



USD 497 NEWS

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Superintendent Announces Plan to Improve Support for Teachers in the Areas of Equity and Instruction



Superintendent Kyle Hayden announces a reorganization of existing personnel to improve support for the district's equity work, professional development of teaching staff and the success of all students.

Assistant Superintendent of Educational Support Anna Stubblefield will add to her supervision of human resources, oversight of the district's equity work, effective immediately. She will work with Executive Director of Student Services Kevin Harrell, Assistant Director of Student Services Leah Wisdom and Equity Facilitator Danica Moore to develop strategies to meet district equity goals. Board of Education equity goals for the 2016-17 school year focus on providing professional development related to culturally relevant teaching, continuing Beyond Diversity training for all district staff, expanding student equity leadership development, and developing partnerships for student success through continued engagement of school families and community members and organizations.



By combining two vacant district administrative support positions, Hayden will create an assistant director of teaching and learning position to directly support teacher training and student achievement. Hayden will transfer South Middle School Principal Jennifer Bessolo into the new position, effective July 1, 2017. She will join Assistant Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Kirsten Wondra in supervising learning coaches. Hayden will team the district's curriculum facilitators with learning coaches to maximize the impact of the coaching team and provide school-based training for culturally relevant teaching and personalized student learning.

"This plan capitalizes on Dr. Stubblefield's strengths and outstanding leadership skills and will help move the district forward in our work to ensure equity and excellence so students of all races and backgrounds achieve, succeed and graduate future ready," said Hayden.

"Dr. Bessolo is an exceptional instructional leader, one of the best I've had the privilege to work with in my career. She has an interest in supporting the continuous professional development of teaching staff, so this will enable her to pursue that passion on a broader level districtwide. I see Jennifer hitting the ground running and assisting our coaching team and building administrators with providing a greater level of support to our professional educators."

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Stubblefield and Bessolo are both members of the District Equity Leadership Team.

Prior to her promotion this year to an assistant superintendent, Stubblefield served as the district's director of human resources for four years and as principal of Liberty Memorial Central Middle School for four years. She previously served ten years as an assistant principal, teacher and coach in the Kansas City area. She earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Kansas, an Educational Specialist's degree from the University of Missouri at Kansas City and her doctorate at Saint Louis University.

"I am proud of the progress the district has made toward its equity goals. I am looking forward to continuing to build on that progress by working with staff and community members to tackle equity concerns and provide opportunities and access for all of our students," Stubblefield said.

Bessolo is completing her third year as South's principal. She previously served nine years as a principal, assistant principal and teacher in Kansas and North Carolina. She also has eight years of experience teaching a variety of education courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels at Baker University, Fort Hays State University, Washburn University and Athens Technical College. Bessolo earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at Washburn University and her doctorate at the University of Kansas. She is a graduate of Lawrence High School (Jenny Perez, Class of 2000) after having attended Broken Arrow Elementary and South and Southwest Junior Highs.

"It's been an honor to serve as South's principal the last three years. Our students, staff, parents and alumni community is tremendous. I've been fortunate to be a part of this team and have forged so many positive relationships with this educational community. South is a special place," said Bessolo.

"While it's difficult to leave a school with such pride and strong community ties, I look forward to supporting our teaching staff on a larger scale. Curriculum, instruction and relationships are the key vehicles that reach students. To work in a support role that infuses our equity work with daily curriculum and instruction is invaluable. I'm excited to be part of it," she said.

The district will immediately begin a search for a new principal for South Middle School, which opened in its current facility in 2007 and currently serves 600 students in Grades 6-8.

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