



1516 Sycamore Street  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18017  
**For Immediate Release**

## **Bethlehem Area School District Selects Dr. Renato M. Lajara as New Superintendent**

BETHLEHEM, PA, May 19, 2026 — The Bethlehem Area School District is pleased to announce that **Dr. Renato M. Lajara** has been selected as Superintendent of Schools, pending Board approval.

Dr. Lajara is an accomplished educational leader and dedicated student advocate known for his ethical, equitable, and student-centered approach to leadership. He brings more than two decades of experience in public education, with a proven record of driving change and improving outcomes for students in diverse and complex school systems.

Currently serving as Assistant Superintendent for Network 8 in the School District of Philadelphia, Dr. Lajara oversees 15 schools and more than 8,000 students. In this role, he has led strategic initiatives focused on academic achievement, equity, and organizational coherence, while collaborating closely with district leadership to implement a comprehensive five-year strategic plan.

A proud product of the Philadelphia public school system and originally from the Dominican Republic, Dr. Lajara's personal journey as an English Language Learner informs his deep commitment to ensuring all students, regardless of background, have access to a high-quality education.

"Dr. Lajara is a visionary, student-centered leader with a deep commitment to equity and excellence," said Dr. Michael E. Faccineto, President of the Board of School Directors. "Throughout the search process, it was clear that his experience transforming school communities, supporting educators, and delivering results for students sets him apart. We are confident that under his leadership, the Bethlehem Area School District will continue to grow and thrive."

Throughout his career, Dr. Lajara has demonstrated success in transforming school culture, improving instructional practices, and closing opportunity gaps. As a principal and district leader, he has led school turnaround efforts, implemented standards-based instructional systems, expanded access to inclusive programming, and strengthened professional learning for educators. His leadership has consistently resulted in stronger academic outcomes and more supportive, high-performing school environments for students and staff.

Dr. Lajara holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Gwynedd Mercy University, a Master of Education in Educational Leadership from Gwynedd Mercy University, and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. He also holds a Pennsylvania Superintendent Letter of Eligibility and Principal Certification.

"It is an incredible privilege to have been chosen to lead the Bethlehem Area School District, a community renowned for its cultural vibrancy, rich educational traditions, and deep-rooted pride," said Dr. Lajara. "A school district thrives when it operates as a true partnership. Together, we will build upon Bethlehem's solid foundation. I am excited to get started and to be a part of the Bethlehem community. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the Board of Directors for this opportunity."

Dr. Lajara will succeed Dr. Jack P. Silva, who will retire on June 30, and the District will share additional transition details in the coming weeks.



###

**For interview opportunities and inquiries, please contact:**

Jennifer LoConte-Kugler, Communications Manager  
jlocontekugler@basdschools.org

***About the Bethlehem Area School District***

The Bethlehem Area School District is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest school district in Pennsylvania serving over 12,240 culturally and economically diverse students in 22 community-based schools. The district serves five municipalities: City of Bethlehem, Bethlehem Township, Hanover Township, Freemansburg, and Fountain Hill. The district enjoys numerous community partnerships with universities, businesses, and arts providers that extend the schools' rich curricular and co-curricular offerings.