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TRUMBULL — As the bus turned off Monroe Turnpike, Kristen O'Connell-Rubin gazed in amazement at the massive office buildings before her.

"I've never seen this before," the 1999 Trumbull High School graduate said.

It was not just newcomers who had something to learn as most of the district's new teachers boarded a bus Thursday for a quick tour of their new professional home.

During the hour-long ride, Economic Development Director Deborah Cox showcased the town in what was partly a pop quiz, partly a nostalgic journey, partly a teacher's suggestion box, and always an opportunity to cheerlead for the community.

"Trumbull's pride and joy is its quaintness, its New England character," said Cox, pointing out the architecture of the houses near the Board of Education's offices on Main Street.

"Our commercial zones are located on the outskirts of town. Why is that good?" Cox inquired. She supplied the answer: It keeps the center of town more residential and allows workers easy access to the highways.

This year, Trumbull has 41 new teachers, plus one new school administrator. Many come from neighboring communities, such as Stratford and Bridgeport, and appeared eager to be working here.

The Trumbull they saw showcased corporate parks, open space, commercial areas such as Trumbull Center and the Westfield mall, and grand houses that have sprouted on land now too valuable for farms.

David Deangelo, who grew up in Stratford and taught there nine years, considers joining the staff at Madison Middle School a terrific opportunity.

"Trumbull just has a great reputation — great town, great school system," he said. Paul Gabriel, another special education teacher who most recently taught in Bridgeport, said he appreciated the town's New England feel. "It's still like that," the new THS teacher said.

Cox showed off some of the town's prized parks, including Indian Ledge and Old Mine, where the Rails to Trails path parallels the Pequonnock River.

"Science teachers: great place to go," she suggested. "English teachers: great place to write about."

"My son and I used to climb the rocks in here," she said as the bus entered Indian Ledge Park.

"Trumbull is a very safe town," she said, encouraging recreational pursuits, such as outdoor running. "One of the safest in the state."

She even touted the adopt-a-spot signs saluting local companies for landscaping areas such as traffic islands. "It's Trumbull's version of billboards," she said.

For kindergarten teacher Joanna Caiola, walking into Jane Ryan School is bound to bring back memories — it's where she went to school.

"It's just a great place to be," she said of Trumbull, extolling its parks and sense of community. And she just paid her hometown the ultimate compliment — not just by taking the job, but by buying a house.