

The Newsletter of LaGrange School District 105

The Blackboard

www.d105.net

Countryside
Hodgkins
LaGrange

105

**District 105
Central Office**
701 S. Seventh Avenue
LaGrange, IL 60525
(708) 482-2700

Dr. Glenn T. Schlichting,
Superintendent of Schools

January 2011

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE



Despite rainstorms and a construction strike, the first phase of the two-year facilities project was completed for the start of the school year. Teachers and students at Seventh Avenue and Ideal

Schools are now enjoying the improved facilities.

Phase I of the project included upgrades to the two schools and relocation of the District Office from the Spring Avenue/Gurrie building to Seventh Avenue School. The construction was most visible at Ideal School where infrastructure improvements were combined with the addition of seven classrooms.

Phase II of the project, scheduled to begin in the spring of 2011, will bring improvements to Gurrie, Spring and Hodgkins' schools. Primary modifications will include many of the same items as in Phase I, such as secured school entrances that will require visitors to enter through school offices, additional classroom space based on increased enrollment needs, ventilation and heating improvements, water pipe replacement, electrical upgrades, additional meeting spaces, asbestos abatement, and replacement of worn carpeting and tile. View Phase II Construction Plans on



the district website:
www.d105.net.

In spring 2011 the community will be invited to attend Open Houses at Seventh Avenue and Ideal Schools to tour the improved facilities.

PHOTOS, clockwise from top left: 1. Many improvements were made to the Seventh Avenue Library Learning Center; 2. A brand new Ideal School classroom with a Promethean Board projection system; 3. The new multipurpose room at Ideal School.



District 105 Schools HIGHLY RATED

The October 2010 issue of *Chicago Magazine* included the magazine's annual listings of the best Illinois Schools. The magazine acknowledged all five of the district schools in the list of the top 300 suburban Cook County schools!

According to *Chicago Magazine*, schools in the county listings are ranked on three different attributes and they are ranked only in relation to other schools within that county. The three attributes are: the percentage of students who meet or exceed state goals on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test; the pupil-teacher ratio, an indication of how many educational professionals—not only classroom teachers—are available to each child; and instructional spending per pupil.

Continues on p. 6

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
Steven Bahn, Principal

Seventh Avenue Elementary School
701 S. Seventh Avenue
LaGrange, IL 60525
(708) 482-2730
Sherry Krzyzanski, Principal

Spring Avenue Elementary School
1001 S. Spring Avenue
LaGrange, IL 60525
(708) 482-2710
Elizabeth Webb Peterman, Principal

The Blackboard

Clear Expectations Guide LEARNING

Over the past several years, in various grade levels, district educators implemented new, research-based programming in science, social studies, and math. Every new adoption brings an emphasis on strong program implementation across all schools. However, the current focus is to ensure that all district curricula is fully articulated across all schools along with a common set of grade level outcomes and common grade level pacing and assessment expectations.

Full program implementation begins with the ability to answer the question, "What must our students know?" District 105 curriculum committees carefully examined this question, which resulted in the development of *Power Standards*.

The District 105 Power Standards are a prioritized set of "essential outcomes" that students must master in each grade. This process does not eliminate state/district standards, but prioritizes the most essential skills that students have to acquire in a given year. The district's curriculum committees developed Power Standards in math, science, social studies, reading, and writing.

With clear expectations firmly in place, the curriculum committees created common content area *pacing guides* to ensure that Power Standards would be met. These common pacing guides outline unit instruction/timing in detail as well as provide common timelines for assessment. "Common pacing guides provide what is termed a 'guaranteed and viable curriculum' for our students," explained Kathryn Heeke, director of curriculum and instruction. "A 'guaranteed and viable curriculum' ensures that in every building and in every class our students will experience the same educational opportunities in a given year and throughout their education in District 105."

Grade level teachers are meeting throughout the school year to review instructional pacing and student progress toward meeting the Power Standards. After analysis, they will offer revision suggestions for the next school year. Ms. Heeke stated, "With common grade level Power Standards and pacing guides, teachers can more easily share instructional strategies, differentiation tools, and the use of assessment results to ultimately move our students forward."

IDEAL PARK Renovations

The renovation of Ideal Park, adjacent to Ideal School, is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2011. The project, a collaboration between LaGrange School District 105 and the City of Countryside, brings many needed upgrades including new playground equipment, a basketball court, tennis



courts, a walking trail, and safety improvements. Students and the community will enjoy the beautiful area. The Ideal Park project represents a joint planning process in which District 105 and the City of Countryside addressed important school/community needs in a fiscally responsible manner. A grant from the Township of Lyons helped fund the project.

Parents Get Help WITH MATH

This year, District 105 is implementing the newest version of *Everyday Mathematics*. On the evening of October 28, parents attended a forum at Gurrie Middle School to learn about the updated math curriculum. *Everyday Mathematics* is a comprehensive Pre-K through 6th grade mathematics curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project, published by Wright Group/McGraw-Hill. It is used in over 185,000 classrooms by almost 3,000,000 students. The federal government's What Works Clearinghouse gave *Everyday Mathematics* the highest rating of any commercially published elementary mathematics curriculum.

Superintendent Glenn Schlichting kicked-off the forum, telling parents about the selection process for the new materials. Kathryn Heeke, director of curriculum and instruction, informed parents about the district's new "essential outcomes" in mathematics that are also known as the "Power Standards" (see article at left). She also discussed the new grade level pacing guides that were created to support teachers in implementing the new program and in meeting the Power Standards. Four District 105 teachers—Alida Ressa, Mary Elizabeth Duffy, Shannon Tobin, and Christine Eck—told parents what *Everyday Mathematics* "looks like" in the classroom. They discussed the program's components, sample lessons, types of assessments, and showed video clips of students using the program. A question and answer session followed the presentation.

"The forum was a great success," commented Ms. Heeke. "Parents learned about the program and how they can support their children at home with the *Everyday Mathematics* curriculum."



Introducing New Personnel



James R. Connelly



Lindsay Klecka



Maureen Demer



Monique Lejman



Ashley Lenardi



Kelly Smith Novak



Jason Tooth

Introducing the newest members of the LaGrange District 105 family:

Administration

James R. Connelly, Interim Business Manager

Mr. Connelly is a Registered School Business Administrator (RSBA) who brings 34 years of experience in finance, including 12 years in an educational setting, to his position as the district's interim business manager. He earned a B.S. in Accounting from the University of Illinois, Chicago, and an MBA with a concentration on finance from Loyola University, Chicago. "District 105 is a high-achieving school district. The faculty and administration have high expectations for the students and work very hard to make sure that students succeed," he stated.

Teachers

DISTRICT-WIDE

Lindsay Klecka, Orchestra Director

Ms. Klecka is helping students in every district school learn to make beautiful music! She achieved a Bachelor's degree in Instrumental Music Education and Violin Performance from Northwestern University. Outside of school she gives private violin and viola lessons and seeks performance opportunities to help maintain her musical skills. For the past four years, Ms. Klecka has served as Concertmaster of the Northwestern Summer Orchestra in Evanston. When she has a spare moment, she enjoys baking, taking care of her puppy and running along the lakefront.

Maureen Demer, District Accelerated Math Teacher/Spring Avenue Fifth Grade Teacher

Mrs. Demer, who has 21 years of teaching experience, served as a part-time teacher in the district for the past three years and is now a full-time teacher. Within the district she has taught math and gifted reading. Mrs. Demer attained a B.S. in Education from Illinois State University, Normal. She is married with four children who range in age from kindergarten to high school!

MULTI-SCHOOL

Monique Lejman, ELL Teacher, Spring and Seventh Avenue Schools

Beginning her fifth year as a teacher, Mrs. Lejman is working with English Language Learners at two district schools. She has a B.A. in English and Spanish

with a minor in Linguistics, specializing in English as a Second Language Teaching from the University of Illinois, Chicago. She also achieved an endorsement in Bilingual Education from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Because Mrs. Lejman's father was from France and her mother from Poland, she learned to communicate in Polish and French as well as English. She is grateful to her parents for this gift. Mrs. Lejman is thrilled to be working with English Language Learners in District 105.

Ashley Lenardi, Physical Education Teacher, Spring and Ideal Schools

Miss Lenardi earned a B.S. in Physical Education with a minor in Health Studies, and then went on to complete a Master of Science in Physical Education. Both degrees are from Eastern Illinois University. She enjoys spending time with family and friends. Miss Lenardi loves being active, likes to run and recently completed her first half-marathon. She likes all sports and is a White Sox fan.

Kelly Smith Novak, Speech Pathologist, Ideal and Spring Avenue Schools

With seven years experience in education, Mrs. Smith Novak earned a B.S. from Northern Illinois University in Communicative Disorders and a Master's in Science in Speech Pathology from St. Xavier University. She is currently working toward earning an Assistive Technology Certificate.

Jason Tooth, Math Teacher/SAIL Reading Teacher, Hodgkins, Spring Avenue, Ideal and Gurrie Schools

Mr. Tooth brings four years experience in education to his work for District 105. He is teaching math to fifth and eighth grade students and is a SAIL reading teacher for grades four through six. Mr. Tooth earned a B.A. in Education from Lewis University, Romeoville. He enjoys sports—especially baseball and basketball—volunteering at his church, traveling and training his puppy.

IDEAL SCHOOL

Kara Macropulos, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher

Miss Macropulos is working for the district as a part-time teacher and also as a one-on-one paraprofessional. She has two years of teaching experience. Miss Macropulos graduated from Eastern Illinois University

with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, concentration in Special Education.

Carolyn Regan, ELL/Bilingual Teacher

With 13 years of experience as an educator, Ms. Regan is very well qualified to help students learn languages. She achieved a B.A. in Elementary Education from the University of Iowa and an M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction/Bilingual Education from National-Louis University, Chicago. Ms. Regan has lived and taught in Illinois, Puerto Rico and Colombia. These experiences enhanced her flexibility and open-mindedness. She is striving to become completely proficient in Spanish. Ms. Regan hopes to make a difference at Ideal School.

SPRING AVENUE SCHOOL

Amanda Heiman, Art Teacher and Paraprofessional

Ms. Heiman was a preschool teacher for three years. Last year she served as a substitute teacher in District 105, while also serving the district as a paraprofessional in a third grade class. By the end of the year, she was teaching three art classes at Spring Avenue School. This year she is teaching first grade art part-time and also works as a paraprofessional in a first grade class. Ms. Heiman completed a B.S. in Art from the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse and achieved a K-12 Teaching Certificate in Art from Elmhurst College. Outside of her work in the district, she enjoys teaching additional art classes and coaching YMCA basketball clinics.

Lauren Parrino, First Grade Teacher

Prior to coming to the district, Miss Parrino taught first grade for seven years and was a reading specialist for one year. She earned a B.A. from the University of Iowa and a Master's and Reading Certificate from National-Louis University. Miss Parrino likes to travel and read in her free time. Next summer, she plans to serve as a volunteer in Peru, where she will work with children in an orphanage and help build a school.

Katie Walsh, Second Grade Teacher

Mrs. Walsh, who has three years of teaching experience, is a graduate of Columbia College, Chicago. She completed a B.A. in Broadcast Journalism, then earned a



Kara Macropulos



Carolyn Regan



Amanda Heiman



Lauren Parrino



Katie Walsh



Ryan Ingwersen



Rachel Person



John Paul Sullivan

Master of Arts in Elementary Education from National-Louis University, Chicago. Mrs. Walsh loves the outdoors, kayaking, hiking and gardening. She teaches a gardening class to children at a non-profit organization in Chicago. Mrs. Walsh is excited about Spring Avenue School's new learning garden.

GURRIE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Ryan Ingwersen, Seventh and Eighth Grade Language Arts Teacher

Mr. Ingwersen is beginning his fourth year of teaching. He received a B.A. in English

from the University of Iowa and is currently working toward a Master's in Education in Curriculum and Instruction.

Rachel Person, Special Education Teacher

Rachel Person is beginning her seventh year of teaching. She earned a B.S. in Education in Special Education and a Master's in Education in Advanced Education Practices from Northern Illinois University. She will soon begin working toward an Educational Specialist degree in Mental Health Practices in Schools through the University of Missouri.

John Paul Sullivan, Seventh Grade Social Studies Teacher

Mr. Sullivan received a B.A. from the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls and achieved a Master of Arts in Teaching from National-Louis University. He attained his Master's degree while working as a resident teacher with the Academy for Urban School Leadership. Participants in that program commit to teaching in high-need Chicago Public Schools while earning a Master's degree. Mr. Sullivan has five years of teaching experience.

Social Emotional Learning

In addition to subjects such as reading, writing, and mathematics, Illinois students also engage in a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) program. SEL emphasizes the necessity for a respectful and safe learning environment for students to meet with academic success.

In 2003, Illinois developed the Social Emotional Learning Standards, becoming the first state to require that all school districts provide Social Emotional Learning by developing a policy for incorporating SEL into the district's educational program.

The Social Emotional Learning Standards are:

Goal 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.

Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

The standards describe the SEL content and skills for students in grades K-12. Each standard includes five benchmark levels that describe what students should know and

be able to do from early elementary grades through late high school.

SEL focuses on five core groups of social and emotional competencies:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-management
3. Social Awareness
4. Relationship Skills
5. Responsible Decision-making.

District 105 students are meeting the Social Emotional Learning Standards through programs such as Responsive Classroom and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). These programs identify and help students learn the appropriate behaviors to use throughout the school, including in their interactions with others. These research-based programs are highly regarded and used successfully in thousands of schools throughout the nation.

Another component of Social Emotional Learning in District 105 is the Second Step program, which focuses on specific Social Emotional Learning (i.e. bullying, feelings, tolerance, etc.) The Second Step classroom lessons reinforce the district's Responsive Classroom and PBIS initiatives.

BOARD ELECTION

A Board of Education election will take place as part of the Cook County Consolidated Election on April 5, 2011. The Board consists of seven members who serve four-year terms without pay. Terms of members are staggered so there are three or four seats contested at each biennial election. Please remember to vote for the candidates of your choice on Tuesday, April 5.

The Blackboard

Message from the SUPERINTENDENT

Re: Summer Learning

We are very proud of the many positive things happening in our district.

- *Our students make significantly more progress in math, reading, and language in a year than national trends.*
- *Our Gurrie graduates are entering college level and honors classes at much higher levels than in previous years.*
- *Our students feel safe, respected, challenged, and engaged in our schools.*
- *Our staff and parents support our district goals and priorities and feel that they are important partners in the district and school decision-making processes.*
- *Our five schools are becoming better designed for teaching and learning, safer, and healthier as a result of our facilities improvement project.*
- *Our financial position is strong, even during these difficult economic times.*

Even with our success, we have identified an area of improvement that we are working hard to address. After several years of increased student achievement, the percentage of students achieving at or above national averages in reading, math, and language has lagged recently. We are especially concerned about this trend because we know that our students who graduate from eighth grade achieving below national averages have limited access to, or struggle in, college preparatory classes at the high school.

The lag in achievement is inconsistent with other data showing that our students make strong progress in math, reading, and language throughout the school year. So, last winter we began a study about the possible causes of our lag in achievement results. We found a primary factor to be the inordinate

number of District 105 students whose skills in reading, math, and language regress significantly more than their national peers over the summer. Students who regress score a significantly lower national percentile ranking in math, language, or reading at the start of the year than they did the previous spring. We found that our regression patterns negatively impacted the achievement at all five of our schools.

We formed a committee last spring to research and develop strategies designed to help students maintain their skills over the summer. The strategies included the refinement of the summer initiatives already in place at the school levels, such as reading clubs, learning packets, and library programs. Efforts also incorporated the development of district-wide strategies that included reading lists for each grade level, enrichment classes in math and science, and a “Summer Learning for All” district website that provided online learning activities and resources for parents and students.

We studied the impact of the enhanced summer learning opportunities this fall. Our initial findings show that students who participated in the summer learning opportunities were more successful in maintaining their skills on fall assessments than their peers who did not participate. We do not have enough information from this initial study to draw any definite conclusions, but we are encouraged enough by the results to continue our efforts to enhance summer learning options.

We know that our strong parent and school partnerships contribute greatly to our students’ success. As our summer plans develop, we will be seeking parent feedback and support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Glenn Schlichting
Superintendent

IN THIS ISSUE

<u>Construction Update</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>District 105 Schools Highly Rated</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Clear Expectations Guide Learning</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Ideal Park Renovations</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Parents Get Help With Math</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Introducing New Personnel</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Social Emotional Learning</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Board Election</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Message From the Superintendent</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Program Committee Reconvenes</u>	<u>6</u>

District 105

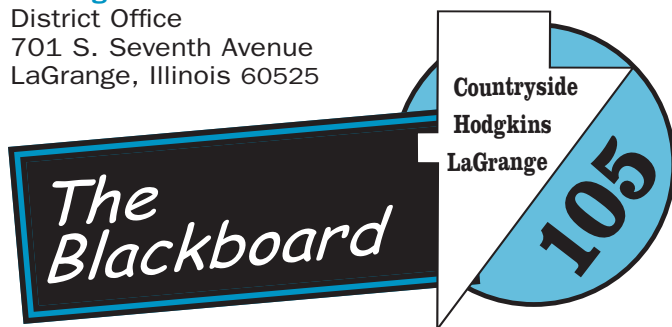
Board of Education

Mark Smith, President
Barbara Baldassarre, Vice President
Kristine Lonsway, Secretary
David Herndon
Jan Kinsley
Peggy Peterson
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 PM.

LaGrange School District 105

District Office
701 S. Seventh Avenue
LaGrange, Illinois 60525



JANUARY 2011

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
LaGrange, IL
Permit No. 50

District 105 Schools HIGHLY RATED

Continued from page 1

The magazine's guiding principle for the county ratings is that a good school has small classes and high test scores and spends generously on educating its pupils. Thus, higher test scores and greater school spending, combined with lower class sizes or pupil-teacher ratios, contribute to a higher ranking.

The attributes are weighted to determine a school's final ranking; test scores count the most, pupil-teacher ratio next, and spending least. Points are assigned by quartile: Out of all of a county's schools, the one-fourth that have the highest test scores receive the most points for that category, and the one-fourth with lowest scores receive the least.

Program Committee RECONVENES

A program committee consisting of teachers and administrators has reconvened. The committee last met in 2007 and is now meeting to follow-up on its previous work. This committee will not focus on specific curriculum, as district curriculum committees are in place that participate in the curriculum renewal process. Instead, the committee's purpose is to examine the success of the district's existing programs, identify other initiatives the district may want to consider, and analyze the financial implications and feasibility of any new initiatives. *The Blackboard* will report on the work of the committee as it progresses.

VISIT THE DISTRICT 105 WEBSITE:
www.d105.net

The District Office has moved! Please note the new address: 701 S. Seventh Avenue, LaGrange, IL 60525.