

Murray selected as new Lakewood AD

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Shannon Murray, the long-time varsity head and competitive cheerleading coach at Lakewood High School, will no longer be working in that role.

Instead, she will now be the athletic director for Lakewood.

Murray was announced as the school's new AD on Tuesday after being approved by the Sumter School District



MURRAY

board on Monday.

One of her first duties will be hiring someone to replace herself.

"I don't think so," Murray

laughed when asked if she would be able to maintain her current position as well as being the AD. That's a big program (competitive cheer). There are about 60 kids involved yearly, so there are almost as many as in the football program. I'm going to have to find someone special to take it."

Murray, who will turn 41 years old next month, said she is excited to step into a role at the school that has been such an integral part of her life.

"It means a lot to me to be getting this job because I'm from there," Murray said. "I believe in the people here, and I'm wanting to keep us going on in the same direction that Frankie Ward has us going. He's laid out a great plan and I want to follow the course, along with making some improvements along the way."

Ward is stepping down as the athletic director after being hired as the new baseball head coach at Lugoff-Elgin High. He has been the Lakewood AD for six years.

Ward is under contract at Lakewood through the end of June. Murray plans to take advantage of that.

"We're meeting together tomorrow (Wednesday) morning at 8 a.m.," she said.

Murray is a 1997 graduate of Sumter High, where she played soccer. She played collegiate soccer at North Greenville University, where she started her college education. She earned a bachelor's degree in business from the University of South Carolina and completed the PACE alternative certification program in order to become a SEE **LAKWOOD**, PAGE B2 business education teacher.

She earned a Master's degree in educational administration from **Western Governors University** and multiple certifications from Central Carolina Technical College and Florida Atlantic University.

She is looking forward to helping high school student-athletes from a different aspect.

"I've been around athletics my whole life," she said. "I've been here 15 years now, and I've always watched what the three or four athletic directors who have been here and what they do. This is a choice to help kids, guide kids."

With the coronavirus having shut down the spring sports season and Sumter School District having yet to set its plans for beginning workouts, Murray is taking over at a unique time in the history of sports. While she may be a new AD, she'll be learning along with everyone else about handling the strict guidelines surrounding the pandemic.

"The safety, the health of our kids is the No. 1 priority," she said.

