



the Ansonian

Vol. XVII No. 1

Ansonia Public Schools

November 2007

New Superintendent Brings Community Back Into Schools

Carol Merlone, the 16th Superintendent of Schools for Ansonia Public Schools, plans to be a school community builder who is concerned with the many facets of shared leadership.

She made this mission statement as she took office on Aug. 1, transitioning from her previous position as principal of Mead School. Mrs. Merlone visits the schools each day, makes herself available to the community at public meetings and at new community sessions, which she hosts monthly in her office, and has opened the lines of communication with the Board of Education and the city.

“My vision for the Ansonia School District, in collaboration with the Ansonia Board of Education, is to make the Board Mission statement a reality: *‘The Ansonia Public School District is committed to providing high quality educational opportunities for all students. In partnership with families and the community, we strive to ensure that students are ready to succeed in an ever-changing world.’*”

She outlined the following phases of her personal goals:

Phase I: Listening and Learning. This phase took place during the first three months of her tenure, as she met with constituent groups and provided updates to the Board of Education.

Phase II: Leading. Under her leadership, Mrs. Merlone has set these four goals: 1. Develop and ensure effective district reform governance through efficient and positive Board of Education/ Superintendent relations; 2. Increase student achievement for all students while simultaneously closing the

achievement gap. 3. Improve public trust, commitment, and confidence through open, honest communication and responsive corrective action in order to increase student achievement and conditions of teaching and learning. 4. Foster a supportive, positive and effective district climate and culture focused on improving student achievement.

Mrs. Merlone reports on her numerous activities monthly to the Board of Education and to parents through the school district website: www.ansoniam.org. She welcomes input from the public at monthly meetings in her Office; the next meeting is Saturday, Dec. 1 from 10-11 a.m.

Mrs. Merlone brings 24 years of experience to the office. She taught for 14 years and was principal of Peck School and Mead School over the past nine. She is a native of Ansonia, having attended Ansonia High School and raising her family in Ansonia.



Photo by Eileen Krugel

Carol Merlone, Ansonia Superintendent

In October, she formed a committee of educators and community members to develop a District Improvement Plan. She met with each building principal and facility director to review budget projections for the 2008-09 fiscal year. In the coming month, she will launch the new parent-communication system called “Connect-Ed,” which will allow her to call the homes of every student when school is cancelled, delayed, or students are dismissed early from school.

Feel free to call Mrs. Merlone at 736-5095 or e-mail her at: cmerlone@ansoniam.org.

Welcome to Ansonia Public Schools

Susan McKernan, Lawrence DiPalma and Lou Puglisi are the school district’s newest administrators. Mrs. McKernan is principal of Ansonia High School, while Mr. DiPalma is assistant principal at Mead School, and Lou Puglisi is interim principal of Prendergast School.

There are several new teachers in the district this year:

AHS—Christopher Bartles, Carole Kargher, Robert Mitchell and Carl LaRovera Jr., science; and Elaine Nadal, language.

Alternative Education—Donna Pala, English.

AMS—Susanna Lombardi, Grade 8 special education; Mark Schilling, Grade 8 LA; John Coppola and Jane Perry, Grade 7 science; Kathleen McCullough, Grade 6 reading; and Rachel Josovitz, social worker

Mead—Nicole Halpin, Grade 3; and Sarah Chicoine and Christine Danner, Grade 4.

Prendergast—Deborah DeGennaro, kindergarten; Kimberly Carter, special education; and Dorri Mendes, music.

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Photo by Eileen K. Ehman



Paula Tyszka, a second grade teacher at Prendergast School, is Ansonia's Teacher of the Year.

Tyszka is Ansonia's Teacher of the Year

Paula Tyszka, a second grade teacher at Prendergast School, is the 2008 Ansonia Teacher of the Year. She has been honored at the Convocation program at AHS in late August, by the Board of Education at its September meeting, and at a State reception in Hartford.

Mrs. Tyszka is a high energy teacher with a dazzling smile who was nominated for the award by Karalyn Meineke, a former student. Karalyn wrote, "She was nice, sweet, and the best teacher ever ... if I could go back to the second grade, I would love to have her as my teacher again."

The award has made her feel so appreciated as a teacher; however, Mrs. Tyszka said it's due to the collegial sharing of two of the veteran teachers at Prendergast—Anita Bazelewicz and Sue Drauss— that she has become a better teacher.

"I asked myself, 'Why do I deserve this title more than they do?' These are outstanding educators who should have this honor before me," Mrs. Tyszka said of these teachers who are her mentors.

Her motto is, "Kids won't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

It's clear that she cares a great deal about teaching, whether it is

adults or children. She started her career as an adult education teacher, teaching English as a Second Language primarily during this time. In 1994, she became a tutor at the former Lincoln-Hayes School before taking a teaching position at Peck School in 1995. During this time, she earned two master's degrees, one in adult education and one in elementary education.

Teaching with the increased emphasis on reading and writing is challenging, she acknowledges. Mrs. Tyszka tries to use her creativity in the literacy centers in order to tap into the students' creative side. She also has a very large class this year—26—but finds when she pairs them with the correct partner, they learn from one another and share their enthusiasm, and there is usually a very positive outcome.

Carol Merlone, Superintendent of Schools, has worked with Mrs. Tyszka for many years and was thrilled to hear she was selected for the honor. "There is no one more deserving. Paula truly loves teaching and she is a role model for the many young teachers we have in our district. She is outstanding in every way."

Mrs. Tyszka and her husband, Frank, live in Ansonia. They have two daughters, Jacqueline, 26, and Susan, 23.