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August 31, 2022

## **Dr. Whitney Oakley Named Next Superintendent of Guilford County Schools**



Following an extensive national search, today, during a special meeting, the Guilford County Board of Education named Dr. Whitney Oakley the next superintendent of Guilford County Schools (GCS).

Oakley, who has served as acting superintendent since July, has a longstanding career in public education and extensive experience with GCS. Having served at nearly every level

of the education system, Oakley brings more than 20 years of educational experience to the role.

“Dr. Oakley has spent most of her career serving the students and families of Guilford County. She is a collaborative leader who is deeply invested in the success of our community,” said Board Chairperson Deena Hayes-Greene. “She is a homegrown leader determined to break down barriers so all children can achieve their full potential.”

A Greensboro native, Oakley attended public schools in Guilford County from kindergarten to high school. She started her career as a teacher at Frazier Elementary in GCS before serving as an assistant principal and principal in the Alamance-Burlington School System. Through her servant leadership, Oakley quickly established herself as an inclusive leader who understands the important role teachers, parents, and community members play in improving students’ lives.

In 2012, Oakley returned to GCS, where she has held various leadership positions in the district, including chief academic officer and assistant superintendent of teaching, learning, and professional development. She was appointed deputy superintendent in September 2021. Oakley later accepted the role of acting superintendent as former Superintendent Dr. Sharon Contreras transitioned to her new role as the CEO of The Innovation Project (TIP).

“GCS is a great place to learn, work and grow,” Oakley said. “Having grown up in Guilford County and as a parent of two GCS students, I have a unique vantage point of where we’ve been, where we are today, and where I see us headed. I believe GCS’ brightest days are ahead of us, and I am honored to serve our school district as its next superintendent.”

Oakley’s appointment comes at a critical time for the school district. In 2020 and 2022, voters overwhelmingly supported the passage of \$2 billion in [school bonds](#) to build, rebuild and renovate schools across the district, as well as to provide safety and technology upgrades to schools. Oakley has been heavily involved in designing GCS’ new schools as part of the \$300 million school bond.

“Businesses and families are already moving to Guilford County because of the quality of education we provide,” said Board Vice Chairperson Winston McGregor. “Dr. Oakley is the right person at the right time to lead GCS through our next chapter.”

Under the leadership of Dr. Contreras, Oakley led key academic initiatives, resulting in increased academic achievement in all tested subject areas at all levels and for all student groups in 2019. She played a critical role in the safe reopening of schools following the COVID-19 pandemic, leading the 164-member re-entry task force comprised of parents, teachers, staff and community members. GCS’ plan was replicated by districts across the country and won top awards from the North Carolina School Public Relations Association (NCSPRA) and the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA).

Additionally, Oakley has been instrumental in launching nationally recognized learning hubs and high-dosage tutoring programs to accelerate learning and strengthen professional development opportunities for principals and teachers.

“It was an honor to work and learn from Dr. Contreras, a transformational and visionary leader,” said Dr. Oakley. “I am grateful for her numerous contributions to our community.”

At her swearing-in ceremony, Oakley announced plans to meet with families, educators, and leaders to discuss their hopes and dreams for the future of Guilford County Schools. Oakley will also be announcing her transition team in the next few weeks.

“The next decade is the most consequential decade for our children and community. It will take all of us working together to succeed,” Oakley said. “In the coming days, we will be launching a series of community conversations to envision our shared future for students, families and community.”

Oakley is the first superintendent from Guilford County to lead the district. She has received numerous awards, including the Piedmont Triad/Central Region Principal of the Year and *The Business Journal* 40 Leaders Under 40 Award. She holds a Bachelor of Science in special education from East Carolina University, a Master of Education in elementary education from Greensboro College, a Specialist in Education and a Doctor of Education in educational leadership from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG).

Oakley will assume the role of superintendent immediately.

[Click here to learn more about Superintendent Oakley](#)

