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Maria Santa in photo from Paterson Public Schools' website.

Photos



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Popular Principal Promoted to School Administration Job

Joe Malinconico

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PATERSON, NJ – Maria Santa, an educator with three decades of experience, has been named Paterson Public Schools' newest assistant superintendent.

Santa fills the assistant superintendent position that became open when Eileen Shafer was appointed deputy superintendent. Santa, who was appointed effective December 1, will serve as interim assistant superintendent for school administration through June 30.

Santa, who previously was principal at School 5, will be paid \$142,250 as interim assistant superintendent.

"I hate to see her leave the school," said Peter Tirri, president of the Paterson Education Association, the union that represents city teachers. "She was a terrific principal."

"She's a teacher's principal," said Board of Education President Christopher Irving. "She's a class act. I don't think you'll find anybody who has anything bad to say about her."

Santa has taken a proactive approach to her previous jobs in the city school district, including going on her own for special training at the Principals' Center at the Harvard University, according to Irene Sterling, president of the Paterson Education Fund, an advocacy group.

"Maria hasn't waited for someone else to fix things, she's taken it upon herself," said Sterling. "She's been aggressive in learning about the things that make a difference at her school and for Paterson kids."

Santa's education career started in Puerto Rico in the 1980s and she came to Paterson in 1985 as bilingual teacher at School 15, a position she held for four years, according to her resume. She then worked one year as an English instructor at American University in Puerto Rico and two years as a bilingual teacher in East Orange before returning to Paterson in 1992 when she was hired as a bilingual teacher at Roberto Clemente Elementary School.

Santa also worked for Paterson Public Schools as a school level facilitator, a language arts resource teacher, supervisor of language arts literacy, and supervisor of assessment before being named principal of School 29 in January 2007. She later was assigned as principal of School 5 in June 2009, the position she held before being named interim assistant superintendent.

"Our daily goal is to make our students better readers, better writers and better thinkers," Santa said in her principal's message on the School 5 webpage. "We strive to ensure every student receives the best educational experience possible. We take pride in our work and we are together in our relentless pursuit of excellence."

This article is filed under the following tags:

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