

Greece school district selects Barbara Deane-Williams



Written by

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1:20 AM, Apr. 29, 2011|

After holding two nationwide searches for a new superintendent of schools, the Greece Central School District Board of Education found the district's new leader just one county to the west.

Barbara Deane-Williams, currently head of the Lyndonville Central School District in Orleans County, will take over Greece schools on July 1.

"I think she will be an excellent fit for our district," said Frank Oberg, president of the Greece school board. "She has successful experience as a superintendent and she is a bundle of energy with a lot of good ideas."

Deane-Williams said she was interested in the Greece position because it would provide her the opportunity "to have a positive impact on a large number of students."

Lyndonville schools have 720 students and a budget of \$13.5 million. Greece, with a \$194 million budget, has a student enrollment of 12,576 and is the state's eighth-largest school district.

Luva Alvarez, who has three children in the Greece schools, said she was happy with the school board's pick. She attended question-and-answer sessions with the three job finalists earlier this month.

The other finalists were Gary Mix, superintendent of the Pembroke school district in Genesee County and Jana Carlisle, former chief planning officer for the Rochester school district.

"There was something about (Deane-Williams) that resonated with my spirit," said Alvarez. "I liked the way she presented herself, the way she was open to conversation and that she made sure she really answered people's questions instead of going in circles."

Parent Gary Elling, who also attended the

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question-and-answer sessions, said Deane-Williams was also his preferred candidate.

"She was the best of the three," he said. "She had a sense of humor and was outgoing. I thought she would be a good match for being able to deal with the community and build the community's interest in what the schools are doing."

Deane-Williams said building that interest and community trust will be one of her initial and ongoing goals.

She intends to hold numerous get-togethers and meetings with community groups, parents and other stakeholders "and listen carefully about the ideas they have for the future" and "opening up a dialogue that's ongoing and communitywide, with an ongoing give and take of information and ideas."

Deane-Williams and the Board of Education reached a four-year agreement slated to be formally adopted by the board during a meeting May 3.

Oberg said Deane-Williams' salary will be \$198,000. Former Superintendent Steven Achramovitch, who retired in June 2010, was paid \$209,000.

Deane-Williams was selected from an overall pool of 21 candidates for the Greece job. She has more than 20 years experience in education and has led Lyndonville since 2005.

This was the second search the district held to find a leader to succeed Achramovitch. The board announced last May that it was unsatisfied with the applicants from that search.

Oberg said that was the right choice.

"The feedback we had on those candidates was not encouraging," he said, adding that community feedback on Deane-Williams was "excellent."

He said Deane-Williams "has done a good job turning the Lyndonville district around, and I expect over time she will make a real improvement in the Greece school system."

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