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# Antioch Elementary District 34 hires new superintendent

By Mick Zawislak

Antioch Elementary District 34 will have a new superintendent for the 2014-15 school year.

Jay Marino, who has served the past five years as superintendent in the Dunlap K-12 district in Peoria, was selected from among 29 candidates to lead the Antioch district, school officials announced. He will replace Greg Buchanan, who resigned effective at the end of the school year.

Marino, 44, received a three-year contract beginning July 1 at a salary of \$198,000, according to Tamara Neumann, school board president.

The Iowa native has a broad educational experience as a grade school and math and science teacher, assistant principal, director of instruction, assistant superintendent and superintendent in school districts in Arizona, Iowa, Michigan and Illinois.

Neumann said his experience is "what the district needs at this time," adding that implementing the Common Core curriculum standards will be a priority.

Marino emerged from a nearly three-month search process that drew applicants from six states, 16 of whom were superintendents, according to Linda Hanson, president of School Exec Connect, the Highland Park firm hired by District 34.

"When I looked at the leadership profile the search firm put together, it seemed my skill set and experience and background fit," Marino said Monday. "I felt it was a good match. He said raising student achievement and building a collaborative system would be priorities, but he needs to familiarize himself with the district.

"The first 60 to 90 days will be (about) visibility and understanding what's in place before you get too particular on initiatives and next steps," Marino said.

A vetting process involved community input through surveys, focus groups, and interviewing committees comprised of administrators, staff, parents and community members, she said.

"I think the community will really like him. He's very engaging," Hanson said.

"One of his areas of expertise is strategic planning and continuous improvement," and he has written two books on the topic, Hanson said of Marino. "He has been a consultant with the Netherlands and their education program."

Dunlap Community Unit School District 323 has 4,200 students in eight schools, compared with 3,100 in five schools in District 34. The K through 8 student population is about the same size, Marino said.

“This is very familiar territory for me,” he said. He added he has family in Northbrook and will move to District 34, where his first and second grade children will be students.

In the most recent school newsletter, Buchanan said the district will raise the bar for learning by implementing Common Core state standards, in part, by adding new technology for students.

The District 34 school board plans to host a meet-and-greet with Marino to introduce him to the community.

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