

Bill Cala passed over in RCSD; search continues

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Rochester Democrat and Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

William Cala won't be the next Rochester City School District superintendent. The reason why depends on who you ask.

Cala, who served as interim superintendent before Jean-Claude Brizard, applied for the current opening but was not selected for an interview. Search firm BWP Associates reported that his online application was incomplete, lacking a resume and transcripts, among other things.

Cala emailed the board last week objecting to that characterization. The decision of who to pick is the board's, he conceded. But if his application was lacking, he said, it was because the online process was disjointed. "I am not objecting with your right to select whomever you wish," he wrote. "I am, however, asking that you immediately stop using a convenient yet false rationale for not considering my candidacy."

Cala's numerous supporters in the community cried foul at his being passed over; board member Judith Davis wrote that his letter "only furthers my lack of confidence in this search process" and asked that the board grant him an interview.

One of the search firm leaders, though, said both the firm and the board had already considered Cala's candidacy and turned him down — and not because of an incomplete application.

"His application was incomplete, but we didn't just rest on that," Kevin Castner of BWP Associates said. "We had some other candidates we thought were stronger."

Castner said his firm conducted research on a number of applicants — including Cala — in deciding six names to propose as people to interview. It also gave the board the names of every applicant, including Cala, if it wanted to choose another name.

That did in fact happen for one candidate, Castner said, increasing the semifinalists to seven. But the board did not choose to add Cala as well, he said.

"The board had the opportunity that, even though we recommended six people, the board could have put forth a person we didn't recommend for an interview," he said. "Instead of putting it just on us — the board are the decision-makers. We just recommend who we think best meets the profile."

Cala is out of the country and could not be reached for comment. Board member Willa Powell confirmed that several members, including her, didn't support Cala's candidacy.

The board eventually selected four finalists who participated in lightly attended public events last weekend.

It will now choose its candidate privately and attempt to negotiate a contract.

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Cala

