

# Byrd must go, Singer declares

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Robert Davis  
and John Camper

Chicago Schools Supt. Manford Jr. should be dumped from job to demonstrate that the city's new Board of Education is sincere about reform, the newly elected board vice president said today.

Former Ald. William Singer, a longtime school critic who was named by Mayor Richard M. Daley Thursday to the new interim school board, called for Byrd's ouster just hours before taking over his new post.

"I don't think that we can signal forms if we retain Dr. Byrd," said Singer, in a taping of the "MAQ-AM" radio show, "The Reporters," to be broadcast at 9 p.m. Sunday.

Byrd is working on a one-year extension of his \$100,000-a-year contract, which is scheduled to expire next March. One of the main duties of the interim seven-member board is to conduct a nationwide search for a school superintendent who will lead the reform movement dictated by a state reorganization plan.

But Singer indicated that he believes that Byrd, a career employee of the much-criticized Chicago Public Schools system, should not continue in the superintendent's job.

"He's been a part of it for so long," said Singer, explaining that the new board and a new superintendent must be prepared to make drastic and wide ranging changes to the entire structure.

"We're not talking about tinkering at the margins," Singer said. "We need major changes."

The lone holdover member from the old board, University of Illinois-Chicago professor William T. Liu, said he believed Byrd's days were numbered, though he de-

clined to demand the superintendent's dismissal.

"With a new board with a brand new outlook, the environment is not going to be very congenial for Byrd to continue," Liu said. "I think his chances are pretty nil."

Liu said he believed the previous board had given Byrd "a terminal year" when it denied him a pay raise and refused to grant him the lengthy contract he requested.

Other board members were non-committal. "We have to see who the other candidates are," said Adela Coronado-Greeley, a school teacher. "Whoever is best qualified to implement reforms, that's who we'll select."

James Compton, president of the Chicago Urban League who was elected the new board president Friday, refused to be drawn into the fledgling controversy, but did call the present Chicago school structure a "failing system." To concentrate on the immediate school problems, Compton said he is considering resigning from his seat on the Chicago Public Library Board.

Byrd, a black who has been championed by such Chicago black leaders as Jesse Jackson and former Mayors Harold Washington and Eugene Sawyer, said Friday that he should be considered for retention.

"Take my record and if you want to improve on that, get someone who's doing a better job in a similar environment," said a defiant Byrd while at the new board's organizational meeting Friday morning, when informed of Singer's remarks.

"I will lay my record against the record of anyone in the country in a similar environment," Byrd said. "Let them find anyone who moved youngsters further in four years than I have done."

Singer said that though he



Tribune photo by Don Casper

Chicago's new interim Board of Education gets down to work at an organization meeting Friday.

One of the board's main duties is to conduct a nationwide search for a superintendent.

believes that the next school superintendent should be from a minority group, in a bow to the makeup of the school system's student population, he added that his first priority would be the competence of the candidate, rather than race.

"I would hope so," said Singer, when asked if the superintendent should be a minority. "But I don't want to make any absolute statements."

Singer, who in the 1970s was a major thorn in the side of the administration of the late Mayor Richard J. Daley, has become, in recent years, an advocate of school reform, authoring a report on Chicago school reform entitled "Agen-

da for Change."

One of the changes he urged Friday was higher pay for teachers, coupled, however, with the establishment of a performance scale that would financially reward teachers on the basis of merit rather than seniority.

"I think teaching is an underpaid profession," he said.

"I only want to reward competence and super-reward excellence," Singer said. "I don't want to reward teachers for not performing."

Singer said he expects that he and the other new board members will ask Chicago Teachers Union officials to cooperate in establishing a merit incentive program in

contract talks, which began earlier this month.

"The trend in American education is that teachers organizations are cognizant of the fact that the public wants excellence in teaching and is willing to reward that," Singer said.

Singer said one of the problems the new board must face is overcoming the cynicism of the public and the system's teachers, who have seen several calls for reform and attempts at systemwide reorganization over the last several years.

Other new board appointees taking their seats Friday were Joseph Reed, Joan Jeter Slay and Rev. Janis A. Sharpe.