



## **Lawrence Alliance for Education Clarifies Mischaracterizations in Superintendent Selection Process**

LAWRENCE (May 15, 2024) – The Lawrence Alliance for Education (LAE) Board has received numerous inquiries from the community concerning the ongoing Lawrence Superintendent search. We appreciate the community’s interest and commitment to Lawrence Public Schools.

Due to mischaracterizations about the search process to hire the next Lawrence Superintendent, the LAE board believes it's imperative to provide clear and accurate information on the steps taken to date.

The Alma Advisory Group, an executive search firm specializing in hiring in the K-12 education system, was hired by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In this process, the Alma Advisory Group independently conducted initial interviews of a total of twenty-six candidates out of forty-six that applied. They interviewed these candidates and narrowed this pool who were presented to the LAE Search Subcommittee members, composed of Chairwoman Pat Mariano, Juana Matias, and Maria Moeller.

To complete the second round of interviews, and following discussion with the LAE Search Subcommittee, the Chairwoman of the LAE Board assembled an external, non-voting panel to assist the LAE Search Subcommittee. On April 11, the LAE Search Subcommittee and the Round Two Interview Panel met to conduct interviews with the ten candidates. Once all interviews were completed a majority of the LAE Search Subcommittee members voted to advance Ralph Carrero and two other candidates.

However, confusion arose during the voting process, when the four external community non-voting LAE members were allowed to cast a vote leading to a different slate of proposed candidates, which resulted in the removal of candidate Ralph Carrero and the inclusion of a different candidate in his place. This decision was made despite the clear objection of a majority of the LAE Search Subcommittee, who were the only ones with voting authority.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) confirmed that only LAE Search Subcommittee members have voting authority in candidate selection. To address this procedural error, the LAE Search Subcommittee reconvened on April 19 to discuss and recast their original vote.

During this meeting, the LAE Search Subcommittee learned that Alma Advisory Group had preemptively extended invitations to the three candidates that were inappropriately voted on during the April 11 meeting. To correct this procedural error, the LAE Search Subcommittee voted to advance a fourth candidate. These four finalists were announced on April 29.

We are confident this process has been rectified and will lead to the selection of a superintendent who will prioritize the success of students, educators, staff, and families in Lawrence Public Schools.

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