

Atchison superintendent search progresses

**(KAIR)--The process of hiring the next superintendent for the Atchison Public Schools advances, following the completion of an online community survey and two meetings focused on the topic Monday.**

**The survey, completed by nearly 175 respondents, including patrons, teachers, and students, was intended to gain public input into what characteristics the community is seeking in the next superintendent for USD 409.**

**Face to face comments were also collected from focus groups Monday, during site meetings overseen by Brian Jordan, of the Kansas Association of School Boards, secured by the local district to facilitate the hiring process. "Each focus group, when they came in, I had them kind of gather into some smaller groups, and I had them start talking about what they felt were the most important leadership and personal qualities they would like to see in a new superintendent," Jordan told the Board of Education during a special Monday evening meeting.**

**The session also served to gain the school board members' input into the characteristics of the next superintendent, which were then compiled by Jordan. "So here's what I heard from you all," Jordan said, as he read the School Board's list of qualities aloud. "Commitment to educational excellence, community minded, involved within the community. High integrity, honest, understand community demographics, be involved outside of the office. Forward thinking, progressive with students, have their future in mind. Good communicator, listens well, gives clear direction, listens to what people are saying, or not saying."**

**Jordan explained that prioritizing the desirable qualities of the next superintendent will allow a better candidate selection and interview process. "How we use that information is when we start doing our background work and research on candidates, we'll look at those things that you've said are priorities and try to see if we have candidates that match up to some of those qualities and characteristics. That also helps you all when you get into interviewing candidates, to think about, ok, what did we say...were the most important qualities and characteristics. It lessens the effect of being wowed by a beautiful resume, or somebody that's really slick in an interview, because you've spent some time up front talking about what the most important things are that you need."**

**The search process began November 12 following the School Board's approval of the resignation of Dr. Susan Myers, who is retiring at the end of the current school year after serving more than 10-years as superintendent.**

**Jordan Monday evening outlined the next steps in the search process, saying**

**applications are due January 17. On January 21, the School Board will hold a special evening meeting at 5:30 to determine which of the applicants will be interviewed for the position.**

**The interview process will begin sometime after that meeting, and is planned to be completed by the end of January.**

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