

MEDIA RELEASE - Superintendent Retirement 2025

January 29, 2025

I hope this message finds you well and filled with the same sense of pride and purpose that has motivated me throughout my tenure as Superintendent. It is with mixed emotions that I share the news of my upcoming retirement at the end of this school year.

Under my leadership, the district has experienced financial stability, demonstrating my commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency. Through careful planning and strategic investments, the district is well-positioned to maintain a solid financial standing, ensuring continued support for educational programs and resources.

Among the major achievements during my tenure is the successful completion of key capital improvement projects. These projects, which include several roof upgrades, flooring replacement in many areas of the facility, many safety and security upgrades including the front entrance and office remodel, new phone and PA systems, updated technology in all classrooms, remodel and upgrade of school kitchen, chimney repair, bathroom remodels, and the small gym repair, have greatly enhanced the learning environment for students and staff. Looking forward, the district has a clear capital improvement plan to continue modernizing facilities and ensuring they meet the needs of future generations of students.

Throughout the ongoing teacher shortage, I have worked tirelessly to recruit and retain highly qualified staff, in an attempt to ensure that every student receives a high-quality education. Through innovative recruitment strategies, partnerships with higher education institutions, and a focus on professional development and support, the district has been vigilant in navigating these challenges with resilience and creativity.

One of the greatest challenges during my leadership was guiding the district through the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. The District successfully pivoted to remote and hybrid learning models, ensuring continuity of education for all students while prioritizing the health and safety of students, staff, and families. I worked closely with local health officials, state leaders, and the community to develop strategies that allowed for a safe return to in-person learning while also providing support for those who continued with remote learning. The district's response to the pandemic is a testament to the strength and unity of the community.

In the wake of the pandemic, it was clear that the district faced a significant challenge when an operational referendum, aimed at maintaining essential programs and services post-pandemic, was not passed by voters. Despite this setback, the district has worked hard to prioritize resources and find creative ways to sustain critical programming for students. While the referendum's failure has posed challenges for funding certain initiatives, I emphasize the district's ongoing commitment to providing high-quality education and making strategic decisions to continue supporting students and staff during these difficult financial times.

As I prepare for retirement, the district remains committed to a forward-thinking vision. The Board of Education is in the process of selecting a new leader who will continue to build on the foundation of excellence, growth, and community engagement established during my tenure.

I am proud of all that we have accomplished together over the past seven years. The successes of this district are a direct result of the hard work and dedication of our teachers, staff, students, parents, and community partners. While I am excited for the next chapter in my life, I am confident that the future of Mellen School District Name is bright, and I look forward to seeing the continued success of this amazing district.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Elmhorst-Friemoth
Superintendent
Mellen School District