

I. Executive Summary

On December 15, 2024, constituent Gayden Pack filed a complaint with the Crook County School District ("District") Board of Education ("Board") raising a number of concerns regarding the District and former Superintendent Melissa Skinner. One of Ms. Pack's concerns was in regard to the hiring process for the transportation manager position. On January 6, 2025, the Board authorized an expedited investigation into that hiring process.

In summary, and as discussed further below, the transportation manager position became vacant in November 2024, following the resignation of the prior transportation manager. The transportation department was suffering from a lack of leadership and faced criticism from parents regarding communication. On November 12, 2024, Dr. Skinner informed the Board of the transportation manager's resignation. Shortly thereafter, Board member Jessica Brumble told Dr. Skinner that she was interested in the position. At the same time, there was discussion among the Superintendent's leadership team about options for filling the position. Leland Bliss, the Director of Operations, to whom the transportation manager position reported, was interested in having First Student, an outside contractor, fill the management position on an interim basis while the hiring process for the permanent transportation manager was conducted. Superintendent Skinner also considered moving a building administrator into the position.

On Friday, November 15, 2024, Ms. Brumble texted Dr. Skinner asking Dr. Skinner to let her know when the position was posted and stating that Ms. Brumble's husband thought she would be a good fit for the position. Dr. Skinner forwarded the text from Ms. Brumble to Human Resources Director Jay Weeks and Assistant Superintendent Joel Hoff, and directed that the position be posted. Mr. Weeks responded that he "misunderstood" that the position was going to be posted, and then he posted it on Saturday, November 16, 2024. Dr. Skinner assumed that the position was posted, while Mr. Weeks did not recall any discussion of posting the position. Mr. Bliss was on vacation at this time and did not review the job description or posting before it went out, and was not aware the position had been posted.

On Sunday, November 17, 2024, Dr. Skinner forwarded to Mr. Weeks and Dr. Hoff another text that she had received from Ms. Brumble. In this text, Ms. Brumble highlighted certain qualifications in the job description and stated that she did not meet the required qualifications. Dr. Skinner stated in her text to Mr. Weeks and Dr. Hoff that it "may be wise to put preferred." Mr. Weeks promptly changed the job qualifications highlighted by Ms. Brumble from "required" to "preferred." Dr. Skinner also texted Mr. Weeks asking him to let her know when Ms. Brumble's application was submitted and asked him to set up interviews as soon as that occurred.

The transportation manager position was posted for a total of 19 days, including the Thanksgiving break. It was posted in the places that the District typically posts positions. Mr. Weeks and Mr. Bliss reviewed the applications as they came in. A total of four interviews were conducted, starting on December 3, 2024. The interview team unanimously agreed that, of the applicants who were interviewed, Ms. Brumble, who was a Veteran, was the most qualified candidate. On December 9, 2024, Ms. Brumble was offered the position. On December 10, 2024, Ms. Brumble resigned from her Board position effective immediately.

The investigation report reviewed the relevant factual background and then made factual and policy findings regarding the District-run hiring process.¹ The report contains the independent findings of the investigator. The District did not impose constraints on the fact-finding process and had no involvement in the determination of the findings.

II. Summary of Key Allegations and Determinations

Following is a summary of the allegations and the determination as to whether those allegations were substantiated or unsubstantiated. The investigation report provided detailed analysis and factual findings.

Allegation One: Ms. Brumble's position as a sitting Board member influenced the hiring process for the transportation manager position.

This allegation is **substantiated**.

Allegation Two: No. 2: The hiring process for the transportation manager position, including the determination of the job qualifications, the posting period, and how the position was posted, violated District policy.

This allegation is **not substantiated**.

Allegation Three: Ms. Brumble was not the most qualified of the applicants for the transportation manager position.

This allegation is **not substantiated**.

¹ This investigation focuses on the District-run hiring process. It does not consider whether Ms. Brumble may have violated any district policies regarding ethics requirements. Ms. Brumble was not a respondent to this investigation and was not interviewed as a witness. The investigation does not include determinations as to whether there were violations of the law.