



Wyoming Department of Education

PRESS RELEASE

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State Board to engage search firm for Director search

CHEYENNE - The Wyoming State Board of Education announced its intention to hire a search firm to aid in the selection of the state's first Director of the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE). The decision came today during a special meeting of State Board in Cheyenne.

The State Board of Education (SBoE) voted 9-0 to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP), which would contract a search firm to identify possible candidates for the Director of the WDE position. Representatives from the State Board said they believed an RFP for a search firm could be developed and ready for the board's regularly scheduled teleconference on Monday, Feb. 11.

Enrolled Act 1, which was signed by the Governor on Jan. 29, transfers the supervision of the Department of Education from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to the newly formed Director of the WDE. According to the legislation, the Governor was required to name an interim director of the WDE upon signing of the bill and did so by appointing Dr. Jim Rose.

The State Superintendent will retain her role on several state boards, such as the State Loan and Investment Board and the State Board of Land Commissioners. The Superintendent's office remains responsible for general oversight of Wyoming education and other specified policy areas. The SBoE is statutorily charged with finding three qualified candidates to fill the position of Director. Those names must be submitted to Governor Matt Mead prior to Dec. 1, 2013.

Governor Mead met with the State Board today and offered encouragement to the board on using a search firm for the process. He said he hopes use of a search firm would produce a wide range of qualified applicants for the position.

"I would like to be left with the idea that there is no wrong person to choose," Governor Mead said. "That is the merit of a national search. We need three extraordinary individuals."

Governor Mead also suggested a modified open search similar to the process used for the selection of judges, where the finalists' names are public.

State Board of Education Coordinator, Paige Fenton-Hughes, offered some options that the board could take in hiring a search firm. Fenton-Hughes said the costs of a selection firm vary. She said some firms base their fees on a percentage of the position's salary.

The Governor will set the salary for the State Director of the Wyoming Department of Education according to the qualifications of the candidate and the requirements of the job. The Governor's office is researching compensation needs for the position.

Members of the State Board also asked that the RFP require responding firms to lay out their process and costs and require the process to include input from Wyoming stakeholders.

"We would be making a huge mistake if we did not include opinions of stakeholders," State Board Chair Ron Micheli said.

While the Governor and State Board said there were no specific timelines in place for the search, each stressed the need for the process to get underway quickly. The Governor pledged his support in the process.

"This board has had a lot to do over the last year or two years and will be asked to do more work," Governor Mead said. "What I would say to you is we will follow your lead. Whatever support you need my office or other agencies, you will have it."