

Kentucky educator named superintendent of Catholic Schools for Archdiocese of Baltimore

James Sellinger, Chancellor of Education for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, announced July 2 the appointment of Dr. Donna Hargens, Ed.D., as superintendent of Catholic schools for the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

Hargens most recently served as superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, the largest school system in Kentucky and the 25th largest in the nation, according to a July 2 news release. She previously served as chief academic officer for Wake County Public Schools in North Carolina, interim superintendent of Wake County Public Schools, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction (PK-12), and Western area assistant superintendent. In addition, she has been a principal, assistant principal and a high school Spanish and English teacher.

The archdiocese conducted an extensive national search for a new superintendent following the July 2017 departure of Dr. Barbara McGraw Edmondson, who took on a new role as as chief leadership and program officer for the National Catholic Educational Association.

"We are excited to have such an experienced educational leader join our team," Sellinger said in the news release. "Dr. Hargens is passionate about Catholic education and has a proven record of working collaboratively with teachers through her knowledge of curriculum and instruction to increase student achievement. She is the consummate professional and we are looking forward to her leadership as we prepare our students for college and careers in the 21st century."

During her tenure as Superintendent of Jefferson County Public Schools, Hargens improved overall math and reading scores in all subgroups, as well as increased overall reading and math scores by 10.2 points for non-gap students and by 8.6 points for gap students, according to the news release. She was instrumental in leading efforts to improve college and career readiness, and boost the district high

school graduation rate to 80.1 percent in 2016. She also worked closely with the Archdiocese of Louisville Catholic School system in several areas, including a summer program to prepare young children for kindergarten, according to the release.

Hargens was recognized in 2012 by U.S. Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, as the “featured superintendent” at the National School Turnaround Summit. In 2013, *Business First* named her the “2013 Enterprising Woman Making a Difference,” and in 2015, *Today’s Woman* named her “Most Admired Educator.”

Hargens graduated summa cum laude from Marquette University with a bachelor of arts degree. She holds a master’s of education in educational administration and supervision from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a doctorate in educational leadership, management and policy from Seton Hall University.

“I am blessed and humbled to serve the families, students, and schools of the Archdiocese of Baltimore in the role of Superintendent of Catholic Schools,” Hargens said. “I am eternally grateful to my parents for their investment in my Catholic education, and look forward to joining Chancellor of Catholic Schools, Jim Sellinger, and the team of dedicated educators to provide the foundation for a strong Catholic education for students to RISE ABOVE.”

Hargens began her new role July 2.

Hargens was the featured guest on the July 8 Catholic Baltimore radio program, heard at 9:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. on WCBM-680 AM. The Catholic Review will publish a feature profile on Hargens in the coming weeks.