

For Immediate Release

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Barlow Park Charter and Journey Charter Elementary Principal Recommendation

Ripon, WI – The Ripon Area School District announced Mr. Shawn Gartzke as the recommended candidate for the principal position at Barlow Park Charter and Journey Project Elementary Schools beginning August 10, 2023. He will replace Tanya Sanderfoot who resigned her position in July. Mr. Gartzke is currently a 2nd grade teacher in Hortonville Area School District, a position he has held for 10 years. Previously, he was a primary teacher at Carl Traeger Elementary School for 14 years. Mr. Gartzke was the top choice following two days of interviews with parents, teachers, support staff, administrators, Governance Council members, and School Board members. The Ripon School Board will vote on the recommendation at a Special Meeting on August 10, 2023.

The Barlow Park Journey Principal position was posted from July 17 – July 28, 2023. Staff and parents were invited to participate in a survey regarding characteristics they valued in their next principal. Seventeen people applied for the position through WECAN. One applicant was internal. Through a screening process six candidates were invited to interview on August 31, 2023. None of the candidates had previous administrative experience. Three candidates were invited back to participate in a second day of interviews on August 3, 2023. The full morning for the three finalists began with a second interview with the selection team, an interview with building principals, a district tour and a writing sample, and then ended with a meet & greet for staff, parents, students, and community members.

In his prior positions, Mr Gartzke gained experience as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) team leader (both in his school and district), as a member of the District Appreciation Team and Compensation Committee, and in his role on a Leadership Team and Site Council. Mr. Gartzke has an

undergraduate degree in elementary education with a minor in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh and a master degree in Leadership from the University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh.

References described Mr. Gartzke as having a heart for kids, especially with students who struggle. He was noted as being professional and dedicated, as well as a relationship builder. Mr Gartzke was described as being naturally empathetic, adaptive, caring, and diplomatic. References described him as having strong communication and interpersonal skills, stating he is "a stand out educator who is also a great leader."

"The Ripon Area School District attracted high quality candidates through our recruiting process. The selection committee was impressed with the caliber of candidates," stated Superintendent Whitrock. "Mr Gartzke has a reputation as an outstanding educator and is prepared to lead Barlow Park Charter Elementary and Journey Project Elementary Schools to even greater success."

Please contact Superintendent, Dr. Mary Whitrock, at whitrockm@ripon.k12.wi.us with any questions.

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