

Dear Watertown Public Schools Community,

I am extremely proud and honored to have been selected by the Board to be your new Superintendent. I am especially grateful to Board Chair Ms. Leslie Crotty and Interim Superintendent Dr. Janet Parlato for their amazing support during this time of transition.

Over the past several weeks, I've received so many well wishes from the Watertown community and I am thankful for such a warm welcome. I believe that schools are stronger when they are embedded in a community that takes pride in the success of its students and considers creative ways to provide ongoing support, and it is evident the WPS community also shares this belief. As I have prepared for my transition to Connecticut from North Carolina, I've been struck by the community's high level of investment in our schools and I am thrilled that my family and I will soon be a part of community.

After 20 years in education, the desire to become a superintendent grows from my belief that every student deserves a leader who will provide opportunities for them to succeed academically, socially and emotionally. Through teaching K-12 students in urban and suburban schools in New Jersey and New York City; strategically partnering with teachers, students, families and community stakeholders as an elementary and middle school principal in North Carolina; and leading the Instructional Services Division as the Assistant Superintendent in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, I have worked to create positive learning environments for all students, and developed the ability to lead, inspire and motivate others to work collaboratively to improve student outcomes.

As superintendent, I plan to utilize all of the lessons I've learned over the last two decades to be the best leader I can be for our community. I am committed to:

- providing our students with relevant, rigorous, and engaging instruction that challenges them to reach their potential by providing our hard working staff with the support they need to achieve our vision of educational excellence;
- maintaining the positive culture I've already experienced and supporting the extracurricular opportunities offered to our students;
- building strong relationships with our administrators, teachers, staff, and students;
- and developing strong partnerships with members of our community.

As I transition, I plan to hit the ground listening—focusing my first 90 days on learning all I can about who we are as a district. Through formal and informal meetings and conversations, I will build positive relationships with students, staff, families and members of the community to hear about the significant accomplishments and greatest challenges in WPS. I will spend time in classrooms and work collaboratively with our district and school leaders to explore our core curriculum and instructional approach and learn about how we meet the unique needs of our students across the district. Finally, I will work closely with the Board and district leaders to plan for our continued success—reviewing our budget and upcoming capital improvement projects and establishing district priorities that will serve as the foundation for a long-term strategic plan. For more specific details about my transition goals and actions, check out my 90-Day Entry Plan.

Throughout this transition period, I will tweet about what I am learning using the hashtag #WholsWatertown and I invite you to follow me on twitter @RydellEdLeader. At the end of the entry plan, I will share my findings with the community during a more formal presentation to the Board.

Best regards,

Rydell Harrison, Ed.D  
Superintendent

