

New Position, Familiar Face

By Cass Lake-Bena Journalism Students

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A familiar face is returning to Cass Lake-Bena Schools this summer and will occupy the top position in the district. Sue Chase was recently hired as superintendent of schools and will begin her duties July first. Mrs. Chase previously spent 23 years working for CLB Schools as both an English teacher and principal. She has spent the past three years as the superintendent for Fosston Public Schools.

Mrs. Chase grew up in Cass Lake, so she is happy to be “coming home”. She graduated from Cass Lake High in 1983 and then went to BSU, where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1989. Her first job was at a daycare, even though she trained to be a high school teacher. Back then there weren't as many teaching jobs available, so she took any experience she could get working with young people. Eventually, she went to work in the Park Rapids Indian Education Program and shortly thereafter, she got her first English teaching job at the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School. There she taught middle school, which she really enjoyed.

An opportunity arose to teach at Cass Lake-Bena and Mrs. Chase took advantage of that. She taught eighth through twelfth grade English when the school still served 7-12 grade students. She appreciated being able to design her classes, which eventually allowed her to bring her love of movies into the classroom, amongst other things. After about 15 years of teaching, Sue decided she wanted to get her master's degree and realized she liked being a student again. She pursued her principal's license and while putting that license to use, she decided to also work toward her superintendent's license.

Mrs. Chase has had to overcome many obstacles to get to where she is today. Becoming a teacher was difficult because she didn't have a lot of guidance, considering that no one in her family had gone to college. Figuring out how to pay for college was another scary task that she solved. What you'll find about Sue is that whenever faced with a challenge, she rises to the occasion and figures out how to get through. People always counted her out, saying things like “you're poor,” or “you're a woman”, or “you can't do that because your family didn't go to college,” but she used that all as motivation to accomplish all her goals. One of the things she's most proud of is proving people wrong and coming back to serve her community as the superintendent of schools.

She's excited to come back to Cass Lake-Bena because the community is so strong and resilient. Regardless of what happens, the people of Cass Lake always have persevered and gotten through tough times. She also appreciates that mostly everyone knows one another and they always lend a helping hand. Cass Lake-Bena Schools are rooted deep with traditions that make it a truly special place.

While in Fosston, she said she learned to listen to people and hear different people's opinions. You have the kids in school, staff, parents and community members that are all invested in what's best for the school, so listening is important to make the hard decisions. When she returns to CLB, she wants to take an inventory of what we've been doing but also really look at what's important to the community. How do we define success at Cass Lake-Bena Schools? That and many more questions will be answered.

When she's not working, she likes to spend time with family (especially her grandkids), travel, watch movies, and cook. She loves the challenge of the traditional Thanksgiving meal, in making sure that everything comes together at the right time. She also loves to make donuts and *may* have committed herself to making the high school students fresh donuts on an activity day in the near future.

One thing is for certain: Mrs. Chase takes the responsibility she has in front of her very seriously and can't wait to get to work. It's nice to know that we're welcoming back a familiar face that wants to give back to her community. Welcome back, Mrs. Chase!