

November 25, 2017

As a community of active participants in the New Haven Public Schools, comprised of parents, students, teachers, and community allies, we have serious concerns about the process by which the Board recently selected a new superintendent.

In addition, we wish to better understand the operations of the New Haven Board of Education in order to support further collaboration and problem solving. Therefore, we sought a copy of the bylaws of the Board of Education. We could not find this document online, which is in itself concerning, since this information should be readily available to the public.

[This document](#) is a compilation of the most recent New Haven Public Schools policies and Board of Education bylaws. It was made available to a parent. However, several pages seem to be missing. Further, the majority of this document has not been updated since 1999.

After reviewing these policies and bylaws, we wish to raise several questions that relate to recent actions of the Board of Education.

**1. How many Board of Education members are needed to approve a motion?**

Page 520 states that “All official actions of the Board shall be by a unanimous vote of five members.” Then, on page 39, the bylaws call for “a vote of five of the Board members” with respect to hiring a Superintendent. Are five Board members required to vote for a candidate in order for him/her to be named Superintendent?

**2. Have the Board of Education bylaws been modified to allow phone call votes?**

Page 519 states that “The rules contained in [Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised](#) shall govern the proceedings of the Board of Education in all instances in which they are consistent with the bylaws of the Board.” [Robert’s Rules](#) states that voting by phone and other electronic methods is permitted [only if the bylaws explicitly authorize this](#). We see no such authorization in the bylaws.

**3. What mechanisms exist to prevent conflicts of interest with and among Board members?**

The bylaws contain no language with respect to avoiding conflicts of interest. As a specific example, one Board member currently reports to another at their place of work. This appears to be a straightforward, classic conflict of interest.

**4. Will the new Superintendent be offered a one-year or three-year contract?**

Page 39 indicates that “The Superintendent of schools, if he/she has not previously held office in the City of New Haven, shall be appointed for a term not to exceed one (1) year.”

We intend to raise these questions as part of public participation at the Board of Education meeting on Monday, November 27, in the hope of clarifying how the Board goes about its work of serving New Haven Public Schools students.

With questions about this statement, please contact:

Maritza Baez, Creed parent, 203.444.4613

Kirsten Hopes-McFadden, ESUMS teacher and parent, 203.308.7742