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BREAKING NEWS: SWR board selects superintendent finalist

By [Samantha Brix](#) | June 21, 2011 in [Education](#), [News](#)

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A finalist has been announced in the search for a new superintendent of the Shoreham-Wading River School District and he could be hired as early as tonight, school officials said.

Steven Cohen, the assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction and assessment in the Rye City School District in Rye, N.Y. is in line to take the reigns from outgoing superintendent Harriet Copel, whose contract expires at the end of July.

“We followed the guidelines that were formulated by the community,” said school board president Jack Costas of the search process. “He has a comprehensive view of the issues facing schools today, and he has a tremendous amount of classroom experience.”

“He’s not only a master educator, but he’s an incredibly efficient curriculum writer,” Mr. Costas continued.

Dr. Cohen did not immediately return phone calls for comment.

Mr. Costas said before holding the assistant superintendent position at Rye, Dr. Cohen served as the social studies department chair in the Roslyn School District in Nassau County. Prior to that, he taught history and

social studies for 13 years at Trinity School, a coeducational day school in Manhattan.

Dr. Cohen went to Wesleyan University for undergraduate schooling and he holds two masters degrees and a Phd in history and sociology from Columbia University, Mr. Costas said.

“He has superior knowledge,” Mr. Costas said. “He is extremely intelligent.”

In a statement posted on Shoreham-Wading River’s website, Dr. Cohen wrote: “I was attracted to your community in part because of your public commitment to ‘authentic assessment.’”

“In its November, 2009 ‘Educational Goals’ statement, the Shoreham-Wading River Central School District made it clear that this community wants its young people to ‘demonstrate an in-depth understanding of a topic of interest’ by the time they leave Shoreham-Wading River High School,” Dr. Cohen continued. “This is the kind of strategic goal that good and successful schools strive to accomplish because it is this kind of learning that stimulates young people to learn about their world in serious ways — and to master the skills needed to do so.”

The announcement comes on the heels of [complaints from a handful of residents](#) at the June 7 school board meeting about secrecy surrounding the search for a new superintendent, which was carried out by the board and the consulting firm School Leadership.

Board members Bill McGrath, Mike Fucito and Leo Greeley said at that meeting they all took issue with the way the search had been conducted, but Mr. Costas said on Tuesday that all board members have since unanimously agreed to select Dr. Cohen as the sole finalist.

Dr. Cohen toured each of the district’s five buildings, as well as the District Office, on Monday. The district will hold a community forum at 7:30 p.m. next Monday in the high school’s library to afford residents the opportunity to meet Dr. Cohen.

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