

Superintendent selection process to begin January

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News Editor

The process to select the superintendent for the George County School District will begin after the Christmas break.

The office of superintendent of education will no longer be determined by electoral votes of the county, but instead by appointment from the school board.

Starting in January 5, 2019 the school board will begin to take applications for this position and will go until the middle February. Applicants will have six weeks to submit their applications.

An advertisement for the position will be posted for the public on the George County School District website, as well as the Mississippi School Board Association's website.

School board president Barkley Henderson feels that it is extremely important that everyone who wants to apply has the opportunity to submit their application within a reasonable time period.

"Once they put in their application, the school board has contracted a company through the Mississippi School Board Association that will screen the applications to make sure that they meet the qualifications that have been put forth by the state of Mississippi," Henderson said.

Although many applications will

be received, the company will narrow down the list and present it to the school board.

"Everyone that puts in may not be qualified for the job, and once they screen them they'll select the Top 10 candidates that meets the qualifications for being a superintendent," Henderson said.

After applications are sorted by the company, the George County School Board will then look over the applicants and decide who they want to interview for the job.

"All 10 might not make it, and the 10 that they screen may not even meet our criteria so if that's the case then they'll go back and pull more," Henderson said.

Last June the local school board built a profile on their expectations for the next superintendent. The association held a few question-and-answer sessions, which they documented the opinion of the teachers, community and local school board.

The questions that were raised were answered and then compiled into a report for the school board to review during the selection process.

"We want someone who is people oriented, who works well with people, who has the schools at heart," Henderson stated.

According to Henderson, they want whoever takes the job to be a good leader, someone who can work with the county as far as tax brackets.

"We also want he or she to be someone who works well with the



principals, within the schools and with the teachers."

The school board believes that the wants of the people are a very important aspect of the selection process.

In the group meeting with the administrators, they expressed their desires of the characteristics of the next superintendent.

Among the suggestions, the desire for someone who is active in the schools, has an open-door policy and develops plans to unify the district. Some also said that they want someone that will hire high-quality teachers and increase teacher morale.

"I remember making the comment that it was so strange to see what the school board wanted, versus what the teachers and public wanted. It was all pretty much in line. [Everyone pretty much had] the same ideas and that's good," Henderson said.

After the application window closes and the School Board Association narrows the list of candidates, interviews could begin.

"This could take a couple months because we all work and if people come from way off we'll have to

work that in. Hopefully by June or July, we'll be able to make an announcement if everything goes well," Henderson said.

"The school board association will not pick the superintendent, it will be strictly the [George County] school board. The five members on the board will be the ones who pick the superintendent."

Henderson feels that the school district is on a good track and is looking for someone who will continue in the right direction.

"This is the first year that this has ever happened in George County as most of our superintendents have been elected by the people. You know we had no say so in it. The State of Mississippi passed the law that all school districts will be appointed now."

"We felt like this was a big step for us. Not saying that we couldn't do it, but we felt like it would be better, especially with the qualifications that the State came up with.

Several school districts are already involved in this process. "We felt like it being our first time to go

through this process, we needed to contract through the school board association. Part of their criteria is that they would advertise."

"We all want local people, but there's no guarantee that that's going to happen, that a local person will get this job. We as the board want to select the very best person that is going to take our school board to the next level."

"By January of 2020, we'll have a superintendent whether it be our current one or someone new."

"I think it's going to be an experience for us. It's something we've never had to deal with, but I think our board is capable of making that decision," Henderson said. "We're going to look at all options."

"We haven't nailed down if it will be a yearly contract or a four year contract. It is a negotiating factor for someone that comes in here. You know they don't want to pick up their belongings and move hundreds and hundreds of miles to here and only be guaranteed one year so that is a factor and we're going to look at that as that time comes."

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