



GOOSE CREEK

CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Goose Creek CISD names two new administrators

Goose Creek CISD Superintendent of Schools Dr. Toby York announced Wednesday the hiring of two new administrators.

- Karen Smithson, academic dean at Goose Creek Memorial High School, has been named the first principal of the district's Early College High School, scheduled to open in the fall.

- Renea Dillon, principal of College of the Mainland's Collegiate High School in Texas City, has been named the district's new director of Career and Technical Education, replacing recently retired director Kevin Parker.

"I believe we have selected the best possible leaders for our Early College High School and Career and Technical Education," said Dr. York.



KAREN SMITHSON
Early College
High School Principal

"Goose Creek CISD is fortunate to add two administrators with proven leadership skills who are committed to providing every child with an opportunity to grow, both academically and personally."

The hiring of the new administrators was made official at the Feb. 22 meeting of the Goose Creek CISD Board of Trustees.

Smithson has lived in Baytown for 20 years, spending 19 of those years as a teacher and administrator for Goose Creek CISD.

Two years after playing a key role in opening Goose Creek CISD's third high school, Smithson will find herself opening the district's fourth, though on a much smaller scale: a school for 80 to 100 students in the first year, expanding to 320 to 400 in four years. Even so, she plans to hit the ground running shortly next month by going to junior schools to meet with students about the benefits of early college courses, meeting with the parents of prospective students as well as hiring teachers and staff.

"Goose Creek CISD's focus is on getting more students college ready. This program is about improving the ability of kids to become college ready," Smithson said.

"I know that a college education can change your destiny, but it is also more — the opportunity for an 18 or 19 year old to earn an associates degree can change a family's destiny," Smithson said. "Our early college high school will open up options for some of our students that maybe they didn't have before."

Goose Creek CISD's Early College High School — which will be housed on the Lee College campus — will engage students in an academic program that blends high school and college work with the goal that students will graduate with a high school diploma and an associate degree or 60 college credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree — tuition free.



RENEA DILLON
Career and Technical
Education Director

This partnership with Lee College will target low-income youth, first-generation college goers, English language learners, students at-risk of not graduating, and other young people underrepresented in higher education.

Prior to working in Goose Creek, Smithson taught school in Beeville. Smithson has taught students at nearly every grade level. She received her bachelor's degree in art and history from Sam Houston State University, and her master's degree in educational leadership from Stephen F. Austin State University.

While not a new program, enhancing the district's Career and Technical Education is a top-priority for Goose Creek and its new director.

Students from each Goose Creek CISD high schools can enroll at Stuart Career Center to get a head start on training for their chosen career, explore a field of interest, and gain knowledge and skills about the work world.

CTE enrollment across the district is up — now well over 3,000 students, and growing.

"I am extremely excited about coming home to Goose Creek CISD, having graduated from Lee High School and taught at Sterling for seven years," Dillon said.

"Helping students discover and prepare for the career of their dreams is a passion of mine, and I can't wait to begin working with the quality programs that GCCISD already has and to build new opportunities for students to develop the strong academic, interpersonal, and work-readiness skills needed for success in post-secondary education and the workforce," she said.

Dillon has worked for the College of the Mainland since 1999, the last six years as principal of the college's Collegiate High School.

Dillon earned her bachelor's degree in Historical Studies from the University of Houston-Clear Lake, and her master's degree in Education Leadership from University of Houston-Clear Lake.

Dillon worked for Galveston ISD as a special populations coordinator from 1997-1999, and previous to that assignment, she taught high school for nine years, seven of those years were at Sterling High School.

A starting date for Dillon has not been established.

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