A Message from School Board President Michael Ehart

I am very honored to be the new president of the University Place School District Board of Directors. I am humbled by the responsibility placed on this board to oversee our nation’s most valuable resource: our children and their education. I committed to continue the long tradition of maintaining and nurturing our best school districts in the state. Superintendent Patti Banks, who has served the community and our students, teachers, and staff admirably through her many years of service, is retiring, and we recently appointed a new superintendent to the amazing foundation she has created. Her strong guidance, wisdom, and clear vision have been an inspiration to us all.

I would like to talk about the board’s efforts to seek out competent candidates. This process was a long one, as every member of the board was concerned that we see the best possible candidates and choose a superintendent that would best exemplify our board’s motto of “kids come first.”

Throughout the process, we had a strong desire to connect with the community and hear the voices of its constituents. Through a series of public meetings held at the UPSD offices and at Curtis Junior High School, we were able to hear the many and varied voices that make up our amazing school district.

We also conducted a web survey that reinvented and enhanced the communication concerns that we had not only the best candidate possible, but also continue the culture of excellence and achievement that Superintendent Patti Banks embodied.

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I was struck with his abilities, his energy, and his commitment to the community values and educational excellence that has come to represent the University Place School District. We can read about Jeff in this issue, and I think you will agree that he was an excellent choice to serve the board as superintendent of this district.

At Promise Program Produces First Graduates

As part of the At Promise Program, students are provided with individualized academic and social support that helps them achieve success. One of the students who benefited from these programs is a student who was found to be struggling with their coursework, and with the help of the program, their GPA improved significantly.

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Board Selects Jeff Chamberlin as New Superintendent

Patti Banks, superintendent of Washington’s University Place School District, which includes Union High School, named Jeff Chamberlin the best candidate to lead the district into the next chapter, according to the new president of the Board of Directors, Michael Ehart.

He brings a wealth of education and administrative experience to the table—more than 33 years of experience in the public education system in Washington and Oregon—and has served the district with distinction as a member of our administration, while bringing a new style of leadership.

“I’m excited to learn,” said Jeff, who will begin work on July 1.

The University Place School District would like to extend its sincerest thanks to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth-serving organizations for their generous support, dedication and hard work. T’wina Franklin and Mary Lu Dickinson have worked their way through the district. Jeff, for the past 10 years, has advocated, intelligently and commit to UPSD’s students, staff, and community, that our colloborative excellence continues for years to come.

Board Chair Franklin.

Jeff Chamberlin

The Washington State Board of Education (OSPI) named Michael Ehart, deputy superintendent of University Place School District (UPSD), as Jeff Chamberlin’s immediate successor, according to a news release.

The Washington State Board of Education is charged by the Legislature with the responsibility of selecting the superintendent of public instruction (Supt). Over the last several weeks, the Board of Directors has conducted a nationwide search to identify a high-caliber candidate with an understanding of the unique challenges experienced by rural school districts.

Jeff Chamberlin


Jeff Chamberlin has been heavily involved in the community and our schools for many years. At Union High, Jeff has been a strong advocate and supporter for our students, teachers, and the community. He was a driving force behind the successful passage of the Union High bond issue, which provided the school with much-needed funds for facilities and technology. Mr. Chamberlin’s leadership in supporting the community for the purpose of the bond is why he received the “Community Advocate” award from the Washington State School Administrators Association.

Mr. Chamberlin has served in the Union High School District since 1992. Jeff’s wife, Karla, is also a teacher in the district. Jeff is an active member of the community and has served on numerous boards and committees.

Mr. Chamberlin will begin his new role as superintendent of the University Place School District on July 1, 2023.