

Hubert tapped for RNESU superintendent

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BRANDON — It turns out the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union didn't have to look too far in the search for its next superintendent.

On Thursday, the RNESU Board announced it had selected Kristin Hubert to lead the six-school, eight-town supervisory union.

Hubert, who is the current director of curriculum, instruction and assessment at RNESU, will replace Jeanne Collins, who is retiring after eight years on the job.

Hubert's hiring comes in a year when around a dozen superintendent positions are in flux statewide, according to the Vermont Superintendents Association.

All that transition has made for a competitive job market.

Early last month, RNESU interviewed two finalists for the job — Zach McLaughlin, current superintendent of the Springfield School District, and Barbara Anne Komons-Montroll, the superintendent of the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union.

The job initially was offered to McLaughlin; however, he passed, opting for a position in New Hampshire. Komons-Montroll subsequently withdrew her application, prompting the RNESU board to reopen its search.

That's when Hubert decided to throw her hat in the ring.

"When we figured out that there wasn't a strong, viable candidate that we believed in, it was, for me, about standing up and stepping forward for a system that I believe in," she said, noting she didn't have aspirations for the superintendency prior to applying.

Hubert, who has been with RNESU for three years, said she will provide continuity and consistency so schools can continue with the work they already are doing.

"I know that I can do it because not just the central office team is so strong but building leaders, coaches, teachers — all levels are really so exemplary," she said. "I may be the superintendent, but it's really everybody pulling that's going to make RNESU continue to be successful."

RNESU, with its numerous schools spread across two distinct districts — Otter Valley and Barstow — is a large system with diverse needs and interests.

Hubert admits her current position has been somewhat insular — mostly working with administrators and teachers — however, as superintendent one of her first tasks will be to get into those communities to better understand “the values and the voices.”

She said while there are areas where the supervisory union needs to work as a cohesive system, there also are opportunities for differentiation within each of the schools.

“We’re all still pulling for equitable student outcomes. The path to get there for the districts might look a little bit different but, at the end of the day, we want all RNESU students and schools to be successful,” she said.

Hubert said a lot of the work RNESU is undertaking is related to curriculum and instruction, which puts her in a unique position to guide it.

Another priority, she said, will be ongoing recovery from the pandemic and applying lessons learned over the past two years.

Hubert, who grew up in Castleton, got her start in education as a classroom teacher at Fair Haven Grade School before serving as a principal for more than a decade, including a lengthy stint at Northwest Primary School in Rutland.

In 2016, she was named the National Distinguished Elementary Principal.

Prior to coming to RNESU, Hubert was on the faculty of the Upper Valley Institute, teaching in its principal preparation program. In addition to working at RNESU, she is teaching as adjunct faculty in principal preparation at Castleton University.

Laurie Bertrand, chair of the RNESU board, admitted she and her fellow board members felt discouraged when the first round of candidates didn’t pan out, but were buoyed when Hubert decided to apply.

“When we saw that she had applied and we talked to her about it, we just realized that she’s going to be great for us,” Bertrand said, adding that Hubert is organized, engaged and “gets along really well with everyone.”

Bertrand said the board offered Hubert the job Tuesday night following a public forum.

She said Hubert’s history with RNESU means she can “hit the ground running” when she takes over on July 1.

“She knows the community ... she knows our families, she knows our students and staff,” said Bertrand.

In an email, Collins stated she was excited that Hubert was chosen, calling her “highly respected,” “committed” and “just the right person for this district.”

“She has been leading initiatives that increases rigor and accessibility for all students and will be able to carry this work through as superintendent,” Collins wrote. “I am pleased for the stability of the district that she will bring.”