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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The School District of University City Names Co-Principals, Creates an Innovative Leadership Model at Pershing Elementary

(University City, MO) The School District of University City is pleased to announce Deitra Colquitt and Jessica Hawkins have been named co-principals of Pershing Elementary School. Their new assignments will begin on July 1.

Superintendent Sharonica Hardin-Bartley, Ph.D., PHR, said the co-principal model embraces the District's focus on a human-centered approach to leadership while fully championing the three pillars of the District's vision of Learning Reimagined: Humanize, Personalize and Problematicize.

"Ms. Hawkins and Ms. Colquitt have already demonstrated their commitment to the District's vision and most importantly to the students, staff and community at Pershing School," she said.

The new leadership model includes a unique management and compensation structure commensurate with their responsibilities.

Colquitt and Hawkins currently serve as Teacher Instructional Leaders at Pershing Elementary. They will replace Principal Herbert Buie who will retire in June 2020 after 14 years of service to the District. "We thank Mr. Buie for his dedication and service to Pershing Elementary School families and our community," Hardin-Bartley said.



Deitra Colquitt joined the District in 2015 after serving as a middle school English Language Arts teacher for the St. Louis Public and Hazelwood school districts from 2003 to 2012 and as an adjunct instructor for St. Charles Community College in 2013. She honed her leadership skills as an education counselor for the Higher Education Consortium in 2013-14 and as an instructional facilitator at St Louis Public Schools in 2014-15. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, Middle School Language Arts; a Master of Science in Elementary Education, Special Reading; and a Master of Education in School Leadership and Administration from the University of Missouri - St. Louis. She anticipates earning an Education Specialist in Education Administration degree from UMSL in May. Additionally, Colquitt received a Catalyst Fellowship from The Opportunity Trust in 2019-20. She was certified for Middle School (5-9) Language Arts in 2003, K-12 Special Reading in 2015 and K-8 Principal in 2019.

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On February 21, 1911, with a City population of only 2,417, The School District of University City was officially established. Classes began in September 1912 with a total school population of 769. Today, you will find outstanding educational programs serving a student population of approximately 2,800 with a preschool, four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. In May 2019, University City High School held its 102nd formal Commencement ceremony.

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“It is a privilege to be named as co-leader of Pershing Elementary School,” Colquitt said. “As a proud University City alumna, I am honored to serve as co-leader in the District where I learned the value of community, friendship and education. Being co-leader at Pershing is very humbling and affords me the opportunity to serve in the school district that helped to shape and mold me into the person I am today.”



Jessica Hawkins joined the District in 2017. She was previously an elementary school teacher from 2010 to 2017 in the Kirkwood School District. As an elementary teacher, Hawkins also facilitated several building and district-level educational equity initiatives while in Kirkwood Schools. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Missouri - Columbia in 2010; a Master of Social Work for Children, Youth and Families from St. Louis University in 2014; and an Education Specialist degree in Educational Leadership from Webster University in 2017. Additionally, Hawkins received the Iota Phi Lambda Apple for the Teacher Award in 2019 and a Catalyst Fellowship from The Opportunity Trust in 2019-20. She was certified for Elementary (1-6) Education in 2010 and K-8 Principal in 2017.

“I am excited, humbled and honored to serve the students, families and staff as co-leader of Pershing Elementary School,” Hawkins said. “Driven by my core belief that all students, regardless of their identity, background or educational level deserve the very best education, I look forward to working alongside the Pershing community to create an environment in which all students feel safe to take risks, ask questions and dream big.”

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