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D233 board approves second associate principal for H-F High

BY MARILYN THOMAS
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Shannon Swilley will join the administrative staff as an associate principal at Homewood-Flossmoor High School next school year.

His appointment was approved on a 5-1 vote at the board's April 19 meeting. Member Debbie Berman was absent, and member Pam Jackson voted no, not because of Swilley's credentials but because she argued board policy wasn't followed in making the appointment.

The policy states that the superintendent "shall define and recommend those administrative positions, organizational changes and any program modifications deemed necessary to implement and operate the educational program of the district. All administrative positions are to be approved by the board."

Jackson said she didn't know about this position. She understood several staff had left at the end of last school year, but said: "I don't know that the policy has been adhered to."

Member Michelle Hoereth also voiced concerns about the process, but she approved the appointment. Also voting in favor were members Gerald Pauling, Steve Anderson, Nate Legardy and Cynthia Turnquest.

Superintendent Von Mansfield took responsibility for the "disjointed" communication with the board. He said two administrative positions – head of security and dean of students – were vacant in summer 2021, and he brought to the Personnel Committee in the summer that he was trying to get one of those filled. When that didn't happen, their workloads got shuffled to other staff members this year.

After the board selected a new principal in December, Mansfield said he considered an associate principal's position essential, so he approached Superintendent-Elect Scott Wakeley about filling the slot. Wakeley said the position was advertised.

Board President Gerald Pauling said: "This is a discussion that's been ongoing since the beginning of the year. This is not a new discussion. These are not new duties, this is not a new role within our school, unlike the MTSS role that required board approval" because the position was mandated and it had new duties. "We're not doing that here. We're not creating any new FTEs, this is actually budget positive. These are administrative duties with increasing importance of security, increasing importance of student support and increasing importance of residency – all of which will reside in this role."

Wakeley told the board the administrative positions would be evaluated.



Shannon Swilley

"Now that we have the person for the position, I think it's incumbent upon us to sooner rather than later talk about how best to use the skill set of all the administrators we have," Wakeley said, adding, "We want to put the players in the best positions and be successful."

Swilley was known to the board after earlier being considered for the H-F principal's position.

"He brings to us his expertise in decision making and leadership," Wakeley told the board. "I think he's perfect not only for this position, but the school as a whole."

He received a one-year contract at a salary of \$125,000. Mansfield said his salary is less than the combined salary of the two people who left District 233.

Swilley received three degrees from Olivet Nazarene University -- a bachelor's degree in history, a master's degree in teaching and a master's degree in school improvement. He started his career as a history teacher at Kankakee High School and after five years he was made a dean. He served in that position for five years. He moved to the Bourbonnais school district serving as an assistant principal for four years and principal for two years. He currently is principal at Central Middle School in Evergreen Park.

The District 233 administrative team for 2022-23 will be in place July 1. That is when Wakeley becomes superintendent and is joined by Clinton Alexander, the newly appointed principal. Swilley will work alongside Craig Fantin, the other associate principal in the South Building, and Quitman Dillard is the assistant principal in the North Building. Jodi Bryant continues as director of human resources and Carla Erdey will join the team as director of communications and community engagement.