

**District 105
Central Office**
701 S. Seventh Avenue
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Dr. Glenn T. Schlichting,
Superintendent of Schools

May 2011

The Newsletter of LaGrange School District 105

The Blackboard

www.d105.net

Countryside
Hodgkins
LaGrange

105

An Important Message from the BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Members of the District 105 Community,

As we approach the end of our school year, I want to share some information and perspective regarding our school finances, current Cook County tax realities, and the building improvements taking place throughout the district.

The District 105 tax rate increased from \$2.135 to \$2.383. We realize the impact this significant increase has had on our community residents, especially during these difficult economic times. We want our community to understand that this change in the tax rate was not the result of an increase in district spending. We also want our community to know that this change in the tax rate did not result in a significant increase in district revenue. In fact, School District 105 revenue from existing property taxes increased only one-tenth of one percent as this rate change occurred.

The sizeable increase in our Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09) tax rate is due to a change in the way that Cook County assesses commercial and industrial property. Cook County reduced the assessment levels of commercial and industrial properties, which had the effect of residents paying a greater portion of the property taxes throughout the county. This change in the Cook County assessment practices had an especially significant impact on School District 105 residents, where our community is fortunate to have such a strong commercial and industrial presence.

Even with the FY09 tax rate increase, the District 105 rate is still below the total tax rate of \$2.494 that the voters approved in the 2005 referendum. The tax rate in District 105 is in the lowest third of the thirty-seven Cook County elementary school districts that surround us.

As mentioned previously, District 105 spending did not cause the FY09 tax rate to increase. The Board of Education and administration have worked together to keep expenses down even though we are experiencing significant enrollment increases. The district has sought efficient ways to utilize personnel and materials to live within our means while meeting the needs of a growing student population. The district has eliminated or reduced expenditures for existing programs and services based on their impact on students and refrained from investing in new programs and services that are not required by federal or state regulations.

The 2009-2010 District 105 operational budget, which includes all expenses except those from our construction budget, increased less than one percent over the 2008-2009 operational budget. **We have been able to limit operational budget increases to less than one percent despite a six percent increase in student enrollment from last year.**

This demonstrates our commitment to fiscal responsibility, as accommodating this growth in student enrollment pressures all areas of our budget—staffing, supplies and materials, programming, facilities, and transportation.

We are currently developing the 2011-2012 school year budget and anticipate between a one and two percent increase over the current operational expenses. We are projecting a student enrollment increase of three percent next year and expecting reduced revenues from the state and federal governments.

Sincerely,

Mark Smith, President
LaGrange District 105 Board of Education

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

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Spring Avenue School Recognized for ACHIEVEMENT

Each year, the Illinois State Board of Education celebrates the accomplishments of exemplary public schools through the Illinois Honor Roll of Schools. There

are three Honor Roll categories: Spotlight Schools, Academic Achievement, and Academic Excellence. The awards are based on academic achievement as measured by the Illinois Standards Achievement Tests (ISATs).

During the past five years, all five District 105 schools have been recognized as Honor Roll Schools.

This year, based on the results of the 2010 ISATs, Spring Avenue Elementary School once again received an Academic Excellence Award. It is the



A Spring Avenue School student is engaged in reading.

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Spring Avenue students hone their computer skills. In classrooms throughout the district, computers are an important learning tool.

Program Committee RECONVENES

After the passage of a District 105 tax referendum in 2005, with a directive from the Board of Education, a Program Committee consisting of members from across the community and from the district's schools was formed in the 2006-2007 school year.

The committee's purpose was to examine possible program additions and/or identify and recommend changes that would address district-wide needs. As an advisory entity to the Board of Education, the committee identified, prioritized, and recommended programs that had significant budgetary, resource, and facility impact. Hiring Library Media Specialists in all five of the district's schools is one of the results of the committee's work.

Last fall, the District 105 Board of Education asked for the Program Committee to reconvene. The committee's updated purpose is to examine the effectiveness of current large-scale district program initiatives that fall outside of the core content areas.

The committee received detailed background information on each program's purpose, costs, and student results. The committee spent the year examining these programs, and will soon provide an evaluation to the Board of Education, identifying each large-scale program initiative as one of four levels:

Level 1: Program is a "must keep" as it adds value to the district's results.

Level 2: Program needs review to increase or sustain current value.

Level 3: Program needs further study to determine viability of return on the investment.

Level 4: Program is not viable to continue current investment.

The work of the Program Committee is one way that District 105 is effectively meeting the needs of all students.

District Has Eleventh **MASTER TEACHER**



Julie McGovern, the district's newest Master Teacher, and two of her Gurrie Middle School students.

Gurrie Middle School Language Arts teacher Julie McGovern is the latest District 105 educator to achieve Master Teacher status, a high honor. Master teacher status is conveyed by certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), through a rigorous process that can take up to three years to complete. National Board Certification attests that a teacher is judged by his/her peers as one who is accomplished, makes sound professional judgments about student learning, and acts effectively on those judgments. National Board Certified teachers demonstrate a high level of knowledge and skills. It not only is the highest credential in the teaching profession, but also attests that a teacher has met exacting standards through intensive study, expert evaluation, self-assessment, and peer review.

With 11 Master Teachers, the district is among the state's leaders in the number of educators to earn National Board Certification. Since this NBPTS program began 24 years ago, only 91,000 teachers in the nation have accomplished National Board Certification. That is a very small number when you consider that today there are 3.5 million elementary, middle and high school teachers in the U.S.

Julie McGovern, who has taught at Gurrie for six years, earned NBPTS certification in Early Adolescence English Language Arts. A former writer, she earned a BA in journalism, MA in communications, and a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT). The National Board Certification process took her eight months to complete, and included a computer-based assessment as well as development of four

portfolio entries demonstrating her teaching in both reading and writing. A fourth entry demonstrated how well she works with parents and with the district's professional community.

Mrs. McGovern explained, "The more I worked on the entries, the more things I noticed that I could improve—for example, I could have redirected that student more effectively—and even noticed things that I do that are pretty good. While I think I am a reflective teacher, sometimes you need to really sit down and thoughtfully evaluate WHY and HOW you do things. This process provided that opportunity." Upon receiving her scores, she could determine the areas of teaching in which she did well, and the areas that needed improvement.

On November 19, 2010, Mrs. McGovern logged on to the NBPTS website and learned she had earned Master Teacher status. As the word spread throughout the day, she was overwhelmed by the kindness and support of District 105 educators and students. "I learned a great deal during the NBPTS process, but the response of people in the district to my news confirmed that my colleagues are the best I could hope to work with."

District 105 Board of Education

Mark Smith, President
David Herndon, Vice President
Eileen Tucker, Secretary
Kristine Lonsway
Larry Prystalski
Jan Reagan
TBD

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.

Phase II Construction is Underway



This year's construction will expand and improve the Hodgkins, Spring Avenue, and Gurrie Middle School facilities.

The second phase of the district's \$28 million construction project is underway, bringing improvements and additions to Hodgkins, Spring and Gurrie schools. Libraries are being expanded at both Hodgkins Elementary and Gurrie Middle schools; a new kindergarten classroom is being added to Spring Avenue School, which will also share a new gymnasium with Gurrie. (The existing gym at Gurrie will also be kept.) Two gyms at Gurrie are needed due to the district's rapid population growth. Last year's enrollment increased by 6%, while over the past 10 years it has increased by 25%. Spring Avenue School and Gurrie Middle School have experienced the greatest population growth.

At Hodgkins School, construction is beginning on a new playground. The school also added a new multipurpose room two years ago.

An ongoing goal of the construction project is improving the district's infrastructure, with upgrades or replacement to plumbing, wiring and HVAC. Asbestos removal is also being undertaken. New security upgrades include centralized entrances to each building.

Phase II is scheduled to be completed by the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year.

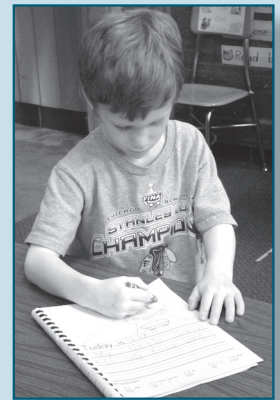
At the beginning of the current school year, the completion of Phase I brought improvements and upgrades to Seventh Avenue and Ideal schools, and relocation of the District's Administrative Offices from the Spring Avenue/Gurrie building to Seventh Avenue School. The construction was most noticeable at Seventh Avenue School, with the addition of seven classrooms.

To view the Phase II construction plans in their entirety, visit the district website: www.d105.net. Scroll down to "Phase II Construction Plans."

In related news, on May 1, a ribbon cutting ceremony marked the completion of updates to the park next to Ideal School. District 105 partnered with the City of Countryside to create a revitalized park that will benefit the school and the community.

Spring Avenue School Recognized for ACHIEVEMENT

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Spring Avenue School students practice reading and writing.

fourth consecutive year the school has received this recognition from the State of Illinois. To qualify for the award, a minimum of 90% of students must meet or exceed standards in reading and math for three consecutive years.

Spring Avenue School is one of only 459 Illinois public schools to earn this achievement in 2010.

To learn more about the Illinois Honor Roll and the selection criteria, visit this website:

<http://www.ilhonorroll.niu.edu/>

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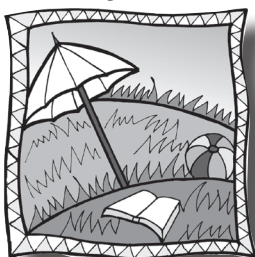
District 105 Presents SUMMER LEARNING FOR ALL

Research that is focused on academic skill regression states that over the summer months students can lose anywhere from one to three months of learning! During the last year, the district completed a comprehensive study examining multiple years of student data. Consistent with national studies on summer learning regression, it was determined that District 105 students regress over the summer as well. This regression is seen across all of the district schools at all socio-economic levels. To address the reality of summer regression, the district is implementing exciting learning opportunities that ALL students and families can experience during the upcoming summer months!

Summer Learning For All Webpage

The *Summer Learning for All Webpage* is a collaboration between all District 105 teachers and staff. The webpage has resources chosen to

enhance summer learning. Students can visit a museum's online collection, practice math facts, or get creative with poetry and writing. Access this webpage through the district website, www.d105.net, under the *Parents/Guardians'* section. The webpage is separated into three sections: Online Student Resources, Community Resources for Families, and Summer Learning Resources for Parents.



Midweek Open Library For All

Every Wednesday evening, 5:00-

7:00 p.m., from June 15 through August 10, the Seventh Avenue School Library will open to all District 105 parents and children to check-out books and participate in shared reading. These experiences will emphasize strong reading comprehension and

fluency strategies. Parents will take home sound reading strategies to aid their children during the summer.

District 105 Summer Reading and Math CONNECT Program

Through the new summer CONNECT Program, interested students will pair with a District 105 educator to practice and discuss math and reading. Over an eight-week period, they will communicate via e-mail, postcards, and/or telephone. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to practice current grade level skills and experience concepts to be introduced in the 2011-2012 school year.

"We are excited to offer these additional resources to the students and families of District 105. The more a child reads, writes, and engages in math, the better prepared he or she will be for the new school year!" stated Kathryn Heeke, director of curriculum and instruction.

IN APPRECIATION



The District 105 community extends its appreciation to three retiring Board of Education Members: **Barbara Baldassarre, Jan Kinsley and Peggy Peterson.**

Collectively, they have given 26 years of service to the students and families of the LaGrange Schools.

A board member for eight years, Barbara Baldassarre served as vice president for the past four years. She stated, "The most important measure of the work we do as a board, together with our administration, staff, and families, is reflected in the success of the students that we serve. Our data is showing that as a group, students are entering high school better prepared and placing into more increasingly challenging courses than ever before. We're definitely heading in the right direction! I am eager to see evidence of continued progress from District 105 students in the years to come."

Jan Kinsley served on the board for the past 10 years. During that time she was the vice president for one

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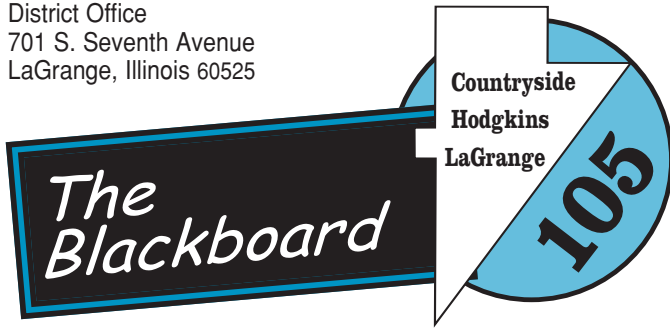
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IN APPRECIATION

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year and board president for five years. "It is difficult for me to identify a specific District 105 accomplishment of which I am most proud," she commented. "The reality is, I have witnessed many significant successes that were the result of the hard work of our students, staff, and members of our community. I extend my sincerest gratitude to all of you for your efforts. I leave knowing that we are a stronger school district that has the people and resources in place to continue advancing our mission."

Peggy Peterson, a board member for the past eight years, is pleased that the board was able to come together to work as a very cohesive unit. She believes that during the years she

served, the board became more goal-oriented, more committed to using data to drive decision-making, and that their decisions aligned with district goals.

She cites the passage of the referendum, curricular program review, and facilities improvements as among the district's important recent endeavors. Also, she believes that there has been a greater recognition of the district's overall accomplishments.

"It has been a privilege to serve the students and families of District 105," Mrs. Peterson commented. "It has been a great learning experience. I thoroughly enjoyed all eight years of service."

ENTER

VISIT THE DISTRICT 105 WEBSITE: www.d105.net