

Schools can all purchase the same textbooks, buses, furniture, computers, etc. But one way they distinguish themselves is by attracting, and then retaining, the best employees.

We have many great employees in our district. Most of our employees are teachers, and our school principals take the lead on interviewing and hiring them. I know they've been busy doing that recently and will continue to work on it, as necessary, throughout the summer.

What I have spent a lot of time on recently is interviewing candidates for administrative positions in the school district. Paul Otten, our assistant superintendent, oversees the teacher hiring and has also spent a lot of time helping to interview administrators.

It's not that we're hiring any additional administrators. In fact, we eliminated two administrative positions this year to save money. But, as happens in most years, some individuals are retiring, or moving to other districts, or changing assignments. All that movement creates openings, and often filling the opening creates another opening.

We haven't filled all the openings yet, but I'd like to highlight the places where we already know there will be new faces next year, or familiar faces in new positions.

Billy Smith, currently the principal at the Middle School, will become the principal at Fairfield Senior High School. In the years that Billy has been a teacher, an assistant principal and a principal, he's demonstrated outstanding leadership, which is why I'm moving him to our largest school.

Paige Gillespie was a very familiar face at Central Elementary, where she was the assistant principal for ten years. This year she moved to East Elementary as the assistant principal, and next year will become the principal there. Paige is also a doctoral candidate at Miami University, so she's going to be busy. Tina Nitz, a teacher at East, will replace Paige as the assistant principal.

Kim Wotring, who's been the assistant principal at South Elementary, will become the principal at the Kindergarten Center. Kim will be doing double-duty at the school, as both principal and parent – one of her own children will be going there too.

We generally look inside our own ranks when we fill positions, because those are the people we know best and it gives us the best chance to match the right person to the job. But at times we go outside, because it's good to bring in fresh perspectives. To replace Kim we've hired Karrie Gallo, from the Oak Hills School District. I think our staff and our families at South will see very quickly why we made the offer to her to join the Fairfield Schools.

We've also hired a new athletic director, Mark Harden, who started Monday, June 1. We are actually welcoming Mark back, as he was previously an English teacher at the high

school before leaving to become the associate athletic director at Cincinnati Christian University.

As this is being written, we're still interviewing candidates for the principal position at the Middle School. We're also seeking two assistant principals, one at Fairfield High School and one at the Intermediate School, where Maureen Meyer is changing assignments to become the district's elementary curriculum coordinator. School will soon be out for the summer, but this important work will, of course, keep right on going.

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