

Coventry introduces three new principals

Feinstein, Washington Oak, Hopkins Hill will be under new leadership

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COVENTRY — They are ready to go.

Three new principals were welcomed to the community during Tuesday's Coventry School Committee meeting.

Jennifer Roy, principal at Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School; Gina Gateman, principal at Washington Oak Elementary School and Kathryn Tancrelle, principal at Hopkins Hill Elementary School were welcomed with a full house and rounds of applause.

"This is what I've worked for, this is my goal, this is my dream job and not many can say they've found their dream job," said Roy after she shook

hands with members of the School Committee.

Roy's career in education began 19 years ago as a special education teacher. As her career progressed, she held various educational leadership roles in Texas and New York. Most recently, she was the Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning at North Kingstown High School and before that the Assistant Principal of Discipline at East Providence High School.

She's been following the Feinstein School for quite some time now and was impressed with their style of collaboration.

"Research shows that middle school is a critical time for children who are on that middle school threshold, after elementary but before high

NEW PRINCIPALS

- Feinstein Middle School: Jennifer Roy.
- Washington Oak Elementary School: Gina Gateman.
- Hopkins Hill Elementary School: Kathryn Tancrelle.

school," she said. "I'm very interested in working with children during that stage. I know the school has already begun education initiatives," said Roy.

She said it truly does take a village to educate a child. She considers herself a very hands-on person who isn't afraid of the hard work that needs to

be continued in the district.

Washington Oak's new leader, meanwhile, was no stranger to the district.

"I'm thrilled," said Gateman, after she was introduced. "This is an amazing opportunity."

Gateman has been in education for 13 years. Her most recent position was at Feinstein Middle School as Coordinator for Unified Learning Support Services for the past five years. Gateman is also a former fourth and fifth-grade special education teacher at both Washington Oak Elementary School and at Feinstein. One of the most memorable points during her career thus far was as an intern at Feinstein where she worked with Mike Almeida, the school's former principal.

"The internship was part of the Administrative Internship for Aspiring Principals Program," Gateman explained.

She has also gained great experience through the years working on a response to intervention model in an effort to provide students with additional support.

"I've been in Coventry throughout my whole career," she said, "I've had great support and I am surrounded by great leaders. It's a collaborative culture where families need to be partners and the focus is on student learning and achievement."

Her definition of principal, she said, is being a leader. And that goes back to creating a community that focuses on teaching and learning.

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Principals ready to get started

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"I know the job cannot be done alone," said the new principal, "and it's important to create a collaborative culture."

Her short-term goal is to establish relationships with the school staff and students before identifying specific priorities.

Hopkins Hill's new principal, too, was looking forward to her new role.

"I'm ready to go, I couldn't

be more excited to be here and get to work," said Tancredelle. "This is an amazing school system and I'm so happy to be a part of it."

Tancredelle is coming from the Smithfield school district where she taught the second and fifth grade for 15 years. Prior to that, she taught fourth grade in a Catholic school in Woonsocket for five years.

"The most significant learning experience I'm bringing to

Coventry is having the opportunity to bring leadership," she said. "It's about working closely with teachers and having the ability to work collaboratively toward reaching mutual goals."

Tancredelle's challenge lies in making the transition from teacher to principal and managing the concurrent shift in responsibilities.

"The demographic is similar to Smithfield," she said, "but

I'll be getting to know the procedures and becoming familiar with the different initiatives."

She praised Coventry for its excellent reputation and leadership.

"The most important aspect for me as a new principal is to make sure teachers have the tools they need to do their jobs and not come in and change everything," said Tancredelle. "I want to also make sure I hear what parents have to say."