

In this issue...

Welcome, new
staff members
—page 2

New assistant
principal,
dean at Old
Orchard—
page 3

School board
elections on
tap—page 3

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In-school technology gets mobile

Because technology is such an integral part of teaching and learning in the 21st century, District 68 is proceeding with a plan to make mobile computing available for all teachers and students.

The first step, completed over the past summer, was installing a robust wireless network throughout all district buildings. “We put in a Cisco wireless network that will serve the district needs now and for the future as we add more devices,” said Technology Director Irina Ziemann.

As more and more people rely on multiple technology-based devices—smart phones, e-readers and tablets, laptops at work and at home—schools will need to accommodate their needs, Ziemann said. The new network makes connecting electronic devices to the Internet and to each other quicker and easier.

“It was a big project to rewire the buildings, but now teachers have the ability to access technology as they move around the room,” said Superintendent Frances McTague.

As the next step in the move to mobile computing, the district has provided all teachers with new laptop PCs this year. The laptops give teachers more flexibility than they have had in the past.

For example, teachers can connect their laptops to the interactive whiteboards in their classrooms, using them to teach lessons or administer quizzes. Outside the

classroom, teachers might use the new computers to view student data at team meetings, go through online training or work on lesson plans at home.

Also new this year, each school has a cart of new laptops housed in the library media center, which students can use for projects and class activities. Those computers are the same model as those used by the teachers.

The district is making other changes on the technology front that have less to do with hardware. For one thing, there is a move toward using applications such as Google Docs, which lets teachers collaborate on documents and store them in “the cloud” so they can work on them anywhere from any device. Students will be introduced to Google Docs during the coming year.

District 68 is also investigating several learning management systems (LMS), which enable teachers to create an online platform for their class. An LMS could include communication channels for parents, students and teachers, a repository for class documents, a class calendar, tools for turning in homework and taking assessments, and more.

“It’s a way to extend the learning community to an online presence,” Ziemann said. The district will transition to a new learning management system next year.

To help teachers and students get up to

Continued on page 4

Welcome, new staff members!

Andrea Dvorsky, kindergarten teacher at Devonshire, graduated from California State University with a bachelor's in teaching. She was a teaching assistant at Devonshire last year.

Michael Flood, social worker at OOJH, has a bachelor's in psychology from St. Norbert College and a master's in social work from the University of Illinois at Chicago. For the past four years he coordinated social services for people requiring living assistance, including residents of Lambs Farm and La Casa Notre.

Rachael Garay, Spanish teacher at OOJH, received a bachelor's from the University of Wisconsin in Spanish education and a master's in Spanish from California State University. She also has bilingual and ESL approvals from National Louis University. She taught Spanish for five years in District 219.

Ivy Jordan, school psychologist at OOJH and Jane Stenson, received a bachelor's in psychology from the University of North Carolina, a master's in psychology at North Carolina Central University, and a Ph.D. in school psychology from Loyola University. She was a half-time school psychologist at Highland for two years, and has been the school psychologist at Niles Township District for Special Education for five years.

Judy Kim, science teacher at OOJH, received her bachelor's from the University of Wisconsin and is working on a master's in education at National Louis University. Last year she taught biology at North Chicago High School.

Samia Longi, ELL teacher at OOJH, graduated from the University of Peshawar with a bachelor's in education and from DePaul University with a master's in elementary education. She has just completed an ELL certificate program at National Louis University.

Brett Morrow, language arts teacher at OOJH, received his bachelor's from the University of Iowa and his master's as a reading specialist from Concordia University. He has been a language arts teacher for 10 years at



Back row, from left: Brett Morrow, Allison Pleser, Patricia Perrin, Michael Flood, Todd Ronna, Samia Longi, Mark Ribbens, Mark Thompson. Front row, from left: Rachael Garay, Brittney Nelson, Andrea Dvorsky, Lisa Murphy, Judy Kim, Ivy Jordan, Katherine Short, Megan Preis, Lisa Talbert.

Palos South Middle School.

Lisa Murphy, special education teacher at the Early Childhood Center, graduated from Northern Illinois University with a bachelor's in early childhood education. She was a part-time preschool special education teacher at the ECC last year.

Brittney Nelson, speech pathologist at Devonshire, has a bachelor's from Elmhurst College and a master's from Northwestern University in speech-language pathology. She was a speech pathologist for Wauconda School District 118.

Patricia Perrin, kindergarten teacher at Highland, received a bachelor's in elementary education and a master's in curriculum and instruction from National Louis University. For the past three years, she has been a long-term substitute in District 68.

Allison Pleser, instructional technology at Highland and Stenson, graduated from University of Central Missouri and is working on a master's in instructional technology from Northern Illinois University. She was a technology teacher in Evergreen Park District 124 for seven years.

Megan Preis, instructional technology at Devonshire and OOJH, has a bachelor's in education from Miami University and a master's in instructional leadership from the University

in the Cumberland. She also has a master's in learning and technology from Western Governors University. She taught as a STEM specialist in the Carroll County Schools in Kentucky for the past four years.

Todd Ronna, fourth-grade teacher at Devonshire, received his bachelor's in elementary education from Roosevelt University. He was a special education teaching assistant at Devonshire last year.

Katherine Short, science teacher at OOJH, graduated from Western Illinois University with a B.S. in education. She did her student teaching at Orland Junior High last fall and was the long-term substitute science teacher there in spring 2012.

Lisa Talbert, LMC director at Highland, received bachelor's and master's degrees in library and information science from the University of Illinois. She was a media specialist in Orland School District 135 for the past four years.

Mark Thompson, math teacher at OOJH, has a B.S. from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and a master's in education from DePaul University. He taught math and science at Ames Middle School in Chicago for three years and advanced mathematics at Mather High School for one year.

New assistant principal, dean at Old Orchard

Old Orchard Junior High welcomes one veteran administrator back in a new position and a second administrator who comes to the school from another district.

As announced last spring, Andy Carpenter begins the year as the new assistant principal. He was dean of students for the past three years and the school social worker for four years before that. Carpenter is taking over from Rob McElligott, who accepted a principal's job in another district.

"The start to the school year has been great," Carpenter said. "I was able to start wrapping my head around my new responsibilities over the summer, but things truly begin once students walk through our doors. We've been able to make some small adjustments from previous years to improve how we educate our students."

For example, the junior high has modified the bell schedule to increase instructional minutes during the school day. And for the first time OOHJH is offering the "Second Step" social skills curriculum to all students.

"I'm thrilled with our new staff members and the experiences and skills they bring to our school. I'm excited about the start of the school year and energized as I step into the assistant principal role," Carpenter added.

Taking over Carpenter's previous position as dean of students is newcomer Mark Ribbens. He comes to OOHJH from Lake County School Districts 117 and 118, where he was a physical education teacher for nine years. He also coached football and baseball at the high school level.

"The start of the year has been terrific, the staff is top-notch and very welcoming, and the students are excited and very respectful," Ribbens said during the first week of school. "I'm looking forward to meeting as many students as possible, building positive relationships with those stu-



Andy Carpenter



Mark Ribbens

dents and working with a great staff."

Ribbens has a bachelor's degree from Northern Illinois University, a master's in teacher leadership from the University of Illinois and another master's in educational leadership from Northeastern Illinois University. He lives with his wife—a high school PE teacher—and 2½-year-old daughter in Grayslake

A teacher in his graduate program, Dr. Jim Fritts, piqued Ribbens' interest in District 68. "He told me if I ever saw an administrative position open in this district, I should apply and stay for many years. I kept my eye on Old Orchard Junior High over the last two years and when I saw the opening I applied. The rest is history."

Talking about the new dean of students, Carpenter said, "Mark and I were able to spend a few weeks prior to student arrival on the transition. Mark's professionalism and student-centered approach are great assets to our community. He has spent these first few days getting to know our students and parents and working hard to

continue the tradition of excellence at Old Orchard."

School board elections on tap

Four seats on District 68's seven-member Board of Education will be up for election in the April 9, 2013 election. The School Board Nominating Committee is convening in September to begin the process of screening candidates who want to run and wish to be endorsed by the committee. Endorsement is not required for candidates to run.

The chair of the Nominating Committee is Steve Gardner.

The first day candidates can circulate petitions to get on the ballot is Sept. 25. Petitions must be filed between Dec. 17 and Dec. 24.

Anyone interested in running for a four-year term on the Board can contact the district office for a packet (9440 Kenton Ave., Skokie, 847-676-9000). Candidates must be registered voters and live in the district.

IN BRIEF

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Board of Education meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month in the Educational Service Center at 9440 Kenton Ave. You are invited to attend.

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Technology

Continued from page 1

speed with the new technology capabilities, a pair of new instructional technology specialists—Arlison Pleser and Megan Preis—will be working in all four District 68 schools. “They will work closely with teachers to model technology-rich lessons, plan units of study, train teachers on new instructional tools and bring new advancements in the world of tech into the school,” Ziemann said.

The instructional technology specialists also will help teachers track how technology affects teaching and learning. “Teachers find that learning changes when students have their own laptops,” Ziemann explained. “Project assignments may need to change; instruction becomes more customized to student needs. The new laptops will give teachers a taste of how teaching will be when all students have mobile devices in class all day.”

That day is coming, although it will take time. “We are moving carefully to one-to-one computing for students, but that will be a couple of years away,” McTague said. “First we have to lay in the infrastructure and professional development for the teachers.”

When one-to-one computing is in place and

every student can work online in the classroom, McTague added, “It will change the way instruction rolls out. It doesn’t look the same as the traditional classroom.”

A committee of teachers, administrators and parents will work on plans for developing a mobile computing environment for all students.

Ziemann noted, “We’re constantly talking with other districts across the country about trends and alternatives. We have to be thoughtful to ensure that technology budgets are sustainable while at the same time doing what’s best for our students in the 21st century.”

Join Us at Fall Fest!

5–7 p.m.
Wednesday, Sept. 12
Old Orchard Junior
High School
9310 Kenton Ave.

For currently enrolled
District 68 students
and their families

