

Gateway Superintendent Selection Committee Report

March 7/2025

Introduction

With Bishop Cowart as Chair, the Superintendent Selection Committee has diligently undertaken the responsibility of sourcing, qualifying, and selecting a Superintendent nominee for recommendation and approval at the Annual Conference. It is essential to share the context, process, decisions, and supporting arrangements with the Conference in preparation for the affirmation vote scheduled for April 9-10, 2025. The Committee believes Tyler Boyer is the right Superintendent nominee to advance the Gateway Conference during this transition. We hope the following information will give you confidence in our process and the resulting nomination.

Selection Committee

- Bishop Keith Cowart – Search Committee Chair
- Pastor Tyler Boyer (MEGA Chair) – Knox Knolls FMC(Recused as candidate)
- Mark Schaefer – Emmanuel FMC
- Pastor Brian Hartley (MEGA) – Greenville FMC
- Andy Davis – Foundation FMC
- Pastor Eugene Dunkley – Coffeen FMC
- James Mannigel – Mt. Olivet FMC
- Pastora Glo Rivera – MAPS FMC
- Karen Whitlock – Knox Knolls FMC
- Pastor Steve Pichaske (BOA) – Greenville FMC
- Pastor Mike Aden (BOA Chair)- The Bridge FMC

Context

Selecting a new Superintendent is always a serious undertaking. This effort was particularly challenging for several reasons. First, Superintendent Tolly departed with a little more than one year remaining in his term. Second, denominational efforts toward greater mission effectiveness may involve realigning or reducing conferences. The likely limited duration of the Superintendent role presented a serious impediment to attracting candidates in and outside the conference. We were blessed to have three Gateway Conference candidates willing to consider the assignment.

Process

Upon his decision to resign, Superintendent Tolly worked with MEGA (Tyler Boyer), BOA (Mike Aden), and Bishop Cowart to establish interim Conference leadership effective January 1, 2025, using the Board Chairs as was done during his sabbatical. The Superintendent and Board Chairs then composed a Superintendent Selection Committee of MEGA and BOA selections of nearly equal Clergy and Lay members. The clergy lay balance anticipated some clergy might apply for consideration. This proved true as two members withdrew in response to the position advertisement. Bishop Cowart met with the Selection Committee prior to the development of the Superintendent position advertisement. By mid-January, the Committee had received responses from three candidates. During February, the Committee reviewed the responses and checked references. Interviews were conducted on March 1, with Bishop Cowart presiding via Zoom.

Decisions

Early in the Superintendent position description development, it was decided to advertise the position profile as interim (1-2yrs). The Committee was passionate about having a Superintendent to maintain momentum within the Gateway Conference and believed it was essential to have a Superintendent in place to engage in the denominational and conference discussions and decisions and to lead the Conference in any resulting transition. At the same time, the Committee also thought it was necessary to acknowledge the high likelihood that the position might not endure

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more than a couple of years. The Committee advertised the Superintendent position with an interim term (1-2 years).

It was also clear that even candidates from within the conference would find it difficult to leave their church to serve as a full-time Superintendent for a limited term. Therefore, the Committee was willing to consider applications that expressed interest conditional on a stationed arrangement, allowing the candidate to serve as Gateway Superintendent while continuing to pastor their church. In those situations, candidates were asked to specify how they would organize and staff to successfully fulfill the responsibilities of the Superintendent in a stationed model. The Committee wanted assurance that the candidate anticipated the personal, church, and conference challenges.

Both the above concessions were necessary to secure leadership in this period of uncertainty. One candidate withdrew from the process in February, citing concern that the demands, even in a stationed model, might be more than he and his church could safely accommodate.

Selection

After reviewing the materials and references, the Committee met with two Superintendent candidates on March 1, asking the same questions of both candidates. The Committee also wanted assurance that each candidate's home church supported their role as a stationed superintendent. As a Committee, we are pleased to have such high-quality candidates as pastors in our conference. The final decision by the Committee to nominate Pastor Tyler Boyer for Gateway Superintendent was unanimous and hinged on Pastor Tyler's history and experience in the conference, along with his cross-cultural work with our international churches.

Arrangements

Pastor Tyler will serve as a stationed Superintendent, retaining his role as lead pastor at Knox Knolls FM. Pastor Tyler is working with a small committee from MEGA (Brian Hartley), BOA (Mike Aden), Knox Knolls (Mark Whitlock), and the Conference Office (Michelle Boyd) to determine the necessary organization, staffing, and budgetary arrangements to ensure Tyler's success as Superintendent of the Gateway Conference. Pastor Tyler is also working with his CMCs and the Knox Knolls Board to ensure that Knox Knolls is well cared for as he allocates his time between two responsibilities. The role of District Leaders is likely to expand in the stationed arrangement, which is directionally consistent with denominational plans for missional effectiveness.