

PRESS RELEASE



August 24 2022

Contact: Maria Simon, Public Information Officer

maria.simon@coronadousd.net

Coronado High School Selects New Assistant Principal

Coronado High School has named Rikki Betancourt as a new assistant principal to begin the 2022-23 school year. Betancourt will join Principal Karin Mellina and Assistant Principal Shane Bavis on the administrative team at CHS.

"I am so thrilled to be joining this district. I am so excited to meet the students, that is absolutely the best part of the job!" said Betancourt, who describes her leadership philosophy as "a collaborative and interactive model that really acknowledges and focuses on the multi-faceted lives of students, families, and teachers."

Betancourt was selected by a panel of twelve CHS certificated and classified staff members, including Principal Mellina who shared, "I am excited for her to join our team. Not only is she highly qualified, she brings great energy and enthusiasm to campus. I think the students and staff will really connect with her."

Betancourt spent the past two years as the assistant principal at Lincoln High School in San Diego Unified School District. "I moved to San Diego in 2020 in the middle of the pandemic," said the New York native. "My brother is a Navy pilot and was stationed out here and I visited him a lot and fell in love with it. I absolutely love New York and it will always be home but San Diego is amazing! Even before my visits it had been a goal of mine since high school to move to southern California so I just decided to go for it," she said of her decision to move across the country.

"I really enjoyed being at Lincoln, especially working to expand their ArmyJROTC program, which we actually doubled! And I'm excited to work with Commander Nesbitt and the CHS JROTC program," she said. "I am very proud of my family's military connection. When I got the call for Coronado one of the reasons I was thrilled was because of the military connection in the schools and community. It's very important for me to continue to work with the military community in the schools," said Betancourt, who also worked at a Marine Corps cadet program public school in New York.

Before moving to California, Betancourt served in many roles within the New York City Department of Education, the DREAM Network, and North Shore Schools on Long Island. She has worked at elementary, middle, and high school levels, as an English teacher, ELA Department Chair, and school building leader. Her degrees include a Master of Educational Leadership, Master in Health & Behavioral Studies as a Reading Specialist, a Bachelor in English, and teaching certifications in ELA, Literacy, and College Counseling.

“I enjoy the administrative role, but I am a teacher first. I wanted to become a certified college admissions counselor just so that I had one more way to help students. While that’s not my role here I think I can use it in conversations with students who are trying to figure out their options after high school. College is not for everyone, and sometimes not right away out of high school. Each student has their own path and I like to encourage them to explore their possibilities. That is another reason why I think the military is a great opportunity, there are so many professions, jobs, areas of the military other than being a soldier,” Betancourt explained.

In a letter introducing herself to the CHS staff, Betancourt wrote, “I am a firm believer that great teaching and learning occurs when we prioritize strong relationship-building. Students should feel encouraged to make positive choices and problem solve in environments that center around query, discovery, and self-efficacy. Most of all, students should feel safe, loved, and cared for while they do this... every single day. I believe in focusing on social-emotional learning, cultural responsiveness, genuine engagement, and academically rigorous instruction while also providing the utmost teacher and family support.”

The energetic Betancourt describes herself as a ‘fitness fanatic and foodie.’ In addition to being an HGTV fan, she likes to spend her time away from work being active and exploring San Diego. She loves to hang out at the beach, hike, run, lift weights in the gym, and find new restaurants. “I used to be on a boxing team in Brooklyn and I was able to find a coach out here so I’m doing some of that too.”

She also enjoys international travel and regular trips to New York. “I’m very close with my family,” she says of her two younger brothers, her parents, and extended family. “I am a proud Latina and have precious roots in Puerto Rico.”

Betancourt officially began her role at CHS on August 1st and is spending the first few weeks learning the campus, getting to know the office staff and team, and making sure everything is ready for students. But she says it will feel real when school starts on August 25th. “I really can’t wait for the students to get here!” she said.

####

PHOTO:

New Coronado High School Assistant Principal Rikki Betancourt.

