

ALUMNI

Charlotte-Mecklenburg (N.C.) Schools' Interim Superintendent is a Gardner-Webb Alumna

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON JANUARY 18, 2023



▲ In January 2023, then Interim Superintendent Crystal Hill met with students of Oaklawn Language Academy. On May 19, Hill was named superintendent of CMS. Photo courtesy of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Dr. Crystal L. Hill Shares Her Goals for the State's Second Largest School District

Dr. Crystal L. Hill became interim superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg (N.C.) Schools (CMS) on Jan. 1, only seven months after she was hired as CMS Chief of Staff. Hill has 25 years of experience in education, which includes earning her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Gardner-Webb University.



▲ CMS Interim
Superintendent
Crystal Hill

As CMS Chief of Staff, Hill worked closely with the superintendent, his cabinet and the Board of Education. Moving into the role of interim allows her to carry out the plans for growth and achievement that she helped to develop. “We’ve been doing a lot of work at the district level to realign to ensure organizational excellence,” she affirmed. “By stepping into this role, I can ensure the good work that has started continues at high levels.”

She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro, N.C., and began her career as a first-grade teacher in Guilford County (N.C.) Schools. Next, she served various roles, including assistant principal, principal, and executive director of elementary education and federal programs in Mooresville Graded School District; then, as curriculum coordinator in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County (N.C.) Schools. In 2020, she co-chaired the North Carolina State Board of Education Literacy Task Force.

Hill chose to earn her doctorate at Gardner-Webb for several reasons. “The most appealing factor was the program was heavily focused on the work of the practitioner while being deeply rooted in evidenced-based and research-based practices,” she praised. “The design of the program allowed for immediate application which allowed me to experience immediate success. GWU also values collaboration and coursework and was intentional in developing relationships with those in my cohort and learning from each other.”

Before coming to CMS in May 2022, Hill was assistant superintendent and chief academic officer for Cabarrus County (N.C.) Schools, where she led the district in achieving the highest level of academic performance in history. She also currently serves on the [Leading on Opportunity Council](https://www.leadingonopportunity.org/) (<https://www.leadingonopportunity.org/>), an entity of the Foundation For The Carolinas, that uses strategy, policy and data to help its partners across Charlotte-Mecklenburg improve economic mobility for all.



▲ Interim Superintendent Crystal Hill meets with the staff of Hawthorne Academy of Health Sciences.



▲ Interim Superintendent Crystal Hill meets with Principal Dr. Kevin Woods and a student at Randolph Middle School.



▲ Interim Superintendent Crystal Hill talks to students of Randolph Middle School as she tours several CMS schools.

▲ Photos courtesy of CMS Schools

As interim superintendent of CMS, Hill directs the second largest school district in North Carolina with more than 140,406 students in kindergarten through 12th grade in 181 schools throughout the cities and towns of Mecklenburg County. The students represent 184 countries and speak 204 languages and dialects. In addition, CMS offers an extensive range of magnet programs in 71 of its schools to nurture students' talents who have interests and abilities in specific areas. CMS also educates, supports and meets the needs of students with learning and physical disabilities.

CMS is one of the largest employers in Mecklenburg County, with more than 18,000 teachers, support staff and administrators. In addition, CMS has support from Charlotte's corporate, faith and business communities and more than 50,000 mentors and volunteers that support learning and instruction in CMS classrooms.

"CMS is full of possibilities; I'm blessed to serve in this role!" Hill asserted. "My goals are to make tough decisions that are in the best interests of children; improve communication at all levels of the organization; and implement structures, processes, and procedures that create predictability and efficiencies that will allow us to put our best thinking toward solving problems that directly impact children."

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to nine colleges and schools, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions,

equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at [Gardner-Webb.edu](https://gardner-webb.edu/) (<https://gardner-webb.edu/>).