

Public input during the interview process

MSBA's process offers three options to school boards for including additional groups in their finalist interviews. Below is a short summary of the board's choices:

1. Rely on the Public Survey Summary Report to represent constituent voices throughout the interview process. MSBA reviews this report with the board during interview training, and boards often choose to use this document for reference throughout the search (i.e. when screening applications, developing interview questions, conducting the interviews, and during board deliberations following both Round 1 and Round 2 interviews). No other public input is gathered as part of the interview process.
2. Create interview committee(s) – these groups interview all finalists separately in addition to the school board interviews. It is important that members of the interview committees not be chosen by the board – instead representative groups should be invited to send someone on their behalf. These groups must then be trained by MSBA to ensure adherence to EEOC protocols (interview format, legality of questions, etc.). These committees would report to the board following their interviews, but prior to the board's final deliberations. It's also important not to call these groups "hiring committees," as this creates unfair expectations and potentially deep resentment regarding the hiring process utilized by the school board. Semantics are important.
3. Invite representative groups to send one person to observe school board interviews of the finalists, then those individuals provide feedback through an online Audience Input Form which asks them to share their thoughts on each candidate's top three strengths and top three opportunities for growth. MSBA then provides the board with this data shortly after their interviews, but prior to the board's final deliberations.

There are pros and cons to each of these options, all of which are discussed with the board prior to making a decision regarding public input in the interview process.

NOTE: Over the past three years most boards have selected Option 1, some boards have chosen Option 3, and only two boards have selected Option 2. For MSBA searches this illustrates a shift away from involving members of the public in the interview process, with most boards relying heavily on the Public Survey Summary Report as the voice of constituents throughout the search process. However, regardless of what other districts have done, you should choose whichever option best fits your district.