



Parents = Partners

Education Notes from Dr. Laurie Heinz

January - February 2016

Mid-year already!

Where oh where did January go?! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and that 2016 is off to a great start for you and your family. We continue to work hard to implement Year One of our 2020 Vision Strategic Plan. The plan is intended to unfold over five years, and is focused on six strategic objectives that define how we will achieve our mission to inspire every child to discover, learn, achieve, and care. I presented a mid-year update to the Board of Education on Tuesday, January 26, [which you can view here](#). We already have much to be proud of!

► **Community Outreach** - Since I began my work in District 64, I have looked for ways to get more involved in the larger community. One such membership is the Park Ridge Afternoon Kiwanis Club. Before winter break, more than a dozen Kiwanians came to the District office to help wrap gift baskets for 35 of our own families in need. The club worked with Mariano's to provide a holiday ham to add to \$100 gift certificates. On behalf of our families, I extend another thank you for their generosity! ► I held my second [Superintendent Community Relations Council \(SCRC\)](#) meeting in January where our focus was on facilities and finances. SCRC members are now well-versed in these two critical objectives within our Strategic Plan. They have talking points that they are eager to share with members of the larger Park Ridge-Niles community.

► Change in Spring Parent-Teacher

Conference Schedule - I wanted to make you aware of a change in our upcoming conference schedule. This spring, only one night of parent teacher conferences will be held, which is a change in practice from years past when the District offered two evenings. The change was made to ensure that the District is in compliance with the language in our teacher contract. Unfortunately, despite our commitment to honoring the contract, there was an oversight in its implementation in prior years. Due to the reduced schedule, the process of signing up for a conference may be different than in the past. This year, your child's teacher will contact you if a conference is recommended. As always, if you have a concern about your child's performance or if you would like an update on your child's progress, you may contact your child's teacher at any time.



Thank you, ELF and "elves"!

It was my pleasure to help greet the hundreds of parents and other supporters who turned out on Saturday, January 30 for the annual Elementary Learning Foundation fundraiser, *Casino Royale*. Special thanks to Co-Chairs Connie Michels (L) and Heather Imhoff (R) and to the many "elves" (teachers, administrators and parent volunteers) who created an evening of fun and fundraising to improve education here in District 64. If you missed the event, there's still time to [contribute to ELF here](#).



I also had the opportunity to update the Kiwanis on our 2020 Vision Strategic Plan on January 5.

For Your Children,

Dr. Laurie Heinz, Superintendent lheinze@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!



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 writing a handbook for parents, "Raising Your Digital Native."

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 "screentime." 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 Diekman (Roosevelt) and Director of Innovation & Instructional Technology Mary Jane Warden will facilitate the program, which is free and open to all adult community members.

In case you missed these Parent University topics. . .

- ▶ **Coding & Computational Thinking** - Dive into the resources available for students of all ages 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.](#)

"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



Winners are: (L/R) Justin Kim (3rd), Zoe Berthold (2nd), and Catherine Sernel (1st).

District Spelling Bee: first “3-peat” winner!

District 64 has crowned its first “three-peat” District-wide champion speller, Catherine Sernel, a grade 7 student at Lincoln Middle School. Sernel edged out fellow Lincoln middle schooler Zoe Berthold, an 8th grader, to take the top honors at the 2016 District 64 Bee, which was held on January 25 at Roosevelt School. Emerson Middle School grade 7 student Justin Kim placed third. Sernel moves on to regional competition at the North Cook ISC Scripps Spelling Bee on February 2 at Joseph Sears School in Kenilworth. Sernel and Berthold battled for 28 rounds before Sernel spelled “quell” to secure her three-peat victory. Spelling bees were held at all seven schools earlier in January, with the top three spellers from each school earning an invitation to the District competition.

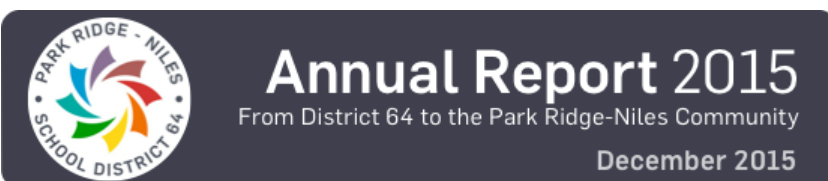
[Read more about our District Bee here.](#)

Free preschool screenings for ages 3-5

If you or a neighbor has a preschooler (ages 3 - 5) and are concerned about their development, call Jefferson School at 847-318-5360 to schedule an appointment for a free developmental screening. Our Early Childhood Diagnostic Team conducts screenings monthly for this age group. The team includes an occupational therapist, speech language therapist, psychologist and social worker. The areas assessed include motor, communication, pre-academic and play skills, and thinking skills. Your child’s vision and hearing also will be checked.

FACILITY NEWS: Summer 2016 construction projects out to bid

Construction bids are currently being obtained for summer 2016 projects, which are focused on keeping schools “safe, warm and dry” as 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 is estimated at \$13.2 million and 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 of Education will receive the construction bids in late February/early March, and will decide at that time whether to take the final step of authorizing the work. ► In January, the Board approved an application to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to be granted the option to issue Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCB), which, if awarded to District 64, would save taxpayers \$19 million in interest on \$34 million of bonds over 20 years. If selected in this competition, District 64's Board would have 18 months to consider whether to issue the bonds, but has no obligation to do so. ISBE is expected to announce selected districts in February. [More information](#) is available in the January 9 report. Bonding is one of the financing options being considered.



Did you receive yours in the mail?

If you have not already done so, I hope you spend a few minutes reviewing the inaugural edition of our [Annual Report for 2015](#), which was mailed to about 18,000 households in our community in December.

Out & About in Our Schools

“Walk & Talk” visits focus on special/encore classes

My visits in January found students clearly enjoying learning in K-5 specials/6-8 encore classes. From PE to electives, students were engaged in various settings outside of their classrooms. Here are my notes:

► **Carpenter** - (*right*) Students were enjoying new challenges in art working with Mrs. Bianchi. As a special treat that day, Mr. Balduf and I had a terrific time delivering coffee, hot chocolate or lattes to staff provided by a generous Carpenter family and prepared by Latte Ladies.



► **Field** - (*left*) Students were enthusiastically enjoying time during their gymnastics unit, including a demonstration on how to move across the parallel bars. In art, students now are working with clay. 1st graders especially like a new “cupcake” project featuring a secret hiding spot inside!

► **Franklin** - Students in grade 4 were busy learning how to make music with their recorders.

► **Roosevelt** - (*right*) Students were engaged in their gymnastic unit where they rotated through seven stations.



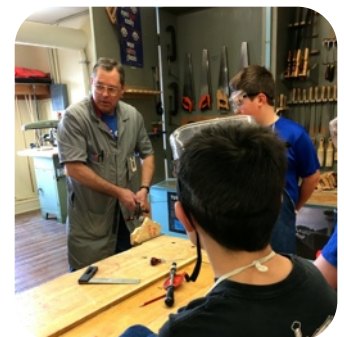
Mr. Bielenda demonstrated how to use the balance beam with the help of student spotters.

► **Washington** - (*left*) A small Guided Reading group was meeting with Ms. Kapcar, while other students were practicing spelling words or reading independently.



► **Jefferson** - Students were working on their gross motor skills as they moved to music and verbal directions provided by their teacher.

► **Emerson & Lincoln** - (*below*) Dance, dance, dance was in the air as our middle schoolers kicked off their Dance Unit! Students at Emerson (*left*) worked on choreographing their own dances as a culminating activity, while at Lincoln (*middle*) they learned new dance moves, such as the Dab. In Industrial Tech, Lincoln students were working on creating their own desk set with guidance from Mr. Szaflarski (*right*).



2016 Open Houses: popular evenings for our families!

I hope many of you enjoyed the opportunity to visit your child’s schools during annual Open House events, which began in January. These tremendously popular evenings allow students to bring their families to visit their classrooms and teachers, and showcase their school work. It’s a fun and exciting night for students and staff! [The schedule for the remaining events may be viewed here.](#)

TECH TALK: Arctic Adventure

Field School Book Buddies in Mrs. Chalberg's 1st grade and Mrs. Schaab's 4th grade recently had an awesome Arctic adventure! After researching together about penguins, climate, landforms, and more, they connected via Skype with Jean Pennycook, a scientist living with penguins in Antarctica. Students were able to ask questions they had created from their research, and have them answered immediately by Ms. Pennycook. An amazing experience was shared by all!



CURRICULUM NOTES:

► **Institute Day Friday, Feb. 5 focuses on Strategic Plan objectives** - Our Student Learning and Technology departments have been working hard to build a day packed with professional development opportunities for District 64 staff for our upcoming Institute Day (no student attendance). Workshops will focus on our 2020 Vision Strategic Plan objectives, including curriculum design, formative assessment, technology integration, and differentiation. This likely will be the final year that District 64 will have an Institute Day in February, as our calendar for 2016-17 will see us “front-loading” our professional development at the start of the school year in August with two teacher institute days instead of one. ► **Spring PARCC testing will be shorter** - PARCC has announced important changes as we prepare for the second year of this assessment of our students in grades 3-8 in English Language Arts and Math. Students will have only one testing window instead of two, and the total time for most students will be reduced by 90 minutes. District 64 will administer PARCC from April 11-22. ► **State science assessment added for grades 5 and 8** - Illinois schools also will administer an online science assessment at grades 5 and 8 in early May. District 64 is currently transitioning to the Next Generation Science Standards that will be assessed by this test; the test will provide baseline information about our students' science achievement.

MUSICAL NOTES: “Perform with a Pro” \$1,000 grant

Thanks to a \$1,000 grant from the Park Ridge Cultural Arts Council and the Illinois Arts Council, our students will have an opportunity to be inspired to achieve a higher level of musicianship by performing with professional musicians from the Park Ridge Civic Orchestra. A PRCO member will be joining the Lincoln Band, Lincoln Orchestra, Emerson Band and Emerson Orchestra for a spring or fall concert. Thank you to Instrumental Music Curriculum Specialist Brian Jacobi and our instrumental music teachers for obtaining this grant!



On the Horizon...

2016 Olympiad offers fun science and engineering challenges

Good luck to the 286 students in grades 3-5 who are competing in the 2016 Science Olympiad this Saturday, February 6 at 9:00 a.m. at Emerson Middle School! This year, 152 girls and 134 boys will work in teams and represent their home elementary schools in one of five different events: aerodynamics, egg drop, mystery box, rubber band catapult, and structures. Each event is co-sponsored by one of the elementary school PTO/As. The Olympiad is truly a family activity, as we consistently have about 200 parents who volunteer as coordinators, coaches, and judges. The Olympiad supports and encourages student interest in science and engineering -- something District 64 has done for years and is now reflected in the Next Generation Science Standards.



Summer program brochures coming soon; register beginning March 2

A printed Worlds of Wonder course catalog will be distributed to all students in mid-February. This year's summer school will move to Field School for grades K-3 and will remain at 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 is \$125 per class per session, and will increase after April 15. Online registration will begin on March 2.

REGISTRATION PREVIEW 2016-17:

► **Kindergarten/New Students** - Registration for new kindergarten and transfer students entering in August 2016 will begin on February 8, with pre-enrollment through the District 64 website [Registration page](#). New this year, all five elementary schools are planning special Kindergarten Roundup evenings in mid-April for parents to visit the school and bring in remaining required documents. Dates and times will be announced soon. ► **Returning Students** - All returning students will again be required to provide proof of residency within District 64. New this year, families will be able to upload scans of their residency documents (in PDF form) during the annual Infosnap registration process, which will get underway at the end of April. More information will be provided in coming months.

School Calendar Update: no school February 29

We are so pleased to have escaped January with no snow or extreme cold days! Fingers-crossed we have the same luck with temperatures and snowfall in February. (Should we be unlucky, please do review our [new Weather Closing Guidelines here.](#)) The 2015-16 school calendar allowed for a records/planning day on Monday, February 29, if sufficient emergency days still remained by February 1. Because none were used, classes for students will not be in session on Monday, February 29. District 64 staff will be working in their assigned building on that day. Again, there will be **no school for students on Monday, February 29.**

Have a fabulous February!

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