



For Immediate Release

February 21, 2025

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North Ed Board Selects 5 Candidates in Search for New Superintendent

Interviews Scheduled for March 3-5

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. – During a special meeting held Feb. 20, 2025, the Northwest Education Services (North Ed) Board of Education selected five candidates to be interviewed for the regional superintendent position.

The board intends to make an offer to its preferred candidate by late March, with the new superintendent to start July 1.

“Thank you to everyone who showed an interest in this position. We had many qualified applicants with excellent resumes and work experiences which made this decision a difficult one for the board to make,” said North Ed Board President Joe Fisher. “Our path from here becomes more challenging as we continue this process to determine who among these high-caliber candidates may be the best fit for our community.”

Candidate interviews are open to the public and will take place March 3- 5 at North Ed’s Arnell Administration Building, 1101 Red Drive, Traverse City. They are scheduled as follows:

March 3:

- 4:30 p.m.: Kathleen Xenakis-Makowski, Superintendent, Johannesburg-Lewiston Area Schools; President of the Michigan Association of School Administrators
- 6 p.m.: John Mertz, Superintendent, Olivet Community Schools

March 4:

- 6:15 p.m.: Michael Haynes, Director of Instructional Services, Char-Em Intermediate School District

March 5:

- 4:30 p.m.: Stephanie O’Dea, Director of Instructional Systems, Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators
- 6 p.m.: Dr. Tara Mager*, Superintendent, Clare-Gladwin Regional Educational Service District

The five candidates were selected from a pool of 22 applicants. The board may return to the pool of applicants if the five selected candidates do not meet expectations or withdraw from the process.

Pete Haines, a consultant with Michigan Leadership Institute, is supporting the North Ed Board with the search. Haines created a job profile based on community input that highlighted good communication skills, an openness to trying new things and bringing new ideas to the organization as sought-after characteristics in a new superintendent. The organization's next leader would also ideally have knowledge of both local school district and intermediate school district operations and programming, along with administrative work experience.

Current North Ed Superintendent Dr. Nick Ceglarek is retiring after being hired for the role in 2017. Prior to starting at North Ed, Ceglarek served as superintendent at Hudsonville Public Schools, Fruitport Community Schools and Baldwin Community Schools. He began his career in education as a math teacher at Rockford Public Schools.

Northwest Education Services supports 20,000 students and more than 30 school districts across the five counties of Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska and Leelanau. As the intermediate school district, it provides early childhood services, special education and vocational education programming for students, professional development for educators and various support services for districts.

More information related to North Ed's superintendent search can be found [online](#).

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**Tara Mager has successfully defended her dissertation and will officially receive her doctorate degree in April.*