

Parents = Partners

Education notes from Dr. Laurie Heinz

Park Ridge-Niles School District 64 • September-October 2014

Opening Days

It's hard to believe that just a little over a month ago almost 4,375 smiling faces arrived at our schools. Students and teachers made a very smooth transition, and are already deeply invested in exploring the challenges and excitement of learning at their new grade levels.

This year, safety remains a critical focus for all of us in District 64. With the help of Niles and Park Ridge Police departments, traffic on the first days flowed well as drivers and students settled into new routines. I thank you for your role in that, and for remembering that only hands-free cell phones may be used (and texting is never allowed) during drop-off/pick-up.

Over the first month of school, I have spent time in all of our buildings and continue to be very impressed with what I observe. This newsletter will be my way of keeping in touch with you through the year about student learning and important happenings in our schools and District. I look forward to establishing a lively dialogue with parents as our partners.

For Your Children,

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



Institute Day for Teachers

was held on August 25. The focus was on our 1:1 learning initiative. Joining me to launch our “I³” focus on **Innovation, Inspiration and Interdependence** were: (from left) Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning Lori Lopez and Director of Innovation & Instructional Technology Mary Jane Warden.

Getting to Know You

It has been my pleasure to meet so many parents and community members at ChromeExplore 64 events, PTO/A meetings, parent curriculum nights, and the Parent University kick-off. I look forward to meeting many more of our District 64 parents and Park Ridge-Niles community members at school events as the year continues!

District 207/District 64 Calendar Update

Many of you have asked if District 64 has already decided to change its calendar to align to District 207's 2015-16 announced changes. The answer is absolutely not at this time. District 64 is having its first internal Calendar Committee meeting on October 2, which is much earlier than we would usually convene our committee and in direct response to the District 207 decision. A representative from District 207 is a member of our committee and will share their decision-making process with us. I will bring information from this meeting to the Board of Education later in October. That will be the first time the District 64 Board will formally discuss this issue. The other Maine Township feeder school superintendents and I plan to create and distribute a unified survey to our parent community so that you may voice your thoughts on this important topic. Our goal is to survey in late October or early November. No decisions will be made until these steps have been taken.

Parent University

Expand your learning in 2014-15

We believe that when parents and schools learn together -- everyone learns more! This year, we are presenting a [series of evenings](#) tailor-made for parents and community members to extend their own learning. Many of the events will be held in advance of Board of Education meetings, to provide additional opportunities for parents and community members to stay for the meeting and learn more about District 64 initiatives and educational issues.



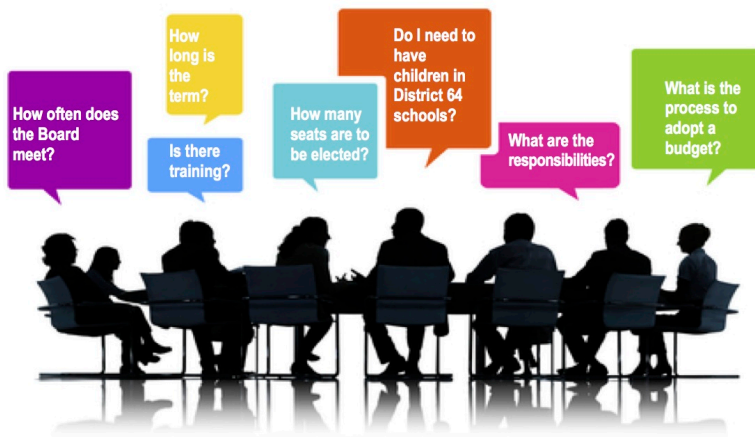
Raising the Emotionally Intelligent Child - October 2

Clinical psychologist and nationally known speaker Ed Dunkelblau returns on Thursday, October 2, 6:45-8:45 p.m., for a second session on ["Raising the Emotionally Intelligent Child in Today's Digital World."](#) at Washington

School (auditorium), 1500 Stewart Ave., Park Ridge. You do not need to have attended his previous talk to enjoy this second night. More than 110 parents attended the first evening on September 23, which was rich with humor, story-telling and research. Dr. Dunkelblau engaged parents in an interactive presentation that addressed social-emotional learning, character development, and practical strategies for successful parenting. In addition, Dr. Dunkelblau also is providing support to the District 64 Social Emotional Learning Committee as the team plans school-based activities that support the development of emotional intelligence.

Concussion: Let's Talk about Prevention & Student Safety - October 27

District 64 is hosting an [evening with Dr. Elizabeth Pieroth](#), NorthShore University Health System, for parents and community members to build awareness of this health concern on Monday, October 27, 6:30-7:15 p.m., Field School (auditorium), 707 N. Wisner, Park Ridge.



A-B-C's of School Board Service: Coffee & Conversation - October 28

With the Board of Education elections ahead in April 2015, District 64 invites community members to learn more about Board service now or at some point in the future. Come talk with fellow residents who have served about what it's like to contribute to your local public schools in this important way. The [A-B-C's of School Board Service event](#) will be held on Tuesday, October 28 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. at the District 64 Educational Service

Center, 164 S. Prospect Ave., Park Ridge. The work of a Board of Education is crucial to the overall success of a district. Please consider attending the meeting to see if Board work is for you. Find out more on the District 64 website: [Board Election 2015 page](#).

Out & About in Our Schools

Setting growth goals for our students

Each fall, children in grades 2-8 participate in Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments in the areas of reading and mathematics. Principals shared presentations at building-directed professional development sessions on a recent Wednesday to provide teachers with an overview of status and growth results from the spring 2014 MAP assessment. Over the next few weeks, grade-level teams will be provided with principal-led release time to discuss both three-year District growth goals as well as goals for the 2014-15 school year.

Improving our facilities

Over the spring and summer, District 64 completed improvement projects and upgrades at all our schools. Whether it was major work -- the complete new HVAC system at Field School -- or smaller repairs, all the schools were the focus of intense activity over the vacation. This fall, we are still working to complete the final phase of the Carpenter HVAC project, and have added the expertise of a construction management firm to oversee this final leg.



Remembering 9-11

We are so proud of our Roosevelt School choir students, who participated in the Patriot Day commemoration event before school on Thursday, September 11. Our students sang the National Anthem and later, God Bless America, during the program held at the South Side Fire Station. The choir was led by teacher Linda Thomas.



Meeting our Senior Tax Exchange Program Members

It was my pleasure to gather with many of our senior program members recently to update them on the District's learning initiatives for 2014-15. Seniors share their talents and expertise to support students and staff, and are reimbursed for their time to help with property taxes in this unique community partnership.

“Walk & Talk” visits spotlight teaching and learning

To help get to know what makes each school unique, I am engaging principals in “Walk and Talk” sessions at their schools. It is through such visits that I get to know the staff and students, and see the curriculum in action. Here are some of the remarkable things I saw underway during the early weeks of school:

- ★ **Emerson** - Students and staff preparing for the kick-off of the Rachel's Challenge program
- ★ **Lincoln** - Students using Chromebooks to write and share descriptive passages
- ★ **Carpenter** - Teachers using “Daily 5” centers so students can *read to self* and *read to others*
- ★ **Field** - Students getting to know their “buddy” classrooms, and the safety patrol in action
- ★ **Franklin** - Senior program members helping students practice their reading strategies
- ★ **Roosevelt** - Students buzzing about the school's special “5-Bee's” and meeting book buddies
- ★ **Washington** - Girls eagerly picking up photos from the PTO mother-daughter dance
- ★ **Jefferson** - Students enjoying “circle time” focused on building their calendar skills

1:1 Learning Initiative - Student-Parent Handbook

The new 1:1 Learning Initiative Handbook will be emailed to all parents soon. The inaugural edition of the handbook features all the essentials students and parents/guardians need to efficiently navigate through the first year of this forward-looking initiative. Of course, the first year of any new venture generates questions. The handbook was designed to provide fundamental basics as well as answers to key questions being asked during the roll-out by students and their parents/guardians. Please take time to review this handy resource. We also recommend taking advantage of other Parent University opportunities that will be offered with a technology theme during the coming year.

Website redesigned with YOU in mind

I hope you have enjoyed visiting our new District and school websites, with a [fresh look and great resources](#) for parents, students, community and staff clearly positioned “front and center!” The quick links will be changed frequently to take you straight to the information you most want to find at different times during the school year. Please bookmark our sites and visit often!



Employees are proud supporters of the Park Ridge Community Fund

District 64 employees are strong supporters of this Fund, which benefits a host of community charities. Last year 321 employees contributed a total of \$14,241! Our 2014-15 employee campaign is now underway.

District Happenings

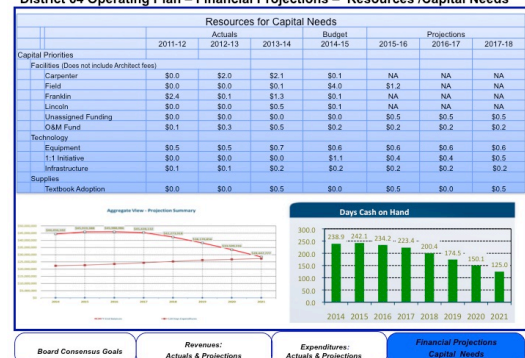
Budget for 2014-15 shows surplus

The District adopted its final 2014-15 budget on September 22, which continues our strong investment in student learning. For the coming year, District 64 will spend \$69.5 million (without capital projects) in the Operating Funds and will receive \$70.2 million in revenues. The Operating Fund balance at the end of the fiscal year on June 30 is expected to be about 69%. Using current projections, the District is expected to maintain this financial health through 2020-21, meeting the Board's goal of extending for four additional years the original 2007 referendum commitment to not return to local voters for additional financial resources for at least a decade.

Crisp, concise highlights of District finances

In one quick view, see 7 years of revenues and expenses, plus long-range forecasts and goals in the updated Board Operating Plan. [Visit the website to view or download](#)

District 64 Operating Plan – Financial Projections – Resources /Capital Needs



Chromebook 101

The kickoff of the 2014-15 Parent University series was held on September 22 at Roosevelt's library. Almost 100 parents turned out to learn more about how District 64 is re-designing learning in our 1:1 environment. The evening was hosted by Roosevelt Instructional Technology Coach Caroline Schaab (*at right*) and Mary Jane Warden, Director of Innovation & Instructional Technology.

If you missed this session, the presentation -- along with responses to the Q&As from that evening -- will be posted soon to the [Parent University website page](#). Also, please plan on attending other tech-focused evenings later this year through the University.

On the Horizon. . .

Annual Illinois Report Cards

At the end of October, we will be sharing the annual Illinois Report Cards and our assessment data from the spring 2014 Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). As you may recall, this was the last year the Common Core-aligned ISAT was administered to students in grade 3-8. I will share highlights with you in next month's issue.

Facility plans for summer 2015 & beyond

This fall, we will be taking a look at our current facility maintenance plan and life safety projects, and will be working with the Board of Education on plans for summer 2015 work as well as future needs. I will update you on facility planning later in the fall as the Board carefully considers various options.



Logon to Facebook to “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