



Barrington 220 Superintendent, Dr. Brian Harris.

Setting the Vision for Barrington 220

When Barrington 220 students and staff returned to the classroom in August, a new superintendent of schools welcomed them. Dr. Brian Harris took over the position on July 1 following Dr. Tom Leonard's retirement.

Harris is an accomplished educator and school district administrator with more than 20 years of experience. He most recently led the 13,500-student Community Unit School District 200 in Wheaton-Warrenville, where he served as superintendent since 2010. Early in his education career, Dr. Harris was an assistant principal at the Barrington Middle School-Station Campus from 1993 to 1998, where he also coordinated the district's K-8 social studies curriculum.

Dr. Harris (BH) took the time to answer some questions about his educational background, classroom values, and vision for Barrington 220's future.

QB: *You have been superintendent of schools for two months now. What have you learned about Barrington 220 so far? What do you hope to learn more about?*

BH: One of the main reasons I chose to become the superintendent of schools in Barrington 220 is the community's commitment to public education. This support is visible through PTO and booster organizations, the Barrington 220 Educational Foundation, and other local benefactors.

I had the opportunity prior to the end of the 2013-14 school year to visit each school in the district and introduce myself to many students and staff. The tremendous talent and success we have in our schools is apparent. It has been wonderful to meet and reconnect with students, parents, staff, and community members who are engaged with our schools.

During my transition to the superintendent

role this summer, I spent a great deal of time familiarizing myself with the programs and standards in place in Barrington 220. Many days were dedicated to visiting summer school classrooms and meeting with our board of education and administrative staff.

Over the next several months I hope to learn more about the academic and social-emotional needs of students in our community. My initial goal is to work with the board of education to build upon our successes and maintain the high expectations in Barrington 220.

QB: *You were the assistant principal at Barrington Middle School-Station Campus from 1993-1998. How have things in Barrington 220 changed since your time at Station?*

BH: During my five years as the assistant principal at Barrington Middle School-Station Campus,

I was very proud of the innovative culture that existed in the school district. That has only grown since my time here in the '90s.

I am excited to be leading the Barrington 220 staff and community to continue to be on the cutting edge of education and providing unique opportunities for our students. The One-to-World initiative, which is being phased in over the next few years, provides an electronic learning device to all students that is critical for the 21st century classroom. This implementation will have a positive impact on students and prepare them with life-long skills.

The Chinese immersion and Spanish Dual Language programs also provide a robust literacy environment for students. Not every school district offers the opportunity for students to learn in a bilingual environment, like we do here in Barrington 220. That is truly something special.

QB: *You have been an educator for more than 25 years. What are some values you feel are important in the classroom at any grade level?*

BH: During my years in education, I have served as teacher, principal, and superintendent. In each of these roles, I have always emphasized the reality that “happy students achieve at high levels.” We must address all of the needs of the students to achieve our goal of educational success.

All students must have access to a rigorous academic curriculum that allows for problem solving and critical thinking. Students learn in different ways, and our formal and informal assessments must reflect that.

At one time or another during their 13 years in public education, all students will need a “safety net.” Sometimes that support will be for academic reasons such as targeted reading intervention or gifted instruction for unique learners. However, many times students need social-emotional support to maximize their learning. Barrington 220 has a history of providing a range of those supports, and my intent is to reinforce and build upon those programs.

QB: *How has your time as a classroom teacher helped you succeed as a school district administrator?*

BH: While in college at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, I changed my major from economics to secondary education because I realized I had a special gift to work with young people. I enjoyed my time in the history classroom with students and was very successful. I believe those same skills have translated into my role as a district administrator.

While I seek opportunities to visit our classrooms in all Barrington 220 schools, a majority of my time is spent working with staff, parents, and community members. Both classroom teachers and school district administrators must be good communicators. I plan to listen, inform, and collaborate with the Barrington 220 community to provide the best education possible for our students.

QB: *What are your hopes for the future of Barrington 220? What types of programs or initiatives would you like to see in place here?*

BH: My hope for the future of the Barrington 220 School District is to continue to provide a safe and robust 21st century education for our students. I believe we must create learning models that enhance student achievement.

Individualized learning for all students will continue to evolve. Online learning in a blended environment will clearly become a new frontier for K-12 education. Making connections between private businesses and public education must also continue to evolve. Our Business Incubator class at Barrington High School is an example of that possibility.

Preparing students for careers, such as the Project Lead the Way curriculum at our middle schools and high school, also makes those connections. Our community is very proud of our schools and my role as superintendent is to understand those values and expectations, and provide the resources and leadership to guarantee student success. U



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