



*Preparing children
to learn and succeed
in a changing world.*

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER - FALL & WINTER 2022/2023

THANK YOU FOR READING THE LATEST D57 NEWSLETTER!

District 57 serves over 2,000 pre-kindergarten through 8th grade students in and around the central business district of Mount Prospect, Illinois. District 57 encompasses 4.3 square miles, including approximately 10,000 households.

District 57 operates four schools: Westbrook School for Young Learners, Fairview Elementary School, Lions Park Elementary School, and Lincoln Middle School.

Thank you for taking the time to read all about District 57's happenings, achievements, honors, and news. It truly is an incredible district worth celebrating.

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Community Respondents Highly Value D57, Survey Says

According to a recent survey, 84% of people would recommend District 57 to a friend or family member. This incredible rating ranks District 57 in the 92nd percentile on this topic of overall community satisfaction when compared to other area districts.

In Fall 2022, District 57 hired an independent agency to conduct this community-wide survey. The purpose of the survey was to gauge the community's satisfaction with the district's performance in a variety of areas. The survey was also intended to give guidance on important issues facing the district, and provide direction for the coming years.

So, where are we doing well? District 57 received positive ratings in many areas, including: employing high-quality teachers and staff; campus safety; building pride in the community; and having the support of the community. This feedback celebrates the significant efforts our staff put forth every day in support of education.

Additionally, respondents felt District 57 had strong leadership from both District 57's administrators and its School Board, and that both are doing what it takes to make our district successful (continued on page 10).



Scan this QR code for a full report of the survey's findings.



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SUCCEED *in a* CHANGING WORLD

It's hard to believe this school year is already half of the way through. It has been a remarkable and welcomed return to pre-pandemic routines. Our district has shown incredible resilience post-pandemic, and this edition of the District 57 newsletter is a celebration of that fact.

Looking through the pages of this newsletter, I hope you feel a sense of pride as I do in this dynamic, engaged community of educators, learners, families, and citizens whose dedication to the health and growth of our children is apparent.

Here are just a few highlights from these pages...

Lend your voice to our **District 57 Portrait of a Graduate** process by completing the survey linked to the QR code on page 3. This exciting endeavor seeks to define the characteristics of an ideal District 57 graduate. You can read all about the exciting new **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)** program (page 6) meant to equip students with the skills necessary to notice, prevent, and report bullying when it happens. On page 1, you will find some of the results of our recent **School Perceptions Survey** as we engage in self-reflection while striving for excellence. Celebrate some of our recent **Community Connections** with Education Academy Interns at Prospect High School (page 10) and the Mount Prospect Fire Department (page 11). And hear about an effort to grow the whole learner through initiatives like **Kindness Club** and the reintroduction of outdoor learning (page 5).

DR. MARY GORR
SUPERINTENDENT

I'm excited about the district's momentum, commitment, and direction. Looking forward, our district will host a Summit in mid-February meant to define, refine, and launch a roadmap - our 5-year Strategic Plan - for District 57 moving forward. This two-day work session incorporates voices from all areas of our community: teachers, staff, parents/guardians, leaders, civic partner representatives, and more. The work from these days - along with data and input gathered from other initiatives - will act as the district's northern star for future years.

I'M EXCITED ABOUT THE DISTRICT'S MOMENTUM, COMMITMENT, AND DIRECTION.

Our path forward will present challenges, but with such a strong community as partners, I know together we can continue District 57's history of providing an exceptional education with the whole child in mind to all the students in our district.

Dr. Mary Gorr

DISTRICT 57 WELCOMES NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS



PICTURED: Karen Schwartzwald (left), Dr. Mary Gorr (middle), and Eric Larson (right).

District 57 welcomed four new members to its administration and leadership teams. **Eric Larson** took over as principal of Lincoln Middle School alongside **Keri Malow-Williams**, the new assistant principal of student services. Larson previously worked as principal of Patton Elementary School in Arlington Heights District 25, and Malow-Williams as an instructional coach in Skokie School District 73.5. **Breanna Grzybek** joined Lions Park Elementary School as their new assistant principal. She comes to District 57 after ten years as an elementary school teacher in District 25. **Karen Schwartzwald** also joined District 57 as the new director of human resources. Karen previously served as a school administrator in Glenview Community Consolidated School District 34 and High School District 214.

DISTRICT 57 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Dr. Mary Gorr, Superintendent

Dr. Kristin Vonder Haar, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Jason Kaiz, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Karen Schwartzwald, Director of Human Resources

Sara Tyburski, Director of Student Services

Mark Fijor, Director of Technology

Danielle Crandall, Principal of Westbrook School for Young Learners

Karl Anderson, Assistant Principal of Westbrook School for Young Learners

Dan Ophus, Principal of Fairview Elementary School

Una Durkan, Assistant Principal of Fairview Elementary School

Katie Kelly, Principal of Lions Park Elementary School

Breanna Grzybek, Assistant Principal of Lions Park Elementary School

Eric Larson, Principal of Lincoln Middle School

Randy Steen, Assistant Principal of Lincoln Middle School

Keri Malow-Williams, Assistant Principal of Lincoln Middle School



COMMUNITY INVITED TO DEFINE THE QUALITIES OF A DISTRICT 57 LEARNER

In the past year, District 57 has worked to define the ideal characteristics and capabilities of a District 57 graduate, a definition referred to as the *District 57 Portrait of a Graduate*.

To begin, District 57 administrators ran an exhaustive review of current research from the business world, education, and psychology in an effort to gather a long list of traits and capabilities of highly successful, well-rounded individuals.

This list of descriptors was then compared against content standards in reading, math, science, social studies, & social-emotional learning. Teachers, students, and administrators collaborated to synthesize and sort these terms into meaningful categories to better clarify a vision for a District 57 learner.

Now the district is over a year into this work and has a solid starting point: a set of terms to describe the *Portrait of a Graduate*. The district is asking parent/guardians/community members to lend their voice to this process. Using the QR codes above, please take a moment to learn a bit more about the *District 57 Portrait of a Graduate* and then complete the 3-5 minute survey. On this survey, you will be asked to rate select words to best describe your vision for your child's educational outcomes, along with answering a few additional questions.

Your responses to this survey, along with prior research and work session outcomes, will move District 57 into the next phase of the process where focus groups will ensure a final *District 57 Portrait of a Graduate* that fully captures the community's vision for all children.

LEARN MORE



TAKE THE SURVEY



DISTRICT 57 SCHOOL BOARD

Eileen Kowalczyk, President

Kimberly Fay, Vice President

Jennifer Kobus, Board Member

Vicki Chung, Board Member

Jennifer Ciok, Board Member

Corrin Bennett-Kill, Board Member

Chris Lettow, Board Member

SCAN FOR MORE
BOARD INFO!



STUDENTS BRING BIG BOOST TO STAFF'S DAY

Students of the Structured Opportunities for Academics & Responsibility (SOAR) program at Lincoln Middle School operate a unique coffee-delivery service on campus called SOARBucks. The service program is designed to build student life skills that can be applied in numerous real-world settings.

SOARBucks started in 2019 after Krystal Luce, a special education teacher at Lincoln, and the director of the SOARBucks program, discovered a similar initiative at the Career Life Skills (CLS) program housed at John Hersey High School. With the help of a grant from the District 57 Education Foundation and the support of administration at Lincoln and District 57, Luce was able to purchase all the supplies needed to launch SOARBucks.

Each Wednesday, students in the SOAR program - along with a group of students in a small math class - fill and deliver coffee, tea, or hot chocolate orders for Lincoln's staff, and manage the money brought in from the day's sales.

"I think it's important for all students to build skills that can be applied beyond the educational setting," said Luce. "SOARBucks is an amazing opportunity for students to gain experience using academic, social, and independent life skills in a fun way."



PICTURED: SOAR student Rabell Y. prepares a coffee order for SOARBucks.

Students focus on practicing money management skills, maintaining supplies for their business, providing top-notch customer service, and developing the necessary social skills required to work on a team and connect with others.

"SOARBucks also provides staff with another way to positively connect with students who are a part of the program," said Luce.

Half of the total sales proceeds for the quarter go to replenishing the business's supplies, and the other half is used to purchase a prize or experience for the students. Recently SOAR students were rewarded for their hard work with a donut party.



PICTURED: Lincoln Middle School student Emmy F. (second from left) helps deliver coffee to Robin Moran (left) while accompanied by her speech and language pathologist Julie Hirsch (second from right) and teacher Krystal Luce (right) (photo credit Paul Valade, *Daily Herald*).

5TH-GRADERS RESUME OUTDOOR EDUCATION

District 57 has a history of including outdoor education in its curriculum, but these types of experiences were lost for some years due to various factors, such as funding and COVID.

This school year outdoor education has returned for 5th graders with a trip to Sunrise Lake Outdoor Education Center (SLOEC). Fairview 5th graders took the trip in the fall, and Lions Park 5th graders are set to visit this spring. Students participate in paddle boating, team-building games, hiking, and archery.



CLAIRE KOEHLINGER RECEIVES DAILY HERALD TOP TEACHER RECOGNITION

Lions Park's beloved music teacher, Claire Koehlinger, was recognized as a "Top Teacher" in a *Daily Herald* special series this fall.

Along with a handful of area teachers, Koehlinger was celebrated for her student rapport, dedication to music education, and her infectious energy.

She teaches 2nd-5th grade music and adaptive music to her special needs students. "So I'm trying to help their big picture of musicianship," said Koehlinger, "and I give them lots of tools, a lot of foundational skills, so that way they're able to pursue whatever interests them most."



1ST-GRADERS SPREAD KINDNESS AT WESTBROOK

Westbrook 1st grade students jumped into Kindness Club this December to learn more about the influence kindness can have in the world. The club empowered these young students to practice kindness in their own lives, offering suggestions and challenges. Students also designed their very own kindness t-shirts, created coat-drive posters, and collected cold-weather clothing for in-need students in the area. This successful club is led by teachers Lisa Ryno, Kara McCarthy, and Elena Coughlin.



DISTRICT LAUNCHES NEW SOCIAL- EMOTIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM

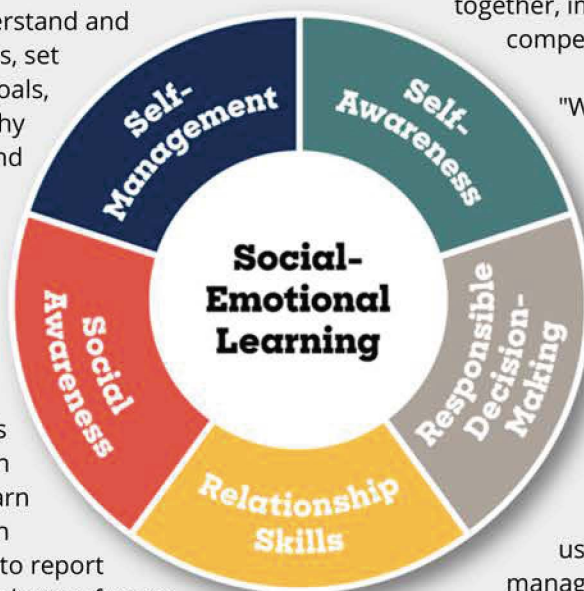
When District 57 builds its curriculum, it considers both the social and emotional development of each student as well as their academic development. This approach is referred to as Social-Emotional Learning, or SEL.

This Fall, District 57 launched a new SEL program in its schools called Second Step. Second Step is a classroom-based social skills program with its own curriculum at each grade level. The lessons and work are designed to reduce impulsive, high-risk, and aggressive behaviors and increase children's social competence and other protective factors.

SEL helps people understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, have and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

One important unit District 57 students cover in Second Step is the Bullying Prevention unit. Here students learn how to recognize when bullying is happening, to report bullying to a caring adult, to refuse to let bullying happen to themselves or others, and to be a bystander who stands up and is part of the solution to bullying.

District 57 underscored the importance of bullying prevention by offering a special screening of "The Upstanders" in January. This powerful film explores all aspects of cyber-bullying, from bully to victim, bystanders and family members. If you weren't able to attend, you can scan the QR code here to view the film.



PICTURED: Nancy Brooks leads her 1st grade students in a morning discussion centered on emotional learning.

When used in school settings, SEL supports whole-child development. When implemented schoolwide, SEL can help create a positive school climate where students and adults can thrive together, improving social-emotional competence and academic achievement.

"We are incredibly excited to have launched this program in District 57," said Dr. Kristin Vonder Haar, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning. "Social-emotional learning has such positive outcomes. We're fortunate to be able to focus on the whole child's learning and development, not just a few aspects of it."

The District 57 SEL goals while using Second Step are to develop self-management skills, use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships, and to demonstrate decision-making skills in all areas of life.



District 57 invites parents/guardians to watch "The Upstanders," a film about resilience and the power of connection to end bullying. No code necessary. Simply scan this QR code for viewing.

District 57 Avoids Teacher Shortage Trend

Despite a dismal staff shortage in schools across Illinois - according to the Illinois School Board of Education - District 57 remains nearly fully-staffed. This has allowed the district to provide our students with the high-quality education that our students deserve and our families expect.

The district does, however, have a number of substitute and instructional assistant positions open. If you or anyone you know is interested, you can scan the QR code below to see a list of available positions.



Scan this QR code to see what employment opportunities are available in District 57!

STEVE SHAFFER RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED COACH AWARD

District 57 staff member Steve Shaffer was awarded the Distinguished Middle School Coach Award from the Illinois Track & Cross Country Coaches Association (ITCCCA) this January. This much-deserved recognition comes after three decades of coaching cross-country in District 57. Shaffer is the Lions Park Physical Education teacher and the Lincoln Middle School Cross Country & Track coach.

"The award means that I have been blessed with working with talented and coachable student athletes, co-coached with fantastic teachers that are committed to the cross country and track & field programs, have had outstanding administrators supporting the programs, and wonderful parents investing in their children," said Shaffer. "All these facets create a special experience for our Lincoln student- athletes!"



PICTURED: Pete Wintermute (left) of Prospect High School and Steve Shaffer (right) receive ITCCCA awards.



PICTURED: Shari Lambert (right) and her 2022-2023 Journalism Club.

FAIRVIEW'S JOURNALISM CLUB SPOTLIGHTS STAFF FRIENDSHIPS

Shari Lambert - who teaches 3rd grade at Fairview Elementary School - is the sponsor of Fairview's *Journalism Club*, an extracurricular program for 3rd-5th grade students. This club meets weekly to learn the basics of journalism, publishing a school newspaper, and creating original podcasts.

This fall, *Journalism Club* completed a spotlight series on staff friendships at Fairview. To view their incredible work, visit the QR code here.





PICTURED: Members of CFAC pose with D57 Board Members.



The January 19 CFAC presentation can be viewed in its entirety using the QR code!

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE PRESENTS FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS TO BOARD

In the spring of 2022, District 57 formed the Citizen Finance Advisory Committee (CFAC), a collective whose aim is to provide vital financial information to the school board so they can make well-informed decisions for the district.

To recruit for the CFAC committee, the district issued an open invitation to the community. Anyone interested in volunteering their knowledge, time, and effort was welcome to participate.

Once formed, the committee was made up of one Lincoln Middle School 8th-grade student, one District 57 teacher, eight parents and community members, one District 57 School Board member, the assistant superintendent of finance and operations, and the superintendent.

The committee was tasked with preparing a financial-

projections presentation for the school board which was presented at the January 19, 2023, Board Meeting (see QR code above for details).

"The group was incredibly cohesive, creative, and dedicated from our initial meeting," said Jason Kaiz, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. "This translated into a solid mid-year budget update and financial projections presentation that was well-received by our board."

CFAC will meet again next school year to prepare financial projections for the board, and tackle other projects. Many thanks to members Vicki Chung, John C., Ryan Collins, Mary Gorr, Edward Henriquez, Laura Hollis, Scott Martin, Kelly Morales, Jason Mulligan, Seth Parker, Bruce Pulitini, and Robert Taylor.

COST ANALYSIS FOR LINCOLN FACILITY ON HORIZON

Lincoln Middle School was originally built in the 1950s, and then expanded in the 1970s to allow for an influx in the number of students at the time. In recent years, the building has begun to show its age, not only in its structure and equipment, but also in its amenities and academic supports.

As part of the district's effort to quantify the costs associated with providing full-day kindergarten, an



PICTURED: A Lincoln hallway during a passing period.

investigation to explore the idea of renovating or rebuilding Lincoln will be launched. This information-gathering project will begin soon, and the District will be in frequent communication with the community about its findings.

SENIORS TEST OUT TEACHING CAREERS

Second-grade students in Amanda Fouch's class at Fairview Elementary School are seated criss-cross applesauce on a colorfully-checked carpet. Each of their heads is tilted in the direction of their teacher, listening attentively. It's storytime, but the usual Mrs. Fouch is not seated in the reader's seat today. Today the students have a special reader: Prospect High School senior Grace Cassaidy.

Cassaidy is in Mrs. Fouch's room as part of Prospect High School's Education Academy, a college-level capstone program that encourages high-achieving seniors to explore their interest in pursuing a specific career. Cassaidy - a District 57 alum - is considering becoming an elementary school teacher.

"I want to be a teacher because I want to make a difference in the lives of young students," said Cassaidy.

Cassaidy is reading "Chester's Way" to the group of students, a picture book by Kevin Henkes that celebrates friendship. While reading the story, she asks the students to make predictions about what they think might happen in the story, a skill that bolsters participation and comprehension. Later, the students split off into groups to collaborate on a project related to Henkes's story.

Through her experience at Fairview and the Education Academy, Cassaidy can explore both a teaching career and the elementary student demographic by shadowing a seasoned teacher and gaining experience in curriculum-based teaching.

Maggie Luncsford and Molly Gilhooly are also seniors at Prospect High School participating in the Education Academy program. Luncsford worked alongside John Bonadurer, an 8th-grade English language arts teacher at Lincoln Middle School. Gilhooly spent her student teaching hours with Seth Parker, a physical education teacher at Lincoln.

According to District 214's website, Education Academy is a two-credit student teaching program at the college level. In addition to exposure to their chosen career pathway, Education Academy students are provided with experience in different settings, like special education and English-language learners.



PICTURED: Prospect High School senior Grace Cassaidy reads "Chester's Way" to students at Fairview Elementary.

"It is extremely rewarding to see Lincoln students come back into our classrooms through Prospect's EdAcademy," said Bonadurer. "It is amazing that they are pursuing a path towards education at this crucial time in their lives."

"As high school seniors, they can also give great guidance to our eighth graders, who are about to start the next chapter of their lives very soon themselves," continues Bonadurer. "My hope is that the EdAcademy leads Lincoln students towards the field of education as a career, and I would love for them to come back and teach here!"



PICTURED: Lincoln Middle School teacher John Bonadurer (center) with Prospect High School students Molly Gilhooly (left) and Maggie Luncsford (right).

LIONS PARK TOY DRIVE A GIFT FOR ALL

Lions Park Elementary School partnered with the Mount Prospect Fire Department for its 24th annual holiday service project, "Caring for Kids at Holiday Time."

For this year's "Holiday Toy Collection," students brought in an unwrapped gift meant for a teenager, the age group most in need of gifts from the community according to the fire department. It is estimated over 400 gifts were gathered.

"It is always such a heart-warming time for everyone involved," said Katie Kelly, principal at Lions Park Elementary School. "The students, staff, community partners, and recipients feel an overwhelming sense of togetherness and kindness during this service project."



PICTURED: Lions Park students give high-fives to Mount Prospect fire fighters for their collaborative toy drive efforts.



PICTURED: Lions Park students place their toy drive gifts in bags.



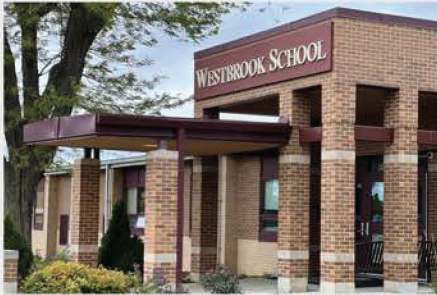
(continued from page 1) What did respondents have to say about how D57 can improve? There was a consensus among all respondents to place future efforts in recruiting and retaining high-quality staff.

Additionally, many parents and staff indicated a desire for future focus in the areas of social, emotional, and mental health for students, while non-parent/non-staff desired academic efforts in reading, literacy, and math achievement.

The survey also gauged interest in a few options related to offering full-day kindergarten. The data collected suggests the district has the permission of the community to investigate further.

The district will explore costs associated with: 1) maintaining grade levels at all schools, but expanding Westbrook; and 2) reconfiguring grade levels to allow for Westbrook to accommodate full-day kindergarten without an expansion. Both options included a need to renovate or rebuild Lincoln Middle School. The district plans to investigate all these cost options in 2023 and report back to the community.

DISTRICT 57 SCHOOLS



WESTBROOK SCHOOL

103 Busse Road

Principal	Danielle Crandall
Grades	PreK-1st
Year Built	1960
Current Enrollment	482



FAIRVIEW ELEMENTARY

300 N. Fairview Avenue

Principal	Dan Ophus
Grades	2nd-5th
Year Built	1995
Current Enrollment	492



LIONS PARK ELEMENTARY

300 E. Council Trail

Principal	Katie Kelly
Grades	2nd-5th
Year Built	1994
Current Enrollment	454



LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL

700 W. Lincoln Street

Principal	Eric Larson
Grades	6th-8th
Year Built	1950
Current Enrollment	775



District 57 Administration
701 W. Gregory St.
Mount Prospect, IL 60056

