



Matt Cook
Appointed
New
OCM BOCES
District
Superintendent

Superintendent of Schools for the Newark Central School District since June of 2013, Matt Cook has accepted the position of District Superintendent of the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES.

As its Chief Executive, his myriad duties will include administering, supervising and evaluating regional support services and educational programs provided by the BOCES at the request of the 23 component school districts it serves.

Chosen as one of two finalists for this high-level position last month, Cook emerged as the successful candidate in the lengthy process that culminated in both candidates being interviewed by the New York State Interim Commissioner of Education Dr. Betty Rosa.

"It's been the greatest honor of my professional career to be able to serve this community," he said. "Any success I've had here is a result of the team that I have been blessed to work with. They will more than capably carry Newark on to do great things in the future. I wish my successor all the best, as he or she will be stepping into a wonderful community and will work with a group of dedicated educators that care deeply about every student, every day."

Under Cook's leadership, there have been many significant accomplishments in the school district including:

- *Creation of District Vision and Strategic Plan*
- *Substantially upgrading the Technology Department and implementing the 1:1 computing device program for all students*
- *Creation of a Curriculum and Instructional Council to obtain teacher input into academic decisions in the district, including when and what curricular areas are updated*
- *Increase in support for teachers through the Instructional Coaching program*
- *A successful capital project that built the new turf field and made other improvements to the Newark High School athletic complex; upgraded air handling systems in the schools and increased safety and security*
- *Reinstated having a School Resource Officer for the district, along with additional school safety staff and measures*
- *Established a Multi-Tiered System of Support to address academic and social emotional issues throughout the district.*

Cook's last day on the job in Newark will be October 30th.

Several commented on Cook's new job including:

Dr. Vicky Ramos, District Superintendent of the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES:

"As the District Superintendent of the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES, I am very happy to welcome Matt Cook to the table as a colleague," she said. "One of our very important roles is to insure equity for students and school districts. I have no doubt Matt will be dedicated to that purpose. As your W-FL BOCES District Superintendent, I remain committed to supporting the the Newark Central School District and its Board of Education during this transition."

Russ Harris, Newark Board of Education president:

"Matt Cook is a strong, collaborative leader and visionary who tapped into the strengths of others to achieve many shared and important goals for our school district and community. I am pleased that he was chosen for this position as the new OCM BOCES District Superintendent. I am even more grateful for the considerable strides we made in strengthening our overall educational program and offerings for students in Newark during his tenure."

NCSD Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Krista Lewis:

"Matt Cook has been a leader in helping to institute many important educational initiatives and curriculum advancements during his seven years in our district for which our students have greatly benefited. One of the most striking examples is how he has worked to not only advocate for, but significantly integrate technology into our program district-wide to enable our students to keep pace with this ever-changing, largely technologically-driven world," she continued. "Last year, thankfully well in advance of the COVID-19 shutdown, every NCSD student had age-appropriate, 1:1 computing devices assigned to them and had been using them, in various ways and degrees in the classroom, so they could then use them at home for instructional purposes when we had to close schools in March. Not every district in the region had this advantage. Matt's leaving Newark is bittersweet, but I am very confident he will more than rise to the challenges that await him as the new superintendent of the OCM BOCES."

Ed Gnau, NCSD Assistant Superintendent For Business:

"Working with Matt Cook for seven years, one of the things that I have been most impressed with is his very inclusive leadership style. In all of our decision making and planning, he has welcomed many viewpoints with the end goal of all of us doing our best to provide the greatest educational program and opportunities for students possible. I have enjoyed working with Matt and wish him every success in his new job."

Newark Teachers' Association President Mikey Davanzo:

"The Association and Matt have had a good working relationship. He was been collaborative with us. He has communicated openly with our entire unit and when he was unsure of something, he has gotten us an answer right away. We wish him the best of luck in his new job."

Newark Mayor Jonathan Taylor:

"It has been a pleasure to work with Matt during my six years as Mayor. We've been able to collaborate on a number of initiatives for the betterment of our community. On behalf of the Village of Newark, we wish Matt well in all of his future endeavors."

In addition to his work as NCSD's Superintendent, Cook is both an instructor and member of the Board of the Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES Leadership Institute. He is treasurer of the W-FL BOCES Superintendents' Association Executive Committee. He is the Wayne County Superintendent representative on the House of Delegates of the New York State Council of School Superintendents.

He is a member of the Wayne County Coordinating Council that aligns the planning processes of programs and services in the county's health and human service sector. And he served as President of the Wayne County Superintendents' Association in 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Cook is also a member of the Newark Chamber of Commerce Board and is a Newark Rotarian.

He earned his doctorate this year in Educational Leadership from the University of Rochester. Before coming to Newark in 2013 he had completed the Superintendent Development Program at SUNY Oswego. He received his Certificate in Advanced Study degree at the University of Rochester; his Master's Degree in social work at Syracuse University; and his Bachelor's Degree in psychology at SUNY Geneseo.

He and his wife, Anne, a retired Lyons Elementary School teacher, have three adult children, Halle, Sam and Hannah.

In an early morning message to staff today (October 16th) about his appointment to the BOCES position in Syracuse last night, Cook said he will begin his new job November 1st.

“... The reason the turnaround is fast is that OCM District Superintendency has been vacant for a while with an Interim temporarily filling in and the OCM BOE asked for me to be able to start as soon as possible. The Newark BOE graciously allowed for that to happen, as they have secured a first-rate Interim Superintendent. His name is Dennis Ford and his last assignment was as the Interim Superintendent in Victor from July 2019 through March of 2020, where I had the pleasure of working with him and getting to know him a bit.

“Mr. Ford spent the majority of his Superintendent years in the Amherst Central School District from 1996 - 2007. He's done a fair amount of training, working at the college level and Interim positions in the meantime.

“Perhaps most significantly, Mr. Ford has a long history with the Newark Central School District. He taught English here from 1974 - 1982. He was an Assistant Principal from 1982 - 1985, Acting Assistant Superintendent/Director of Special Programs from 1985-1986 and Principal of NMS from 1986-1989, before leaving for the Elmira City School District as their Associate Superintendent.

“Mr. Ford will begin working with me the last week of October and will fully transition into the Interim Superintendent role on 11/2. I'll be taking him around to all the buildings and do as many introductions as possible that week, to ensure a smooth transition.

Starting in November, the Newark BOE will work with Dr. Vicky Ramos, the District Superintendent of the WFL BOCES, to begin the search process for your next Superintendent.”