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School Board negotiating deal for interim administrator

The Northern Ozaukee School Board is poised to hire an interim superintendent while continuing to search for a replacement for Bill Harbron.

School Board President Paul Krause said the board is negotiating with retired Random Lake School District Supt. Joseph Gassert to lead the Fredonia district on a temporary basis.

“We are finalizing details on things like how many days a week he would be expected to work and the hourly rate,” Krause said.

One of the initial stumbling blocks in the talks with Gassert was how long he would be expected to be at the helm. Krause said the board agreed the interim agreement would expire Oct. 1, or earlier if a superintendent is hired.

“That timing was important to Joe because he has a lot going on,” Krause said.

Gassert, who lives in Mequon, serves as a mentor to administrators from Milwaukee Public Schools.

His name also appears on the list of potential interim superintendents compiled by the Wisconsin Association of School Administrators.

The board is expected to finalize an offer to Gassert during its board workshop meeting, at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 26.

If an agreement is reached, Gassert is expected to be on the job by Aug. 1.

Going the interim route is not new territory for the school district.

Harbron was hired in fall of 2002 as an interim superintendent when Jack Roller suddenly resigned. That interim qualifier was eventually dropped.

After nine years with the district, Harbron submitted his resignation, effective at the end of the 2010-11 school year.

Since that time, Pupil Services Director Barb Peterka has been serving as acting superintendent.

An initial search for superintendent candidates was narrowed to a field of three, but the search process was reopened when one of those top candidates withdrew from consideration.

Krause said a search for a permanent superintendent continues, with the district accepting applications through Aug. 22.

Candidate interviews are planned for early September.