

Northville Central School District Falcon Podcast: Jamie Dickinson

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[00:00] Host: Welcome to Northville Central School District's Falcon Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Chauncey, Superintendent. My guest today is Ms. Jamie Dickinson, Northville's new middle school/high school principal. After serving as our pre-K-12 assistant principal last year, Ms. Dickinson is stepping into a new role in our school community. Listen in to get to know her better and help us welcome her to this next chapter at Northville.

Ms. Dickinson, what drew you to education, and what excites you most about becoming Northville's middle school/high school principal?

[00:44] Dickinson: So if you were to ask me 30 years ago, when I was sitting here as an 18-year-old student (which tells my age), that I was going to be a teacher, and a science teacher on top of that, I probably would have told you, "There's no way." And that's why I tell students all the time, you never know where your life is going to lead. But I was involved here in the Future Teachers Program. I went on to get my science degree, and at 25, I really found a love for teaching. I got my master's degree, and being in the classroom and sharing the curiosity of science really made me want to help students understand what science is about and enjoy the curiosity and the excitement that I get from science.

[01:24] Host: I've been in your classroom, so I've seen that. We're so glad that you're joining us in this capacity, because I think you'll bring that same excitement. So tell us about your teaching background. What subjects and grade levels have you taught, and how have those experiences shaped your approach to leadership?

[01:42] Dickinson: So I actually started my teaching career at Gloversville teaching seventh grade science, and then I moved to California and I taught sixth through eighth grade math and science. It was there that I really got involved in underwater robotics, and working right by the ocean really helped us do a lot more hands-on. And when I moved back to New York, I actually was no longer certified, so I had to go back and take extra certification classes. Mr. DiMezza and Ms. Hohenforst at BOCES really helped me get certified, helped me work through the process, allowed me to work at summer school, and then eventually in the P-TECH program. The process of building a new school with P-TECH, with the teachers and the counselor and the principal, really helped me see the value of student empowerment and having students help build what that school looked like. And I really want to bring that type of element to Northville.

[02:34] Host: So you really see this from both sides: the challenge of becoming the teacher you wanted to be, and then how to make sure that students had those experiences.

[02:42] Dickinson: Yes. And I've worked as an aide, I've worked as a teacher's assistant, I've worked as a teacher, and now as an assistant principal and a principal.

[02:50] Host: Now, looking back on your years as our pre-K-12 assistant principal, what moment best captures what this school community means to you?

[02:58] Dickinson: So I think developing the Soaring Together Award and recognizing all the different things that our community gives us, whether it was Ms. Ostrander as a Falcon Force recipient in the

cafeteria, or my dad as a community member, or different parents that came in, as well as other community members. What they bring to this school and how the old adage that it takes a village to raise a child is really true. We need everyone, and we need everyone to work together to develop what we want to see in our graduates.

[03:30] Host: I know the people who received those accolades this year were very happy about it, and they did feel recognized. So thank you for bringing that into our school. What do you hope students feel and experience when they walk into our middle and high school classrooms each day?

[03:47] Dickinson: So what I really want them to do is feel a part of something. I don't want them to feel like school is just done to them. I want them to feel that they have a say in what they're doing, they have a voice in what the school looks like and what they're learning, and that they feel a part of something bigger than themselves.

[04:02] Host: We try to give them that through our student council. I know you meet with students individually and in small groups, and you've helped make leadership experiences available to our students. I'm really excited about that.

[04:13] Dickinson: I'm really excited to see what NHS and student council specifically are going to do this year. I know they have a lot of big plans.

[04:22] Host: So how would you describe your leadership style, and how do you hope to work alongside staff and families?

[04:28] Dickinson: So I believe I have a very collaborative style. I like to work with people and as a team, and I think the team approach is what's really important. I think everyone has to realize we all have the same goal. We're all working for the best interest of the student. Even though those things might seem different, at the end of the day we're all working for the best interest of that child. As long as we all have that baseline understanding, we can move in the right direction. And for me, I think that's what makes Northville so special, because you can feel that collaboration among everyone to support our students.

[05:00] Host: Absolutely. What would you enjoy sharing about yourself outside of school? An interest, hobby, or experience that helps people get to know you?

[05:11] Dickinson: So I think I'm a very family-oriented person. I have two children of my own, and we do a lot of things together. I like to travel and I like to hike. Having the experience of teaching outside of Northville and living outside of Northville for about 15 years of my life really gives me a bigger perspective on things I can bring to Northville that I think are important. I'd like to bring those experiences to our students so that they have a broader perspective.

[05:34] Host: Thank you for that. As you begin this role, what strengths do you want to build on, and what new possibilities are you most eager to explore?

[05:42] Dickinson: So I think my strengths are [as a] systems-building-oriented person. I believe that if you have the proper systems in place, a lot of the things that maybe wouldn't work very well will start to work well. So I think by building some systems, we'll have a better place and foundation to start. And I'm excited to explore some of the new ways and new clubs that students are interested in.

I think student council is going to have a great start this year as well, with some of the things they have planned. But I'm interested to see what students really want to see here and how they feel about things. That's an avenue I'm really excited to explore.

[06:21] Host: Well, I know I'm excited to have you here to bring those systems into our school and to work with our staff, students, and families. Thank you for being with me today, and we look forward to an amazing 2026-27 school year.