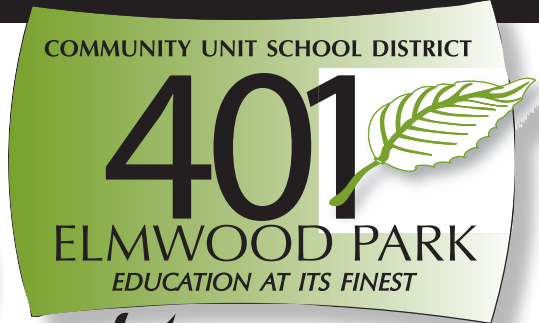


FOCUS



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District Embarks on New Technology Plan

IN May, following months of analysis and discussion, the District 401 Board of Education voted to begin the implementation of a new Instructional Technology Plan. Initially, the plan's focus will be on extensive professional development using Google Classroom as the main educational tool. In Year 1 of the plan (2016 – 2017), Elmwood Park High School and Elm Middle School teachers and administrators will receive the initial in-school training on Google Classroom basics, and how classroom instruction may involve the increased use of technology. Elementary staff members will receive a lesser amount of introductory training. The Board also approved the addition of at least one instructional technology coordinator, who will provide training opportunities to groups and individual teachers.

Because of the uncertainty of state funding and district revenue, the Board will review the Instructional Technology Plan on an annual basis to determine whether the next steps can be initiated. If funding is available, Year 2 of the plan will include additional training and the purchase of more laptop carts for the high school and middle school. Then, no later than Year 3, the high school is scheduled to have a laptop for each student, followed by the same for middle school students in Year 4. The elementary schools will benefit from the movement of existing laptop carts from the high school and middle school, so that all teachers and students will have increased opportunities for the instructional uses of technology throughout the day.

National Honor Society Builds Leaders, Community

Each year, EPHS sophomores through seniors with a 3.3 cumulative GPA or better are invited to apply for membership in the National Honor Society (NHS). The organization "serves to honor students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and character." Its purpose is to "create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote leadership, and to develop character." Membership provides students with NHS scholarship opportunities

Prospective EPHS students must complete an information form, obtain three letters of recommendation from teachers, and are evaluated on their level of service and leadership in community and school activities. Selection is completed through a faculty vote. Each NHS member commits to providing 25 hours of service during the school year.

There are currently 49 EPHS National Honor Society members. These students implemented and led numerous volunteer efforts this year, including: *Adopt-*

a-Kid, Community Easter Egg Hunt, Leadership Week, and *Feed My Starving Children*. They served as leaders for Eighth Grade Orientation, Open House and Parent-Teacher Conferences, and assisted at the Tiger Tear, Leyden Easter Egg Hunt, and Halloween events. Their good work is celebrated at a banquet and at an end-of-year picnic.



National Honor Society members helped provide holiday gifts for children in need.

Elmwood Park High School Class of 2016

On Sunday, May 22, 238 seniors graduated from Elmwood Park High School. *Sophie Tran* was the class's valedictorian, while *Angelica Bosco* was the salutatorian.

Graduates will attend many colleges and universities, including Dominican, Northeastern Illinois, DePaul, SIU, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, University of Illinois, Chicago, Purdue, Concordia, Loyola, Elmhurst College, University of Colorado, University of Oklahoma, University of Missouri, Bradley, Marquette, IIT, University of Wisconsin, Triton, and others.

Congratulations to the graduates and to their families!

Introducing the New Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

On July 1, upon the retirement of



Dr. Paula Hlavacek, Dr. Nicolas D. Wade will become the district's new assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. His is a familiar face: For the past three years Dr. Wade has served the district as the assistant principal of Elmwood Park High School. He has been an English teacher in addition to an assistant principal, and worked in education for 10 years.

Dr. Wade

He earned a BA in English and Secondary Arts from Bradley University; a Master of Education, Leadership and Administration from Benedictine University; and a Doctor of Education in District Educational Leadership from Argosy University.

Dr. Wade also makes presentations on educational topics to state, regional, and national organizations.

"I have fully enjoyed my time in the Elmwood Park community, and am excited to be able to continue my work in the district. It means a great deal to me that the Board of Education and district have put their faith in me to continue the good work that Dr. Hlavacek has accomplished. I am greatly humbled by the confidence that she, as well as others, have in me to fill her shoes," Dr. Wade remarked.

Dr. Wade is an avid moviegoer and bookworm. He also enjoys golfing, spending time with his wife and young son, and is looking forward to the birth of his second child.

Congratulations, Retirees

Eleven dedicated staff members will soon retire. Congratulations and best wishes to:

District Dianne Cravens, Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, 10 years; **Dr. Paula Hlavacek**, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, 18 years.

Elm Middle School Paula Swiatek, Math Teacher, 16 years.

Elmwood Elementary School Devra Glancy, First Grade Teacher, 16 years; **MaryAnne Kirsch**, Fifth Grade Teacher, 24 years.

Elmwood Park High School School Georgia Hendrix, Social Worker, 16 years; **Karen Katolick**, Dean of Students, 25 years; **Doug Whitesell**, Math Teacher, 22 years.

John Mills School Mary Ann Hewak, Principal's Secretary, 22 years; **Peggy Lopata**, First Grade Teacher, 45 years; **Cathy McGovern**, Fifth Grade Teacher, 37 years.

Rave Reviews for Guys and Dolls

About 100 Elmwood Park High School students – and several eager Elm Middle School students – worked in front of and behind the scenes to produce one of the school's best musicals ever. *Guys and Dolls* played to an enthusiastic, packed house for three performances from March 18-20, and for two open dress rehearsals for elementary and middle school students on March 17.

Noah Pligge directed the show, Brittany Muszynski designed the sets, Michael Popplewell oversaw the vocal music, Kyle Rhoades served as pit director/producer/piano accompanist/lighting designer, and Susan Schultz designed the costumes.

"This production was among the very best in my 14 years in the district," stated Michael Popplewell, EPHS and Elm Middle School vocal music teacher, "especially in how well cast the students were for their roles. The 'chemistry' between our Sarah Brown (Anna Sullivan) and Sky Masterson (Dante Bruno), and Adelaide (Regan Huston) and Nathan Detroit (Tyler Pesko), was believable.

"Another challenge for this show was having a strong singer in the role of Nicely-Nicely Johnson, and Michael Santos had great performances in this role the entire weekend. Our director, Noah Pligge, devoted countless hours to working with the performers. He deserves credit for his dedication to our students. Mr. Pligge also choreographed all of the dance sequences, which was no small feat!

"Additionally, we had the largest pit orchestra (about 36 players) we've ever had. Combined with cast and crew, about 100 students – more than 10% of our high school population – participated in this production. The costumes were almost completely handmade and/or tailored by our own Susan Schultz, who has worked on our shows since 1999, and

deserves a special mention, since she makes the visual scene come alive with her attention to detail."

The show was a huge success. Dr. Kevin Anderson, District 401 superintendent, related that he received several letters from community members in praise of the performance.



District Spelling Bee

District 401 students participated in the eighty-sixth annual Scripps National Spelling Bee at Elmwood Elementary School on January 22.

Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders from John Mills Elementary and Elmwood Elementary schools participated in the event. Before the holiday break, students at both schools took a written spelling test. From the

results of this test, 17 children from each school were selected to take part in the event.

This exciting Spelling Bee lasted 24 rounds until John Mills Elementary School student **Andrew Ticao** correctly spelled the word "campaign."

Congratulations to Andrew and to all of the Spelling Bee participants!

“Most Influential Teacher” Award

Elm Middle School teacher Elena Bartolomei is doubly honored: first, by one of her students, and second, by a national bookseller. The eighth grade language arts teacher received a certificate of appreciation for her “inspiration and commitment to students” through the Barnes and Noble *My Favorite Teacher Contest*.

To be considered for this award, a student must submit an essay, poem, or thank you letter about how a teacher influenced their life, and why they appreciate and admire that teacher. Barnes and Noble representatives selected the winning entries.

Eighth grade student Klarissa Olivarez wrote about Ms. Bartolomei, her teacher. An excerpt from Klarissa’s 500-word letter states: “Your words inspire me. ‘A book is a vitamin for your brain.’ Those eight words are music to my ears. Just because I barely met you last year, doesn’t mean you have not had the time to impact my life, because you already have. You tell me that I will go to college. You influence me to have an incredible future and a backup plan...”

Entering the contest was an independent class project, a way for students to gain experience in writing, and for them to learn how to enter a writing contest. Earlier this year, Elm



Middle School Principal Dr. Kathleen Porreca received a letter from Barnes and Noble, stating that Ms. Bartolomei was selected as the *My Favorite Teacher* recipient from the Oak Brook Barnes and Noble bookstore.

Barnes and Noble honored Ms. Bartolomei (photo, at left) and Klarissa (right) at an awards ceremony held at the store in March.



Early Childhood Center students and their families celebrated Earth Day on April 22 with a parade around the school. Students studied conservation in class and culminated their learning with the parade.

Registration for the 2016-2017 School Year

Returning and new/transfer students (Elmwood Park residents only): visit www.epcusd401.org for registration information. Registration materials were either mailed or given to all current students in May. If the materials are misplaced, parents can visit their child’s home school website and click on the “student registration” link in the quick links section.

Residents who do not have access to a computer may visit the Elmwood Park Public Library located at 1 Conti Parkway. There is a small fee for printing.

Forms and copies of proofs of residency are due by Friday, July 22.
Mail all documents to:

Elmwood Park High School
Attn: Kim Kaminski
8201 W. Fullerton Avenue
Elmwood Park IL 60707

Walk-in registration is Thursday, July 21, 1:00 - 7:00 p.m. at Elmwood Park High School, 8201 W. Fullerton Avenue, Elmwood Park.

For New Students
Prekindergarten and kindergarten registration was held every Tuesday and Friday from April 22 through

June 3 at the Early Childhood Center, 4 Conti Parkway.

New/transfer student registration for prekindergarten through twelfth grade begins Monday, July 25. Parents need to contact their home school for an appointment.

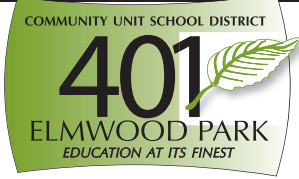
The first day of school is Monday, August 15. Students will follow the normal school day schedule at each building.

RESIDENCY MUST BE PROVEN

Because Elmwood Park borders on several towns, the district is diligent in ensuring that only students who are Elmwood Park residents enroll in its schools. Parents must document proof of residency every year. The district may sometimes question the legitimacy of paperwork. When this occurs, the district has several options that can confirm or disprove residency. The district subscribes to a special database that has access to public records, including when utilities were established, and if a property is in foreclosure.

The district may also use a private investigations company to assist. In Illinois, it is a *Class C misdemeanor – punishable by a \$500 fine or up to 30 days in jail – to knowingly enroll a child in the wrong school district.* In addition, parents are billed for each day of non-resident tuition. In District 401, this is currently \$65.39 per day.





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Students Have Best Handwriting in Country, State

The results of the twenty-fifth annual Zaner-Bloser National Handwriting Contest are in, and three District 401 students from Elmwood School are top winners! With about 270,000 students nationwide participating, this is no easy achievement.

Elmwood School student **Donald Yu** is the first grade Grand National Handwriting Champion – recognized with the best handwriting of all first graders who entered the contest in the country. He is also recognized as the best first grade handwriter in the State of Illinois. Elmwood School students **Taran Sharma**, second grade, and **Olivia Shipinski**, third grade, are the State of Illinois’ winners for their grade levels. These students will receive awards and prizes from Zaner-Bloser, an educational publisher, for their achievements.

All first- through third-grade Elmwood School students entered the contest, which promotes legible handwriting. Under their teacher’s direction, each student worked on producing his/her best handwriting sample in class.

Teachers determined grade level winners and entered these submissions in the national contest. Zaner-Bloser selected a grade level winner from each state, and from these chose one Grand National Handwriting Champion for each grade, K-8.

“We are very proud of Donald, Taran and Olivia’s accomplishments in this year’s handwriting contest,” Elmwood School Principal Kevin Seibel stated. “These students have a great work ethic in their home and in class, set high expectations for themselves, and they will certainly be future Elmwood School leaders.”

Elmwood School is also proud of the efforts and dedication of their teachers in promoting excellent handwriting. Congratulations to teachers Lisa Anderson – 1st grade, Sandy Katsantones – 2nd grade, and Diane Daniels – 3rd grade, for their wonderful work in producing national and state handwriting champions!

For more information on the National Handwriting Contest, visit: www.zaner-bloser.com.



Best handwriters (L to R): Elmwood School students Taran Sharma, Donald Yu, and Olivia Shipinski.