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New Paltz Board of Education Starts Process to Hire New Superintendent

The New Paltz Board of Education has selected the New York State Leadership Group (NYSLG), a non-profit educational organization structured under the State University of New York (SUNY) Buffalo State College Foundation, to lead the search for its next superintendent of schools. NYSLG was approved by the Board unanimously at its special meeting on Monday, December 9.

The firm was formed in early fall of 2017 and since then has completed more than 50 successful school district leader searches. NYSLG provided stellar references from board members involved in those searches.

“New York State Leadership Group really stood out to the Board because of its vast experience not just with superintendent searches, but with educational leadership in general. Their consultants are experienced, well-connected, former superintendents who have held key leadership positions with state professional associations and who currently teach educational administration on the college level,” says Kathy Preston, NPCSD Board of Education president. “It was evident they have a deep perspective of education and the role of superintendent.”

Robert W. Christmann, executive director of NYSLG, will serve as the lead consultant for the search process. Christmann served for 22 years as a superintendent in New York State. From 2013-2017, he was selected as executive director of the Western New York Educational Service Council at the University of Buffalo. He currently teaches two classes each semester at SUNY Buffalo State on developing new superintendents and administrators. He also has ten years of experience teaching in the New York State

Superintendent Development Program, an eleven-month course of study that prepares school administrators to become superintendents.

Christmann is currently the president of the National Staff Development Council. For six years, he was elected to the governing board of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the national

superintendents' organization. He is also past president of the New York State Council of School Superintendents and has experience as a school board member of his local school district.

Dr. Robert J. Reidy, Jr. will also assist in the search process. Dr. Reidy has been a superintendent for many years in two states, and is also a former BOCES district superintendent. He was executive director of New York State Council of School Superintendents for many years. He currently teaches doctoral students at Sage University in Albany.

NYSLG has outlined the preliminary steps for conducting the search, which includes meeting with NPCSD Board members to review the process and set goals. Using Board feedback, results from a survey they will administer, and focus group discussions, NYSLG will conduct a comprehensive analysis of desired superintendent qualities. According to Christmann, assessing the current needs of the New Paltz Central School District and the development of appropriate selection criteria is central to the entire process. "We listen very carefully," he says.

After identifying desired qualities, recruitment materials will be developed and the consultants will begin contacting potential candidates who fit the profile. "Our goal is to deliver the largest and most qualified list of candidates that match the qualities chosen by you as board members," says Christmann. "We have never failed to deliver on that goal."

NYSLG will carefully screen all applicants, including thoroughly reviewing credentials, and provide a list of candidates recommended for interviewing. "We believe past successes will lead to future successes," says Christmann. "Our reference work is very deep."

Working with the consultants, the Board will select about six semi-finalists for interviewing. Extensive background checks will be conducted. Christmann and/or Reidy will personally speak with candidates on the phone, and where possible, in person. NYSLG will also assist with developing interview questions and the coordination of site visits to applicants' current school districts.

"Working with these consultants, we expect a search with ample opportunity for community involvement in the process," adds Preston. "Hiring the next superintendent of schools is among the most important work we will do as a board."