

FB coach, leadership roles, approved for USD 409

**(KAIR)--Educational leadership changes are made at the Atchison Public Schools, with the USD 409 Board of Education, this week, approving the hiring of replacements in key positions.**

**According to Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Renee Nugent, the school district "is excited to welcome three new leaders who will play a key role in supporting students, staff, and families across the district. Each of these positions brings a unique focus to the district- overall mission of academic excellence, student success, and community engagement."**

**Named as Director of Curriculum and Instruction is Felicia Yoakam who replaces former director Jacque Coleman. According to a release, she "will be working closely with teachers, administrators, and staff to ensure strong instructional practices, curriculum alignment, and professional development opportunities," with the release calling Yoakam's role "especially important as USD 409 continues to implement Visible Learning strategies, which are designed to help students take ownership of their education and make their learning more effective."**

**The position of Director of Curriculum and Instruction "is a district-level leadership role that focuses on the quality of teaching and learning across all grade levels."**

**Selected as Associate Principal of Atchison Elementary School is Catherine Gundersen who, the release says, "will provide additional support in the daily operations of the school, helping students, teachers, and parents navigate the academic year successfully."**

**Gundersen, who replaces Janis Olds, "brings years of experience as both a classroom teacher and an administrator, making her a great fit for this role."**

**Also hired is the replacement of long-time Head Atchison High School Football Coach, Jim Smith, who's retirement becomes effective at the end of the current school year.**

**Named as Smith's replacement is Jordan Malcom, who, the release says, "has seen great success in recent years" working under Smith, with Malcom, the last two seasons, serving as the defensive backs coach which, the release says, gives him understanding of the "expectations of the program," with his focus to be placed on "developing a community-centered culture in student-athletes, not just in their performance on the field, but also in their leadership, teamwork, and personal growth off the field."**

**The hirings, for the 2025-2026 school year, were approved by the Board of Education Monday.**

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