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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jennings School District Reveals New Administrative Appointments for School Year 2026-27

(JENNINGS, MO, May 4, 2026) – Superintendent Dr. Paula D. Knight today announced that six rising stars in the Jennings School District have been appointed to critical leadership roles effective in the 2026-27 school year.

Dr. Monica Barnes-Boateng will be the new Chief Academic Officer. **Dr. Curtese Holmes** is moving to Executive Director of School Leadership. **Ms. Alisha Shannon** will serve as the K-12 District Mathematics Specialist, **Dr. Ann E. Shaw** will focus on reading instruction as the Literacy Curriculum Coordinator. **Ms. Jaclyn Overbey** will be working closely with first- and third-year teachers as PT Instructional Coach. **Ms. Kay Gage** will take on new duties as Core Data Specialist, responsible for the Infinite Campus tracking and recording system and reporting data directly to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. *(Please see expanded bios below.)*

"At Jennings, we are always excited to recruit new talent. However, it's just as important to grow talent from within," Dr. Knight said. "Our reimbursement program supports continuous learning and skill building among our team, and then we leverage that talent to strengthen service to children, families, teachers, and the community." She added, "And, what a great message it sends to students to see their instructors and counselors in continuous pursuit of knowledge."



Dr. Monica Barnes-Boateng, director of assessment and data, is an educational leader with more than 25 years of experience in instructional improvement, assessment systems, and professional development. She's taking on the position of Chief Academic Officer.

She began her educational career as an evaluator in the Saint Louis Public Schools, where she used data to drive instructional reforms, conducted program evaluations, and trained staff to use transformative technology and assessment tools to enhance classroom practices.

She served as the director of assessment and data for Jennings School District for nearly 17 years. During that time, she expertly leveraged data to drive equitable student outcomes and inform

districtwide instructional decisions. She has played a key role in professional learning communities that align with District goals and accreditation standards.

Dr. Barnes-Boateng authored the Personalized Competency-Based Learning grant that launched the PCBL movement in JSD. She regularly drives engagement through stakeholder forums and cafés, student voice initiatives, and professional learning. Her efforts have supported school improvement initiatives, accreditation readiness, and the integration of virtual learning environments. She said, " I am excited for the opportunity to leverage data-informed academic strategies and evidence-based practices to meet the evolving needs of our students and support educators across the district. I look forward to partnering with our educators to leverage our collective strengths in order to ensure every learner has the tools to succeed."

Dr. Barnes-Boateng holds a doctorate in Educational Leadership from Webster University, with a focus on transformative learning in a global society. She also holds advanced degrees in criminology and procurement and acquisitions management, which equip her with a unique systems-thinking perspective and strong analytical skills.



Dr. Curtese Howard Holmes, principal of Rose Mary Johnson Jennings Junior High School, has accepted the new position of Executive Director of School Leadership.

She joined the Jennings School District in 2018 and served as principal at Hanrahan and Woodland Elementary Schools before moving to the junior high. Along the way, she earned recognition for driving student and organizational improvements and for utilizing data-driven instruction to build supportive systems for students and educators.

"This role allows me to deepen my impact by aligning instructional practices and systems in ways that lead to consistent, measurable growth for everyone." Dr. Holmes stated, "I've been connected with Jennings my entire life through family who live in the community, so I understand what our scholars need." "I'm committed to advancing equity by aligning data-driven instruction with sustainable systems like MTSS to ensure all students and teachers receive the academic and behavioral support they need to succeed," she said.

In addition, Dr. Howard-Holmes said, "It is essential to build and sustain coherent structures where rigorous practice and strong relationships intersect. Centering high-impact, student-focused approaches will drive consistent improvement in performance across schools"

She holds a doctorate in Education Leadership from Missouri Baptist University and an Education Specialist degree from Webster University.



Ms. Alisha Shannon, Instructional Coach at Rose Mary Johnson Jennings Junior High School, will apply her knowledge of instructional strategies districtwide in her new position as the District's K-12 Mathematics Specialist. She plans to help lead the integration of the district's new instructional framework, strengthening standards-based practices while ensuring meaningful support for teachers and students across all schools.

"Our teachers at the junior high have developed strong instructional practices, and I am excited to expand that impact across the district," she added. "I aim to improve math performance by building strong relationships and strengthening instructional effectiveness through the identification and consistent use of best practices, such as collaborative learning, where students learn from one another."

Originally drawn to history and pre-law, she pivoted after graduation to pursue paralegal studies and later served as a probation and parole officer. She ultimately transitioned into education, bringing her analytical skills to support students and teachers across grade levels, and has since earned multiple mathematics certifications.

She has led the implementation of Building Thinking Classrooms across the district and will continue expanding this work to strengthen math instruction. "We will work together to meet our students where they are and move them forward—one band, one sound," she added.

Ms. Shannon earned bachelor's degrees in History and Political Science, with a minor in Paralegal Studies, from Webster University in 2006. She later earned a master's in Legal Analysis from Webster in 2009 and a master's in Education from the University of Missouri–St. Louis in 2024.



Dr. Ann E. Shaw, curriculum and instruction/special projects, will take on the responsibility of Literacy Curriculum Coordinator**.**

She joined the district in 2007 as an elementary teacher before moving to an instructional coach at Hanrahan and Woodland Elementary Schools. She was later promoted to Head of Schools, serving Hanrahan and Woodland Elementary Schools, before becoming Woodland's principal.

Now focusing on literacy from early childhood education through elementary school, she will be responsible for comprehensive literacy program development, coaching and training other instructors and identifying personalized strategies to improve reading and writing skills for every child.

"I find great joy in witnessing scholars grasp new concepts and develop a genuine enthusiasm for reading." When scholars discover books that capture their interest, she observes them becoming deeply engaged and increasingly motivated to read independently. She says she is committed to personalizing lesson plans to support each scholar's growth in reading and to thoughtfully integrating targeted programs into the curriculum.

Dr. Shaw holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Southern University in New Orleans and both a master's and doctorate degree in Educational Administration from Capella University.



Ms. Kay E. Gage, student information specialist, will take on the role of Core Data Specialist responsible for overseeing the Infinite Campus tracking and recording system and reporting data directly to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

She started her career as a teacher at Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS) in 1995. Two years later, she joined the Jennings School District as a classroom teacher at Fairview. In 2002, she became the school counselor for Fairview and, later, Gary Gore Elementary students. She later moved to Jennings Junior High School in 2012 and, in 2025, transitioned to technology, where she serves as a Student Information Specialist, working specifically with Infinite Campus, the system that streamlines administrative processes, promotes stakeholder collaboration and supports personalized learning.

Ms. Gage said, "I work with district information daily, and I welcome the opportunity to take on the core data process, which gives me greater access to data and analysis to ensure full compliance and accountability of our district."

She earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Missouri and a master's degree in Elementary School Counseling from Lindenwood University. She completed specialized certifications through coursework at Harris-Stowe State University.



Ms. Jaclyn Overbey, third-grade teacher at Fairview Elementary School, will serve as PT Instructional Coach, working closely with first- and third-year teachers. She joined the district 24 years ago, right out of college, and has been teaching at Fairview Elementary School ever since.

"This (Jennings) is my home. I have such a strong relationship with our kids and parents, even outside of school. My own children graduated from Jennings Senior High," she said.

She has built a reputation for being among the best at building community in the classroom. Her students focused and consistently perform well. Teachers are often invited to come observe her classes but, now, she will be able to go to them. She added, "I'm excited about the opportunity to coach and train new teachers. I will be employing many of the strategies that were successful at Fairview. Ms. Overbey says seeing teachers interact with students in their own space will be helpful in her coaching. "I don't do a lot of standing up front and teaching. I like to see my students standing up front, sharing what they learned," she explained. "My students feel safe to talk, to feel and to make mistakes because they know I care. When I ask them to 'push' farther, they listen. They understand that I am tough because I have high expectations for each one of them."

Ms. Overbey holds a bachelor's in Elementary Education (grades 1-6) and a master's in Elementary Administration from the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

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About the Jennings School District: *The Jennings School District serves 2,320 students PreK-12 across four elementary schools: Hanrahan, Woodland, Northview and Fairview (Primary and Intermediate), Rose Mary Johnson Jennings Middle School and Jennings Senior High School. JSD spans three communities, Jennings, Country Club Hills and Flordell Hills. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Links are available at https://linktr.ee/JenningsK12.*