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Students to be greeted by host of new principals in DeKalb schools

By Aracely Hernandez - Staff Writer

DeKALB - Students at four elementary schools and at both middle schools are going to be met by at least one more new face when they go back to school on Aug. 29.

Four of the district's nine elementary schools - Gwendolyn Brooks, Littlejohn, Tyler and Wright - as well as Clinton Rosette and Huntley middle schools have new principals.

The principals said they are getting the hang of things such as learning how to get around their school buildings and learning teachers' names. But there are still offices to organize and parents to meet. Some principals already met some parents and students during registration earlier this month.

Brooks got a new principal when Mary Haddad retired at the end of the last school year. Dennis Owens, a principal from Plano, was hired in May.

The rest of the principals were all hired this summer after their predecessors left for various reasons, including jobs in other school districts.

Kristina Hesbol, assistant superintendent for human resources, said the new employees are all enthusiastic about working for the district.

"We didn't just have candidates, we had quality candidates," she said.

The new principals have all come from various cities, and most have said they are excited about the opportunity to work for the DeKalb School District.

Owens said the education bug bit him when he began volunteering in park district camps with children in special education. His wife also is a teacher.

"I'm excited about schools and working with the teachers," he said. "I like the direction of where the district is going."

Robert Palmer, who will be the interim principal at Tyler Elementary School, said he has lived in the area for more than 20 years.

"I was excited about the possibility of openings here," he said. "There's a real supportive administrative team."

He said he has some experience with the district because he previously worked with the Kishwaukee Education Consortium.

Gina Greenwald, the new principal at Wright Elementary School, said she loves working with children and teachers and the different challenges each day brings.

"There's no two days that are ever the same," she said.

Littlejohn principal Char-lotte Kreuder and Huntley principal Roger Scott both said they are in the business because of the students.

Scott previously worked as a teacher, then left for several years to work in the business world, then returned to work in school.

"It's been a passion of mine," he said. "It's a fun opportunity to make an impact on (students') lives."

At the end of the day, knowing they have helped students makes their jobs satisfactory, Kreuder said.

"It's just a fun opportunity to work with students and help them achieve at high levels," she said. "That's what it's all about."

Clinton Rosette Middle School also has a new principal, Craig Bowers. He was a principal at a middle school in Villa Park. He will be joined in his new position by a new assistant principal, Matthew Bohrer, who previously worked as an eighth-grade math teacher in West Chicago.

DeKalb High School also has a new principal and two new assistant principals. Lindsey Hall was hired earlier this summer, and John Hahn and Valerie Bilek were both hired earlier this month.

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