

Roark selected to lead Harlan County School District

The Harlan County Board of Education has named longtime educator Brent Roark as the district's new superintendent. His four-year term will begin July 1.

"I am eternally indebted to the Harlan County Public School System for what it has provided for me and my family," said Roark, who has worked for the district for the past 24 years. Fourteen of those have been in an administrative capacity. "I truly love our school district and will give my complete devotion to see our district achieve its maximum potential."

Roark noted that his entire life has been spent associated with the Harlan County School District in various capacities.

"The Harlan County Public School System provided a career for my mother, father and aunt. Their careers with our school system in turn provided the resources necessary for both me and my sister to graduate from our district and to be well prepared to succeed in obtaining our college degrees. The Harlan County Public School system has given me a career that has allowed me to raise my family. Both of my sons attend Harlan County Public Schools and have received a high quality education provided by exceptional teachers and support staff."

Current Superintendent Mike Howard is retiring on June 30th. He served in that capacity for the past five years.

Harlan County Board of Education Chairman Gary Farmer said the superintendent screening committee narrowed the field of applicants and the board interviewed two excellent candidates.

"Mr. Roark was selected due to his familiarity with the many aspects of the school district, including staff, finances, facilities, assessment and other areas. He knows our strengths and our challenges. He will hit the ground running to continue to build upon the successes taking place across our district. He has a great rapport with our teachers, support staff, principals and with the community. He is a great asset to district. He has proven to be very versatile."



Roark has held numerous positions in the district, including assistant superintendent, Title I director, teacher, coach and others.

His work with the school district actually began as a substitute teacher in 1991. Two years later he began his teaching career and served at Cumberland Middle School, Loyall Elementary School and Hall Elementary School. In 2003, he became the Title I Supervisor and over the next decade held many responsibilities, including professional development coordinator, elementary athletic director and Title IX coordinator.

He became assistant superintendent in 2008. His responsibilities have been varied and included instruction and curriculum, federal programs, Appalachian Renaissance Coordinator and Extended School Services Coordinator.

He holds numerous degrees and certifications. He earned his elementary education degree at Eastern Kentucky University, his Master of Arts, Rank I and instructional supervision from Union College, and his instructional leadership for superintendency from ECU.

Roark is the son of Mary Faye Roark and the late Jim Roark. He and his wife, Kris, have two sons, Braydan and Brett. In addition to his parents, Roark's aunt, Naomi Craig, served the students of Harlan County for many years.

He becomes only the 18th superintendent in the district since 1884.