

Former superintendent to lead Catholic schools in Hawaii

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HONOLULU — Dr. Michael M. Rockers, former diocesan superintendent and principal at Catholic High School in Little Rock, is the new superintendent of Hawaii Catholic Schools. He starts Sept. 1.

Rockers, 56, has been a Catholic educator for 34 years in Minnesota, Arkansas and South Carolina, serving as a teacher, principal and superintendent.

The new superintendent was picked from a field of about 20 in a national search, said Dara Perreira, human services director for the Diocese of Honolulu.

The search committee, made up of a local Catholic school principal, a pastor, a diocesan finance council member, a diocesan school board member and several Catholic community leaders, was impressed by the candidate's experience as a superintendent, his familiarity with strategic planning and his fund development skills, Perreira said.

Rockers was born in Austin, Minn., on Sept. 8, 1954. After earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education in 1977 from Winona State University in Minnesota, he began his educational career teaching sixth grade at St. Augustine-St. Edward School in Austin.

He received a master's degree in community counseling from Winona State University in 1984, and in 1985 was named principal of St. Vincent de Paul Elementary School in Rogers.

Eight years later, in 1993, he was appointed superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Little Rock. At the time of his appointment, Sister Henrietta Hockle, OSB, the previous superintendent described Rockers as a "recognized leader and innovator in providing quality Catholic education."

Five years into his job as superintendent, Rockers earned a doctorate in educational leadership in 1998 from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He also has an advanced certificate of catechist formation from the Diocese of Little Rock.

In 2001, Rockers was named principal of Catholic High School following the death of long-time

principal, Msgr. George Tribou.

He served there until 2005 when he moved to South Carolina to be principal of St. Francis School in Hilton Head Island, S.C. Last year, he received the Dr. Charles Armar Educational Leadership Award, being named the South Carolina Private School Principal of the Year.

Rockers has served as board president of the National Federation of Nonpublic School State Accrediting Associations, the Arkansas Nonpublic School Accrediting Association and the Little Rock Scripture Study board of directors.

He and his wife Lori have four children and 12 grandchildren.

The superintendent oversees the Hawaii Catholic Schools office, which provides support services to about 40 Catholic preschools, elementary schools and high schools in Hawaii.