

Press Release

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New Paltz CSD Appoints Angela Urbina-Medina to Superintendent Post

[New Paltz] During its May 6, 2020 meeting, the New Paltz Board of Education approved the appointment of Angela Urbina-Medina, of Port Jervis, as the District's next superintendent of schools. Ms. Urbina-Medina was selected via a five-month nationwide search process conducted by the New York State Leadership Group after the retirement of former superintendent Maria C. Rice this past December. She will assume her post on July 1, 2020.

An educator since 1997, Ms. Urbina-Medina currently serves as deputy superintendent at Ellenville Central Schools, a position she has held since July 2018. Prior experience at Ellenville includes serving as the district's assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction for three years and principal at Ellenville Middle School for five years. Before the principalship, she served as assistant principal at both Warwick Valley's Middle School and Haviland Middle School in the Hyde Park School District.

Ms. Urbina-Medina says that she is driven to be involved in transformative work on behalf of children. "Creating initiatives that can be life-changing for students puts the steam in my engine."

She is especially proud of her work with the My Brother's Keeper initiative, which provides programming to engage students that might otherwise be disengaged. The creation of the Ellenville Elementary School Summer Boost Academy, a program designed to protect and advance educational progress over the summer months, is also a source of pride. "Creating an environment where kids want to be in school when they could instead be out playing is a challenge. Through a collaboration with Ulster BOCES, we created a program that kids come back to year after year."

Ms. Urbina-Medina cites her ten years as a classroom teacher at Monhagen Middle School in the Middletown School District as having a significant impact on her career. “I know what it is like to be a classroom teacher, and the perspective is valuable. My wife is also a teacher, so I am still deeply connected to the day-to-day,” she explains.

While the new superintendent’s path from classroom teacher to district leader is not uncommon, Ms. Urbina-Medina’s path to the educational field was quite unique. For six years, she served as a New York City police officer, assigned to the NYPD’s 40th precinct of the Bronx. Her job provided her with a view of an environment that was very different from the one in which she was raised, instilling invaluable insight. Through an early police/school collaboration, she was assigned to visit classrooms to help students understand “appropriate physical contact” and to teach them about being in control of their own bodies.

“As parents, we all want the same things for our children - to be happy and successful. Yet, there are stark differences in how we experience life, which was very eye-opening,” she explains. As a result, the police officer-turned-educator feels strongly that “the types of environments we are committed to fostering and the ways we form relationships with kids really matter.”

“I consider being a woman in uniform, at a time when there were so few, as one of my most significant accomplishments. This experience expanded my view of the world and the challenges we face as a society,” Ms. Urbina-Medina observes.

Planning to start a family of her own, in 1991 she decided to transition out of law enforcement and start the journey that would soon put her into the classroom.

“The Board of Education is excited to welcome Ms. Urbina-Medina to the New Paltz Central School District. She is a proven equity-centered leader and informed decision maker with a strong background in curriculum,” says Michael O’Donnell, NPCSD Board of Education president. “We believe her calm, clear, and concise communication style will resonate with the full spectrum of students, parents, faculty, staff, and community members to foster a positive school culture.”

According to Mr. O’Donnell, Ms. Urbina-Medina was selected from a well-qualified, national pool of 40 applicants, 32 from New York State (NYS) and others from as far away as Arizona, Florida, and Texas. The Board’s decision was informed by input collected from district stakeholders through focus groups and an online survey about the desired traits in their new school leader.

While Ms. Urbina-Medina candidly recognizes the COVID-19 pandemic as a challenging time to begin as a new superintendent in a new district, she does not enter the challenge unprepared. In addition to her leadership experience at both the district and school building levels, she recently completed training in the NYS Council of School Superintendents' Future Superintendents Academy, a year-long experience that immersed her in all aspects of district administration.

And while she has been preparing for a career move, Ms. Urbina-Medina describes being in the fortunate position to be very selective on where she applied. Based on her positive experience in Ellenville, she was waiting for a district that she really wanted to be a part of. "New Paltz has always been high on my list. It is an area where we could see ourselves living and where we would like our children to go to school," she says.

"The district's vision and mission align with my own beliefs of what education is supposed to be. The district's position on equity and inclusivity aligns with my philosophy for creating a district where there is a strong sense of belonging. New Paltz is very upfront about what they believe. These beliefs have been reinforced throughout the interview process, and I look forward to continuing this work," she says.

Her most immediate priorities include establishing a level of stability and preparing for the reopening of schools. As superintendent, Ms. Urbina-Medina is committed to clear, consistent communication that includes ongoing stakeholder input in support of an environment where everyone feels they belong.

No stranger to New Paltz, Ms. Urbina-Medina earned both a Master of Science in education and a Certificate of Advanced Study in educational administration from SUNY New Paltz, in 2000 and 2007, respectively. She received a Bachelor of Arts in history, summa cum laude, from Lehman College in NYC. She holds NYS Department of Education certifications for K-6 teaching, school administration and supervision, and district administration.

Plans for introducing the new superintendent to her faculty, staff, students, parents, and community are underway and will be announced when finalized.

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