

E'town superintendent named

ANDREW HARP The News-Enterprise

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Kelli Bush, assistant superintendent for student learning at Elizabethtown Independent Schools, gives her remarks after being selected as the new superintendent of the district. She'll be replacing current superintendent Jon Ballard when he retires August 1.

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Tony Kuklinski, later select Keli superintendent
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Amidst new challenges and situations within the district and country, the Elizabethtown Independent Schools district has selected a new leader.

Kelli Bush, 49, assistant superintendent for student learning at Elizabethtown Independent Schools, was named the new superintendent of the district.

The announcement was made at a special board meeting Wednesday at Elizabethtown High School.

Bush will take up the position after Jon Ballard, current superintendent, retires toward the end of July.

“The selection of a leader for a school district is one of the, if not the most, important decision, the school board to make,” said Tony Kuklinski, board chairman, at the meeting. “There really is no place for critical errors as the future of our students is at stake.”

The board voted unanimously to accept Bush as the superintendent with statements from Ballard and Bush following.

Ballard said the board made an excellent choice.

“I know that Kelli has all of the qualities that are needed to make a successful superintendent. I’ve seen it on a daily basis,” Ballard said.

He said Bush is a hard worker, self-motivated, always looking to innovate and is not afraid to make tough decisions.

“Like every public school district in Kentucky, we face daunting challenges and Kelli Bush is the right person, at the right moment, and has the right background to lead EIS into the future,” said Matt Wyatt, board vice-chairman, in an email.

The board of education and the superintendent selection committee spent a few months interviewing and vetting applicants who applied for the position.

At the last regular board meeting, Ballard agreed to extend his employment from the beginning to the end of July to help with the transition because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bush thanked the board, Ballard and her family after the vote. She is married to Matt Bush, and has two children, Austin, 24, and Meredith, 21, who both study at Western Kentucky University.

Before taking up the assistant superintendent position in 2012, Bush served as the principal at Morningside Elementary.

Originally from Lebanon Junction, she said in 1992 she began working at Morningside during her senior year at WKU in the education department.

Bush said the unity within the district was something she noticed once she began work there, and realized she wanted to be there again sometime in her career.

“That is not something that you see in most districts,” Bush said.

She said she worked at a neighboring district as an elementary school teacher for six years before going back to Morningside in 1999.

“I’ve had 20 years to affirm everything that I learned that first experience that I had back in 1992,” Bush said.

Bush said there is lots of work to do in the short term in terms of the reopening of the schools, safety of students and staff, and construction.

For long-term, Bush said it’s about building up the “wonderful” things happening in the district and to keep on improving, despite the challenges the district may face.

Kuklinski said once Bush settles officially into the position August 1, she’ll be able to select her predecessor.

Bush said she’ll be looking in and outside the district for those who apply to her soon-to-be-open position.

She told everyone at the meeting this position is an opportunity for her to use everything she has learned and give it back.

“I am honored and very humbled to be able to serve in this role moving forward. It is going to be a journey that we are going to embark upon,” Bush said.

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