



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HARRISBURG

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HARRISBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT SELECTS NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

HARRISBURG, PA – Harrisburg School District (HBGSD) is pleased to announce that Dr. Benjamin Henry will be the District's next superintendent with approval planned for the School Board meeting on Tuesday, August 27, 2024. Dr. Henry's anticipated 4-year term will begin on November 1, 2024. Meanwhile, Dr. Marcia Stokes (Chief Financial Officer) who was appointed Acting Superintendent effective July 1, 2024, will continue to serve in that capacity until Dr. Henry assumes the role.

The District partnered with experts from the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA), beginning in June 2024, to facilitate an extensive search process which included:

- a community survey;
- leadership profile development;
- statewide, regional and national marketing and recruitment campaign;
- search committee credential file screening;
- three progressive rounds of interviews;
- background and reference checks;
- finalist interviews with stakeholder participants representing the community, administration, faculty and support staff.

The search committee reviewed 21 applications for the role, interviewing seven (7) highly qualified candidates, and ultimately selecting Dr. Henry from among three (3) finalists.

Dr. Benjamin Henry has been the Regional Assistant Superintendent of Polk County Schools in Florida for the past four years, where he oversees 29 schools. With over two decades of experience as a public school educator, he started his career as a special education teacher in Polk County and then became a middle school math teacher in Hillsborough County. Dr. Henry later returned to Polk County and served as a principal, leading his Title 1 school to become one of Florida's high-rated schools of excellence. He was appointed by the governor to serve on the state's Education Ethics Committee.

Dr. Benjamin Henry has always prioritized equity, integrity, inclusion, collaboration, respect, and innovation throughout his career in education. He strongly believes in the principles of equity, which were deeply ingrained in his approach to education by his mother. She grew up in South Carolina as a sharecropper's daughter and struggled in school due to a lack of resources. Dr. Henry's mother instilled in him a dedication to service, hard work, and ensuring that all students receive a world-class education, regardless of their background.

Dr. Henry holds a bachelor's degree in special education from Alabama State University, a master's degree in computer information systems, and a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. He values his family above all else and takes great pride in being a husband and father. Dr. Henry and his wife Valarie, who is also an educator, have three children together. In his free time, Dr. Henry enjoys playing golf, eating good food, and spending quality time with his loved ones.

“The Harrisburg School District is eager to welcome Dr. Ben Henry as its next Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Henry has the full support of the elected School Board,” said Dr. Lori Suski, Court Appointed Receiver, who will ultimately vote to approve the contract for the next superintendent at tomorrow’s School Board/Receiver General Business Meeting. “The Board and I have worked collaboratively throughout the summer to select the most well-qualified candidate to be the next leader of the Harrisburg SD.” Dr. Henry’s experience as a regional assistant superintendent of a large countywide system in which he was instrumental in turning around some schools under state control was of particular interest to the Receiver since the 2024-25 school year is the last year under the current three-year cycle of receivership. Dr. Henry presents as a “systems thinker with a passion for urban education, a strong communicator and relationship builder,” said Dr. Suski. He is an experienced leader who is excited to lead the Harrisburg School District putting students first.

About Harrisburg School District

The Harrisburg School District, located in South Central Pennsylvania, is a culturally diverse public PK-12 school district and is part of the Capital Area Intermediate Unit #15. The district spans approximately 12 square miles and has an enrollment of approximately 6,400 students who attend 12 schools. The District is overseen by a Court Appointed Receiver. The reopening of the newly renovated Steele Elementary School and the planned reconfiguration of other District elementary schools in September 2024 will return the District to operating six neighborhood K-5 buildings, three middle schools and two high school campuses. The SciTech campus of Harrisburg High School was recognized in 2018 as a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. This is an application school for students in grades 9 -12 as is the Marshall Math Science Academy for students in grades 6 – 8 with a focus on STEM. Additionally, the District operates a separate K-12 blended learning school known as Cougar Academy and a K-12 cyber learning program called Harrisburg Virtual Learning Academy (HVLA). Harrisburg School District students are also able to attend the Dauphin County Technical School or Capital Area School for the Arts (CASA) by application in grades 9 -12.