

Coventry chooses new superintendent

Assistant to DiPietro promoted to head of schools, former position eliminated

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COVENTRY — Michael Convery will be the new superintendent of schools.

The school committee wasted no time appointing a new superintendent after Kenneth DiPietro announced last Tuesday that he would be retiring at the end of the school year.

After several discussions in executive session, the committee chose to consolidate the administration structure from one head superintendent and two assistant superintendents, of which Convery was one, to a two-man administration. This made sense fiscally, said School Committee Chairwoman Katherine Patenaude at Tuesday's committee meeting.

It also makes sense because of the strength of the central office administration

and the good working relationships that exist there, she added.

The plan is bold, she admitted, but supported by everyone in the central administrative offices in Coventry. "To move forward with this we're asking a lot of everyone," she said. "But we have been assured that we can make this work."

When asked if he would take the role of head superintendent, starting on July 1, Convery accepted.

"It is my honor to accept," he told the committee and the assembled group of school principals and residents at Tuesday's meeting. "I have had the pleasure of working in Coventry for many years. Another person that I have worked with for 19 years is [Assistant Superintendent] Jim Erinakes. We are going forward as a team. Someone has to be the superintendent of schools, but we are equals in my eyes."

This spirit of equality and teamwork comes as no surprise, Patenaude observed. "[Convery and Erinakes] have worked together as a team as long as I've known them," she said. "But we're not fooling ourselves that this is going to be a challenge. We want to thank them for agreeing to the consolidation."

Turning to DiPietro, Patenaude thanked him for having "the vision to bring these leaders to the central office. A really good leader teaches people to take his place," she said, attributing this situation to DiPietro's foresight.

DiPietro is completely confident that this new administrative structure will be successful, he said. "When I saw the caliber of these two individuals who not only restructured the middle school but are so

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Superintendent Kenneth DiPietro (left), who recently announced his end-of-year retirement, congratulates his replacement, Michael Convery (right), who is currently one of two assistant superintendents. Jim Erinakes is the districts other assistant superintendent and he will continue in that position.

Convery new head of Cov. schools

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strong at the central office, and the other staff we have here, Sue Lyons to run student services, our Business Director Robin Reazor, Brian Steverman who is the director of the physical plant and has been here longer than any of us, Mary Lou who helps us out in Human Resources [I knew this could be successful].”

The fact that Convery and Erinakes and the rest of the administration are willing to realign their responsibilities and walk the district through the difficult times ahead proves that they are “people who know it’s not about them but about what needs to be done,” DiPietro said.

A chorus of approving comments came from the principals who attended the meeting. The whole high school administrative team was there, Head Principal Mike Hobin said, because he’d gotten wind of Convery’s promotion and wanted to show the high school’s support.

“We support you 100 percent,” he said, recalling when he worked with both Convery and Erinakes at the middle school.

“You guys made an excellent decision,” he said to the committee. “We work well together [already].”

School Committee Member Nancy Sprenglemeyer was also pleased with the choice, she said.

“This is a great day for Coventry. There is nothing that these two gentlemen have done in Coventry that they have not put their heart and soul into. They have excelled in every way. Although we were sad to see Ken [DiPietro] go, we are blessed in this district to have these two stellar leaders.”

After the school committee appointed Convery with a unanimous vote, he thanked them.

“There is a lot to do,” he added. “It will be a challenge, but we’re ready for it.”