



Prologue

Last year, it was decided to hold the first annual State of the District for the stakeholders of Elmwood Park. Due to many changes already occurring and those about to take place, it felt necessary to make an attempt to comprehensively convey where the district was, where it is, and where it will be going. The district has seen substantive changes to its programming, support services, facilities, and community outreach in the last few years. All of this in a effort to move the district forward.

With these changes taking effect, it is comforting in continuing to see stakeholder support and appreciation as we work through these changes. Because, in the end, what we are really here for is to give all of our students an opportunity to succeed and to find an interest that speaks to them in order for them to be successful in the classroom and beyond. And with that, the district has extended “An Invitation to Opportunity” for all of our students. This invitation is something that encapsulates everything we are working to do in moving forward by transforming the learning experience for our students. This, in short, is our vision.

In order to make this invitation successful, we need to have an honest conversation with ourselves about what our expectations are for all, not some, of the students in Elmwood Park. And that can be simultaneously productive, emotional, and angst-ridden, but necessary, and it is with those conversations that decisions are made about what resources to procure and how best to allocate them. And, in the end, the students will be the ones greatly leading us in that conversation based on what their interests are, their strengths, and their areas for growth.

And in order to follow-through on that invitation, there are two (2) parts: Resources and the Teacher. For resources, the district, more than at any other point, has increased professional development opportunities for staff and administration, the access to technology, programming options and related resources, and funding into improving our facilities. And for the teacher, it is up to the district to assure parents that when they have their child enter the classroom, the child will have the expectations held for them and experiences necessary to succeed and pursue opportunities as a result of the person, or people, in the classroom leading the charge.

And I would be remiss to not include a personal anecdote of mine to show what extending this invitation to all students means to me. My oldest, Bennett, has a speech delay and experiences challenges in social interactions with his peers and adults and difficulty in managing his emotions. I remember very early on in his preschool career another parent asking another, in front of my wife, what was wrong with “*that kid*” during a holiday event that did not go as scripted.

Bennett eventually became part of a program in his school district, and due to the incredible work of his teacher Ms. Kelsey and her colleagues, Bennett can now tell me how his day is, what he is feeling, and what is going on in that little head of his. He continues to have a strong affinity for animals, especially those in the Arctic, and can now rattle off a series of facts about each animal, to the point where I will shamefully Google the facts to realize he was right and I was wrong. But these improvements are not because he is the son of a superintendent and a hard-working mother, it is because of his teacher Ms. Kelsey.

I am pleased to say this district is full of Ms. Kelseys and it is my continued responsibility and the Board of Education’s to continue to support and move forward with them for our students and their eventual successes.



Our Podcast Channel

Parkside Chat

<https://anchor.fm/epcUSD401>



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Finances and the Evidence-Based Funding Formula

The topic of finances in the state of Illinois continues to impress with there being no shortage of topics related to the increasing liability of the state's pension fund obligations and their potential shift to the school districts, the evidence-based funding (EBF) formula to provide more adequate funding to school districts, property tax cap measures, consolidation of state and federal grants, and that is just to name a few topics. While the state has been attempting to address its own particular issues, the district worked diligently over the last two years to turn around anticipated deficits while simultaneously juggling initiatives to advance itself and meet the needs of the students. A number of these actions taken were addressed in [last year's](#) State of the District and in the [third issue](#) of last year's *Superintendent Spotlight*.

The conclusion of the budget crisis from two years ago brought about the passage of the evidence-based funding formula. The goal of this formula was to take over two dozen variables that impact the makeup of a district, allocate values to each variable, multiply those to the number of a students a district has in total and/or in a particular sub-group, cross that with revenues already being received by the district at the local and state level as well as the district's expenditures, and have the result determine the amount of new additional funding the state will provide the district.

This formula saw the district gaining around \$336,000 that is supposed to be compounded annually. However, this could be considered somewhat of a misnomer because the district saw a reduc-

tion in its allocated Title funds, as a result of its increase in state funding, regardless of its increased demographic variables that would result in additional Title funds. For example, the district received a reduction close to \$120,000 in Title funds, meaning the net increase in its overall revenue from the state is closer to \$200,000.

Regardless, an increase in funding, the state being caught up in its categorical payments (as opposed to having one being held back each fiscal year) and the internal steps taken to address budgetary concerns, have allowed the district to address other needs related to programming, support services, and facilities.

District Budget

Beginning last year, we have started targeting the use of Title funds to support or enhance programming changes in Grades K-8 and have additional resources available. The Title funds are used to saturate devices at both elementary schools and the Early Childhood Center, cover 1:1 at Elm Middle School, pay for district-wide social-emotional and core content curriculum programs and their related training, further professional development opportunities for staff and administration, provide teachers with professional memberships to their content areas and fields and allow them to attend statewide conferences, and hire two (2) instructional coaches for staff Grades K-6.

You see an aggregate view of funds that make up our operations budget. From FY15 through FY18, you can see the final revenues, expenditures, and excess/deficit with an estimate for this fiscal year. As mentioned last year, FY14 was when expenditures

Aggregate View of Funds			
Fiscal Year	Revenues	Expenditures	Excess/Deficit
FY 2015	\$36,904,264	\$35,595,223	\$1,309,041
FY 2016	\$36,554,655	\$36,887,317	(\$32,662)
FY 2017	\$37,626,156	\$37,700,040	(\$73,884)
FY 2018	\$39,453,605	\$39,500,058	(\$46,453)
FY 2019 (estimated)	\$40,549,587	\$40,971,820	(\$300,105)

began outpacing our revenues and FY16 was the first year in many where the district operated in a deficit. While the deficit has been reduced from a once anticipated \$1.6 million deficit, what is contributing to the district's current deficit spending is primarily the repair and maintenance that has to go into our aging facilities and FTE. For this fiscal year, those projects can be primarily attributed to roof repairs, window replacement, tuck pointing, and replacing multiple PA systems in the schools. More will be elaborated upon on the state of our facilities when we approach Buildings and Grounds.

This table is our projected year-end balances, or "reserves." A reason these fund balances are dipped into is when the budget needs to be balanced. Aside from covering a fiscal year's deficit,

the funds were also put towards building repairs and projects, such as the cafeteria and main gym at Elmwood Elementary, the Science Wing at the high school, masonry work, adding more secure entrances, and so on.

And since FY15, there have been minor fluctuations in FTE in administration, EPET, support staff, custodial staff, and non-union due to programming for Grades K-12 and needs in student support services.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (estimated)
Administration	18	18	19	20	20	21	21
EPET	215	217	216.5	211	209.5	209	212
PSRP	55.5	52.5	52.5	54.5	56	60	65
Custodial/Maintenance	20.5	20.5	22	23	22.5	22	22
Non-Union	6	6	6	7	6	7	7

And since FY15 there has been a net loss of over 160 students enrolled in the district, primarily seen at the elementary buildings and the high school with the Early Childhood Center and the middle school remaining relatively flat.

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-19	NET +/-
Early Childhood Center	235	239	228	227	233	-2
John Mills Elementary School	663	647	605	642	612	-51
Elmwood Elementary School	612	585	569	611	580	-32
Elm Middle School	413	454	458	435	421	+8
Elmwood Park High School	1,006	953	890	902	919	-87
TOTAL	2,929	2,878	2,770	2,817	2,765	-164

Aggregate View of Fund Balances	
Fiscal Year	Year-End Fund Balance
FY 2015	\$18,649,193
FY 2016	\$16,371,508
FY 2017	\$16,254,122
FY 2018	\$16,207,669
FY 2019 (estimated)	\$15,907,564

Buildings and Grounds

An appropriate segue from the topic of finances is to look at the state of our facilities. For years the Buildings and Grounds Department has performed a significant task in maintenance by extending the life of our mechanical systems and performing more than adequate repair work and cleaning throughout the facilities. Two years ago, the district contracted Inspec and CS2 to perform a complete Life Safety needs assessment so the district would have an understanding of the current state of its facilities, its associated costs, and estimated timelines of when repairs or replacement would be necessary. This new Life Safety plan would then be merged with the conversation and plan pertaining to space and aesthetic changes. Details of this Life Safety assessment can be found in [last year's](#) State of the District and in the [third issue](#) of last year's *Superintendent Spotlight*.

CS2 Design Group performed a complete facilities assessment on the conditions of all of the buildings' heating, ventilation, HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems. It provided the District an understanding of the current status of major pieces of equipment and systems, and the assessment has a cost estimate, recommendations on life expectancy or urgency to repair or replace in three time frames of within one (1), two (2) to five (5) and six (6) to ten (10) years, and suggestions for priorities.

CS2 compared the equipment ages to guidelines published by nationally recognized organizations in the industry and based on averages throughout the country. It should be noted again how much work the Buildings and Grounds Department has done to maintain our equipment and systems beyond the estimated national average life expectancy. As a result, the Life Safety projects for the district totaled over \$25 million with a vast majority of those projects needing to be completed prior to the six (6) to ten (10) year time frame.

With our buildings aging, including two elementary schools nearing 100 years old, we will need to spend significant resources to address extensive life safety and infrastructure needs. The two (2) elementary buildings, to be renovated and expanded, would cost around \$55 million to complete. The challenges in addressing the district's facility needs is cost and time. With the cost estimate to address life safety work, renovations, and equipment being close to \$55 million, the district has to look at what is best for the students, staff, and community in the long-term. This includes looking at what would be the cost of maintaining the buildings at their age in the next 15-20 years and what would be a better use of taxpayer money over time. This means the district will also be looking at the feasibility of new construction.

The Board of Education approved the hiring of EOSullivan Consulting, a consulting firm, to collect information from the community. There will be a number of surveys issued and focus groups held over the next few months to gather data about not only what parents of students prefer, but consideration of preference for the entire community for elementary programming and facilities, as well as what cost is palatable. The Board will be presented in June the initial findings of the surveys and focus groups. Those findings will be forwarded to the district's architectural and construction firms to determine potential projects, logistical concerns, and cost estimates. Those options will then be presented to the community for additional feedback through additional surveys and focus groups, and those results will help the Board decide on a ballot measure to approve for March 2020.



Elm Middle School Project

The district has moved forward on one [facility enhancement project](#) and that is at Elm Middle School. Elm Middle School will add ten (10) new classrooms, a second gym and an entire grade of students. Sixth graders will be attending Elm by the start of the 2020-21 school year, making Elm become a true middle school in both concept and reality.

Elm's student population will be around 700 and to accommodate this, the Elm expansion will involve a combination of additions and renovations to the existing building. The project will also involve parking improvements as well as infrastructure, maintenance and life-safety work. The total work involved will cost an estimated \$19.5 million and no new taxes will be required to finance the project. Financing will be done through new bond sales.

No school time will be lost to renovation

or construction work. Remodeling of existing facilities will be done when students and faculty are out for the summer. Construction of new facilities will take place while school is in session, but precautions will be taken to minimize excessive noise and other distractions, similar to what was done at Elmwood Park High School when the science wing was built.

Renovations will include knocking down walls to reorganize classroom space, gutting restrooms to install new flooring and fixtures, building out old areas for new uses, removing chalkboards, installing new technology, new ceiling tiles, new lights and new doors, and applying fresh coats of paint.

Moving Sixth Grade over to Elm Middle School is significant. Ms. Rebecca Siegel, Principal at Elm, said it best

with, "At Elm we are a family. We work together, and we work hard so our students and each other feel supported. With having new staff in the building we will continue with that mindset. We have many staff members who have worked in our building for a number of years alongside many other people in our District from other buildings. We know this transition will be one that is met with excitement."



EXTERIOR EAST ENTRANCE
ELM MIDDLE SCHOOL - ADDITIONS AND REMODELING
DANFORD PARK COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #41
10 JANUARY 2019
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Technology



CERTIFICATIONS



Level 1:

- Mary Therese Anichini
- Elizabeth Bantel
- Karen Bear
- Lisa Berkery
- Marcia Bernas
- Stacey Blair
- Cami Breitzman
- Catherine Charleton
- Hilary Coia
- Kyleen Coia
- Penny Dahmer
- Marianne DiFrisco
- Lauren Feiereisel
- Amy Ferguson
- Morgan Freeck
- Stephanie Hagins
- Kathleen Hagstrom
- Christian Hartwig
- Jessica Iovinelli
- Becky Hoffmeister
- Brian Hofmeister
- Molly Hong
- Jamie Kanas
- Lauren Kruizenga
- Tracy Lotz
- Alyssa Makropoulos
- Carla Malizzio
- Ashley Mech
- Maria Munoz
- Nora O'Mahoney
- Emily Obrecht
- Meghan Quirk
- Kyle Rhoades
- Kara Riley
- Rosemarie Romano
- Clare Thomas
- Nicole Tobey
- Paul Uhler
- Vanessa Woof

Level 2:

- Lisa Berkery
- Cami Breitzman
- Penny Dahmer
- Morgan Freeck
- Jessica Iovinelli
- Jamie Kanas
- Nora O'Mahoney
- Rosemarie Romano

The District is now in its third year of the Technology Initiative and there have been some significant strides. The [middle](#) and the [high school](#) are now 1:1, each elementary school has 480 devices, and the Early Childhood Center is saturated.

The District has expanded use of Google Classroom as our learning management system for Grades 3-12, with it being mandatory at the high school and gradually expanding that expectation with each successive year. Use of Google Classroom gives the students exposure to an online learning platform, easy access to class materials, feedback in real time on work, and less paper. All of our recently acquired e-texts work with Chromebook, allowing students to access their resources online.

The District Technology Committee continues to support the implementation of the District Technology Initiative by bringing representatives from the technology department, administrators, teachers, and community members together to review, modify, create, and support instructional technology plans and procedures. The Committee is over 35 members strong with staff and administrative representation from each building, as well as student and parent representatives.

Surveys given to staff, students, and community members about the process yielded overwhelmingly positive results. A quote from a staff member was, "The transition to 1:1 has been a lot easier than anticipated. The students have quickly adapted and I feel prepared to incorporate this into my teaching." A student said, "Two pros are having access to all essential textbooks without having to physically carry all of them in a backpack which relieves stress on students as well as having access to the internet and millions of research materials at a moments notice." And a community member said, "My EPHS student is using the Chromebook and has been very responsible with charging and securing it at home. It's a great lesson for him to have to be responsible for the learning tool."

A key to our success with this initiative has been the district's investment in training its staff. After two (2) years of over 30 hours of professional development, it continued on this year as well. Topics included, but were not limited to, Google updates which included a complete overhaul of Google Classroom, and new formative assessment tools like Kahoot, Quizizz, Socrative, Pear Deck, Quizlet, EdPuzzle, and Flippity to help provide ongoing feedback to

adjust instruction. Following these sessions, students were exposed to many new ways to enhance their learning as teachers quickly implemented what was taught.

In the second semester, 82 educators and three (3) administrators voluntarily took part in a new format of professional development in which the staff had to present a technology implementation strategy to their colleagues demo-slam style.

A technology badging system was put in place so that teachers and administrators could earn recognition for all of their efforts in technology implementation as a way to improve student learning. Names of badges that could be earned: Google Level 1 and 2 certification, Technology Team, Student Savvy, Classroom Connoisseur, First Rate Feedback, SAMR Samurai, PD Power, and Data Divers. Over 120 educators participated in this program, earning 270 badges. New badges will be available for the 2019-2020 school year as designed by the District Technology Committee.

It should be noted Dr. Wade was once a proud recipient of three (3) badges until he missed a District Technology Committee meeting, apparently forcing Ms. Jessica Iovinelli, our Director for Instructional Technology, to publicly shame him in his badge removal.

The District Technology Committee was 38 members large this year with four (4) student representatives, one (1) parent representative, and 33 teachers and administrators from across the district. They worked on creating the feedback surveys for the year, giving feedback on future staff devices, and planning the Google Classroom Workshops for Parents that occurred in the months of January to March. They are already brainstorming ideas for a large scale community event this year that should rival the "Into the Cloud" event of 2018.

Technology Badges 2018-2019



New Curricular Programs

This year saw some sizeable developments in our programming for students Grades K-12. This includes, but is not limited to, increased time for Specials, expanding accelerated options, moving ahead with standards-based grading, having core content articulation, and developing college and career pathways related to student interests for Grades 6-12.



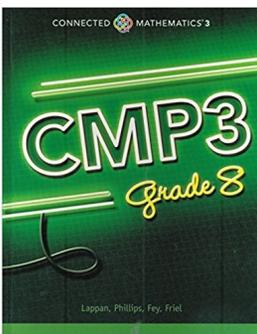
In 2016-17, the District implemented [STEMscopes](#), a Science-based curriculum offering that is aligned with the expectations for

student application found in the Next Generation Science Standards and approved by the National Science Teachers Association. This program is completely integrated meaning students are consistently exposed to, on an annual basis, Life, Earth and Space, and Physical Science for Grades K-8. STEMscopes provides many resources, labs, and activities to engage students to where they can demonstrate a level and depth of understanding and application in relation to the content.

The District now has [GO Math!](#), a Mathematics curriculum offering that is aligned with the Common Core Math Standards and is approved by the National Council of Teachers for Mathematics. It transforms planning and teaching and develops mathematical understanding in students, and helps teachers differentiate instruction, building and reinforcing foundational math skills that translate from the classroom to real life.



[Connected Mathematics 3 \(CMP3\)](#), is an inquiry-based math program that is currently used in grades 6-8. The same math program will continue with the addition of the digital interactive e-text. CMP3 helps students focus on math practices. These practices require students to look deeper and connect problem solving to practical situations in the everyday world. Students enrolled in Algebra I, Geometry or Algebra II will be a part of [enVision math](#). enVision math e-text balances conceptual understanding, procedural skills and application. It creates critical thinkers, problem solvers, and collaborators for future jobs and careers. Students and teachers will use the Pearson Realize platform to access the curriculum and materials. Students enrolled in honors math courses will continue with Core-Plus Mathematics (CPM). Students have the digital interactive e-text to support this problem-based high school mathematics program.



Students enrolled in Precalculus will continue with the Blitzer Precalculus. Starting in 2018-2019 students will have access to the digital interactive platform and e-text. The focus is on the full scope of mathematics with applications to real-life situations. Students enrolled in AP Calculus and AP Statistics will have access to the newest curriculum edition that is aligned to the AP exam.

Also, the District has [ReadyGen](#) in Grades K-5, an English Language Arts curriculum offering that is aligned with the Common Core English Language Arts standards and is approved by the National Council of Teachers for English (NCTE). This offering is not just tied to skills pertaining to Reading, but also Writing and Speaking and Listening. These three skills sets are embedded with each lesson in each unit since each skill set provides students an alternative avenue for them to display levels of comprehension and analysis. All skills sets found within the Common Core English Language Arts allow students the ability to demonstrate literacy and grant teachers flexibility in measuring said literacy.



All primary and secondary texts are grade level and cognitively diverse. ReadyGen also comes complete with

diagnostic assessments to measure facets of a student's ability to read, such as fluency or word identification. This can provide teachers meaningful feedback immediately as all diagnostic and intervention tools are aligned with the current lesson and/or unit the teacher is on, so any use of said tools would not be pulling the students away from the core learning experience, much like in GO! Math.

Everything said before is the same for the English Language Arts curriculum for Grades 6-12, which is [MyPerspectives](#). MyPerspectives is the direct continuation of ReadyGen and is also approved by the College Board, as well as the NCTE.



You will notice I have left out one particular content area and that is Social Studies. We are moving forward on selecting a program that meets the expectations of the [Career, College, and Civic Life \(C3\) Framework](#) and approved by the National Council for Social Studies. The Elementary Social Studies Committee has determined My World Interactive as an integrated resource. This resource has a direct connection with Ready Gen. The Secondary Social Studies team has determined that HMH Social Studies is the best fit as we look at the connection between the elementary and the high school. This resource provides an interactive e-text with engaging activities for all students.

Changes to the Bell Schedule

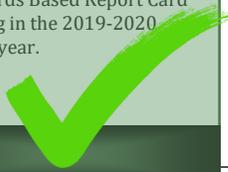
Please click [here](#) to see changes to the bell schedule at the middle and high school.

bell
schedule
CHANGE

Standards-Based Reporting

Throughout the 2017-2018 school year, the Standards-Based Reporting (SBR) Committee met to develop a Standards Based Report Card for Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. The committee focused on the importance of developing a tool that would communicate with parents, students and staff a measure of a student's academic and behavior progress. With this focus in mind, the committee met monthly to create a draft of the report card.

The Standards Based Report Card will communicate much more than one grade for parents. It will allow for parents to have an understanding of where their child is at and the progress they make throughout the school year. The committee's timeline is to pilot the Standards Based Report Card starting in the 2019-2020 school year.



New Curricular Programs (continued)

Students enrolled in Civics, AP Human Geography, World History, US History, and AP Government will have access to the digital interactive e-text through the Pearson Realize platform. The platform allows for students and teachers to access learning through clear, appealing and engaging activities that prepare students to be college and career ready. Students enrolled in AP World History and AP US History will have access to the newest curriculum edition that is aligned to the AP exam.

Students enrolled in AP Physics, Physics, Biology, and Chemistry will have access to the digital interactive e-text through the Pearson Realize platform. The platform allows for students and teachers to access learning through problem-based learning, research, and lab-experiments. Students enrolled in Anatomy will use the digital interactive e-text that incorporates student-friendly learning strategies and progressive questions to help students apply what they've learned. Students enrolled in AP Chemistry will have access to the newest curriculum edition that is aligned to the AP exam.

Students enrolled in Health at the middle school and high school will use a digital interactive e-

text. The curriculum delivers the tools necessary for developing and enhancing healthy behaviors that influence the lifestyle choices of students. This relevant, integrated text and video program stimulates classroom discussion, helping students' master skills essential to successful health education.

Students enrolled in Spanish at the middle school and high school will a digital interactive e-text that empowers students to reach proficiency in Spanish. ¡Avancemos! takes language learning beyond the book with digital resources and virtual experiences to immerse students in new cultures.

To assist with the implementation of these new curriculum and programs, the district has implemented instructional coaching. Last year the district hired two (2) District Instructional Specialists, Ms. Jamie Kanas for English Language Arts and Social Studies and Ms. Morgan Freeck for Math and Science. They provide professional development opportunities for staff, can observe a lesson and provide feedback, model a lesson for staff and students, assist in navigating through the multiple program's voluminous amount of resources and materials, and so on.

Acceleration, Enrichment, Honors, and Specials

There have been some changes to the accelerated opportunities and Specials available to students in Grades K-6. For the first time, there are now regularly scheduled specials for our students at the Early Childhood Center as our Kindergarten students now receive Music, Art, Enrichment, Technology, and Physical Education weekly.

Also for the first time, all First and Second Grade students are experiencing a new Special: Enrichment. ReadyGen and GO Math! offer enriched lessons that can be given to the students in a manner that accompanies the lesson and/or unit they are currently on with their General Education teacher. This is strictly a learning experience and not to be taken for a grade.

Students in Grades 3-5, who are eligible for an accelerated opportunity, will be going to the next grade level's content area they are eligible to participate in. For example, if a Third Grader is eligible and able to participate in an accelerated Math opportunity, that Third Grader will be in Fourth Grade Math.

For the 2019-20 school year, Elm Middle School will be piloting the following accelerated opportunities for students: Algebra I, English 9, and Civics. For the 2020-21 school

year, Elm Middle School will be having the following accelerated opportunities for students: Algebra I, CP Math I, English 9, Biology, and Civics.

Civics is being considered to be given to all Eighth Grade students beginning in the 2020-21 school year. The benefits to this are the students having at least one (1) high school credit upon entering the Ninth Grade, assisting the high school in monitoring Ninth Grade on Track numbers and providing supports to the core content areas where students are most likely to struggle or fail based on historical data, and will provide further availability in the students' schedules to pursue other accelerated options or pathways.

Biology cannot be offered in 2019-20 due to the lack of proper equipment and space. It is being planned to be included at Elm Middle School in the 2020-21 school year. Algebra I will be offered to Eighth Grade students in 2019-20 and Seventh and Eighth Grade students in 2020-21. If a student takes and passes Algebra I in Seventh Grade, s/he can take CP Math I in Eighth Grade.

There will be Honors level courses provided to students that feed into these high school credit opportunities in Eighth Grade. Eligibility requirements to participate

in these accelerated opportunities will be comparable to the procedures following the Accelerated Placement Act and what has been implemented in Grades K-6 this school year.

The District Office has been fully aware this has been a demand and expectation from students, parents, the community, and the Board for some time and is pleased to be including accelerated opportunities into the course catalog at Elm Middle School beginning next school year. Overall, as the district continues to implement these changes, we continue to take in feedback and work diligently to ensure opportunities are able to be provided and expanded upon.

On May 15, the middle and high school administration and the District Office will present to the Board plans to realize college and career pathways for students Grades 6-12. This means having an array of elective opportunities that are articulated between the two (2) buildings and others available at Triton College and the Technical College of DuPage. There will also be an expansion of dual credit opportunities due to a collaboration between Elmwood Park High School and Benedictine University.

Standardized Tests

Now comes the time that we discuss everyone's favorite topics, standardized assessments. This presentation will focus on two (2) assessments in particular: the PARCC and the SAT Suite.

The PARCC has now been replaced by the IAR, or Illinois Assessment for Readiness. In terms of the IAR's level of cognitive demand and its connection to the standards and skills, this assessment is more than comparable to the PARCC. While the PARCC name will be disappearing, the state has purchased all of the question items and given it to a company called Meridian to create the IAR. While the name will be different, the complexity and expectations of the test will remain the same, therefore, making the PARCC results from 2015-18 still relevant and relatable enough to the IAR to still determine growth on our schools' report cards

Here is a table for John Mills Elementary from 2015-18 in English Language Arts and Math. In red are students who scored a Level 1 or 2, which is considered below or emerging, Level 3 is meeting expectations, and Levels 4-5 are above. You will notice a shift from 2015-16 and that is due to the assessment recalibrating itself over the next couple years.

John Mills Elementary (PARCC; English Language Arts)			
Year	Levels 1-2	Level 3	Levels 4-5
2018	39%	31%	30%
2017	35%	35%	30%
2016	30%	37%	33%
2015	40%	31%	29%
John Mills Elementary (PARCC; Mathematics)			
Year	Levels 1-2	Level 3	Levels 4-5
2018	56%	28%	16%
2017	40%	34%	26%
2016	47%	33%	20%
2015	59%	31%	10%

And here is a table for Elmwood Elementary from 2015-17 in English Language Arts and Math. A motivator for the district in pursuing the curriculum and training options prior was to provide a common, grade level, aligned, and articulated learning experience to all students in the classrooms. Currently, we are seeing internal indicators of student growth and development that should hopefully translate into our first increase in test score performance district-wide in eight years.

Elmwood Elementary (PARCC; English Language Arts)			
Year	Levels 1-2	Level 3	Levels 4-5
2018	38%	31%	31%
2017	34%	31%	35%
2016	33%	31%	36%
2015	41%	31%	28%
Elmwood Elementary (PARCC; Mathematics)			
Year	Levels 1-2	Level 3	Levels 4-5
2018	41%	30%	29%
2017	43%	31%	26%
2016	41%	28%	31%
2015	45%	31%	24%

And here is a table of the PSAT 8/9 for Elm Middle School. There was a recalibration of scores between 2016 and 2017, but no further changes to cut scores or reporting have been made by the College Board for 2018.

Elm Middle School (PSAT 8/9; Evidence-Based Reading and Writing)		
Year	Mean Score	Students Meeting Benchmarks
2018	411	58%
2017	417	65%
2016	397	50%
Elm Middle School (PSAT 8/9; Mathematics)		
Year	Mean Score	Students Meeting Benchmarks
2018	421	47%
2017	414	48%
2016	419	43%

It should be stressed that the Illinois State Board of Education decided to, on its own, to increase the cut scores for reasons that have yet to be clearly articulated. This change was not supported by the College Board. We will see if the state board will decide to make any other changes to the cut scores, but, as of right now, there is no indication to do so. This change impacts the school's report card, but will not affect the individual student in his or her score reporting with post-secondary institutions or their performance in relation to peers.

Elmwood Park High School (SAT; English Language Arts)			
Year	Partially Meets	Approaching	Meets or Exceeds
2018	29%	48%	23%
2017	20%	41%	39%
Elmwood Park High School (SAT; Mathematics)			
Year	Partially Meets	Approaching	Meets or Exceeds
2018	40%	36%	24%
2017	20%	45%	35%

As a whole, we believe that the number of steps we have taken at creating articulation in the core content areas and continuing to create more opportunities and supports for our students and staff will assist in turning around, as mentioned before, an eight year trend of scores, regardless of assessment recalibrations or changes to cut scores.



Social Justice

The district is excited to share that we will be piloting social-emotional learning (SEL) in all of our buildings starting this Fall. Our elementary pilot teachers will be implementing the [Second Step Curriculum](#) and our high school teachers will be piloting the [RULER Curriculum](#), after having attended a two-day training this summer. Second Step and RULER both focus on critical social-emotional skills such as self-management, decision-making, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness.

The goal of integrating social-emotional learning into the school day is to support students' individual development of skills, attitudes, and knowledge to be successful in life. The district's school social workers have been supporting the implementation of our Social Emotional Learning pilots by providing teachers with resources and guidance. Throughout the course of the year, the district's Social Justice League Committee will be monitoring and guiding the implementation of Social Emotional Learning across the district and analyzing its impact on students. We believe that by strategically supporting students on both a social/emotional and academic level, it will provide students with the skills needed to succeed.

Student Support Services

The vision of Elmwood Park CUSD 401 is that all children should be able to view themselves as learners and be engaged daily in authentic activities. This can happen by placing appropriate demands and expectations on each child, building self-esteem and results in greater personal success, and celebrating said success in a supporting and caring environment that it is lastingly affirmed. Every student's respective learning environment entitles them to the same education and expectations established by the state and federal governments. It is because of this vision Elmwood Park has for children that it remains committed to providing the necessary resources and support to help students, teachers, and parents close the academic gaps for struggling students and those with disabilities.

The district last year created a Department for Student Services and the addition of a Director for Student Services, two (2) District Special Education Coordinator positions, and Psychologists. The demographics of our students and their families have been quickly changing and providing more opportunities to the district in terms of providing academic intervention, social-emotional health services, and other resources. As a result, the district has taken steps in becoming autonomous in its provided supports and response time, in addition to becoming proactive in identifying trends and creating an appropriate response plan. All of these changes are impacting three (3) specific areas: special education, bilingual and English Learners, and social-emotional learning and restorative justice practices.

The district has a negotiated withdrawal agreement with the Leyden Area Special Education Cooperative (LASEC), which will see the district no longer part of the cooperative after June 30, 2020. The district's withdrawal plan and intergovernmental agreement with the cooperative has been approved by the LASEC Executive Board, each member district's board of education, the West 40, and the Illinois State Board of Education. Prior to last year, most of the decisions and direction for special education services were in conjunction with the Leyden Area Special Education Cooperative, or LASEC. Being one (1) of 11 member districts, the relationship of the cooperative was having the district spend over \$400,000 a year for administrative services to provide technical assistance, or decision making, in training for staff, student placement, continuum of services, and allocation of personnel and fiscal

resources. However, any services provided by the cooperative are essentially split with the rest of the member districts, meaning that \$400,000 is providing a number of part-time personnel and administrators that are not essentially dedicated fully to meet the needs of our district. That does not mean the cooperative has been or is negligent, but the needs of each district within the cooperative is inherently different.

The district also took steps to provide a continuum of supports throughout the buildings that includes co-teaching and a continuum of supports. Due to the varying needs of the students and the high percentage of students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the district expanded the number of Special Education teachers this school year after expanding Social Worker and Speech and Language Pathologist positions last year. The district will also be looking to hire its own Occupational and Physical Therapists and board-certified behavioral analysts for next year as well.

The district has provided more professional development opportunities for staff and administration over the last two (2) years. The district provided professional development related to differentiation and co-teaching with accompanied coaching, as well as de-escalation training training. The district continues to add more opportunities with many including writing defensible IEPs and 504 plans and supporting instructional classrooms.

Part of the Elm Middle School project is providing an updated learning environment for our CORE program, and the high school will be seeing the addition of a transition program with a renovation project already completed to accommodate the needs of the adult participants. For the CORE and transition program, there will now be six (6) sizeable spaces that will provide three (3) general learning environments, a dormitory environment complete with a kitchen, a bedroom living environment, and an independent living environment to work on participants' independent/daily living, vocational, and recreation and leisure skills. This is a classroom- and community-based program. There will also be areas for staff to provide services within the classroom. The district will also allow enrollment of out-of-district students for the secondary CORE and post-high school transition programs.

School Resource Officer

There is no limit to topics we cannot discuss that do not involve our local, state, and federal brethren. While the District is constantly adapting to the state's difficulty in providing budgets, alleviating unfunded mandates, bestowing new mandates of all shapes and sizes, and providing constant anxiety, the same cannot be said of the District's relationship at the local level.

The Villages of Elmwood Park and River Grove and the Board of Education approved an intergovernmental agreement that allowed for an Elmwood Park officer, Officer Chuck Lombardi, to be the School Resource Officer. He may be housed at the high school, but Officer Lombardi has been a presence and continued asset for all buildings in assisting in various situations, being a proactive liaison with law enforcement, and a voice in how we have bettered our security procedures. On April 29, Officer Lombardi, Commander Kmiecik, and Chief Fagiano will be present for a Public

Health and Safety Forum on lockdowns where the Elmwood Park Police Department and administration will review the district's safety procedures during soft and hard lockdowns and having those in attendance practice those as well.

The District continues to build a positive relationship with many of the Village's Departments. The District would like to thank Mr. Skip Saviano, Village President, Mr. Paul Volpe, Village Manager, Chief Frank Fagiano, Chief of Police, Mr. Dino Braglia, Director of Public Works and Water, and many other individuals for their communication and assistance in several matters. We look forward to continuing developing our relationship in the years to come.



New School Report Card System

Please click [here](#) for more information related to the new report card system issued by the Illinois State Board of Education. We are also expecting there to be some recalibrations in the state's overall algorithm for the next report card in determining said ratings.

As mentioned earlier, we have taken a significant step forward in ensuring all students in Elmwood Park are being exposed to a rigorous learning experience by having an articulated curriculum within English Language Arts, Math, and Science. This is the first year where students in the same grade level, in the same building, and across buildings are receiving the same materials and lessons. And as students move forward, the expectations, materials, and resources are more (inter)connected from one year to the next.

It is the hope of the District that by providing a consistent and equitable learning experience will provide a more solid foundation for the students and allow for more constructive conversations about resources, interventions and supports, and training. The staff in the district have been working incredibly hard learning a lot about our new curriculum programs and how best to teach them. To also assist the staff in this endeavor was the inclusion of instructional coaching where the staff can have a consistent resource available who will work to assist them as they moved forward. This district has also "flooded" Kindergarten through Grade 2 with additional Reading supports so there is a firmer skill set built in for the students to better succeed in Grade 3.

The report card is also looking at not just how many students are enrolling in dual credit or Advanced Placement classes, but they are now looking at the number of students who succeed in receiving credit or passing the exam. Elmwood Park High School continues how best to expand upon dual credit opportunities and the number of Advanced Placement courses being offered to students. Elm Middle School and Elmwood Park High School have identified student interest levels in a number of career clusters in order to provide an articulated interest-level pathway that has the potential to lead to certification, limit college remediation, and dual credit.



Illinois
State Board of
Education

English Learners

For our English Learner student population, there has been over a 45% increase in EL enrollment. EL numbers are concentrated heavily at the elementary level with John Mills Elementary having the highest number of EL students, primarily due to three grade levels of a bilingual program being housed there. We are starting to see a shift downwards in students enrolled in our bilingual program and moving to receiving EL services. For context of the breadth of the multiple language spoken in Elmwood Park alone, there are 28 languages spoken at home and 19 languages spoken by EL students enrolled in the District.

As mentioned before, the district has significantly invested in co-teaching, having our Special Education and EL teachers be seen and act no differently than what would be considered a primary general education teacher. This also means that no matter the type of teacher in the classroom, each teacher is servicing all students so the co-teaching model is not just for the benefit of a smaller group of students. As a result, all of our students, regardless of an associated acronym, are part of the same learning experience as their peers. Also with our move to e-texts, this is the first time our curriculum is available in Spanish with the companies continuing to work on translating into other languages in the future. Having a curriculum accessible in multiple languages not only assists the students in their own learning process, but can allow parents to be more involved in what their children are learning day to day.

Community Outreach

The district website is updated regularly to reflect all of the happenings across the district. The [Superintendent Spotlight](#) launched in February of 2018 continues to provide information directly from the Superintendent and is available on the District Website in English, Spanish, and Polish. [Twitter](#) is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms and this year. The district hopped on the Twitter train with accounts for each building and one for the district. Even if you do not have Twitter, you can find the full Twitter feeds on the district website.

This year we launched our [podcast channel](#), "Parkside Chat," with the amazingly witty host, Ms. Iovinelli. Featuring teachers, students, and even superintendents and with over 1,400 total plays, the channel currently features 12 episodes with topics including An Innovation to Opportunity, Elm renovations, social-emotional learning, the district instructional specialists, students and staff on going 1:1, the Elm Middle School Drama Club, elementary programming and facilities, National Board Certification, co-teaching, learning about the LGBTQ+ community, and full-day Kindergarten.

Recognition

The district is now beginning to be recognized for its contributions in providing quality learning experiences to its students, in addition its valued stakeholders. For the first time, the district was recognized at the Illinois State Board of Education's "[Those Who Excel](#)" awards banquet with four (4) awards. The District Technology Committee received an Award of Merit for the "Team" category, Ms. Jessica Iovinelli received an Award of Merit for "School Administrator," Mr. Michael Scheidt received an Award of Recognition for "Community Volunteer," and Ms. Morgan Freeck earning an Award of Excellence for "Early Career Educator."

For the first time in 20 years, the district had a [Golden Apple finalist](#). Mr. Josh Heinen, a Special Education teacher at the high school, was one (1) of 32 finalists from over 600 submissions. Even if we believe the committee made an error in their final decisions, we are extraordinarily proud of this achievement and of the work he has done and continues to do.

And Mr. Doug Noyes, the high school's Athletic Director, was [recognized](#) as a Certified Athletic Administrator by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association. To earn this, Mr. Noyes had to demonstrate the highest level of knowledge and expertise in the field of interscholastic athletic administration.



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In Closing

With these many changes in the district, I am extraordinarily proud of the staff for their commitment and involvement in regards to these changes and the overall direction of where the district is going. They have been exposed to a lot between new curriculum and the shift to a blended learning environment, and they have stepped up admirably in providing a different learning experience for our students. A lot has been asked of them, and their dedication and commitment does not go unnoticed.

In addition, the district has received a high number of compliments from students and parents about a number of moves the district has made over the past few years. These compliments include, but are not limited to, a common curriculum being taught, [approving a full-day Kindergarten plan](#), making the middle school a true middle school, the embracing of technology, and expanding interscholastic and learning opportunities for students. And we have also heard palpable excitement from students and parents for our push for college and career pathways in Grades 6-12, and we are equally anxious to present that comprehensive direction at the May 15 Regular Board Meeting.

I'd like to thank the stakeholders of Elmwood Park for their continued investment and faith in the direction we are continuing to move forward on, and I look forward to continued dialogue in the 2019-20 school year. Thank you.

- Superintendent Dr. Nicolas Wade

