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**Contact: Heather Crocker**

**Communications Director**

**Blaine County School District #61**

**208-578-5005**

**HCrocker@blaineschools.org**

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## **BCSD Board of Trustees Announces New Superintendent**

After a national search that attracted some of the best candidates from across the state and country, the Blaine County School District Board of Trustees unanimously voted late Tuesday evening to hire Dr. GwenCarol Holmes as the next Superintendent of Blaine County.

"We want to thank everyone involved in this process," said Board Chairman Shawn Bennion. "We appreciate the staff, parents, and community members who took the survey, attended the public forums, and served on the interview committee, we had a great deal of involvement from all of our stakeholders and would like to thank each of them for their time and interest in our school district."

Dr. GwenCarol Holmes is currently the Chief Academic Officer of Alexandria Public Schools in Alexandria, Virginia. Prior to her position at Alexandria Public Schools, she was the Chief Operating Officer of the Success for All Foundation and Assistant Professor of Education at John's Hopkins University.

Dr. GwenCarol Holmes stated, "I felt welcomed here the first moment I came to Blaine County as a teenager. The people of Blaine County are the reason I've been motivated to keep coming back and they are the reason I am humbled and excited to be a part of this wonderful community."

BCSD Board Trustee Liz Schwerdtle said, "Dr. Holmes brings an excitement, professionalism and warmth to her position as the new leader of Blaine County School District. Her entire career has been motivated by a love and respect for children."

BCSD Vice Chair Kathy Baker stated, “We carefully thought about our current administration’s collective leadership qualities. We knew it was important to find a good fit that would compliment the administrative team.” Several administrators were selected by the Board to serve on the interview committee, including Alturas Principal Brad Henson and Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Learning Angie Martinez.

Angie Martinez said, “Dr. Holmes values public education as a great equalizer, revealing the potential of every child to fulfill their greatest dreams. We proudly welcome Dr. Holmes.”

Alturas Principal Brad Henson said, “I was impressed by her energy and passion for the work we do as educators as well as her passionate drive for continual reflection of our -selves, our practice and our systems in order to stay relevant in the important work we do as educators; fostering inquiry and a passion for learning in our students. I look forward to working closely with and gleaning from Dr. Holmes, and I am excited to see where she leads our district.”

Other members of the interview committee included a parent representative and a member of the Latino community. Parent Gretchen Wagner said, “After a long and detailed process of interviewing several superbly qualified applicants, Dr. Holmes inspired us all anew. I anticipate that she will quickly become a familiar and revered fixture in our community and am very excited for what lies ahead.”

Sergio Ruiz said, “Dr. Holmes is in an excellent position to help everyone in our community, including our Latino population. She possesses the necessary abilities to listen and analyze any situation in a respectful manner.”

Dr. Holmes has worked in education for over twenty years. She began her career as an elementary teacher and went on to serve as a reading specialist, math specialist, Title 1 specialist and principal in two schools before moving on to the Success for All Foundation. During the public forum held on Tuesday, April 22, Dr. Holmes spoke about her relentless passion for education and her high standards. “I use my own experience as a parent to measure a school. I hold the same standards for all children.”

Dr. Holmes shared a public statement after her hiring, “I look forward to joining the strong team at Blaine County School District. You have strong schools that are working tirelessly to provide our children with an excellent education. This work will continue as we strive to ensure that we provide each and every child a personalized and excellent education. To continue to do this and to close the achievement gap that exists for some of our children, we need the entire community’s help.”

Dr. Holmes will begin working for Blaine County School District sometime in early July. During the public forum, she stated that her first priority would be to engage in a listening

tour of the community, encouraging all stakeholders to express their hopes and aspirations for the students of Blaine County School District.

Interim Superintendent John Blackman will continue serving until that time. The Board expressed gratitude to Blackman in an email to all staff. “We are grateful for John Blackman’s excellent leadership during this time. He worked tirelessly over the last eight months to not only maintain but improve our system,” said BCSD Board Trustee Kathryn Graves.

For more information on the Blaine County School District, go to [www.blaineschools.org](http://www.blaineschools.org) or find us on Facebook at [www.facebook/blaineschools](https://www.facebook.com/blaineschools).

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