

A Racinian to Know

Dr. Eric Gallien, incoming superintendent for Racine Unified School District

Please introduce yourself:

Hello. I'm Dr. Eric Gallien. I am the incoming superintendent for Racine Unified School District.

Where are you from originally?

I was born and raised in Milwaukee. I spent most of my life there with the exception of my time in the military. I've lived in Racine for the past five years.

How did your life's journey bring you to Racine?

I have been in education for 21 years. Most of this time has been spent in Milwaukee schools. As I grew in various leadership positions there, some of my mentors and

colleagues encouraged me to consider a position in RUSD. As I learned more about the district, the superintendent (Dr. Lolli Haws) and the Racine community, I was encouraged, excited and really believed I would be able to contribute to moving the district forward.

What do you like best about Racine?

The community collaboration here is incredible. As soon as I got here, I could see that the

many partnerships and organizations willing to support our public schools. The people in the Racine community have been open and welcoming to me. I have really enjoyed building some great relationships and look forward to building many more.

Please give some examples of how your work has made a positive impact on the community.

Over the past five years, I believe there are three major areas of work that are positively impacting our students and families here in Racine.

When I came to RUSD in 2013, my first area of focus was high schools. Together with RUSD staff and many community

partners we embarked on that work. In 2016, we officially launched the Academies of Racine at Case, Horlick and Park high schools. The Academies provide opportunities for our high school students to explore careers, get hands-on experiences and follow a pathway that prepares them for success after high school. The impact the Academies has and will have on our community is significant.

Last year we launched the Community Policing Model in our schools. This is a partnership between our local law enforcement and the District. It provides officers in our schools who are not just there to keep our schools safe, but to build relationships with students and staff that lead to positive school climates.



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Finally, I believe that the work we are doing around children's mental health is outstanding. Through the Children's Mental Health Collaborative convened through the Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, we were able to work with community partners to create resources and initiatives that support our students and their families with mental health services. We are fortunate to have mental health clinics in some of our schools as well as a community mental health clinic serving all K-12 students in our community.

As you can see, all of these efforts rely on strong partnerships. All of these organizations working together with RUSD are what make this community so strong.

What's the least understood aspect about what you do?

Education has changed tremendously over many years. People don't always realize that the job of an educator today is so much more than math and science. It's truly about building relationships with students and families. It's about understanding where each unique student is coming from and how we can best support them to meet their learning goals and become productive citizens in our community. It's about education, social emotional learning, family engagement and some-

times just meeting a student's basic needs. Public education goes beyond the school walls. It's truly a community that raises a child and we are so thankful for this community's ongoing support.

What would you like to accomplish during the next 6 months? 12 months?

In the next six months, I would like to see a successful launch of our middle school My School. My Choice. initiative. We've transformed our middle schools and can't wait for our students and families to experience these new opportunities next fall.

Over the next 12 months, I plan to focus on building positive internal culture within RUSD. My leadership style is all about building strong relationships, collaboration, respect and in-



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tegrity. A year from now, I hope our employees believe we are one of the best places in Racine County to work and to learn!

What's the best way to contact you?

You can reach me by contacting Elizabeth Tobias at (262) 631-7064 or Elizabeth.Tobias@rusd.org.

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