

West Irondequoit superintendent Jeff Crane to retire at end of year

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Jeff Crane, the longest-serving school district superintendent in Monroe County, will retire from the leadership of the West Irondequoit Central School District at the end of the year, the district announced Thursday.

Crane, 66, was hired as superintendent in 2003 after spending six years as principal of Irondequoit High School. His career in education began in 1979 as a teacher in Fairport and Brighton, and as a school principal in Victor.

He decided to retire now because several major initiatives, including adopting full-day kindergarten and creating a teacher preparation program at the high school, are coming to a finish.

“It’s been 44 years in public education and these past 15 as superintendent in West Irondequoit have been really enjoyable, even through difficult times,” he said. “As we were sort of finishing with those projects I’ve been working on for a while at both ends of the spectrum, I figured, well, it’s time.”

In the past several years Crane has been one of the foremost suburban activists for attention to segregation and racism in schools. He helped revitalize and reform the Urban-Suburban program, and West Irondequoit helped convene the student-led organization Roc 2 Change, which addresses issues of race across district boundaries.

Under his watch West Irondequoit also persevered through a twice-failed budget.

“He has led with the moral conviction and unwavering belief that all children are unique and deserve not only a high quality education but a safe and caring environment,” School Board President John Vay said in a statement. “From his student led Superintendent’s Leadership Initiative to his significant work with the Monroe County School Boards Association advocating for fair funding of schools, Jeff has always been a visionary and someone who leads by example.”

Crane is the second long-serving school leader to retire recently. Kenneth Graham stepped down in Rush-Henrietta last month after having begun there in 1999. Asked about his future plans, Crane said: “I know I’m going to do something with the rest of my life that has something to do with social justice; I just don’t know yet what that’s going to be.”

West Irondequoit said it would “update the community on next steps in the critical process of selecting the next superintendent in the near future.”

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