By Carolyn Lee
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New elementary vocal teacher Jodie Liess comes to Chase County Schools with 27 years of teaching experience, 20 plus of those in the area.

The Sidney native taught instrumental and vocal music at Cambridge Public Schools from 1991 through the end of the last school year.

She was involved in pep band, high school, junior high and elementary band, high school and junior high choir, and the one-act play.

After obtaining a Bachelor of Fine Arts in music education from Hastings College in 1984, Liess first taught K-12 music at St. Edward Public Schools. At that time, she also established a swing choir.

She then taught K-12 vocal music at David City Aquinas from 1986-91, at which time she moved to Cambridge.

Liess said she decided to make the move to Imperial because it was a larger school system, and she wanted to focus on elementary music, which she had missed in Cambridge.

She has known secondary vocal teacher Randy Hayes for a long time, and after attending the district music contest at CCS last year, was very impressed with “how well everyone treated you.”

Liess plans to focus more on singing in her classroom, but will still use the ORFF school of thought with instrumentation that former teacher Amy Walworth taught.

She also plans to introduce “small musical plays, operettas” to her students, with the goal of presenting them to the public.

Liess performed on the flute in college, and also plays saxophone and piano. She wanted to become a teacher, she said, “Because I love music and I knew performing wasn’t what I wanted to do.”

She enjoys “vocal music a lot” and increased that pleasure through high school swing choir and musicals at Cambridge.

The teacher is happy about focusing on vocal music because teaching both instrumental and vocal music in her previous job was stressful.

“We’re working on note names and rhythm now,” with her elementary students, and “It’s so much fun when they finally get it.” It’s the light bulb turning on effect, she laughed.

A graduate of Sidney High School in 1980, Liess and her family moved there from Millard when she was in the fifth grade.

Liess, whose parents still reside in Sidney, has other family in the area to whom she will now be closer. She enjoys cross stitching and old movies, and owns two cats and a dog.