



Mill River Unified Union School District

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Thriving Students. Premier Schools. Engaged Community

April 3, 2018

Shrewsbury Community,

I am very pleased to share information with you about our hiring process for the Principal position at SMS.

I met with the SMS Staff today, had a discussion with them, and answered questions about the overall Principal selection process and what that process involved, and shared the name of the candidate of choice with them.

The process for filling the Principal role has been both deliberate and measured in order to ensure that the right individual ended up in the position. State law requires that as superintendent, I am responsible for identifying the candidate of choice and recommending the hire to the school board. As such, we utilized a process similar to the process used to identify our MRUHS principal in 2016. That involved the screening of all possible candidates being completed by my office, with the intent of narrowing down possible candidates through the process to arrive at a place where the top individual or individuals could be presented to interest groups in the school.

Posting positions online to seek qualified applicants for administrative jobs in Vermont has proven to be very problematic, as the pool of candidates we attract is very shallow. That said, I believed it necessary to find a candidate with Vermont experience, connections to elementary-aged learners, and an understanding of the scope of the work we are undertaking in terms of our curriculum, instruction, and future vision direction.

I interacted with a number of my superintendent colleagues to discuss potential candidates and their attributes and availability. A handful of candidates emerged as strong possibilities, including one that I have had my eye on locally for awhile, and one internal candidate. As that process unfolded, what was meant to happen did happen, and an outside candidate accepted another position while our internal candidate emerged as the unquestioned best choice among all others in my professional opinion.

The next phase of the process involved allowing interest groups at the school to interact with that candidate in open-ended interview conversations with the purpose of assessing the demeanor of the candidate and offering me feedback to inform my recommendation to the board. A group of three (3) students was selected by SMS staff to meet with the candidate on 3/19/18. A group of five (5) SMS

parents met with the candidate on that date as well. Then, a group of two (2) board members and two (2) staff members met with the candidate. Each of these groups debriefed with me about their conversations, offered feedback, and provided input. In the end, my belief that we had the ideal candidate internally was affirmed by our students, parents, board members and staff.

At the board meeting on Wednesday 4/4/18 I will recommend that the board offer a contract for the role of Principal at SMS to **Mrs. Jodie Stewart-Ruck**. Mrs. Stewart-Ruck is a resident of Middletown Springs, VT and the parent of two young children. She has served in a number of roles in the Mill River Schools since joining us in 2013, including as Dean of Students at MRUHS and Director of Personalized Learning for the full MRUUSD. Before coming to Vermont, Jodie's career and upbringing were primarily in New York State. Her resume, highlighting her career work, is included at the end of this letter. Jodie has been significantly involved in the development and planning for our District's Vision Work, and will be an excellent fit for SMS and the broader Shrewsbury community both now and into the future. I am excited to make that recommendation for her hire to the board on 4/4/18!

After a contract is finalized, we will be hosting a Meet & Greet for interested community members at SMS on two occasions:

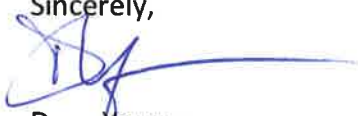
Meet & Greet #1 - Friday, 4/6/18 at 8:15 am

Meet & Greet #2 - Monday, 4/10/18 at 6:30 pm.

Additional dates will be scheduled throughout the spring where Mrs. Stewart-Ruck and Mrs. Fishwick will work together to ensure a smooth transition for students and staff. I am confident and excited that SMS will benefit greatly from Mrs. Stewart-Ruck's experience, skill and style, and that the wonderful foundation established at the school by the community, staff and Mrs. Fishwick will be upheld and reinforced. There is a bright and exciting future ahead for SMS, and I am pleased that Mrs. Stewart-Ruck will be a part of it!

If you have any questions for me, please don't hesitate to call at 802-775-3264.

Sincerely,



Dave Younce
Superintendent of Schools