-breaker if two equally-qualified candidates emerge.
- Leader must get to know the characteristics and diversities of Philadelphia, and devise strategies that respond to the local strengths and challenges---not just import a strategy from elsewhere.
- Leader should look inside Philadelphia for examples of success and support their perpetuation and replication.

Other important ideas:

Overall, the group thought that the criteria are too general. They don't say enough about the backgrounds, competencies, and aptitudes of desired candidates.

Group 2

Moderators: Carol Lydon, Saxon Nelson

Moderator's description of the group:

The group consisted of 10 people: seven women, three men; it was split 50/50 African-American/Caucasian. Several of the people were either teachers or involved in education, several had children in the Philadelphia School District. They lived in University City, West Philadelphia, Center City and Overbrook Park.

The group was difficult to moderate. There were three very strong voices in the group, who despite our attempts to pull others in dominated the conversation. The group didn't seem to trust us nor did they allow themselves to trust the process. They didn't listen to each other or to us, even though we tried several times to steer the conversation back to the process. As a result, it was difficult to get the information requested by the SRC.

Hopes and Fears for next leader of the SDP:

HOPES:

- Change will happen and all children, including those in special education, will be educated
- They will recognize the commitment of parents and hard working teachers
- Youth will receive meaningful learning experiences
- The new leader will be local and education
- The new leader will recognize change in the city and build on neighborhood schools
- They will look at teachers who are effective
- The schools will produce educated, critical thinking youth

FEARS:

- Students are verbally aggressive
- Fear that youth will be left out
- The school district is not educating generations of children
- Misallocation of resources
- Fear that the search process will not be completed by the start of the school year

Parts of the Framework that Make sense to participants, and why:

1 – A commitment to education and an overall passion to ensure learning for all children.

- Schools are not reaching the “whole child”; they are only focused on testing and testing only focuses on math and reading arts, leaving out all the other subjects.
- Curriculum is teaching to the test
- Schools don't provide the extras such as music and sports, leaving the parents to provide for those activities
- “Education is an action word.”

#2 – Knowledge and Capacity to run a large enterprise or organization

- Needs to be able to manage diverse circumstances and people
- They need to remember “customer service”
- Needs to be flexible and not locked into a certain way or plan
- They need to understand how their decisions will affect the larger community and can’t “muck it up” with constant change.
- “Their product is future citizens.”
- The superintendent can’t do everything.
- “The most important thing is that they 1) love kids, 2) love learning and 3) know how to manage the hell out of it.”

#4 – A team-builder able to coordinate and motivate a diverse group of managers and educators of different types of schools in different types of settings

- Students need to be involved
- Need to be engaged with all constituents, not isolated.
- “Why aren’t teachers mentioned.” (*There was some talk that teachers were deliberately left out of the criteria.*)

#8 – Ability to influence the public, business community, higher education community, and legislative leaders on the value of public education and the commitments necessary to achieve notable progress

- Needs to be a fighter for the school system
- Need to know where the money comes from and where it goes

- Needs to have been in the trenches

- Will have to manage different types of schools with the same resources, i.e. district, charter, magnet, etc.

Parts of the Framework about which participants are concerned, and why:

- “There is nothing wrong with the criteria...the problems are unspecific, e.g. how were they prioritized?”
- What is the value of public education?
- ““Regardless of provider”” scares me. (*There was a fear among several of the people of the “charterization” of the schools.*)
- Needs to have the ability to understand the external network navigation
- Teachers are kept out of the criteria
- Needs the ability to not give into influence, outside influence
- Accountability is missing from the criteria
- The word “portfolio” feeds into a business mindset
- Politics makes strange bedfellows
- Mismanagement of money – there is no mention of resources

- The model still seems to be “top down”; one person can not fill every role. (*One gentleman pointed out that one person doesn't have to do everything, e.g. Bill Gates didn't do every job and make all decisions. He hired people.*)

What difference it would make if the successful candidate is/is not from Philadelphia, and why:

YES/NEED TO BE FROM PHILADELPHIA:

- It's important not to have to pay big money for consultants
- They would know where the children in Philadelphia are
- If they aren't from here, they need to do 1, 2 and 8. “Know how to play the game” with mayor, state, etc.
- An outsider wouldn't understand the differences in the people of Philadelphia and their identity
- “We are a different city.”
- Need to give a local person a chance and believe in ourselves.
- Already know the terrain and the situation
- Someone new would need too long of a learning curve and there are too many “tricksters” to influence them

NO/IT DOESN'T MATTER:

- If they aren't from here, they need to learn who is doing things right
- Will only be able to make a difference if they come in, otherwise it will be more of the same.
- Anyone that comes in has to come from a large city – someone from a small city/town couldn't understand us
- Someone from here could be beholden to influence
- Fresh look at problems and new solutions
- There is no apparent benefit/disadvantage to a local hire
- It doesn't matter as long as they come in as a “learner” not an “expert”

Other important ideas:

- Need to be an effective communicator
- Need to be committed
- Need to have financial and management capabilities

Group 3

Moderators: Ed Battle, Maureen Hiller, Martin Molloy

Moderator's description of the group:

There were a total of 13 participants, 8 women and 5 men.

The group was cautious at the start of the session, not sure of what to expect or the direction of the evening. But, once I reviewed the goals and procedures of the session, participants had direction and knew what was expected. The group grew more enthusiastic and it was a great session.

Hopes for next leader of the SDP:

- Can return to the era and spirit of JFK..."Ask not what your country can do for you..."
- Restore funding to the school district
- Less of a top down structure. Why? To do what's best for students
- Be more in tune with needs
- It's hard to be hopeful. But, be able to provide services, not by the book all the time, be creative.
- For all schools have the same basic services and resources. Phila. schools have the same things as suburban schools.
- Want this discussion [search for next Leader] to have a positive impact
- Want students to have a safe and constructive time in schools
- Can find a Leader who understands and respects the assets we have; experienced teachers and staff
- Leader who has educational values
- A student hopes she can get into the good high school she wants

Fears for next leader of the SDP:

- There's continued decline in the district (in reading, teaching from a book)
- Changes made will not focus on children and the district's image will stay negative
- District will continue to throw dollars away. Why? Taxpayers don't get return on investment
- Huge budget deficit will over shadow any opportunity for advancement
- Unions will continue to be demonized and not viewed as an asset

Parts of the Framework that Make sense to participants, and why:

- Bullet #8, find someone who is able to strongly engage legislative leaders. Why? Because if we don't, the grinding down process will continue [reduced school funding]
 - Need a Leader who can notice bad decisions by banks. Why? He/she can suggest ideas for change
 - Need a strong person who can lead
 - Every stakeholder benefits from strong public schools
 - Children need direction now. Why? For their future

- Involve the business community
- Get the public/private sectors together around education. Why? It was done with stadiums, why not education?
- Invest in children now. Why? Because they are our future
- All 9 bullets need to be addressed. Why? All 9 are lacking
- Bullet #1, Drs. Ruth Hayre and Constance Clayton had all kids' best interests at heart, concerts, carnivals, etc. They supported unions.
- Bullet #7, support decreased centralization. Why? We're a city of neighborhoods with different needs.
 - We need more differentiation of schools
 - Schools should have autonomy. Why? Dollars can go where they're needed
 - There should be a school to fit each child. Why? The child can be the best they can be in the right school
 - Some centralization is needed. Why? So that administrators doesn't cede all responsibility; want administrators to have responsibility for their students
- Bullet #2, where in Phila. do you find the person who has..."knowledge and capacity to run a large enterprise or organization...?" Answers:
 - David Cohen, from Comcast, he is well respected, unlimited capacity for successful management
 - Governor Rendell
 - Staff people who currently work in the school district
 - Also, parents could be a good choice
- Having an educator as Leader is important. Why? Because they can relate to these people

Parts of the Framework about which participants are concerned, and why:

- Bullet #2, Add, "person must be an educator"
 - Disagree that David Cohen and Governor Rendell are the right type
- Bullet #7, Decentralization is ceding authority of the District to outside providers
- Bullet #7, re-think the service model, need to build upon or expand on where the District has access to resources, dollars, and focus on fiscal issues
- Drs. Ruth Hayre and Constance Clayton had dual roles
- Bullet #9, not enough here, needs language around accountability and responsibility of stakeholders
 - There's no specific language to address importance of supporting teachers. This point was stressed.
- Bullet #1, No mention of teachers or principles and their primary influence on children
 - No mention of values or a reference to integrity of public charters
 - No mention of "educational experience"

What difference it would make if the successful candidate is/is not from Philadelphia, and why:

- Someone from Philly can do it
- Have someone from Philadelphia. Why? They know us and what we need

- Must have a personal stake in Philadelphia OK to be from Philadelphia. originally, leave the city and return. They must know how Philly works
- What missing? “The WOW factor with a brand, assist with being a change agent.” Able to understand kids with an emphasis on educational excellence at all cost
- Leader be from Philly. Why? Will have knowledge of current resources.
- We do have that person here in Philadelphia inside and outside of the District. We’ll save dollars. Will understand the positives and culture of Philadelphia.
- We need the best person possible. They could be from outside of Philadelphia. Start looking from within first and then expand the search to outside the city
- “We’ve had a number [leaders] from outside, but now we need someone from here.”
- May be someone who grew up here, left and then getting experience, comes back to Phila.
- Why must there be just one person? Can there be two Leaders?
 - With 2 people there’ll be a checks and balance system
 - May have one person from Phila., one person not. This is the best of both worlds
 - It would be hard to find 2 people who want to work as a team
- The Leader must be an educator paired with a “turn-around” specialist
- Two people as “the Leader” will be a big challenge because of egos.
 - Leader should be an educator from Phila., could be a consultant
 - If two people, one must be an educator

Other important ideas:

- Key point: equality in educational opportunity across districts
- Key point: Leader from Phila. must understand our uniqueness. This was stressed
- Key point: safe schools a priority
- Key point: financial mismanagement specifically bank loans, bad swaps, etc.
- Key point: decentralization lets principals have authority to decide, with their constituents, the priorities of the neighborhood/school
- Key point: don’t want just a CEO type Leader who is not an educator
- Main theme: Leader must be an educator
- Main theme: Leader must know Phila., its communities, cultures, who to talk to, and how to work the system
- Main theme: Leader must be dedicated to educational excellence at all costs
 - Responsibility of teachers, students, communities, principals, etc.
 - With decentralization comes flexibility given to principals and local communities

Group 4

Moderators: Ted Enoch and Steve Vassor

Moderator's description of the group:

Our breakout group (#4) proved to be a diverse group of citizens who shared a deep concern for the future of the School District of Philadelphia. Most of the group lived in West Philadelphia and all had meaningful experience with the school district. The men and women of varied ages and cultural backgrounds included members who: had worked for the district for decades (security officer, supplies deliverer); currently served students with special needs; currently supported students for post-graduate engagement; managed/provided school partnerships to the district; and perhaps most importantly, some were parents and grandparents of past and current school district students. The group remained highly engaged and attentive to one another for the 90-minute breakout session, building upon each other's ideas while continuing to hone in on key concerns for the school district's next leader. Some of the recurring themes this group saw as vital were:

- (1) The need to encourage autonomy, creativity and decentralization without encouraging a disparity of resources and performance for schools.
- (2) The vital need for a team/relationship builder who can forge and model successful partnerships that bring critical resources and opportunities to the district.
- (3) That the next leader provides real experience as an educator, with a real understanding of the challenges and dynamics of teaching in Philadelphia.

Hopes and Fears for next leader of the SDP:

Hopes:

- That the next leader receives enough time and support to implement their plans.
- That the next superintendent is a true educator.
- That we get a change agent who is willing to change and remove the things that aren't working now
- That we find a person with "tough skin" who is at the same time very compassionate.
- That the new leader appreciates, honor and promote the existing assets and talents in our neighborhood schools and that they don't rush to "reinvent the wheel."

Fears

- That we don't rush to pick someone and we search until we have an excellent person ready for the job
- That the job might be too big for one person.
- That the next superintendent have no connection whatsoever with the Broad Superintendent Academy as this will not provide the district an educator for a leader.
- That we are on a treadmill seeking a person/role who doesn't exist while ignoring our opportunity to transform the system into its needed modern adaptations.

- That the new leader won't take the time to analyze, learn and maintain what is working, keeping important things intact, preventing rushed and unneeded destabilization and turmoil in our schools.
- That we get another leader that doesn't respect teachers.

Parts of the Framework that Make sense to participants, and why:

#1 – A commitment to education and an overall passion to ensure learning for all children:

This group seemed to really focus on the “All” that ends this criterion. In this regard, group members said:

- Don't give up on any children!
- Address inequities.
- Standards help to ensure all children/schools are in a quality situation and that all children receive a world-class education that meet core standards.
- That it is “An educator” who will be able to address the needs of our youth

#2 – Knowledge and capacity to run a large enterprise or organization: Yes, we need a leader who can create a distributive leadership model that empowers a team and yet who takes responsibility and is accountable.

- A leader who will understand education and makes education the first order of business.
- This leader will need to “see where the problems are”, one who will be “an instigator and a detective” who can “weed out the bad wood.”
- Can we have one leader who is responsible, the CEO, while having a COO and a CFO and other team members who have the specific skill sets required to support our school district?

#3 – A clear understanding of the way management decisions affect teaching, training, and leadership development among school principals:

- This leader must be able to learn and listen. We need to know what resources are effective and operational currently.

#4 – A team-builder able to coordinate and motivate a diverse group of managers and educators of different types of schools in different types of settings:

- “The superintendent is only as good as his/her team.”
- We need a group of motivated professionals who intervene early to achieve appropriate plans/interventions/assessments so that we prevent failures and maximize achievement.
- We need a leader who respects teachers. One who includes teachers in “top” level decisions such as setting policies and standards, while respecting their “autonomy in bottom level areas”, allowing them to creatively meet standards and instruct students.

#5 – Embraces the idea of a portfolio of schools and advocates for high-quality schools regardless of the provider (district or charter):

- The group saw the need for “accountability” for charter schools.

- There was energy and excitement for recognizing the value of vocational and technical training programs in addition to college prep programs. Some cited the past dismantling of “award-winning” programs such as successful automotive/ mechanical programs as an indicator for why this criterion is important.

#6 – A relationship builder who is able to build creative partnerships with numerous external stakeholders to bring resources to individual schools and groups of schools: The group had a lot of energy around this topic.

- One man/father from the neighborhood described how impacting it was for him to work with Temple students when he was in school and how it was the first instance he had ever conceived of “college.” He is now the proud parent of students who attended college and is a firm believer in the need for these types of partnerships.
- The group excitedly imagined the need for greater jobs and internships, for higher education as a key partner
- That the new leader will have lots of work to do to fix/repair the “burnt bridges and broken relationships” that exist currently
- That the new leader will have to model for and encourage principals to do the same.
- That a “visionary leader” will understand the critical importance a high school plays in the development and building of community. How can families, neighborhood organizations and local institutions play a role in our school? How can the design of new schools (green space, community space) support healthy communities?
- Many in the group cited former superintendent, PaulVallas, as being very effective in this area as a leader.
- Several in the group expressed great concern as to how the University of Pennsylvania no longer had a strong – or any – presence in West Philadelphia High. Several of the local parents thought this was a complete missed opportunity, while others who worked with Penn and West in previous years as part of active partnerships could only shake their heads and point to “changed policies” or “politics” that prevented them from seeking or continuing this partnership.

#7 –Ability to rethink the district’s service model, moving closer to autonomy for individual schools and decreased centralization: This criterion also raised lots of energy, attention and concern for the group.

- That this is important, as we have such wide-ranging needs, cultures and communities in our district. The leader needs to be able to comprehend and connect with this reality.
- That the district provide schools and educators with options – a portfolio of methods – that meet standards and core requirements, but which local instructors have input and choice upon.
- That the leader needs to ensure equitable resource provision, or perhaps need-based provision of resources – that then get implemented in a localized, way that promotes autonomy while preserving equity.
- Many in the group felt that this was doomed without accountability and transparency on all levels.

#8 – Ability to influence the public, business community, higher education community, and legislative leaders on the value of public education and the commitments necessary to achieve notable progress: Again, lot's of energy for this group on this criterion. Many saw this as an extension of (6, Relationship builder...) and as a means for achieving (1, 7 and others) many of the other criteria.

- Many in the group saw this a critical to providing necessary resources and opportunities for all students.
- Can we consider bringing more resources to schools with greater needs?
- Can we ask the SRC to also be accountable for this and work hand-in-hand with the superintendent to seek and deliver funds from Harrisburg and the Federal Government?
- It is imperative that we reach out to and connect with the Higher Ed community to support their neighboring school communities.

#9 – Is committed to actively engaging with students, parents and community stakeholders.

- Our next leader needs to bring sensitivity, needs a talent for understanding and addressing the needs of our numerous and diverse communities.
- This leader needs to reduce resource gatekeepers, and help connect local schools and communities with the resources they need.

Parts of the Framework about which participants are concerned, and why:

#1 – A commitment to education and an overall passion to ensure learning for all children:

- How will the committee and the public measure this?

#3 – A clear understanding of the way management decisions affect teaching, training, and leadership development among school principals:

- That “principal” is a term that reflects an outdated model. “Lead teacher/instructor” is a more accurate term/role to show how an educator leads today’s instructional efforts.

#7 – A bility to rethink the district’s service model, moving closer to autonomy for individual schools and decreased centralization:

- One teacher with the district, with great urgency, and nearly in tears, cautioned about/against this point, citing the aftermath of Brown V. Board of Education and the Separate But Equal Doctrine that allowed for segregated and ultimately inequitable forms of education in the US. This prompted many to talk about the role of standards, accountability and transparency.
- One retired employee of the district was concerned about the inequities he witnessed in resource allocations in the past, and current failures of local schools to adhere to federal standards in supporting children (supplying tokens). His concern about corruption, and lack of accountability – for all levels of the school district – also moved the group to clarifying the need for standards and accountability.

Are all of the above too much for one person?

Do we need to rethink the position to maximize different strengths? (The group went back and forth on this. On one hand, most liked having one leader to hold accountable, and the other hand; others thought it was more realistic to break the job into components that matched talent/skill/experience sets of a team of leaders.

What difference it would make if the successful candidate is/is not from Philadelphia, and why:

- There was no consensus about this with the group.
- One felt the corruption and politics of the current system required that we get someone from the outside.
- Another felt like the person needed direct knowledge, or a real talent and appreciation for understanding our cultures, community and history of teaching/instruction.
- Will an outsider get a fair shake from Philadelphia? Are we too jaded and biased against outsiders at this point?
- Others were clear that there **MUST** be a suitable leader here in Philadelphia.
- All agreed, that if you didn't understand and appreciate the local political ("machine") realities, and weren't prepared to work with all levels of government and politics, that "you will get your head handed to you."

Other important ideas: This group had many important issues and concerns, but in nearly every case, some or all were able to connect their concerns to the various criteria that the search committee is using to select the next superintendent. As stated earlier, if the group had any key issues or recurring themes, it was the tension and balance between promoting decentralization and local leadership without creating disparities and inequities for our students. Further, that standards, accountability and transparency were key tools to achieve the proper balance.

Group 5

Moderators: Josh Warner, Heather Wertz

Moderator's description of the group:

Group 5 comprised of eleven individuals, three male and eight female. Four were African American and seven were Caucasian. The group had several teachers or former teachers, but also included college students, parents of public school students, and non-profit advocates. Group 5 was very passionate about the state of Philly schools and the qualities & focus of the next leader. This was a common thread throughout the discussion, and is expressed in the overall themes the group offered at the end of the evening.

Hopes and Fears for next leader of the SDP:

Hopes

- That the new leader will have a neighborhood level focus
- Will **ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY** and work with the community [engagement came up 4 times in the hope/fear discussion]
- That the leader will fully meet criterion #1
- That the SRC is not looking to hire a "Superman / Superwoman"
- That schools will be treated equally with equal resources
- Focus on preparing children for college (students that attend college often aren't academically prepared for it)
- That the leader will take student voices into account
- Leader will focus on increasing literacy
- Leader will increase transparency

Fears:

- That there will be too many contracts opened with charters
- Leader will have a disconnect from people's lives and communities
- Wasteful spending
- Leader will not have knowledge of the issues that many students and families face
- That the leader will only improve charter schools and will not improve existing public schools
- That we will get a series of temporary fixes and no real lasting improvements

Parts of the Framework that Make sense to participants, and why:

#9 "Is committed to actively engaging with students, etc....."

- Engaging these groups is critical to success (parents, students and community)
- Criterion should mention "caregivers" as well. Criterion should be rephrased as many students do not live with parents
- Leader needs to make sure it's true community engagement. It is often just lip service

- “Partner” would be a better verb to use in the criterion, instead of “engage”
- Question: why is this criterion at the bottom of the list?

#8 “Ability to influence the public, etc.....”

- Integrity and passion are key for the leader, and for influencing others
- Must engage state legislators and government officials
- Partners in higher education are very important – need more pipeline programs with local colleges/universities
- Kids need more access to higher ed, and opportunities to get involved before the college application process
- Need to engage with city council for local \$ and resources
- Reach out to higher education for scholarships, college classes & prep, and college credits
- Vocational education and tech careers are very important as well, as not all kids will go to college. The same kind of partnerships and pipeline programs are needed for these careers
- Need tracking and follow-up of students using these programs. Do they work?

#3 “A clear understanding of the way management decisions affect teaching, etc.....”

- This person has to be a leader to have integrity and passion built in
- Emphasis on accountability should be added to this criterion
- Leader should develop more ways for information to be “shared up” – from the teacher/classroom level to the administration/superintendent level. A method to do this anonymously should be implemented as well (fear of repercussions)
- All parties need clarity on how administration decisions affect the operations of schools and school “climate,” e.g., effects on safety, nutrition programs, ESL and special ed. Programs

#7 “Ability to rethink the district’s service model, etc.....”

- Autonomy for schools/principals is important
- Teachers are often not invested in the schools, because of the strict top-down model
- Principals need to have a say in hiring
- Teachers are not given the ability to adapt lessons to fit the needs of their classes. There is a lack of trust in the schools’ teachers.
- Need an “outside the box” thinker who can avoid creating/supporting erroneous policies
- Too much “de-professionalization” of the teaching profession
- Service model should reduce the practice of just “teaching to the test”
- Experience and track record will be important for the leader to accomplish this criterion
- De-emphasize the focus on testing, and emphasize learning (too many drills)
- We need a leader who is also a teacher, and is passionate about teaching and knows what teachers need

- #6 “A relationship builder who is able to build creative partnerships, etc.....”
- The criterion should also mention the need to **repair** relationships and trust

- #5 “Embraces the idea of a portfolio of schools, etc.....”
- Schools should be high quality regardless of provider
 - More clarity should be given on what type of charter oversight will be given and accountability
 - Emphasis on improving neighborhood schools. Improve “what we have” first before creating new schools
 - Full transparency throughout the portfolio
 - More oversight of charters is necessary
 - The term “portfolio” is good and captures the diversity of schools and the variety of models/approaches to education. It’s not a “one size fits all” system.

Parts of the Framework about which participants are concerned, and why:

- #1 “A commitment to education and an overall passion to ensure learning, etc....”
- Need a strong commitment to students with special needs and ESL students
 - Charter schools must include their fair share of students with special needs, rather than “dismissing” them (fair treatment and adequate services/programs)
 - Oversight and accountability must be established for this fair treatment
 - Arts and cultural programming is M.I.A. Leader should re-establish these.

- #6 “A relationship builder who is able to build creative partnerships, etc.....”
- Because of the lack of arts/cultural programming, the leader should focus on building partnerships with these types of activities throughout the region

- #8 “Ability to influence the public, etc.....”
- Clarify/define what is meant by “notable progress” at the end of the criterion
 - Leader should influence others for support of specialized/specific programs, such as strengthening school libraries and nurses/health services
 - Leader should be “winsome” at these things, instead of just influential. Gaining increased funding from the state is vital. Partnering with other struggling districts (especially rural) to form a coalition

- #4 “A team builder able to coordinate and motivate a diverse group of managers, etc...”
- Worry that some parts of this criterion will be ignored
 - Worry that this criterion points to someone “outside” of the city that will not have the understanding of Philadelphia issues. There’s too much of a learning curve, and there are people here who have the passion and ability to do the job.

- #9 “Is committed to actively engaging with students, etc.....”
- Concerned that the leader will not listen to the students’ voices or take them seriously

- Need full transparency here [regarding activities in this criterion]

#7 “Ability to rethink the district’s service model, etc.....”

- Must clarify what is meant by “de-centralize.” What is the plan?
- Very concerned about how decentralization will affect Title I and Special Education

#3 “A clear understanding of the way management decisions affect teaching, etc.....”

- Need to focus on how kids learn – the different methods
- Must also focus on how the management decisions affect learning – not just how they affect administration or budgets
- The criterion treats teaching as an “output.” It should reflect the fact that teaching is the input, and learning is the true output
- How decisions affect ‘school climate’ needs greater attention

#2 “Knowledge and capacity to run a large enterprise organization”

- Dislike of the term “enterprise.” This is not a business; it’s about learning.

GENERAL CONCERNS WITH THE CRITERIA

- It’s disheartening that we had such a fiscal and emotional disaster in the former school leadership. It impacts attitudes towards selecting a new leader
- Need to repair many relationships
- Concern that big money will be spent on yet another special project or pet program. As a sliver bullet for the new leader.
- Concerned that there is not focus on longevity in all the criteria. The leader will have to make and maintain both short and long-term relationships
- None of the criteria mention specialized programs/teachers. Need a commitment to school libraries with actual librarians. And also nurses and other specialized teachers.
- Concern about the potentially high salary level (given the funding cuts)
- Concern that a superstar will be hired. And an outsider.
- Question: Is this search process really any different than the previous one?
- Need to have a leader that is not just a money person, CEO/CFO type.
- Needs to have understanding and experience dealing with fiscal crises

What difference it would make if the successful candidate is/is not from Philadelphia, and why:

From Philadelphia:

- Leader would have knowledge of the climate (people, politics, issues)
- Leader would have relationships already
- Would know the characteristics of Philly neighborhoods (which are diverse)
- Leader would already be invested in the city (which is something you can’t buy)

- Probably would have had to make hard choices as a parent of school-aged children in the city
- Won't have a learning curve; can hit the ground running
- Should not be beholden to special interests, or entrenched in a specific party

Not from Philly:

- If it's an outsider, we don't want someone who has failed other school districts
- Insider/outsider doesn't matter as long as the person is effective
- SRC must question why an outside candidate would want to be leaving their existing job/school district.
- Insider/outsider is not the biggest issue
- Request: videotape the candidate interviews for the public to see

Major Themes:

- Integrity
- Transparency
- Passion
- Commitment to community and student voice
- Commitment for all schools, not just the special ones
- Learning is the priority
- Special Ed and ELL/ESL needs more support
- Must have a winning track record; good experience
- Accountability is important for all parties
- Teachers need a voice, without repercussions
- Information shared from the bottom up
- Repair (not just build new) relationships
- Take a pay cut (compared to the prior superintendent's salary)
- Having knowledge of the uniqueness of Philadelphia – a city of neighborhoods
- Have an individual thinker vs. a group thinker