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Lourdine Florek, Owner

Thursday, March 16, 2017

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Suzzette Hesser, newly-hired Hoopeston Area superintendent, shakes board member Mark Schaumburg's hand at Tuesday's school board meeting, as retiring Supt. Hank Hornbeck and other board members look on.

Former John Greer teacher hired to lead Hoopeston Area

Suzzette Hesser knows a bit about the Hoopeston Area School District, both as a teacher and a parent of students who attended the school.

Now she will get to know the district from a different angle.

Hesser was hired as the district's new superintendent at the school board meeting Tuesday evening.

"I am so excited to be coming back to work with the board, the students, the staff and the families," she said after the unanimous board vote.

"My passion is to inspire others to achieve their dreams through education. It is truly an honor to have the opportunity to work with the students, staff and community to continue the tradition of excellent in the Hoopeston Area schools and Expect More!"

Hesser, a Bismarck native, began her teaching career at John Greer approximately 22 years ago, teaching fifth grade. After about seven years in Hoopeston, she was hired by the Sterling Public School District. There, she

See **TEACHER** on other side

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Class fee \$96

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Teacher continued from other side

served as teacher, and principal in a pre-K-8 district.

In what some might consider a step back, in 2014, Hesser went back to teaching. She is currently a fifth grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary. "I didn't want to spend too much time away from teaching," she said. "I think that happens sometimes and you lose sight of the students."

Hesser, 47, graduated from Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She completed a master's degree in educational administration at EIU and is currently working on her doctorate in educational leadership from Aurora University in Aurora. Her dissertation is on improving in-service teacher development.

At John Greer, Hesser had the distinction of becoming the first teacher in Vermilion County to earn National Board Teacher Certification. She attended Harvard University's Graduate School of Education Principal Center in Boston, Mass., for intensive instruction on the use of data and change leadership. She was also chosen to participate in the AASA (School Superintendents Association)

Aspiring Superintendent's program in Washington, D.C. during the 2016-17 year.

"I am beyond thrilled to be here," Hesser said after the meeting. "My husband and I loved being here."

When she began teaching at John Greer, Hesser's children were in kindergarten through John Greer. When they left, the youngsters were in Honeywell through middle school and the family was involved in many areas of the community, including youth sports and church. "We had a great experience," she said.

When Hesser takes the reins on July 1, she plans to spend several months "listening and learning" to staff, students, parents and the community."

Hesser was hired with a three-year contract at a base salary of \$120,000, said board President Russ Walder, who called the search for a new superintendent "a rewarding experience," saying the board "interviewed people from all over the state."

Walder gave a brief history of the search, which started in May when the board hired the Illinois Association of School Boards, at \$7,400, to conduct a nationwide search to replace Supt. Hank Hornbeck, who has served in that capacity since July 2007.

Briefly

At the library

Upcoming events at the Hoopeston Public Library include:

"Dollar-A-Day Boys: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Illinois" a special multi-media program by author and speaker Bill Jamerson, 6:30 p.m., Thursday lower level meeting room.

While this program is geared toward adults, it would also be of interest to middle/high school students interested in history.

Treeclimbers Genealogy Group meets at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 18 in the Teen Room (upstairs north end). This program is open to anyone interested in genealogy and family research.

Weather

Mostly sunny today. High 39. Tonight, cloudy, chance of showers. Low 32. Tomorrow, chance of showers. High 53, low 33.

Classifieds

HELP WANTED

The City of Hoopeston is accepting applications for a part time Zoning/Compliance officer. Application and job description are available at Hoopeston City Hall, 301 W. Main St., Hoopeston Practice Representative:

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