

For Immediate Release

BOE Approves Hire of New Alps Road Elementary Principal

Athens, Georgia — During its Thursday, June 2 meeting, the Clarke County Board of Education approved the hire of veteran educator and long-time Clarke County School District assistant principal Dr. Melanie James as the new principal of Alps Road Elementary School.

Dr. James has been employed by CCSD since 2003, when she was hired as a math teacher at Clarke Central High School. After three years in that position, she spent 10 years as assistant principal at Fowler Drive Elementary School and has been assistant principal at Winterville Elementary School since 2016. Since January 2022, she had held the position of interim principal at Winterville after former principal Dr. Donna Elder was hired as CCSD's Executive Director of Federal Programs. Prior to her time with CCSD, Dr. James taught math for six years at her high school alma mater, Dougherty Comprehensive High School in Albany. She also has spent the last 18 years as a part-time math professor at the University of North Georgia Oconee campus and previously taught math at Darton College and Albany State University.

With 25 years of experience in public K-12 education and two decades at the college level, Dr. James brings a strong educational foundation to Alps Road Elementary. Raised in a home where education was a top priority, she graduated as valedictorian of her high school class and earned a full presidential scholarship to attend Albany State, where she earned a bachelors degree in mathematics. She later attained a masters degree in Mathematics Education from the University of Georgia and continued her graduate studies at the University of Southern Mississippi as a Gates Scholar, receiving her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Supervision in 2001.

"We are thrilled for Dr. James to become the next principal of Alps Road Elementary," said CCSD superintendent Dr. Xernona Thomas. "She believes that it takes a village to raise a child and that the entire community has a shared responsibility and an important role to play in the education of children in Athens-Clarke County. Her passion for educating the whole child, academically and socio-emotionally, will be an invaluable asset to the school community."

"We must do what it takes to help students become literate, productive citizens of our society," added Dr. James. "I chose to become an educator because I feel that our children are our greatest natural resource, and we must invest in them for the sake of our future. Being an educator has allowed me to positively impact the lives of thousands of students. My job is to plant seeds and nurture them. The joy is seeing the fruits of my labor. I look forward to continuing my journey of educating our youth at Alps Road Elementary. My goal is to use my experience to continue the great work that was started there by prior leadership."

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