



**Please direct inquiries to:**

Darrell Gleason, Communication Specialist, Alleghany Highlands Public Schools

(540) 620-0859, [Darrell.gleason@ahps.k12.va.us](mailto:Darrell.gleason@ahps.k12.va.us)

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## ***Halterman, Snead-Johnson to Lead Highlands School Division***

LOW MOOR — Kim Halterman was appointed superintendent of the newly created Alleghany Highlands Public School Division on Friday, July 1, 2022. Melinda Snead-Johnson, who had served as superintendent of Covington City Schools for the past six years, was appointed assistant superintendent.

Alleghany Highlands Public Schools was created through the July 1 merger of Alleghany County Public Schools, Covington City Public Schools, and Jackson River Technical Center. The school board appointed Halterman and Snead-Johnson during its inaugural meeting.

Halterman, an Alleghany High School graduate, was appointed in March 2021 as superintendent of Alleghany County Public Schools; Snead-Johnson served a six-year tenure as superintendent of Covington City Public Schools. Halterman and Snead-Johnson were appointed to their posts with the new school division after the school board met in closed session to discuss personnel.

Halterman and Snead-Johnson had worked closely together over the past year to help facilitate the merger of the two school divisions. The merger was approved in September 2020 by the governing bodies and school boards in Alleghany County and Covington. The Virginia Board of Education approved the merger in January 2021.

“This historic consolidation was a result of a lot of hard work and cooperation with the goal of creating more opportunities for the youth of our region. No two people worked harder than Kim Halterman and Melinda Snead-Johnson to make this event, which some said would never happen, a reality,” said Jacob Wright, who was elected as chair of the joint school board.

“We are so fortunate to have these very talented and hard-working scholars lead our school system and give the students of the Alleghany Highlands the best opportunities possible,” Wright said.

“Mrs. Halteraman and Mrs. Snead-Johnson have made a wonderful team over the past year and a half. Their leadership has been essential and we’re blessed to have them both as we move forward with our school division,” said Jonathan Arritt, the board’s vice chair.

“I’m honored to serve as vice chairman of the Allegheny Highlands School Board. Though there will certainly be much work ahead of us, I’m excited to see what the future holds for education in the Highlands because of the many talented and dynamic individuals that make up Allegheny Highlands Public Schools. Great people make all the difference, and our board is committed to supporting their efforts to provide the best education possible to our children,” Arritt said.

Halterman has 20 years of experience in public education. She had served as a teacher in Botetourt County, and as an assistant principal and principal in Bedford County. She had been principal of elementary and secondary schools, most recently at the Susie G. Gibson Science and Technology Center, formerly the Bedford Science and Technology Center. Before joining Allegheny County schools in 2021, Halterman worked for the Virginia Department of Education in its career and technology education division.

Halterman was valedictorian of the Allegheny High School Class of 1997. She attended Roanoke College in Salem, studying psychology, sociology, preschool through secondary education, and health care, also graduating as valedictorian. She earned a master’s degree in educational leadership and policy studies from Virginia Tech. She also possesses two graduate certificates from the University of Virginia, one in human resources leadership and one in health care administration.

Halterman holds the distinction of being the first AHS graduate to become the full-time superintendent of Allegheny County Public Schools.

She is the daughter of Lana C. Kidd, a long-time teacher in Allegheny and Botetourt counties, of Clifton Forge and the late Daniel F. Kidd, an electrician at the former Hercules plant in Covington. Halterman said her father would have appreciated the current level of cooperation in the Highlands community.

“It is a wonderful honor to continue serving home, and it is even more wonderful to do so with a colleague as esteemed and established as Melinda Snead-Johnson. We so appreciate the faith and trust of our community,” said Halterman.

Snead-Johnson, a Covington High School graduate, worked for Covington City Schools for 46 years, starting her career as a second grade teacher at Rivermont Elementary School. She later taught special education for 20 years at Rivermont and Jeter-Watson Elementary School before moving to the central office to become an administrator.

In the central office, she held several positions including the director of student services, director of pupil personnel, and director of special education. She was named superintendent following the retirement of Tom Long in 2016. While serving as superintendent of Covington City Schools, Snead-Johnson also carried out the duties of director of special education.

Snead-Johnson was the first woman to be named superintendent of Covington City Schools. She also holds the distinction of being the city’s last school superintendent.

“I am honored to be chosen for the position of assistant superintendent with the new consolidated school division. I look forward to the opportunities with the new school division,” she said.

Snead-Johnson graduated from the University of Virginia in 1976 with an undergraduate degree in elementary education. She earned a master's degree in special education from U.Va. in 1979. In 1991, she received an endorsement in school administration from U.Va.

She is a daughter of the late Harold J. and Peggy Snead of Covington. Her family owned and operated a Covington automobile dealership, Snead Buick-Pontiac Inc., from 1923 to 1997. She and her husband, Tuffy Johnson, are lifelong residents of the Alleghany Highlands. They have three grown sons, Seth, Eli, and Noah.

Alleghany Highlands Public Schools is jointly funded by Alleghany County and the City of Covington. The school division serves approximately 2,700 students in Alleghany County, Covington, Clifton Forge and Iron Gate.

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