

New principals happy new school year is here



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Susan Kern, Leslie Lancette and Melissa Olson can't wait for classes to start Sept. 1.

The new principals at the Chippewa Falls Middle School, Hillcrest Elementary and Parkview Elementary want to finally meet their new students.

"It has been amazing," Kern said about her joining the Chippewa Falls School District after serving as an assistant principal at Eau Claire

North High School.

"I feel the support that has been given to me has been fantastic," Kern told the School Board on Aug. 20.

Lancette has an extensive education background, but took the job at Hillcrest because it gave her the chance to work with students and teachers. That was an opportunity she didn't have working the past five years as the Director of Learning in the Cumberland School District, where she worked with principals and the superintendent.

"I'm just really excited for the opportunity that I have been given here and I plan to make the most of it," she said.

Olson has settled into Parkview Elementary, holding a meet-and-greet session with school staff and sending out letters to parents.

"I want Parkview to be an open place for our families to come in here," said Olson, who was building principal at Roosevelt Elementary in Eau Claire for five years. Before that she was a K-12 literacy coordinator for the Eau Claire School District, and worked as a reading specialist in Plainfield and Western Springs near Chicago.

Susan Kern

Kern taught 14 years at DeLong Middle School in Eau Claire and served as interim principal at both DeLong and Northstar Middle Schools.

She said she's been impressed with the kindness and support she has received from the Chippewa Falls district.

"It is clear that all members of the district are encouraged and empowered to grow as professionals and people do so, always keeping what is best for our students and families at the center of their work," she said.

Kern promised to focus her efforts in building collaborative efforts to benefit staff and

teachers.

“I am also eagerly awaiting the opportunity to begin building positive relationships with all of my students and families.”

She succeeds Dr. Heidi Taylor-Eliopoulos as the school’s principal. Taylor-Eliopoulos became the district’s superintendent on July 1.

Leslie Lancette

Lancette spent 18 years with the Cumberland School District. She and her husband live east of Menomonie.

“I was looking for something closer to home,” she said, and the job at Hillcrest fit.

She said she heard a lot of good things about the Chippewa Falls School District. “What I am so excited about is how positive everyone is here,” she said.

She added: “I have never seen an organization that focuses on people before.”

Lancette said she is a big proponent of individualized learning by students.

“I think that students need to be where they are going to be able to be successful. I am always wanting students to be set up for success.”

Lancette is a graduate of Unity High School, near Balsam Lake. She has a bachelor of arts degree in education from Beth University in St. Paul, Minnesota. She earned her masters at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, and her principal’s license through the WiscAD certification program.

“I want to provide a positive approach to what I do,” she said.

Melissa Olson

Olson is very familiar with the Chippewa Falls School District because her husband is from Chippewa Falls and their two children are students in the district.

Olson has a bachelor’s of science degree from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois and earned her masters from National Louis University in Chicago and her administrator license from Viterbo College in La Crosse.

“My strategy is working with the very qualified people who are here,” he said, adding that the staff knows the students at Parkview.

Olson said she wants students to be safe, responsible and to show respect. She also wants students to set high goals and to be well rounded.

Her goal is to have parents involved and engaged in their students’ learning. She plans on having regular communication with parents, and added the Parents Teachers Organization is a great avenue for parental involvement.

“I’m just excited to be here and I’m ready for the school year,” she said.