

To: Emily Parks, Superintendent of Schools
From: Allison Borchers, Assistant Superintendent
Date: March 22, 2019
Re: METCO Director Search

Introduction

Westwood has participated in the METCO (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity) program for well over two decades, and there are currently 49 WPS students in grades 6 - 12 who live in the city of Boston and attend the Westwood Public Schools.

Westwood's longtime METCO director, Sheryl Goodloe, is retiring this June after 26 years in the Westwood Public Schools. Finding a replacement for leadership of this critical program is an important task, particularly in light of the district's strategic priority to "Implement programs and instructional practices that recognize and support the needs of students and families in an increasingly diverse community."

Thorough and Inclusive Process

Informal recruiting for the METCO Director position started in December, when WPS representatives attended the annual METCO Directors' Conference, a sold-out gathering of educators from districts supporting the program. Several Westwood students helped to kick off the conference by sharing their thoughts about the challenges that they face as students of color in a predominantly white community. In addition, WPS representatives attended a job fair hosted by the conference's organizers. Although this took place prior to the job posting, it laid the groundwork for recruitment efforts in the new year.

Timeline

The formal process started in February and includes the following steps.

February 15	Position posted
February 25	Search committee recruited Outreach to Boston families - letter and survey
March 8	Posting closes
March 11	Subcommittee reviews resumes
March 14	Committee meets to select first round candidates and generate interview questions
March 19 & 20	First round interviews held and finalists selected
March 27 & 28	Finalist visits and interviews held
March 28	Evening parent forum in Boston with finalists
March 29-April 2	Final reference checking and contract offer
April 3	New hire announcement

As part of the process, we reached out directly to our Boston resident students and families to ask about their needs. In addition, we recruited Boston students and parents to serve on the search team, along with educators and administrators from the middle and high school and a representative from METCO headquarters. Finally, we have scheduled an evening parent forum in an accessible location in Boston, so that parents of both Boston and Westwood resident students can meet the finalists and ask questions.

Context and Update

This hire comes at a critical moment. The METCO organization has new leadership and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has created a new division to help districts support the mission of METCO. At the same time, WPS is working to create a more welcoming and supportive environment for all students. The primary mission for our new director will be to ensure that participating families are embraced by the community and that participating students thrive both socially and academically. In order to do so, the new director will need to work collaboratively with WPS employees, students, families, community partners, METCO headquarters and the Department of Education.

As of today, three excellent finalists have been selected from a highly qualified field of applicants. We look forward to introducing the finalists to the community next week and to announcing a new hire in early April.