

North Harrison hires new superintendent; John G. Roeder from education background

Written by Administrator

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John G. Roeder, 56, was hired Tuesday night (January 5) as the new Superintendent of the North Harrison Community Schools. The vote (5-0) by the board came quickly in a meeting that was for the purpose of hiring the new superintendent only.

"This board has been looking for a strong superintendent who has been successful as a superintendent," said board member Gary Byrne during the meeting. "He (Roeder) will be a strong leader for this school."

Byrne said that during the last year, the board had three separate searches for a new superintendent, in looking for the best possible chief.

Roeder retired June 30 after nine years as the superintendent of the Sunman-Dearborn Community School Corporation, a system of 4,300 students in northern Dearborn County, in the Cincinnati area of Indiana.

What drove Roeder to re-enter the education workplace was a desire to simply get involved in education again.

"After six months, I knew the choice was to return," Roeder said of returning to the field. "After taking some time off, I'd like another five years in education."

He started his stint at Sunman-Dearborn in 1989, when he began an eight year stretch as an elementary principal. He then served for three years as assistant superintendent, and then went on to the nine year stint as superintendent.

He began his career as a sixth grade teacher in the Northern Wells Community Schools in the Fort Wayne area.

Roeder has several long time teachers in his background. His father John Roeder Sr. was a superintendent for 29 years, his paternal grandmother was a teacher for a number of years, and his brother teaches in a middle school in Rising Sun.

Roeder graduated from Rising Sun High School in 1972, and got his undergraduate degree in education from Indiana State University in Terre Haute. He got his Master's in Education from Ball State in Muncie, and earned his Education Specialist (Ed. S.) degree in 1996 from Indiana University. The Ed. S. degree was for his superintendent's license.

First impressions count, and Roeder's first impressions of North Harrison have been positive.

"I think there's great people here," Roeder said of the people he has met so far. "Everybody's been very nice."

He didn't really want to go to a large urban setting; he preferred the idea of going to a smaller rural setting, like North Harrison.

He said he went to North Harrison because it was smaller, and he likes the idea of being "closer to the kids."

He likes the more personal approach, and said that in a smaller school system, a superintendent isn't drawn in so many directions.

For example, at Sunman-Dearborn, Roeder oversaw a \$75 million building project, which took up large amounts of time.

Noting that the Morgan Elementary School renovation project is now on schedule for the opening of the new wing for the lower grades in February, he likes what he has seen of the project so far, and attended a construction meeting last Thursday.

"It sounds like they're on target," said Roeder. "To me, things are looking in great shape."

Roeder's wife is a pediatric emergency room physician at Children's Hospital in Cincinnati, and he has three adult children. His oldest daughter Amanda is a pharmacist, and is married with six and two year old sons. His son Sam works for Kroger and his youngest daughter

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Kimberly is a junior at Indiana University and is majoring in journalism.

North Harrison Classroom Teachers' Association president Dan Haskell said that he was pleased with the choice, but he said that he thought the board could have conducted the searches with more transparency and openness to the general public.

"We're looking forward to working with him," said Haskell. "We've heard some good things about him. We're still not pleased with the transparency of the superintendent search over the last 12 months."