



MEDIA RELEASE

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919 N Broad Street • Brooksville, FL 34601

## Principal named for Winding Waters K8

**Brooksville** - Veteran educator and school administrator Cari O'Rourke has been selected as the next principal for Winding Waters K8 (WWK8). O'Rourke follows current principal, Janet Cerro, who announced her retirement earlier this year. When O'Rourke begins her tenure in June, she will be only the third principal to lead the district's second-largest K8 school since it opened in 2011.

O'Rourke, who is currently an assistant principal at Challenger K8, has been with Hernando Schools since 1995. She started with the school district as a third grade teacher at Westside Elementary and also taught at Chocachatti Elementary. By 2013, she successfully transitioned into school administration with a post at Chocachatti Elementary as assistant principal, with subsequent administrative opportunities at Westside and Moton Elementary before moving to Challenger K8 in 2018.

Over her nine years in school leadership, O'Rourke has earned respect among her colleagues for creating and leading school teams toward increased student learning gains with focused use of achievement data. In addition to supervising and supporting faculty and students, she has collaborated on developing and monitoring school improvement goals, accountability systems, and instructional practices. She was also named the school district's first Assistant Principal of the Year for 2019-2020.

As she looks ahead to serving at Winding Waters K8, O'Rourke plans to work with school staff to identify new academic targets and to find creative ways of enhancing school culture through building positive relationships and promoting high learning expectations. "Winding Waters is a high performing school. The staff are dedicated, the parents are involved and the students are proud of their amazing school. I'm so excited and honored to be part of the Yellow Jacket family," O'Rourke said.

"It is obvious to anyone who meets Cari that she leads with enthusiasm and heart. Her career highlights point to her expertise in effective instructional practices, her ability to bring stakeholders in to the process and to create a school where students and staff thrive," Superintendent John Stratton said. "With her signature blend of energy and enthusiasm, Cari will be a great principal for Winding Waters."