

Rafe Begley to replace outgoing principal Keith Adams

By ELLY GRIMM

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With Keith Adams leaving his position as principal at Liberal High School, the school board had to work quickly to appoint a new principal come July.

That successor is current LHS assistant principal Rafe Begley, who is currently finishing up his eighth year at LHS.



“I was maybe stunned at first, but then I quickly recovered and was excited and very thrilled to accept the position,” Begley said of when he learned of the appointment from human resources director Jason McAfee.

Superintendent of schools Paul Larkin said it was no easy task selecting Adams’ successor at LHS, saying how the position of high school principal is a very big and public position. He also

cited Begley's background in Liberal and understanding of initiatives and recent accomplishments at LHS.

"Mr. Begley understands completely the AVID strategies, how important it is at LHS. He understands the Literacy First process and so he's sound instructionally on those types of things," Larkin said. "He's got good experience in education. He spent a lot of time in the classroom before he came to Liberal as an administrator so he's a veteran educator and so I think those are some of the main characteristics. Also, he's a well-respected person within the building now, and there's a lot of good things happening at LHS right now."

Begley said he decided to apply for the position to help keep the momentum at LHS growing.

"As soon as I found out Mr. Adams was leaving, I thought 'well, we've done a lot of good things here,' and I want to make sure that those good things continue. So I thought the best way to do that was to go into the principal position," Begley said.

Larkin added the committee overseeing the interviews had roughly 15 applications and ended up conducting six interviews from those.

"We finally made the decision, and we said at least half of the people we interviewed could do the job and we wouldn't go wrong with them. So that's a great problem to have when you're making a decision like that it's always like 'oh man I don't know about this' and when you think of the other two or three that you could have, they all could have been great candidates. It's very fortunate when you have such a strong pool that you can't go wrong, but Mr. Begley's kind of floated to the top of the pool."

With the school's team of administrators and counselors, Begley said he is excited to begin not only the new position but the school year as well.

"I have a lot of pride in this school. I'm just completing my eighth year, and I've seen a lot of good improvement, a lot of good programs come about and it hasn't been the efforts of just one person – we've had a number of good people come in and help us out whether it be as

administrators or faculty and other staff, and I want to continue that team approach,” Begley said. “You cannot do it all yourself, especially with a school this size so to have a good team, a good family of people in place, helps, and I want to draw from those people, faculty and administrators and counselors to help me continue all the good things that have happened in this school the last few years.”

Begley also received support from his soon-to-be predecessor Adams.

“He’s going to do a fine job, he’s been here since my first year,” Adams said. “He’s been a part of the school improvement initiative since the beginning so he knows how all of our systems work. He’ll do a great job, I have no regrets having him in that position.”