New Beachwood High School Principal Ed Klein feels he will fit in well

BEACHWOOD -- Ed Klein, the new principal of Beachwood High School, said he came away impressed when he visited the school district shortly before he was hired.

“It’s a community that cares very much about the children's education and the school system,” Klein said in a phone interview. “The kids are very knowledgeable about the school and the operation of it, and they want the best for themselves as well.

“The teachers are very professional and very dedicated to the students.”

Klein, assistant principal at Euclid High School the past three years, was approved as BHS principal at a special meeting of the Beachwood school board May 30.

The board hired Klein based on the recommendation of Superintendent Richard Markwardt. He was awarded a two-year contract, effective Aug. 1, at an annual salary of $110,284.

The community had a chance to meet Klein and Joseph Spiccia, the other finalist for the job, May 20 at the Fairmont Early Childhood Center. The two candidates also met with BHS students May 16-17 and with school board members May 21.

Spiccia, former principal of Mentor High School, serves as Race to the Top coordinator for the Mentor schools.

‘I felt the time was right’

Klein, 35, will replace Robert Hardis, BHS principal since 2006, who was named the district’s assistant superintendent in March. Hardis will begin his new duties Aug. 1.

“I’m very excited for the opportunity to work with the community, students and staff of Beachwood High School,” Klein said.

“I’ve wanted to be a head principal of a school. I felt the time was right and this would be a community where I would fit in well.”

Klein said he likes the idea of working at “a small school when you can get to know everyone and they can get to know you.”

“I have past experience in a very large school with many different situations,” he said.

“I have an ability to work with people. I understand kids and work for the betterment of kids, and I have a desire to continue working to improve education.”

The Euclid school board has accepted Klein’s resignation. His contract with that district expires July 31.

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‘A lot of soft skills’

Markwardt said Klein was chosen from among 75 applicants after the district conducted a national search. After paper screening, the field was reduced to 12 candidates, then six semifinalists, and finally three finalists.

The third finalist accepted a position with another district out of state, Markwardt said.

“In addition to having the skills and some of the experience we were looking for, he had a lot of the soft skills that we felt would be necessary to lead Beachwood High School,” Markwardt said of Klein. “He had a lot of the relations skills and people skills that we have in the current principal.”

When asked what made Klein stand out, board president Dr. Brian Weiss said, “He just fits.”

“With his credentials, background, previous experience and personality, he fits the culture of the (high school) building and the district, and he fits the educational excellence that we strive to maintain at all times,” Weiss said.

“We know he is the right person to continue to foster and improve the current excellent learning environment for the students and staff at the high school.

“We’re excited to have him. We wish him good luck and great success in our district, and we look forward to working with him.”

Weiss said the board is appreciative of Markwardt and the team he assembled “for bringing us two quality candidates.”

“We know both of them would have served our students well.”

12 years at Euclid High

Klein, of Concord, has worked at Euclid High School the past 12 years, including the last nine years as a high school administrator. He was principal of Euclid’s Business and Communications School (2006-2009), an instructional teacher leader (2004-2006) and 10th-grade assistant principal (2003-04).

In the fall, Klein was named Assistant Principal of the Year for 2011-12 by the Ohio Association of Secondary School Administrators. He traveled in April to Washington, D.C., where he was recognized for his award by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

“I am grateful to the many staff, students and community members who participated in the selection process,” Markwardt said. “I look forward to Mr. Klein joining our Beachwood High School team.”

Markwardt said Klein will transition into his new job this summer, after he completes his obligations with the Euclid school district.

Klein said his first priorities on the job will be “getting to know the community, students, staff and parents, learning the system and culture of the school and working to move it forward.”

“I want to get up to speed on the (BHS) construction process,” he said.

Klein, who grew up in the Pittsburgh area, started at Euclid High School as an English teacher in 2000. He previously taught English for one year at Lake Academy, an alternative school in Willoughby that is part of the Auburn Vocational School District.

He earned a master’s degree in educational administration from Ursuline College and a bachelor’s in English from John Carroll University.

He is a doctoral candidate in K-12 educational leadership at Kent State University.

Klein and his wife, Danielle, have three children: Grace, 10, Francesca, 9, and Joe, 8. They all attend St. Gabriel School, a parochial school in Concord.