

November 28, 1989

Dr. Henry Williams  
Superintendent of Schools  
Syracuse City School District

Dear Dr. Williams:

I have been an intermediate level teacher at Pere LeMoyne Elementary School for twenty-four years. As you can imagine, I have witnessed many administrators in the District come and go. Some were excellent, while others proved to be ineffective. I want to share with you my observations about an administrator who is a "bright light" for the District.

Joanne Downes became principal of LeMoyne in August of 1988 during a planned renovation; educationally one of the most trying of times for staff, students and community. Although only her first assignment as a principal, she tackled the job with a high level of energy, enthusiasm and commitment. Joanne genuinely cares about children and visits the classrooms in a non-judgemental manner to enjoy the students working and learning. In addition, she often can be seen conversing with children in a hallway or in the cafeteria. Yet, she is firm, consistent and fair when disciplining children.

Working directly with Joanne as an STA building committee member and as a member of the School Improvement Committee has given me a chance to recognize and appreciate her leadership abilities. She acknowledges and deals with potential areas of compromise and conflict in a professional and caring manner. Joanne is flexible and open-minded and will consider creative ways to solve staff management or instructional problems. This attitude maintains high staff morale and instills challenge. I am impressed with her listening skills and truly outstanding communication abilities. She always has a smile and it's easy to see her interpersonal skills are excellent and cause others to relax and ultimately be more productive. Organizational strengths and planning for both short and long term instructional goals are clearly evident. Joanne encourages input and then in a cooperative fashion designs and implements monitoring and evaluating vehicles. Putting in extra time is just a normal part of her amazing work ethic.

Blending her considerable resources with a complete knowledge of the scope and sequence of the various curriculums, Joanne is well equipped for the important task of supervision of instruction. She is quick to praise and build one's self

concept, and yet she delivers constructive criticism in a cogent, non-threatening and enlightening manner. This type of atmosphere nurtures professional growth, cooperation and being open to change, but not just for change sake.

Society has tremendous problems and education attracts the blame for many. However, with Joanne Downes, a bright, energetic and dedicated professional as principal of Pere LeMoyne, you can look forward to progressive solutions and academic successes. The District is fortunate to have her services.

*Douglas R. Creamer*