



[TOP](#)

# Teacher of the Year Promoted Internally to Lead Lake Road

AUGUST 25TH 2020 BY DEE LOFLIN

## Teacher of the Year Promoted Internally to Lead Lake Road

Poplar Bluff, MO - Distinguished elementary educator Rondi Vaughn has been hired to succeed Erica Weadon as principal of Lake Road Elementary

Having split her career between Eugene Field and Oak Grove over the course of two decades with the Poplar Bluff School District, Vaughn now intends on bringing with her best practices from each elementary building.

“It’s the same curriculum and same achieving excellence (mission statement), it’s just seeing education through a different lens,” Vaughn said. “I plan to take the greatness from each of the buildings I’ve been in, and hope that I can continue to build on the work that makes Lake Road amazing.

Input on leadership qualities was solicited from Lake Road faculty before the Board of Education approved Vaughn's internal advancement in March, after Weadon announced that her family would be relocating. A Campbell native, Vaughn can recall substitute teaching a teenage Weadon back at Holcomb High School, where Vaughn was encouraged by an administrator to pursue a career in education.

She earned her master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from William Woods University in Fulton, and more recently another master’s in elementary administration from Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau. Vaughn began her tenure teaching elementary school in Kennett in 1998.

“I didn’t instantly know I wanted to be a principal, it just evolved as I had instructional leadership opportunities within our PLC (professional learning community),” Vaughn explained. “You have to develop your teachers; they’re the most important resource for delivering instruction and student success. I have been in their shoes; I’m gonna be facing the challenges with them.”

Lake Road was the first school in R-I history to earn the coveted National Blue Ribbon award. Earlier this year, the elementary school received gold level recognition under School-wide Positive Behavior Support and was named a national showcase school through the Capturing Kids’ Hearts initiative once again.

This year Lake Road will complete its phase-in plan of expanding the configuration to include grades 1-6 to combat the results of a population shift within the district. The school board approved the purchase of a modular classroom in February to house elective classes, subsequently opening up two classrooms per grade level in the main building.

Vaughn was named the 2020 Teacher of the Year at Eugene Field, a Lighthouse School under the Leader in Me program, based on Dr. Stephen Covey’s best-selling book, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.” Vaughn happens to be the eighth teacher at Eugene Field to go on to become a school administrator either within the district or the region since implementing the leadership program. She says the habits have made an impact on both her professional and personal life.

“You have to hold onto your ‘why,’ and that’s your hope,” Vaughn stated. Vaughn was previously named the 2012 Teacher of the Year at Oak Grove, the second school within the district to receive the Blue Ribbon award. She was a part of the groundwork there under the SW-PBS system

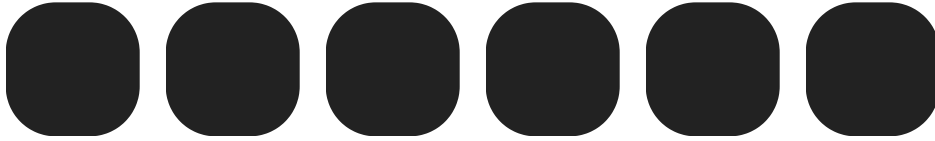
“Mrs. Vaughn obviously has a tremendous teaching pedigree and is immediately equipped to continue the advancement of the good work Lake Road is engaged in,” said Dr. Scott Dill, R-I superintendent. “In terms of her mindset, she has a servant’s heart when it comes to leadership, and in my mind that’s the only way to approach such a position. She understands that the opportunity to lead is really the opportunity to be of service.”

Pictured Rondi Vaughn enters her 23rd year as an educator leading Lake Road Elementary, one of two Blue Ribbon Schools within the district.

Photo and article provided by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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TOP

## Three Rivers College Requires Face Coverings

JULY 27TH 2020 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Three Rivers College Requires Face Coverings

As of Monday, July 27, 2020, Three Rivers College will require face coverings to be worn by faculty, staff, students, and visitors while in a building and while not physically separated in an office or room without others present.

Face coverings must be worn outdoors if the recommended six feet social distancing cannot be maintained.

Students living in College housing are not required to wear face coverings when inside their housing unit, but must otherwise follow the requirements.

If more than one individual is present, face coverings must also be worn inside College vehicles. As with other buildings, face coverings must be worn in food service areas and

food will only be available to-go.

“We understand that wearing face coverings can be uncomfortable and can feel like a hassle, but it is necessary to provide a safe work and learning environment at this time,” said Dr. Wesley Payne, President of Three Rivers College.

“Social distancing is often not possible in classrooms and crowded hallways, for instance,” said Payne. “We have been consulting with local health officials, and all recommend face coverings when social distancing is not possible. Our students’ health and safety are of the utmost importance. So, while it may seem inconvenient, we believe requiring face coverings is one of the best things we can do to keep our students, faculty, and staff healthy.”

Like with other attire, face coverings cannot have imagery or words that would be disruptive to the learning environment.

Face coverings must properly cover the nose and mouth and against the sides of the face and be secured around the head as a tube, with ties, or ear loops. Bandanas, kerchiefs, articles of clothing, masks with exhalation valves, or items which are held against the face by hand are not acceptable forms of facial coverings.

There are some exceptions to the mandate. If a person is not able to wear face coverings due to valid health concerns, then reasonable adjustments will be made.

Students with valid health concerns should contact Ann Matthews, Dean of Students, at 573-840-9669 or **[amatthews@trcc.edu](mailto:amatthews@trcc.edu)**. Faculty and staff with valid health concerns should contact Kristina McDaniel, Director of Human Resources, at 573-840-9695 or **[kristinamcdaniel@trcc.edu](mailto:kristinamcdaniel@trcc.edu)**.

Individuals engaged in physical education activity, athletic competition/practice, and theater/music performance are not required to wear a face covering during the activity but are encouraged to maintain social distancing if possible.

Employees and students will each be provided one cloth face covering at the start of the semester, which begins on August 17.

It is the responsibility of employees and students to have their face coverings available and properly maintained. Information will be provided to all students, faculty, and staff on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.

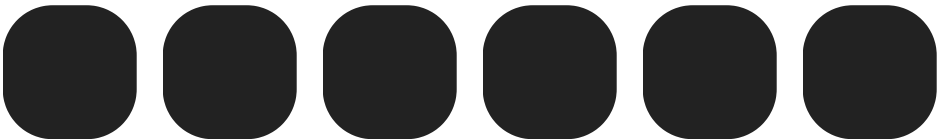
Three Rivers College is committed to contributing to the quality of life in Southeast Missouri with quality, affordable higher education opportunities and community services

that support and encourage the economic, civic, and cultural vitality of the region. For more information about college and workforce programs and upcoming events, visit [trcc.edu](http://trcc.edu).

LAST UPDATED ON JULY 27TH 2020 BY DEE LOFLIN

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[Go to post](#)



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# Poplar Bluff Student Winners Named in Earth Day Contest

APRIL 06TH 2020 BY DEE LOFLIN

Poplar Bluff Student Winners Named in Earth Day Contest

Please note photo was taken on March 12th - Poplar Bluff Junior High and Technical Career Center students were recently awarded for placing in a T-shirt design contest initiated to promote the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.

On Thursday, March 12, top students received \$50 gift cards and trophies, sponsored by Ozark Federal Credit Union. Winners in the PBJHS category were: Cailin Pratt placing first, Carli Pundsack placing second, and Wyatt Meurlott-Luebben – third. TCC winners were: Jessica Paulin placing first, Jaden Jordan – second place, and Alayna Stokan – third.

The overall winner of the design chosen by way of committee was Jon Daniels, an area art teacher, who entered the adult category through the Margaret Harwell Art Museum, and received \$100. T-shirts are available for purchase at the art museum, with proceeds supporting the operation

“I chose the Junior High and Senior High levels for the T-shirt design contest since we love for students to be a part of the art museum,” stated Terena Whitworth, event organizer, whose husband Steve serves as museum director. “This was a way to make them aware of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and the Margaret Harwell Art Museum at the same time.”

Terena Whitworth, a retired educator, said she can recall celebrating the 40th anniversary as a teacher at the former Poplar Bluff 5th and 6th Grade Center, and the 30th anniversary at O’Neal Elementary School. “My goal is for the whole community to become more aware of saving our planet and to celebrate Earth Day some time in April,” she continued.

The Margaret Harwell Art Museum is planning an ‘edible landfill’ and ‘junk sculpture’ activities free for children, ages 5-12, tentatively scheduled for 1:30-3:30 p.m. Saturday, April 18, at 421 N. Main St. For more information, contact Terena Whitworth at 573-785-3332.

(Left to right) PBJHS teacher Brandon Francis; organizer Terena Whitworth; students Cailin Pratt, Carli Pundsack and Wyatt Meurlott-Luebben; Ozark FCU representative Meagan Bader; and Margaret Harwell Art Museum Director Steve Whitworth.

Photo and article by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

LAST UPDATED ON APRIL 06TH 2020 BY DEE LOFLIN

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## Corey Jameson to Lead New Mark Twain School

MARCH 12TH 2020 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Corey Jameson to Lead New Mark Twain School

Poplar Bluff, MO - An educator with 20 years of experience working with at-risk students has been hired to lead the planned Mark Twain School on North Main Street.

Corey Jameson, lead instructor of the Poplar Bluff Graduation Center, has accepted the position of principal of the alternative educational facility set to serve grades 7-12 beginning in the fall.

“From my perspective, Mr. Jameson took an indirect path to public education, but on his journey he was always focused on a population of students who needed something a little different than what was offered via conventional methods,” commented Dr. Scott Dill, R-I superintendent. “I genuinely believe Mr. Jameson sees it as a place of opportunities for students who have experienced trouble with the system, and he has the skill set to recognize what the students need from us to be successful, whether that’s extra support or really just us getting out of the way.”

Jameson earned his master's degree in secondary administration from Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau in 2018. He started his undergraduate education at Three Rivers College and went on to receive his bachelor's in organizational management from Hannibal LaGrange College, and later his teaching certificate from Central Methodist University in Fayette.

Before joining the R-I school district in 2015, Jameson served at Sears Youth Center in various capacities including special education teacher, group leader, youth specialist and service coordinator beginning in 2002, and two years prior to that when counting his part-time work.

“My entire career has centered around helping students who have had barriers to success, and helping get them past those barriers,” Jameson said. “That’s what I’ve done for a long time, since I was about 18 years old.”

The nontraditional school will provide services on site through FCC Behavioral Health plus become the district’s headquarter for its social workers and attendance office. According to Jameson, a district as large as Poplar Bluff needs to have an alternative pathway for students who may have “slipped through the cracks” due to various life circumstances, yet have found the self-motivation to earn their diplomas.

“These students got themselves up, caught a bus and came to school,” Jameson continued. “That’s when an individual becomes most successful, when they’ve decided to do it for themselves. Because the bottom line is they see their value.”

Filling the top position was accelerated so that the principal can be part of the programming process as well as staffing, which will include reallocation of faculty as well as additional posts approved by the Board of Education in February.

The Mark Twain building, to be retrofitted once the Early Childhood Center moves to the Kindergarten Center campus over the summer, will absorb the district’s credit recovery services and RISE Transition Center long-term suspensions, as well as become the home of the future Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) program. Education officials are also in discussions with higher education partners about college credit offerings

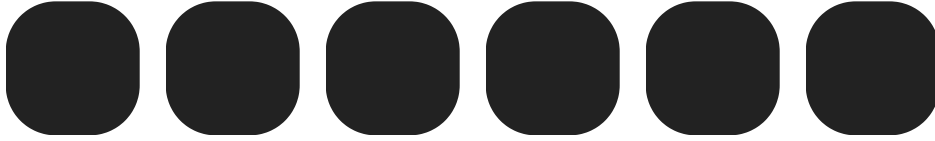
“Everything is on the table at this point,” Dill explained. “We’re crafting programs to address the needs of learners for whom the traditional brick and mortar school is not meeting – on both sides of the spectrum.”

The grand openings of the new Early Childhood Center and Mark Twain School later this year will mark the completion of the second and final phase of the long-range plan financed in a single levy measure approved by voters in 2014.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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## Dr. Owings Honored Regionally by Principal Association

MARCH 12TH 2020 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Dr. Owings Honored Regionally by Principal Association

Poplar Bluff, MO - Poplar Bluff Middle School Principal Dr. Brad Owings was named ‘distinguished principal’ of the Southeast Region during the 31st annual conference of the Missouri Association of Elementary School Principals held Saturday, Feb. 29, at Osage Beach.

A principal of 17 years, Owings was hired in Poplar Bluff in 2015 at the former 5th and 6th Grade Center, and led the transition the following year to the Middle School which—with 1,200 students at the time—was the largest upper elementary school in the state, according to education officials.

The move to the former High School campus involved bringing fourth grade teachers in from the district's lower elementaries, helping to develop procedures and schedules for the reconfigured grade span and planning the logistics of traffic patterns for parents, all the while having hired 15 first-year educators.

"I have often been amazed at the number of students Dr. Owings knows by name" and frequently "knows their story," wrote Middle School intervention teacher Kris Sittig in a nomination letter for the award. She continued: Owings shows the "same respect to his secretarial, maintenance and school cafeteria staff" as he does faculty.

Cultivating a positive climate is the most important job of a building administrator, wrote Owings in his nomination essay, and a leader does so by providing teachers with "autonomy, mastery and purpose," he stated. His personal mission, he went on, is to equip staff members with "everything they need to be the best version of themselves," and create a "culture of continuous learning for adults."

"It's so easy to get caught up in the 'busy-ness' of being a principal that we lose sight of the real work," which is relationship-building, Owings noted as a professional challenge.

"Dr. Owings possesses a broad working knowledge of both the pedagogy and the business of education," said R-I Superintendent Dr. Scott Dill in a letter of support, adding that Owings is an "asset to the profession" and believes in students "at his core." The superintendent elaborated: "He believes in their potential and sees for them a future brighter than they, themselves, can often envision."

On a personal note, Owings is married to sixth grade Middle School teacher Holly, and together they have four children. Dave Elledge, co-pastor of The Bluff Church, where the family attends, stated that Owings "seems to have found a wonderful balance" between home life and his career. "Dr. Owings is seen in our community as an administrator who truly cares for his students, his teachers and staff, and the Poplar Bluff community," Elledge commented.

While Owings has recently accepted a job offering in Southwest Missouri for the 2020/21 school year, his successor—to be recommended for approval by the Board of Education during the next monthly meeting—will be left with a solid foundation once he or she takes the reins in July. Gains were made in both English language arts and mathematics, along with all subgroups on state assessments from 2018 to 2019 at the Middle School.

The three best practices that the outgoing principal—who received his doctorate in 2010 from the University of Missouri at Columbia—listed are vital in helping all students find success are: School-wide Positive Behavior Support, Response to Intervention and

Professional Learning Communities.

Over the past few years, the Middle School has ‘rebooted’ its PLC model, collaborating in teams to track data on student progress using common formative assessments; established common RTI time so each grade level can provide differentiated instruction for students struggling or in need of extension activities; and started the SW-PBS process, reinforcing student expectations.

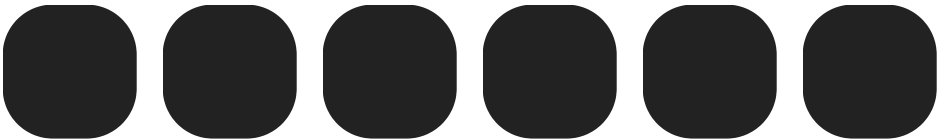
Pictured: Dr. Brad Owings, Middle School principal, is recognized among colleagues on Saturday, Feb. 29, during the MAESP Distinguished Principal banquet at Osage Beach.

Photo and article by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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