



Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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School building leadership updates in District 200

Many familiar faces in new roles and a few new faces have assumed new leadership roles across Woodstock Community Unit School District 200.

Two assistant principals were promoted to principal positions at each high school, new assistants were hired to fill those positions, and a veteran D200 educator was hired to take over at Greenwood Elementary School.

Amy Ficek

Amy Ficek will take over for former Greenwood principal Julie Smith, who will take over the new Bright Beginnings autism program at Clay Academy. Ficek has 21 years of experience in education, most recently as an instructional coach at Olson and Dean elementary schools.

She also spent 18 years teaching kindergarten at Verda Dierzen Early Learning Center. Ficek earned her bachelor's in early childhood education from Eastern Illinois University and has two master's degrees in leadership from St. Xavier and Aurora universities, respectively.

"I have learned that strong schools are built on strong relationships," Ficek said. "I have had the pleasure of serving under eight different building principals in D200, and have learned from every single one of them. I've learned the importance of listening first, supporting teachers, partnering with families, and always keeping students at the center of every decision."

Ficek said it's important to her that staff and students feel supported and hopes to continue the strong bond that Greenwood has with its families.

"I want parents to know that I see them as partners in their child's education and together, we can create an environment where every child feels safe and inspired to succeed," she added.

Ficek's has a daughter who graduated from Woodstock North High School in 2025 and now attends Northern Illinois University, a son who is a senior at North, and a stepdaughter at Mary Endres Elementary School.

She said she's excited about this upcoming year at Greenwood, where she has worked in the recent past.

"Greenwood is a special place, with a strong, student-centered culture. The staff is incredibly dedicated, supportive, and committed to doing what is best for students every day. I am excited about continuing that tradition while building on the great work that's already happening here," Ficek said.

John Liuzzi

Former assistant principal John Liuzzi, who has spent his entire career in Woodstock Community Unit School District 200, was named the new Woodstock High School principal last spring.

Liuzzi said he's humbled to assume the leadership role at the more than century-old school with a rich history, positive school culture, and high academic standards.

Liuzzi has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Butler University and a master's degree in education from Northern Illinois University. He also obtained a second master's degree in educational leadership from the American College of Education.

In 2022, Liuzzi was named an assistant principal at Woodstock High School, where he has served for the last four years, taking on many administrative duties, including launching and leading the WHS Link Crew, which pairs upperclassmen with incoming freshmen.

Tyler Carlson

Tyler Carlson, formerly an assistant principal at Woodstock North, who previously served in similar roles at both Creekside and Northwood middle schools, was selected as the new Woodstock North High School principal.

Carlson earned a bachelor's degree in secondary education from Augustana College and a master's degree from Concordia University, where he is also working on his doctorate in educational leadership.

He taught English at several high schools, including Dundee-Crown and Libertyville, before beginning his career as an administrator, serving as dean of students at DeKalb High School for four years.

Melissa Thurlwell

Melissa Thurlwell has replaced Liuzzi's assistant principal role at Woodstock High School. Thurlwell most recently served as the English Department Chair at Grayslake Central High School since 2013. She has taught at Central since 2006, taught English in North Chicago for 3 years, and taught English in Japan for a year in 2002-2003.

Thurlwell has a bachelor's degree in secondary education and speech communication from Augustana, two master's degrees in administration and supervision, and in curriculum and instruction from Roosevelt and Concordia universities, respectively.

Christina Fain

Christian Fain takes over Carlson's assistant principal position at Woodstock North High School. Fain was also an English Department Chair at Hampshire High School since July 2018. She has been a digital learning coach for District 300, and taught English at Jacobs High School for 10 years.

Fain spent 20 years in District 300 and worked with incoming Principal Tyler Carlson about 10 years ago. She and her husband have lived in Woodstock for about three years and have two children at Olson Elementary School.