



Parents = Partners

Education Notes from Dr. Laurie Heinz

November 2015

Let's continue building home-school partnerships

Parent-teacher conference season and the end of the first trimester typically spark many fruitful conversations between parents and teachers, and in turn, between parents and students. I hope the information you recently received about your child's academic, social and behavioral progress was helpful in understanding your child's areas of strength and areas for growth. Good home-school communication is the bedrock for building strong student performance in the classroom. Our teachers offer many avenues to keep the lines of communication open through progress reports, the Parent Portal (middle school), emails /websites, and other means. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher by phone or email or your Principal/Assistant Principal if you have unanswered questions about your child's progress as the second trimester begins. Keep the conversations going!



Mr. Rubenstein leads his Franklin 1st graders in an early literacy lesson focused on word sounds. See more of my "Walk & Talk" notes inside.

► **Adopting a "growth" mindset** Our new [2020 Vision Strategic Plan](#) is focused around continuous improvement and a growth mindset. Our teachers had the opportunity at our August Institute Day to hear from a protege of Dr. Carol Dweck, a leading researcher in this field, on how to incorporate this growth mindset in their classrooms. Her work explores the impact that *focusing on a child's effort* in solving difficult challenges yields a far more positive response than praising them on how smart they are for having solved a difficult challenge. [New parent resources from Stanford University](#) offer a series of mini-lessons and activities for you to explore what a growth mindset is, why it's important, and how you can support your child at home in developing this mindset, too. I think you'll be intrigued!



► **Saluting Board service** District 64 is joining with other Illinois districts to thank board members for championing quality education as our Everyday Heroes on School Board Members Day. Franklin School students will be presenting certificates of appreciation to the Board at the Monday, November 16 meeting. We also are introducing a new [Past Board Members website page](#) to salute community members who have previously served on our Board. The visionary goals and policies they established made it possible for generations of Park Ridge-Niles students to thrive and succeed, thanks to their outstanding District 64 education. Thank you to our current Board members – and to all who came before – for your leadership and the sacrifices you have made in service to our schools and the community. [Email your appreciation to our current Board members here.](#)

For Your Children,

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



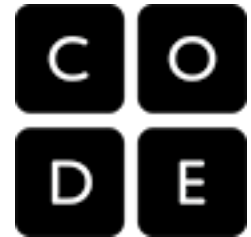
Parent University: Expand your learning

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!

Thursday, December 3

Coding & Computational Thinking

Join us to explore this of-the-moment topic at a Parent University on Thursday, December 3 from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. at Lincoln Middle School (Learning Resource Center), 200 S. Lincoln, Park Ridge. This program will feature information and hands-on exploration of the international *Hour of Code* event coming soon. We'll delve into the importance of coding for students of all ages, dive into the resources available to practice coding at home, and discuss plans for students to spend an hour in December at each of our buildings to experience different forms of coding. District 64 Instructional Technology Coach Megan Preis (Lincoln) and District 64 Director of Innovation & Instructional Technology Mary Jane Warden will lead the program, which is free and open to all adult community members.

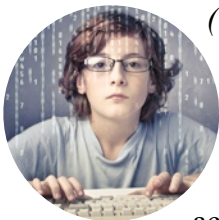


Download these (in case you missed them earlier) . . .

The Climb to Mastery

Teachers and students use assessments and technology tools in real-time to guide their learning. Learn more about *formative assessment*, the method by which teachers can assess student learning in real-time to guide instruction. The program offered parents a "hands on" experience to demonstrate several formative assessment strategies and tech tools that teachers and students utilize to gauge learning and understanding. Formative assessment -- including feedback and individual student goal-setting -- is one of the "high impact" instructional strategies that have a significant impact on student learning. It is a hallmark of a rigorous education and directly related to one of the objectives within District 64's new 2020 Vision Strategic Plan. Facilitated by Instructional Technology Coaches Linda Diekman (Roosevelt) and Allison Sobotka (Franklin). [Download the presentation here.](#)

Raising Safe & Smart Digital Citizens



(Geared towards parents of students in grades 3-8) Explore how to better guide children to become safe and smart digital citizens. Learn about District 64's Internet Safety curriculum and how you can discuss with your child aspects of being safe on the Internet. Tour some basic social networking sites, see the safety/privacy settings available to users and parents. Learn ways to monitor your child's personal media activities and set up guidelines on Web presence. Facilitated by Instructional Technology

Coaches Kara Pottinger (Emerson) and Beth Rihtar (Field) . [Download the presentation here.](#)

Google Apps for Education

Google Apps for Education are an integral part of District 64 learning environments. Learn about Google Drive, how it works and the awesome suite of apps students can use to promote creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration skills. Facilitated by Instructional Technology Coaches Allison Sobotka (Franklin) and Kevin Michael (Carpenter). [Download the presentation here.](#)

District Happenings

Safe, Warm and Dry is the priority

Board to vote Nov. 16 on secured entries, facility projects for summer 2016

As you know, we have been working to prioritize the needs identified in the recently completed 10-year Health Life Safety (HLS) survey and Master Facilities Plan (MFP) prepared by FGM Architects.

Focusing first on proposed projects for summer 2016, our Board of Education this fall has spent many hours reviewing suggested designs, and analyzing budgets and financing options. Two proposals are being considered that would impact the daily home of our almost 5,000 students and staff members.

► Secured entries for all schools: \$5.1 million

The proposal is to add secured entries and renovate adjacent offices at all eight of our schools and the District's administrative office. The design provides **layers of security** to delay intruders from entering or to keep other types of unauthorized visitors from gaining access to staff or students. The design includes recommendations from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, and input and review by Park Ridge First Responders. Although the design at each school varies, all schools would have consistent features. Small entry additions are planned for the District's three oldest schools dating to 1928 -- Lincoln, Roosevelt and Field. Offices will be modified at the other schools to provide better access to the existing main entries. **Secure entries are intended not just to provide a layer of security for violent "shooter" incidents, but also for the ongoing, daily needs at our buildings with the steady influx of parents and visitors.** Our principals shared examples with the Board on November 5 of challenging experiences that occur routinely, which secured entries would better contain and manage. Secured entries have become very commonplace in schools across the country and are already installed at schools throughout our north suburban area. **Our educational program also would benefit from this work:**

► Improved conference space for teachers to meet with parents or for teams of teachers to work collaboratively to plan instruction. ► Direct access for sick children to the health office. ► Efficient access to teacher work room/copy center. ► Restoring grade level clusters (at some schools, because of where the office is relocating) to improve the educational environment for students and teachers. ► All school building entries will be ADA accessible.

► Critical Health Life Safety/Infrastructure Projects: \$8.1 million

The new HLS/MFP identified many other projects needed to keep the schools safe, warm and dry. Urgent work recommended for summer 2016 includes: ► **Roofing** totaling \$5.7 million for all schools except Emerson and Field, which are conducting summer school in 2016. ► **Restoring the "envelope" of the schools** totaling almost \$2.4 million primarily for replacing or sealing windows, repairing crumbling brick, and adding exterior security lighting.

Funding options for summer 2016 and future years being reviewed

We have been working with the Board this fall to identify funding options for facility needs, including spending some of the District's existing fund balance possibly in combination with bonds. Funding options for future HLS/MFP work in 2017 and beyond also are being reviewed. Further information about the Master Facilities Plan and funding options is available on the website. Guided by the Master Facilities Plan, we believe these proposed investments for *Safe, Warm and Dry* infrastructure work will offer a thoughtful, long-term solution to meet the needs of our students and staff. ► **The November 16 Board meeting is at 7:00 p.m. at Franklin School (gym), 2401 Manor Lane, Park Ridge.** Board meetings are open to the public; an opportunity for public comment is always included. Meeting reports and videos also are available on our website.



Strategic Plan videos available

To ensure our parent community is informed of our key areas of focus, all parents should have received the [2020 Vision Strategic Plan brochure](#) when you attended parent-teacher conferences. [A series of brief videos](#) is also available for a tutorial on the key action items and outcomes in the areas of student learning, professional collaboration, facilities, and finance.



Objectives 5 & 6 - Podcast



Annual report to be mailed home

The District's new annual report to the community will be mailed to all homes in Park Ridge-Niles in December. The report is one way we are illustrating our commitment to sharing with parents and all local residents the many programs and services our District provides its students. The report features updates from every school as well as District information on goals, finances and facilities. ► The District also will publish its second annual Financial Report for 2015 later this year - watch for a website link to this award-winning e-publication!

Out & About in Our Schools

Lincoln granted \$2,500 for “Don’t Pitch It - Wash It” green initiative

Lincoln Middle School has won a \$2,500 grant from the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) to reduce waste in the lunchroom by replacing disposable utensils with stainless steel flatware. The grant will fund Lincoln's “Don’t Pitch It -- Wash It” initiative to purchase reusable silverware, storage/display holders for the lunch line, and related items. Lincoln's Green Team student club members will be the leaders in the lunchroom, working with the lunchroom staff and staff supervisors to encourage all students to not “pitch it,” but “wash it.” The school is planning to have specific places at each table to put the used silverware to make it easy to collect, and also is streamlining the way students will be dismissed to recycle and dispose of their lunch waste before heading outside to recess. Lincoln expects to reduce lunch waste considerably by this school-wide campaign.



Veterans Day 2015

Schools commemorated the day with learning activities, ranging from inviting service personnel to talk with students, writing letters to veterans, conducting a special flag-raising ceremony, singing patriotic songs, or exploring the origins of the day. (LEFT) At Roosevelt, Mrs. Williams' 3rd graders and (RIGHT) Ms. Wingader's 4th graders heard from local veterans during classroom visits.



MUSICAL NOTES: Students selected as region's best musicians

The top band, orchestra and jazz musicians from our middle schools have been selected to participate at two 2015 regional events sponsored annually by the Illinois Music Educators Association (ILMEA). Meeting and performing with their talented peers from other schools across the region is inspiring for our students, along with the opportunity to learn under the direction of nationally known conductors. [Read more about our talented musicians here.](#)

TECH TALK: Students pioneer Google “Expeditions” virtual field trips

Students at four of our schools had the opportunity this fall to take virtual reality field trips via Google’s [“Expeditions” Pioneer Program](#). Elementary students at Carpenter, Franklin and Roosevelt as well as Emerson’s middle schoolers enjoyed the 20-minute virtual reality trips guided by their teachers. Teachers and our Instructional Technology Coaches selected the destinations best aligned with our curriculum from among Google’s offerings. Whether visiting Mars and the moon, seeing the Gettysburg battlefield, diving under the sea, or walking through the Palace of Versailles -- students found the trips to be highly engaging and have responded enthusiastically! We are fortunate that students at many grade levels were able to pioneer this new way to learn.

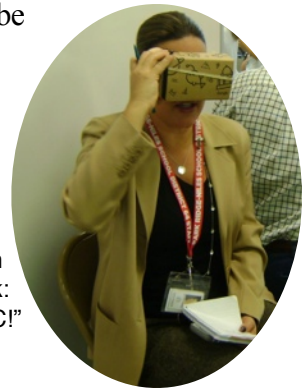


Roosevelt 4th graders studying landforms took an around-the-world field trip to explore unique geography.



(RIGHT)

I enjoyed the opportunity to join students on a trip! An exuberant Carpenter 5th grader was heard to remark: “This was just EPIC!”



(LEFT) Students react in wonder as they entered the virtual reality world, as captured on Franklin Instructional Technology Coach Allison Sobotka’s short [video](#).

“Walk & Talk” visits find students invested in their learning

My visits in October/November found motivated students learning new things in all areas of our curriculum:



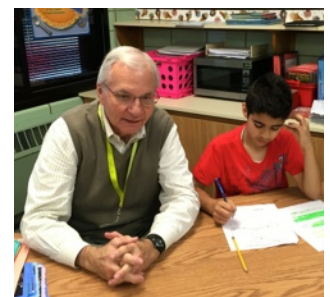
Carpenter - It was my pleasure to deliver a special certificate to Mrs. Farrell’s 1st grade class, who won the *Masters of Masterpiece* weekly award as part of their “One School, One Book” program. Trivia questions from the chapters of *Masterpiece* being read each week are announced over the loudspeaker. Students bring their answers to the office, and one is selected lottery style. If their answers are correct, that classroom becomes the winner!

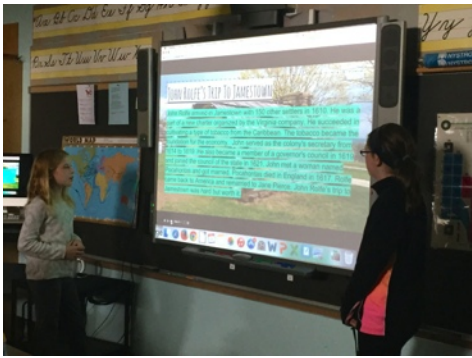


Field - Kindergartners were working on their reading stamina. Stamina is defined by how many sustained minutes students are able to read. (Left) Mrs. Moon’s 2nd graders shared stories they wrote. Fourth graders were studying the levels of government.

Franklin - (Right) A senior volunteer was helping students work individually on *compare* and *contrast*.

Roosevelt - First graders were reading different versions of the same genre and sharing the differences





they discovered with their reading buddy. (Left) Grade 5 was hard at work presenting learning on the American Colonies.

Washington - Joining with schools across District 64 and the nation, students celebrated Red Ribbon Week in October with the theme: "Respect Yourself. Be Drug Free." Daily activities planned with the PTO's help encouraged students to demonstrate healthy behaviors and celebrate the good choices they make. The students also enjoyed a visit from mascot *Roary* who congratulated students who were rocking their good ROARS behaviors!

Emerson - Guitar with Mr. Kennedy had students practicing self-selected songs. *Stairway to Heaven* and *Sweet Caroline* were among a few pieces that students were rehearsing to later play for their classmates.

Lincoln - Student Government is in full swing at Lincoln! I enjoyed participating in an executive board meeting with the four student representatives and both Drs. McLean and Murray. Students brought forth concerns shared by fellow Lions and a lively conversation took place.

Jefferson - Our youngest learners enjoyed their first field trip to The Grove to explore the fall forest and visit the interpretative center to view local wildlife up close.



Franklin fall tradition: "literary" pumpkins

Franklin's seventh annual "literary" pumpkin contest received an amazing 67 entries this year ([view them all here](#)), which were displayed in the Learning Resource Center. Families worked together at home to decorate a pumpkin based on their favorite book or character. The school selected five favorites, including this *Ghostbusters* character -- just in time for Halloween!



Emerson singers serenade at annual staff "Homecoming"

This year, Emerson's Vocal Power singers under the direction of teacher Terry Broeker performed for about 60 retired staff members who gathered over a self-funded breakfast in late October to catch up with former colleagues. I enjoyed updating them on our new 2020 Vision Strategic Plan and Master Facilities Plan, as well as our 1:1 Chromebook initiative and other news from our classrooms!

"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

Curriculum Corner

What do teachers do on Institute Day?

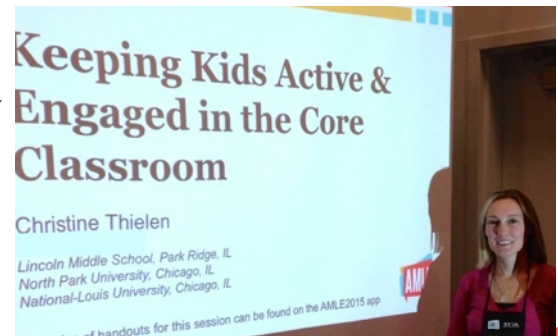
They learn and grow!

November 3 was District 64's second Staff Development Day of the school year. Quality teachers are critical to student success, and District 64 invests in important professional development opportunities for all staff as part of our continuous improvement philosophy.

We serve a range of learners in our classrooms and our greatest challenge is to customize our instruction so ALL students grow to the next level. Our Staff Development Day sessions helped teachers identify strategies for managing instruction for different learners. With the new Strategic Plan as our road map, here are some of the ways our teachers came together to continue their learning:

► ***Our math curriculum is in its third year and we continue to support teachers with this transition.*** K-5 classroom teachers explored a new model for designing differentiated instruction for students in math. Our middle school teachers focused on the eight standards for “mathematical practice” that describe habits of mind for proficient math students. Understanding and implementing these practices is key to student mastery of the Common Core State Standards. ► ***Science teachers focused on preparing for the new Next Generation Science Standards.*** Middle school science teachers deepened their understanding of the state’s new learning goals for science.

The session focused on "scientific practices" as well as and science and engineering tasks. ► ***Social Studies reviewed a new framework.*** Middle school social studies teachers used the College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Social Studies Framework to broaden their understanding of the new Illinois Learning Standards. ► ***Technology is a continuing focus.*** Teachers learned new ways to harness Chromebook technology to support collaborative teacher/student feedback, student work stations, and student self-monitoring. ► ***Other sessions*** focused on designing assessments around six quality indicators; working with at-risk learners; and ways to support students with significant behavioral needs.



Sharing our math teaching strategies nationally

We are very proud that District 64’s Middle School Math Department Chairperson Christine Thielen, an 8th grade teacher at Lincoln, presented for the fourth time at the Association for Middle Level Education National Conference this fall. Mrs. Thielen shared some of the classroom activities she and our other math teachers use to fully engage students, such as reminder chants for common math formulas, Matho (a math bingo game), scavenger hunts to find and complete math problems, and interactive Smartboard activities.



Illinois Report Card

State Report Cards on website, but test results delayed

In keeping with tradition, the Illinois State Board of Education has released [the 2014-15 School Report Cards](#). However, data from the PARCC assessments data (which replaced the ISAT in spring 2015) is not available yet. The report does present other information about student characteristics, our school programs, and learning conditions. PARCC data is expected to be available later this year.

On the Horizon. . .

Calendar for 2016-17

The Board is expected to approve a school calendar for the 2016-17 school year on November 16. The adopted version will appear on the [Calendar Overview page](#) of the District 64 website.

Deal yourself in for a night of fun and fundraising!

Casino Royale is the theme of the Saturday, January 30 Elementary Learning Foundation (ELF) annual fundraiser at Cafe Le Cave.

100% of the money raised goes to fund grants to improve education right here in District 64. With a few new tricks up their sleeves, 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. Will you see me there? You can bet on it!



Best wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving!

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