

## Aptakistic Junior High School Principal Succession Plan Announcement



Aptakistic-Tripp School District  
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Dear District 102 Families,

As you may know, Dr. Mark Kuzniewski has accepted a position as superintendent in Brookfield School District for the upcoming school year. I am sure you will join me in wishing him success in his new position.

Selecting the right people to lead our district is one of a superintendent's most important responsibilities. Finding the right successor to Dr. Kuzniewski is one of my first responsibilities as I look forward to becoming your superintendent as of July 1, 2009. With the advice and support of Dr. Mink, I am writing to describe my plan for replacing Dr. Kuzniewski as the principal of Aptakistic Junior High School. It is my hope that by laying out the details of the plan, I can answer questions and avoid speculation that might distract from making a smooth transition.

I have made the following recommendations to the Board of Education:

- That Julie Brua, currently principal at Tripp Elementary School, be named as principal of Aptakistic Junior High School;
- That Jessica McIntyre, newly-hired as assistant principal at Tripp be named assistant principal at Aptakistic Junior High School; and
- That Greg Michels, currently assistant principal at Aptakistic, and Mary Bhardwaj, currently assistant principal at Meridian be reassigned to Tripp Elementary School as co-principals.

These changes will create a vacancy at Meridian Middle School. My recommendation is that we initiate a search for a new Assistant Principal for Meridian.

### **Background**

Mrs. Brua has demonstrated her effectiveness as a leader and administrative team member during her tenure as principal of Tripp and I have no doubt she brings the qualities we need to lead Aptakistic Junior High. In addition to this leadership experience, her teaching

background includes junior high language arts and gifted education. This experience will be invaluable as we bring on a brand new 8th grade language arts team, and continue to develop curriculum and select materials and resources in the coming years. Mrs. McIntyre joins our administrative team after having been a leading member of our junior high mathematics team. She led the Area 125 math consortium with the Stevenson High School math department chair this past year as that group rewrote the SHS math placement test. She has also been a leader in creating a 21st century learning environment in her classroom. As District 102 staff members, Mrs. Brua and Mrs. McIntyre also bring to their new roles a deep understanding of, and commitment to, the culture of District 102. I am confident that they will continue to enhance the current learning system and work deftly with students and staff to create levels of student engagement second to none.

The vacancy created at Tripp by the reassignment of Mrs. Brua and Mrs. McIntyre creates a unique opportunity for District 102 to implement the co-principal leadership model--one that is becoming "best practice" over the traditional principal/assistant principal model. Mrs. Bhardwaj and Mr. Michels bring extensive leadership experience as assistant principals and will be co-equal leaders who will engage with staff, students and parents in all conversations and levels of school administration and leadership at our largest elementary school. I believe that this team will be able to tap into the energy and expertise of the Tripp staff to support them as they continue to incorporate new technologies for academic and social emotional learning.

Acknowledging that Mr. Michels and Mrs. Bhardwaj are assuming their first principalships and that the co-principal model is new to District 102, we will spell out the roles and responsibilities in future communications so that parents and staff have the same clarity in this model as they do in any other partnership.

#### **Next Step: Introduce New Leaders**

In mid June, I will host two coffees, one at Tripp and one at Aptakisic Junior High, for those families to meet their new leaders in an informal setting.

On a more personal note, as I step into my new role to serve District 102 families, I have a singular focus to provide for, protect, and lead this organization's learning system. Every single recommendation and decision I make will, in my heart and mind, be true to my single focus on behalf of the students and families of this school community.

I welcome your questions, comments and ideas. We are in this together and I will listen and learn from anything you have to share.

Sincerely,

Theresa Dunkin  
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