

DMS principal is new asst. superintendent

□ Joanne Downes will begin later this month

by Guy C. Hulbert

The Marcellus School Board was expected to approve Driver Middle School Principal Joanne Downes as the district's new assistant superintendent last night Tuesday.

Downes, who has served as principal at DMS since July 1992, replaces Timothy Barstow, who left MCS last month to take over as superintendent of Onondaga Central Schools.

Downes, who has 16 years of administrative experience at the elementary and middle school level, is expected to assume her new duties later this month.

As part of that, Downes expects to help the district continue to move forward with its district-wide comprehensive technological initiative, participate in K-12 curriculum and support each school as they attempt to meet new standards mandated by the state. In addition, Downes said she will also support the district in its special education program, as well as write grants in an attempt to acquire additional money for the district.

Despite the increase in duties, Downes expects to continue to maintain close contact with the students, parents and teachers of the district.

"This position will allow me to

maintain visibility within the district," Downes said last Friday. "People are doing a ton of good things here and I would like to help them share new ideas as well as learn from one another."

It is that type of thinking that made Downes the school board's number one choice, board President Timothy Dudley said.

"She's a very intelligent person and very dedicated to education," Dudley said last weekend. "If every school had one [Joanne Downes], they'd be in great shape. We just love having her here. She's done a great job."

Downes said she is equally pleased to have the opportunity.

"I'm honored that I've been given the chance to keep growing in a new and different way. I feel grateful that the [school] board had enough confidence in me to give me the appointment," she said.

Prior to coming to Marcellus, Downes served as principal of LeMoyne Elementary School in Syracuse from 1988 to 1992 and as vice principal of Seymour Elementary School in Syracuse from 1985 to 1988.

Her ten years of teaching experience, saw her perform a full spectrum of regular and special education duties, both in the class room and as a support staff member from kindergarten through the college level.

A Syracuse native, Downes lives in Marcellus with her husband, Allan Chamberlain.

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