

Saint Paul Public Schools Board Member resigns early

Written by

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Tom Goldstein, Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) Board of Education Director, today resigned from the Board of Education effective Nov. 11, 2009. Given the critical superintendent decision facing the Board this month, the SPPS Board plans to act on the appointment of Board Member Elect Jean O'Connell to fill the remainder of Mr. Goldstein's term to so she can fully participate in superintendent selection process. On Nov. 11, the Board also plans to act on the early appointment of Board Member Elect Vallay Varro.

Ms. O'Connell, as with all members elected during regular Board elections, was scheduled to take office effective Jan. 5, 2010, at the Board's annual meeting. Ms. Varro, who won the special election to replace Tom Conlon for the remaining two years of his term, was originally scheduled to take office Nov. 17th.

"Ms. Varro was elected by the public and we want to give her the option of participating in the semi-finalist process as a full Board Member, as we plan to do for Ms. O'Connell. We are taking our legal authority to appoint Ms. Varro early to complete Mr. Conlon's term," Board of Education Chairwoman Kazoua Kong-Thao said. "This will allow us to have the full Board of Education participating in the entire superintendent interview and selection process."

Ms. Kazoua Kong-Thao said she has been in communication individually with each Board Director today, as well as with Ms. O'Connell and Ms. Varro. Given the exceptional nature and timing of the superintendent decision facing the Board this month, the Board of Education plans to take three special and separate actions at its Special Meeting Nov. 11:

the acceptance of Mr. Goldstein's resignation.

the appointment of Ms. O'Connell, effective Nov. 11, to complete Mr. Goldstein's term until the annual Board meeting January 5, 2010.

the special Board appointment of Ms. Varro to serve between Nov. 11th and Nov. 17th, at which time she will assume office by virtue of her election.

"Ms. O'Connell and Ms. Varro have each informed me that if the Board approves the actions tomorrow, they plan to accept the appointments effective Nov. 11, 2009," Ms. Kong-Thao said. "I want to take an opportunity to thank Mr. Goldstein for his service to the Saint Paul Public Schools and for this gracious gesture that will allow the Board member who will be working with the next superintendent to make the decision about the selection," Kong-Thao added. "It is an act of leadership that should be acknowledged and appreciated."

In other SPPS news, the Interim Superintendent shared with the Board of Education at tonight's Committee of the Board Meeting that the District is projecting a \$23 to \$28 million deficit for the 2010-11 school year. The District is planning an earlier and broader process for development of the 2010-11 budget, and more information will be shared in the coming weeks as the budget timeline is finalized.