

# INTRODUCTION

Meet Michael Dadey, Acting Superintendent of the Greater Johnstown School District in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. A proud alumnus of the district, Mr. Dadey brings a lifelong connection and deep commitment to the community he now serves. The district reflects the resilience and pride of Johnstown, with a strong focus on student growth, safety, and community engagement.

Mr. Dadey's educational background and extensive professional experience have prepared him well for district leadership. His dedication to continuous improvement—for both himself and the organization—has positioned him as a committed and forward-thinking leader.

## Education

Mr. Dadey holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master of Education from Saint Francis University. He also earned his Principal Certification from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and his Superintendent Letter of Eligibility from PennWest University.

## Experience

Mr. Dadey's career in education has reflected steady growth across a wide range of roles. He began as a volunteer tutor while in college, working with students in the Oakhurst Homes area. He then served as a Kindergarten teacher for five years, followed by three years as a middle school science and reading teacher.

He transitioned into administration as an elementary assistant principal, then served five years as a high school assistant principal. He later became a high school principal and vocational director, a role he held for seven years. For the past three years, he has served as Assistant Superintendent, and in January 2026, he was named Acting Superintendent of the Greater Johnstown School District.

Born and raised in the West End of Johnstown, Mr. Dadey began his journey in the district at age five. He often reflects on his 41-year connection to the district—as a student, educator, coach, and community member. His service as a football coach further strengthened his relationships with students and families.

## Outstanding Achievements

Throughout his career, Mr. Dadey has demonstrated strong leadership in curriculum development, school safety, operations, and community engagement. Among his most notable accomplishments are advancing district-wide safety initiatives, including training over 100 staff members in Mass Casualty Incident (MCI) response and equipping them with Individual First Aid

Kits (IFAKs). He also led the implementation of metal and weapon detection systems across all district buildings and played a key role in establishing the district's school police department.

Despite these accomplishments, Mr. Dadey remains grounded in his mission to serve students and the community. He states, "I am honored to serve as superintendent of the district that shaped me. My goal is to continue fostering a culture of excellence, innovation, and inclusivity, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive."

He looks forward to continued collaboration with students, staff, families, and community partners to build on the district's strengths and create new opportunities for success.

**Tell us about how you see today's superintendent.**

I see today's superintendent as a servant leader who must balance many complex roles—educational leader, operations manager, communicator, and community partner. Expectations have grown significantly, especially in areas such as school safety, transparency, and communication.

One of the biggest shifts I've seen is the need to be highly visible and connected. Families expect real-time updates and access, often through social media and digital platforms. It's no longer enough to lead from behind the scenes—you have to be present, engaged, and proactive in telling your district's story. At the same time, you have to stay grounded in what matters most: student achievement, staff support, and building trust within the community.

**What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?**

One of the biggest realizations I've had is that this job is not about having all the answers—it's about building trust and relationships. Whether it's with the school board, staff, students, or the community, trust is the foundation for everything we do.

I've also learned that listening is one of the most important leadership skills. You have to be willing to hear different perspectives, even when they're difficult, and be open to adjusting your approach. Progress happens when people feel heard and valued.

Another key understanding is that leadership requires both patience and persistence. Change doesn't happen overnight, but staying focused on the long-term vision while being responsive in the moment is critical.

**Share an idea or something you've learned with your colleagues.**

One of the most important lessons I've learned is the value of intentional communication. Not everyone processes information the same way, so it's important to tailor your communication style to meet people where they are—especially when working with board members and stakeholders.

I've found that being proactive is key. We never want our board or community members hearing important information secondhand. Whether it's a phone call, a meeting, or a written update, clear and consistent communication builds confidence and prevents misunderstandings.

I also believe strongly in leading with authenticity. Being genuine, approachable, and consistent goes a long way in building relationships and creating a positive culture.