

Return to Assistant Superintendent duo causes optimism

Two-assistant system return to former operating procedure; no additional cost to taxpayers in town

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COVENTRY — Two new assistant school superintendents, Dr. Michael Almeida and Lee Rabbitt, were named at Thursday's school committee meeting. Both are very excited about their new roles and are ready to get started.

As assistant superintendents, their role will be to oversee all aspects of teacher evaluations, curriculum assessment and technology.

Almeida comes from the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School, where he was the principal for five years. Prior to that, he was the principal at the Riverside Middle

School in East Providence. Although he's been working with Coventry School Superintendent Michael Convery for about a week, his position became official July 19.

"This new position will give me the opportunity to see things from a different perspective," Almeida said. "I can use my past experience and use that knowledge to make better decisions for the schools. I'm also a member of numerous professional organizations. I have a large network of people who I can seek out advice from and see how I can implement that based on Coventry's needs."

Almeida's short term goal, first and foremost, is to learn his role as

quickly as possible through working with Convery and the staff at the central office.

Long term, he wants to put all his efforts into serving the students through redesign and restructuring. One way he knows he can do that is through the new classification system that measures students' growth throughout the schools.

"We'll be working on a lot of professional development," said Almeida. "This is all going to be new on our plates this year — we have a task ahead of us."

Almeida is looking forward to working with Rabbitt in their shared roles.



Kendra Leigh Miller/Daily Times

Lee Rabbitt (left) and Dr. Michael Almeida are looking forward to facing the challenges their new positions as Assistant Superintendents in Coventry will pose. The pair replaces James Ernakes, who resigned from the position to take the Superintendent's job in West Greenwich earlier this month.

See DUO, Page A-2

Duo will work together for schools

Continued from Page A-1

"I'm certain we'll work well together," he said. "I see her as having a great wealth of knowledge with technology with the competence and understanding that Coventry desperately needs."

Rabbitt, a Coventry resident, has been an educator in business and computer application

as well as a central office administrator for last 22 years.

"My goal is to support the students, staff achievement, identify priorities and focus in on those priorities through curriculum,

assessment, technology and parent engagement," she said.

"I'm certainly looking forward to working with Michael," said Rabbitt. "One of us will take the lead with some things while the other will take a secondary role and vice versa."

Rabbitt's official start date in August 1 but she's already begun the hard work necessary to improve education.

"My immediate priority is to get to know the staff and get to know the challenges with implementing the core programs and how we can improve them," she added.

Rabbitt said her immediate concentration will be on curriculum instruction and technology issues.

Convery welcomed Rabbitt and Almeida with open arms. He believes in order to do the most effective job for the town's schools in terms of education and curriculum alignment, two people are necessary.

"I'm excited to have two assistants," said Convery. "We haven't had two assistant superintendents for two years. It's about time we're going back to the structure we had — all funded through grants, at no cost to the taxpayers at all."