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Subject: FW: Louisiana: National school chief search urged

National school chief search urged

by Will Sentell

Capitol news bureau

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[1 Comments](#)

Leaders of a coalition of teacher unions and others who oppose Gov. Bobby Jindal's choice to be Louisiana's next state superintendent of education said Monday they want a nationwide search to fill the job.

"To choose not to invest in a thorough selection process will surely shortchange the state's education system for decades to come," said Jack Loup, chairman of The Coalition for Louisiana Public Education, in an "open letter" to members of the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

BESE President Penny Dastugue said Monday that no nationwide search is planned.

Jindal backs state Recovery School District Superintendent John White for the job.

The governor got heavily involved in this year's races for BESE after he was unable to get enough votes for White earlier this year.

The 11-member board now includes nine or 10 members generally aligned with Jindal and who are likely to back White when BESE decides the issue in January.

At least eight votes are needed to hire a superintendent.

The superintendent recommends and carries out policies that affect about 668,000 public school students statewide.

Loup's group, which also includes local school board members and superintendents, suffered several losses among candidates that it backed for BESE.

In his letter, Loup urged the state board to offer a formal, nationally advertised application process, including criteria for the job, an open evaluation of all the candidates and a public interview process.

In a reference to White, the letter says it would be a mistake to focus on one candidate who is a "recent arrival to our state without formal, professional education credentials, and without certified teaching experience," and that doing so would ignore top-flight candidates "well versed in our state's history and needs."

Loup also is president of the St. Tammany Parish School Board.

In a telephone interview, Dastugue noted that the state has had an acting superintendent since May.

"We don't have the funds or the time to do a nationwide search," she said. "And we have a lot of heavy work that needs to be done immediately, so I don't see that happening," Dastugue said of the request by Loup's group.

She also said the state did an extensive search when White was hired as RSD superintendent.

White, 35, became RSD superintendent on May 1. Before that he was deputy chancellor for the New York City school system.

He was also executive director of Teach for America in Chicago for three years and taught high school English in Newark and Chicago.

The RSD oversees troubled public schools in New Orleans, Baton Rouge and elsewhere.

Ollie Tyler is serving as acting state superintendent of education.

Tyler announced last week that she will leave the state Department of Education at the end of January.

She assumed the job when former Superintendent Paul Pastorek quit in May to take a private job in the Washington, D. C., area.

Dastugue said BESE members will be sworn in on Jan. 9 and the board will meet soon after to deal with the superintendent issue.

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