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Former DJ trades songs for curriculum

September 2, 2001

By Leon Lagerstam, Dispatch/Argus Staff writer

He once was known as ``J.J. the DJ."''

Now, J. Jay Marino is in charge of spinning curriculum efforts in the Rock Island-Milan the district's new assistant superintendent for instruction and school improvement July Island-Milan launched its new modified year-round calendar.

It's a challenging position at a challenging time, Mr. Marino said, especially for someone younger than typical assistant superintendents of curriculum.

Mr. Marino said he brought no preconceived notions about how his job should be done personnel need to be flexible to adjust to new calendar changes. ``I wasn't set in my

He's worked as an educator in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Arizona. ``Out of everywhere where I feel the most can be done for students," he said. ``This is the right place at t

Mr. Marino was a disc jockey on an alternative radio station in Cedar Rapids, Iowa from A Dubuque native and University of Northern Iowa graduate, he also played college te founding member of the university's hockey club.

While working as an inner-city sixth grade teacher in Phoenix, Mr. Marino received an award that included a \$5,000 prize.

He taught five years in Arizona before moving to Michigan, where he was an elementary education coordinator, director of technology and director of instruction.

His background is outlined on his www.jmarino.ws Web site. ``It's my online portfolio

Although he misses classroom duties, he feels he can reach more students as an adm growth of individual students is what Mr. Marino misses most, ``because at the district wait a year to see that growth."

His first priority is visiting teachers and administrators in every district building, ``to goal is to align everything to the Illinois Learning Standards and the district's mission

Mr. Marino recently finished national certification to become a trainer for a Quality Kid launch.

Walls in his offices are covered with flow charts outlining responsibilities and plans, but teamwork from colleagues and district employees to make programs work successfully

Mr. Marino joined three other new central office administrators this year, including assistant human resources I.V. Foster, and two other curriculum directors.

Kay Ingham will oversee curriculum and school improvement plans at the junior high. Bruce Bufe will be Title 1 reading director.

The new administrators have spent a lot of time meeting and planning activities, but with humor, Mr. Marino said.

He told how Mr. Foster got administrators to hold hands as a sign of unity then began "Love Me" Barney the Dinosaur song.

"The team superintendent (Dave) Markward has put together has some excellent and collegiality."

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