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## **Gregory-Portland Independent School District**

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### **G-PISD Superintendent hires Sarah Hodges to serve as Executive Director for School Leadership**

Gregory-Portland ISD Superintendent, Dr. Michelle Cavazos, said she wanted to move quickly this week to hire Sarah Hodges from Austin, Texas, as the district's Executive Director for School Leadership. "It's extremely important to find the right person to fill a role like this one, and we know this is the time of year that exceptional leaders are looking for opportunities so we had to move quickly to hire (Hodges)," said Cavazos, who emphasized that the position is vital to provide adequate support for Principals and Assistant Principals across the district.

"Good school districts do an excellent job empowering and developing students, and great districts empower and develop their teachers and staff ... while truly exceptional districts also focus on developing their school leaders who are in direct service to thousands of students, families, and staff. This position reveals the commitment we have to our community, and to our school leaders, that developing and supporting *them* is an essential part of doing the same for our students. I've worked with (Hodges) in the past, and know her proven ability to develop individuals, and school communities. I could not be more excited to bring her incredible leadership, service, and support to G-P. She's a phenomenal leader, and will be exactly what we need to move our team, and our district, forward together."

Hodges is currently the Principal of Wallace Middle School in Hays CISD, a rapidly-growing school district just south of Austin. She has also served the same district in the past as a School Improvement Coach, Instructional Coach, Assistant Principal, Teacher, and Coach for girls athletics. She has been a Texas State University Writing Program Consultant for Region Schools & Organizations since 2009. Prior to entering the field of education, Hodges was a Human Resources Director for International Talk in Austin, and a Legal Assistant and Interpreter for four different law firms specializing in Special Education & Civil Rights; Lobbyist & Policy Work; Environmental Law; and Patent, Corporate, Real Estate, and Business Law.

She has a Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction from Texas State University, with specialization in Instructional Technology and Reading, and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish Language Teaching from the University of Texas with a minor in Mexican-American Ethnic Studies. Hodges has earned and held several certifications, including teaching English as a Second Language, Advancing Educational Leadership, and teaching Secondary Spanish, among others. She plans to enter the certification program for Professional & Executive Coaching with the University of Texas at Dallas this Fall, and will soon begin the pursuit of a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration with emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion impacting multicultural education.

"Developing effective systems begins with developing leaders and building a pipeline for success; something that has been evident to me for many years, and proven true in the example I've witnessed from none other than the current Superintendent of G-PISD, Dr. Michelle Cavazos," said Hodges. "(Cavazos) and I have worked together before, and she's at the top of the list for reasons I've chosen to make this move to Gregory-Portland ISD. She's a giant in educational leadership, and I want to be a part of what she's doing because I know it will be nothing short of an incredible success."

Hodges said she looks forward to working with G-PISD school leaders to help support their students and campus communities with a collaborative approach and connection to the families served by G-P schools. In particular, she said, those strong ties are instrumental in closing learning gaps for students – a specialization of hers, based on evidence from her former schools and positions. "The position of School Principal often includes a lot of pressures and responsibilities, with many needs to balance at once, and we need to support them in ways that are effective and critical for student success," said Hodges. "Supporting the whole child begins with supporting the whole teacher, and the whole principal; it begins with people, talent, and the balance of synergy. It requires various operations and systems working interdependently to rely on one another with an infusion of trust, clarity, mutual purpose and collaboration – and with a district already as successful as G-P, I know that's something that can be done especially with the leadership of (Cavazos).

"I'm a small-town girl, having grown up along the coast myself. I'm a first generation college student, with a family history that includes shrimping, farming, and military service. I have a passion and heart for people of all backgrounds and beginnings, and I believe that together we can make each other better. I'm incredibly excited to move to G-P, meet our incredible school leaders, and become part of the fabric of the outstanding G-P team and community that I've heard such great things about for many years now among colleagues across the state."

Hodges' will begin work with G-PISD as of July 12<sup>th</sup>. She and her husband, J Patterson Hodges, look forward to weekends on the coast and the marriage of their son, Kaiman, to his fiancé, Jessica. Hodges, an avid runner, said she's excited to enjoy all the area has to offer, including the annual Beach to Bay marathon, and the return to a coastal lifestyle in the G-P community. ##