

Dickinson retires after four decades



Becky Dickinson works with students in her Favorite Hill School classroom last week.

MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO



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PIQUA — After more than 40 years in education, Becky Dickinson, third-grade teacher at Favorite Hill Primary School, will be retiring at the end of the school year.

She started teaching in the early 1970s and has seen many significant changes in teaching and schools.

Dickinson grew up in Dayton and graduated from Fairview High School in 1967. She was a member of the drill team,

the Scotchettes, and she was in the Future Teachers of America club. "Teaching was a natural path for me," she said. "My brother, sister-in-law, mother, an aunt, and a cousin all landed in education."

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She enrolled in Kent State University and earned a bachelor's degree in education in 1971. "I chose KSU because it was close, but not too close," she said. Later in 2005, she received a master's degree in education from Marygrove College. She is a certified gifted education teacher.

When Dickinson graduated from Kent, she was recruited to teach in Piqua and taught at South Street School for 21 years. A job transfer for her husband moved the family to Texas where Becky taught a 3rd grade gifted class which required her to take extra coursework. "After seven years, my husband was transferred back to Ohio, and I was hired again by Piqua City Schools to teach at Favorite Hill," she said. Dickinson has

been in third grade at Favorite Hill the last 14 years. "I like the third-graders because they are developing a blossoming independence," she said. "But, they still have an innocence about them."

She credits Betty Straker, her mentoring teacher at South Street, with helping her in the early years. "Betty took me under her wing," Dickinson said. "She showed me how to be a successful teacher." Dickinson said she has been lucky to have always worked with dedicated teachers. "The third grade team at Favorite Hill is great," she said. "We collaborate closely for the benefit of the students."

Dickinson has seen many changes, both positive and negative, in education. "New technology is creating a whole new approach to teaching," she

said. "No more chalkboards or overhead projectors. SmartBoards, Elmos, laptops, and iPads have advanced learning to a new level."

While technology is a positive, the current theme of doing more with less can be a negative. "There are more demands on teachers today," she said. "More testing, more paperwork, and more meetings have made the profession more stressful and less fun." Less funding has led to fewer resources being available to enrich or intervene with all levels of students. "We have to meet more and more state and national standards, but we have less money for resources to do so."

In her classroom, a project that really grabs the attention of Dickinson's third-graders is a wax museum. Students re-

search a famous person, write a report, dress like that person, and present themselves and a short biography to other students and staff at Favorite Hill.

At home, Dickinson enjoys reading, walking, working jigsaw puzzles, and traveling anywhere. She and her husband Scott have been married 33 years. They have two sons. Ryan is married and is a software engineer in Washington, D.C. Alan is married and a senior interaction designer in New York City.

Dickinson said she is looking forward to retirement, but she will miss the students and seeing her colleagues on a daily basis. "Teaching has been a big part of my life. I have made many valued friendships over the years," she said.