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**TIPTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION**  
**MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** Board of School Trustees  
**FROM:** Kevin Emsweller, Superintendent  
**DATE:** 06/30/2018  
**RE:** Recommendation of Employment

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As you are aware, after an initial consideration to fill this position, the vacancy was reposted to include external candidates as well as internal. We also used the previous screening committee (two teachers, two parents, and three board members) and added two additional parents and two teachers.

As a result of this screening, I am recommending Mr. Richard Stillson for the position of Tipton High School Principal. Mr. Stillson is a Tipton County resident and is currently the Assistant Principal of Tipton High School.

Twenty-four individuals applied for the position of Tipton High School Principal. In reviewing the applicants, eight were eliminated simply on the fact they did not have any administrative experience. The remaining sixteen applications were reviewed and six individuals were selected to be interviewed. Interviews were held over three nights, with Mr. Stillson being interviewed early because of personal commitments. The remaining five candidates were interviewed over two nights the week of June 25.

Prior to the interviews, committee members submitted various questions they wished to ask. These were discussed and prioritized by the committee and each candidate was asked the same question during their respective interview.

Following the interviews, the committee discussed the candidates. The final discussion came down to three individuals, and then two. The committee was evenly split between Mr. Stillson and another candidate. Discussions took place on the pros and cons of the two candidates.

Since the last meeting of the committee (last night), I have reflected on the qualities of the two candidates and the input from the individual committee members during our discussions. I have listened to and respect the different opinions and perspectives of each person who gave up three evenings and more to be part of this process.

There are arguments to be made for both candidates being considered. Both candidates, based on what we know from their interviews and what else could be discovered about them, would be an asset to the school and the community. With all those things being considered, I believe that Mr. Stillson can, and should be given the opportunity to lead Tipton High School. Mr. Stillson is human and therefore, is not without faults. But I believe that he has the foundation and skills set that can be developed for him to become outstanding leader that will take the school forward. He has the advantage of already knowing and has developed relationships with the staff and the community. He is familiar with school policies and state laws that prepares him to meet the challenges ahead.

Mr. Stillson was appointed Assistant High School Principal five years ago. He has been successful in serving in that position handling many of the attendance and discipline issues. He has a background in special education that helps in meeting the needs of special needs students and state requirements. He has been active in many of the activities of the school, as well as in the community. Through our conversations, we have discussed areas of change that needs to be addressed at the high school. Mr. Stillson has expressed the desire to address these same changes and more to take THS to the next level. I am confident that Mr. Stillson has the leadership skills to bring about positive changes for the benefit of the students and the Tipton High School community.

Mr. Stillson will officially begin his duties upon approval with a 224 –day contract (first official day of July 23) and a salary of \$80,000 per year plus a \$900 stipend for cell phone use.

Interview Questions  
Tipton High School Principal  
June 2018

1. Identify one or two skills or techniques you have learned from other principals that you plan to bring with you to THS. Why did these techniques resonate with you? (Jennifer)
2. What professional books/articles/ blogs/ podcasts have you read/ listened to lately that have impacted your ideas about leading a school? In what way did this source change your thinking?
3. THS has utilized Block 4 scheduling for a number of years. What type of experience have you had with a Block schedule? What do you see as advantages and disadvantages of such a schedule? What is your view point on Block vs Traditional scheduling and why? (Rick)
4. A decision is made at a district administrative meeting regarding an instructional issue. You don't completely agree with the decision, in part because you expect there to be significant resistance at your school regarding implementation. How would you proceed?
5. THS has what is known as a "veteran" staff. What do you see as the differences in the job of principal of a veteran staff vs. a young staff? (Amy)
6. My question is based on the fact that Tipton doesn't always have a desirable salary to draw someone to us AND by the time we make a decision, we get a candidate choice number three or four....due to the salary factor AND the timing. So my question is: There are several administrative openings on the DOE website. Many have a close date after our board meeting where we would approve a principal candidate. How confident are you that, if you were offered this position, being Principal of Tipton High School would be a good fit for you/your family?
7. While interviewing for a teaching position, one of the questions always asked is, "What is your philosophy of teaching"? Along the same lines, what is your philosophy of administration? (Kim)

8. Tipton has always had a parent group in the elementary, another, I believe smaller, group conducts activities in the middle school. We now have some very interested parents who have formed a group hoping to include teachers and business members. How would a group like this fit into your administrative style? How would you increase the school's involvement with the community? Are there services or activities that you established at your previous school that you would like to bring to Tipton? (Lori)
9. Recall a time a situation needed to be handled with great sensitivity and tact. What was the issue? What was the outcome?
10. Recall a time you made an unpopular decision. What was the reaction? How did you handle it?
11. In your opinion, how do teacher evaluations correspond to student achievement?
12. How would you bridge the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students? (Jennifer)
13. What would you do if a student or group of students came to you with concern(s) regarding a teacher or a student? (Laura)
14. When you walk into a teacher's classroom, what are five things you look for to indicate whether s/he understands the principles of high-quality instruction? If you observed a sample lesson from that teacher, what kinds of indicators would you look for in determining his/her level of instructional rigor? (Denise)
15. As principal, would you establish a set of instructional "non-negotiables" for your teachers and staff? If so, what would they be? How would you work with staff to build their buy-in and consensus for these practices? What would you do if your staff did not believe in or implement these practices consistently in their classrooms? (Amy)
16. What do you feel are the key components of maintaining high staff morale? How would you go about implementing these components?
17. Schools tend to take on personalities of their own that are generally influenced by the leadership style of the building principal. Based on this, what would Tipton High School look like if you were named principal?

18. "Juuling" is a growing problem in our school and community. How would you address this issue? (Lori)
19. While the school has good attendance overall, there is a significant number of students that have excessive absences. What steps would you take to improve the over attendance issue of high school students?"
20. What made you apply to the THS Principal position?
21. What are the three most important goals you want to bring to our school? Why? Please list the top three responsibilities, priorities, or job functions you feel a high school principal should be focusing attention to. Also, please give a brief explanation why they would be your top three. (Laura)
22. How do you plan on marketing our school to make it appealing/competitive -vs- the surrounding school options? How do you plan on both retaining and recruiting [students] in order to grow total enrollment? (Keilah)