

Parents = Partners

Education notes from Dr. Laurie Heinz

Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 • May-June 2015

An extraordinary year comes to a close

As I reflect back on my first year as District 64 Superintendent, I find myself feeling a sense of pride at what has been accomplished through hard work and a collaborative effort on the part of so many.

I smile when I think of my “Walk & Talk” classroom visits and the time they afforded me to interact with staff and students, and of the many events I attended that showcase the incredible talents of our students and their teachers.

I am amazed at the fast pace we set during a busy and productive year, which included a District-wide systems audit, creating a new 2020 Vision Strategic Plan, conducting a Master Facilities Study, seating new Board of Education members, re-verifying residency for over 3,000 District 64 families, implementing our new PARCC testing, and the list goes on and on!

And, I am grateful for the partnerships with parents I’ve had the pleasure of experiencing during this incredible year -- they truly set this District apart from many others. Special thanks to my PTO/A Presidents and the many building-based volunteers for the truly wonderful things you do for staff and for students, especially the rich and varied enrichment opportunities you bring to our schools. We are thankful for your dedication and child-centeredness. Thanks also to our amazing Educational Learning Foundation (ELF) for their tireless efforts to raise money and provide grants for innovative ideas to be used with students. Your caring, commitment, and countless hours spent on making District 64 a better place to teach and learn is second-to-none.

Finally, I extend my very best wishes to our 8th graders promoted on June 9 -- 278 from Emerson and 245 from Lincoln! Dr. Seuss said it best in his book, “Oh, the Places You’ll Go!” -- “You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the one who’ll decide where to go...” Good luck as you head off to high school. I hope you work hard, get involved and enjoy the four years that lie ahead! They will be some of the best memories you will make. Make your teachers and administrators in District 64 proud!

To our returning families -- have a wonderful summer break and I look forward to your return on August 18!

For Your Children,

Dr. Laurie Heinz, Superintendent lheinz@d64.org 847-318-4300



Emerson's History/Culture Museum

8th graders proudly transformed their wing into a “museum” on June 5 as they shared their research on a topic of American history or culture with classmates and visitors.

Summer Notes

Preventing the “Summer Slide”

► *Narrated 6-minute slideshow available to view at your convenience!*



If you missed the recent Parent University session, now you can get the benefit of all the great summer-friendly suggestions whenever it's convenient. After all of their hard work all year long, students regress over the summer if they don't practice their reading and math skills. The good news is that there are many exciting and challenging activities to combat summer slide. The slideshow is chock-full of links and suggestions to District 64 and outside resources gathered by Roosevelt School's Linda Diekman, Library Information Specialist, and Caroline Schaab, Instructional Technology Coach. [Watch the 6-minute narrated slideshow here!](#) And, [view the printable guide filled with links to suggested resources.](#)

CURRICULUM: Summer is busy for our educators

The summer months are a busy time for educators! Throughout June, July and August, District 64 will host 15 professional development classes for teachers. Topics address technology integration and strategies for differentiating instruction. In addition to workshops, our teachers will work on several curriculum projects. We are finalizing curriculum maps in both math and reading. Curriculum maps support teachers with knowing what to teach and when to teach it. They also include resources for struggling learners and learners seeking a greater challenge. In addition to this work, middle school science teachers are creating inquiry-based units that reflect Illinois' new Science Standards and we are also exploring new science materials K-5.



Lincoln seed library is at the Farmer's Market this summer

Looking for something healthy to grow? Interested in sharing seeds? [Check out this season's heirloom seed offerings](#) and visit us at the market. This unusual library was established by an ELF grant.

TECH: Chromebooks collected for summer upkeep

► District 64 hopes that you and your student have found the Chromebook to be a productive learning tool for their education. Hopefully your child has returned his/her Chromebook, along with the power charger and case in good condition. If items are found to be missing or damaged, you will receive a letter indicating the cost of the equipment to be repaired or replaced. Letters regarding charges are expected to be sent home by Friday, June 12 or shortly thereafter. Please pay the incident fee or replacement cost as promptly as possible, so the District can facilitate the repair or replacement of your student's device over the summer in order for it to be ready for the new school year. In August, the assigned Chromebook will be returned to them by their homeroom/classroom teacher. To ensure that all students have the tools for their learning at their disposal and to better support 21st century classrooms, all students in grades 3-8 will be bringing their Chromebooks to and from schools beginning in 2015-16. A required \$30 Chromebook Maintenance Fee is being assessed as part of your Infosnap registration for 2015-16.



SUMMER SCHOOL: Session 1 begins June 16

District 64's morning "Worlds of Wonder" summer enrichment program offers two sessions this year: June 16-July 2 and July 6-22. Franklin School will be the home for students completing grades K-3, while students completing grades 4-7 will attend classes at Emerson Middle School. Registration links and course brochures can be found on the ["Worlds of Wonder" Webpage](#). New this year, registration is being conducted conveniently online; registration is based on the availability of classes. Student ID# is required to register (the ID# is found on your child's report card). Session 1 registration will end on June 18; Session 2 registration will end on July 8.

Out & About in Our Schools



ELF awards \$25,000 in innovation grants for 2015-16

The District 64 Elementary Learning Foundation (ELF) has selected six projects to share \$25,000 in grants to establish and support innovative educational programs.

This year's grants advance ELF's total direct funding to nearly \$700,000 since its inception in 1994! ELF grants let our teachers and schools try new approaches and really stretch our thinking and teaching practices, without diverting funding from our regular budgets. Knowing that ELF is there to invest resources, teachers and schools have the freedom to propose innovative and creative ideas that may go on to become models for the District to adopt for all students in the future. This year's grants were awarded to staff at Jefferson, Carpenter, Roosevelt and Washington schools and will benefit a wide range of ages, from District 64's preschoolers through the elementary grades. [Learn more about the grants.](#)

Emerson Middle School Earns "Horizon School to Watch" Award

Emerson Middle School has been re-designated as a "Horizon School to Watch" for a second time. We are proud to say that Emerson is one of six schools in Illinois honored and one of 350 schools across 18 states. In 2009, Emerson was first presented with the "Horizon School to Watch" award as a high-performing middle school that focused on academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structures and processes created to support students toward a path of excellence. Schools selected for this award must reapply every three years and demonstrate a constant growth towards the award's goals. The Emerson staff went through a rigorous process to reapply, which included a site visit by six educators who visited classrooms and team meetings to identify Emerson's strengths in the four areas and also met with parents, students, teachers, and administrators. The visitors were extremely impressed with Emerson's offerings for students!



May/June "Walk & Talks"- culminating activities abound!

My visits offered the opportunity to see students proudly showcasing their advanced work and to hear about the many special events that highlight the last weeks of the school year!



❖ **Jefferson** - Students and teachers lovingly created a colorful memory quilt honoring Principal Leslye Lapping as she heads to retirement on June 30.

❖ **Emerson** - The Symphonic Band traveled to Vernon Hills High School for the "Music in the Parks Festival." Competing against three other bands, they received a superior rating and won their division. What a "high note" to end on!

❖ **Lincoln** - Team 7-2 conducted a first-ever "Water Walk" off-campus field trip as a service learning activity culminating their studies about this scarce resource. The 85

students trekked together to Dam #4 Forest Preserve (across from Maine South High School) to fill water containers at the pump, and return to Lincoln. The trip not only focused student and community awareness about the global water crisis, it also raised \$2,365 for the Water.org project they had selected!



❖ **Carpenter** - Students enjoyed many varied learning activities as part of the "TOGETHER Memory Making Moments" during the final week of school. Classes selected 2-5 of the

special activities, supported by the PTO, parents and other community volunteers. I enjoyed reading one of my favorite books, “The Day the Crayons Quit” by Drew Daywalt, to the entire kindergarten!



❖ **Field** - Cereal and breakfast treats were enjoyed by 5th grade families and staff at the 3rd annual “Empty Bowls Breakfast” fundraiser in May sponsored by the Student Council. An ELF grant originally provided two pottery wheels that students use to make the bowls during their lunchtime. Thanks to a generous response, enough money was raised to buy clay for next year's 5th grade pottery wheel experience and donate more than \$400 to the Greater Chicago Food Depository.



❖ **Franklin** - Moms, caregivers, grandmoms, students, and faculty enjoyed “Muffins with Moms” sponsored by the Franklin PTA at a before school gathering in early May. I also enjoyed seeing the delight on 1st graders’ faces as they observed baby chicks.

❖ **Roosevelt** - Led by the Student Council, students collected just over 13,600 books for needy children and families in the Chicago area through a Bernie's Book Drive, breaking Roosevelt’s own record for donations by a single school to the organization! Although 5th graders are captivated by the University of Illinois' Bugscope program as an optional experience during their Microscope unit, recently kindergartners in Miss Arsenault's classes used it as a culminating activity for the first time during their insect studies. The U of I's Bugscope provides free interactive access to a scanning electron microscope so that students anywhere in the world can explore the microscopic world of insects.

❖ **Washington** - The PTO celebrated Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-8) with gusto through special daily treats and displays of students’ own “high 5’s” to thank their “All Star Teachers!”



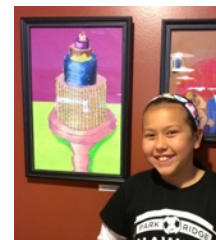
District Happenings

Student art partnership continues at LePeep

For the seventh year, Le Peep restaurant, our Art Department and Brickton Art Center have partnered to create an ongoing public exhibit of children’s artwork.

District 64 student art is displayed May thru October and Brickton exhibits from November thru April at LePeep, 100 Euclid Ave., Park Ridge. [Work by students from every District 64 school is on display -- 46 artists in all!](#)

Students received a certificate for their achievement at an opening reception for the artists, their parents and art teachers. We are very proud of the high caliber of artwork that students create in our program as they explore their creative strengths.



Two key studies will shape the future of District 64

► 2020 Vision Strategic Plan presented June 8

District 64's new 2020 Vision Strategic Plan was presented to the Board of Education at its Committee-of-the-Whole meeting on June 8. The plan identifies six key strategic objectives that we will focus on over the next five years. Following lengthy discussion, the plan is being developed in its final form and will be returned to the Board for final approval on June 22. [Visit our 2020 Vision Strategic Plan Webpage](#) to learn more. We will provide details about the plan in our upcoming Annual Report this summer, and will have extensive outreach with families and staff about the plan when the 2015-16 school year gets underway this August.



► Master Facilities Plan to be presented June 22

Another far-reaching report will be delivered to the Board on June 22. The new plan will outline the Health Life Safety requirements the District must address to keep our schools up to Illinois School Code requirements and will also present a comprehensive Master Facilities Study. FGM Architects have met with teachers, parents and students for informal conversations about our buildings. This data will help inform the report, along with the detailed work FGM has conducted since February scrutinizing our facilities. You'll be hearing more about this plan as we look ahead to our future needs.

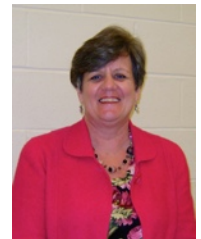
Congratulations to our staff reaching career milestones

As the 2014-15 school year draws to a close, we are [celebrating the career milestones of 48 teachers and staff members](#). This year, we have 18 staff members retiring. It is always bittersweet to see talented and dedicated members of our staff leaving to start a new chapter in their lives. But we sincerely thank them for their years of service to our students and schools, and wish them nothing but the best as they head off to retirement. We also are honoring 14 staff members who have attained 25 years of service, and congratulating 16 teachers who will achieve tenure. *Congratulations and best wishes to all!*

New administrators in place for 2015-16

I am so pleased to add these talented administrators to our team:

► District 64 has named [Lisa Halverson](#) as our new principal at **Jefferson School** to replace Leslye Lapping, who will be retiring effective June 30. Ms. Halverson comes to District 64 from Hinsdale School District 181, where she served for four years as pupil service administrator and also directed its early childhood program. She impressed us immediately by her collaborative leadership style and clear, child-centered focus.



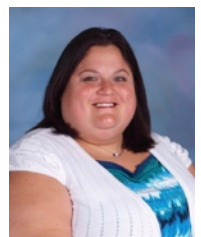
Lisa Halverson

► At the elementary schools, [Katie Kelly](#) has been promoted from Assistant Principal to Principal at **Field School**. Mrs. Kelly was a clear front-runner in the selection process, based on her outstanding leadership as assistant principal for the past six years. Her warmth and empathy coupled with her collaborative and inclusive leadership style have helped her forge strong bonds with staff, parents and students. I'm sure Mrs. Kelly and our Field School community will enjoy a seamless transition moving into the new school year.



Katie Kelly

► At **Washington School**, [Shari Lazor](#) has been named the new Assistant Principal. Ms. Lazor comes to District 64 from Martin Elementary School in Lake Villa, where she taught grade 4 for 13 years. She is an exceptional teacher who has worked far beyond the four walls of her classroom to improve student learning. We feel confident that Ms. Lazor's well-rounded experiences have prepared her to move into an administrative leadership role, and believe she will not only work well with Principal Stephanie Daly but also be a great addition to the Washington community and to District 64.



Shari Lazor

I wish Mrs. Lapping well in retirement, and would like to thank Susan Walsh and Andy Petrolina for their leadership at Field and Washington. Good luck with your new endeavors!

On the Horizon . . .

PARCC results will arrive in fall; exam will be shortened in 2015-16

► **2015 Results** - Results from the first Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exams will be available in late fall. The 2015 results will take additional time to produce because classroom teachers and higher education content experts from each state, including Illinois, must review the first year of student scores and determine performance levels based on appropriate score ranges.



► **2016 Exams** - PARCC will return next year with a shorter, simpler format. The exam was originally divided into two parts that measure different types of knowledge and skills. The

PARCC Governing Board voted to consolidate the two testing windows into one and reduce total test time for most students by 90 minutes beginning in the 2015-16 school year. The exam will continue to align to the new Illinois Learning Standards and maintain its focus on critical thinking, concept mastery, and writing skills. Although the assessment will be given in one testing window in future years, the test will still contain the same extended tasks and writing exercises that are important for measuring students' critical thinking and concept mastery. The single testing window will be later in the school year -- roughly between the 75-90 percent mark of the school year. Going forward, the PARCC exam will now consist of six or seven test units, depending on grade level, compared to the eight or nine sessions that students took this year.

Have you completed your Infosnap registration for 2015-16?

If you have not already done so, please be sure to complete your [Infosnap registration](#) for each child registered in District 64. You will be able to update additional student information and pay student fees for 2015-16. If you have not received a Snapcode via email, please contact your school office through Friday, June 19 or thereafter the District 64 Educational Service Center, 164 S. Prospect, Park Ridge, 847-318-4300. To receive a Snapcode you must have re-verified that you physically reside at the residence listed for your child by [providing acceptable documentation](#) as evidence. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

2015-16: schools reopen a week earlier on Tuesday, August 18

District 64 schools will open approximately one week earlier than in past years, as students will return to school on Tuesday, August 18, which will be a full day of attendance. See this [handy, one-page list](#) for other key dates:

- ◆ Thanksgiving Recess - Begin Monday, November 23, 2015 - Return Monday, November 30, 2015
- ◆ Winter Recess - Begin Monday, December 21, 2015 - Return Monday, January 4, 2016
- ◆ Spring Recess - Begin Friday, March 25, 2016 - Return Monday, April 4, 2016
- ◆ Last Day of School - Thursday, June 2, 2016* (*subject to change in the event that more than 4 emergency days are used during the regular school year)

Fill your summer with opportunities
for your family to read and learn together!
Our schools and teachers will be waiting to welcome you on
Tuesday, August 18 for the start of the 2015-16 school year!

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

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