

Huntley School District 158 interim superintendent prepares for new role

Superintendent John Burkey looks back on tenure with district

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[HUNTLEY](#) – Bradley Hawk hopes he can make the transition to superintendent as smooth as possible for Huntley School District 158.

“[I look forward to] being able to use some of my experience and background to make sure we help all the members of organizations, parents, families and stakeholders, and they understand it can be a smooth process,” Hawk said. “Certainly anyone who follows [Superintendent] John [Burkey] will have big shoes to fill.”

Hawk was appointed to serve as interim superintendent when Burkey leaves the position, effective Jan. 31, to take a new job as executive director of the Large Unit District Association, a lobbying group for school districts.

Burkey said Hawk’s background makes him well-equipped for the role. He served as interim superintendent for DeKalb School District 428 in 2016 and previously was superintendent of Burlington Central School District 301. Hawk also is a Northern Illinois University professor.

“I really hope we can continue on in the direction we’ve set, but I hope the superintendent takes us to the next level,” Burkey said. “That’s what I tried to do what I came, and I hope the next superintendent does that, as well. We are such a good organization because we keep pushing ourselves further. We have to be better.”

Hawk and Burkey have known each other for more than 20 years. They met at the University of Illinois in 1996 while both earning their doctorate degrees, Burkey said.

“We were middle school principals in two different districts, and we both ended up in this area by coincidence,” Burkey said. “We have such a good relationship that we work really well together, both formally and informally, and will continue to.”

Burkey said he talks regularly with Hawk, and Hawk is attending weekly cabinet meetings

to learn about every arm of the district.

Hawk worked for District 158 as assistant superintendent for human resources from 2000 to 2004, and he worked as interim assistant principal at Huntley High School in 2010.

He said he plans to work with the assistant superintendent for human resources to look at staffing and make sure the district is well-staffed for the 2018-19 school year.

"I'll also be working with the board of education, since the search will be a new process for them since John has been the superintendent for 12 years," Hawk said. "I am hoping to help them ask the right questions to the right people."

Hawk, who will begin the interim role Feb. 1, will be paid no more than \$72,000 to work the remainder of the 2017-18 school year, according to his contract. He also will be available for phone consultation to the replacement superintendent for four weeks on an as-needed basis, district documents show.

The board approved hiring executive search firm Hazard Young, Attea & Associates of Schaumburg – part of the ECRA Group – for \$17,500 to find the district's next leader.

While reflecting on his time in District 158, Burkey said he is most proud of the implementation of blended-learning classes, an idea he came up with during one holiday break while trying to think of how classes could be more flexible in high school.

Blended-learning classes allow students to learn in part at a brick-and-mortar facility as well as through online delivery.

"I got some teachers to try it, and all credit to them, they made it happen, not me," Burkey said. "We have thousands of kids now taking blended-learning classes, and we are getting testimonials of how much it's helping kids in college, and it helps kids learn to manage their time and take more control over their learning."

Burkey said his favorite memory of being superintendent is that his own two children attend District 158. His son is a freshman in high school, and his daughter is in fifth grade. Burkey said the kids will stay at their schools, and he is not moving out of Huntley.

"Even though I am not superintendent, I still feel it's the best school for them," Burkey said. "A great memory for me is what the school has done for my own kids, and I'm really proud of that as a parent."
