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# Pine-Richland hires Hernandez as new high school principal



TONY LARUSSA | Thursday, June 16, 2022 5:17 p.m.



COURTESY PINE-RICHLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Frank Hernandez

Pine-Richland High School’s new principal won’t need to spend the first days on the job finding his way around the building or getting to know the staff and students.

Frank Hernandez, the assistant principal since joining the district in August, was appointed principal by the school board on June 6 to replace Nancy Bowman.

The new role at the high school for Hernandez is not his first stint leading a school. He previously served as an assistant principal at Baden Academy Charter School. He also was a principal at West Allegheny High School and West Allegheny Middle School and was a principal at both Freedom Area's high school and middle school.

While serving as the middle school principal at West Allegheny, the administrative team led by Hernandez earned the prestigious Don Eichhorn National Schools to Watch designation in 2018.

"I'm very excited to follow Dr. Bowman as the next principal at Pine-Richland High School," he said. "Over the last year, I have been able to experience firsthand what makes P-R special, and I am looking forward to our next steps to continue to enhance the educational experience for all students and staff."

Bowman is leaving to fill a new position created in the North Allegheny School District — coordinator of curriculum and instruction for grades six through 12.

Hernandez, 37, is a 2002 graduate of Ambridge Area High School. He earned a bachelor's degree in 2006 from Geneva College and a master's degree in school leadership from the University of Pittsburgh in 2012. His doctorate in educational administration and superintendent's letter of eligibility also were earned at Pitt.

He began considering a career in education while he was in high school, he said.

"One of my teachers, Mr. Neil Tkatch, had a profound and positive impact on me and inspired me to want to be a teacher," Hernandez said. "Other teachers I had throughout high school that built positive relationships with students and were passionate about what they do further inspired me to want to go into education."

Hernandez's leadership skills include extensive experience with special education; positive behavior and intervention support; and curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Superintendent Brian Miller said Hernandez's education and experience make him well-suited to follow Bowman in "this critical position."

"We are thankful for the leadership and sacrifice Dr. Bowman has provided to Pine-Richland High School over the past eight years," Miller said. "Dr. Hernandez is a strong supporter of the PRSD mission, vision and values.

"He brings a wide range of leadership experiences to the position. In the year that he has worked in the district, he has already begun forming strong relationships with students, staff and parents," the superintendent said.

Hernandez said transitioning into administration began during his first few years of teaching.

"I tried to get involved in as many different school activities and events as possible," he said. "I wanted to have a large impact on our school community, and through engaging in these activities, I was able to see how principals can positively impact a school and community. By my third year of teaching, I started in a principal program at Pitt."

While attending the Principal's Academy of Western Pennsylvania, Hernandez received the Distinguished Principal's Award.

Hernandez said the district's mission and values are not mere platitudes, but rather guiding principles for how children should be educated.

"We have a strong mission and vision at Pine-Richland that is focused on developing every student within a collective school and community environment," he said. "My goals include engaging our team in a focused manner that is centered on our mission and values to further strengthen our existing academic and extra-curricular programs while also creating new opportunities for our students.

"Our primary goal is to improve college and career readiness for every student at Pine-Richland High School," he said.

Hernandez said he also is a "big believer" in community engagement.

"My family and I live in the Wexford area and we plan to be active members in our school community for a long time," he said. "I look forward to working with our community on everything from strategic planning and individualized student and family needs to attending events to celebrate our students and more.

"School and community partnership is vital to our collective success," Hernandez said. "I would like our families to know that our team wants nothing more than to partner with you to create the best possible outcomes for all students at Pine-Richland."

Hernandez and his wife Marigrace have three children. He is scheduled to begin work on July 1 and will be paid a \$132,500 annual salary.

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