

## Retirement opens door for new crew chief

From clearing school parking lots of snow and grooming athletic playing fields, to repairs and maintenance of buildings and equipment, Hamburg Central counts on its maintenance mechanic crew chief to know every inch of its facilities and to supervise his team to ensure a safe and efficient operation.



**S. Bykowicz**

That monumental responsibility recently changed hands when long-time Maintenance Mechanic Crew Chief Kevin Strong retired after 38 years with the district and Stephen Bykowicz stepped into the role as head of buildings and grounds.

“To say Kevin Strong will be missed is an understatement,” said Barbara Sporyz, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services and Finance. “Steve has some big shoes to fill but he is a capable successor and we are fortunate to have him join our team!”

Mr. Bykowicz comes to Hamburg Central from the Williamsville Central School District, where he was a maintenance mechanic for 22 ½ years. His has a strong background in the electrical trades and served in the U.S. Navy as a Seabee.

In his new position, Mr. Bykowicz oversees a staff of 54 on three shifts. In these first months, his priorities are becoming acquainted with his staff and colleagues throughout the district, gaining a working knowledge of systems and processes, spending time in all the buildings to assess needs and conditions, and learning about projects underway or slated to soon begin. This includes a \$9.875 million renovation project that moves into full force this summer.

As Mr. Bykowicz explains it, the job involves “a lot of moving parts.” He intends to approach the challenges with flexibility and an eye toward finding a better way of doing what needs to be done.

One of his first accomplishments at Hamburg was to implement an online system for submission of maintenance work orders. Next on the list is setting up online supply ordering that will allow better tracking of inventory and usage.

# Superintendent's Column



## Renewing our sense of purpose

I was in a 12th grade English class a couple of weeks ago, during which the teacher was engaging the students in an essay about education by Ralph Waldo Emerson. While Emerson lived from 1803-1882, his thoughts about education, along with the teacher's provocative questioning, prompted the students to share their insights into what and how they are taught in school, about the purpose of education altogether and about what they believed were the features of an ideal education. I stayed for about 25 minutes (my visits to each classroom are usually less than 10 minutes), because I could not tear myself away from the dialogue that was taking place. I found it fascinating because our school district continues to engage in our own dialogue about what and how we teach children, we continually assess and re-assess our own purpose as educators and we know that we have an obligation to provide the very best modern learning experiences for all learners.

Our Strategic Planning Committee of 50 stakeholders is where our collective dialogue about teaching and learning occurs. At our fall meeting, and during three meetings of a smaller working group selected from our larger committee, we have worked on developing a new Strategic Narrative. A Strategic Narrative comprises a vision statement, mission statement and core values. Like our High School seniors, we, too, are working to establish our version of the ideal learning environment. Our vision, mission and

core values will focus our efforts on behalf of the students and families we serve.

We include among our inspirations the notion that our mission statement must be a compelling and simple statement of what “makes us durably relevant to the world.” (Harvard Business Review, 2017). We are reminded by a Spanish philosopher who is famous for saying, “Tell me what you pay attention to and I'll show you who you are,” that our core values must reflect those beliefs that

will permeate everything we do in our service to students and families.

All of which brings me back to the 12th grade English class. Their assignment was to analyze a variety of texts about the purpose of education and use that analysis to construct their own essay about the purpose of education and describe their version of the ideal learning environment. As the world continues to change, so does our work in schools. You can expect that we will continue to engage in our own thoughtful discussion as a school district about the ways we can best help students become the critical and creative thinkers, effective communicators and productive collaborators that our modern world requires. You can also expect that we will act decisively on the results of that discussion.

Our Strategic Planning Committee meets again this spring and our 2018-2019 Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board of Education in June.

Thank you for the opportunity to be your partners in the learning and growth of your children.



**Michael Cornell**  
Superintendent