



SHERRI YBARRA, ED.S.
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

650 W. STATE STREET, 2ND FLOOR
BOISE, IDAHO 83702
(208) 332-6800 OFFICE / 711 TRS
WWW.SDE.IDAHO.GOV

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Media Contact:
Kristin Rodine
Public Information Officer
208-332-6807
krodine@sde.idaho.gov

Superintendent Ybarra announces two new directors, chief procurement officer

(BOISE) – Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra is welcoming new directors of assessment and certification, replacing two valued department heads who have moved on to new roles.

Superintendent Ybarra also is welcoming a new chief procurement officer to her leadership team.

“I am sorry to see my Assessment and Accountability Director Kevin Whitman and Certification and Professional Standards Director Lisa Colon Durham go, but I greatly appreciate their skillful leadership and wish them the best in their new positions,” Superintendent Ybarra said. “And I’m thrilled to announce that we have excellent new directors stepping in.”

Dr. Bethani Studebaker is the new director for Certification and the Professional Standards Commission. Studebaker came to the superintendent’s team from Northwest Nazarene University, where she was director of Doctoral Programs in Educational Leadership and previously directed Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation Programs. Earlier, she served as director of the Division of Student Affairs – Children’s Center – at Boise State University and advisor for TRIO Access & Opportunity Programs at Idaho State University, as well as teaching and directing the Child Development Center at Immanuel Lutheran School in Twin Falls. She earned a doctorate in education and a master’s degree in educational leadership and administration from the University of Idaho and a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from Idaho State University.

Colon Durham, director of Certification and Professional Standards for the past six years, has taken a job as director of professional development for the Idaho School Boards Association. She joined the department as Family and Community Engagement coordinator in 2013 and later served as coordinator

of educator effectiveness. Previously she taught math at Eagle Middle School and served as principal and assistant principal in Vallivue School District elementary schools.

Whitman, Assessment and Accountability director since July 2020, recently accepted a position in the private sector. He joined the department in early 2016 as National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) coordinator, then served as accountability coordinator before his promotion to department director. Before coming to Idaho, he was in Washington, D.C., as senior officer, research, for the Pew Charitable Trusts in Washington, D.C., and director of the Office of Policy Research for the U.S. Social Security Administration. He earned a master's degree in public policy from George Mason University and a bachelor's degree in government from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Kevin Chandler, mathematics and science assessment coordinator since March 2019, has been promoted to be the department's new Assessment and Accountability Director. Before joining the superintendent's team, he was a senior manager for test development at the American Institutes for Research in Washington, D.C., a molecular biology production associate at Argos Therapeutics in Durham, N.C., and a high school science teacher in Wake County, N.C. He earned a master's degree in secondary science education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from North Carolina State University.

Superintendent Ybarra also announced another promotion within her staff: Longtime employee Rick Kennedy is now the department's chief procurement officer. Kennedy joined the department in 2012 and has served as grant coordinator, instructional improvement coordinator and, most recently, instructional technology coordinator for the Content and Curriculum department. Previous positions include business management consultant at C4 Business Development Group, president and executive director of Arts West School for the Performing Arts, and senior intelligence consultant for Provizio, Inc. He earned a master's degree in organizational leadership and a bachelor's degree in management and business information systems from George Fox University.

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Attached: Photos of Dr. Bethani Studebaker, Kevin Chandler and Rick Kennedy