

From: IVEE_alerts@dps61.org
To: [Melissa Bradford](#)
Subject: A payment has been made against a requisition you originated
Date: Friday, January 28, 2022 7:25:51 AM

A payment in the amount of \$1886.22 has been made to MICHAEL GAAL regarding purchase order number 10222670 and requisition number 11223335.

From: [NewsBreak](#)
To: [Kathy Streaty](#)
Subject: Afghan Welcome Home Project of Central Illinois helps provide jobs and housing for refugees
Date: Friday, January 28, 2022 8:11:42 AM

NewsBreak



Friday · January 28, 2022



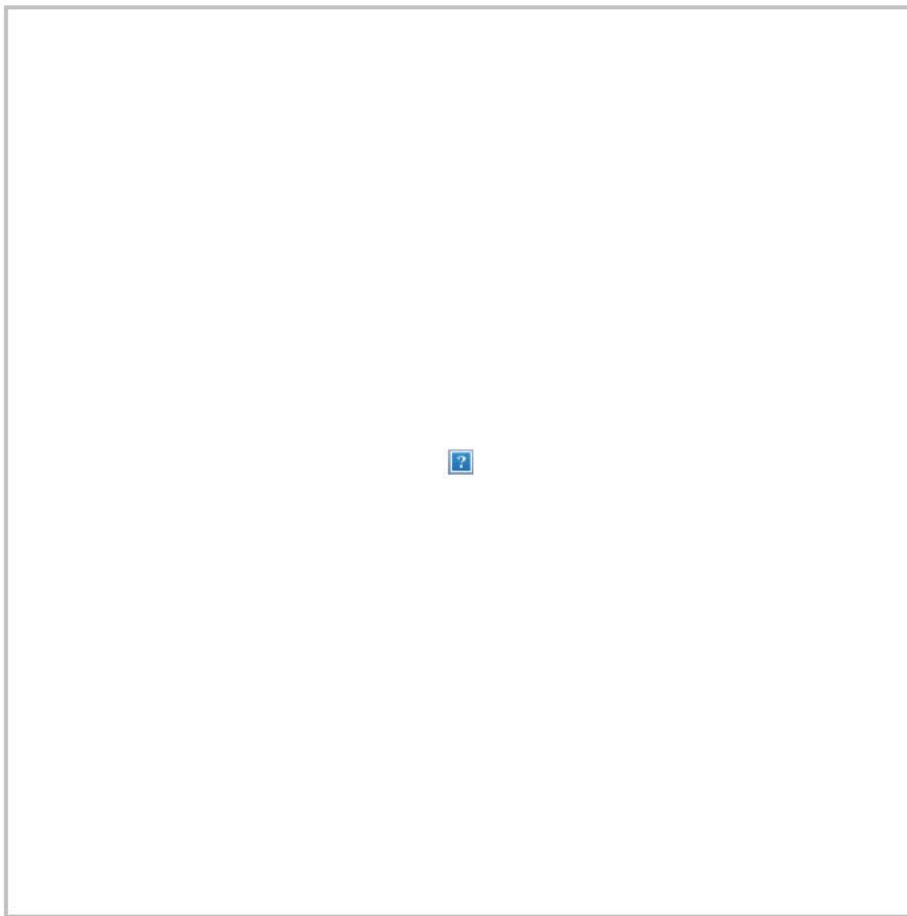
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24°F

LOCAL



Afghan Welcome Home Project of Central Illinois helps provide jobs and housing for refugees

hoiabc

CENTRAL ILLINOIS (Heart of Illinois ABC) - After the fall of Kabul following the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan in August 2021, a nonprofit group is working to help refugees set up a new life. Of the more than half-dozen in the area, three former Afghan soldiers are ...



Covid In Macon
County · Herald &
Review

**Macon County
reports one
COVID-related**

death on Thursday

The death of the woman in her her 40s brings to 303 the number of COVID-related deaths since the start of the pandemic. The daily statistics also included 260 new cases of COVID-19. One previously-reported case was determined to be from out of county. The information was transferred ...



Basketball - Herald & Review

Latest Decatur Public Schools Athletic Hall of Fame Class to be inducted

DECATUR — Some of the most legendary basketball names in the past 60 years of Decatur basketball are part of the latest Decatur Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2022. The class includes three basketball players who went on to play Division I hoops — Lewis Jackson, John Cliff and ...



Decatur · Herald &
Review

Decatur school board to interview a new candidate for superintendent

DECATUR — The Decatur school board has called a special closed meeting for Monday to interview a new candidate for superintendent. The board previously announced that there were two finalists for the position, Malika Savoy-Brooks and Michael Gaal, who took questions from community ...

- 99

Illinois Law Change May Allow 12 Year Olds To Be Left Home Alone

You may have seen it pointed out that Kevin McCallister's parents in the movie Home Alone (set here in Illinois) would have been looking at serious trouble for leaving an 8 year old to knock around that fabulous house all by himself. If the McCallisters were following Illinois ...



Thanks for reading! Let us know if you have any questions by emailing newsletter_feedback@newsbreak.com. See you tomorrow!

NewsBreak Newsletter Team

From: [Melissa Bradford](#)
To: [DPS61 Board of Education](#)
Cc: [Max McGee](#); [Constance Collins, Ph.D.](#); [Brian Braun](#)
Subject: Board Question and Answer
Date: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 4:07:54 PM

Good evening,

Please see the below Board question and answer was sent from HYA:

Subject: Question about Gaal

I've been thinking and researching this whole superintendent process and one thing that concerns me about Mr. Gaal is his lack of educational experience and certification. I'm not sure he can even get a superintendent endorsement in IL without a Type 75, MS in Ed admin. It appears you have to have at least 2 years teaching experience, as well, and he doesn't. I'm not sure what all the Type 75 stuff is, but I'm afraid we will look bad if we pursue with him. Can this be sent to someone for clarification?

HYA's Response

Good Afternoon,

Given Mr. Gaal's work in other districts, we did not anticipate there being a problem attaining Superintendent Certification with these steps from ISBE listed below. What we do not know and have been working to find out this afternoon is for how long (or if) ISBE grants a temporary certificate and/or if it still requires someone with a Superintendent's Endorsement to sign official documents as was the case with Tony Sanders, the former CEO (and now Superintendent) of U-46 (the second largest district in Illinois) a few years ago. Connie and I know Tony well and Max spoke to him earlier this afternoon. It took him about three years to get his permanent license, and in the meantime they hired an interim to come in to sign papers and join him at Board meetings and cabinet meetings but Tony was responsible for and accountable for the leadership and management of the district. U-46 could have had a staff member who had a superintendent's license sign documents, but both Tony and the Board opted for the other route of retaining an interim (Dr. Ken Arndt). I also recall there was some legislation passed that allowed larger districts to hire a CEO, but we will need to [REDACTED]

Connie is working with a colleague she knows well from the Regional Offices of Education to get more information regarding temporary certification, who can be official signatories, and the like. We hope to have that information within 48 hours.

The bottom line is that if Michael Gaal is the Board's choice, at the very least he would need to complete the coursework in the fourth bullet below and pass a licensure test. The worst case scenario would be that none of his past military and educational experience would not count

at all and he would have to follow a more time consuming route.

Let's proceed with the forum as planned and we will keep you updated as we learn more.

Max and Connie

Option 2: ISBE 80-02

Did you complete an approved out-of-state educator preparation program but did not become licensed in that state? You must meet the following requirements to obtain the IL PEL:

- A master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution of higher education
- Completion of a preparation program in the field of specialization (e.g. superintendent) ([Form 80-02: State-Approved Program and Completion of Standards Verification](#) must be submitted to ISBE)
- [Internship or equivalent experience](#)
- [Completion of coursework* addressing methods of teaching exceptional children, reading methods, content area reading, and methods of teaching English language learners](#) (Use [form 80-02: State-Approved Program and Completion of Standards Verification](#))
- [Licensure Tests: All test scores are valid indefinitely. View the options below to see the required tests for each area. Click here to register for the tests. If out-of-state test scores were completed, copies of the test scores must be submitted per the ISBE 80-02 form.](#)
- [Additional requirements:](#)

- [2 years of experience working full time as a principal, director of special education, or chief school business official, or other administrative position while holding a valid administrator license](#)

- [Pass a Superintendent Test](#)

- **Glenn "Max" McGee, President**

- **Board Members, please do not "reply to all" to this email.**

- [Melissa Bradford](#)
[Executive Administrative Assistant to the:](#)
[Board of Education and Superintendent](#)
[Office: 217 362-3011](#)

From: [Max McGee](#)
To: [Andrew Taylor](#); [Dan Oakes](#); [Melissa Bradford](#); [Constance Collins, Ph.D.](#)
Subject: COLUMN TYPO FIXED Re: Summary of Feedback Data
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 12:38:27 PM
Attachments: [DPS Survey Analysis from HYA.pdf](#)

Good catch, Andrew.

Melissa, please forward the attached to the Board instead of the earlier version with the typo.

Thanks,
Max

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

On Mon, Jan 10, 2022 at 12:27 PM Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org> wrote:

Hey Max,

In your quantitative section you have Michael's data column labeled as "MB."

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Max McGee <maxmcgee@hyasearch.com>
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 11:53:14 AM
To: Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>; Dan Oakes <Danoakesjr@comcast.net>; Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org>; Constance Collins, Ph.D. <constancecollins@hyasearch.com>
Subject: Summary of Feedback Data

Good Morning,

Attached is our report on community feedback.

I have also included a pdf copy of the survey with all the comments. This document is a duplicate of the information I sent Saturday along with the pdf files from each stakeholder group.

Max

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

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From: [Max McGee](#)
To: [Dan Oakes](#); [Andrew Taylor](#); [Melissa Bradford](#); [Regan Lewis](#); [Alana Banks](#); [Kevin Collins-Brown](#); [Al Scheider](#); [Jason Dion](#); [Constance Collins, Ph.D.](#)
Cc: [Max McGee](#)
Subject: CONFIDENTIAL - PLEASE DO NOT REPLY ALL OR FORWARD
Date: Saturday, January 8, 2022 2:45:56 PM
Attachments: [OTHER DPS FORUM Data All 220108.pdf](#)
[SUPPORT STAFF DPS FORUM Data All 220108.pdf](#)
[COMMUNITY MEMBER DPS FORUM Data All 220108.pdf](#)
[PARENT DPS FORUM Data All 220108.pdf](#)
[CERTIFIED STAFF DPS FORUM Data All 220108.pdf](#)
[ALL RESPONDENTS DPS FORUM Data All 220108.pdf](#)

Good Afternoon,

Hope you are having a fine weekend. We are in the process of working on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the forum feedback forms. There were 206 respondents (see attached file "ALL RESPONDENTS DPS FORUM" and they made a total of 156 comments.

Knowing that you may want to read all the comments yourselves, I am attaching PDF files of results for ALL RESPONDENTS as well as each stakeholder group except for students. Only 1 student responded, and the individual rated both candidates a 7 and just made a comment regarding the first candidate.

Max and Connie

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

From: [Twitter](#)
To: [Jewel Grady](#)
Subject: Decatur Public Schools Tweeted: Here are two things you can do to he...
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 9:02:01 AM



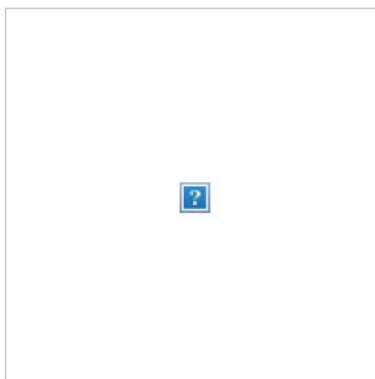
Your Highlights



Decatur Public Schools
@DPS61Decatur

Here are two things you can do to help keep DPS buildings safe for the return of students from winter break.

youtu.be/jD1GDd7-H1s



NowDecatur.com
@nowdecatur

Mendoza announces that Illinois has paid off \$2 billion COVID loan

nowdecatur.com/2022/01/05/sta...



Mark Pearson
@MarkPearsonTV

The @MillikinHoops men's team has more wins at the halfway point of this season than they did in the last two seasons combined.

The reason why? A change in culture.
Players are all-in for new head @CoachKSodie's vision and @MUBigBlue is already seeing positive results.



1



14



48



Alison Flint
@alflint

AKA Profiteering off of a crisis

Walmart, Kroger raise at-home COVID test prices after agreement with White House expires - ABC News abcnews.go.com/Health/walmart...



heraldandreview
@heraldandreview

President Biden marks the anniversary of the Jan. 6 insurrection, saying "democracy held," and offering a blistering criticism of former president Trump. Full coverage here. herald-review.com/news/national/...



WAND TV News 
@wandtvnews

DECATUR, Ill. (WAND) - On Wednesday night, the Decatur community got a chance to meet the finalists for the District 61 Superintendent position - Dr. Malika Savoy Brooks and Michael Gaal.

wandtv.com/news/dps-super...



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We sent this email to @JgradyD. [Unsubscribe](#)

Twitter, Inc. 1355 Market Street, Suite 900 San Francisco, CA 94103

From: [Valerie Wells](#)
To: [Melissa Bradford](#)
Subject: FOIA
Date: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 11:02:12 AM

Under the Freedom of Information Act, I would like to request electronic copies of emails to and from Michael Gaal, and mentions of him in correspondence among school board members and the search firm Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates.

Valerie Wells | Staff writer

Phone: 217-421-7982

Cell: 217-972-7933

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From: [Kyle Auer](#)
To: [Melissa Bradford](#)
Subject: FOIA Request
Date: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 8:00:46 AM

Dear FOIA officer:

Under state and federal freedom of information laws and other relevant legislation, I request all emails and text messages between Beth Nolan, all board members, all district leadership, all staff, HTF search firm, and Michael Gaal from 01/01/2022 to 01/11/2022.

Finally, please provide the date that your office expects to comply with this request. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. This request is non-commercial in nature, and I would ask that you waive any fees associated with the same. I prefer to receive this information in digital form if possible. Digital files can be sent to me at [REDACTED] Please feel free to call or email me if you have any questions. Please note this correspondence was emailed during regular business hours on 02/01/2022. Finally, if there are to be costs, call me at [REDACTED] for authorization.

Thank you for your time,

Kyle Auer

From: [Robert Good](#)
To: [Denise Swarthout](#); [Maria Robertson](#)
Cc: [LochaBrooks](#)
Subject: Follow up on our meeting today
Date: Thursday, January 13, 2022 12:50:44 PM
Attachments: [Notes on Superintendant Candidates and Diversity Equity Race.docx](#)

Hello Denise and Maria,

Thank you for our rich conversation today. I have done a little bit of exploring to try and obtain some material that might be helpful in drafting a press release for whomever the board hires. It is attached with some links. Let me know if you have any questions.

Also, just FYI, when I was doing a search on Michael Gall I came across a [news story from Ft. Meyers, FL](#), dated yesterday, that identifies Gall as one of 5 finalists in their superintendent search. I don't know if you, Bobbi, or the Board is aware of that, but I thought you would like to know that information.

I also did a quick survey of your neighboring schools and the diversity of their administrative leadership. They all have a degree of diversity. Champaign has 8 people of color and 6 whites with a Black, female superintendent. Urbana has a Black female superintendent but all of the cabinet positions are white (they have 6 people of color and 4 white people at the director level). Springfield has a White, female superintendent, and they have 5 people of color and 10 white people in their district administration. That being said, your administration is the most balanced with 7 people of color and 8 white people. You also have two Black Assistant Superintendents.

One thing I noticed, and I also shared with Bobbi, is that all three of those districts have a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion administrator in the district administration. It may be something for Decatur to consider.

Thanks again and please contact me if you have any questions.

Rob Good, PhD
Consultant, 1stClassEducator



From: [Melissa Bradford](#)
To: [Constance Collins](#)
Subject: FW: [REDACTED] reimbursement
Date: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 11:31:00 AM

Please see the below response from the Business office. Melissa

-----Original Message-----

From: Ann Rohman
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 11:30 AM
To: Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>
Cc: Michael Curry <mcurry@dps61.org>
Subject: RE: [REDACTED] reimbursement

A check for these reimbursements will be cut at the end of this month and go to the board for approval on 2/8. I will mail all checks out on 2/9.

Thanks,
Ann

-----Original Message-----

From: Melissa Bradford
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 11:28 AM
To: Ann Rohman <ARohman@dps61.org>
Cc: Michael Curry <mcurry@dps61.org>
Subject: FW: [REDACTED] reimbursement

Hello Ann,

Could you please advise on the Board meeting date that the below reimbursements would be processed:

[REDACTED]
Michael Gaal
Malika Savoy-Brooks

Thanks

-----Original Message-----

From: Constance Collins <constancecollins@hyasearch.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 11:25 AM
To: Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>
Subject: [REDACTED] reimbursement

Hi Melissa,

I received a request from [REDACTED] asking when he will be reimbursed. Any update?

Connie

Constance R. Collins, Ph. D.
Associate
HYA Executive Search
constancecollins@hyasearch.com
C 847.533.0209

From: [Melissa Bradford](#)
To: [DPS61 Board of Education](#)
Cc: [Brian Braun](#)
Subject: FW: Michael Gaal
Date: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 3:14:26 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Good afternoon,

Per Andrew, I'm forwarding you the below email.

Thanks

Board Members, please do not "reply to all" to this email.

From: Andrew Taylor
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 12:35 PM
To: Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>
Subject: FW: Michael Gaal

Melissa,

Please forward to the board:

Please see below. Given fundamental flaws in the candidate selection process and mounting indiscretions concerning that process I now view it as fundamentally corrupted. I will not be supporting any candidate brought forward by HYA.

Andrew Taylor

DPS 61 – Board of Education

From: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 10:42 AM
To: Dan Oakes <Danoakesjr@comcast.net>; Daniel Lynch <DLynch@dps61.org>; Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org>; Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>; Bobbi Williams <BJWilliams@dps61.org>
Subject: FW: Michael Gaal

See below, give me a call if you'd like to discuss.

Denise Swarthout
Chief Communications Officer

Decatur Public Schools
217.855.3639



From: Valerie Wells <Valerie.Wells@lee.net>
Date: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 10:40 AM
To: Denise Swarthout <DSwarthout@dps61.org>
Subject: Michael Gaal

We are hearing rumors that he has dropped out of contention for superintendent. Has he? And if he has, what happens now?

Valerie Wells | Staff writer

Phone: 217-421-7982

Cell: 217-972-7933

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From: [Melissa Bradford](#)
To: [DPS61 Board of Education](#)
Cc: [Max McGee](#); [Constance Collins](#)
Subject: FW: Summary of Feedback Data
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 12:49:02 PM
Attachments: [ALL RESPONDENTS DPS FORUM Data All 220108.pdf](#)
[DPS Survey Analysis from HYA \(003\)-3.pdf](#)

Good afternoon,

Per HYA, I'm forwarding the below email and two attachments. Thanks

Board Members, please do not "reply to all" to this email.

From: Max McGee <maxmcgee@hyasearch.com>
Sent: Monday, January 10, 2022 11:53 AM
To: Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>; Dan Oakes <Danoakesjr@comcast.net>; Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org>; Constance Collins, Ph.D. <constancecollins@hyasearch.com>
Subject: Summary of Feedback Data

Good Morning,

Attached is our report on community feedback.

I have also included a pdf copy of the survey with all the comments. This document is a duplicate of the information I sent Saturday along with the pdf files from each stakeholder group.

Max

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

From: [Andrew Taylor](#)
To: [Andrew Taylor](#)
Subject: Fwd: CONFIDENTIAL - PLEASE DO NOT REPLY ALL OR FORWARD
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 8:16:59 AM
Attachments: [FULL FORUM XLS WITH COMMENTS FOR A.T..xlsx](#)

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Max McGee <maxmcgee@hyasearch.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 9, 2022 4:58:05 AM
To: Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org>
Cc: Constance Collins <constancecollins@hyasearch.com>; Dan Oakes <Danoakesjr@comcast.net>
Subject: Re: CONFIDENTIAL - PLEASE DO NOT REPLY ALL OR FORWARD

Hi Andrew,

Here is the full data file in XLS. Please let me know if you need additional information.

I have already done some number crunching and will have a report for everyone tomorrow before noon.

Max

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

On Sun, Jan 9, 2022 at 12:48 AM Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org> wrote:

Max,

Thanks for the info! Would it be possible to to see the micro data file just like the one before for the candidate profile survey? Basically what you have already provided, just in the excel format.

Andrew

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Max McGee <maxmcgee@hyasearch.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 8, 2022 2:45:29 PM
To: Dan Oakes <Danoakesjr@comcast.net>; Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org>; Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>; Regan Lewis <RLewis@dps61.org>; Alana Banks <ABanks@dps61.org>; Kevin Collins-Brown <KCollins-Brown@dps61.org>; Al Scheider <AScheider@dps61.org>; Jason Dion <JDion@dps61.org>; Constance Collins, Ph.D.

<constancecollins@hyasearch.com>

Cc: Max McGee [REDACTED]

Subject: CONFIDENTIAL - PLEASE DO NOT REPLY ALL OR FORWARD

Good Afternoon,

Hope you are having a fine weekend. We are in the process of working on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the forum feedback forms. There were 206 respondents (see attached file "ALL RESPONDENTS DPS FORUM" and they made a total of 156 comments.

Knowing that you may want to read all the comments yourselves, I am attaching PDF files of results for ALL RESPONDENTS as well as each stakeholder group except for students. Only 1 student responded, and the individual rated both candidates a 7 and just made a comment regarding the first candidate.

Max and Connie

Glenn "Max" McGee, President

Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates

1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor

Schaumburg, IL 60173

cell: 224.234.6129

www.hyasearch.com

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From: [Constance Collins, Ph.D.](#)
To: [Melissa Bradford](#)
Cc: [Constance Collins, Ph.D.](#); [Max McGee](#)
Subject: Fwd: Decatur 61 Reimbursement for Expenses
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 10:10:52 AM
Attachments: [mi_folio_e44466887.pdf](#)
[National Rental Agreement 651651038.pdf](#)
[Flight Receipt - MICHAEL WARREN GAAL 17DEC21.pdf](#)

Good morning Melissa,

Did the candidates receive a reimbursement form from the district? Michael would like to know if the travel reimbursement will be issued as a check or ACH? How long does processing take following document submission?

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Michael Gaal [REDACTED]
Date: Sun, Dec 19, 2021 at 3:22 PM
Subject: Re: Decatur 61 Reimbursement for Expenses
To: Constance Collins <constancecollins@hyasearch.com>
CC: Max McGee <maxmcgee@hyasearch.com>

Connie, attached are my three receipts (flight, hotel and car rental).

Flight--\$1286.40
Hotel\$411.82
Car--\$188.80

total--\$1887.02

Will this be a check or ACH?

On Thu, Dec 9, 2021 at 11:43 AM Constance Collins <constancecollins@hyasearch.com> wrote:

Decatur District 61 Second Round Candidates,

In talking with the Business office, each candidate should submit your receipts for travel, housing and food to Connie once everything is completed. These receipts should be sent via email to me and I will forward them to Melissa, the Board Secretary. Once Melissa receives all of your receipts, She will submit the reimbursements for each candidate into the Decatur 61 system so that the Business office can process as appropriate.

Connie Collins

Constance R. Collins, Ph. D.
Associate
HYA Executive Search
constancecollins@hyasearch.com
C 847.533.0209

--

Constance R. Collins, Ph.D.

From: [Google Alerts](#)
To: dswarthout@dps61.net
Subject: Google Alert - Decatur Public Schools
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 3:14:27 AM



Decatur Public Schools

As-it-happens update · January 6, 2022

NEWS

Watch now: **Decatur schools** superintendent candidate Michael Gaal addresses forum ...

Herald & Review

Michael Gaal is the second of two candidates identified as a finalist for the position of superintendent of **Decatur Public Schools**.



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From: [Max McGee](#)
To: [Dan Oakes](#); [Andrew Taylor](#); [Andrew Taylor](#); [Kevin Collins-Brown](#); [Regan Lewis](#); [Jason Dion](#); [Al Scheider](#); [Alana Banks](#); mbradford@dps61.net
Cc: [Constance Collins](#); [Melissa Bradford](#)
Subject: HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL - SLATED CANDIDATES
Date: Friday, October 29, 2021 12:30:50 PM
Attachments: [DPS Slate Memo PDF.pdf](#)
[DPS 61 DRAFT OF FIRST ROUND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 10-29-21.docx](#)

[REDACTED]
[Michael Gaal Materials.pdf](#)
[REDACTED]
[Malika Savoy-Brooks Materials.PDF](#)
[REDACTED]

Dear Board Members,

We are excited to share the diverse slate of accomplished candidates we are recommending for first round interviews: two African American women, two African American men, and two White men. All are well qualified.

The message below is in a more readable PDF format which is attached, but we have also copied it here. Apologies for some of the spacing/formatting issues in the pasted version.

Max and Connie

Decatur Public School District 61 received 17 applicants for the superintendent's position. Applicants came from ten states, and seven applicants have superintendent experience. As a two member team, we conducted 14 screening interviews.

We are proud to present the following slate to you as our recommendation for first round interviews. These individuals fit the desired personal characteristics and have the professional qualifications in the Leadership Profile Report and have tackled challenges similar to those DPS 61 faces. Moreover, all are actively seeking this job and not running from another. In alphabetical order, they are:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Michael Gaal

President of Sales, Beable Education
Lakewood, NJ

Formerly Deputy Chancellor of District of Columbia Public Schools
Washington DC

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Malika Savoy-Brooks

Chief Academic Supports Officer
School District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Attached, you will find one file for each candidate. Each file contains the cover letter, resume, and two essay responses. You can also access these materials and others the candidates may have included via the Shared Drive link.

[REDACTED]

At the meeting Max will provide some more specific details regarding our rationale for the candidates we slated including what we learned from references and internet screening. Max will also be glad to discuss our rationale for candidates we chose not to slate.

Looking ahead to the Board meeting, please review the materials of each candidate and a draft of potential first round interview questions, all of which are attached to this email.

In Tuesday's Closed Session, here is specifically what we would like to do:

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Thank you for your continued efforts to support the students, staff, and greater community of Decatur Public School District 61.

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

From: [EdSurge Biz](#)
To: [Kelly Mahoney](#)
Subject: How much does the U.S. spend on edtech; An alternative to Zoom
Date: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 6:08:00 AM

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ISTE_vF2_EdSurge_NwsLtr_Header Biz



This issue is sponsored by



The U.S. edtech industry is massive. Yet, curiously, the amount that school districts, states and the federal government spend on these products each

year is something of an unknown variable.

The total figure is in the billions—perhaps between \$26 and \$41 billion a year, according to a new analysis published this month by the Edtech Evidence Exchange, a nonprofit organization based out of the University of Virginia. But that range is merely an estimate—and a conservative one at that.

The ambiguity around edtech spending is doing more harm than most people realize, argues Bart Epstein, CEO of the Edtech Evidence Exchange and a research associate professor at the University of Virginia School of Education and Human Development.

Without transparency around edtech spending and results, schools and states can't share their mistakes and successes. The taxpayers footing the bill for new investments can't see how effective a product is, and the companies can't be held accountable for the big promises they make about student progress and outcomes, which are sometimes based on poor research and shoddy claims.

"We are not collectively learning from each other," Epstein says. "The result is everything is a one-off."

See [EdSurge's full report by Emily Tate](#).

THE HEADLINES

GROWTH SPURT: Venture capital investments for early childhood edtech startups had been steadily increasing over the past decade, before the pandemic paused the trend. But investors and entrepreneurs expect that with the pandemic shining a spotlight on the importance of child care, plus the fact that the field is "highly fragmented and relatively under-tched," the market [will be on investors' radars again soon](#)—and for years to come.

TUTORING FOR SKILLED TRADES: A new online tutoring market has emerged—in construction. With high labor market demand for skilled trades workers, and pandemic conditions making in-person training difficult, business is booming for virtual courses that help construction workers prepare for

license exams. A new company is betting that, just like many students in school and college, [adults seeking virtual workforce training want personalized support.](#)

ZOOM ALTERNATIVE? New startups are hoping to convince colleges to move away from Zoom and other mainstream video conferencing platforms by promising platforms that are made for online teaching. But as colleges increasingly restart in-person classes, [will they need new remote classroom tools?](#)

Sponsored by Samsung

A SMART UPGRADE: “Effective hybrid learning plans go far beyond moving assignments and lessons online and getting accustomed to video calls,” cautions Dave Haynes of Samsung. He offers [advice for establishing smart hybrid classrooms](#) to “make technology central to teachers' day-to-day instruction and students' collaboration.”

PRIVACY, PLEASE: Students are speaking out against the use of remote exam proctoring tools and facial recognition software on campus. [Some colleges are responding to these requests for privacy with more transparency about how and why they use data](#), and with efforts to recruit students to co-create data policies and tools. The hope is not only to avoid blowback, but also to design systems that work better for everyone.

HOMESCHOOL BOOST: Greater public approval of homeschooling could be an unexpected result of the pandemic's forced experiment in remote online learning. At least, that's what two recent surveys suggest. Learn more, plus new data about why STEM courses in higher ed need labs and the toll the pandemic is taking on education conferences in Frank Catalano's [Edtech Reports Recap](#).

NEW GUARD: “Leaders of color are rising and we need to be conscious about how we help each other grow,” argues Frances Messano, the new president of NewSchools Venture Fund. “A new generation of leaders of color are ready to serve. We will work differently than those who came before us.” [Here's how diverse leaders are changing education.](#)

Sponsored by Pear Deck

RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB: Like countless others last spring, Assistant Principal Ronda Smith worried about both her teachers and students in the sudden pivot to remote learning. But thanks to a helpful suggestion from a district reading coach, the school managed to “increase student engagement and continue with instruction during this shift in education.” Smith has since been singing the praises of Pear Deck as a tool that empowers teachers and, most importantly, [“gives the students a voice in a virtual world.”](#)

DEALS

IXL Learning, a San Mateo, Calif.-based provider of a learning resources platform for K-12 students, [has acquired Rosetta Stone](#), a language-learning app-maker based in Arlington, Va.

The textbook giant **Houghton Mifflin Harcourt**, which these days calls itself a “learning technology company,” has [unloaded its consumer publishing arm](#), HMH Books & Media, known for its J.R.R. Tolkien titles, cookbooks and Curious George series. The buyer is **HarperCollins Publishers**, a division of NewsCorp, which paid \$349 million cash.

Udemy, which runs a crowd-taught online learning platform with more than 150,000 courses, announced that it [closed a Series F round](#) at the end of 2020. Company officials say the round raised \$50 million from three main investors: Learn Capital, Winter Capital and Tencent.

Edge Pathways, a New York-based startup that connects students from diverse backgrounds with career opportunities, [has raised \\$8 million in seed funding](#) from First Round Capital, Emerge Education and Rethink Education.

Finalsite, a company that does website development and online marketing for private and public schools, [has acquired SchoolAdmin](#), an Austin, Texas-based provider of K-12 admissions and enrollment software.

Byju’s, a giant Indian online education startup, is [reportedly in talks](#) to raise over \$600 million in a new financing round that values it at \$15 billion.

The following is a message from our sponsor



EdTech companies are moving faster than ever before to meet the needs of teachers, administrators and the school community. Designed to help EdTechs of any size accelerate solution delivery through cloud technology, the Amazon Web Services (AWS) **EdTech Innovation Series** dives into topics that will help you increase product innovation and operational efficiency. [Learn more.](#)

COLUMNIST CORNER

PARALLEL HIGHER ED SYSTEM? A growing number of companies are rapidly expanding their credentialing programs. That makes employers essentially new types of players in higher education, in what some see as a parallel system to academe. Sean Gallagher and Holly Zanville argue that [more research is urgently needed to help understand this changing world of credentialing](#).

ON THE PODCAST

MAKING IT: [What do today's students need to know](#) to be prepared for the world they'll graduate into—whether from high school or college? That's the topic of a new book by Stephanie Krauss called "Making It: What Today's Kids Need for Tomorrow's World." EdSurge connected with Krauss to ask her about her book, and how it was shaped by her own unconventional educational journey.

Sponsored by AWS

THE POWER OF VOICE: When Steve Muth and his team launched VoiceThread, their aim was simple: to improve the value of still images with the addition of voice recordings. Though not designing for education at the outset, they soon heard from a group of kindergarten teachers who were using the platform to great success with their pre-writers. This confirmed Muth's original

hunch—“a digital artifact was worth so much more after the voice had been added to it”—and set him on the path [to reimagining educational interactions](#).

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Rich Milner, a professor of education at Vanderbilt University, [was voted president-elect](#) of the American Educational Research Association.

Paul Bankhead was [appointed chief product officer for MasterClass](#).

Dave Tomar was hired by [AcademicInfluence.com to the role of managing editor](#). Tomar chronicled his work in the contract cheating industry in an essay called “[The Shadow Scholar](#),” written under the pen name Ed Dante.

Sir Timothy O'Shea, former leader of the University of Edinburgh, joined digital textbook company Kortext as its academic advisor.

George Schlieben was hired by Student Playbook as head of operations.

Steve Taylor, founder and former CEO of ED2WORK, [joined the Charles Koch Institute as a senior fellow for postsecondary education](#).

Jennifer Davis was [hired by Learfield IMG College](#), a college sports media company, to be its CMO.

Michael Gaal joined Beable Education as president of sales.

Zovio [appointed new members to its board of directors](#): **John S. Wilson**, former Morehouse College president, and **Ron Huberman**, CEO of Benchmark Analytics and former head of Chicago's public schools.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

EVENTS HORIZON: Blackboard's BbWorld21 has set new virtual dates: July 13-15 and 20-22. The event is free to attend. [See the latest updates in our tracker of U.S. education industry events.](#)

ALSO ON OUR RADAR

Y Combinator is [widening its bet in edtech](#), with 14 education companies in its latest batch. Only two are from the U.S. (TechCrunch)

The FBI has warned of a [surge in ransomware attacks](#) targeting K-12 schools and higher education institutions in the U.S. and U.K. (ZDNet)

The technology to create “deepfakes” has [arrived on smartphones](#). Now is the time to put in some guardrails. (Washington Post)

Last week’s “disgusting” [Zoombombing incident](#) at Carnegie Mellon University shows that colleges are still struggling to regulate virtual events. (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette)

Looking for a job in edtech? You’ve come to the right place. EdSurge has the leading edtech jobs board in the industry with openings from schools, nonprofits and companies.

[Post a job](#) | [See all jobs](#)

[District Partnerships](#) | Goalbook | Multiple

Goalbook is hiring for District Partnerships across the country to fuel our growth. You’ll lead efforts to bring Goalbook into school districts and work closely with instructional leaders.

[Operations Specialist](#) | CodeHS | Chicago, IL

CodeHS is looking for an adaptable and organized Operations Specialist located in Chicago who is excited about making a positive impact.

[Software Engineer](#) | CodeHS | Multiple or Remote

CodeHS is looking for a Software Engineer who will be responsible for helping to build and maintain the codehs.com website and related tools. The role is for a generalist engineer who may work on any number of areas.

Marketing Manager, Education and Business Services | Future Publishing US

| Multiple

Future B2B is hiring a Demand Gen Marketing Manager. As a member of the marketing team, you will be responsible for delivering revenue growth by managing the creation and deployment of high quality content at all stages of the buying cycle.

Account Executive | Desmos | Remote

Desmos is looking for founding members of our sales team to help us reach many more students and teachers.

Client Thought Partner (Southeast) | BrightBytes | Atlanta, GA or Remote

BrightBytes is looking for a Client Thought Partner who will cultivate, deepen, and grow relationships with existing K-12 customers. Success is focused on customer adoption, program participation, rate of upgrades, and overall customer satisfaction.

Events

Post an event • **See all events and meetups**

The Students for Equitable Education Summit | April 24 19 • Online • Free

Students have the answers. Are we listening? Join us on April 24 for the SEE Summit, a national social justice event that engages students as leaders, designers, and facilitators of authentic professional learning for the education community.

ISTELive 21 June 26-30 • Online • \$51 to \$250

Get strategies to help you move from surviving disruption to reimagining learning by joining us to design a new learning landscape!

THANKS FOR READING

Got any feedback? We love hearing from readers. [Shoot us a note, critiques, a joke—whatever you’ve got!](#)

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Event planners: [Feature your in-person or virtual event on our calendar & newsletters.](#)

“Always roll up the sleeves on your shirt. It gives the impression that you’re working, even if you’re not.”

— Ashton Kutcher

EdSurge covers and connects the people, ideas and technologies that shape the future of learning. We are an independent news and research initiative of the International Society for Technology in Education.



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From: [Max McGee](#)
To: [Dan Oakes](#); [Andrew Taylor](#); [Andrew Taylor](#); [Kevin Collins-Brown](#); [Al Scheider](#); [Alana Banks](#); [Jason Dion](#); [Regan Lewis](#)
Cc: [Constance Collins, Ph.D.](#); [Melissa Bradford](#); mbradford@dps61.net
Subject: Immediate Feedback
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 9:30:44 AM
Attachments: [Screen Shot 2022-01-06 at 9.22.21 AM.png](#)
[DPS FORUM QUESTIONS.docx](#)

Good Morning,

We think the forum went quite well. We had 364 attendees at one point and there were more than 140 questions. Several of the questions were along the same theme and I have attached ALL of them for your reference.

Maria has the link, and I will send it to all of you in a few minutes.

As for responses, thus far, we have 132 complete the survey.

1 student

11 support staff

66 certified staff

24 parents

15 community members without kids in school

15 "other" - mostly former employees or spouses of employees

The ratings are very close - both candidates fell between 6 and 7 on the slider.

We have not read all the comments but attached one that struck us right away and we have attached it - it is about how good BOTH candidates were. Congratulations on your selection of the two finalists.

Max and Connie

Glenn "Max" McGee, President

Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates

1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor

Schaumburg, IL 60173

cell: 224.234.6129

www.hyasearch.com

From: [Valerie Wells](#)
To: [Denise Swarthout](#)
Subject: Michael Gaal
Date: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 10:40:56 AM

We are hearing rumors that he has dropped out of contention for superintendent. Has he? And if he has, what happens now?

Valerie Wells | Staff writer

Phone: 217-421-7982

Cell: 217-972-7933

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From: [Sue Long](#)
To: [Dan Oakes](#); [Andrew Taylor](#); [Alana Banks](#); [Kevin Collins-Brown](#); [Regan Lewis](#); [Jason Dion](#); [Al Scheider](#)
Subject: New Superintendent for DPS #61
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 7:39:38 PM

Dear Board Members:

My family and I moved to Decatur 45 years ago. Our daughter would be starting kindergarten in the fall; our son had just turned one. They are now both graduates of the Decatur School System: one is a veterinarian; the other owns his own real estate company in Chicago – but he's a teacher, too! I say that because, I, too, am a teacher with 49 years under my belt, some in Decatur, some in areas schools, and the last 12 before I retired as principal of ROE #39 Milligan Academy (Safe School).

I wanted you to know this information so you would realize that I'm not coming into this situation of hiring a new superintendent without knowledge of what our district has had in the past and what we need in the future.

I watched the "forum" on Wednesday night. First, I do not understand why you felt the necessity of hiring a human resources firm to hone the candidates, why you took that down to only two, and how in the world these particular candidates were chosen!

As I listened, I took notes and recorded questions that I had. When Dr. Malika Savoy-Brooks spoke, she absolutely lost me. She jumped quickly from one subject to the next, never fully explaining herself on anything. It almost seemed as though she had a specific agenda of wanting to get in as much information as possible, even if it did not make any sense. Several times she would go back, inserting something she had forgotten to put in earlier. Dr. Savoy-Brooks has held so many and various positions in schools, that I'm not certain she really ever received adequate experience in any of them. It has been my experience that when an employee is moved so many times to so many different positions, the district is simply keeping that person on the staff for some reason other than ability and does not value that staff member's knowledge or experience. Get that person moved before she can cause too many problems. How the company you hired to narrow the candidacies to the top two put this particular person into the finals totally "blows my mind!" (Sorry, I'm a child of the 60s!)

When Dr. Savoy-Brooks finished, I was SO thankful for a break so that I could take a breath, scan my notes, and brace myself for the next candidate. My imagination ran wild after seeing what your research team had chosen for the first candidate!!!

We were then introduced to Michael Gaal. What a breath of fresh air!!! His presentation was calm and calming. He spoke as though he is a person very much in control of himself and able to create the same mood in others. Though I've never been in the armed services, I much admire his commitment to our country as an Air Force pilot as well as one who has served in various positions of authority in that service. I appreciated his concept of "Recruit, Train, Sustain" for bringing qualified people into our school district to work with our children, helping them acclimate to their positions, and then keeping them here to serve our district for many years. Of course, having worked with young people in an alternative school, I especially appreciated his idea that not all students can be served in the same manner, needing other methods of learning than the traditional classroom.

Certainly, I appreciated his thoughts of being a hands-on administrator, making himself available directly to the employees of this district. This could be a very

demanding position to take, but with some modification, it would be an outstanding means of communicating with staff.

While much of what Mr. Gaal had to say really rang true to me as to the manner in which an ideal administrator would conduct himself, one comment REALLY caught my ear. He does not feel that there needs to be a LONG (no pun intended) string of go-betweens from the teachers to the superintendent. My personal feeling was that he believed less funding needs to be spent in the Keil Building with more being shared in the school buildings themselves. I like that. To me this says he is willing to be hands-on, my type of administrator. (Since I retired from Milligan, I have discovered there are now 3 people doing the job that I handled daily for 12 years!!! Too much money is being spent on administration and not enough on the teachers and students!!!)

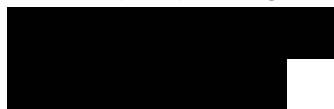
Another of Mr. Gaal's attributes is that he is concise and clear. He was not attempting to throw as much information at us as he could in the time allotted. I also love the idea of his having been a military person. While everyone would agree that we are not running military academies in our district, someone with the type of training he has in managing people could be nothing but a true gift for teachers who are attempting on a daily basis to maintain discipline in their classrooms.

(BTW: The last time I subbed for DPS, I walked out after 3rd hour at SDMS. There was absolutely no discipline in the classroom with no support coming from the office. In talking with the counselors for the next hour, I was informed that was a typical day at SDMS!!! I'm retired; I don't need that! Of course, I realize there is a different principal there now, so hopefully things have changed.) Perhaps Mr. Gaal could get this situation straightened out in all of the schools!!! (You and I both know there are major discipline problems in many of DPS schools!)

By now, I'm certain you are very much aware of the candidate to whom I believe the superintendency should be given. I could go on with other positive comments about my chosen candidate, but I know if you listened carefully yourself, you, too, realize that Michael Gaal is the best person to fill the vacancy of the superintendent in Decatur Public Schools District #61.

Thank you.

Susan (Sue) Long



From: [Max McGee](#)
To: [Andrew Taylor](#)
Cc: [Constance Collins](#); [Dan Oakes](#)
Subject: Re: CONFIDENTIAL - PLEASE DO NOT REPLY ALL OR FORWARD
Date: Sunday, January 9, 2022 4:58:24 AM
Attachments: [FULL FORUM XLS WITH COMMENTS FOR A.T..xlsx](#)

Hi Andrew,

Here is the full data file in XLS. Please let me know if you need additional information.

I have already done some number crunching and will have a report for everyone tomorrow before noon.

Max

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

On Sun, Jan 9, 2022 at 12:48 AM Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org> wrote:

Max,

Thanks for the info! Would it be possible to to see the micro data file just like the one before for the candidate profile survey? Basically what you have already provided, just in the excel format.

Andrew

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Max McGee <maxmcgee@hyasearch.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 8, 2022 2:45:29 PM
To: Dan Oakes <Danoakesjr@comcast.net>; Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org>; Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>; Regan Lewis <RLewis@dps61.org>; Alana Banks <ABanks@dps61.org>; Kevin Collins-Brown <KCollins-Brown@dps61.org>; Al Scheider <AScheider@dps61.org>; Jason Dion <JDion@dps61.org>; Constance Collins, Ph.D. <constancecollins@hyasearch.com>
Cc: Max McGee <[REDACTED]>
Subject: CONFIDENTIAL - PLEASE DO NOT REPLY ALL OR FORWARD

Good Afternoon,

Hope you are having a fine weekend. We are in the process of working on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the forum feedback forms. There were 206 respondents (see attached file "ALL RESPONDENTS DPS FORUM" and they made a total of 156

comments.

Knowing that you may want to read all the comments yourselves, I am attaching PDF files of results for ALL RESPONDENTS as well as each stakeholder group except for students. Only 1 student responded, and the individual rated both candidates a 7 and just made a comment regarding the first candidate.

Max and Connie

Glenn "Max" McGee, President

Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates

1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor

Schaumburg, IL 60173

cell: 224.234.6129

www.hyasearch.com

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From: [Melissa Bradford](#)
To: [Kyle Auer](#)
Cc: [Brian Braun](#); [Christine Christensen](#); [Luke Feeney](#)
Subject: RE: FOIA Request
Date: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 8:43:00 AM

Good morning,

Per your FOIA below, could you please be more specific as to the subject matter and/or a key word?

From: Kyle Auer [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 1, 2022 8:00 AM
To: Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>
Subject: FOIA Request

Dear FOIA officer:

Under state and federal freedom of information laws and other relevant legislation, I request all emails and text messages between Beth Nolan, all board members, all district leadership, all staff, HTF search firm, and Michael Gaal from 01/01/2022 to 01/11/2022.

Finally, please provide the date that your office expects to comply with this request. Thank you in advance for your cooperation. This request is non-commercial in nature, and I would ask that you waive any fees associated with the same. I prefer to receive this information in digital form if possible. Digital files can be sent to me at [REDACTED] Please feel free to call or email me if you have any questions. Please note this correspondence was emailed during regular business hours on 02/01/2022. Finally, if there are to be costs, call me at [REDACTED] for authorization.

Thank you for your time,

Kyle Auer

From: [Sue Long](#)
To: [Regan Lewis](#)
Subject: Re: Forgotten bit for superintendent evaluation
Date: Friday, January 7, 2022 12:00:24 PM

You are welcome!!!
Sue

From: Regan Lewis <RLewis@dps61.org>
Sent: Friday, January 7, 2022 8:54 AM
To: clemlong@msn.com <clemlong@msn.com>
Subject: Re: Forgotten bit for superintendent evaluation

Sue,

Haha! I agree! Bless him for trying to make that connection with us. Thank you very much for your thoughtful feedback yesterday. It is much appreciated and thank you for your years of service to the community.

Best,

Regan

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Sue Long [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 7, 2022 10:38:17 AM
To: Dan Oakes <Danoakesjr@comcast.net>; Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org>; Alana Banks <ABanks@dps61.org>; Kevin Collins-Brown <KCollins-Brown@dps61.org>; Regan Lewis <RLewis@dps61.org>; Jason Dion <JDion@dps61.org>; Al Scheider <AScheider@dps61.org>
Subject: Forgotten bit for superintendent evaluation

It will be absolutely necessary that when Michael Gaal become superintendent and he moves into our community, he learns that it is "Krekel's" that has the wonderful food, not "Kerkels!"

Thanks.

Sue Long

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From: [Max McGee](#)
To: [Melissa Bradford](#)
Cc: [Constance Collins](#); [Brian Braun](#); [Luke Feeney](#); [Christine Christensen](#); [Dan Oakes](#); [Andrew Taylor](#)
Subject: Re: FW: FOIA
Date: Monday, January 31, 2022 5:50:47 PM
Attachments: [meeting_saved_chat_DPS Meet the Finalist Community Forum.pdf](#)
[Decatur Public School District Leadership Profile Report \(LPR\).pdf](#)

Good Evening,

Here is the information you requested that we can share;

1. Leadership Profile Report is attached
2. The link to watch the Community Forum in order to hear all questions and answers (Zoom does not save a copy)
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ffRvt8gUiW20NSt4iKsBKRIIGpBHjTnr/view?usp=sharing>
3. All chat text from the Community Forum

Hope this helps!

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

On Mon, Jan 31, 2022 at 9:51 AM Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org> wrote:
Max and Connie,

I received the below FOIA request. Please review numbers 1 - 4 and advise on the following:

1. What is considered confidential and will NOT be turned over to the public?
2. What is for public consumption?
3. If is a request below that you can respond to, please send the FINAL response WITH REDATCTIONS, if any.
4. If there is no document, please just simply state which number below and "there is no document responsive to the request."

Please note: You do NOT have to CREATE documents in order to answer a FOIA request.

At this time, the response is due February 07, 2022.

If you need our legal advice, please call Brian Braun at 217 359-5012 or Christine and/or Luke at 217 762-9416. I will NOT know the answer(s) if you have any questions.

Please advise

-----Original Message-----

From: Leara Evans <learaevans@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2022 8:42 AM
To: Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>
Subject: FOIA

WARNING: This message was sent from outside the company by someone with a display name matching a user in your organization. Please do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Melissa,

I would like to FOIA the following information:

1. The Hazard Young Attea Associates Leadership profile presented to the Board of Education for use with Candidate interviews.
2. The Hazard Young Attea Associates presentation of candidates slate to the Board of Education.
3. Names of all the Candidates interviewed for the Decatur Public Schools Superintendent of Schools current vacancy.
4. All questions and comments from the Community public session held in January 2022.

Again I ask that if this information is on the District webpage, please forward me the links.

Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

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From: [Melissa Bradford](#)
To: [Max McGee](#); [Dan Oakes](#); [Andrew Taylor](#); [Andrew Taylor](#); [Kevin Collins-Brown](#); [Regan Lewis](#); [Jason Dion](#); [Al Scheider](#); [Alana Banks](#); [mbradford@dps61.net](#)
Cc: [Constance Collins](#); [Brian Braun](#)
Subject: RE: HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL - SLATED CANDIDATES
Date: Friday, October 29, 2021 1:10:55 PM

Hello Everyone,

Thanks Max for the information.

Board Members, I will have printed copies in a binder for you. Thanks

From: Max McGee [mailto:maxmcgee@hyasearch.com]
Sent: Friday, October 29, 2021 12:30 PM
To: Dan Oakes <Danoakesjr@comcast.net>; Andrew Taylor <ataylor@decaturedc.com>; Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org>; Kevin Collins-Brown <KCollins-Brown@dps61.org>; Regan Lewis <RLewis@dps61.org>; Jason Dion <JDion@dps61.org>; Al Scheider <AScheider@dps61.org>; Alana Banks <ABanks@dps61.org>; mbradford@dps61.net
Cc: Constance Collins <constancecollins@hyasearch.com>; Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>
Subject: HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL - SLATED CANDIDATES

Dear Board Members,

We are excited to share the diverse slate of accomplished candidates we are recommending for first round interviews: two African American women, two African American men, and two White men. All are well qualified.

The message below is in a more readable PDF format which is attached, but we have also copied it here. Apologies for some of the spacing/formatting issues in the pasted version.

Max and Connie

Decatur Public School District 61 received 17 applicants for the superintendent's position. Applicants came from ten states, and seven applicants have superintendent experience. As a two member team, we conducted 14 screening interviews.

We are proud to present the following slate to you as our recommendation for first round interviews. These individuals fit the desired personal characteristics and have the professional qualifications in the Leadership Profile Report and have tackled challenges similar to those DPS 61 faces. Moreover, all are actively seeking this job and not running from another. In alphabetical order, they are:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Michael Gaal

President of Sales, Beable Education

Lakewood, NJ

Formerly Deputy Chancellor of District of Columbia Public Schools

Washington DC

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Malika Savoy-Brooks

Chief Academic Supports Officer

School District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Attached, you will find one file for each candidate. Each file contains the cover letter, resume, and two essay responses. You can also access these materials and others the candidates may have included via the Shared Drive link.

[REDACTED]

At the meeting Max will provide some more specific details regarding our rationale for the candidates we slated including what we learned from references and internet screening. Max will also be glad to discuss our rationale for candidates we chose not to slate.

Looking ahead to the Board meeting, please review the materials of each candidate and a draft of potential first round interview questions, all of which are attached to this email.

In Tuesday's Closed Session, here is specifically what we would like to do:

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Thank you for your continued efforts to support the students, staff, and greater community of Decatur Public School District 61.

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

From: [Andrew Taylor](#)
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: New Superintendent for DPS #61
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 7:56:18 PM

Thank you for your feedback and support of DPS!

Andrew Taylor

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From: Sue Long [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 6, 2022 7:39:32 PM
To: Dan Oakes <Danoakesjr@comcast.net>; Andrew Taylor <ATaylor@dps61.org>; Alana Banks <ABanks@dps61.org>; Kevin Collins-Brown <KCollins-Brown@dps61.org>; Regan Lewis <RLewis@dps61.org>; Jason Dion <JDion@dps61.org>; Al Scheider <AScheider@dps61.org>
Subject: New Superintendent for DPS #61

Dear Board Members:

My family and I moved to Decatur 45 years ago. Our daughter would be starting kindergarten in the fall; our son had just turned one. They are now both graduates of the Decatur School System: one is a veterinarian; the other owns his own real estate company in Chicago – but he's a teacher, too! I say that because, I, too, am a teacher with 49 years under my belt, some in Decatur, some in areas schools, and the last 12 before I retired as principal of ROE #39 Milligan Academy (Safe School).

I wanted you to know this information so you would realize that I'm not coming into this situation of hiring a new superintendent without knowledge of what our district has had in the past and what we need in the future.

I watched the "forum" on Wednesday night. First, I do not understand why you felt the necessity of hiring a human resources firm to hone the candidates, why you took that down to only two, and how in the world these particular candidates were chosen!

As I listened, I took notes and recorded questions that I had. When Dr. Malika Savoy-Brooks spoke, she absolutely lost me. She jumped quickly from one subject to the next, never fully explaining herself on anything. It almost seemed as though she had a specific agenda of wanting to get in as much information as possible, even if it did not make any sense. Several times she would go back, inserting something she had forgotten to put in earlier. Dr. Savoy-Brooks has held so many and various positions in schools, that I'm not certain she really ever received adequate experience in any of them. It has been my experience that when an employee is moved so many times to so many different positions, the district is simply keeping that person on the staff for some reason other than ability and does not value that staff member's knowledge or experience. Get that person moved before she can cause too many problems. How the company you hired to narrow the candidacies to the top two put this particular person into the finals totally "blows my mind!" (Sorry, I'm a child of the 60s!)

When Dr. Savoy-Brooks finished, I was SO thankful for a break so that I could take a breath, scan my notes, and brace myself for the next candidate. My imagination ran wild after seeing what your research team had chosen for the first candidate!!!

We were then introduced to Michael Gaal. What a breath of fresh air!!! His presentation was calm and calming. He spoke as though he is a person very much in control of himself and able to create the same mood in others. Though I've never been in the armed services, I much admire his commitment to our country as an Air Force pilot as well as one who has served in various positions of authority in that service. I appreciated his concept of "Recruit, Train, Sustain" for bringing qualified people into our school district to work with our children, helping them acclimate to their positions, and then keeping them here to serve our district for many years. Of course, having worked with young people in an alternative school, I especially appreciated his idea that not all students can be served in the same manner, needing other methods of learning than the traditional classroom.

Certainly, I appreciated his thoughts of being a hands-on administrator, making himself available directly to the employees of this district. This could be a very demanding position to take, but with some modification, it would be an outstanding means of communicating with staff.

While much of what Mr. Gaal had to say really rang true to me as to the manner in which an ideal administrator would conduct himself, one comment REALLY caught my ear. He does not feel that there needs to be a LONG (no pun intended) string of go-betweens from the teachers to the superintendent. My personal feeling was that he believed less funding needs to be spent in the Keil Building with more being shared in the school buildings themselves. I like that. To me this says he is willing to be hands-on, my type of administrator. (Since I retired from Milligan, I have discovered there are now 3 people doing the job that I handled daily for 12 years!!! Too much money is being spent on administration and not enough on the teachers and students!!!)

Another of Mr. Gaal's attributes is that he is concise and clear. He was not attempting to throw as much information at us as he could in the time allotted. I also love the idea of his having been a military person. While everyone would agree that we are not running military academies in our district, someone with the type of training he has in managing people could be nothing but a true gift for teachers who are attempting on a daily basis to maintain discipline in their classrooms.

(BTW: The last time I subbed for DPS, I walked out after 3rd hour at SDMS. There was absolutely no discipline in the classroom with no support coming from the office. In talking with the counselors for the next hour, I was informed that was a typical day at SDMS!!! I'm retired; I don't need that! Of course, I realize there is a different principal there now, so hopefully things have changed.) Perhaps Mr. Gaal could get this situation straightened out in all of the schools!!! (You and I both know there are major discipline problems in many of DPS schools!)

By now, I'm certain you are very much aware of the candidate to whom I believe the superintendency should be given. I could go on with other positive comments about my chosen candidate, but I know if you listened carefully yourself, you, too, realize that Michael Gaal is the best person to fill the vacancy of the superintendent in Decatur Public Schools District #61.

Thank you.

Susan (Sue) Long



From: [Max McGee](#)
To: [Melissa Bradford](#)
Cc: [Constance Collins, Ph.D.](#); [Brian Braun](#)
Subject: Re: Question about Gaal
Date: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 2:42:38 PM

Good Afternoon,

Given Mr. Gaal's work in other districts, we did not anticipate there being a problem attaining Superintendent Certification with these steps from ISBE listed below. What we do not know and have been working to find out this afternoon is for how long (or if) ISBE grants a temporary certificate and/or if it still requires someone with a Superintendent's Endorsement to sign official documents as was the case with Tony Sanders, the former CEO (and now Superintendent) of U-46 (the second largest district in Illinois) a few years ago. Connie and I know Tony well and Max spoke to him earlier this afternoon. It took him about three years to get his permanent license, and in the meantime they hired an interim to come in to sign papers and join him at Board meetings and cabinet meetings but Tony was responsible for and accountable for the leadership and management of the district. U-46 could have had a staff member who had a superintendent's license sign documents, but both Tony and the Board opted for the other route of retaining an interim (Dr. Ken Arndt). I also recall there was some legislation passed that allowed larger districts to hire a CEO, but we will need to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Connie is working with a colleague she knows well from the Regional Offices of Education to get more information regarding temporary certification, who can be official signatories, and the like. We hope to have that information within 48 hours.

The bottom line is that if Michael Gaal is the Board's choice, at the very least he would need to complete the coursework in the fourth bullet below and pass a licensure test. The worst case scenario would be that none of his past military and educational experience would not count at all and he would have to follow a more time consuming route.

Let's proceed with the forum as planned and we will keep you updated as we learn more.

Max and Connie

Option 2: ISBE 80-02

Did you complete an approved out-of-state educator preparation program but did not become licensed in that state? You must meet the following requirements to obtain the IL PEL:

- A master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution of higher education
- Completion of a preparation program in the field of specialization (e.g. superintendent) ([Form 80-02: State-Approved Program and Completion of Standards Verification](#) ☐ must be submitted to ISBE)
- Internship or equivalent experience
- Completion of coursework* addressing methods of teaching exceptional children, reading methods, content area reading, and methods of teaching English language

learners (Use [form 80-02: State-Approved Program and Completion of Standards Verification](#) ☐)

- Licensure Tests: All test scores are valid indefinitely. View the options below to see the required tests for each area. Click here to [register for the tests](#). If out-of-state test scores were completed, copies of the test scores must be submitted per the ISBE 80-02 form.
- Additional requirements:
 - 2 years of experience working full time as a principal, director of special education, or chief school business official, or other administrative position while holding a valid administrator license
 - Pass a Superintendent Test

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

On Wed, Jan 5, 2022 at 12:14 PM Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org> wrote:
Hello Connie and Max,

Could you please advise on the email that was sent for Board Member Kevin Collins-Brown? In talking with Attorney Braun, [REDACTED]

You could also give me a call, if needed.

Once I get an answer from you to the below question, I will send to the entire Board of Education.

Thanks, Melissa

-----Original Message-----

From: Melissa Bradford
Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 11:32 AM
To: Brian Braun <bbraunlaw@gmail.com>
Subject: FW: Question about Gaal

Please give me a call at your earliest convenience. Thanks

-----Original Message-----

From: kevin collins <kcmb151@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 11:19 AM
To: Melissa Bradford <MBradford@dps61.org>
Subject: Question about Gaal

Hi,

I've been thinking and researching this whole superintendent process and one thing that concerns me about Mr. Gaal is his lack of educational experience and certification. I'm not sure he can even get a superintendent endorsement in IL without a Type 75, MS in Ed admin. It appears you have to have at least 2 years teaching experience, as well, and he doesn't. I'm not sure what all the Type 75 stuff is, but I'm afraid we will look bad if we pursue with him. Can this be sent to someone for clarification?

Thanks, Melissa!!

Sent from my iPhone

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From: [Atalece Bird](#)
To: [Elizabeth Brinkoetter](#)
Subject: Re: Superintendent search
Date: Thursday, January 6, 2022 12:30:40 PM

We are re-watching both now in the library while working on things like record sets and weeding. It was hard to get much content from Dr. Savoy-Brooks because she was very nervous and tended to talk in circles. But I liked some of the things she had to say— she talked a bit about reading instruction, she mentioned relevance in curriculum, and she talked about a student advisory council. I was a bit concerned with her hem and hawing about why people would come to Decatur and why she would stay.

Mr. Gaal has an interesting background— I was concerned about how he didn't spend more than a year in Detroit, DC, or Oakland. He didn't address literacy or reading, but I thought his overall answer to this SPED question was good. I would feel more confident about him if he had a good track record of working and staying in districts. But he presented well and I did really like the directness.

Both candidates said they would respond to data, etc. We have plenty of data sources that libraries work, and they both said they like to be present in schools. I want to see whomever we select spending time in our libraries.

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From: Elizabeth Brinkoetter <EBrinkoetter@dps61.org>
Sent: Thursday, January 6, 2022 11:25:47 AM
To: Atalece Bird <AMBird@dps61.org>
Subject: RE: Superintendent search

Just saw this. You probably already know by now, but the other candidate was Dr. Malika Savoy-Brooks. I didn't get to see much of her interview since my child was being a bit needy at the time. However, she does have a long career in education and has an endorsement as a Reading Specialist—which I like very much.

Mr. Gaal doesn't appear to have actual time in the classroom on his resume and has spent the last few years in educational program sales... :/

I didn't hear anyone asking questions about libraries. I would have, but my child was off the chain. Hopefully we will have another opportunity to advocate soon.

From: Atalece Bird
Sent: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 7:46 PM
To: Megan Flanigan <MGlover@dps61.org>; Megan Holt <MEHolt@dps61.org>; Elizabeth Brinkoetter <EBrinkoetter@dps61.org>
Subject: Superintendent search

I jumped on the Michael Gaal zoom a little after 7:30. Who was first candidate? I have wheel of buffering, perpetually-- has anyone asked anything about libraries of these candidates? I would

except wheel o'buffering.

Ata

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From: [Max McGee](#)
To: [Melissa Bradford](#); [Dan Oakes](#); [Andrew Taylor](#); [Constance Collins, Ph.D.](#)
Subject: Summary of Feedback Data
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 11:53:36 AM
Attachments: [DPS Survey Analysis from HYA.pdf](#)
[ALL RESPONDENTS DPS FORUM Data All 220108.pdf](#)

Good Morning,

Attached is our report on community feedback.

I have also included a pdf copy of the survey with all the comments. This document is a duplicate of the information I sent Saturday along with the pdf files from each stakeholder group.

Max

Glenn "Max" McGee, President
Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates
1475 E. Woodfield Rd., 14th Floor
Schaumburg, IL 60173
cell: 224.234.6129
www.hyasearch.com

From: [Atalece Bird](#)
To: [Megan Flanigan](#); [Megan Holt](#); [Elizabeth Brinkoetter](#)
Subject: Superintendent search
Date: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 7:46:26 PM

I jumped on the Michael Gaal zoom a little after 7:30. Who was first candidate? I have wheel of buffering, perpetually-- has anyone asked anything about libraries of these candidates? I would except wheel o'buffering.

Ata

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