

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

Dr. Glenn T. Schlichting,
Superintendent of Schools

EARLY SUMMER 2016

The Newsletter of LaGrange School District 105

The Blackboard

www.d105.net

Countryside
Hodgkins
LaGrange

105

Did you KNOW...

The District 105 Gurrie Middle School eighth grade class took winter MAP (*Measures of Academic Progress*) tests for the Lyons Township High School course scheduling process. The entire District 105 community is very proud of their many noteworthy class achievements, including:

- 78% of students scored at or above the 50th percentile in reading. This is the highest eighth-grade achievement level since the district began administering the winter MAP tests.
 - Nationally, the class ranked at the 89th percentile in winter reading achievement.
 - 73% of students scored at or above the 50th percentile in math, the second highest eighth-grade achievement level since winter testing began in the district.
 - Nationally, the class ranked at the 81st percentile in winter math achievement.
 - The percentage of eighth-grade students who have placed into advanced and honors courses at Lyons Township High School far exceeds any Gurrie graduating class since the district began data tracking in 2003. For comparison, placements for the 2016 and 2003 classes are provided below:
- Honors/Accelerated English:*
Class of 2016 (65%); Class of 2003 (33%)
- Honors/Accelerated Math:*
Class of 2016 (59%); Class of 2003 (27%)
- Honors/Accelerated Science:*
Class of 2016 (51%); Class of 2003 (34%).

Parent Information Committee AIDS, INFORMS

The district's Parent Information Committee (PIC) helps parents and students by providing presentations on pertinent parenting topics, and by hosting special events. The committee uses information gathered through interest surveys to determine the events' contents. This year, mental health issues and cyber-safety were key focus areas. Students and parents also benefited from a stimulating Career Night.

Parent attendance at presentations and events, which are generally held at Gurrie Middle School, is aided by free childcare, translation services, and bus transportation. Committee members work hard to assure that parents have these resources, so they are able to attend PIC events to get the information they need to keep their children safe.

The PIC members are: Sandy Ruffner, Lynn Halfpenny, Dee Morello, Marci Ortiz, Sandy Brantner, Kristine Lonsway, Danijela Neskovic, Megan Beutjer, Maureen Kidd, and Allison Cherry. Parents and staff appreciate their dedication and service!

Here's a look back at the Parent Information Committee's accomplishments this year:

Career Fest

On March 9, 2016, 40 community members and parents, representing a wide variety of careers, volunteered their time and talents to provide insight about training, education, and working conditions. Over 120 students attended the fest with family members. Students asked the exhibitors thoughtful questions. They learned how their current school experiences connect them to future educational opportunities, and eventually, to career selections.

What Parents Need to Know About Anxiety in Children and Adolescents

In February, parents gained knowledge about anxiety through a presentation by Dr. Patrick B. McGrath, the director of the *Center for Anxiety and Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD)* and the co-director of the *School Refusal and Anxiety Program* at Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital in Hoffman Estates, Illinois.

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Students and parents gained valuable information from working professionals during the Parent Information Committee's Career Night.



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
Erin Hall, Principal

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

Last year, the State of Illinois initiated new testing for Illinois school students in grades 3-8. This testing, called PARCC (*Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers*), measures whether students are on track to be successful in college and careers. PARCC testing is based on the new Illinois Learning Standards for English/language arts and mathematics. These standards reflect learning that is more hands-on and rigorous than the previous learning standards, with an emphasis on critical thinking, concept mastery, and writing skills. For several years before the PARCC testing began, Illinois schools overhauled their curriculum to align with the goals of the new Illinois Learning Standards, which have definitive learning goals for each grade level.

Schools and parents received the results of the 2015 PARCC exam in fall 2015. While these scores look much different, and, overall may appear lower than scores in the previous ISAT (*Illinois Standards Achievement Test*) state assessment, they are not comparable. "The new English/language arts and math standards have 'raised the bar' for the type of skills and knowledge students must possess before moving on to the next grade level," explained Kathryn Heeke, District 105 director of curriculum and assessment.

"As with any large scale change, we anticipate a period of adjustment as students and teachers become more accustomed to the new format of the PARCC exam, and the higher expectations of the new Illinois Learning Standards."

Revisions to 2016 Testing

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) improved the testing this year, through a shorter, simpler format. According to the ISBE, the exam was originally divided into two parts that measure different types of knowledge and skills. The PARCC Governing Board voted to consolidate the two testing windows into one and to reduce total test time for most students by 90 minutes beginning in the 2015-16 school year. The vote came in response to school district feedback during the first year of testing and a careful review of the test design.

The decision was designed to make the test easier for schools and districts to administer, take less student time in most instances, and reduce the amount of time necessary to administer the test.

The PARCC assessment will also still provide reliable and valid information about student achievement that students, their families, teachers, and schools can use to improve teaching and learning for individual students and for students as a group.

The testing window this year was up to 30 days and extended from roughly the 75 percent mark of the school year to the 90 percent mark.

The revised PARCC exam consisted of six or seven test units, depending on grade level, compared to the eight or nine sessions that students took in 2015. The PARCC Governing Board's decision also reduced the math testing time by 60 minutes, and removed a half hour from the English/language arts portion for most students.

In addition, students had fewer questions to answer, while educators had more flexible scheduling, and are anticipated to receive data from the tests back quickly.

Parent reports are scheduled to be available over the summer, several months earlier than in the initial 2015 testing.

"We want to emphasize that no one test in isolation can gauge the success of a child, teacher, school, or district. Multiple measures need to be used to view both growth and achievement," Ms. Heeke stated. "The PARCC assessment is new. Like any other new initiative, it takes time to improve implementation and understand the impact. An excellent resource on PARCC for parents, teachers, and community members can be found at greatschools.org/gk/common-core-test-guide. Parents have been directed to this link."

2015 District 105 PARCC Test Results "Meets and Exceeds"

Grade	English/Language Arts		Mathematics	
	District 105	State	District 105	State
3	56%	34%	51%	36%
4	58%	37%	35%	28%
5	58%	37%	43%	27%
6	45%	33%	47%	26%
7	49%	37%	41%	27%
8	43%	38%	40%	32%
District Overall	53%		44%	

The PARCC scores for 2015, the first year the test was administered, cannot be compared to the scores of the ISAT, the test it replaced. PARCC has "raised the bar" for the type of skills and knowledge students must possess before they can move on to the next grade level.

INTRODUCING STEVE BAHN

TO the Ideal School community, and to all District 105 teachers, administrators and staff, Steve Bahn needs no introduction. For the past 10 years, he has served as the principal of Ideal School. On

July 1, he will continue to serve the district, but in a very different capacity, one that will impact not only Ideal School, but the entire district.

On that day, Steve Bahn will become District 105's assistant superintendent. Two years from then, upon the retirement of current superintendent Dr. Glenn Schlichting, contingent upon the Board of Education's review and approval of Mr. Bahn's work as assistant superintendent, he will become the next superintendent of the District 105 schools.

Mr. Bahn was recommended for the position by an external search consultant, through an internal review process. The Board of Education approved his hiring. After two years as assistant superintendent, the Board also reserves the right to conduct a full external search for the new superintendent, if it deems necessary.

"I am honored and humbled to have been selected to be the assistant superintendent of LaGrange School District 105," Principal Bahn stated. "I am excited about this wonderful opportunity and will continue to promote and represent our school district with tremendous dignity and pride. I have been blessed by the many opportunities I have experienced in District 105 over the past

10 years, and I look forward to continuing my professional journey with passion and dedication."

Mr. Bahn, who has been an educator for 17 years, is grateful for the support and mentoring of Superintendent Schlichting, who, he says, "has been the foundation of my career." Although he believes that no longer heading Ideal School will be extremely challenging, remaining in the district means that he is committed to the school and to the greater community. "When I was offered the position, it took my breath away. Being assistant superintendent will allow me to do more for the district, to help move it forward," he remarked, "and earn the trust placed in me by the Board of Education."

Mr. Bahn is working toward a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership from National Louis University, Chicago, with completion in the spring of 2017. He also has an MS in Educational Leadership and a BS in Elementary Education, both from Illinois State University, Normal.

"I genuinely care about this district, and being able to continue my career here is like a dream. The climate and culture set us apart. There is genuine care and concern about the academic and social/emotional needs of every child. It is a truly great place to work. However, our work is never done. There is no finish line, only additional challenges. We embrace the continuous improvement mindset, and continue to seek opportunities to grow. If what I do in the next two years helps make District 105 an even better place, I will be very proud. If not, I shouldn't be here."



Ideal School Principal Steve Bahn will soon be the district's new assistant superintendent.

PRINCIPAL of SPRING AVENUE SCHOOL Retires

Elizabeth Webb Peterman, who has served as principal of Spring Avenue School for the past 10 years, is retiring on July 1. She has been an educator for 33 years.

"My heart is filled with gratitude for the people in District 105!" Mrs. Webb Peterman stated. "Working in District 105 has been one of the best experiences of my life. It has been a glorious ride. I have learned more about what works and what is magical in education through collaborating with the individuals in this district. From the office and building staff and support staff, to each and every teacher, administrator and supervisor - I am blessed to have been surrounded by

wonderful people. The parents are our guardian angels. The children, oh, the AMAZING CHILDREN! I am a changed person because of having had the privilege of watching them grow! Each and every child has unbelievable potential. I wish them all continued joy in everything they do!"

Mrs. Webb Peterman looks forward to an active retirement, filled with travel, exercise, educational consulting, writing, and with her work for a Naperville nonprofit.

"To all my educator family members and friends, thank you for changing lives. Keep on being 'Difference Makers' in the lives of our children!" Mrs. Webb Peterman exclaimed.



Spring Avenue School Principal Elizabeth Webb Peterman will retire on July 1.

Lenzi Community Learning Center OPENS FOR ALL

District 105's Lenzi Community Learning Center opened April 4 to address a community need for adequate technology resources, homework assistance, and a quiet, after school study space for District 105 students. The Learning Center is located in the Lenzi Apartment Complex in Hodgkins. District 105's corporate partners, Republic Bank and Vulcan Materials, have graciously provided all funding for the community center. The center provides free homework assistance, and is open to all District 105 students and parents.

An important District 105 goal is to accelerate the learning of all students. Parent partnerships and support for home learning are paramount to this goal. Marci Ortiz, the district's English Language Learners coordinator, explained, "From working closely with our families, we realized that many of them have had difficulties in finding adequate study space and technology resources to support student learning after school hours. Our goal is for the community learning center to be an important resource for families who need this type of assistance."

The Lenzi Community Learning Center is equipped with computers, Internet access, tutors, and a quiet study space to support parents working with their children to finish daily homework, research topics, read together, and complete projects. The center was open on Mondays and Wednesdays, April 4 - May 25, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. The district is evaluating the efficacy of the

program after this first phase to determine plans for the summer and for the next school year.

Mrs. Ortiz concluded, "I am very excited about this new endeavor. Many of our families are sure to benefit from the community learning center. It is strategically located, which makes it easy for students and parents to access.

It is a safe and quiet place where students and parents can share their learning. The center is equipped with everything needed to support our students' learning, and is one more way the district is working to help all of our students succeed."



Lenzi Community Center opened April 4. Parents and students used the resources to study, and to get homework assistance.



(Photo, left): District 105 English Language Learners Coordinator Marci Ortiz (L) worked with families on opening day.

JAZZ BAND Selected to Play at State Music Conference

The Gurrie Middle School Jazz Band earned a high achievement this year. On the basis of its excellent musicianship, the band was selected to perform at the annual Illinois Music Education Conference, held January 27 - 30 at the Peoria Civic Center in Peoria. This annual event features the state and country's top student bands, music education institutions, and music programs.

A committee of music educators from the Illinois Music Education Association, the event's sponsor, selected the bands. The Gurrie Middle School Jazz Band was one of only two middle schools selected to play in the conference; most of the bands were from high schools and colleges. Over 10,000 people from the Illinois' music education community came to the event to attend music clinic sessions, see performances, and participate in networking opportunities.

Gurrie Middle School Band Director Jerry Lowrey presented a workshop titled "The



The 2015-2016 Gurrie Middle School Jazz Band and their director, Jerry Lowrey (L), at the Illinois Music Education Conference.

Clinic," and the band's performance was called "Jazz Band Rehearsal Techniques in Action for Your Jazz Band: Pedagogy to Cultivate and Improve Swing Articulation and Cultural Interpretation." "Our students absolutely wowed everyone who heard them," stated Mr. Lowrey. "The president of the Jazz Education Network even told us she had not heard a band play that well and swing that hard in a long time!"

This is the first time that the Gurrie Jazz Band was selected for this honor. The jazz band consists of 19 talented students, 16 students in grades seven and eight, and three sixth-grade students

"Our jazz band students are given the opportunity to explore jazz, 'America's Classical Music,' from a cultural, historical, and musical perspective," Mr. Lowrey explained. "From day one they showed incredible commitment by giving up their Thursday nights and practicing for countless hours to get the most out of their music. Jazz band members surprise me every year with the

amount of work they devote to the music and to each other. This year's band exceeded my expectations in every possible way. The students became great jazz musicians in a very short time. It's extra special to see students with very little previous exposure to jazz become enthusiastic improvisers and develop great techniques, as well as an appreciation for the music, so quickly."

DISTRICT 105 FOUNDATION Update



Fun was had by all at the fourth annual Kane County Cougars' Game on April 24. Over 600 community members attended the event.

The District 105 Foundation sponsored its fourth annual Kane County Cougars' Game on Sunday, April 24, as a way to strengthen family and community relationships throughout District 105. Once again, the event was a tremendous success with over 600 community members enjoying the game.

The Foundation awarded five new scholarships to former District 105 students graduating from Lyons Township High School. A new scholarship was added this year for a special education student in honor of Hodgkins School teacher Leesa McHugh. The Foundation's focus is to award scholarships to former District 105 students graduating from Lyons Township High School who are most in need of support to pursue a college education. With the combination of new and renewal scholarships, the District 105 Foundation will currently be helping 13 former students.

The Foundation will sponsor its third annual Family Movie Night on the Spring Avenue and Gurrie Middle School grounds one night in September, date TBD.

New this year: the Foundation will hold its first fundraising event on Saturday, October 8, 2016. Please save the date and watch the district website, www.d105.net, for information.

Looking for a worthy charity for regular giving?

Planning to make a donation in someone's name as a gift or a memorial? Please consider the District 105 Foundation, a recognized State of Illinois Not-for-Profit Corporation. All contributions to the Foundation support efforts to strengthen family and community relationships throughout the district, and fund scholarships for deserving students. Donations can be sent to the District 105 Office, 701 S. Seventh Avenue, LaGrange, IL 60525, or contributions can be made online at www.d105.net by visiting the District 105 Foundation tab.

DISTRICT 105 BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Jan Reagan

Robert Webb

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.

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EARLY SUMMER 2016

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Parent Information Committee **AIDS, INFORMS** (Continued from page 1)

He explained why students are presenting with anxiety, what parents can do at home to promote healthy coping strategies, and how parents can determine when students need the help of outside resources.

Dr. McGrath is the author of the stress management workbook *Don't Try Harder, Try Different*, as well as *The OCD Answer Book*. He has also been featured in many newspapers, journals, and magazines, and has appeared on numerous radio and television programs. He also worked on the Discovery Health Channel's documentary *Anxious*, and filmed episodes of *Hoarding: Buried Alive*, for The Learning Channel. Dr. McGrath frequently has speaking engagements around the country, leads an active research program, trains students in the treatment of anxiety, and makes presentations on anxiety disorders at national conferences.

Signs of Suicide Parent Education Program

Gurrie Middle School offered depression and suicide prevention training to students, staff, and parents as part of the *SOS Signs of Suicide Prevention Program* in late October. The PIC sponsored a presentation for parents. The national SOS program is successful at increasing student reporting concerns about themselves or about friends, and is the only school-based suicide prevention program listed by the U.S. government's *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration* (SAMSHA) for its National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices, that addresses suicide risk and depression, while reducing suicide attempts.

The goals of student and parent participation in this program are to:

- ✓ Help students understand that depression is a treatable illness;
- ✓ Explain that suicide is a preventable tragedy that often occurs as a result of untreated depression;
- ✓ Train students in how to identify serious depression and potential suicide thinking in themselves or in friends;
- ✓ Impress upon students that they can help themselves or their friends by taking the simple step of talking to a responsible adult about their concerns; and
- ✓ Let students know which adults in the school they can turn to for help.

Digital Citizenship

Detective Rich Wistocki, Computer Crimes Unit, Naperville Police Department, gave a presentation to parents and teachers titled, *My Kid Would Never!!! But Others Would!!!! Keeping Our Children Safe Online*. Later, middle school students and staff also received this information. The presentation covered cyber-bullying, monitoring children's online activities, and apps that have the potential to be dangerous for students. Parent questions and involvement revealed a high level of engagement on the topic.