

Minneapolis Board of Education selects Bernadeia Johnson as next superintendent

Written by
Friday, 12 February 2010 16:12



The Minneapolis Board of Education at its meeting on February 9 selected Bernadeia Johnson, current deputy superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools, as next Superintendent of Schools. Her selection comes at the end of a process that began in July 2009, when current Superintendent Bill Green announced his decision not to seek renewal of his contract when his term concludes on June 30, 2010.

Johnson has served as deputy superintendent of MPS since August 2005. She is responsible for providing leadership, leadership development, service and support to improve the academic achievement of all students in the Minneapolis Public Schools. Johnson believes that all students should have high quality leaders and teachers and a rigorous curriculum that promotes critical thinking, engages learning and prepares them for success in the twenty-first century.

One of the key architects of the development of the Minneapolis Public Schools Strategic Plan 2007-2012, Johnson plans to focus on accelerating academic progress for all students in her new role as Superintendent of Schools. During her meetings with the community during the superintendent search process, she emphasized the importance of high expectations and accountability for herself and every employee in the Minneapolis Public Schools. She also stressed the importance of community involvement in and beyond the school day to promote continuous learning for all students.

Johnson's work in Minneapolis has included leading the Academic Leadership Team, which identifies school reforms and practices that support accelerating student achievement and makes decisions that impact curriculum and instruction, professional development, assessment and accountability for the district. She has also been instrumental in establishing programs to improve principal leadership and teacher quality; forging partnerships with universities, foundations and community organizations; and planning for the academic, financial and operational future of the Minneapolis Public Schools.

From April 2004 to July 2005, Johnson held the position of deputy superintendent of Memphis City Schools, the largest school system in the state of Tennessee, where she was responsible for the creation of a team that included representatives from academic departments to focus on the clear alignment of academically focused work. She was principal at Elizabeth Hall Community School in Minneapolis from July 1999 to March 2004. Johnson taught and served

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as an assistant principal in the Saint Paul Public School district from 1991 to 1999. Prior to her work in the education field, Johnson was a financial analyst in Minneapolis.

Johnson is currently completing her dissertation for a Doctorate in Education Policy and Administration at the University of Minnesota. She received her superintendent's licensure in Minnesota in 2006 and her principal's licensure in 1997. Johnson earned her Master of Arts degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of St. Thomas in 1992 and her Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Disorders from Alabama A & M University.

In preparing for identifying a new superintendent, Board of Education met twice with national consultants to identify effective selection processes. Board members also reviewed the six responses to a request for proposals from firms that assist districts in conducting superintendent searches. Additionally, board members conducted 24 listening sessions to hear community members' evaluation of MPS, their vision for how to move forward and their criteria for a new superintendent. The board then met three additional times in retreat to discuss the information members had received, their own evaluation of the district, their priorities for moving forward and whether to conduct a national, regional or internal search for the next superintendent.

After Johnson's selection as the single candidate for the superintendent position, the board hosted three community meetings in different areas of the city to provide community members with the opportunity to meet Johnson, hear about her vision for MPS and ask questions. A formal interview that took place on February 4 was open to the public and was broadcast on Minneapolis Channel 15, KBEM Jazz 88 (88.5 FM) radio and online.

The Board of Education's vote to select Johnson authorizes Board Chair Tom Madden to enter into contract negotiations with Johnson. The contract will be voted on by the board in the spring of 2010.