

CLIFTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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NEWS RELEASE

August 22, 2019 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From Custodian to Assistant Principal, the American Dream is realized in Clifton Public Schools

Clifton Public Schools will see a familiar face in a new role in September when Taras Petryshyn takes on his new responsibilities as School 14's assistant principal. Mr. Petryshyn may be new to the position; however, he is not new to Clifton Public Schools.

Mr. Petryshyn graduated from Clifton High School in 2000 after he and his family moved to the United States from Ukraine in 1997 during his sophomore year. After graduation, Mr. Petryshyn was hired as a custodian for Clifton Public Schools in 2001 where he worked at Clifton High School before transferring to the administration building as a night-shift custodian.

"Betty Marchioni hired me as a custodian. She was like a mom around here. If it hadn't been for her, I never would have had these opportunities," reflected Petryshyn. "People were always very kind and supportive. When I was a custodian, Janina Kusielewicz, the Director of Curriculum, constantly encouraged me to continue with my studies and to do more."

While working nights, Petryshyn followed Ms. Kusielewicz's advice and attended classes at Bergen Community College and William Paterson University, where he graduated in 2006. Petryshyn studied English with a concentration in writing and obtained his K-5 teaching certification.

In 2007, Clifton hired Mr. Petryshyn as a teacher replacement at School 13 and School 5. Mr. Petryshyn was hired permanently as a fifth-grade teacher in 2008 where he taught at School 1 and afterward, School 8. Petryshyn obtained his administrative degree at Montclair State University and became the administrative intern at School 14 during the 2018-2019 school-year.

"I think it's truly amazing what he's accomplished," stated Jason Habedank, principal of School 14, "not only starting as a custodian but coming to this country. It was a big hill for him to climb, and he climbed it."

“My parents are happy and excited about this, but hard work is just a part of our life. So to them, there was no other way. It’s more of a big thing for my wife,” stated Petryshyn. Mr. Petryshyn and his wife, who works in the banking industry and also from Ukraine, recently welcomed their first son, Daniel.

The school board officially appointed Mr. Petryshyn as assistant principal at School 14 at the Board of Education meeting on Wednesday, August 21, 2019.

“Taras is the epitome of a success story. He sets an example for all of us with his hard work, dedication, and commitment to helping others. I know that he will be an outstanding leader for the children in Clifton. We are lucky to have him,” stated Superintendent Dr. Danny Robertozzi.

“It’s been a journey, and the journey doesn’t stop here. It continues, just in a different path. As the new assistant principal, I promise to work hard for the students and staff and to assist them in any way that I can. I want to continue to build those relationships with the community,” Mr. Petryshyn said at Wednesday’s board meeting. “My family and I grateful for this opportunity, and I thank you for that.”

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