

Kendra Leigh Miller • Daily Times

"Kotter" the penguin, a recent fixture at Coventry schools' central administration, is being used as a motivational tool by new superintendent Mike Almeida.

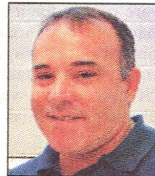
# Coventry welcomes a 'Kotter'

## New super uses book and bird to promote positivity

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COVENTRY – School Superintendent Mike Almeida is getting creative with promoting a positive work environment and customer service within the Coventry School District with a story about a penguin named Kotter and how change can be good thing.

Almeida said the idea of promoting the positive within the district is not a new one. He has been working on promoting communication, collaboration, support, reflection, professionalism



Mike Almeida

and strategy since he began working as the department's assistant superintendent this summer. Almeida has since been promoted to superintendent and he is a strong believer in promoting a healthy work environment to benefit staff which, in turn, will benefit the students.

He's using a stuffed animal and a story but the subject matter behind these child-like things is serious.

"I want our administration to love their jobs, love coming to work and to feel their piece in this administration is very important to the success of the district's students," said Almeida.

On display in the main hallway at the central office stands a stuffed penguin the administration has affectionately

# Kotter is promoting the positive

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named "Kotter."

"Along with the stuffed animal is a book called "Our Ice is Melting," by John Kotter is about changing and succeeding under any circumstance," Almeida said. "The book really being about the need for change or a re-organization if something isn't working.

The book is about how many different personalities and characters must come together and decide how they want to live.

The book explores how so many different personalities come into play in our lives and how we as individuals can choose how we'll go through each day.

Almeida gave a copy of the book to each administrator to read, then later had a meeting to get their feedback about how they saw themselves as one of the characters in the book and any ideas they had about how to make better changes in their work environment.

"I bought the penguin and asked them to name it and come up with personality

traits for it that they felt were important to incorporate in their work days," he said.

Linda Langlois and Cathy Bennett, special education administrators, think the idea of the mascot is good one and both found the book very interesting.

"The thought behind it make us more aware of our feelings, and how we approach our day to day tasks," said Langlois. "It's good way to move ahead with so many changes taking place."

"It's something we all took part in, so that makes it a kind of neat thing," said Bennett.