

Wyandot Middle School welcomes new principal

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Christina Kozouz has been named the new principal at Wyandot Middle School after working at the middle school level in the Chippewa Valley Schools district for 15 years.

Photo by Patricia O'Blenes

CLINTON TOWNSHIP — The Chippewa Valley Schools Board of Education has named Christina Kozouz as the new principal at Wyandot Middle School following the impending retirement of current principal Darlene Gauci in January.

Gauci announced she was going to retire at the end of the current semester, which is in January, and Kozouz will work alongside her until that time to help make the transition easier. Kozouz's hire was approved by the board at the Nov. 20 meeting, and her start date was the next day.

Kozouz has spent 15 years in the Chippewa Valley district, spending all her time at the middle school level. Her first job was teaching eighth-grade social studies and English language arts at Seneca Middle School.

In 2008, she moved to Wyandot, where she taught seventh and eighth grade until 2011. She took part in the district's administrative intern program to perform administrative duties while still in the classroom before becoming the assistant principal at Iroquois Middle School in 2012, where she served until she was selected for the principal position.

Having spent her entire career in Chippewa Valley Schools, including teaching at Wyandot, Kozouz said she feels it has made her uniquely qualified for the principal position.

"When the position was first posted, I had many people reach out and say it was time to come home, and that meant a lot to me," Kozouz said. "I appreciate that I have been gone (from Wyandot) for five years, and there is new staff and new initiatives that I am excited to help on. But on my first day here, everybody said 'welcome home.'"

Superintendent Ron Roberts said that during the hiring process, the administrative team spoke to teachers at Wyandot to collect data on things that are going well and should be preserved, and things a new principal should consider going forward.

With Kozouz having been with the district since 2003 and committed to the middle school level, Roberts said she has proven herself ready to take over as principal.

“So much of what we do, we have to relate well to people and connect with them, from our students to parents and do the same with the staff, and (Kozouz) can do that,” Roberts said. “Christina has a really in-depth knowledge of the middle school curriculum and where we should move our school, and I think she will be an asset not just at that school, but in our entire district.”

Kozouz said she has always wanted to teach and work at the middle school level going all the way back to when she was in middle school. It has also always been a goal to become a principal because of the positive experiences she had with administrators as a student.

Kozouz earned her bachelor’s degree at Central Michigan University and her master’s degree at Saginaw Valley State University.

“I have aspired to be a principal from the beginning, because I had a close relationship with administrators as a student,” she said. “As much as I love teaching, I loved the idea of being able to have an initiative and to see it followed through, and be responsible for that and be a part of that.”

Kozouz said she has created a vision board and is relishing the opportunity to work with Gauci before she retires to learn about the school culture and observe students. She said she is also working to make sure the school community feels involved with what is going on inside the school.

While she is observing mostly at this point, Kozouz said she has some ideas of things she would like to work on going forward, from bridging achievement gaps to making school a place where students enjoy being.

“I want to bring the excitement back of school being somewhere students want to go and not have to go, whether that is school assemblies, mentoring programs or enrichment activities,” she said. “There are things I want to bring to the school while maintaining the current programs that they have that are working.”