

Laconia High principal retiring, capping 27-year career in education

- By MICHAEL MORTENSEN, The Laconia Daily Sun
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Michael Fredericksen, principal at Laconia High School for the past three years, announced to the staff on Monday that he is retiring. (Adam Drapcho/The Laconia Daily Sun photo)

LACONIA — Laconia High School Principal Mike Fredericksen will be retiring at the end of the school year. He announced his decision to the school’s staff on Monday.

Fredericksen became the school’s principal three years ago, following 18 years in various administrative posts in the Nashua school system.

“He was a breath of fresh air and raised the bar here at Laconia High,” Craig Kozens, LHS’s dean of students and athletic director, said.

During Fredericksen's tenure new courses have been offered, another science teacher was added to the faculty, and the school began offering a special distinction diploma to students who earn credits above the number required for graduation.

Fredericksen was also credited with bringing stability to the leadership of the school, which had seen three principals in the five years preceding Fredericksen's arrival.

Fredericksen's two immediate predecessors left LHS to take higher-paying principal positions in the Concord School District. One of them, David Bartlett, returned to Laconia one year later and is now assistant principal at LHS.

"It's been great," Fredericksen said of his time at Laconia High. He took the position after serving for one year as assistant superintendent in Nashua because he wanted to return to being a principal.

He praised the school's staff, as well as the support from the parents of students and the community in general.

"The community has come together around the schools" he said. He said he especially enjoyed working in Laconia because of the community's "old-fashioned values" and because "there's not the divisiveness that there is in other places."

Superintendent Steve Tucker said Fredericksen's "personableness, wide range of experiences, and expertise made him a great mentor to many staff members."

Fredericksen's retirement caps a 27-year career in education. His father was a physical education teacher, and two of his children are teachers — one teaches math, and the other is a special education teacher.

The school district has already begun the process to hire Fredericksen's successor.

Tucker said he hoped the search would produce a pool of applicants out of which between three and five would be interviewed. He said the search has begun early enough to attract a good number of qualified applicants.

“It’s a hard job,” Tucker said. And while mindful of the turnover in recent years, Tucker said he was especially interested in finding someone who he and the School Board “feel is going to be a good fit.”

Fredericksen, 57, holds an undergraduate degree in engineering from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth and a master's degree in educational administration from Rivier University in Nashua. He and his wife, Kathy, have five children, including one still in college.

After working for a time as an electrical engineer, Fredericksen taught pre-engineering courses in schools in Massachusetts before joining the Nashua School District.

Kozens said Fredericksen’s engineering background was an important factor in his support of the programs at the Huot Technical Center.

Fredericksen is highly respected by both the schools teachers and students, Kozens said.

“The faculty knew he would always be there for them. And the students felt he would listen to them,” he said.

Fredericksen said at this point he has no immediate plans of what he will do after he retires.

“The family and I will be talking to figure that out,” he said.

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