

Wood picked for North Heights

• Tonya Wood will stay on as the principal of North Heights Elementary as Main Elementary students move over this fall.

 By Spencer Lahr

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Tonya Wood

Tonya Wood will continue as the principal at North Heights Elementary School as it absorbs students and teachers from Main Elementary this fall, according to Rome City Schools Superintendent Lou Byars.

"I'm really excited about it, just because it's a change, it's something different, it's challenging," Wood said, "and in a couple of years we're going to get a brandnew school."

Main Elementary students will attend North Heights Elementary while their old school is torn down and a new one built in its place on the current site. The new Main Elementary will house students from both schools.

The project is expected to be included in the upcoming education local option sales tax package, which would be put before voters on the November ballot.

Once the new Main Elementary is built, Wood said she plans to continue as principal there.

Byars said Main Elementary Principal Lora Young will remain with the system but what position she will have is undetermined.

"We're waiting to see what happens between now and the end of the year to see what's available," he said.

There will be an open principal position at Anna K. Davie Elementary, after the board of education approved on Tuesday night Parke Wilkinson to become principal at Rome Middle, effective July 1.

However, when asked whether Young will replace Wilkinson, Byars said, "We haven't opened up that position yet, so it would be too soon for me to speculate.

"We'll see who applies and consider everybody that applies," he added.

Wood has been principal at North Heights since 2011, when she left East Central Elementary after seven years. She said combining the schools will bring the student count up to around 500, which is about the number of students she oversaw at East Central.

North Heights received its STEM certification last week, and bringing Main students into the "more project-based learning" is "going to be a challenge," Wood said. To help with that, she continued, Natalie Hall will transition from being the math coach at North Heights to become the STEM coordinator for the school. The math coach at Main will fill Hall's position.

"That will be extremely helpful in getting the teachers and the students ... up to where our teachers and kids already are," Wood said.

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