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Resigning school chief to exit early for new job

Morton Sherman had planned to stay through 2005-06

but received an offer from Tenafly, Bergen County.

Kristen A. Graham INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Superintendent Morton Sherman announced yesterday that he would leave as head of Cherry Hill schools six months earlier than planned.

On Monday night, he accepted a job as schools chief in Tenafly, Bergen County, and will start there Dec. 12.

Sherman previously said he would leave when his contract expired after the coming school year, but a clause allows him to depart with 90 days' notice.

His salary this school year would have been \$169,000. With performance and other bonuses, his pension and life insurance, the compensation could have risen to \$232,000.

The terms of his Tenafly contract have not yet been completed.

Cherry Hill Board of Education President Cindy Trubin said that the district would immediately look for an interim superintendent and that a consultant might be used in the

selection of a long-term replacement.

Sherman, who has led Cherry Hill schools for eight years, is known for his focus on innovation and standards. But detractors say he leads without building consensus and has pushed through unpopular programs.

The Cherry Hill board does not support all of Sherman's initiatives, and his contract might not have been renewed had he not submitted his resignation.

Sherman yesterday was enthusiastic about moving to Tenafly, six miles outside Manhattan. The district has 3,100 students and six schools, compared with Cherry Hill's 11,500 pupils and 19 schools.

New Jersey Monthly ranked Tenafly High School third-best in the state, and its 11th graders were 100 percent proficient on language arts and 99 percent proficient on math tests. Ninety-nine percent of its students go to college, 91 percent to four-year schools.

"It's a rapidly evolving community, which I find exciting," Sherman said. "I'll be taking over this wonderful little district that pretty much sets the standards for New Jersey. This Board of Education has been very impressive to me, and I look at this as a great match as where I am personally and professionally."

Sherman said that until leaving in early December, he would stay true to Cherry Hill's goals, especially revamping the high school experience, improving math instruction districtwide, streamlining business practices, and closing the achievement gap among students.

If his Tenafly contract is completed, Sherman said, he expects to submit his letter of resignation at the next action meeting of the Cherry Hill board Tuesday.

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Illustration:PHOTO

Superintendent Morton Sherman will start Dec. 12 in Tenafly.

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