

School Board Announces Two Superintendent Finalists

Outstanding Candidates Reflect Qualities in Superintendent Profile

On Tuesday, April 3, the Seattle School Board voted unanimously to invite two (2) finalists to continue in the Superintendent Search process. These individuals were selected from an outstanding national group of six semi-finalists who were interviewed by the Board over the weekend.

“We had a very qualified pool of semi-finalists from which to choose,” said School Board President Cheryl Chow. “High-caliber candidates from across the nation were attracted and recruited, and the entire Board was very impressed by their leadership quality, educational experience, and personal enthusiasm. Our interview questions were designed to probe for experience and ability related to the nine points of our Superintendent Profile. During each two-hour interview, we were able to get a very good understanding of the strengths of each individual as they relate to the needs of our district.”

The two finalists for the role of Superintendent include Maria Goodloe-Johnson, Ph.D., currently Superintendent, Charleston County School District, Charleston, South Carolina; and Gregory Thornton, Ed.D., who serves as Chief Academic Officer of the School District of Philadelphia.

“Both finalists clearly demonstrated to us that they have the qualities we are seeking as outlined in the Superintendent Profile,” said Chow. “Their depth and breadth of understanding of what is needed to support teachers to do their best is impressive, and their passion for academic achievement for all students was very evident. In addition, they both have the experience and qualities that will enable them to be successful in building relationships internally and externally, providing leadership throughout our district, and effectively managing resources.”

Dr. Goodloe-Johnson and Dr. Thornton are career educators with 25-plus years of experience that includes working in large urban school systems. Both candidates began their careers as classroom teachers, progressing on to principal and then to senior leadership roles.

Additional biographical information is available below.

Next Steps

The board has invited the two finalists to visit Seattle for a day of interviews and meetings. They will visit schools, meet with the School Board and the district’s leadership team, and also meet with an invited group of representatives from a wide array of community organizations.

The Board will then conduct site visits to the districts where the candidates are currently employed. As planned, the Board is on track to complete the hiring process and name a new Superintendent before the end of April.

Biography – Maria Goodloe-Johnson, Ph.D.

As Superintendent of Charleston County School District, Dr. Goodloe-Johnson is responsible for the administration and supervision of a school system with 43,000 students, 5,500 employees and a \$308 million budget. Prior to joining Charleston County School District in 2003, Dr. Goodloe-Johnson served the students of Corpus Christi Independent School District in Texas. At Corpus Christi she served in the capacity of assistant superintendent, overseeing three areas - instruction and school services (1999-2000), special education and instructional support (2000-2001), and school services and elementary instruction (2001-2003). Dr. Goodloe-Johnson has also served as director of secondary instruction, St. Vrain Valley School District, Longmont, Colorado (1994-1999), and as high school principal and assistant principal (1988-1994). She began her career as a high school special education teacher in Colorado.

Current professional and community affiliations include service on the boards of the Charleston Trident United Way Campaign, the Carolina Boy Scouts, and the Children's Museum. Dr. Goodloe-Johnson also serves on the Broad Advisory Board, and the National Staff Development Board of Trustees. She is a member of the Charleston Chamber Education Foundation and Charleston Rotary Club; and is a community advisor to Junior League. Prior community service includes serving on the boards of the National High School Alliance, National Board for Middle Grades Reform, National Conference for Community and Justice, and American Heart Association. She is also a member of a number of education-related professional associations.

Dr. Goodloe-Johnson has been recognized and honored for her work in education. Among those honors are: American Association of University Women, Denver Chapter, "1996 Trailblazer Award," "The Superintendent of Education Excellence" Award from Mt. Pleasant District AME Hall of Fame (2006), Morris Street Baptist Church Community Service Award (2006), Charleston Branch NAACP Trailblazer Award (2004), and University of Nebraska at Lincoln Alumni Achievement Award (2000).

Goodloe-Johnson holds a Bachelor of Science in Special Education from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln; a Master of Arts in Educationally Handicapped K-12 from the University of Northern Colorado at Greeley, and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration, Supervision, Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Colorado at Denver. Dr. Goodloe-Johnson is also a graduate of the Broad Center for Superintendents.

Biography – Gregory Thornton, Ed.D.

As Chief Academic Officer of the School District of Philadelphia, Dr. Thornton has total responsibility for developing and managing all facets of the instructional, school management, accountability, policy, and compliance programs of the district. He serves 189,000 students, and oversees 272 schools, 15,000 professional and support staff, and a budget of \$2.2 billion.

Prior to joining Philadelphia in 2004, Thornton served as Community Superintendent and then Deputy Superintendent for the Montgomery County (Maryland) Public Schools (2002-2004); Assistant Superintendent for the Winston-Salem, Forsyth County (North Carolina) Public Schools (1998-2002); Coordinating Director of Secondary Schools, Charlotte-Mecklenberg (North Carolina) Public Schools

(1997-1998). He has also held elementary and high school principal positions in Maryland, Delaware, and North Carolina (1981-1997).

Dr. Thornton has served as chair, board member, and member of numerous educational, civic, and community organizations. Recent civic and professional activities include Adjunct Professor, University of Pennsylvania, School of Education and Dissertation Chair, Nova Southeastern University. Thornton has served as a member of the National Urban Education Collaboration, Yale Institute for Teaching and Learning, Coalition of Urban Schools Initiative, Community College of Philadelphia Strategic Design Team, Mayor's Advisory Board for Appointments to Community College of Philadelphia, National Educational Trust Advisory Group for the Reorganization of New Orleans Public Schools, Mid-Atlantic Comprehensive Center at The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education Advisory Board, and Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts Education Board. Dr. Thornton has been a keynote speaker at a variety of national and international education conferences.

Recognized and honored for his work in education, Dr. Thornton was awarded the Citizen of the Year Award from the Montgomery County Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, the Black Achiever Award from the Winston-Salem YMCA, and the Outstanding Service Award from the Caroline County Board of Commissioners. He is also an Inductee, Temple University Gallery of Success, was an IBM Nominee for Technology Superintendent of the Year in 2005, and received the President's Award from the Schoolmen's Club of Philadelphia.

Dr. Thornton holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education/Math from Temple University in Pennsylvania, a Master of Arts in Administration/Supervision from Salisbury State University, Maryland; and an Ed.D. Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University in Florida.

Seattle Public Schools – Superintendent Search Process – Background

In November 2006, the Seattle School Board launched a national search to replace current Superintendent Raj Manhas, who announced his resignation effective August 2007. The School Board hired Ray & Associates, a national executive search firm, to conduct the search. During January the consultants led a series of discussions and meetings where staff, families, and community members provided input on the qualities and experience that are needed in the next Superintendent of Seattle Public Schools. Based on that input, the Board adopted a Superintendent Profile, which contains nine key elements.

Engaging in a national search, the consultants received 39 applications. Eleven (11) semi-finalists were brought forward to the board for in-depth consideration, and six (6) were invited for interviews.

Additional background and timeline information is available on the School Board website at <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/board/search/search.htm>.