



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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BOARD MOVES AHEAD IN SEARCH FOR NEW COMMISSIONER

(LOUISVILLE, Ky.) – Today, during a special meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education discussed the characteristics it would like to see in the next commissioner of education and voted to hire a firm to conduct a search to replace current Commissioner Terry Holliday when he retires August 31.

Director of the National Center for Innovation in Education and former commissioner Gene Wilhoit facilitated a discussion about the kind of person they would like to see in the commissioner's position. Board members discussed a list of characteristics including professional qualifications, leadership, relationship building and communication skills. The board also considered input submitted by the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents.

"We need to put kids and what is best for them first," board member Sam Hinkle said.

The board agreed wholeheartedly and said that would be its first priority in the search process.

A draft list of characteristics will be culled from the discussion and shared with the public within the next week for its input. All input will be provided to the board for its consideration in finalizing the commissioner characteristics list.

According to KRS 156.148, the commissioner shall possess the professional qualifications determined by the Kentucky Board of Education as appropriate for the office.

Next, Associate Commissioner Hiren Desai described the procurement process for selecting a search firm.

- A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued after the board voted to move forward with the RFP at its April 1 meeting
- The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) issued an RFP on April 7 which closed on April 21. There were three responsive bids. One vendor was disqualified because its bid was not signed.
- Using a rubric that took into account things like previous experience, qualifications, familiarity with Kentucky's education needs, availability to conduct search, references and cost, a subcommittee of the board and KDE staff scored the proposals. Greenwood/Asher scored the highest.
- A subcommittee of the board decided to ask Greenwood/Asher to make an oral presentation to the entire board.

"I am very comfortable with the process we followed," said Associate Commissioner Hiren Desai. "It complies with state law. The procurement process is usually a closed process, but because the state board is considering this issue, it is subject to the open meetings law."

(more)

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Later, the board voted unanimously to hire Greenwood/Asher and Associates, Inc., a Florida-based firm, to conduct the search for the state's next commissioner of education.

Greenwood/Asher is the same firm that conducted the search for current commissioner Terry Holliday, Council on Postsecondary Education President Bob King and University of Kentucky Presidents Lee Todd and Eli Capilouto.

One of the partners of Greenwood/Asher is a product of the Kentucky public schools. Betty Asher grew up in Breathitt Co. and still has a home in Kentucky. The firm has successfully conducted more than 2,000 searches in K-12 and higher education and has a 97 percent rate of return business.

After legal review, Greenwood/Asher and the Kentucky Board of Education will enter into a contract for services. The firm bid to conduct the search for \$80,000 plus reimbursement and other expenses for any candidates.

"You have an excellent reputation. I think you are in a very desirable position in hiring a new commissioner," said Jan Greenwood.

During a discussion with Greenwood/Asher about the process for hiring a new commissioner, the board agreed to act as a whole.

As for a timeline, board members said they would like to have a commissioner by the time Holliday leaves on August 31, but are willing to hire an interim commissioner if need be.

"I think it is important that we move quickly but deliberately," board member Jay Parrent said. "It's paramount that we get this right and get the right person for the job. We need to take however much time we need."

Finally the board went into closed session to discuss with the search firm, people they think might be interested in applying for the position or who they think might be possible candidates. However, board members stressed that all candidates who are interested in being the Kentucky commissioner of education will need to apply and abide by the normal hiring process.

The next regular meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education is scheduled for June 2-3 in Frankfort.

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