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### **DPS board considering where to look for Bennet's successor**

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**By Jeremy P. Meyer**

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Denver Public Schools officials are considering whether to look within or search elsewhere to replace outgoing Superintendent Michael Bennet.

The seven-member elected school board met Saturday night in private session to discuss the selection process.

"The key criteria for the board is continuity and stability," said Theresa Peña, board president. "The real tragedy in urban education is new superintendent, new reforms and you start all over. What happens in that whole pendulum swing is teachers get screwed and kids' education is compromised."

The goal, Peña said, is to maintain the district's focus on improving achievement.

"The best way to do that is continuity and stability," she said. "Ideally, it would be an internal candidate to do that, though there are some tremendous external candidates."

Internally, DPS's chief operations officer Tom Boasberg — a friend of Bennet's who was an executive at Level 3 Communications — would seem to be the top choice.

Boasberg worked alongside Bennet on the district's financial structure, including work with the legislature on retooling the pension system.

He also was a key negotiator with the teachers union over a three-year contract that was ratified last summer.

"There isn't a natural successor except for Boasberg," said Van Shoales, education expert with the Denver-based Piton Foundation.

"They need an academic leader," he said. "You need someone who is going to continue to support the decentralization in the district with an emphasis on school performance."

"They will probably have to go to a national search," said Tony Lewis, director of the Donnell-Kay Foundation.

*Jeremy P. Meyer: 303-954-1367 or [jpmeyer@denverpost.com](mailto:jpmeyer@denverpost.com)*

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