

Byars on short list for school chief

• The Rome school board is expected to make its choice between two finalists by the end of February.

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Lou Byars



Bobby Virgil
Cole



Faith Collins

The field for Rome City Schools' new leader has narrowed to two candidates: the system's current interim superintendent and an assistant superintendent from Henry County Schools.

During a called meeting Friday morning, the Rome Board of Education announced that interim superintendent Lou Byars and Bobby Virgil Cole, assistant superintendent of Henry County Schools, are the two final candidates.

"We narrowed down from 46 applicants to five candidates to interview and have named the final two," said Faith Collins, board chairwoman. "We are hoping to have a superintendent chosen some time after Feb. 23."

By law, the board had to make the information about the finalists available to the public at least 14 days before coming to a decision.

Byars has served as interim superintendent since former superintendent Mike Buck left in September. Before serving as interim, he was the system's chief operations officer for two years. He also served as the director of financial review for the Georgia Department of Education from 2011 to 2014 and Calhoun City Schools chief financial officer from August 2014 to February 2015. He was Rome City Schools' finance director from 2008 to 2011.

Cole has served as assistant superintendent at Henry County Schools since 2014. He was previously director of human resources for Henry County from 2011 to 2014. He also was principal of East Lake Elementary from 2004 to 2011 and assistant principal of Cotton Indian Elementary from 2002 to 2004.

"We are very excited about this," said Collins. "We have two excellent final candidates to choose from and we want to do what is best for our students and our school system."

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