

Saluting Superintendents

Dr. Hank Stopinski

Erie County Association of School Boards Salutes Retiring Superintendents



**DEPEW
WILDCATS**



Dr. Hank Stopinski has served in the role of Superintendent of the Depew UFSD for 1.5 years. In the brief time he has been at Depew, he feels that his greatest accomplishment is the creation of a framework for a strategic plan with goals around student wellness and supports, inclusion and belonging, school safety, improve academic performance and the development of CTE opportunities for all students. His beginnings started at Granville Central High School where he served as a Science teacher. He then served as a Director of Career and Technical Education at both the River Valley Technical Center and Capital Region BOCES. Founding Principal of the Health Sciences Center, Dr. Stopinski moved to the Roy Hart CSD where he served as Superintendent before moving to the Depew UFSD. In retirement, Dr. Stopinski plans to devote quality time with his wife and family, get to all the projects that are on his "to do" list, spend time in the outdoors and garden, and entertain opportunities to help our public school systems and other service organizations.

Dr. Stopinski is a graduate of Williamsville North High School where some of his fondest memories of school are the times spent with fellow athletes and coaches. He also remembers the passion teachers exhibited for education like his Latin teacher, Miss Leone, who inspired him and his classmates to love learning.

His hobbies and pastimes include gardening, cooking, scouting, outdoor sports and recreation, home improvement projects and helping his brother manage his 80 acres. Throughout his ca-

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Thoughts...

Dr. Stopinski thanks first and foremost his wife and children for the sacrifices that they made in order for him to be an active and engaged Superintendent of Schools. He thanks the Boards of Education that he has served with and finally the students and staff of each of the Districts that he has served.

reer, he has been active in his church, scouting, various business organizations such as Rotary Club and various Chambers of Commerce. On the first day of school in the fall of 2024 after nearly 30+ years of education, Dr. Stopinski envisions having breakfast with his wife and reflect on his years in public education, and on raising his two sons, and for all the students he has served over the years.

He was recognized as a National Teacher of the year, Vermont State Principal of the Year, Basketball Coach of the Year, church and scouting leadership awards. One of his greatest honors was leading a national delegation of FFA members from across America to Russia at the end of the Perestroika. Dr. Stopinski has been an active ECASB participant in his short time at ECASB. He would offer Boards of Education and Superintendents the following words of wisdom, "Never lose sight of the reasons you became involved in education - our students". He would deliver the same message to elected officials, the Governor, our representatives in Albany and the SED Commissioner. He would remind them to make decisions based on what is best for children. On Board of Education meeting nights, Dr. Stopinski hopes to be working his gardens, taking a continuing education class or spending time with family. Reflecting on his career, Dr. Stopinski indicated that some of the 'best moments' as serving as Superintendent of Schools were:

- Greeting kindergartners on the first day of school.
- Creating and meeting with a Superintendent's student advisory in districts,
- Awarding seniors their diplomas at com-

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mencement.

- Attending concerts, musicals, athletic events and award ceremonies.
- Guiding the process of creating a student member of the Depew Union Free School Board.
- Bringing Capital Improvement projects to fruition in two school districts.
- Supporting the design and development of a nationally recognized agricultural education program in the Roy-Hart CSD.

Dr. Stopinski attended Niagara County Community College and Forest Technology, S.U.N.Y. C.E.S &F, in Wanakena for his Associates Degree. He earned a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education/Natural Science from Castleton State College in Castleton, Vermont. His Master Degree in Educational Administration and Leadership was earned from Castleton State College as well. Dr. Stopinski earned his Educational Leadership Ed.D. from NOVA Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. His dissertation was, Development of a Career Academy Evaluation Model for Rural Schools.

Dr. Stopinski over the course of his 30+ years in education was active in many school and community organizations. He received many awards and recognitions including:

- Presenter to emerging teaching professionals at Niagara University and Buffalo State University regarding interviewing for teaching positions.
- Member of NYSCOS, ENSSA, Convener of weekly meetings with Orleans/Niagara Superintendents, and the Niagara County Health Department.
- Southern Vermont Varsity Basketball Coach of the Year.
- Greater Niagara Boy Scouts of America Scouter of the Year, Award of Merit.
- Williamsville North Wall of Honor recipient, 2019.
- Diocese of Buffalo Companions on the Journey Award for Youth Services.
- Middle State Association of Schools and Colleges Program Evaluator.