

## Press Clippings 2/24/2018

---Daily Herald--- 2/24/18

### **River Forest District 90 finds 'right fit,' names new special education director**

BY STEVE SCHERING

River Forest School District 90 announced the appointment of Denise Matthews as its new director of special education, a hire approved by the school board Feb. 19.

Matthews will begin her new role on July 1 and will fill a position that had been held by long-time River Forest administrator Karen Boozell, who will retire after the current school year.

Matthews currently serves as the assistant director of specialized student services for compliance for **District U-46 in Elgin**. She previously served as an assistant principal at both Westmont High School and Gwendolyn Brooks Middle School in Oak Park.

"I am very excited about joining District 90 and the opportunity to work with such a well-respected school district," Matthews said. "There is such a strong fit between District 90 and my personal philosophy about student learning and achievement, professional development and collaborative professional relationships. I look forward to working together with faculty and parents to meet our students' needs."

The appointment comes after an extensive search that included groups of faculty, staff, administrators, parents and school board members.

"After conducting an elaborate search for this position, I believe that Denise Matthews has the appropriate experience and approachable temperament that is the right fit for the district and our students, staff and families," Superintendent Ed Condon said. "Her extensive experiences with student services and school administration, along with her commitment to professional growth for faculty, and facilitating a collaborative work environment, made her stand out among other candidates."

Following school board approval, Matthews received a two-year contract with District 90 at an annual salary of \$127,816.

Matthews is also a two-time winner of the special education teacher of the year award from the Supported Education Association of Oak Park-River Forest.

Matthews holds two master's degrees from DePaul University, one in educational leadership and administration and the other in language, literacy and specialized instruction. She received a third bachelor's degree from the University of Belize.

## SPORTS

---Daily Herald--- 2/24/18

### **Boston's bucket a moment South Elgin won't forget**

BY JERRY FITZPATRICK

The final score of Metea Valley's 83-73 win at South Elgin is not what fans will remember about Friday's nonconference boys basketball game.

Those in the gym will remember the human moment that unfolded in the final 20 seconds after autistic South Elgin manager Geoffrey Boston entered the Senior Night lineup.

Metea Valley (15-11) led South Elgin (16-12) by 10 points when Storm coach Brett Johnson looked to his bench and pointed to Boston, the team's loyal manager who plays for District U-46's Blue Stars basketball team.

Cheers went up from the South Elgin student section as soon as Boston doffed his warmup. They had been chanting his name for minutes.

"He's really cool," South Elgin cheerleader Claire Walters said. "We don't even think of him like that (autistic). He's just one of us. We all hang out with him. And that's all he wants to do is play. He literally is here when all the boys are practicing so seeing him play was so awesome."

Boston's teammates directed him to stand near the South Elgin basket as they inbounded at the other end. Point guard Kyle Sy crossed midcourt and sent a pass to Boston, who was unguarded in the post.

Metea Valley coach Matt Walpole is a former special education teacher who is now that school's dean of students. Johnson spoke with him before the game and mentioned Boston might enter under the right circumstance.

It was the right circumstance with 20 seconds left so the Mustangs gave Boston plenty of room to operate. The senior caught the pass, turned to the basket and banked home the only shot of his varsity career with 12 seconds left, thereby triggering the loudest ovation of the night from the supportive home crowd.

The game was stopped as Boston's teammates enveloped him and began jumping around in celebration. The score didn't matter in that moment. Geoffrey Boston did.

"To be out there on the court is just an honor," Boston said. "Being able to score is an even greater honor for me. Everyone on this team, they know how much I love the sport of basketball. So, to get out there is just a great feeling."

It was a basket Metea Valley didn't mind giving up.

"To be able to shine the light on him for a little bit ... I mean, he's going to remember that moment for the rest of his life," Walpole said. "It was touching. It was touching to my kids. They were pleased to be a part of something like that."

As for the game itself, the Mustangs jumped to a 23-10 lead and generally maintained a double-digit cushion throughout. Metea received balanced contributions from junior guard Ethan Helwig (23 points), senior guard Cory Adams (21 points), Brad Hartje (17 points) and Veonte Ballard (16 points).

No question, the biggest 2 points of the night were scored by Boston, who reflected on the moment.

"Once I got to middle school my life completely took a detour and turned around," he said. "I started work with the basketball team. Then once I got into high school I got better and better and started making more relationships with people. They started realizing maybe he has autism but it doesn't matter. He's still a person. He's still a student. We're not going to treat him any less. He's just one of us. Maybe he's different. We've got to treat him like he's a student.

"Now, I'm the highest person at this high school."