

News

St. Mary's Catholic School welcomes a new principal

By JESSICA SIEFF / Niles Daily Star
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NILES - For students and teachers, the weeks leading up to the first day of school are especially hectic. For the students those last few lazy days of summer are not to go by wasted. For teachers, there are plenty of lesson plans to prepare, classrooms to set up and activities to plan.

Dr. Marie Doyle is no stranger to the anticipation that accompanies the first day of school. But, having just recently been named the new principal at St. Mary's School, Doyle is facing an particularly busy couple of weeks ahead and if she has anything to say about it, a very promising school year.

"It's what I enjoy most," Doyle said about working within the school principal arena. "My real love and passion is working at the school level, the building level ... interacting with the parents ... and getting back to Catholic education."

She comes to St. Mary's from Elkhart Community Schools as the curriculum director. Through that position, Doyle worked with the administrators and educators of 20 schools within the Elkhart school system on different aspects of curriculum and instruction. Now, she's looking forward to getting back to the principal's office.

"My dad said it's like going full circle," she said.

A former elementary school teacher who taught in Omaha Neb., and Denver Co., Doyle carries degrees in elementary education, education administration and a doctorate of elementary education of from the University of Colorado, Nebraska and Northern Colorado, respectively. Before her position within the Elkhart school system, she was a principal at a Catholic school in Nebraska and chair of the education department at Saint Mary's College. "I've worked at all levels of education," she added.

Now she will work the halls at St. Mary's School in Niles, which is expecting 86 students this year and hopes to reach 100.

"We're getting new registrations everyday," Doyle said. And she expects them to continue into the school year.

"Dr. Doyle brings an impressive record as an experienced teacher and administrator to St. Mary's," said The Rev. David Otto, pastor of St. Mary's parish in a press release.

"She has a passion for working with young people. Her faith and values will be a true asset to the children and families of St. Mary's School."

Tuesday night, Doyle held an open meeting with teachers and parents to discuss the school's future. "My personal goal this year," she said. "Is to create a model of excellence in education.

"But it's not my vision ... It will be the vision and the mission of a learning community," she added.

The idea of such a "learning community" comprised of parents, teachers and students interacting, is one that Doyle feels strongly about.

From her meeting Tuesday, Doyle has a list of ideas for the schools future such as looking at ways to promote school spirit and enrollment, the possible addition of a foreign language to the curriculum, increasing technology and fostering student talents.

The school is small, Doyle said, allowing educators to focus on those individual student talents. "We're looking forward, not backward," she said.

Having interviewed in June and receiving the position at the end of July - Doyle is still just trying to put her office together. But, as busy as she is, there seems to be no lack of excitement. "We're ready to go," she said. "The staff has been wonderful." And, she adds, "we'll be ready for the children..."

Classes begin at St. Mary's on Tuesday, Aug. 26.