

Press Release
Hazlet Township Board of Education Appoints New Superintendent
October 3, 2017

After careful deliberation, on October 2, 2017, the Hazlet Township Board of Education voted unanimously to approve Dr. Scott Ridley as Superintendent of Schools, replacing Dr. Bernard Bragen Jr., who is leaving to chair Monmouth University's newly-created Educational Leadership Doctoral Program. Dr. Ridley currently serves as Superintendent of Schools in Union Beach and he looks forward to beginning his tenure in Hazlet on January 1, 2018. Board of Education President William Kolibas stated, "The Board of Education is excited to have a leader with Dr. Ridley's educational leadership to be heading the District. Dr. Ridley is the right person to lead our District into the future and continue to build upon our excellent educational programs."

Over the past 25 years, Dr. Ridley has taught and/or led at every level of the American educational system. Out of Albright College, he was a high school English teacher for eight years in the Freehold Regional District before earning his Masters in English Education at Rutgers and moving to Brookdale Community College, where he taught and supervised for the next 16 years. During this time, he earned his Doctorate in Educational Leadership at Rowan University, where former Commissioner of Education Dr. David Hespe was a member of his dissertation team.

At Manalapan High School, Dr. Ridley taught all grades and academic levels of English and coached both varsity boys' and girls' soccer and wrestling. At Brookdale, he subsequently chaired the English department, and served as the Dean of English and Reading, and the Director of Education. During his tenure as Director of Education, he was in on the ground floor for the creation of the Early College High School, an initiative that the Hazlet leadership has embraced.

At Union Beach, he has reorganized the focus and priority of several academic areas and written a number of successful grants, totaling over \$17,000 in awards to the district. He installed a full time officer in the school, reworked the guidance and disciplinary departments, introduced an attendance program that has seen lateness decrease drastically, and hosted a monthly Superintendent's Teaching Circle to discuss how to make the classroom experience more enriching for students.

Dr. Ridley created a Superintendent's Scholarship that reinforces the importance of lifelong learning and encourages students to think "big-picture" regarding their education. He prioritized a complete renovation of the physical plant from the outside walkways and grounds to the building within and worked firsthand with the NJ Department of Education (DOE) Homeland Security team to improve responses

to every kind of threat. Additionally, he reduced the Special Education budget \$70,000 by eliminating external vendors and hiring a fulltime occupational therapist.

This September, he partnered with his administrators to create both a half day pre-school for 3 year olds and, by way of a \$326,000 grant from the NJ DOE, a full day pre-school for 4 year olds. Together, both programs have resulted in nearly 50 new enrollments. He added "Celebrate Memorial School" to the monthly Board agenda, during which various students, faculty and staff are recognized for their accomplishments.

A father of twin college freshmen, Dr. Ridley is a parent and leader who fully understands that children need to feel "nurtured, supported and encouraged" at all times.

"While my Union Beach experience has been rewarding, I truly look forward to serving the student body of Hazlet and helping every single student achieve his or her potential. I am especially interested in building-out the Early College Academy, an undertaking I am quite familiar with given my time at Brookdale." Board of Education President William Kolibas stated, "Dr. Ridley will continue to expand this program, envisioned by Dr. Bragen and the Board of Education, for the benefit of our students in Hazlet Township."

Dr. Ridley added, "A student's scholarly journey should be consistent sequentially through the grades and result in a well-prepared graduate ready to meet challenges with confidence and to make the most out of opportunities beyond high school."

"I am grateful for the opportunity to represent such a progressive school district and to serve a Board of Education whose forward thinking has created so many enriching opportunities for the Hazlet student body. I am eager to join a team that defines the strong educational foundation already in place and thank both Dr. Bragen and the Board for the transitional support they continue to provide."

Several "Meet the Superintendent" events will be scheduled over Dr. Ridley's first few weeks in January, giving all of the stakeholders of Hazlet the chance to have a cup of coffee with the new Superintendent and to discuss the Hazlet Township Public Schools.