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## Elementary Students Greeted by new Principal

BY SHANNA AVERY Star Staff Writer

Students at Baldwin Elementary were greeted back to school with their new principal, Joanie Wiersma.

Wiersma, who was formerly the literacy coach at Baldwin Community Schools, was given the position after Rob Dennis, the former principal, was accepted as principal at Mason County Central Middle School for the 2018/2019 school year.



As principal, Wiersma wants to keep strong connections with parents and the community. “I would really like to continue partnering with the community.

Last year we had several literacy workshop events which involved families,” she said, adding she hopes to build on that momentum. I also want to build leadership capacity with staff and students — to put both in leadership roles.

“As part of the school district, I want to work toward to making this a high-quality institution to raise student achievement. We really have a collaborative staff, which supports the social and emotional well-being of all students.

“These are my priorities, but a lot of this is continuing the great work already put into place in this district. Rob Dennis got things off to a great start, and we continue to move forward with things we began to initiate, making sure students and staff are successful.

” Wiersma, who lives in Carr Settlement, loves working in the area she calls home. She was an elementary teacher in Baldwin from 2005 until 2012. She became a reading specialist before she left Baldwin. She then became employed in administration at Ferris State University Charter School Office. In 2016, she returned to Baldwin as an instructional specialist.

She earned two degrees at Grand Valley University and an educational specialist degree at Central Michigan University.

She is halfway to earning her doctorate.

“Baldwin is home for me. This is where my heart is and always has been,” she said. “Working here has made a big impact on my life. I love the Manistee National Forest. My husband and I are mountain bikers, and there are endless trails to enjoy the nature.

“This is a great community that is really invested in this school.”

Joanie Wiersma is the new principal at Baldwin Elementary.