



NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office

Lee Harris, Mayor

Vasco A. Smith, Jr., Administration Building
11th Floor, 160 North Main, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lauren Lee
Interim Public Information Officer
Office: 901.222.2322
Mobile: 901.481.3422

**MAYOR LEE HARRIS ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF DR. CEDRICK GRAY AS
FIRST EVER DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION FOR SHELBY COUNTY**

Gray will serve as liaison to Shelby County Schools and the municipal districts.

Memphis, TN - Mayor Lee Harris has selected Dr. Cedrick Gray as Director of Education for Shelby County.

A proud product of Memphis, Dr. Gray attended Memphis City Schools and the University of Memphis. Dr. Gray began his career in Memphis and served as Principal of both Lester Pre-K - 8 and Craigmont Middle School. Dr. Gray was selected to lead Fayette County Schools as Superintendent. He led the district to West Tennessee Exemplary District Status and developed a comprehensive plan for desegregation of schools. Following his tenure with Fayette County Schools, Dr. Gray served as Superintendent of Jackson Public Schools, the largest school system in the state of Mississippi. As Superintendent, Dr. Gray increased the district's graduation rate by 9% in just four years while decreasing the dropout rate. Dr. Gray's innovative and data-driven approach to education earned him the achievement of Superintendent of the Year by the National Association of School Superintendents in 2016.

VASCO A. SMITH, JR. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
160 North Main Street, 11th Floor Memphis, TN 38103
901-222-2000 Fax 901-222-2005
www.shelbycountyttn.gov



Dr. Gray currently serves as Executive Director of the Principal Supervisors Program of New Leaders, an organization providing school based coaching and leadership development. This organization visits schools to observe, coach, and provide feedback for principals.

“Dr. Gray is innovative, data-driven, and an expert on working with educators for the best possible outcomes for children and young adults,” says Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris. “In this leadership role, Dr. Gray will do more than just work with the commission on budgeting. He is the right person to improve education from pre-K to workforce development.”

"I am grateful for the opportunity to return back to my community what it invested in me," says Dr. Cedrick Gray. "I am looking forward to working in the multifaceted educational landscape of our county and encouraging the collaboration necessary to share best practices across all school systems. My goal is to expand and support pre-K and early childhood programs, school facility investment, and college and career readiness for our youth."

“I have worked with Dr. Gray for more than a decade,” says Carol Johnson, former Superintendent of Memphis City Schools. “Dr. Gray is very talented and loves Memphis. We are fortunate to have him here to do work that links together county initiatives with public education.”

Dr. Gray’s primary focus will be working directly with the Shelby County Commissioners, Shelby County Board of Education, municipal school boards, and superintendents of all public school systems in Shelby County.

“Dr. Gray's background as an educator, school leader, and superintendent will be invaluable in building strong relationships across Shelby County,” says Shelby County Commissioner and Chairman of the Education Committee Michael Whaley. “We have a unique opportunity to be a leader in how we define educational success, and how we convene multiple stakeholders toward a common goal of ensuring equity and opportunity for every student in Shelby County.”

“Dr. Gray’s external and statewide relationships will be key assets as Mayor Harris looks to strengthen his collaboration with all school districts in Shelby County,” says Dorsey Hopson,



Superintendent of Shelby County Schools. “He is a proven student-centered leader who has a wealth of experience inside and outside of Shelby County.”

Dr. Gray is the first person ever appointed to this newly created position in county government. Please note that this position was previously referred to as Education Liaison. The administration has changed the title of the new position to Director of Education. Dr. Gray is expected to start January 7th.

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