



Chief District Court Judge, Burford Cherry, administers oath of office to Dr. Walter Hart, HPS Superintendent

## **Dr. Hart Takes Oath as HPS Superintendent**

During the October 24th meeting of the Board of Education for Hickory Public Schools, Dr. Walter Hart was administered the oath of office as the district's new Superintendent. Chief District Court Judge, Burford Cherry, who serves the 25th Judicial District, administered the oath of office. Dr. Hart was joined by his wife, Laura Hart, for the ceremonial event.

Following an extended ovation from a large crowd in attendance, Joab Cotton, chairman of the HPS Board of Education, officially welcomed Dr. Walter Hart to Hickory Public Schools. "We look forward to a long relationship of success and welcome you to Hickory Public Schools," said Cotton.

In response, Dr. Hart shared the following words with the Board of Education and all guests:

*"Ladies and Gentlemen – I am honored to serve as the superintendent of the Hickory Public Schools. I would like to thank the Board of Education for the trust they have placed in me and thank everyone who has been part of extending a warm welcome to Laura and me.*

*The Hickory Public Schools has such a positive reputation for extending excellence in academics, the arts and athletics. We will continue to build upon that tradition while affirming the good work of our outstanding staff. I will challenge folks to improve, but I intend to do so in a way that is affirming and supportive.*

*The education of all of our children will be my highest priority. There are no simple solutions to the challenges we face in education today. I'm not going to pretend that I have all the answers. But I will tell you that: (1) We will strive for continual improvements, (2) I won't back away from a challenge to help children, and (3) I will work with people to help them realize their full worth and potential.*

*Again, thank you for the warm welcome. I am proud to be part of the Hickory Public Schools, and I look forward to working with you.”*

Currently a resident of China Grove, Dr. Hart plans to relocate to Hickory. He most recently served as the assistant superintendent for administration, Rowan-Salisbury Schools in Salisbury. Serving in this position since 2007, he was responsible for supervising 35 principals, a student enrollment of 20,500 and managing a budget of 20 million.

Prior to serving Rowan-Salisbury Schools, Dr. Hart led Lincoln County Schools as the associate superintendent of human resources for six years—where he supervised 24 principals, 1,700 employees and more than 12,000 students. He worked with a budget of 75 million while serving in this capacity.

Dr. Hart also led Mooresville Graded School District as assistant superintendent of curriculum and personnel where he supervised 250 teachers and was responsible for a budget of 24 million.

Gaining early professional ground in school administration, Dr. Hart made the move from serving as a social studies classroom teacher and coach in Cabarrus County Schools to assistant principal and then principal—where he served as the chief administrator of a high school.

With an undergraduate degree in psychology and his teacher licensure from Wake Forest University, Dr. Hart earned both his Masters in Educational Leadership and his Doctorate in Educational Leadership—at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

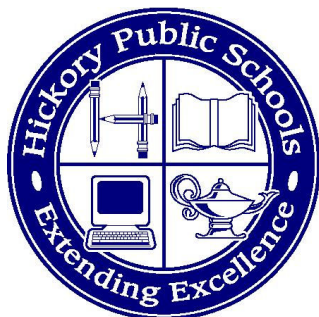
A former adjunct instructor at UNC-Charlotte and Belmont Abbey College, Dr. Hart is also an active community volunteer serving on multiple boards and he is involved with several professional organizations.

Diverse populations have been a significant component of Dr. Hart’s career—as he established a history of success while implementing a “multi-cultural student union” to recognize and celebrate diversity. Additionally, he developed a “newcomers center” for non-English speaking students and families, extended inclusion programs for special needs students, established a support program for high school deaf students—and he focused priorities in strengthening school leadership teams to reduce achievement gaps.

Dr. Walter Hart is the father of two sons, Tyler and Patrick. Dr. Hart and his wife, Laura, who is an instructor in the education department at UNC-Charlotte, are the parents of a daughter, Savannah.

Officially starting his duties as Superintendent on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, Dr. Hart has already spent two full days with Hickory Public Schools, meeting with principals and the HPS administrative team as he prepares new goals and strategies for best serving the needs of all students and employees.

***Welcome Dr. Walter Hart to Hickory Public Schools!***





(L-R) HPS Board chairman, Joab Cotton, HPS Attorney, Jeff Mackie, and (seated) HPS Interim Superintendent, Dr. James Causby, observe Chief District Court Judge, Burford Cherry, as he administers the oath of office to Dr. Walter Hart.

