

# Oakland Unified School District

Board of Education  
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**DRAFT**

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## **Minutes (Long)**

**Monday, December 15, 2008**

**6:00 PM**

**Special Meeting**

**Board Room, Paul Robeson Building, 1025 2nd Avenue, Oakland, CA  
94606-2212**

## **Special Committee on Superintendent of Schools Search**

***Gary Yee, Chairperson***

***Noel Gallo, Member and Christopher Dobbins, Member***

## A. Call To Order

*Chairperson Gary Yee called the Committee Meeting to order at 6:15 P.M.*

## B. Roll Call

Roll Call: Present: Gary Yee, Noel Gallo and Christopher Dobbins

## C. Unfinished Business



### 08-3150 2008-2009 Superintendent of Schools Search - Review of Requests for Proposal (RFP)

Continued establishment of ground rules, procedures, a proposal screening rubric and preliminary review of submitted Requests for Proposal from firms (proposals attached) interested in assisting Board of Education with search for permanent Superintendent of Schools.

#### Funding Source: General Purpose

Attachments: [California School Boards Association - Executive Search Services - West Sacramento, CA.pdf](#)  
[Cascade Consulting Group - Bellevue, Washington.pdf](#)  
[Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates, Ltd - Glenview, IL.pdf](#)  
[Leadership Associates - Mission Viejo, CA.pdf](#)  
[Proact Search - Milwaukee, WI.pdf](#)  
[Ray and Associates, Inc. - Cedar Rapids, Iowa.pdf](#)  
[RBL Enterprises LTD - Oakland, CA.pdf](#)  
[08-3150 - Interim Superintendent of Schools Analysis of RFPs for Superintendent Search.pdf](#)

*Chairperson Yee acknowledged Superintendent Mayor, State Administrator Vincent Matthews, and Assistant General Counsel Danielle Houck in attendance at this evening's Committee Meeting.*

*Chairperson Yee said there were seven superintendent search firms that submitted applications to the District. He had asked committee members to review the seven proposals and especially to interview school district Board Members who participated in the searches of each of the firms. Superintendent Mayor was asked to do the same and perform her own analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each application. He asked committee members to unanimously support the decision of whatever firms are brought to the final round would include an interview with the committee in early January leading to a recommendation to the full Board. He also requested to add the Superintendent to the prioritization process because of her experience in the process. Committee Members agreed to the Chairperson's proposed ground rules.*

*Director Gallo said he reviewed the proposals for Proact Search and Leadership*

*Associates. He has also spoken to references for both Proact and Leadership Associates. Regarding the Proact, Director Gallo said he spoke to the professor who was in charge of selecting the search firm, as well as sitting on the selection committee. The response of the professor, as well as the other references, was extreme pleasure with their professionalism. Proact has a long history and has an "in" throughout the country in the superintendents' circle. In Baltimore, she provided 40 applicants to the Board, as well as five additional applicants and nontraditional candidates from business, as well as two military candidates. Baltimore was looking for someone that was not necessarily established as a superintendent. They were looking for a first and second staff member that had the ability and whose energy was young and someone who had new ideas. The gentleman that was on the Board that led this process said they were extremely pleased from beginning to end, that it was a knowledgeable and clear process and that the firm provided great guidance. She allowed disagreements within her discussion. Regarding the community process, that Board did not want to parade the finalists in front of the public. The Board felt that it was a Board decision and that they were going to make the decision. They did have input as to desirability of the superintendent. They chose a gentleman from New York Public Schools.*

*Director Gallo said he spoke to another reference today. At Newark, New Jersey, the arrangement is similar to ours and the State has control over the school district. The school district chose the Proact group. The person he spoke to today said he was extremely satisfied and they went through a community process. Their selection committee was comprised of 18 members. The Governor at the end had the final say. At first, the Governor had chosen the New Jersey School Boards Association group. The Committee Members, in working with the Governor, were able to have the Governor agree to a national search. He was extremely pleased with the group and its national reputation. The firm knew the process and worked well with the Board in community engagement. They have five wards and they got input from ministers, principals, PTAs, ward leadership and they were able to get them to buy into the process. Newark placed a priority on the community process. It took them about six weeks to go through the community process in order to get everybody to buy in and get the right person. They ended up choosing a gentleman out of Washington, D. C.*

*Director Gallo said the other district was from Toledo. They all spoke very highly of Dr. Nancy Noeske [Proact]. He said he worked with her when we chose the Oakland Unified School District in the last superintendent search.*

*Director Dobbins said costs for one of the proposals were \$33,600 with an extra \$20,000 in ancillary costs.*

*Director Gallo said Leadership Associates can adapt to any size search as requested. They can also tag on to services of another search firm. They do not have the background compared to Proact. They have done a lot of searches and have a multitude listing, but they have never done the full search. They were part of a tagging onto another search firm. They have only done a couple of big searches, including Elk Grove and Sacramento, which were in the \$50,000 price range. A national group will cost about \$50,000.*

*Director Gallo said he spoke to the references in Hayward regarding Leadership Associates. Dr. Sarah Gonzalez, Chairperson of the current Board, and Paul Frumkin III, Vice President of the Board, were both pleased with the superintendent search process. It*

*met the needs of Hayward Unified School District. The superintendents who are involved are extremely knowledgeable and have been at this process for a long time.*

*Director Gallo said he would rank Proact as his first choice and Leadership would rank Number Two. Proact has the national experience, they can get nontraditional candidates to apply, and their process is very clean from the beginning to end. They are able to do a community engagement, if requested.*

*Director Dobbins asked if the total cost for the search would be \$44,500? Are there any additional fees? Director Gallo said yes.*

*Director Dobbins said he also looked at two organizations: RBL Enterprises of Oakland and Executive Search Enterprises (ESS) with the California School Boards Association (CSBA).*

*Director Dobbins stated ESS/CSBA is tied into California schools. The cost would be \$40,000 with expenses of \$8,000 with two optional workshops. He spoke to Calvin Young, Board Member for the Lodi School District which has a student enrollment of 30,000. Mr. Young said they have not done as extensive of an urban search as other firms such as Proact. Mr. Young said ESS used an extensive community engagement process. Lodi is not the size of Oakland, but their school district took in part of Stockton and parts of other unincorporated areas. Mr. Young said he could recommend the services of ESS although he would not recommend the additional options.*

*Director Dobbins said he and Director Yee met with a gentleman from the Emeryville School District today. Director Young said they worked very well and they are very engaging and they know California inside and out and he would recommend it. The two people he spoke to both recommended this kind of stuff where they jump up and down and say this is the greatest thing ever. They both felt they were very engaging. At \$47,000, the price is higher, but competitive. He would definitely endorse this firm.*

*Director Dobbins said he spoke to Dr. Ruth Love of RBL Enterprises today. They are very tied into urban school districts. She talked about the superintendent search at Atlanta and Dallas. Director Dobbins said he spoke to a Board Member at Dallas who highly endorsed RBL Enterprises. He felt he personally wanted more public interaction and Dr. Love was good at that, but their Board did not want to have the full community engagement process. The only challenge to her proposal was the cost of \$45,000, plus \$20,000 which might be a challenge. Director Dobbins said he left another message for the Board Member in Dallas and he will get back to him tomorrow and he will have an updated report on Wednesday. Overall, Dr. Love knows Oakland very well and she is a former Superintendent of Oakland. Director Dobbins said if we could get the price down, RBL would be better because she is more tied into urban districts.*

*Chairperson Yee said he looked at three proposals. Cascade Consulting, Hazard, Young, Attea, and Ray and Associates. These three were all out of the California area.*

*Chairperson Yee said Cascade Consulting is located in Bellevue, Washington, so most of their searches seemed to be out of Bellevue. They did the Nashville superintendent search and the Inglewood superintendent search. He spoke to Kathleen Harkey, former Board*

*Member for Nashville Public Schools. They went through the policy governance program with the Aspen Group before they started the search. When they went through the search, they also went through a school board turn-over. They felt the Cascade group was helpful. They did have a citizen's screening group. However, the number one candidate selected used the search as a mechanism to get more pay in her own district. They did not select the number one candidate. As a result, they ended up getting the second person who turned out not to be good. They have had chaos every since. Ms. Harkey said they did not surface any local candidates which made sense since they came from Washington State. They got private funding to pay for the search. That would be something for Oakland to consider. Director Yee said, in general, he was lukewarm with them and he did not pursue mingling with them because there was nothing that jumped out at him. The cost for services of Cascade would be \$28,500 for their fee and \$10,000 for expenses for a total of \$38,500. Chairperson Yee said Cascade would assign Dr. Rudy Crew to be our consultant. Dr. Crew is very charismatic and is a former superintendent in New York. Their costs were among the lowest of all the groups.*

*Chairperson Yee said Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates are a national firm from Glenview, Illinois. They have done many searches in California, including San Diego and San Francisco. He spoke to Norman Yee [former Board member San Francisco Unified School District] who was the leader of their search process. He was the one who suggested a community advisory committee after a search firm has been established. Mr. Yee said the Hazard firm fee was excellent and they were satisfied with the candidate pool. They received 30 candidates with a mixture of local and district candidates, including some from the inside. Because of that mix and the political nature of San Francisco, it was important to have confidentiality; and Hazard and Young were able to provide that. Mr. Yee said the Hazard firm was not necessarily strong on community engagement and they [SFUSD] did the community engagement themselves. They wanted a community engagement that would have been difficult for an outside consulting company which does not know all the local players. The firm worked very well with the Board Members. There were no complaints about the results--only a bit about the community engagement process. Hazard and Young has worked a lot in California and they have a national reputation. The price range for this firm is \$38,000 for their fees, \$5,000 for expenses and \$6,000 for optional workshops.*

*Chairperson Yee said Ray and Associates are from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He was somewhat frustrated with them. They did very little superintendent search work in California. Their searches were in the Albuquerque and in Memphis areas and they just completed a search in Seattle. Chairperson Yee said he spoke to the Seattle Board President about their selection of Ray and Associates rather than Cascade Consulting. The Board President felt that Ray and Associates had a strong national presence. They work all the national associations and have a very wide net of potential candidates. Their price range was \$43,000 and was one of the least expensive quotes. The school board was totally satisfied with their search and they were satisfied with the candidates they received. They worked well with individual board members and they interviewed each one individually. They held two community meetings at large and they ended up with a very diverse pool. They were impressed with the number of minority candidates and the number of women candidates. They ended up getting their top candidate who is an African American woman and a year later they are totally satisfied with her. The District is going through a process of closing ten schools in Seattle and the Superintendent is handling it very well. They were not*

looking for nontraditional candidates, so they did not present any of those. Chairperson Yee said he asked about glitches and complaints in the search process and the response was "no" and that everybody was happy about the process. The final candidate came from a non-unionized district and they thought that would have created a problem, but it has not been a problem at all. They were very satisfied.

Chairperson Yee said he would rank the three firms as Ray & Associates as first; Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates, Ltd, as second; and he would drop Cascade off the list.

Superintendent Mayor said she did not do any interviews. She did review their applications and she does recognize a lot of the people associated with the different firms. All of the firms are reputable and all have previous experience conducting searches for school districts. They all have a similar process which starts with meeting with the Board to discuss the process and identify district needs, engaging with the staff and the community to identify desirable qualities in a superintendent; advertising and recruiting for applicants nationwide; vetting the applicants; and working with the board to identify candidates who best meet the qualities the board and the community are seeking. She did a summary of all of the costs:

1. CSBA - \$48,000
2. Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates, Ltd. - \$43,000.
3. Ray & Associates, Inc. - \$43,000
4. RBL - \$65,000
5. Cascade - \$38,500
6. Leadership Associates - \$44,500
7. Proact - \$53,000

Interim Superintendent Mayor stated all the firms that have an out of state home base would provide a local principal lead to handle the search process in our community and they did provide the name of the lead contact for Oakland. They all indicated that the schedule would be approximately four months. They either started in November and would end in March or April; or start in January and would end in May. Because of our present timeline, if they started in January, it is possible that any one of these firms could complete the search process by the end of May. A couple of the search firms offered more than the others. The Hazard and Proact search firms offered a one-year guarantee, indicating that if the selected superintendent did not stay or did not work out in the first year, they would conduct a search at no cost to the District to find a replacement. The Hazard firm also indicated that whoever they find for the District would not consider our candidate for other positions elsewhere for a period of five years.

Chairperson Yee asked his colleagues and the Superintendent to write down their top three firms.

Person	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Gallo	Proact	Hazard	Ray
Dobbins	Hazard	Proact	RBL
Yee	Proact	Ray	Hazard
Superintendent Mayor	Hazard	Ray	Leadership

Chairperson Yee noted that Hazard and Associates was on everyone's list. He and Director Gallo chose all national firms. Director Dobbins chose one local firm, RBL, and the Superintendent chose one California firm, Leadership Associates. Superintendent Mayor noted that Proact and Ray were repeated three times on the listing.

Chairperson Yee stated we have our three candidates if we use that methodology. Hazard was on everyone's listing and Proact and Ray were considered by three of the four Board Members and Superintendent. That would exclude the two California firms.

To rank the firms by costs: Proact, \$53,000; Hazard, Youth and Attea, \$43,000 and Ray & Associates, \$43,000. All three have urban experience. All three have California experience, although Ray & Associates has the least experience in California.

Hazard was the only one with a weakness in the community engagement portion. The other two were very definitely strong.

Chairperson Yee asked, "Are we satisfied with the kind of services that the three would provide?" Then, it is a matter of the difference in costs. Director Dobbins stated the committee agreed to go along with the group. We all have discussed it, and now it is fair. Chairperson Yee asked Director Dobbins if he was okay that the local firm was not included. Director Dobbins said it was definitely brought up but the firm is so cost prohibited and they are at least \$12,000 over the first choice and \$20,000 over the others. Chairperson Yee asked the Superintendent if she felt okay with Leadership not being on the list. Superintendent Mayor said she is okay with that because all of the others would involve California locals on their team.

Director Gallo stated anytime a superintendent is selected it is probably the biggest decision a Board will make. Therefore, for him the cost in this effort is not a problem. Considering that the Board is about to regain control that it has not had for a number of years, the public feels this is the first statement that the Board is going to make. For him, getting a reputable national organization or consulting group that has done a superintendent search, he would advocate for Proact. Their proposal speaks more to what we are looking for. They did provide services to Oakland, so they know Oakland and they have done the community engagement process. Proact is willing to guarantee the candidate for one year. He would advocate that we work with Proact and use that time to put together a good process.

Director Dobbins concurred with Director Gallo's comments on the process. He supports our last superintendent one hundred percent on a personal level; he was his principal at Oakland Technical. He would like us to go with the three. A difference of a few thousand dollars may not be the ultimate issue because we are making a pivotal decision. He would like the Board to interview three firms.

Superintendent Mayor said she can go either way--picking one now or waiting until we have a chance to interact with the firms. We might not want to rush to one firm without actually interacting. Director Gallo is familiar with Dr. Noeske [Proact] because he has worked with her before. It might be advisable that board members meet her or the leads from the other firms to see, in their interactions with the Board, in terms of what they will do and how they will work with the Board in the process. It might be helpful to talk to them

*one on one before making a decision.*

*Chairperson Yee said he somewhat agrees. He spoke to several of the people in San Francisco and Seattle and went through a short interview process. They just felt that the interpersonal fit was really critical. We do not want to blame Proact for anything subsequent.*

*Chairperson Yee said at least three of us [Board members] wish to move in that direction. We would ask them to come in one day and interview with us. We could schedule it as an open meeting and the firms could give a presentation on their proposed search process, but it would still be our decision. The other Board Members who are not on the committee could be in the audience, but we would make the recommendation. Director Gallo concurred.*

*There were no speaker cards submitted on this item.*

*Chairperson Yee said that would be their recommendation on Wednesday to the Board as a whole. If they agree, then we will move forward and schedule interviews with representatives of the three organizations. Superintendent Mayor said she will make initial contact with the three; that they would be able to meet with the three subcommittee members in the first week in January after the holidays. Chairperson Yee said that at the January 14th Board Meeting, a commitment will have been made with the firm and we will be able to start the process the week after that.*

## **D. Adjournment**

*Chairperson Gary Yee adjourned the Committee Meeting at 7:05 P.M.*

Prepared By: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_