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New Principal Hired for Staley High School

Asst. Supt. Clark Mershon Takes the Helm July 1

KANSAS CITY NORTH ... At its Jan. 9 meeting, the Board of Education approved the hiring of **Asst. Supt. Clark Mershon** as principal of **Staley High School** that opens August 2008.

“The opening of Staley High School has provided me the rare opportunity to become principal of a school one more time,” said Mershon, “and to work again with students and teachers, which is something I truly enjoy. The challenge of opening a new high school is an exciting one that few educators receive during their lifetime, and I am honored and grateful to be chosen.”

Mershon, who has been an assistant superintendent at Central Office, currently is responsible for the oversight of educational programs, school supervision and leadership development.

“I have gained a great deal of knowledge these past four years from my colleagues in the Cabinet as an executive director and then as assistant superintendent, as well as having had the opportunity to observe outstanding principals in our own district,” Mershon said.



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“We have cultivated ground already plowed, through the vision and good work of Dr. Vicki Baker and others,” he added, “by building and expanding upon existing educational programs.”

One of the programs Mershon was key in developing further is the Leadership Institute begun eight years ago by Dr. Baker.

“Not only did we broaden leadership development for the members of the institute, but we also provided opportunities for leadership growth for all building leaders and staff by focusing on our district’s core values.”

The districtwide internalization of core values of leadership is something of which Mershon is most proud.

Mershon began his teaching career in 1982 at Lebanon Junior High School and later was a teacher and coach at both West Junior High School in Columbia and at Greeley County High School in western Kansas. In 1989 Mershon became the assistant principal at Lebanon Junior High School and was named principal in 1992. He moved to Kansas City North in 1997 when he became principal at New Mark Middle School.

At New Mark, Mershon’s leadership provided structure and processes that brought people together — staff, students, parents and the community — as the school overcame challenges of increased overcrowding. During his time as principal, New Mark was first in the district to pilot the Renaissance program for student and staff recognition.

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“We expanded the rich legacy that was already in place at a great school,” he commented on his middle school success.

For his personal effort and teamwork with staff at New Mark, Mershon was first recognized as the **2002 Greater Kansas City Principal of the Year** and later, as the **2003 Missouri Middle School Principal of the Year**, an award given by the Missouri Assn. of Secondary Principals.

Supt. Tom Cummings has said that in addition to providing leadership for teachers, students and community members during his tenure as a school leader, Mershon is “a blend of the important character traits and administrative skills so necessary for the role of today’s principals”. Cummings added that Mershon’s “humanity, humility, and sound instructional and organizational skills serve as examples of the importance of his impact on his school and community. In developing the principal profile with students and staff, it is clear that their priorities are evident in the selection of Clark Mershon.”

That impact will certainly be felt as Mershon develops his comprehensive entry plan for Staley High School.

“I will always have the heart of a principal,” Mershon said about his new position. “I look forward to working with students, their parents, staff and the community around Staley to establish new traditions. Some of them will be unique to Staley, while at the same time fulfilling the mission that is central to the program in all our district high schools.”

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Mershon, who is known to quote educators that inspire him, has worked the past four years under the tagline, *Success comes when we all pull together. We can't be on opposite sides of the rope.* He wears a small lapel pin as a reminder. The pin has small children pulling on one side of the rope during the game, Tug of War.

“One of my favorite quotes,” Mershon said, “is by researcher and education consultant Michael Fullan who says that the only way you can move a large district forward is when the principal has as much concern for the school next door as his own school, and when teachers share as much concern for those in the classroom down the hall as they do their own students.”

This emphasis on relationships and values is what Mershon intends to bring with him when he begins work at Staley High School July 1.

— Background —

Mershon completed a Bachelor of Science degree from Southwest Baptist University in 1981 and a master's degree in education in 1982 at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He earned his specialist degree in educational administration from Southwest Missouri State University in 1997 and is completing his doctorate at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

He is married to Karen Mershon, a kindergarten teacher at Fox Hill Elementary. Their son Mason is a 9th grader at Oak Park and son Ward is a 3rd grader at Fox Hill.