

Jersey School District welcoming new school year with new superintendent

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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JERSEYVILLE - The Jersey Community Unit School District starts the 2017-18 school year Wednesday with a brand new superintendent - well, at least new to the district.

Brad Tuttle has been working in the field of education for more than two decades, most recently serving as superintendent of the Sullivan, Illinois Community Unit School District, which serves just under 1,500 students outside Champaign, Illinois. Previously, Tuttle was the superintendent of the Centralia, Illinois, High School District, which

served just under 1,000 students. When classes begin Wednesday in Jersey County, Tuttle will be overseeing as many as 2,700 students as well as staff and other administrators.

"I am analyzing everything," Tuttle said. "We have kids coming tomorrow for their first day, so all the staff was here yesterday. We're excited about Springfield figuring out funding as well."

While the State of Illinois neglected to pay \$1.16 million in mandated categorical payments, which reimburse school districts for such necessities as transportation and special education costs, in the 2016-17 school year, and has already missed the first two general state aid payment dates (Aug. 10 and Aug. 20), Tuttle is still optimistic about the future of school funding.

"We figured once they figure out how they'll distribute the money, they'll get it to us," he said. "I have high hopes the tougher part of this was done when they decided what the money was going to be. Now, they're just fighting for distribution of it."

Tuttle also said, if Senate Bill 1 (SB1) - a bill allowing for evidence-based school funding throughout the State of Illinois - does not pass, he is confident other bills will until the problem is finally resolved.

While working in both Sullivan and Centralia, Tuttle said he dealt with funding issues from the state. He said that every school district in the state has been struggling with funding worries and woes.

As far as Jersey is concerned, however, Tuttle said students and staff should expect a continuation of last year's goals for now, and more as he analyzes everything. He said he has a lot of experience in the field and is looking forward to improving upon an already working district.