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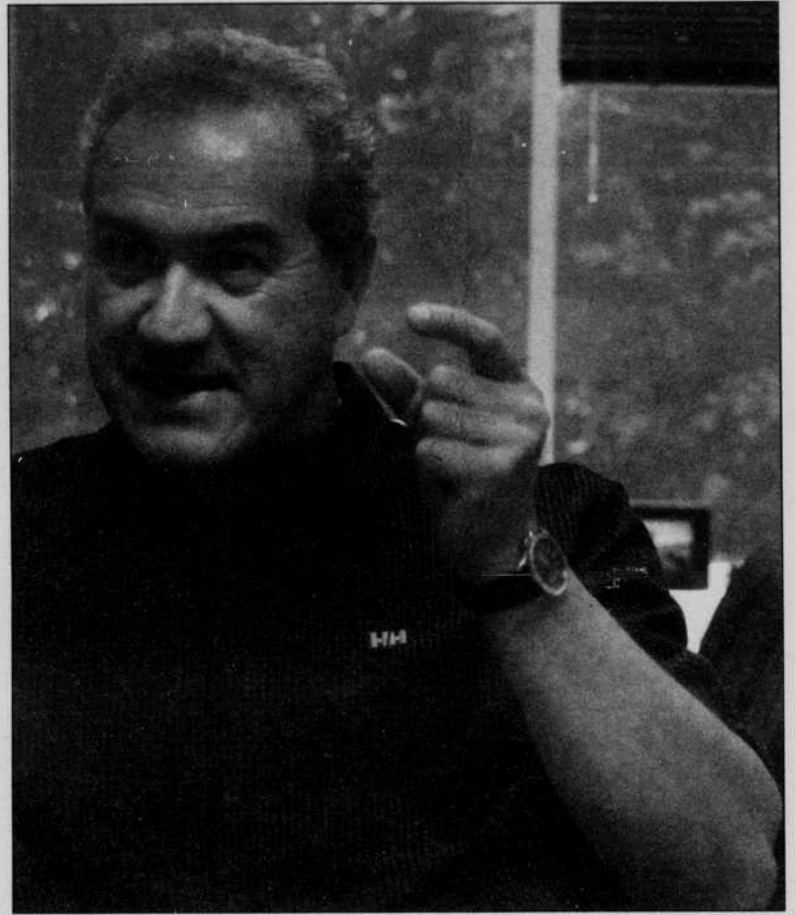
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Dr. Edward J. Kame'enui has accepted a position as the nation's first commissioner for special education research.

Professor accepts national post for special education

Dr. Edward J. Kame'enui will take an indefinite leave of absence to begin the new research position

BY BRITNI MCCLLENAHAN
NEWS REPORTER

Dr. Edward J. Kame'enui, professor of special education, will be taking an indefinite leave of absence from the University to take a new position as the nation's first commissioner for special education research. He will be leading the National Center for Special Education Research, a newly established office within the U.S. Department of Education.

Kame'enui will begin his new position in Washington, D.C., on July 1.

"I'm honored," Kame'enui said. "It's a great field, with great people who are very serious, dedicated and smart."

Kame'enui earned a bachelor of arts degree at Pacific University in Oregon and a master's and Ph.D., both in special education, at the University of Oregon. He began his career in special education as a houseparent, working with children identified with serious emotional and behavioral problems at a residential treatment center in Wisconsin when he was only 21 years old.

"I couldn't find a job as an English teacher, and that was that," Kame'enui said.

Before coming to Oregon in 1988, Kame'enui taught at the University of Montana and Purdue University. His areas of expertise include early literacy research, school-wide reading improvement, and design of high-quality educational tools and instruction.

"The reason I came to this university was the colleagues," Kame'enui said. "There are wonderful people here. The faculty and students here are great, and it's a really unique place."

The National Center for Special Education Research, one of four centers within the education department's Institute of Education Sciences, supports research on special

education and related services and aims to provide school officials with sufficient information regarding children with learning disabilities.

IES Director Grover "Russ" Whitehurst said in an education department press release that Kame'enui is "uniquely qualified" to lead the new center.

"We are so pleased to have someone with Ed Kame'enui's background and considerable skills fill this key position," Whitehurst said.

According to the Department of Education's Web site, the new program is designed to increase effectiveness in education to students with disabilities through the latest sciences and technologies geared to understanding and developing new techniques for students with learning disabilities.

The center came from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, which ensures that all children with disabilities have access to free, appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living.

Under IDEA, the federal government protects the rights of children with disabilities and ensures that educators and parents have the necessary tools to improve educational results and to assess and ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate children with disabilities.

Kame'enui said he welcomes this opportunity and hopes to make a positive impact on education.

"The more experience you have, the wiser your decisions will be," he said. "Hopefully it will help make the right decisions. You make connections with people and learn from your successes and mistakes."

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