

BOONE PARLOW SELECTED AS NEXT SUPERINTENDENT OF BELLS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



Above: Boone Parlow (right), seen here chatting with CCHS head football coach Kevin Ward at Tuesday night's basketball games, will soon be headed to Bells for his new position as the future Superintendent of the Bells City School District. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

If producers in Hollywood ever decide to re-boot "The Andy Griffith Show" – and cast Crockett Countians in the roles of the fine people in Mayberry – there's a good chance they'd settle on Boone Parlow to play Sheriff Andy Taylor.

All the requisite qualities necessary for the character – leadership, street-smart (but humble) intelligence, compassion for others, a love for his community, and a friendliness that makes everyone in his presence feel like the most important person in the room – can be found in our high school's Vice Principal.

And it's because of those qualities that the members of the Board of Education of the Bells City School District have selected Parlow to succeed the retiring Superintendent Mark Wallace, beginning in July. Starting March 1, Parlow will transition into the position by serving as the Assistant Superintendent to Wallace, thereby setting up a "love/hate" relationship with Parlow's colleagues in Crockett County: They love that Parlow has earned this opportunity, but hate to see him leave the high school.

That reaction begins at the very top of the district, from Director of Schools Phillip A. Pratt.

"Coach Parlow and I have been together for 29 years," said Pratt, who had Parlow on his first staff when he coached football at CCHS. "I believe in order to achieve success you need to surround yourself with people that have a shared vision, beliefs, and common goals. Achieving success takes a group of like-minded people to be consistent, repetitious, and grounded in values of faith. Boone Parlow is that person and friend. Bells has gained a true leader. I am both proud for Boone and his family and excited for what lies ahead of him. We're going to miss Boone, but we still have the best of him here, Brody (his son, a student at CCHS)."

That sentiment is echoed by Assistant Director of Schools Jared Foust: "I have appreciated my friendship and work relationship with Coach Parlow over the past 27 years. He has been an asset to Crockett County Schools and we've put in a lot of long nights and days together. He will be missed not only by me but the many others he has impacted as a coach, teacher, mentor, and leader. I wish him the very best."

Likewise from Judy Hoover, Supervisor of Instruction, Curriculum & Assessment: "I have had the pleasure of working with Boone Parlow for over 20 years and can say with confidence that no one can continue to have a bad day in his presence. He is acutely aware of people and their feelings from the moment he encounters you. He is genuinely concerned if you are having a hard day and will work diligently to help you all that he can. I have experienced Boone handle difficult situations with kindness, fairness, and poise. The students, faculty, and staff of Crockett County Schools will miss him terribly but are cheering him on as he enters a new chapter in his life in education."

The viewpoint doesn't change when you hear from CCHS Assistant Principal Heather Harris, who works beside him every day.

"I have enjoyed working side-by-side with Boone for the last three years," Harris said. "I am often inspired by his patience, kindness, and humility. He is not only committed to his students and colleagues, but most importantly his faith in Jesus is never questioned. Even though he will be truly missed, I know that he will be there for me anytime I call. That is what makes Boone so special. To quote Winnie the Pooh, 'How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard'."

Then there's Kevin Ward, the CCHS Head Football Coach: "Crockett County High School will definitely miss Coach Parlow. He has been a staple in this school system for many years. Bells has gained an outstanding leader and person. When you think of a Cavalier... you think of Boone. He exemplifies everything you would want in an administrator, a leader, and a friend. Congratulations to Coach Parlow. We know he will do well, but he will truly be missed."



Above: Andy Griffith as Sheriff Andy Taylor, a man whose influence survives 60 years later in the qualities modeled by Boone Parlow. (CBS Photo)

Are you starting to see a similarity to Mayberry Sheriff Andy Taylor? There's an ironic twist to the story, courtesy of CCHS Volleyball Coach Bobby Rawson, another long-time associate.

"Interesting fact about Coach Parlow," Rawson said. "He is an expert on 'The Andy Griffith Show.' He can answer almost any question from the episodes, especially the black and white years. Very impressive!" Parlow admits to loving the show, and admires the "life lessons" each episode seemed to teach, especially for a rural setting. Little did he know his colleagues feel he has absorbed and modeled what Andy and the cast were dispensing.

Rawson continued, "I have worked with Boone for years. He is as kind and consistent as they come. He is always fair with the students. I'm sure that he had bad days, but you couldn't tell it by his actions. One thing for sure is that you know what you are going to get every day from him, which is awesome considering all the 'fun stuff' administrators have to deal with. CCHS is taking a huge loss, but we are so happy for him and Bells Elementary School – they are getting a huge gain."

Parlow began in the Crockett system in the 1993-94 school year, teaching eighth grade social studies and U.S. history, which he did for five years. He switched to sixth grade social studies (but still doing eighth grade U.S. history) for the next decade, and eventually came to the high school in 2008 as a U.S. history teacher.

Parlow became an assistant principal in July of 2012 and was named Vice Principal in 2014. During all the years he was a classroom teacher, he was always coaching one or more sports as well, "usually football," he said.

He even sounds like Sheriff Andy Taylor when he relates his experiences.

"Crockett County has a great set of kids who have a great set of parents," Parlow said. "I have been fortunate to work with so many great people who want to empower others and consistently want the best for our students. I couldn't have done anything I've done well without them, and there is absolutely nothing I would change about the path I've taken in this system. It's been fantastic."

While he knows it will be tough to leave the high school setting, Parlow is looking forward to learning his new role from Wallace and then working closely with Bells Elementary School Principal Keith Curl, Supervisor of Instruction and Federal Programs Director Christie Williams, and the others on his new team.

"I'm sure I have a lot to learn, but Mark will be a great guy to learn it from," he said. "He's a good man, and he's helped build a great school and a great place to work."

In the first season of "The Andy Griffith Show," there's a scene in which Andy Taylor is reading Shakespeare (from "Romeo and Juliet") to his son Opie.

"Goodbye, goodbye, partin' is such sweet sorrow that I would say goodbye till it be morrow," Andy reads.

"What's that mean?" Opie asks.

"Well, that means I'd love to set and jaw with ya a while longer, but I got to be a-movin' on."

Godspeed to you, Boone Parlow – with everlasting love and appreciation from the Crockett County School District.