



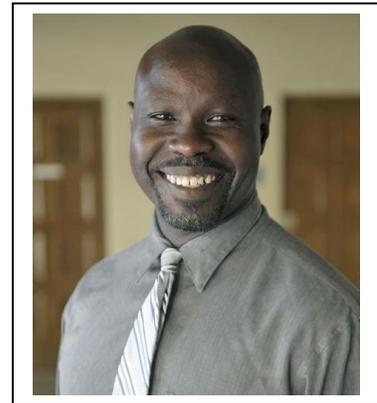
SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Gail Pinsker
310.450.8338, ext. 70230
gpinsker@smmusd.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 3, 2016

Dr. Ben Drati Named New SMMUSD Superintendent

The Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education approved the appointment of Ben Drati, Ed.D. as the new superintendent at the November 3, 2016 regular meeting. The appointment is effective January 1, 2017.



Dr. Drati comes to SMMUSD from the Santa Barbara Unified School District where he has served as the assistant superintendent of secondary education since 2012. In this assignment he is charged with designing and implementing key initiatives involving the development of a culturally proficient school district through professional development, teacher collaboration, parent engagement and providing equity and access to all students.

Prior to serving in this position, Dr. Drati served as the principal of Clovis West High School in Clovis, California from 2007-2012. He was the deputy principal there from 2005-2007 and the learning director from 2002-2005. He served as assistant principal at Riverdale High School in Riverdale California near Mt. Whitney from 2000-2002. He began his teaching career as a chemistry teacher and football coach at Central High School in Fresno in 1997, where he worked until 2000.

His commitment to involving all stakeholders in addressing issues of disproportionality and overseeing the development of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) has resulted in great success for his current district. Dr. Drati also created student programs that emphasized the importance of diversity within the school culture and worked with teachers to create a school and classroom environment where all students feel valued and appreciated.

Dr. Drati is known as a strong, confident and collaborative leader who is deeply committed to improving the lives of all students. A board member from his current district described Dr. Drati as a person of great integrity, as well as a genuine and warm person. He went on to say that Dr. Drati accomplishes his job with careful thought, transparency and motivation. Another high-ranking district official commented Dr. Drati's strong skills in creating positive working relationships with businesses and community organizations to support and improve the learning environment of the district.



*Dr. Drati, center, with board members,
Co-interim Superintendent
Dr. Sylvia Rousseau and Drati's family.*

"I can't wait to get started," Dr. Drati said following the board appointment. "My first task is to go out and meet people at our schools and in the community. I am committed to keeping the interest of children as my highest priority. I will work collaboratively with the board, teachers, classified staff and parents, and commit to serving as a worthy ambassador of SMMUSD to the world."

Dr. Drati earned a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry from Fresno

State University, where he also played football; a single-subject credential in chemistry and Master of Art and administrative credential in education leadership from National University; and a doctorate in education leadership from Fresno State University. Earlier this year he earned a certificate from the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Urban Superintendents Academy at University of Southern California.

Dr. Drati is happy to return to the Los Angeles area, having lived here in his youth and graduating from Los Angeles High School in the mid-Wilshire area. He came to the United States at the age of 10 with his family from war-torn Uganda, and places an extremely high value on the importance and benefits of public education. He plans to relocate to the community along with his wife and two sons in high school. Dr. Drati has a daughter who currently lives and works in the area.

"We are thrilled with Dr. Drati's appointment and look forward to working with him. We are confident that his leadership skills, passion and energy will guide our students, parents, staff and community toward a successful future" Laurie Lieberman, board president said. "I would like to congratulate him on his new position and welcome him to SMMUSD on behalf of our board."

Dr. Drati replaces Sandra Lyon who left the district in July for the superintendent position at Palm Springs Unified School District. Dr. Sylvia Rousseau and Dr. Chris King have been the co-interim superintendents since July and will complete their contracts on December 31, 2016.

#

SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
1651 16TH Street, Santa Monica, CA 90404
ph: 310.450.8338; fax: 310.581.1138
www.smmusd.org Follow us on Twitter: @SMMUSD