

Bridgeport schools introduce new teachers

by **Brittany Murray**
STAFF WRITER

Students aren't the only ones preparing for a new school year.

Bridgeport schools are introducing new teachers to their staffs for the upcoming 2014-2015 school session.

Bridgeport High School welcomes new mathematics teacher Natalie Hathaway, who served as a substitute teacher at the school from October 2013 to the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

"As a sub, she did an outstanding job, and we don't expect anything less from her as a full-time employee," Principal Mark DeFazio said.

Hathaway, who is a graduate of Bridgeport High School, has a degree in education from Fairmont State University, certifying her to teach mathematics in grades six through 12.

"I'm really excited, and I'm thankful to be back at my old school and working with the teachers who taught me so well," Hathaway said. "It's such a great place to be."

Many new faces will join the teachers at Johnson Elementary School this year, as well. Additions to the staff include Sherri Gallagher, second grade; K.C. Lewis, fourth-grade science and health; Taya Trent, fifth-grade social studies and spelling; Erin Bowers, fifth-grade math and art; and Tonya Eve, special education. There also are two new positions, with Bethany Kulchock and Kerri Fabian-Johnson as academic support teachers.

Gallagher was a stay-at-home mom when she decided to go back to school for her teaching degree at Fairmont State University. Last year, Gallagher began her first year of teaching at Salem Elementary School in third grade.

"I am excited to be in Bridgeport (schools) because I live in Bridgeport, so that makes it nice to teach in my own community," Gallagher said. "Since I started teaching here in Harrison County, I have found all of the teachers that I've worked with to be wonderful, easy to work with and exceptional with new teachers coming aboard."

Lewis, a Bridgeport resident, was previously a first-grade teacher at Nutter Fort Elementary for four years and has worked as a substitute teacher in Harrison County since 2003. Lewis graduated from Fairmont State University before she began her teaching career at St. Francis Central Catholic School in Morgantown. Lewis, a graduate of Bridgeport High School, is thrilled to be back in the town in which she grew up.

"Bridgeport holds a special

place in my heart. It's time to really enjoy that and give back to the community," she said. "I'm ready to start this new venture here in fourth grade."

Trent has previously taught in California, as well as in West Virginia, and is excited "to see how I am going to develop, as well as the students."

"I am very excited about the prospect of working with this demographic of students. They have a great fifth-grade team," Trent added.

For Bowers, this will be her third year teaching. She worked in intervention and substitute teaching after graduating from West Virginia University-Parkersburg. In 2012, she became a full-time special education substitute teacher at West Milford Elementary and has also taught third grade overload at Simpson Elementary.



"I am very excited to begin this school year. I feel blessed to be given the opportunity to

invest in the lives of children. It is my personal goal to help my students reach their fullest potential, both inside and outside of the classroom," she said.

Eve earned a bachelor of arts degree from Fairmont State College in elementary education K-8 and a master's of education from West Virginia University in special

education. She also continued to further her education at Marshall University, earning credits toward additional endorsements in education.

Eve was a special education teacher for 14 years at West Virginia Industrial Home for Youth in Salem, and last year she taught special education at Salem Elementary.

"I am very excited and looking forward to this school year at Johnson Elementary as a special education teacher," she said.

Bethany Kulchock is a first-year graduate of West Virginia University's five-year "Veterans Program" master's course of study. She is excited to be coming back to the school where she completed her student teaching.



Hathaway



Kulchock



Kingston



Lewis



Eve



Stuttler

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Teachers

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Now she will be working as an interventionist for kindergarten through third grade, providing support for the teachers and reporting to them on up-and-coming methods and training.

"I'm very excited to be starting my career in the school that taught me how to be a teacher," Kulchock said. "I'm kind of a born leader, so it's kind of exciting to be doing this right out of college."

Also, Leslie Morgan, English as a second language teacher, Cindi Shaver, hearing impaired teacher and Kristie Galindo, county technology integration specialist, will be moving their offices to Johnson Elementary.

"Our motto at Johnson Elementary is, 'We are All on the Same Team,'" Principal Vicki Huffman said. "We are looking forward to having these ladies become a part of our team. We are excited and teaming up for a great year at Johnson Elementary."

Heritage Christian School is also bringing aboard new teachers this school year, including Amelia Kingston, third grade, and Laura Stuttler, fourth grade. Other positions will be hired before the beginning of the school year as well.

Kingston is a graduate of Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. Last year, she worked for AmeriCorps as a full-time math tutor for fifth and sixth grades.

This year, she is excited

"to see what God does in my students and how I'll grow closer to them in the school year."

Laura Stuttler recently graduated from Appalachian Bible College, where she studied both Bible and education. This will be her first full year of classroom instruction.

"I'm excited to meet my students and just pour everything into my class. It's exciting for me to have my own classroom," Stuttler said. "It seems like a really great environment."

Heritage Christian Administrator Linda Simms said school officials "are excited to add these new teachers to our staff and look forward to what the Lord will do through them."

"They are energetic, poised

and prepared teachers who come to us highly recommended," Simms said. "We are blessed to have them and praise the Lord for adding such quality teachers to our staff. It's always good to see the Lord answer prayers in such a wonderful way."

Simpson Elementary School does not have any teachers joining the staff this year, but will need to make adjustments to accommodate for construction. Arrivals and dismissals will take place at the main front entrance doors, and fifth-grade students will be housed at Bridgeport Middle School for the entire 2014-15 school year.

"Although the construction has created mild inconveniences for this school year, the new addition will provide

us with a new and safe area for our students. We are so excited and appreciative of this opportunity to upgrade our facility," Administrator Loria Reid said.

Bridgeport Middle School did not provide information for this article.

Harrison County has 53 new teachers for the 2014-15 school year, of whom about 20 are newly out of four-year institutions, according to Superintendent Dr. Mark Manchin.

"We're excited about that and the enthusiasm that these teachers bring," he said. "Nobody can replace the teacher in the importance of the students' learning."

The teachers began their new school year on Monday, and the first day for students is today.