

The Newsletter of LaGrange School District 105

The Blackboard

www.d105.net

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

*Mr. Steve Bahn,
Superintendent
of Schools*

JANUARY 2019



Principals Share 2018-19 Strategies

Principals from the five D105 schools recently shared their thoughts on their main initiatives and practices that are occurring during the 2018-2019 school year:

Gurrie Middle School, Principal Ed Hood

Throughout the year, we are continuing our focus on creating a school culture where students feel safe, healthy, engaged, supported, and challenged. Our “whole child” focus helps prepare students for the academic challenges of high school and beyond, provides opportunities for students to connect with their communities to make a difference, builds skills for students to work together in a collaborative manner that enhances personal growth and learning, and integrates opportunities throughout the curriculum to connect with a wide variety of experiences that help produce positive and contributing members of our society. **continues on p. 4...**



GURRIE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE ENGAGED IN THEIR STUDIES.



The D105 Difference

- Three D105 graduates have been named commended students in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship program. Commended students place in the top five percent of more than one million students who enter the program. Congratulations to: **Sophie Pigman, Benjamin Prystalski and Gabriella Smith!**
- **Seventh Avenue School** recently organized a D105 Care Closet, a collection of food and household items, to distribute to district families in need. Seventh Avenue School Principal **Erin Hall** organized a competition between the schools, which resulted in the collection of 1,712 items for the care closet.
- For the second consecutive year, Gurrie Middle School teacher **Molly Kowynia** received a \$2,500 grant from ESP (Energizing Student Potential/The NEED project). The group focuses on infusing energy and related STEM content into the classroom.
- The **Gurrie boys' cross country team** finished 13th in the state at the IESA State Finals! The Gurrie cross country team also finished as the “Best Overall Team” with both the boys’ and girls’ teams winning their respective championships.

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
Emily Crement, Principal

Ideal Elementary School
9901 W. 58th Street
Countryside, IL 60525
(708) 482-2750
Eilidh Hall, 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

Introducing NEW TEACHERS



D105 welcomed eight new teachers at the beginning of the school year. Introducing the newest members of the D105 family:

Gurrie Middle School

Katherine Picht, **Culinary Arts Teacher**

Mrs. Picht has 14 years of teaching experience. She earned a BS in Family Social Services from Northern Illinois University, and an MA in Early Childhood Education from Concordia University, River Forest.

"Everyone in D105 has been welcoming, helpful, and supportive," she commented.

Mrs. Picht shares a loving home with her husband, three children, and their two dogs. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, taking long walks, and baking.

Sylwia Zalewska, **Eighth Grade Math Teacher**

Miss Zalewska comes to Gurrie with five years of teaching experience. She achieved a BS in Secondary Education from DePaul University, Chicago, and a Masters of Education in English as a Second Language, Special Education, and Bilingual Polish, from Dominican University, River Forest. Miss Zalewska remarked, "Everyone in D105 is very welcoming, supportive, and collaborative."

Hodgkins School

Adam Bautista, Fifth Grade Teacher

Mr. Bautista has nine years of teaching experience. He earned a BA in Elementary Education from the University of Illinois at Chicago, an MA in Curriculum and Instruction from the American College of Education, based in Indianapolis, and an MA in Technology Education from Concordia University, Chicago.

"I love how the staff views all students as their students and therefore everyone is so willing to collaborate and provide support. It is very clear that parents in this community want their students to do well,



ADAM BAUTISTA



LAURA GHERA



LAUREN HUEBNER



JULIE JACOBS



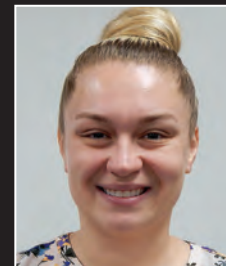
SARAH KUBILIUS



KATHERINE PICTH



JILL SCHMALE



SYLWIA ZALEWSKA

which promotes a strong line of communication between family and school."

Mr. Bautista was a Golden Apple Scholarship recipient in college, which allowed him to receive extra teaching preparation from award-winning classroom teachers during his undergraduate studies. He likes to exercise and strives to incorporate the importance of movement and activities into classroom instruction.

Jill Schmale, **Preschool For All Teacher**

Ms. Schmale has taught preschool for 13 years. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago.

"D105 is a welcoming district with staff members who really care for each student and strive to build positive relationships with the students and families," she stated. Ms. Schmale has a two-year-old daughter. She enjoys endurance sports and has competed in the Chicago Marathon, Chicago Triathlon, and in other races.

Seventh Avenue School

Laura Ghera, Music Teacher

Mrs. Ghera has taught for nine years. She has a BA in Music from Illinois Wesleyan University, Bloomington, and an MA in Music Education from VanderCook College of Music, Chicago.

"The students are friendly, personable, talented and thoughtful," she said.

Julie Jacobs, Reading Specialist

Mrs. Jacobs spent nine years in the Chicago Public Schools as a classroom teacher and as a reading specialist/literacy coach. She also worked as a

literacy consultant for 11 years for a private company that provides teachers with professional development. She earned a BA in Elementary Education from Loyola University, Chicago, and a Master's as a Reading Specialist from National Louis University, Lisle.

"It is evident that this district strives for excellence and I feel so lucky to be a part of such an amazing learning community. Everyone is so welcoming that my transition to Seventh Avenue School has been amazing. I am excited to continue learning about the district and to share my expertise with students and teachers," Mrs. Jacobs commented. She lives near the district with her husband, two sons, and their new puppy.

Spring Avenue School

Lauren Huebner, **Third Grade Teacher**

Miss Huebner has a very special connection to D105: She attended D105 schools and loved her experience! She said that it feels great to be giving back to the district that inspired her dream of becoming an educator. She currently lives in the district. This is her second year of teaching. She achieved a BA in Education from Aurora University.

"D105 is such a wonderful place to live and work," Miss Huebner stated. "It has a very welcoming, caring, and supportive culture. It is a progressive and active district. I love how dedicated the district is to creating a positive and engaging learning experience for students to develop and succeed! It is evident that D105 staff always strive to be the best."

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D105 Provides Parents With **EXTRA HELP**

Throughout the school year, the district's Student Services Department provides special presentations and other opportunities that offer information and assistance to parents.

New this year is a partnership between the district and Pillars Community Health, an innovative health and social services agency, which was among the first in Illinois to integrate primary medical and dental care with mental health and social services.

Pillars Community Health's Parent Support Team is offering a series of free **Parent Cafes** in District 105 during the 2018-2019 school year to help parents prepare pre-schoolers for school. Cafes offer conversation and support and are open to all Lyons Township families. Child care is available, and snacks are included. These programs take place at Hodgkins Village Hall.

The first Parent Café occurred on September 25. The topic was **"Helping Children Talk About Emotions."** The second was held on November 7, and the topic was **"Understanding Challenging Behaviors."** The third, **"Discipline and Routines,"** will take place January 29, 2019, from 6:30 to 7:30 pm.

The final Parent Café, **"Reducing Parent Stress,"** will be held March 14, from 7:00 to 8:00 pm.

The Student Services Department is also offering several **Parent Workshops** this year. All D105 community members are invited to attend the Parent Workshops.

On October 25, Patrick Donohue, a 24-year high school educator, coach and administrator, and life coaching expert, as well as author of *Red Zone Fathering*, presented, **"Creating Success: 5 Things Great Students and Parents Do,"** at Seventh Avenue School. The program is targeted to parents of students in kindergarten through eighth grade. It will be repeated on February 28.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Health) Metro Suburban will present a program for parents of sixth, seventh and eighth grade students at Gurrie Middle School on January 15 at 6:30 pm: **"Stress Less. Life Hacks for School Success."** Also at Gurrie on February 12, 7:00 pm, Detective Richard Wistocki, who recently retired from a 30-year career with the Naperville Police Department, will speak on **Cyber Safety** for parents of students in grades K through eight.

Parents of students with special needs were invited to the information session, **"Understanding Your Child's IEP,"** on October 16. It was facilitated by Maureen Kidd, M.S., director of student services.

Mark your calendars! D105 will host a **Wellness Fair** for all families and community members at Gurrie Middle School on March 14, 7:00 pm. Vendors and presenters will provide information to help further a healthy lifestyle.

For further information about Student Services' events, please contact Maureen Kidd at mkidd@d105.net.

What is the D105 Foundation?

D105 Foundation's mission is "to empower students from District 105 to pursue their interests, talents and dreams."

Foundation President Susan Dixon explained, "We accomplish this mission by STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS throughout District 105 with opportunities for families to celebrate and connect together. Over 500 D105 community members participate in our annual Back-to-School Family Night each fall, and in the annual Kane County Cougars Baseball Game outing in the spring.

"We also provide SCHOLARSHIPS to well deserving alumni from our district. Four-year, renewable scholarships are awarded to students graduating from Lyons Township High School to help these alumni with college costs. Since we began the program in 2014,

23 scholarships have been awarded, with over half of our scholars on track to be the first in their families to graduate from college. We reached a milestone in May 2018, when our first group of scholarship recipients graduated from college!

"The Foundation is always looking to add members to our Board of Directors. Interested individuals can complete an application that is available at www.d105foundation.org. Likewise, the Foundation accepts any/all donations throughout the year through that website. Also, Amazon Smile users may designate the D105 Foundation as their charity of choice via a link on the Foundation's website."

View photos and a video from the Foundation's events at www.d105foundation.org.

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Principals Share 2018-19 Strategies

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We agree with Psychologist Lee Jussim, who said that “holding high standards without providing a warm environment is merely harsh. A warm environment without high standards lacks backbone. But if you can create a combination of high standards with a warm and supportive environment, it will benefit all students.”

Our exceptional staff is continuing to focus on developing strong relationships with our students that enhance teaching and learning – empowering both our teachers and students to stretch ourselves personally, academically, and socially.

Supporting students to learn more about their interests, develop their talents, and pursue their dreams is what we continue to strive to accomplish each day at Gurrie. Along with the support of our parents and communities, we will no doubt ensure that students leave Gurrie not only in a better place, but also prepared for the wonderful opportunities that lie ahead.

Hodgkins School, Principal Emily Crement

As I write this article, I am nearing the end

of my “first 90 days” as principal of Hodgkins School. I want to very honestly say, what an amazing 90 days it has been. What a joy it has been to meet the students, teachers, and community members who call themselves Bulldogs. I am delighted to be counted among them!

On October 1, the staff and I presented our School Improvement Plan to district leadership. We began that process by looking closely at data, celebrating our successes, and selecting priority areas for future growth. As a team, we decided to focus on specific strategies for reading, discussing, and writing about informational text. In alignment with district goals, the instructional strategies that teachers are learning and practicing together fully support math instruction as well. We are focused on helping students understand major math content through purposeful questioning that challenges student thinking, meaningful discourse that allows students to deepen their understanding through conversation, and productive struggle that encourages students to persevere!

We are also excited to implement a new structure for opening our school day together. In a commitment to “jump starting our brains,” we gather each morning in a schoolwide Academic Morning Assembly. During this time, we continue to use a Responsive Classroom approach to practice core thinking, listening and speaking skills that are critical to academic

success in the classroom.

Through our *Bulldogs’ After 3 Clubs*, we are able to extend important learning beyond the school day. Students continue to practice math, science, speaking, reading and writing through our Lego Learning Club, Hodgkins TV, and “kid-friendly” Crime Scene Investigations.

We are energized by what is in store this year. I know I speak for all Bulldogs when I say we are proud to be making a difference in D105.

Ideal School, Principal Eilidh Hall

Writing this article gives me time to reflect on my new journey as the Ideal School principal. Over the past few months, there have been many peak moments that have helped me to understand more about the Ideal community. Some of these moments include the looks on the students’ faces as they met their teachers for the first time, walking into classrooms and seeing students engaged in learning, our first *Books and Bagels* event of the year, and the many professional learning experiences with staff.

The Ideal School staff truly demonstrates what it means to be a life-long learner. Over the course of the past few months, we have reviewed the Responsive Classroom principles and their connection to our roles. Responsive

Classroom (RC) is an evidence-based approach to teaching that focuses on engaging academics and positive community. We are currently learning more about Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and ways we can embed these learning strategies within our lessons to meet the needs of all of our learners.

In addition to working toward our academic goals, the Ideal School staff used input from student and parent surveys to create our schoolwide theme for the year: **Being Inclusive**. We created building-wide experiences for students to connect using the book, *The Invisible Boy*. Students are working within their classrooms and with Panther Pals (mixed age group communities) to discuss, demonstrate and apply their learning of how to be a good friend.

Seventh Avenue School, Principal Erin Hall

Seventh Avenue students continue to meet and exceed D105 reading and math goals. A high percentage of all stakeholder groups shared their overall satisfaction with our school on survey results. Even with these outstanding successes, the

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STUDENTS AT HODGKINS SCHOOL WORK ON A CREATIVE PROJECT.



IDEAL SCHOOL STUDENTS VIEW A PRESENTATION.

Principals Share 2018-19 Strategies

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A TEACHER WORKS WITH A SMALL GROUP OF STUDENTS AT SEVENTH AVENUE SCHOOL

Seventh Avenue Building Leadership Team (BLT) met in August to dig deeper into both academic and social/emotional data points because of their commitment to ensuring success for all students!

Seventh Avenue teachers are working to verti-

cally align their academic language and teacher resources to increase the students' understanding of *Main Idea and Supporting Details*. We believe this focus will also increase the students' overall writing skills.

In math, teachers continue to find ways to build in math numeracy at least three times a week. Children may be discussing *Number Talks* at home. These short (5-10 minutes) exercises help build number sense, which is the ability to play with numbers. It means that students can visualize problem solving, perform calculations quickly, and are flexible in their math strategy. Teachers continue to push students to not only explain their math reasoning verbally, but to express themselves as math writers, too! Once again, teachers and students are working together to set math and reading goals and reflect on their growth together. Student Communication/Data Binders are sent home throughout a math and reading unit with pre- and post-test data and parent unit letters.

Academic excellence is important to stakeholders at Seventh Avenue, and equally important is students' social/emotional well-being. Each year, the Responsive Classroom (RC) Teacher Leadership team chooses a social/emotional all-school theme. During the school year, teachers and students work through social/emotional lessons and all-school community activities that are focused on this school-wide theme. The 2018-19 theme is, *It All Starts With A D.R.E.A.M.* Currently, classrooms are focused on the "R" and "M" in DREAM. R stands for Readiness (being in control of one's body and voice AND being on time and in school), and M for Mindfulness. To help students build the capacity to be Ready, we embed Mindful breathing and activities throughout the school day. Stop by to check out the new ZEN ZONE, too! We look forward to the other all-school lessons and activities for "D" Determination, "E" Empathy, and "A" Acceptance.

Seventh Avenue School is an amazing place to learn and grow!

Spring Avenue School, Principal Brian Lawson

We are well into another fantastic year at Spring Avenue School! High-quality instruction is the rule at Spring Avenue, and teachers are working together to ensure the strongest possible educational experience for our students.

Throughout the district, teachers have been steadily improving their units of instruction in both English/language arts, and math. Along these lines, we have prioritized student engagement through guided instruction in these areas. Such instruction may include small, teacher-led groups reading targeted texts to enhance understanding of the standards; studies of novels; collaborative work in both reading and math; differentiated problem-solving activities in math; and enrichment or scaffolded activities in English/language arts. The purpose of all of these activities is to provide the appropriate level of challenge and/or support, so that more students will experience growth within the context of the unit work, gaining proficiency where it was lacking on the pre-assessment, and demonstrating mastery once proficiency has been attained.

We have more STEM- (Science Technology Engineering Math) based clubs than ever before, including PTO-offered clubs through the After 3 Program, and school-based clubs such as our first Lego League and IMSA Fusion. We hope that the clubs' success will provide a foundation for future expansion. Thus far, students have been very interested and engaged by these opportunities.

We completed the Peace Rocks project, which raised \$1,000 for Loving Without Limits, a charity that supports families of children who have extended hospital stays. This project is part of our overall ACES (Accept, Celebrate, Elevate and Serve) Initiative. We began this program two years ago to promote tolerance and understanding of people of different cultures and with differing abilities. Our Morning Kickoffs have included ACES presentations to educate all students in these areas. ACES was expanded to include several community service projects last year, and we are continuing to offer and improve these opportunities this year.

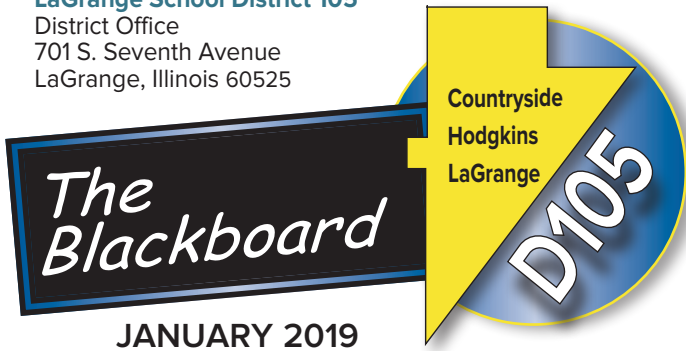
Through the above examples and by other means, we continually strive not only to challenge our students academically, but to help them develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and a sense of compassion and service to the world around them.



SPRING AVENUE STUDENTS WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO SOLVE A PROBLEM.

LaGrange School District 105

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Miss Huebner enjoys sports, fishing, and spending time with family and friends. In college, where she played softball, she was honored with the Chris Thompson Award for displaying dedication, determination and sportsmanship throughout the year. She believes that is a strong reflection of her character.

At Aurora University, she was inducted into three honor societies and received the Gold Ivy Leaf Award for her academic performance.

Sarah Kubilius, Fourth Grade Teacher

Miss Kubilius is a new teacher who graduated in June from North Central College, Naperville, where she earned a BA in Education. She also has an Associate of Arts degree from the College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn.

"D105 is a great school community! I am very impressed with the district's commitment to empowering students to pursue their own interests and talents. The wide variety of clubs allow students to further enhance and take ownership of their learning," said Miss Kubilius.

She was the recipient of the Outstanding Elementary Education Award from North Central College. One senior per major is nominated by the faculty to receive this accolade.

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**DISTRICT 105
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

- David Herndon, President**
- Kristine Lonsway, Vice President**
- Virginia Kogen, Secretary**
- Elyse Hoffenberg**
- Larry Prystalski**
- Marika Radi**
- Eileen Tucker**

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