



Independence Board of Education Names Finalists for Next District Superintendent

March 10, 2023

INDEPENDENCE, IA — The Independence Community School District Board of Education has announced three finalists in its search for the district's next superintendent. Out of the 18 applicants for the position, six candidates were invited to screening interviews on March 7.

Following the screening interviews, the three finalists are Ben Petty, Cynthia Phillips, and Erik Smith.

Petty currently serves as superintendent of the BCLUW Community School District, where his responsibilities include budgeting, negotiating, financial forecasting, and other aspects of school finance. Petty also serves as a member of the Conrad Development Committee, dedicated to promoting business, cultural, and community growth in the city of Conrad, Iowa. Previously, Petty was principal of BCLUW High School.

As executive director of high school education in the Cedar Rapids CSD, Phillips has been responsible for supporting educational programming for 5,000 high school students in four comprehensive high schools, one alternative school, and one online academy. Additionally, Phillips is a member of the Postsecondary Course Audit Committee for the Iowa Department of Education. Phillips previously served as principal of North Polk High School.

Currently, Smith is the shared superintendent of the AGWSR and Gladbrook-Reinbeck CSDs, where he has maintained a steady unspent authorized budget while increasing staffing to add more programming for students in both districts. He has been professionally involved in the School Administrators of Iowa and the American Association of School Administrators. Previously, Smith served as high school principal in the Clarion-Goldfield-Dows CSD.

As a next step, the board and stakeholder interview teams will conduct final interviews with each of the three finalists on Tuesday, March 21. The board then plans to discuss the candidates and reach a final decision soon after the formal interviews.

The next superintendent will begin leading the Independence Community School District effective July 1, 2023.

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