

# **NEWS**

*from Durango School District 9-R*



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## **9-R board approves contract with Dr. Keith Owen**

The Durango School District 9-R Board of Education has approved a contract with Dr. Keith Owen to hire him as the district's next superintendent.

"The board is thrilled to have Dr. Owen join our community and school district. We believe he will be a great addition and complement our superb existing staff," said board President Floyd Patterson.

Dr. Owen was the top candidate to emerge after a nine-month selection process that involved a 14-member committee made up of board members and school/community representatives. The board extended an offer of employment to the Pueblo School District No. 60 chief academic officer Tuesday, April 22. The board accepted the contract with Owen after more than two weeks of contract negotiations between attorneys.

Dr. Owen was selected for the superintendent position based on his ability to meet the criteria established during the community meetings last fall. He has demonstrated extensive strategic planning experience, educational leadership experience in the positions that he held in Pueblo, and has had success in closing achievement gaps, curriculum alignment, and Professional Learning Communities.

The board said they believed he has a "genuine concern for students and the education of students, accompanied by a commitment to be a collaborative team player who will provide focus and inspiration for all district staff members." The board noted that Owen seems to thrive on diversity of opinion, has great vision, is able to digest data, and has the ability to establish "great" relationships.

The contract includes a three-year term that can be extended by one year annually, beginning July 1, 2008, at a salary of \$150,000.

Owen will succeed current superintendent Mary Barter, who retires in June after nine years as 9-R's educational leader. The board will host a community reception to honor her service to the district from 5 to 8 p.m. on Friday, May 16, at the DoubleTree Hotel.

Owen is currently the chief academic officer of Pueblo School District No. 60 in Pueblo, Colo. where he has direct responsibility for academic student achievement at 36 schools, provides leadership, supervision, development and management of all district schools and principals, and supervises and mentors the instructional central office team that includes the directors of Exceptional Students, Assessment and Technology, Technology, Career/Technical and Secondary Education, Elementary Education, Early Childhood, and other departments.

The Pueblo district has more than 18,000 students and a budget of \$200 million. Owen's accomplishments include development and implementation of \$7.1 million magnet school grant, alignment of the curriculum to international, national, and state standards and benchmarks; and revision of all school improvement plans to satisfy federal, state and local requirements.

Before becoming chief academic officer, Owen was the executive director of elementary education and the director of reading at Pueblo School District No. 60. Owen also was the principal of Beulah Heights Elementary School in Pueblo for five years, the principal of John Mall High School in Walsenburg, Colo., and an elementary teacher in Pueblo. In 2003, the Colorado Association of School Executives named Owen the principal of the year while he was at Beulah Heights.

Owen has a bachelor's degree in psychology and elementary education from Colorado State University, a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Northern Colorado, and a doctorate in educational administration from the University of Denver.

For more information, contact the Office of Public Information at 247-5411, ext. 1400 or Floyd Patterson at 970-259-7700.

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