



USD 497 News Release

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Administrative Announcement



Superintendent Dr. Anthony Lewis announces the selection of Woodlawn Elementary Principal Jayci Roberson as the district's director of elementary schools, pending school board approval. Roberson will transition to her new position during the remainder of the school year.

"Jayci's dedication, experience, and outstanding leadership in her current and previous roles have uniquely prepared her for this new challenge. As we look to strengthen districtwide structures and enhance our capacity to support our principals, I look forward to the positive impact Jayci will have as an approachable and collaborative leader and systems thinker," said Dr. Lewis.

This is Roberson's fifth year at Woodlawn. The district honored her as its Elementary Principal of the Year in 2020-2021. She previously served as assistant director of virtual education/Lawrence Virtual School assistant principal for a year. Prior to joining the district, she served six years as an elementary assistant principal and fourth grade teacher in Fort Riley, taught second grade for three years in Junction City, and served two years in the U.S. Army as a combat medic. Roberson earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Kansas State University.

"As Woodlawn marks its 100th year, it has been a profound honor to have served as its principal. I carry the rich experiences and insights gained as I transition into this new role. I look forward to collaborating with the elementary principal team to lead in our commitment to serving our students, staff, and community, ensuring each student receives the care and support to be their best," said Roberson.

The district will begin a search to fill the principal position at Woodlawn, which serves 238 K-5 students.

Elementary and secondary director positions were among \$6.4 million in staffing reductions approved by the board in March of 2022 to balance the budget and provide staff raises. From listening to the needs and concerns of principals, staff, and families; and continuous review of student achievement and behavioral data, it is evident that the pandemic negatively impacted student social-emotional and behavioral development. The board and administration understand the necessity to provide additional support to meet student needs and maintain environments conducive to learning.

After a comprehensive look at the present budget and reflection on the board's financial priorities, the district will reinstate both positions to support building principals in their role as instructional leaders. In addition to 10 contingency teaching positions added in the fall to reduce class sizes, the district plans to create lead teacher positions based on the priority needs of elementary and middle school students. Dean of students positions will support staff in the consistent implementation of effective instruction, intervention, restorative practices, and student and family support and serve as professional learning opportunities for teachers interested in becoming administrators. The board and administration will continue to work together to balance the need for budget stability with requests for increased support for student safety, well-being, achievement, and success.