

SCHOOLS

MARCELLUS

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Driver principal named to district's No. 2 job

■ Joanne Downes starts Monday as assistant superintendent.

By JEFF THEODORE
The Post-Standard

The Marcellus school board didn't look far to replace Timothy Barstow, the school's former assistant superintendent, who took a job as Onondaga's superintendent.

Last week, the board tapped

Joanne Downes, principal of Driver Middle School, to assume the assistant superintendent spot.

"We wanted to look in-house for people who have worked with us over the years," Marcellus school board President Tim Dudley said. "She expressed an interest in advancing to a higher administrative position. We knew she had the ability. So it was an easy decision."

Downes has 16 years of experience in elementary and middle schools. She taught for 10 years in Syracuse city schools and has been Driver's principal for six years. Monday she begins the new position — which pays \$77,500, about \$1,000 more than her salary at Driver.

"I'm so delighted," Downes said. "But I do feel bad about leaving Driver, leaving the kids. I'm excited, though, about the challenge this new job will offer, the chance for more professional growth and to have a larger impact."

Downes said she wants to recreate the sense of working together that she and her seven brothers and sisters had while growing up.

"As a family, we always had to function together to do things such as making dinner," Downes said.

"As a result of that, I know what it's like to work as a team. I don't really enjoy doing the top-down thing. I like to set up situations where people can all learn from each other. That's natural to me."

Marcellus Superintendent Paul Bristol said he sees that as one of Downes' greatest strengths.

"She's an experienced administrator who has the ability to analyze situations and see multiple options for solutions," he said.

He referred to when Driver Middle School examined its scheduling because of an increase in students. "She broke things down to come up with various options" to address the scheduling, he said.

Among Downes' new duties are overseeing the district's special education efforts, curriculum development, and the district's five-year computer plan.

"We're heading into the fifth year," Bristol said. "She'll start working on the second phase of the plan for the next five years."

Downes also has been charged with establishing a district newsletter.

"We want to have a regular format where we can increase the public output to the community," Dudley said. "You know, things that aren't necessarily front-page news or earth-shaking but day-to-day interesting items that happen."

Heffernan Principal Dave Taddeo also was considered for the assistant superintendent post, but he declined, Dudley said.

"He said he liked his building and the kids and didn't want to walk away from that," Dudley said.

The school district posted Downes' position at Driver throughout the district last week. Assistant Principal Patrick Collier is one of the leading contenders.

"He (Collier) has said he is interested, but wants to think it over," Dudley said. "I think he would be excellent."

The district will interview candidates next week.

"If Collier gets the job, the interview process would start for his job," Bristol said.

Onondaga
CENTRAL SCHOOLS

4466 South Onondaga Road
Nerrow, New York 13120

315-492-1701
jdownes@ocs.cnyric.org

Joanne B. Downes
Superintendent



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