

# **School Committee Meeting**

## **March 11, 2019**

**6:00 P.M.**

**To Attend Question & Answer  
Session for Director of Student  
Services**

**Open Session**

**To Follow @ Approximately 7:00 P.M.**

**RMHS Schettini Library**



# Town of Reading Meeting Posting with Agenda

## Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

### School Committee

Date: 2019-03-11

Time: 6:00 PM

Building: School - Memorial High

Location: School Library

Address: 62 Oakland Road

Agenda: Revised

Purpose: Open Session

Meeting Called By: Linda Engelson on behalf of the Chair

Notices and agendas are to be posted 48 hours in advance of the meetings excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Legal Holidays. Please keep in mind the Town Clerk's hours of operation and make necessary arrangements to be sure your posting is made in an adequate amount of time. A listing of topics that the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting must be on the agenda.

**All Meeting Postings must be submitted in typed format; handwritten notices will not be accepted.**

### Topics of Discussion:

6:00 p.m.		Call to Order
		Attend Director of Student Services Question & Answer Session
7:00 – 7:20 p.m.	E.	Old Business 1. Approval of the Revised Director of Student Search Timeline
7:20 – 7:40 p.m.	F.	New Business 1. Vote to Appoint the Director of Student Services
7:40 p.m.	K.	Adjourn
7:45 p.m.		Executive Session

\*\*Times are approximate

John F. Doherty, Ed. D.  
Superintendent of Schools

82 Oakland Road  
Reading, MA 01867  
Phone: 781-944-5800  
Fax: 781-942-9149



Christine M. Kelley  
Assistant Superintendent

Sharon Stewart  
Interim Director of Student Services

Gail S. Dowd, CPA  
Chief Financial Officer

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*

To: Reading School Committee  
From: John F. Doherty, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools  
Date: March 11, 2019  
Re: Director of Student Services Search Update and Recommendation

At the Reading School Committee meeting on January 24<sup>th</sup>, the Committee approved, the Director of Student Services timeline which included a process that would be completed with a vote of the Superintendent's Recommendation by the School Committee on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Over the last few weeks, the 16 member Director of Student Services Screening Committee has worked diligently designing questions, reviewing applications, and conducting interviews of candidates. In total, there were 14 applicants for the position with a wide range of skills and experiences. Out of those 14 applicants, the Screening Committee interviewed 5 qualified candidates, all with districtwide special education administration experience. From those first round interviews a group of pre-finalists were moved to a second round of interviews with the Central Office Leadership Team consisting of Chief Financial Officer Gail Dowd, Assistant Superintendent for Learning and Teaching Christine Kelley, Interim Director of Student Services Sharon Stewart, and myself. As a result of both rounds of interviews and extensive reference checks, one candidate has been moved forward as a finalist.

I am pleased to announce that Jennifer Stys is the finalist for the Director of Student Services. Jennifer is currently the Director of Special Education for the Lowell Public Schools. A copy of Jennifer's resume is attached to this memo.

Because our process is ending quicker than anticipated, we will be changing it to reflect that there is one qualified candidate. At the March 11<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting, I will be recommending to the Committee to change the timeline of the process so that the School Committee vote on the Superintendent's recommendation for the position of Director of Student Services on March 11<sup>th</sup>, rather than wait until March 28<sup>th</sup>. My rationale is two-fold. First, there are other searches going on or about to begin for similar positions in other school districts. The candidate pool for this position usually has limited qualified applicants and is a difficult position to fill. Second, throughout this process, Ms. Stys has been the most qualified candidate in the pool and her references verified that she would be an outstanding addition to the Reading Public Schools.

Therefore, if the Committee approves the shortened timeline, I will be recommending Jennifer Stys to be hired as the next Director of Student Services for the Reading Public Schools.

I would like to thank the Screening Committee and the Central Office Leadership Team for the amount of time and effort that they put into this important process.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

# JENNIFER A. STYS

## Vision ♦ Leadership ♦ Communication

**Mission driven leader and education program administrator with a passion for inspiring world-class vision for academic excellence and enabling students to achieve their greatest potential.** Recognized as a hands-on administrator with a deep understanding of academic priorities, and a track record for providing innovative and collaborative leadership that align programs to school missions and goals. High skilled at structuring and implementing leadership, training and technology initiatives in support of operational execution, program innovation and student success. Identified as a mentor and change agent with a motivational management style, skilled at promoting continuous improvement, while responding and adapting to changing student needs.

### CORE COMPETENCIES:

Special Education ♦ Program Management ♦ Strategic Planning ♦ Academic Operations ♦ District Planning  
♦ Technology Deployments ♦ Parent Communication ♦ Budget Management ♦ Cross-Functional Teams  
♦ Multi-Cultural Environments ♦ Strategic Partnerships ♦ Collaborative Leadership ♦ Student Enrichment

### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- **Creates and aligns programming to ensure FAPE and LRE to all students while improving staff capacity**
- **Directly supervises and evaluates a 75+ person** staff focused on creating and executing student development programs
- Track record of fiduciary excellence; **delivers on budget commitments every year despite changes in the special education population and influx of students**
- Partnered closely with IT and general education **to improve the Multi-Tiered System of Support process thus increasing targeted student interventions and reducing special education referrals**

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Lowell Public Schools, Lowell, MA**

**1993 - Present**

**DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

2013 - Present

*Provide special education leadership and vision for an educational system with 28 schools and 14,000+ students. Focus on developing programs that enable student to reach their full potential and meet ambitious goals.*

- Act as the driving force in spearheading program enhancements that close student achievement gaps and improve student outcomes; collaborate with school principals and special education staff to implement and maintain services/programs
- Supervise and evaluate 75+ central special education staff and develop future leaders via feedback and coaching; establish a high performance culture underpinned by student success; provide mentoring as a cornerstone to faculty development
- Formulate policies and procedures to locate, identify and evaluate students with suspected disabilities; monitor district compliance to ensure that the district operates within federal and state education laws and regulations
- Establish new standards that streamline communication across students, faculty and parents in support of the deployment of innovative academic programs; participate in the district wide Special Education Parent Advisory Council
- Oversee the district's multi-million dollar out-of-district budget, ensuring the least restrictive placements and the development of cost-effective in-district alternatives when feasible and appropriate
- Manage fiscal resources, prepare budgets and direct spending; introduce a disciplined analytical and data-driven approach to fiscal management, capital spend deployment and budget governance
- Partner with advocates, public and private agencies, physicians and community resources to secure and provide services to students with disabilities

**ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

2011 - 2013

*Developed, coordinated and evaluated special education programs aligned to the missions and values of the school systems.*

- Oversaw the execution of program efforts focused on enhancing academic capabilities, planning, projects and systems; promoted the use of emerging technologies to create an interactive classroom environment and enhance student learning
- Organized program planning, staff training, program development and program evaluation; played an active role in investing and mobilizing teachers to achieve the collective goals of special education programs
- Interpreted the philosophy and practices of the special education department to administrators, staff and the community
- Supervised staff and daily site operations; set team priorities with a focus on accountability, execution and development
- Drafted proposals for reimbursements and assisted in the preparation of the special education budget

- Other responsibilities included establishing procedures for screening, placement, evaluation and assignment of programs, preparing federal, state and local reports and participating in the selection of new personnel and assignments

**SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL**

2006 - 2011

*Responsible for the selection, supervision and evaluation of the staff through hiring committees and other programs. Assured the presence and quality of educational programs that addressed the needs, interests and abilities of all students.*

- Articulated the vision and mission of the Special Education Department, Lowell High School and Lowell Public Schools; drafted department newsletters, attended PAC meetings, ran department meetings and attended administrative meetings
- Practiced disciplined fiscal management in accordance with federal, state and city policies and procedures
- Participated in Education Leadership, Discipline and Placement and Teacher Assistance meetings
- Advanced partnerships among staff, families and the business community and other local groups
- Planned for the integration of students into less restrictive environments, encouraged the use of educational technology and planned effective courses
- Reviewed and monitored all team meetings, generated Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and progress reports

**PREVIOUS ROLES:**

Lowell Public Schools - Evaluation Team Chairperson, Instructor of Lowell Teacher Academy/Fitchburg State College Adjunct Professor, Co-Creator of the Special Education Teacher Mentoring Program, Language Based Special Education Teacher (k-4), Special Education Summer School Coordinator and North Stratford, NH Special Education Teacher (k-12)

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**EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS**

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**University of Massachusetts at Lowell**, Lowell, MA

*Ed.D., Leadership in Schooling (expected May 2019)*

**University of Massachusetts at Lowell**, Lowell, MA

*Master's Degree, Curriculum and Instruction*

**Fitchburg State College**, Fitchburg, MA

*Bachelor of Science Degree, Special/Elementary Education*

**CERTIFICATIONS MEPID: 50079926**

Massachusetts Moderate Special Needs Teacher, (PreK - 9)

Massachusetts Elementary Teacher (K-6)

Director of Special Education

Superintendent/ Assistant Superintendent