



Parents = Partners

Education Notes from Dr. Laurie Heinz

December 2015

Curl up with a good book during Winter Break

As exciting and magical as the holidays can be, the hectic pace can be a bit overwhelming. It is my hope that our students will use time over their Winter Break to unwind with a good book. Remember, a book is a gift you can open again and again! I hope you will find a moment to stop by the library or pull out a treasured favorite from your books at home and enjoy some pleasant time reading. Perhaps you will gather as a family to read aloud passages from a favorite holiday book together, or have each family member share why they are enjoying a book they are reading on their own. Whatever the opportunity, I hope you will carve out time for your child to enjoy reading over break. Our online resources for learning activities also are available on our website: [elementary students](#) or [middle schoolers](#).

► 2015 PARCC: our students surpass state averages at all grade levels

As we conclude 2015, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) released the scores on the PARCC assessments taken by students in grades 3-8 last spring. You should have received a mailing from your school with your student's individual results in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. PARCC is significantly more rigorous than the ISAT, Illinois' former state assessment, and has a different scale to report student performance. The test is aligned with the updated Illinois Learning Standards and measures students' problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and writing skills, which are all essential for success in higher education and the workplace. Additionally, the assessments ask students to demonstrate and apply their knowledge and skills. In ELA, 57% of our students met or exceeded (levels 4 and 5) grade-level expectations, while 50% met or exceeded grade-level expectations in Math. District 64 continues to outperform Illinois state averages at each grade level as well as the average of other states participating in the PARCC test. A good resource to understand more about PARCC scores is the [Understand the Score website](#). PARCC scores reflect a new baseline for our District, and over time should become a more reliable instrument for assessing student learning. In the meantime, we will continue to use classroom assessment data, our Educational Ends, and student performance on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) to help us understand the impact of our instructional program.



Students spread holiday cheer

Whether performing at City Hall (above/ Lincoln's Jazz Band), out in the community or at school concerts (below/Field School), District 64 students spread holiday cheer to enthusiastic audiences through their voices and instruments this month. Thank you students and teachers for the gift of music!



For Your Children,

Dr. Laurie Heinz, Superintendent lheinz@d64.org 847-318-4300 [@DrLaurieHeinz](https://www.facebook.com/DrLaurieHeinz)



Parent University: Expand your learning

We believe that when parents and schools learn together -- everyone learns more! Back by popular demand, [District 64 Parent University](#) returns for a second year offering a series of free evening events tailor-made for parents and adult community members to extend their own learning. Bookmark this page and find out more! Come and bring a friend or neighbor!

Mark your calendars: Tuesday, March 8 Raising Kids in a Digital Age with Guest Speaker Dr. Devorah Heitner

District 64 is pleased to bring Dr. Devorah Heitner to Park Ridge-Niles for this [special Parent University event](#) on March 8 from 6:30-8:00 p.m., Emerson Middle School (Multipurpose Room), 8101 N. Cumberland, Niles. Our children are growing up in a different world. How do we help them be mindful and responsible citizens in the 21st century? Dr. Heitner will offer a refreshing perspective on kids and media that goes beyond the typical admonishment to limit "screen time." She offers parents and educators concrete criteria to evaluate the quality of our children's media experiences and is a resource for anyone seeking advice on how to help children thrive in a world of digital connectedness. The evening will also include a panel discussion prompted by audience questions and is expected to be an enriching dialogue. Instructional Technology Coach Linda Diekmann (Roosevelt) and Director of Innovation & Instructional Technology Mary Jane Warden will facilitate the program, which is free and open to all adult community members.

Download these (in case you missed them earlier) . . .

► **Coding & Computational Thinking** - Understand the importance of coding for students of all ages and dive into the resources available for students to practice coding at home. [Listen to a narrated presentation.](#) ► **The Climb to Mastery** - Teachers and students use assessments and technology tools in real-time to guide their learning. Learn more about *formative assessment*, one of the "high impact" strategies that have a significant impact on student learning. [Download the presentation.](#) ► **Raising Safe & Smart Digital Citizens** - Learn about District 64's Internet Safety curriculum and gain helpful tips on how to monitor your child's personal media activities and set up guidelines on Web presence. [Download the presentation.](#) ► **Google Apps for Education** - Learn about Google Drive, how it works and the suite of apps students can use to promote creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills. [Download the presentation.](#)



Dr. Heitner is the founder and director of the online resource, [Raising Digital Natives](#). An experienced speaker, workshop leader, and consultant. Dr. Heitner appears in a **TEDx-Naperville presentation: [The Challenges of Raising a Digital Native \(Empathy is the App\)](#)** and has been interviewed by CBS and NBC News in Chicago, as well as the NBC Today Show/Parent, among other outlets. She received her doctoral degree in Media/Technology & Society from Northwestern University, and has taught at Northwestern, DePaul University, and Street Level Youth Media. She is currently writing a handbook for parents, "Raising Your Digital

"Like" our District and school fan pages:



► District 64 Park Ridge-Niles ► Carpenter Elementary School, Park Ridge-Niles
► Field Elementary School, Park Ridge-Niles ► Franklin Elementary School, Park Ridge-Niles
► Roosevelt Elementary School, Park Ridge-Niles ► Washington Elementary School, Park Ridge-Niles
► Emerson Middle School, Park Ridge-Niles
► Lincoln Middle School, Park Ridge-Niles ► Jefferson School, Park Ridge-Niles

District Happenings

New Annual Report for 2015 mailed to all homes

District 64 has published a new Annual Report to the Community for 2015, which has been mailed to almost 18,000

households. The report is one way we are illustrating our commitment to sharing with all Park Ridge-Niles District 64 residents the many education programs and services our District provides students. The 12-page report invites the community into our classrooms with photos and short reports from all schools to see learning in action. It also provides highlights about our educational programs, Board of Education activities, our new 2020 Vision Strategic Plan, facilities and finances. We hope this new report leaves you confident that we are doing our very best as prudent stewards of your tax dollars as well as proud of the work District 64 does every day to fulfill our mission: *To inspire every child to discover, learn, achieve, and care.* [The report may be viewed on our website, too.](#)



2016-17 school year will begin on August 17 for students

The upcoming 2016-17 school year calendar has been approved by the Board of Education. The calendar reflects a few notable changes, such as two Institute Days for staff at the start of the school year in August, eliminating one typically scheduled in February. I believe that having two Institute Days as the school year begins will give our teachers and administrators important added time together to reconnect, celebrate accomplishments, focus on goals for the new year as a District and for each school, and to participate in professional development to support our shared focus. It is my hope that this new calendar will create positive momentum and get the new school year off to a seamless and exciting start. The first day of student attendance will be moved to Wednesday, instead of Tuesday. [Read more](#) about the calendar or [download the full 2016-17 calendar](#).

FINANCIAL NEWS:

2015 levy, 2014-15 audit adopted

The Board of Education at the December 14 meeting conducted a public hearing and approved the 2015 tax levy. The levy is 4.53% greater than the 2014 tax extension, although the impact on existing property taxpayers will be far less. The levy is designed to leave enough room to capture all new property Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) coming onto the tax rolls for the first time. [Read more about the tax levy here.](#) The Board also reviewed and accepted the 2014-15 fiscal year audit, which included a "clean" letter from the auditors for the fourth consecutive year. Management letters and the full audit are available on the [Financial Data - Prior Years page](#) of the District 64 website.



Thanking our "Everyday Heroes"

District 64 joined other Illinois districts to thank the seven dedicated members of our Board for their tireless volunteerism to District 64 staff, students and the larger Park Ridge-Niles community. Franklin School scouts presented certificates of appreciation to Board President Anthony Borrelli (right) and other members.

Another step forward on facility projects for summer 2016

Projects for summer 2016 took another step forward as the Board of Education authorized preparing construction documents to obtain bids for critical work focused on keeping schools "safe, warm and

dry.” At a series of meetings this fall, the Board thoroughly analyzed suggested designs, budgets and financing options for projects identified through the District’s new 10-year Health Life Safety (HLS) survey and [Master Facilities Plan](#) (MFP) prepared with FGM Architects. The recommended summer work estimated at \$13.2 million includes: adding secured entries and renovating adjacent offices at all schools to add layers of security while enhancing school operations; and roof replacements, windows, brick repair and other urgent infrastructure work. The Board will receive the construction bids at the February 22 meeting, and will decide at that time whether to take the final step of authorizing the work.

► In addition to the funding options already under consideration, ISBE at year-end announced an opportunity for school districts to compete for an opportunity to issue Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB). These low- to no-interest bonds for construction and building needs could potentially save local taxpayers significant interest costs; the Board will make a final decision on whether to submit an application for the competitive program at the January 11 meeting.

Out & About in Our Schools

TECH TALK: Hour of Code ignites students’ interest in programming

The Hour of Code is a global movement promoting computer science instruction in all schools, spreading an awareness that anybody can learn to code, and giving our students the opportunity to explore possible careers in computer programming fields. Whether using iPads, laptops, Chromebooks or in the computer lab, students across the grades enjoyed fun and engaging learning experiences focused on coding and programming. Students utilized tools developed around popular resources, like Minecraft, Star Wars, and other familiar themes. There were options for every age and experience level to explore!



(Above) Franklin students explore coding resources. [View more Hour of Code images from across District 64 in our online PHOTO GALLERY.](#)

“Walk & Talk” visits find students thriving

My visits in November/December found students thriving with many new challenges! Here are my notes from happenings across District 64:



► **Carpenter** - (left) Kindergarten students decorated gingerbread houses with a variety of goodies!

► **Field** - (right) 5th graders were writing claim and evidence papers regarding whether they felt stores should be open on Thanksgiving and Black Friday. They needed to provide their reason/rationale, source, evidence and interpretation.

► **Franklin** - (right) 4th graders became junior geologists as they examined rocks and their characteristics.

► **Roosevelt** - Student Council collected Travel Treats for the Troops. Grade 2 students in Ms. Stonelake’s class were hard at work creating





reindeer stories. 4th graders were studying for their upcoming Government test (left).

► **Washington** - (right) Students in Channels of Challenge wore their imagination hats while discussing a novel they had read: "The Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles." In another room, a psychologist was helping develop students' social skills using the Second

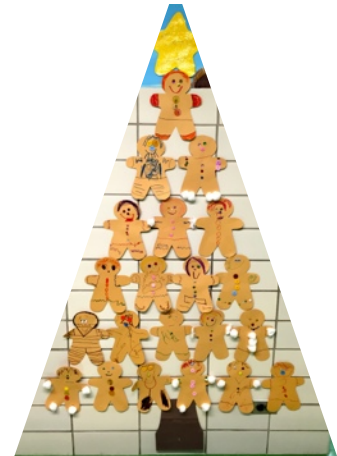


Step program. Also this month, Mrs. Daly in collaboration with the Washington PTO hosted a parent/teacher book club to meet and discuss "The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go so Their Children Can Succeed" by Jessica Lahey. Parents reviewed the book's advice for handling homework, report cards, social dynamics, and sports, and for understanding why stepping back and embracing their children's setbacks along with their successes can help children thrive and grow into independent, confident adults.

► **Emerson** - Being a "Santa" and buying gifts for children within the Department of Children and Family Services (DFCS) program began as a passion project for teacher Julie Flyke. Her efforts quickly snowballed to involve Emerson staff and students. This year alone, 100 wards of the state will have their wishes granted based on this project! To date, approximately 1,600 wish lists have been fulfilled. Gifts include not only toys, but clothes and necessities such as socks, hats, winter coats, boots, bedding and school supplies. Although these acts of kindness are done anonymously, students and teachers enjoy knowing they've made a difference in someone's life!

► **Lincoln** - A Sharing Basket has been placed in the lunchroom to collect non-perishable items that students do not want, so that food that could potentially help others is not wasted and thrown away. The items will be donated to local agencies serving those in need in this new campaign supported by Green Team members and the Student Government.

► **Jefferson** - Students created gingerbread boys in the spirit of the season (right)!



CURRICULUM NOTES:

► **Returning to a 7-year curriculum review cycle** - Now that the transition to Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Math is complete, District 64 will be returning to a traditional seven-year curriculum review cycle in addition to ongoing support provided by our curriculum specialists. The cycle includes four stages to research, develop, implement and monitor; the work is carried out by a committee over several years. ► **Gifted program review underway**

- The Gifted Program Review Committee met for the first time at the end of November. Several parent representatives are serving on the committee, which will help to clarify the vision and eligibility requirements of our Primary Challenge/Channels of Challenge Program, and determine our service delivery model. Laura Beltchenko, a specialist in gifted education and program consultant, is working with the committee, which will continue its work in 2016. ► **Music teachers present at midwest teacher clinic** - District 64 music teachers Mary Ciccotelli, Jamie Hestad, Natalie Jacobsen-Prim, Max Hellermann, and Erica Charous performed as members of the Chicagoland Educators Orchestra at a presentation at the Midwest International Band & Orchestra Clinic in December. We are proud of our teachers for their commitment and dedication to music education excellence and dedication! ► **District 64 and Kalo Foundation collaborate on bringing**

Park Ridge history to students - Thanks to a collaboration grant awarded by the Park Ridge Cultural Arts Council, District 64 teachers are being offered the opportunity to participate in workshops to learn about Park Ridge's history and culture, focusing on City founders and leaders, artists and musicians to help make connections to local history for their students. The grant also is funding Art Department resource materials for all schools on famous local artists to inspire student projects.

On the Horizon. . .



Summer program will move to Field and Emerson in 2016

District 64 has announced that summer school for 2016 will be conducted at Field School for grades K-3 and Emerson Middle School for grades 4-7. The program will include two, 14-day sessions: Tuesday, June 7 - Friday, June 24 and Monday, June 27 - Friday, July 15 (no school July 4). Tuition has been set at \$125 per class per session; tuition will increase after April 15. Online registration will begin on March 2. A printed Worlds of Wonder course catalog will be distributed to students in February.

Don't miss a great "deal" on Casino Night early bird tickets

Tickets are now on sale for the Saturday, January 30 Elementary Learning Foundation (ELF) annual fundraiser at Cafe Le Cave at a discounted price through January 16. ELF awards grants to improve education right here in District 64. The "ELFs" have stacked the deck to ensure a great evening's food, beverages and casino games of chance for you to enjoy among new and old friends in support of our schools. [Deal yourself in now at this bargain price!](#)



Best wishes for a
happy and healthy holiday season.
See you in 2016!

*For Your Children,
Dr. Laurie Heinz, Superintendent*