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Welch Announces Retirement as Superintendent

USD 480 released a statement Friday confirming that Superintendent Vernon Welch announced his retirement this week, stating he is stepping down from the position he has held since 2004. Welch further announced that he will continue to serve as Superintendent through the end of the school year.

Welch's service to the district has spanned 23 years, including stints as Assistant Principal at Liberal High School and Principal at South Junior High School.

"I am grateful for the opportunity I was given to serve the students and staff of USD 480," Welch said. Welch's service to USD 480 was interrupted only when he held the position of Superintendent at USD 483 from 1989 to 2000.

"As a result of his leadership and vision, Mr. Welch has left USD 480 on solid ground," board president Dan Diepenbrock stated. "If we effectively execute the plans and programs put in place during his tenure, the academic achievement potential for our students is unlimited," he added.

In recent years, USD 480 has implemented programs such as AVID, Capturing Kids Hearts and Literacy First, programs and curricula designed to enhance the academic rigor for USD 480 students. In addition, the advanced placement offerings at the High School have expanded substantially in a few short years.

"His strong suit, however, is his insight regarding budgeting matters", Diepenbrock said. "Our district has been able to keep our mill-levy low, in particular the local option budget levy, in large part because of Mr. Welch's ability to effectively allocate and utilize tax dollars. While keeping our mill levy low, the salary and benefits we pay our teachers is among the highest in the state."

Welch informed the Board on Monday of his intent to retire, and later in the week delivered a letter to Diepenbrock formally stating he will step down effective May 28, 2010.

Diepenbrock stated the district will start the process of finding Welch's replacement as soon as possible.

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