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News Release

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Seattle Public Schools Principal Appointments for 2007-2008

Superintendent Raj Manhas and Chief Academic Officer Carla Santono have announced principal appointments for the 2007-2008 school year. The appointments are a result of a rigorous, three-phase process that began in fall 2006. The process is described in more detail at the end of this news release. Most recently, Phase III of the process, open recruitment, resulted in appointments at eight schools.

For the first time this year, the open recruitment process included a hands-on demonstration of each applicant's strengths as instructional leaders. Candidates were taken on an educational walk-through of classrooms by Carla Santono where they saw instruction in progress. The candidates were then asked to provide written feedback on their observations. "As we see and hear how applicants respond to a real-world situation, we can get a very good sense of how they will perform as principals," said Santono.

"I am very impressed by the caliber of the individuals appointed to principal roles for 2007-2008," said Superintendent Raj Manhas. "We have promoted a number of talented individuals from within the district, and attracted several excellent leaders from surrounding districts."

Seattle Public Schools encourages and mentors internal candidates for school leadership roles. "We value and encourage talented teachers and other certificated staff who are interested in administration to gain credentials, serve as assistant principals or interns, and to apply for principal roles," said Santono. "We are committed to mentoring aspiring leaders."

Several leadership roles remain open; the district intends to fill these in the near future. The open schools are The New School, Aki Kurose Middle School Academy, The Center School, and Nathan Hale High School.

Appointments made during Phase III of the principal interview process include:

Daniel Bagley Elementary School

Kimberly Kinzer, currently assistant principal at Salmon Bay K-8, will be the new principal at Daniel Bagley Elementary. Since joining Salmon Bay in 2004, Kinzer has filled many roles, including serving as an instructional leader, athletic director and activities director. She also started Salmon Bay School's first-ever Middle School Cohort Program for students of color not meeting learning standards. Before becoming an administrator, Kinzer spent her administrative internships at TOPS K-8 and Pacific Crest Montessori School in Seattle. Her previous experience includes 12 years teaching grades 5-12 in the Lake Washington School District and at Pacific Crest School. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Washington, her master's in teaching from Seattle University and a principal's certificate from the University of Washington's Danforth School. Kinzer's appointment is effective July 1, 2007.

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John Stanford International School

Kelly Aramaki, a former principal intern at John Stanford International Elementary School, is returning to the school as principal in 2007-08. Aramaki served his principal internship with current Stanford School Principal Karen Kodama during the 2002-03 school year. He has spent the past four years as principal at Maywood Hills Elementary in the Northshore School District, where he implemented numerous programs aimed at supporting students' instructional, social and emotional needs. Aramaki worked with staff to implement an anti-bullying campaign and started a Spanish-speaking family fiesta to better serve and support Maywood Hills' ELL families. In addition, he assisted the community in supporting the homeless when Tent City moved across the street from the school. Aramaki received a bachelor's in zoology from the University of Washington, a master's in teaching at Columbia University Teachers College, and a school administrator certificate through the University of Washington's Danforth School. Aramaki's appointment is effective July 1, 2007. He replaces Karen Kodama, who is moving on to other responsibilities at SPS central office.

Stevens Elementary School

Jennifer Reinig has been named the new principal at Stevens Elementary School. Reinig has spent the past year as an educational assistant/intermediate literacy coach, and has also served as acting principal, at Gregory Elementary School in the Highline School District. She began her career in education as a teacher at the Highline District's Hilltop Elementary, where she taught fourth grade from 1999-2003 and then served as the school's literacy coach from 2003-2006. In her role as educational assistant at Gregory Elementary, Reinig led school-wide implementation of the Safe and Civil Schools Program and administered all aspects of progressive student discipline. She received both her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Puget Sound and her principal certification from Western Washington University. Ms. Reinig's appointment is effective July 1, 2007. She replaces Mr. Larry Bell, who is retiring.

African American Academy

Christopher Carter has been appointed principal at the African American Academy. Carter has been assistant principal at Pacific Middle School in the Highline School District since 2003. Prior to that time, he was a house administrator and teacher at Asa Mercer Middle School in Seattle, where he taught reading, health, language arts and social studies. He also spent two years teaching at Horace Mann Elementary School in Long Beach, Calif. While at Pacific Middle School, Carter supported and supervised math and literacy initiatives, and initiated and implemented a three-tiered, school-wide discipline system in conjunction with the Safe and Civil Schools Committee. Carter, who comes from a family of educators, has an undergraduate degree in history from the University of Washington, a master's in teaching from City University and a principal's certificate from Western Washington University. His appointment is effective July 1, 2007. Carter replaces Ms. Rickie Malone, who is retiring.

Hamilton International Middle School

Katie Cryan Leary, former assistant principal at Hamilton International Middle School, is returning to the school as the new principal. Leary has spent the past year as interim principal at Roxhill Elementary School. While at Hamilton from 2001-2006, she guided the School Design Team as it developed a vision for a new building; led implementation of an anti-bullying program and worked closely with Hamilton's international education director to implement the school's international focus. Leary came to Seattle Public Schools from the Edmonds School District, where she spent three years as a math teacher and one year as a principal intern at Terrace Park K-8. She holds a bachelor's degree in communications from Washington State University, and received both a master's in school administration and a principal's certificate from Western Washington University. Her appointment is effective July 1, 2007. Ms. Cryan Leary replaces Mr. Terry Acena, who is retiring.

Whitman Middle School

Michael Starosky has been appointed principal at Whitman Middle School. Starosky has a long history of involvement at Whitman, serving as assistant principal since 2002 and even attending Whitman as a middle school student. He has also been athletic director at both Whitman and Asa Mercer middle schools since 1998. As an instructional leader at Whitman, Starosky has provided professional development to staff on a wide range of topics, including race and equity, cultural competency, anti-bullying and ELL student immersion and evaluation. Before becoming Whitman's assistant principal, Starosky spent six years as a language arts/social studies and health teacher at Asa Mercer. He holds a bachelor's degree in school health education from Central Washington University and a master's in school administration from Western Washington University. His appointment is effective July 1, 2007. Starosky replaces Mr. Robert Kogane, who is retiring.

Roosevelt High School

Brian Vance is the new principal for Roosevelt High School. He comes to Roosevelt after four years as principal at The Center School. During his tenure at The Center School, Vance developed and established strong community partnerships and promoted the arts across the curriculum. Prior to working at The Center School, he spent four years as a counselor at Skyline High School in Issaquah, where he coached the junior varsity boys basketball team. He also served as a high school and middle school counselor in Maryland. Vance received his undergraduate degree in psychology from Hobart College, a master's of education in school counseling from the University of Maryland, and administrative certification from the University of Washington's Danforth School. His appointment is effective July 1, 2007. Vance replaces interim principal Dick Campbell, who filled in following the retirement of Mr. Charles Chinn.

West Seattle High School

Bruce Bivins, the interim principal at West Seattle High School since March, has been named principal at the school. Prior to coming to West Seattle, Bivins spent five years as assistant principal at Franklin High School, and was recently named KingCo 4A Assistant Principal of the Year for 2007. While at Franklin, Bivins was involved in developing small-learning communities and academies, building community mentoring programs for failing and truant students, rebuilding the athletic program, and bridging partnerships with the Seattle Police and Fire Departments. Before moving into administration, Bivins was a special education instructor in the Edmonds School District and at Garfield High School, and worked as the King County Juvenile Detention School Coordinator for Seattle Public Schools Interagency Schools. He is president-elect for the Secondary Association of Seattle School Principals.

Additional principal appointments include:

Dearborn Park Elementary School

Ellen Punyon, currently principal at Wing Luke Elementary, has been named principal at Dearborn Park Elementary following its merger with Whitworth Elementary. A Southeast Seattle resident, Punyon has 25 years experience as an educator and is currently the principal at Wing Luke Elementary, where she has served for the past 11 years. Punyon also spent four years as principal of Whittier elementary and eight years as a special education resource room teacher. While her appointment is effective July 1, 2007, she has begun to work with Whitworth and Dearborn Park to ensure a smooth transition and consolidation.

North Beach Elementary

Joanne Bowers, current principal at Viewlands Elementary, which will close in June, has been appointed principal at North Beach Elementary. A 22-year Seattle Schools veteran, Bowers taught at Catherine Blaine K-8 and Graham Hill, Van Asselt and Whitworth elementary schools from 1986-1994. She started her career in administration in 1994, serving as principal of Coho (now Salmon Bay), Orca and Viewlands elementary schools. Bowers holds a masters in education degree. She replaces Ed James, who has been filling in on an interim basis.

Roxhill Elementary

Cathy Thompson, current principal at Rainier View Elementary, which will close in June, has been appointed principal at Roxhill Elementary School. A 14-year district veteran, Thompson spent four years as principal at Rainier View Elementary, four years a literacy instructional coach and six years as a first-grade teacher at Gatzert Elementary. Thompson holds an undergraduate degree in elementary education from Central Washington University and a masters degree in educational leadership from Western Washington University. She is currently working on her doctorate in the University of Washington's Leadership for Learning program.

Sacajawea Elementary

Barry Dorsey, currently principal at Whitworth Elementary, which will close this June, has been appointed principal at Sacajawea Elementary. Mr. Dorsey has served as principal at Whitworth, ML King, and Arbor Heights elementary schools. While at ML King, he established a Montessori program and a summer "Kindergarten Academy." Dorsey's teaching experience includes middle and high school math and science in Boston. He also taught at Madrona, Thurgood Marshall, and Whitworth. Mr. Dorsey holds a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Boston State College and a Master of Science in Elementary Education from Purdue University.

Sanislo Elementary

Debbie Nelsen, currently principal at Sacajawea Elementary, has been appointed principal at Sanislo Elementary. A 16-year veteran of Seattle Schools, Nelsen spent 2 years as head teacher at John Hay and 8 years teaching physical education at Thurgood Marshall elementary. Most recently she served for six years as principal at Sacajawea Elementary. Nelsen holds a masters degree in education in teaching/administration. Ms. Nelsen replaces Ms. Victoria Foreman, who has been filling in on an interim basis.

Wing Luke Elementary

Davy Muth, currently principal at Fairmont Park, which will close in June, has been named principal at Wing Luke Elementary School. Ms. Muth has 25 years of experience as an educator serving students from many backgrounds and cultures, and has been principal at Fairmount Park Elementary for the past eight years. She also spent two years as assistant principal at Cooper Elementary. Prior to her administrative roles, Muth taught for six years at Stevens and Olympic View elementary schools, and spent eight years as an instructional assistant at Adams, Latona and Lowell elementary schools.

Background on the Principal Recruitment Process for 2007-2008

This year there were three phases to the principal selection process. During phase one, which occurred during the fall, principals were named at the schools merging and consolidating to facilitate joint school planning. During phase two current principals were asked earlier in the year than usual if they had intentions to retire or transfer so that this information could be taken into account when making appointments. The streamlined transfer process allowed the school district to post a list of schools with vacancies on its website, giving applicants a chance to indicate a preference for the schools they wanted to apply to lead.

The third phase of the principal appointment process included open recruitment and hiring. This included screening of applications and interviews hosted by principals and administrators. For the first time, the process also included an educational walk-through of classrooms hosted by Chief Academic Officer Carla Santorno. Each applicant observed instruction in progress, and then provided written feedback on a number of aspects designed to demonstrate the candidate's skill as an instructional leader. From the pool of candidates identified through this rigorous interview process, school teams selected a number of applicants to interview. The school-based teams, which typically include staff and parent representatives, then submitted a review of applicant strengths and weaknesses in relation to the needs of the school. Taking the team's feedback into consideration, Chief Academic Officer Carla Santorno and Superintendent Raj Manhas made the final appointments.

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