

Palisade man named new education commissioner

Written by Wauneta Breeze
Tuesday, 31 December 2013 18:02 -

By Grant Schulte

Associated Press

LINCOLN (AP)—A Nebraskan who helps coordinate services for students, teachers and school districts was chosen as the state's new education commissioner.

The State Board of Education announced last Thursday it had unanimously chosen Matthew Blomstedt of Central City for the job out of four finalists. Blomstedt will replace Roger Breed, who retired earlier this year.

Blomstedt, a native of Palisade, serves as executive director of the Nebraska Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council. The six-year-old council works with Nebraska's 17 educational service units, which provide staff training, technology and instructional materials to schools.

The board voted 8-0 to approve Blomstedt. Board members pointed to his experience with educators throughout the state, and his work with rural Nebraska schools. Board members noted that, in his current job, Blomstedt had met with more than 100 Nebraska superintendents. He also has worked closely with state lawmakers.

"He was so well-informed about the needs in education throughout Nebraska," said board member Lillie Larsen of Lincoln. "I personally appreciated that he stressed his willingness to negotiate, to come to agreement on the best educational policy."

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Blomstedt received a Ph.D. in educational leadership and higher education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, in addition to a master's degree in community and regional planning and a bachelor's degree in political science.

Blomstedt also has headed the Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association and worked as a research analyst for the Nebraska Legislature's Education Committee.