

# Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **New D 200 principals set to take over at Prairiewood Elementary School, Clay Academy**

A talented teacher promoted from within her own school and a broadly experienced educator are among the new principal hires in Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 for the upcoming 2022-2023 school year.

Former Prairiewood Elementary School teacher and instructional coach Nikki Kunde was selected to lead her building, while veteran teacher and administrator Dan Palombit was chosen to take over the principal position at Clay Academy. Kunde and Palombit are filling roles vacated, respectively by the retirements of Jared Skorborg and Dawn Cook.

"I'm very pleased to welcome Nikki and Dan to our team of outstanding principals. They each possess the professional and interpersonal skills needed for these important roles to provide the best leadership and learning environments for our students, staff and families," District 200 Superintendent Mike Moan said.

Nikki Kunde has been a teacher, reading interventionist and instructional coach in District 200 for 11 years.

"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to continue to serve the community in a new role as a building principal. I have spent the last five years working at Prairiewood Elementary and the atmosphere that the staff and families have created for our students is second to none," Kunde said.

Kunde has taught pre-K, first and second grade. She earned her Bachelor's of Science degree in Early Childhood Education from Illinois State University in 2009 and has 3 master's degrees in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in English as a Second Language and in Educational Technology: Leadership, both from Concordia University. She also has earned her Master's Degree in Educational Leadership with Principal Endorsement Program from Aurora University.

"I am excited to hit the ground running in 2022-2023 and continue many of the great initiatives the district and school have put into place over the last few years that I am extremely passionate about and invested in."

Mrs. Kunde lives in Woodstock with her husband and three young children on a farm that has been in the family for more than 150 years. Her two older boys attend District 200 schools while her youngest daughter is 3.

"As a leader, it is my job to apply my knowledge and resources to promote the success of every teacher in order to support high quality instruction for all students.

Dan Palombit brings a wealth of educational experience into his new role as principal of Clay Academy where he is excited to join staff who share the philosophy that every student can learn.

“How each student best accesses learning and realizes success differs. Essentially, one size does not fit all. That’s my fundamental approach to education, teaching, and learning. In order for a student to have success, they must feel safe, respected, and understood,” Palombit said.

Palombit earned his Doctorate in Education in 2019 from American College of Education in Indianapolis, two master’s degrees in educational leadership and secondary and special education. He received his bachelor’s degree from Northern Illinois University.

Over his nearly 20 years in education, Palombit has held many roles as a teacher and administrator at the high school and middle school levels. He’s taught subjects including business, media technology, and special education.

He also served as dean of students at Jacobs High School and associate principal of operations at Dundee-Crown High School among other administrative roles including District 300 director of student services.

Palombit said he will always have the student’s best interests in the forefront of his decisions and interactions and expects a strong line of communication between school and home.

“I look forward to the many celebrations at Clay Academy, especially when we have school-wide celebrations for students who are mainstreaming or returning to their base schools. When students celebrate each other’s accomplishments, they are all building a sense of community and pride and realizing success is happening all around Clay Academy.”

The lifelong McHenry County resident is married with three children residing outside of Crystal Lake.