



# WYOMING

## State Board of Education

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## Search for WDE Director enters final stretch

CHEYENNE - Wyoming's search for a Director of the Wyoming Department of Education will soon enter the interview phase as the application period for the position closed May 15. The Wyoming State Board of Education will now prepare to interview applicants by the end of the month in its effort to provide three qualified names to the Governor.

During its March meeting in Rock Springs, the State Board of Education named Ray and Associates of Cedar Rapids (Ia.) as a consultant in the director search. The firm has been taking applications and will help the Board recommend three qualified candidates to the Governor prior to the Governor appointing a State Director of the Wyoming Department of Education. The Governor has until Dec. 1 to make an appointment.

Gary Ray, President of Ray and Associates declined to give a number of applications received for the position, but did say he was impressed by both the quantity and quality of the applications.

"We had a very, very good response for the position," Ray said. "I have done a number of commissioner searches (the firm is or has been involved in searches for state school chief positions in Ohio, Florida and Mississippi) but for this search we had a very good response from people in-state as well as out-of-state. We have a diverse group of candidates--people from different walks of life and professional backgrounds.

"I am very happy with the response to this position."

State Board of Education Coordinator Paige Fenton Hughes said Ray and Associates is now performing background checks on the applicants as well as developing a list of potential interview questions for the State Board. Fenton Hughes said State Board members have access to all of the information submitted by all applicants. That information will be made available to the board members before they make their decision on whom to interview.

The State Board will meet at the Hathaway Building in Cheyenne on May 29 to screen the applicants. On May 30, the State Board will host its regularly scheduled

meeting before hosting interviews for the Director position on May 31 and June 1. The Board's interviews will be held in closed session.

The public will have an opportunity to meet the candidates who receive interviews with the State Board and ask their own questions on May 31 and June 1 at the WDE offices in Cheyenne. Stakeholders attending the meetings with the candidates will be asked to fill out forms offering their opinion on the candidates. That feedback will be made available to the Board of Education prior to choosing the three finalists.

“One part of the interview will consist of a closed session with the state board,” Fenton Hughes said. “The other part of the interviews will consist of a session with members of the public. During the public session each candidate will answer a few questions, which will be the same for each candidate. Then, a facilitator will gather questions from those who attend the interviews, and the candidates will answer as many as time allows.”

In addition to their own questions, Fenton Hughes said Ray and Associates would use comments submitted during public comment sessions, interviews with those involved in education around Wyoming, and conversations with the Governor and State Board members as background for additional candidate questions.

“The board has been committed to involving as many folks as we can and I think Ray and Associates have done an excellent job of honoring the board's commitment to that stakeholder involvement,” said Fenton Hughes.