



PRESS RELEASE

For Release on 4:00pm on Monday, April 24, 2017
Pomperaug Regional School District 15
Regina Lemerich Botsford, Superintendent of Schools
203-758-8259 ext. 110

Region 15 Appoints New Administrators

April 24, 2017, Middlebury/Southbury, CT-

Region 15 Superintendent of Schools Regina Lemerich Botsford has appointed:

- Heather Pellicone as Principal of Middlebury Elementary School
- Heidi Syzmanski as Assistant Principal of Pomperaug High School
- Brian Jehning as Assistant Principal of Pomperaug High School
- Emily Gervasio as Assistant Principal of Rochambeau Middle School
- William Roland as Special Education Academic Chairperson at Pomperaug High School
- Ronald Plasky as Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Health

They will be introduced at the Board of Education meeting scheduled for 7:30pm on April 24, 2017 in the Pomperaug High School AP Room. Their positions will be effective beginning July 2017. The appointments made to five of the six administrative positions are the result of retirements.

Each new hire is the result of an extensive search and interview process. Separate search committees were formed for each position and included representation of district administrators, teachers, and parents. Region 15 appreciates the dedication of the committee members who worked diligently and thoughtfully in the interest of our students and our region as part of the selection process for the new administrators.

“I am pleased to welcome our new administrators to our district. I am grateful to the members of the search committees who thoroughly evaluated applicants and who recommended such highly qualified candidates as finalists. All of our new administrators will continue to work together with our community and staff to further develop the excellence in education that is the hallmark of Region 15,” said Regina Lemerich Botsford, Superintendent of Region 15 Schools.

Heather Pellicone, Principal, Middlebury Elementary School:

Mrs. Heather Pellicone has been appointed to the position of Principal of Middlebury Elementary School. She is currently the Principal of South Street School in Danbury, a position she has held for the past three years. Prior to her current position she was department head of ESL/Bilingual and World Languages and was an elementary classroom teacher and ESL teacher in the Danbury Public School district. She has 13 years of successful educational leadership and teaching experience.

Mrs. Pellicone has a Master of Arts in Special Education from Fairfield University and a Master of Arts in Reading from Western Connecticut State University.

“As a principal, I strive to develop a school culture and educational program conducive to student learning and socialization. I believe in teamwork and cooperation among students, staff and families. I am looking forward to being part of the administrative team and to continue the work of Region 15’s high standards,” said Mrs. Pellicone.

Mrs. Pellicone’s background as a teacher and administrator bring an exceptional blend of skills and attributes to the position. She is dedicated to developing a cohesive collaborative culture to support student learning and has extensive instructional expertise in balanced literacy and Teachers’ College Reader’s and Writer’s workshop. Her knowledge, educational degrees in both reading and special education, and demonstrated skill in working collaboratively with teachers and parents make her an ideal candidate for Middlebury Elementary School.

Mrs. Pellicone will replace Mrs. Mary Lou Torre who is serving as Interim Principal at Middlebury Elementary School for the 2016-17 school year.

Heidi Syzmanski, Assistant Principal, Pomperaug High School:

Mrs. Syzmanski has been appointed to the position of Assistant Principal at Pomperaug High School (PHS) with a combined 28 years of teaching experience including 7 years of administrative experience in Regional School District 15. She is currently the Academic Mathematics and Science Chair of PHS, a position she has held since 2010. Prior to being administrative head of the Mathematics and Science departments, she taught honors and academic level biology courses at PHS, and science and reading at Memorial Middle School. She has been a member of multiple committees in the district focusing on curriculum development, student support, and 21st century learner expectations and creating a positive and inclusive community.

She holds a Sixth Year degree in Educational Administration and Supervision from the University of Bridgeport and a Master of Science degree in Biology from Central Connecticut State University. She also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Education with a major in Biology from the University of Connecticut.

“My commitment and effort on behalf of the students, parents, faculty, support staff and community throughout the years have not wavered from our mission. I am looking

forward to continuing my career in Region 15 as an educational leader,” said Mrs. Syzmanski.

Mrs. Syzmanski understands and appreciates Region 15’s long-standing commitment to excellence in all facets of the educational process. As her career has advanced through Region 15 she has developed effective leadership skills, which in combination with her administrative experience and strong educational background, will be a natural transition to serving PHS and the community well in her new role of Assistant Principal.

Mrs. Szymanski will be filling one of two Assistant Principal positions at PHS following the retirement of Assistant Principals Catherine Szerszen and Michael Orefice.

PHS serves approximately 1240 students in grades 9-12 with standardized test results consistently above state average and consistently competitive with similar districts. PHS was ranked the #8 high school in Connecticut in the Newsweek 2016 High School ranking. PHS serves students in both Southbury and Middlebury in Pomperaug Regional School District #15.

Brian Jehning, Assistant Principal, Pomperaug High School:

Mr. Brian Jehning has been appointed to the position of Assistant Principal at Pomperaug High School (PHS). He currently serves as a Biology and Physical Science teacher at PHS and his leadership experience at PHS includes: Administrative Dean of Students, Curriculum Coordinator and Instructional Team leader at PHS, Digital Arts and Sciences Academy Site Coordinator, and Link Crew Coordinator. Mr. Jehning has ten years of classroom teaching experience, including nine years of teaching in Region 15. Mr. Jehning was selected as Region 15’s Teacher of the Year and was a semi-finalist for Connecticut’s State Teacher of the Year in 2015-16.

He holds a Sixth Year Degree from Southern Connecticut State University; a Master of Arts degree in Education and a Bachelor of Science degree in Education, with an interdisciplinary area of concentration in Biology, both from the University of Connecticut.

“I am passionate about education and the future of children and our society. I am looking forward to continuing my work in Region 15 as an educator who leads by example,” said Mr. Jehning.

Mr. Jehning understands that educators are responsible for providing students with the academic, social and emotional tools to become citizens and leaders of the global world. His past leadership experiences is consistent with Region 15’s long-term goal and 21st century learner expectations.

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Emily Gervasio, Assistant Principal, Rochambeau Middle School:

Emily Gervasio has been appointed to the position of Assistant Principal at Rochambeau Middle School. She is currently Assistant Principal at Sarah Noble Intermediate School in New Milford, CT, a position she has held for the past three years. Prior to her current position in New Milford she was a teacher at Rochambeau Middle School in Region 15 for eleven years, and instructional team leader of the English Language Arts Department and Building Lead Teacher.

Mrs. Gervasio holds certification in Intermediate Administration from the University of Connecticut Administrator Preparation Program. She holds a Comprehensive Special Education and Elementary Education Master of Arts degree, and a Comprehensive Special Education and Elementary Education Bachelor of Science degree, both from the University of Connecticut.

“I knew at age five that I wanted to be an educator. As an administrator, I love supporting the teaching and learning process to ensure that students learn skills that will help them flourish as happy, successful and responsible adults. I look forward to returning to Region 15,” said Mrs. Gervasio.

Mrs. Gervasio’s background as an administrator and middle school teacher, provide her with an appropriate blend of skills and attributes. She places a high value on developing a caring community focused on learning and continuous growth.

Mrs. Gervasio will replace Deborah Schultz following her retirement at Rochambeau Middle School. Rochambeau Middle School serves approximately 500 students in grades 6-8 in Southbury.

William Roland, Special Education Academic Chairperson, Pomperaug High School:

Mr. William Roland has been appointed to the position of Special Education Academic Chairperson at Pomperaug High School. Mr. Roland is currently serving as Planning and Placement Team (PPT) Chair at the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences at Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven, CT, a position he has held for the past two years. Prior to his current position his educational and leadership background includes ten years of teaching and leadership development in New Haven, two years of special education service coordination and supervision in the Madison Public School district, and four years of teaching behaviorally challenged students at the ACES ARISE program.

Mr. Roland has a 6th year certification in Administration and Supervision from the University of Bridgeport, a Master of Art’s degree in Liberal Studies from Albertus Magnus College, a Bachelor of Art’s degree in Political Science from Southern

Connecticut State University, and certification in Special Education for grades K-12 and certification in History/Social Studies for grades 7-12 from Southern Connecticut State University.

“I am looking forward to support the mission and vision of Region 15. I pride myself on building rapport with parents, students, staff and community stakeholders to provide a safe, supportive and engaging learning environment,” said Mr. Roland.

His varied leadership experiences bring numerous perspectives regarding special education and student services to Region 15. His established ability to lead and supervise staff to effectively provide high quality specialized instruction is a valuable leadership quality for this position.

Mr. Roland will replace Ms. Maureen Honan following her retirement from Pomperaug High School.

Ronald Plasky, Director of Athletics, Health, and Physical Education:

Mr. Ronald Plasky has been appointed to the position of Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Health for Region 15, bringing to the district extensive experience as a teacher, coach, athletics coordinator and a broad based athletic background. He is currently serving as Coordinator of Athletics at City Hill Middle School in Naugatuck, CT, in a position he has held since 2012. He has over 20 years of teaching experience as a physical education teacher and health teacher in the Naugatuck and Oxford School systems, and over 20 years of coaching experience as head and assistant coach in a variety of sports at the middle school and varsity levels for both boys and girls teams.

He holds a Master of Science degree in Athletic Administration from Ohio University, a Master’s Degree in School Health Education from Southern Connecticut State University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education from the University of Rhode Island.

“It would be an honor to represent Region 15 and uphold the excellent academic and athletic traditions that have been established. My focus will be to maintain the success of the athletic department, and health and physical education departments, while using creative and enthusiastic ideas to build these departments further,” said Mr. Plasky.

Mr. Plasky’s background in health, physical education and athletics, provides him with a blend of skills and attributes fitting for this position. He values team building and has been involved with athletics his entire life, as a player, coach, athletic trainer, and official.

Mr. Plasky will replace Mr. Joseph Velardi following his retirement. He will be responsible for overseeing health, physical education, and athletics for grades K-12.