

EAST KNOX LOCAL SCHOOLS

Board of Education

James Peterson, Interim Superintendent

Jessica Busenburg CPA, Treasurer

23201 Coshocton Road

Howard, Ohio 43028

jpeterson@ekschools.org

www.ekschools.org

Phone: 740-599-7000

Fax: 740-599-5863

jbusenburg@ekschools.org

The East Knox Local School District Board of Education is pleased to announce the hiring of a new superintendent after a thorough process in which the school district engaged the community throughout the last three months.

The board hired Richard J. Baird at a regular board meeting on Thursday, May 23, 2024. The hiring comes after a search process that included focus groups representing all aspects of the school community to develop a profile for the next superintendent. More than fifty individuals from the East Knox Local School District community were part of the interview process. Groups representing teachers, administrators, support staff, community leaders, students, and parents participated in the final interview night.

"Rich Baird brings eight and one half years of experience as a superintendent," Board President, Ms. Lindsay Bush stated. "The board will look to him to use that experience to be a community leader bringing together the students, staff, and school community. We are excited to bring a leader of this caliber to the East Knox Local School District. He will work with the East Knox administrative team prior to his official start date of August 1, 2024 to ensure a smooth transition."

Baird has served as the superintendent of the North Union Local School District in Richwood, Ohio since 2015. During that time, he was honored to serve as chair of the Union County Family Council and the Union County Drug Free Youth Coalition. He received the distinction of being the 2020 United Way of Union County Community Champion, and while at North Union the district was an Ohio Department of Education High Progress School of Honor and received the Ohio Department of Education Momentum award for academic progress. North Union was also named the Union County Chamber of Commerce Large Business of the Year Award in 2022. He was also privileged to serve as the Ohio Superintendent Representative on the Ohio Department of Education Improving the State System of Support of Students with Disabilities Steering Committee as well as the Ohio K-12 Superintendent Representative of the Perkins V Comprehensive Stakeholder Committee.

Prior to assuming the superintendent position, he served for nine years as the Sells Middle School Principal in the Dublin City School District in Dublin, Ohio. He was also Assistant Principal at Karrer Middle School in Dublin for three years. He was a high school and middle school English and Language Arts teacher at Marysville High School and Ridgemont Jr./Sr. High School over a span of over ten years. He was a football and baseball coach and mock trial advisor as well.



Baird plans to move to the East Knox school community along with his wife, Kristin. He has four grown children and four grandchildren. He is proud to share that two of his children serve as educators, one is a flight paramedic, and one is a hair stylist. He is eager to be a part of the community and looks forward to the opportunity to work for the great people of the community and grow professionally. His work will target growth in the district in the areas of academic progress and learning, staff and student wellness, the future success of the students and the community, and clear communication throughout the district. He shared his excitement for the educational and co-curricular opportunities available to children in the East Knox Local School District.

Rich Baird earned a Master of Education degree in educational administration from Wright State University and a Bachelor of Science in English Education from The Ohio State University.

His experience brings a history of building academic success, wellness, community engagement and communication in all the districts and buildings served. The positive relationships he builds with staff, administration, students, parents, stakeholders, and the community will be an asset to the East Knox School District. He is enthusiastic about getting started and will begin by personally connecting with the administration, staff, community members, students and local businesses and agencies.

"The facilities are beautiful and the district is financially sound thanks to the hard work of the board, current and past administration, and Treasurer Jessi Busenburg. East Knox has strong community support, and outstanding staff, parents, and students. I can't wait to become a part of it." Baird said.

"I am honored to serve and become a part of the East Knox Local School District."

"Rich Baird has demonstrated many of the qualities and characteristics that were identified by numerous stakeholders in our community as being essential in our next leader. The board is excited to have him lead our district and we are grateful to the many community members, faculty, staff, parents, and students for the time, effort and input that was given in assisting the Board of Education with this superintendent search." Bush said.

Bush also noted that the district will give the community opportunities to meet Mr. Baird in the coming months.