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NEWS RELEASE

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Sheriff Calls for the Milwaukee Board of School Directors to Make the Process of Selecting the Next Superintendent Open to the Public

Milwaukee, WI – It has been nearly one month since Dr. Gregory Thornton announced that he was leaving to take a post with the City of Baltimore school district. Since that time we have heard nothing from the MPS Board of School Directors as to how they will go about selecting the next superintendent to head the state's largest urban K-12 public school system. Next to the position of police chief, there is no more important position to fill in city government.

Will the school board conduct a national search? Will they hire a search firm? How long will it be before the position is filled? Will the public be offered hearings to give input on what they want in a superintendent? Most people have no idea of how the Milwaukee School Board goes about this important task. They have an obligation to inform the public about the process and keep us updated as it moves along. I don't want to wake up one day and find out that the job has been offered to someone before the community gets an opportunity to weigh in.

This process needs to be open to the public. Mayor Tom Barrett indicated a desire to be part of the selection process but he has said nothing since. I believe that Barrett should pursue the legislative changes necessary for him to take over the school system to give it a better chance to succeed. Then he can pick the superintendent himself and assume responsibility. Does he have the will? Does he want the responsibility?

The local newspaper should be all over this selection process and want to keep the public informed from the start, not at the end when it's too late. School Board President Michael Bonds should be made to hold a news conference detailing a written plan for this process. The days of choosing a Superintendent in a back room are over.

Anyone who has been paying attention is aware of the problems plaguing Milwaukee Public Schools. Worsening reading and math scores of the largely black and Hispanic

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school system, poor graduation rates, truancy problems and a growing black achievement gap are just a few of the issues facing MPS.

No candidate should be considered a finalist without their having a written detailed plan on how they will reverse these problems, including a timetable and benchmarks. These plans should be made public for the stakeholders to weigh-in and submit questions at a series of public hearings, preferably televised and at night. That's how important this is. *Dancing with the Stars, Scandal* and *American Idol* can wait.

This may very well be our last chance to save this ailing school system, which is inextricably tied to the future of Milwaukee.

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