

Centennial stays local with superintendent hire

By Gary Weckselblatt, staff writer | Posted: Tuesday, September 8, 2015 11:45 pm

The Centennial School District filled its superintendent position Tuesday night by hiring David Baugh, who has led two other Bucks County districts.

Baugh, the acting superintendent at Neshaminy since July 1, held the top post in the Bensalem School District since 2011.

Baugh, who described himself as a "passionate, child-centered educator," agreed to a contract that runs from Oct. 9 to June 30, 2020. His annual salary will be \$175,000.

"I am incredibly honored with the trust you have bestowed upon me this evening," Baugh said after the school board's 8-0 voted in his favor.

"You can do a lot of good in five years. I plan to hit the ground learning. You have to walk, listen and look," he said.

Baugh is replacing Joyce Mundy, 45, who resigned April 10 just shy of two years into a four-year contract.

Mark Miller, the board's vice president, said Baugh's experience heading up two other districts "will help view our work from other perspectives."

School board president Jane Schrader Lynch described the evening as "a great night in one respect and a sad night in one respect." Her sadness came in announcing the retirement of fellow board member and "good friend" Betty Huf.

Huf, a director for 22 years, suffered a stroke in June 2014, and missed several meetings before returning to the board over the winter.

"We've been friends for years and became closer as school board members," Lynch said. "We had a lot of the same thoughts. I will truly miss her."

Lynch said Huf misses her daughter, who lives out of state, and is moving closer to her.

The board has 30 days to appoint a replacement for Huf, who represented Region II. "It's a tough job, it's a thankless job, but come up and stand at the plate," said Lynch, seeking resumes for the position.

Director Steve Adams said Huf convinced him to run for a seat on the board. "Betty was everybody's mom," he said. "Betty was everybody's friend. I'll personally miss her."

On the superintendent front, Lynch said the board interviewed eight candidates of the 25 who applied for the position.

Baugh, 53, was hired in June as acting superintendent at Neshaminy to replace Robert Copeland, who

resigned in May to take the superintendent position at Lower Merion School District in Montgomery County.

He was paid \$640 per day with benefits for a term of no more than one year.

Baugh was promoted to the top position at Bensalem in 2011 after joining the district as an assistant superintendent in 2009.

On Tuesday night, he said Neshaminy was committed to beginning a full search for a superintendent in January and he didn't want to wait. "I'm pleased and honored to make it through Centennial's process," he said.

Lynch praised the work of acting superintendent Jennifer Polinchock, telling Baugh he will have "one of the finest assistant superintendents that we've ever had ... someone at your right hand that's going to help you."

Baugh said his research supported Lynch's compliment. "That's why I'm standing here tonight," he said of "Dr. Polinchock's reputation ... I consider this strong administrative team one of my true benefits."