

**DISTRICT OFFICE**  
701 S. Seventh Avenue  
LaGrange, IL 60525  
(708) 482-2700

*Dr. Glenn T. Schlichting,*  
*Superintendent of Schools*

APRIL/MAY 2018

# The Newsletter of LaGrange School District 105

# The Blackboard

www.d105.net

Countryside  
Hodgkins  
LaGrange

105

## New SUPERINTENDENT to Begin JULY 1

On July first, upon the retirement of Dr. Glenn Schlichting, Steve Bahn will become the new District 105 superintendent. Mr. Bahn will be extremely well-prepared to serve.



*Steve Bahn*

He has spent the past two years as assistant superintendent, learning about the intricacies of the district directly from Dr. Schlichting, and about the scope of the work of the superintendent. Mr. Bahn is also already well acquainted with aspects of the district from having served as Ideal School's principal for 10 years.

In 2015, the Board of Education chose Mr. Bahn to become the assistant superintendent, with the possibility of becoming superintendent after a two-year transition period, upon Dr. Schlichting's retirement.

Mr. Bahn would first like the community to know that he is honored and humbled to have been given the opportunity to become superintendent. He is also grateful that the Board of Education chose to look at candidates who have a connection to the district. "I aspired to become a superintendent, but never expected to have that opportunity in such a great district. I am humbled and extremely grateful for the trust the board has shown me.

"The nearly two-year-long transition has involved a great deal of new

learning. Anytime you step into a new role, you may have a perception or understanding of what it will involve. There are many aspects I can say I had an understanding of, but there are many other responsibilities that you can't know unless you are close to the position itself. I always had great respect for Glenn's role in the district, but since becoming assistant superintendent, I have a greater respect for the magnitude of his responsibilities. It's been a great learning experience, and I am very happy for the opportunity to learn alongside Glenn, and from an administrative team, teachers, and a community that have allowed me to learn on the job and better prepare myself for July 1. There's certainly a level of anxiety about transitioning to the role of superintendent. I'll never be the type of person who says 'I know it all,' but am very fortunate to have had Glenn as a mentor for many years, not only these past two years, but previously when I was principal of Ideal School, and even prior to that, when I was a teacher at the Illinois State University Lab School, where he was my principal.

"Glenn has served District 105 as superintendent for 12 years, providing the district with stability—he is a visionary and a great motivator. There is no doubt in my mind that we are where we are as a district because of his leadership. Glenn has surrounded himself with great educators who have a common

vision. But it starts at the top, and I am grateful for Glenn's leadership. But the much greater part of leadership is learning about our four school communities — building relationships with each school community, getting to know the teaching staff, the families, the students, the entire D105 community as well as the school board. The most critical thing I've learned is how Dr. Schlichting models that. I've had a jump start of two years to do so. For that, I am extremely grateful."

## Did you KNOW...

- **Gurrie Middle School eighth-grade student Susan Yeager and Spring Avenue School fifth-grade student London Shannon-Muscolino won the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Awards for their essays on American history. London has advanced to the district recognition level.**
- **Fifteen Gurrie students participated in the West 40 Speech and Drama Contest on March 10. Shannon Miller and Jeanne Mardegan received first place scores in individual events. Jade Babb, Karla Hernandez, and Gabby Quintana received first place recognition in the Trio Category.**
- **Stefanie Kubitz, Seventh Avenue School fifth-grade teacher, and Gail Housman, Ideal School fourth-grade teacher, received the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce Under 40 Young Professionals Award for Excellence.**
- **On February 7, Student Services Director Maureen Kidd served on a discussion panel facilitated by ABC newscaster Judy Hsu at the Community Memorial Foundation Mental Health Symposium. Under Maureen's leadership, District 105 is a recognized regional leader for the district's support of mental health concerns.**

**Gurrie Middle School**  
1001 S. Spring Avenue  
LaGrange, IL 60525  
(708) 482-2720  
*Ed Hood, Principal*

**Hodgkins Elementary School**  
6516 S. Kane Avenue  
Hodgkins, IL 60525  
(708) 482-2740  
*John Signatur, Principal*

**Ideal Elementary School**  
9901 W. 58th Street  
Countryside, IL 60525  
(708) 482-2750  
*Timothy Sheldon, Principal*

**Seventh Avenue Elementary School**  
701 S. Seventh Avenue  
LaGrange, IL 60525  
(708) 482-2730  
*Erin Hall, Principal*

**Spring Avenue Elementary School**  
1001 S. Spring Avenue  
LaGrange, IL 60525  
(708) 482-2710  
*Brian Lawson, Principal*

In February, State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Smith sent a letter to all Illinois public school districts about the future of the PARCC state assessment. He stated that Illinois will continue to use and build upon the core features of PARCC (*Partnership of Assessment for Readiness and Careers*), the current state assessment and accountability measure, which incorporates learning standards that emphasize critical thinking skills over rote learning. This year, PARCC is once again being administered in English language arts and mathematics to all students in grades three through eight. There is some reduction in the time that the tests will take. Otherwise, little will change.

However, moving forward to the 2018-2019 school year and beyond, Dr. Smith states, "Illinois will continue to use and build on the core features of PARCC that make it the highest quality accountability assessment in the United States, in particular, the complex writing tasks that require strategic reasoning and extended investigation to solve problems. Our collective vision for the future is a suite of aligned Illinois Assessment of Readiness that serve educators, students and families with a more useful understanding of where students are in their learning journey today and how ready they are for what's in front of them tomorrow."

The state's specific objectives include:

- Returning results more quickly, providing educators with meaningful time to adjust instruction;
- Building assessments from the ground up in more languages to increase accessibility and allow all students to demonstrate their true level of mastery;

- Measuring growth in high school, so educators can better see what's working;
- Utilizing test items developed by Illinois educators to more closely align with instruction in Illinois classrooms;
- Reporting results on a common scale across all assessments, so educators can be in deeper dialogue with each other and with families and students;
- Reaching full online assessment to support equity of access to rigorous instruction and return results faster; and
- Transitioning to a computer-adaptive format, meaning the test items get more or less advanced depending on the student's performance as they progress through, to know not just whether a student meets the standards for their grade level, but to also know the upper and lower bounds of their mastery.

This last bullet is exceptionally important, as an adaptive format will allow educators to truly pinpoint student achievement and growth. Those results, especially when received from the state in a very timely manner, will enable educators to make instructional decisions for every child based on exactly what the child knows and understands. It will help determine needs for every child, from special needs through gifted.

"It will be a positive change," said Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Kathryn Heeke. "Assessment data should always drive our instruction for each child. All we desire is that assessments give us the best information, in a timely manner, on student achievement and growth so that we can provide all D105 students with the education they need to meet their potential and lay the foundation for future success."

## "CONNECTIONS" Makes CONNECTIONS

**ON** October 10, Connections Community Learning Center opened in Ideal School to provide students and their families with a welcoming place to learn, talk and play. Open from 4:00 to 7:00 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays, teachers from throughout the district facilitate events in the gym, library, and in the classrooms. Students can use laptops, play games, and socialize with friends and families in a safe, supervised and fun environment. Additionally, English and Spanish language classes for adults are held at the Center from 5:00 to 6:00 pm on those days.

Connections is enjoying great success with district families. Here are some Community Center highlights to date:

### Attendance

Since its opening, Connections is averaging 90 attendees per night! While the majority of attendees are from the Hodgkins and Ideal attendance areas, families from Spring, Seventh Avenue, and Gurrie make up 18% of attendance on average. Attendance in the Parent Language Classes continues to grow and expand, driven by the addition of an English-Spanish class.

### Programs

Computer coding classes for students are a rousing success that bring together students from across the district in a rich STEM learning environment. In January, a new class, "Chess Scholars" began. Sixteen fourth- through eighth-grade students are now learning about chess and competing with one another, increasing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In April, Community Center learning expanded with the addition of CPR and First Aid certification courses for parents led by two D105 PE teachers.

### Celebrations

Students participated in a Connections Logo Contest, submitting their original drawings. An illustration by Spring Avenue School student Reese Cassidy, third grade, was chosen as the winner. This logo will be featured on communications, signage, and on the district website.

The Community Center invited its neighborhood sponsors, representatives from Vulcan Materials Company and Republic Bank, to come see the results of their generous support. They received commemorative signs from the district to honor their involvement.



# Math Needs Assessment Provides GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

A recent Math Needs Assessment by an independent educational organization confirmed that the district has a very strong math program throughout the district. It also provided information on what the district can do in the future to further strengthen math instruction.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Kathryn Heeke explained, "We look at student data regularly and report those results to the Board of Education, teachers, and parents. These results share how well students are progressing annually, and how well they are mastering grade level learning standards. Out of that information, over the last few years, we determined that we can improve in mathematics. Therefore, we engaged in a 'Math Needs Assessment' to determine 'where do we begin, how can we do even better?'"

"The district worked with the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC), with whom we've had a partnership for several years. At the end of January, CEC representatives spent two days in the district interviewing parents, teachers, students, staff, and administrators, collecting data around math instruction. Concurrently, teachers completed a self-assessment survey about their teaching of math. The CEC gathered the data from the interviews, from the survey, and from their own classroom observations, to paint a picture of how well we are moving forward with math instruction. The CEC also determined if the teachers/administrators' perception of math instruction in the district aligned with the perception of parents and students."

Ms. Heeke also provided the CEC representatives with very detailed information about the district's approach to math instruction, from committee meeting reports, to work around units of instruction, teacher-created curriculum, board policy, actual curricular unit assessments, district results, and much more.

The CEC reviewed all of the data and determined key findings. Most importantly, the teachers' evaluation of themselves and their instruction is identical to the CEC's evaluation of the teachers. That means the teachers understand their own strengths and improvement areas. In fact, every stakeholder, teachers, parents, students and administrators, had a good

Here are the district's strengths in math education as identified by the Math Needs Assessment Survey:

In the area of **Learning** – 1. There is a strong commitment districtwide to a guaranteed and viable math curriculum. 2. Each unit's curriculum is clearly communicated to students and parents in a variety of ways.

In the area of **Assessment** – 1. D105 has a very defined summative assessment system aligned to standards-based units that is an expected part of the culture and valued by all stakeholders. (Summative tests evaluate what students know before a unit of instruction is taught and then again after a unit of instruction is completed.) 2. There is a strong goal-setting culture in the district.

In the area of **Instruction** – 1. Differentiation is a districtwide expectation. 2. Teachers provide opportunities for additional time and support if a student has not/has mastered learning outcomes.

In the area of **Support** – 1. D105 schools have a very positive, collaborative culture that is felt across the district. 2. The district commits significant resources to the focus on learning. 3. Students and parents love their schools and their teachers. 4. Teachers use collaborative team time to examine learning practices.

understanding of the district's strengths in math education, and improvement areas. That level of recognition says that communication about math education is exemplary throughout the district.

After all of the data and input were reviewed, strengths were identified and evaluated in the areas of learning, assessment, instruction and support. Opportunities for growth were then determined for those areas.

Among the most significant findings of the study are the CEC's suggested next steps:

- Continue to offer professional learning and support for teachers that directly impacts classroom instruction. Focus on the vertical alignment of mathematics instruction across kindergarten through eighth grade. Continue to provide grade level specific math content professional development.
- Continue to build a system of intervention and enrichment. Further define the structure to support students who are struggling and also for students who are ready for enrichment opportunities.

Over the summer, teachers will engage in professional development to further align the math curriculum throughout the district.

## D105 Career Fair

On the evening of March 15, sixth- through eighth-grade students and their parents were treated to an event that was designed to help students make connections between their school experience and future career choices: the D105 Career Fair, a presentation of the Parent Involvement Committee. Over 40 community members, representing a variety of careers, presented information in a tradeshow format. The presenters talked about their careers and what coursework and interests are needed to pursue them. They answered questions, such as, "Do you want to know why your math homework is important if you want to open your own business?" "What does an engineer do day to day?" "What are the college courses you will need for a degree in nursing?" "How do you find the job that you love?" Students and parents received information on a wide range of careers, from graphic designer, to scientist and orthopedic nurse.





## PROJECT LINUS: BLANKET DAY

During the holiday season, Gurrie Middle School sponsored "Blanket Day" for Project Linus, a non-profit organization that provides handmade blankets to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need. On December 15, Gurrie students became "blanketeers," creating soft blankets for these children. Their efforts resulted in over 50 blankets being donated to the Ronald McDonald House of Oak Lawn. Students began the activity in their afternoon advisory and continued to work in the gym after school. Families donated money to "sponsor" a blanket, which was used to purchase materials. Students enthusiastically gave of their time and talents to support children in need.

## MID-TERM PROGRESS

District 105 students took the nationally norm-referenced Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment in December. Highlights of D105 students' mid-term performance on MAP follow. View the report in its entirety on the district website, [d105.net](http://d105.net), under the School Board – Presentations tab.

- 80% of eighth-grade students scored at or above the fiftieth percentile on the winter MAP Reading assessment. This is the highest eighth-grade percentage since the district began administering winter MAP in 2010. 67% of eighth-grade students achieved their spring-to-winter targets, placing this class well above the 90th percentile nationally in student reading growth.
- 60% of eighth-grade students scored at or above the fiftieth percentile on the winter MAP Math. This percentage is slightly higher than mid-term math trends.
- The overall percentage of K-8 students achieving at or above the fiftieth percentile was 61% in math and 68% in reading. These achievement levels are significantly above mid-term trend results.
- The overall percentage of K-8 students achieving their spring-to-winter progress targets was consistent with the district's goal of ranking above the 90th percentile nationally for student progress.
- The district cohort study (which tracked the same students across multiple grade levels) indicates that the longer students attend District 105, the better they perform on MAP reading and math tests when compared with their national peers.

## D105 Foundation News

Each year, the District 105 Educational Foundation provides four college scholarships to students who may need financial assistance in reaching their goals. One former student from each of the district's elementary schools is selected each year. The Foundation raises funds from donations and from special events, including the annual District 105 Kane County Cougars Day, where participants enjoy great baseball and participate in special activities.

This year's **Kane County Cougars Day** took place on Sunday, April 29, from 1:00 to 7:00 pm. All community members and their families were invited to attend this special event.

The Foundation will also sponsor its annual **D105 Back-to-School Family Night** on September 14. School and community members are invited to come to Gurrie Middle School to welcome the new school year. A family movie on a big screen, a magician, balloon animals, a raffle, a DJ and delicious food by Q-BBQ are among the highlights of the event.

A gala event for adults, the Second Annual "Grand Jam"

will take place on Saturday, October 20, from 7:00 to 11:00 pm. Please check the Foundation's Facebook page at @D105 Foundation for information as it becomes available.



*The Blackboard*



We are very proud of School District 105 and our many strengths which set us apart from other districts. Here are highlights of our accomplishments, which we proudly refer to as **THE D105 DIFFERENCE**.

## Pathways to Success

- More than half of Gurrie graduates qualify for Lyons Township High School (LT) Honors and Accelerated Math and English courses.

This percentage has almost doubled since 2003.

More than 80% of these students earn an A or B in these courses.

- In a recent LT survey to freshmen students about their middle school experiences and preparation for high school, the responses from former Gurrie students were more favorable than the average of students' responses from the other LT feeder districts.
- Students at all four elementary schools meet the same rigorous learning standards and are well prepared for success at Gurrie Middle School and LT.

## Progress for All Learners at All Schools

- District 105 students rank above the 90th percentile nationally for academic progress in math and reading. This ranking includes students from all schools, backgrounds, and ability levels.
- Students in District 105 make greater annual progress than comparable districts with similar student demographics.
- All district students develop individualized goals with their teachers based on their units of instruction.

## Respectful and Positive School Climates

- Students from all five district schools benefit from small class sizes and dedicated professionals. Over 95% of students report extremely high satisfaction ratings. Students respond that they feel safe in school, know that their teachers expect them to do their

best work, and believe that their school is a good place to learn.

- 99% of Gurrie students are involved in at least one extracurricular club, activity, or sport. Approximately 50% of District 105 students participate in at least one of the three district music programs.
- Parents from all five district schools provide very high satisfaction ratings for safety, communication, a welcoming environment, and teacher and administrator commitment to their child's success.

## Rich Learning Experiences in Diverse School Communities

- Students from all backgrounds and at all schools show excellent academic progress and report trusting and respectful relations with peers, teachers, and principals.
- All district students benefit from the district's diversity, learning and growing with peers from a variety of socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.



## Students Excel at Math Olympiad

Twenty-six D105 fourth- through eighth-grade students competed in the Math Olympiad hosted by Western Springs District 101 on February 24. The fourth/fifth grade team (L to R: Samantha Lameter, 5th Grade Seventh Avenue School; Adrian Karlovic, 4th Grade Ideal; Andrew Sherman, 4th Grade Spring; Donovan Colvill, 5th Grade Spring) won their event. Eleven area schools and districts were represented at the Math Olympiad.

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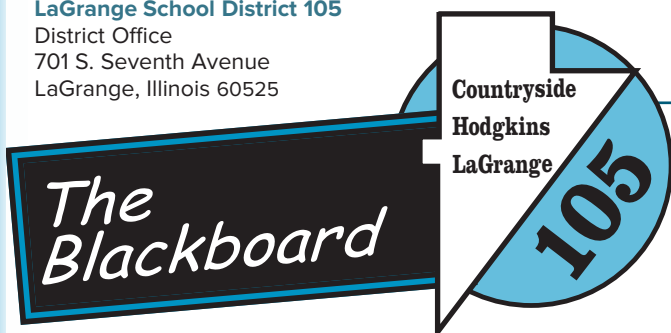
**Elyse Hoffenberg**

**Larry Prystalski**

**Jan Reagan**

**Eileen Tucker**

*The public is invited to attend board meetings – generally held at Gurrie Library Learning Center on the fourth Monday of each month, 7:30 p.m.*



APRIL/MAY 2018

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## Early Dismissal **UPDATE**

**T**his year, after several years of extensive research, planning, and communication with parents, a major change to the school calendar began. In past years, several half-days of early dismissal were used to support teachers' professional development. This year, that was replaced with early dismissal days every Wednesday, which make every Wednesday 45 minutes shorter for students at the elementary schools, and one hour shorter for students at Gurrie Middle School. Teachers are now typically meeting twice a month on Wednesdays from 2:15 to 3:30 pm, and twice a month from 2:15 to 4:30 pm, to participate in a variety of professional development activities.

Teachers and administrators have been monitoring the program throughout the school year. All indicators, including parent and teacher feedback, say the new schedule is working extremely well. Teachers are responding very positively, and all parent input has also been positive. Strong communication from the district to parents about the schedule change before it occurred helped ease the transition.

Although the new early dismissal model is succeeding, there is always room for improvement and growth. Teacher/administrator committees are further evaluating the content of the professional development time to determine how both building-level needs and district-level needs can be best addressed. Ultimately, the district wants to assure that

teachers continue to receive strong professional development and have ample time to make sense of new information and apply it to classroom learning.

### District 105 Information Available on **SOCIAL MEDIA SITES**

From elementary schools to colleges, social media is empowering students, parents and teachers to share information in exciting ways and is building a new sense of community. District 105 is joining the social media scene to share "OUR STORY!" All parents are being asked to follow district information on one or more of the following social media sites. Community members are also invited to visit! Here's how to log in:

**Facebook** — La Grange District 105

**Twitter** — LaGrange105 or @dist105

**Instagram** — lagrange105