

‘It has to start with me’

New Albany High principal eager to get started

There are few leadership roles David C. McCalla, Ph.D., has not held during a 35-year career in urban public education.

High school principal was one of them, and he will fill that in beginning in July at Albany High School.

Dr. McCalla, who began his career with 25 years in the Miami-Dade County (Fla.) Public Schools, succeeds Maxine Fantroy-Ford at 2,300-student Albany High. Mrs. Fantroy-Ford will take over at Giffen Memorial Elementary School.

Dr. McCalla is eager to get to work connecting with students, families, teachers and staff members.



“I’m looking forward to making Albany High School an outstanding internationally recognized high school,” he said. “You have the making of it because you have the International Baccalaureate program there, but that is just a small part of it now.

“The expectations of excellence should be applicable to all the departments.”

Also in July, Raymond Colucciello, Ed.D., will take over as interim superintendent, succeeding Eva C. Joseph, Ed.D., while the Board of Education conducts a national search in partnership with the community for Dr. Joseph’s permanent successor.

Dr. Colucciello was superintendent of the Schenectady City School District from 1993-2001, and later spent three years as interim superintendent and superintendent in Ballston Spa (2005-08). He served a one-year term as interim superintendent in Voorheesville during the recently completed school year.

At Albany High, communication will be Dr. McCalla’s top priority.

You want his e-mail address? Just ask.

He promises he’ll get back to you, no matter how busy things get. He says he’s used to it after nine years as a middle school principal in the Miami-Dade system, America’s fourth-largest public school district with more than 300 schools.

“It’s hard to explain the amount of paperwork and e-mail that comes across your desk each day,” he said.

Dr. McCalla's experience also includes two years as a middle school principal in Nyack, N.Y., with just five total schools, and in Mount Vernon, N.Y., a district similar in size to Albany. He served in two assistant superintendent positions in Mount Vernon, most recently in charge of pupil personnel services.

Dr. McCalla comes to Albany High at an important time, with critical discussions about to begin regarding the future of the school's academic programs and facilities, and alternative education.

He is excited to play a leading role in rebuilding Albany High's programs – and image.

"We have to be very diligent in remaking the reputation of that school," Dr. McCalla said. "It takes every team member thinking like I think and being comfortable with what they do in extending themselves to the public.

"It has to be pervasive. It has to start with me."