



# District News

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*Building Bridges to Success*

## A Message From the Superintendent

Dear District 148 Community,

Under the tutelage of our dedicated and compassionate educators and staff, our students are broadening their knowledge, enriching their skills and strengthening their abilities.

This celebratory time of year allows us to reflect on these gratifying accomplishments. We have the best and brightest students who are progressing toward a promising future.

The significant growth we have seen in students' academic performance is further illustrated in the 2018 Illinois Report Cards. Six of our schools: Franklin, Lincoln Elementary, Park, Riverdale and Washington Elementary and Junior High School earned the designation of Commendable from the Illinois State Board of Education. There were four designations given this year and Commendable is second only to the highest rating of Exemplary. You can view the District's Report Cards and more information about the school designations on our web site at [www.district148.net](http://www.district148.net).

In order to further protect our students and staff and keep them safe and focused on learning and instruction while in our care, another

layer of security is being added to our schools. We are installing a comprehensive, high-tech safety platform. This state-of-the-art system will augment existing safety measures, practices and procedures.

Additionally, we are anticipating the arrival of Dr. Sonya L. Whitaker as the District's new Deputy Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Whitaker will join our administrative team on July 1, 2019, following the retirement of Assistant Superintendent Dr. Patricia Moore. More information about Dr. Whitaker's background in education is available inside this newsletter.

In closing, my hope is for peace and kindness to fill your homes and our communities this holiday season. May you be surrounded by family and friends as you ring in the arrival of 2019!

Respectfully,  
  
Dr. Kevin J. Nohelty



## From the Board President

Dear Parents and Community Members,

A District 148 graduate recently demonstrated the value of community service. Washington Junior High School Class of 2018 Valedictorian Jayera Griffin attended a Board of Education Meeting in November to make a donation to the District's students. She presented a wagon filled with book bags and \$1,000 for school supplies. Her message is: "...Having school supplies is a right and not a privilege."

We are inspired and awestruck by this teen's thoughtful and generous nature. Her parents consistently make acts of kindness a priority in their home. They are always at Jayera's side as she advocates for others.

All parents/guardians play a key role in the development of their child/children. The Board and I want families to be assured that we continue to do everything possible to keep students safe at school. School is often the safest environment for students.

The Seconds Matter Safety Solutions system being installed in our schools will provide additional protection for the students. Without safety, it is difficult for teachers to teach and students cannot learn.

Progress and interventions are taking place in our schools. The Reading Recovery intervention for First Grade classes helps our young students become better readers and writers. Our Reading Recovery educators also benefit from the ongoing training being offered.

We remain committed to making sure our students have all of the tools they need to be successful, productive citizens.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I offer my congratulations to all Grade 4 and Junior High Science Fair participants and to our winning Lincoln Avenue School Cross Country Team. Keep reaching for the stars! I also encourage all parents/guardians/families to stay involved in the education of their child/children. Thank you for your support and for making sure your child is on time and in school every day. Regular and consistent attendance matters.

Lastly, I wish all District 148 families a safe and restful winter break!



  
Ernesto E. Mickens

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### Dates to Remember:

Dec. 24 –	
Jan. 4	No School - Winter Break
Jan. 7	School resumes after Winter Break
Jan. 18	Second Quarter Ends
Jan. 18	School Improvement Day, Early Dismissal at Noon
Jan. 21	No School - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Observance
Jan. 25	Second Quarter Report Cards sent home with students
Jan. 28 –	
Feb. 1	ECC Screening 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Feb. 8	No School for students – Teacher Institute Day

## Our New Deputy Superintendent

Dr. Sonya L. Whitaker will become the District's new Deputy Superintendent of Schools after the current school year ends.

The District 148 School Board has approved Dr. Whitaker's hiring, effective July 1, 2019.

The new job title and employment of Dr. Whitaker comes as District 148 Assistant Superintendent Dr. Patricia Moore prepares for retirement at the end of the 2018-19 school year. Dr. Moore has served as the District's Assistant Superintendent since July 2008.

Meanwhile, Dr. Whitaker is no stranger to South Suburban schools or to the educational arena. She has more than 25 years of experience in education and currently serves as Associate Superintendent of Schools in Harvey Elementary District 152.

Before being hired by District 152, she was Superintendent of Schools at Fairmont School District 89 in Lockport for six years. She also worked in Schaumburg Elementary District 54 in a variety of capacities including Assistant Principal, Principal, Director of Literacy and Director of Academic Improvement.

"My interest in becoming a part of the District 148 family is related to me being keenly aware of the fact that there are many talented professionals working tirelessly in every school and in the district office," Dr. Whitaker said. "It is also my understanding that we share a common interest, and that is to ensure the academic and social well-being of each and every student that we serve."

## A Lesson in Community Service

When a graduate returns to her elementary school district roots with an attention-grabbing message of benevolence and goodwill, we cannot help but take notice.

That alumna is District 148's Jayera Griffin.

Jayera's recent visit and lavish donation of book bags and school supplies elicited a huge response from the School Board, administration, staff, the community and news reporters.

The Washington Junior High School Class of 2018 Valedictorian attended the November Board meeting and gifted to all District students a wagon filled with book bags and a \$1,000 check for school supplies.

Her message was succinct:

"If a child loses his pencil, please give him one. If a child does not have crayons, please supply them. School supplies are a basic necessity for school. I believe having school supplies is a right and not a privilege," she said. "There should be no reason why the kids in School District 148, my school district, are not successful. Please accept my donation of \$1,000

## Commendable Schools

Six of our schools received a Commendable designation from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) this year.

As part of the 2018 Illinois Report Card, the state has released descriptors to convey how well schools are serving all students. The designations also let families and communities know each school's progress toward preparing all students for success in college and careers.

In our District, Franklin, Lincoln Elementary, Park, Riverdale and both Washington Schools received designations of Commendable – just behind the highest rating of Exemplary. The designation is based on data that includes 2018 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) results.

The descriptors are part of the state's new support and accountability system for all schools.

The state-mandated Report Cards include information about the District and each school's student ethnic/racial diversity, socio-economic status, attendance and mobility rates, average class sizes, teacher/pupil ratio, finances and performance on assessments.

The progress experienced by the District's Commendable schools is the

"The District has an amazing reputation and its leadership vision is strong. This is a winning team and I am humbled to be able to combine my skills and expertise with the talented individuals in District 148."

Dr. Whitaker is a published author. She has written a book entitled "Is There Anybody That Can Teach Me How to Read?" She is also the author of a published professional development video entitled *The Culturally Responsive Teacher: How Understanding Culture Impacts Instruction and Student Achievement*.

She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Ga., and a Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership and Administration from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She also has Educational Specialist and Doctor of Education degrees from Northern Illinois University.

She became a devoted educator because she wanted to be involved in increasing the academic achievement levels of all students, particularly students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and those experiencing the effects of poverty. Her first teaching position was in Atlanta, Ga.

Dr. Whitaker and her husband have two sons, ages 13 and 18.



*Incoming Deputy Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sonya L. Whitaker*

for school supplies."

The District has since purchased and distributed the supplies with Jayera's donation.

Jayera's humility and commitment to community service is a lesson from which we all can learn. Her parents, Tanya Williams and Michael Griffin, instilled in Jayera the importance of helping others. They are among her strongest supporters as she continues to formulate new ways to bestow kindness and generosity in the community.

Thank you Jayera, for inspiring us with your ongoing acts of kindness!

*"Kindness should be the natural way of life, not the exception."*

*-Buddha*



*District 148 alumna Jayera Griffin donated \$1,000 for school supplies and a wagon filled with book bags to the District's students. Now a student at Thornton Township High School, Jayera believes having school supplies is "a right and not a privilege."*

direct result of the emphasis on the core instructional areas of reading and math, initiatives to create healthy and meaningful relationships between students and educators (such as Restorative Justice and Capturing Kids' Hearts) and membership in Partnership for Resilience to improve the lives of families and students.

"We are very proud of the success of our students and staff and we will continue to work diligently on delivering exemplary instruction to all of our students. We have high expectations for our students and staff and the Illinois Report Cards are proof that these expectations can be met," said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin J. Nohelty.

The District will receive additional federal funding assistance and resources to help Lincoln Junior High and Roosevelt Elementary and Roosevelt Junior High School which received lower designations. We thank the American Institutes for Research for partnering with us to further support students and maximize our District's strengths.

To learn more about the school designations go to: <https://www.isbe.net/support>. Information about District 148 and its individual schools' performance is available at: <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/> and [http://district148.net/School\\_Report\\_Cards.html](http://district148.net/School_Report_Cards.html).

## An advanced system of protection

The best District with the greatest schools, remarkable students and incredible staff deserves no less than the most comprehensive and advanced system of protection and security.

District 148 is adding a state-of-the-art rapid response system to all schools and buildings. Under the Seconds Matter Safety Solutions proposal, the BluePoint Life Safety Response Platform, together with Amber Box Shooter Detection System, will provide an extra layer of protection during emergency situations and will enhance existing safety measures, practices and procedures.

“Our top priority is to continue to safeguard our most precious assets: our students and staff. Ongoing training and drills, crisis plans, school resource officers and security systems help to keep students safe while they are in our care. The availability of the latest lifesaving advanced response technologies allows us to be proactive in our approach to

safety,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin J. Nohelty.

The moment the system is activated, two-way communication between first responders and school staff is immediately established, allowing information about safety procedures and awareness to be shared in real-time. BluePoint’s patented intuitive activation devices promptly notify law enforcement and medical first responders during emergencies.

This feature saves critical minutes, said Seconds Matter Safety Solutions President Mr. Milos Klipic said.

“District 148 is the first District in Chicago’s Southland to adopt such a comprehensive safety platform for their students, staff, parents and administration. Their initiative serves as a model for other districts hoping to improve security in their buildings ... and we are pleased to be working with such a dedicated school community,” Mr. Klipic said.

## Reflecting on Reading Recovery

First-graders are becoming better readers and writers through interventions at District 148 schools.

A District Literacy Coach, a Reading Recovery Teacher Leader and Reading Recovery-trained teachers are all part of the team approach to enhancing students’ reading and writing skills.

Reading Recovery is short-term, research-based early literacy interventions for first-graders who may be struggling with early reading and writing.

“I knew immediately that this initiative was ideal for District 148. Our premium educators provide exceptional instruction to students on a daily basis. Our students, in turn, are eager to learn and grow. Reading Recovery will help catapult our students’ advancement in the core subject of literacy,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin J. Nohelty.

Reading Recovery teachers work individually with specific students in daily, 30-minute intensive lessons. The teachers typically work part of the day in Reading Recovery and the other part in classrooms or small-group literacy instruction.

The one-on-one sessions continue for about 16 to 20 weeks and focus on bringing young learners up to grade level standards in reading and writing. Each student’s progress is measured before, during and after instruction.

Ongoing teacher training is an integral part of Reading Recovery. This professional development includes teaching, observing and discussing Behind the Glass lessons taught behind a special, one-way mirror. This mirror is located at Lincoln Avenue School. First Grade students from the District’s other schools are transported to the Lincoln location on a monthly basis.

During a recent educators’ class session led by a faculty member from National-Louis University, teachers discussed how they are adjusting instruction to meet individual students’ needs. They also offered suggestions on other methods that might be beneficial to students.

The group then observed some Behind the Glass lessons and discussed what they saw and heard as one student at a time read aloud to his or her teacher, wrote sentences and reviewed vocabulary. The observing educators also recommended strategies that could be used to expand students’ skills.

“Teachers trained in Reading Recovery know what to do, why it works and how to adjust their teaching based on a child’s capabilities and needs. Training in Reading Recovery integrates both theory and practice,” Reading Recovery Teacher Leader Kristi Banks said.



*Reading Recovery educators discuss ways instruction is being tailored to meet students’ individual needs.*

## District officials attend statewide training event

District officials and Board of Education Members connected with their peers from across Illinois and shared valuable insights on key issues during a recent three-day education conference.

Board President Mr. Ernesto E. Mickens, Vice President Mr. Larry Lawrence, Secretary Mrs. Kim Adkins, Board Members Mr. Charles Givines, Mrs. Faith E. Gunter and Mr. Charles W. Lloyd, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin J. Nohelty and Senior Executive Assistant Mrs. Lilly Chapman joined thousands of school leaders and officials at the November 2018 Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), and Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO). Nearly 10,000 public school leaders and guests attended the statewide conference in Chicago. The event was open to local school board members, superintendents, administrators and administrative professionals, state lawmakers, education officials, school attorneys, university professors and exhibitors.

District 148’s representatives attended presentations covering a variety of topics including school safety, student behavior, collective bargaining, federal education laws, legislation and policies that impact public schools, fiscal accountability and student assessments.

The training opportunities this conference provided enables the Board to make informed and educated decisions for the District, the students and the community.

Among the keynote speakers was American Civil Rights Activist Ruby Bridges who addressed how educators can make a difference in students’ lives.



*Front row, from left, Board Secretary Mrs. Kim Adkins, Board Vice President Mr. Larry Lawrence, Board President Mr. Ernesto E. Mickens and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kevin J. Nohelty. Back row, from left, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Patricia Moore, Board Members Mr. Charles Givines, Mr. Dexter Miles, Mr. Charles W. Lloyd and Mrs. Faith E. Gunter and Senior Executive Assistant Mrs. Lilly Chapman.*

**Dates to Remember:** *continued from page 1*

- Feb. 15 Bring your parent, grandparent, special person to school day
- Feb. 18 No School – Presidents’ Day Observance
- Feb. 20 Parent Advisory Committee Meeting  
5 p.m., Location to be announced
- Feb. 22 Third Quarter Progress Reports sent home with students
- Feb. 22 School Improvement Day,  
Early Dismissal at Noon
- March 4 No School – Casimir Pulaski Day Observance
- March 5 ISA SCI Assessment Begins, Grades 5 & 8
- March 5 Illinois Assessments of Readiness Testing Begins
- March 13 Dynamic Learning Maps – Alternate Assessment Begins, Grades 3-8
- March 22 Third Quarter Ends
- April 2 No School for students -  
Parent/Teacher Conferences, Report Card Distribution 11:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.
- April 3 Jayera Griffin Day
- April 19 –  
April 26 No School – Spring Break
- April 29 School resumes after Spring Break
- May 3 Fourth Quarter Progress Reports sent home with students
- May 6 –  
May 9 Fine Arts Festival
- May 6 Visual Arts 7 p.m., Early Childhood Center at Harriet Tubman School
- May 7 Spring Concert - Beginners 7 p.m., Early Childhood Center at Harriet Tubman School
- May 8 Spring Concert - Advanced 7 p.m., Early Childhood Center at Harriet Tubman School
- May 9 Performing Arts 7 p.m., Early Childhood Center at Harriet Tubman School



P.O. Box 160  
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**Your School Board**

- Ernesto E. Mickens  
*President*
- Larry Lawrence  
*Vice President*
- Kim Adkins  
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- Charles Givines
- Faith E. Gunter
- Charles W. Lloyd
- Dexter Miles

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*For additional District information visit  
District 148 on the Web at: [www.district148.net](http://www.district148.net)*

May 15	Parent Advisory Committee Meeting 5 p.m., Location to be announced	May 27	No School – Memorial Day Holiday
May 17	School Improvement Day, Early Dismissal at Noon	May 29	8th Grade Graduations* All Junior High Schools *Tentative
May 20 – May 24	ECC Screening 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.	May 31	Fourth Quarter Ends
May 24	Music Awards Dinner (tickets required) 6:15 p.m., Lincoln Junior High School gym	May 31	Last Day of School,* Report Cards sent home with students *Tentative

## Great things are happening

The following are among the great things happening in District 148:

- ✓ Lincoln Junior High School's Cross Country Team – the first Cross Country Team in District 148 history – won Third Place at the Tinley Park Invitational.
- ✓ Parents, students teachers and staff are encouraged to give input regarding the District's schools by participating in the Illinois 5Essentials Survey posted on the web site at : <http://district148.net/index.html>. The closing date for the survey is Feb. 15, 2019. The survey is part of the State accountability system. Survey results will be used to help determine the rating the State will give to each school.
- ✓ Students from Franklin, Lincoln, Park, Roosevelt and Washington Schools were invited to participate in Sen. Napoleon B. Harris III's Winter Wonderland Experience event.
- ✓ The Village of Riverdale invited District 148 students and their families to a Winter Family Day event.
- ✓ Restorative Justice Trainings for Parents/Guardians are being offered at each of the District's schools.
- ✓ Families from Franklin, Lincoln and Roosevelt schools received Thanksgiving turkeys donated by the Dolton Park District and Ford Motor Company Local UAW #554.
- ✓ School Board President Ernesto E. Mickens, Vice President Larry Lawrence, Secretary Kim Adkins and Board Member Faith E. Gunter were honored for their Master Board Member achievements during the Illinois Association of School Boards South Cook Division Fall Dinner Meeting.
- ✓ More than 100 parents/guardians/community members attended and provided input during the first Parent Advisory Committee Meeting of the 2018-19 school year.
- ✓ The District has received a library grant from the Illinois Secretary of State's Office. The money will be used for books and materials for school media centers.
- ✓ The Family Guidance Centers, Inc. is providing a Youth Prevention Education Program to seventh grade students at Washington Junior High School and Lincoln Junior High School.
- ✓ Dolton Public Library administrators and staff are helping to catalog media center books and performing other tasks in District 148 while renovation work is taking place at the Dolton library building.
- ✓ Plans are underway for a new playground at the Early Childhood Center at Harriet Tubman School.
- ✓ Chicago Mobile Dentist is providing dental exams and cleanings to students.
- ✓ Ageless Eye Care is conducting eye exams and providing free eyeglasses to students who need them.
- ✓ The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, in partnership with Advocate Children's Hospital, visited Washington, Lincoln and Roosevelt Schools.
- ✓ Washington Elementary School's Multi-Tiered System of Supports Facilitator Unique Morris is serving as a member of the Illinois State Board of Education Professional Review Panel.
- ✓ Dolton officials, community members, fathers and other male role models participated in the Black Star Project's Million Father March at Franklin School on the first student attendance day of the 2018-19 school year.
- ✓ State Rep. Will Davis, Sen. Napoleon B. Harris III and IEA Vice President Al Llorens observed the Non-Violent Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training of more than 200 District 148 staff at Riverdale School.
- ✓ The Frankfort-Tinley Park Rotary Club donated new dictionaries to every Grade 3 student in the District.
- ✓ Seven Lincoln Junior High School students, seven Roosevelt Junior High School students and four Washington Junior High School students qualified for the Illinois Junior Academy of Science Region 9 Science Fair.
- ✓ Lincoln Avenue School students are completing training in Restorative Justice and as Peace Keepers to mediate conflict.
- ✓ Roosevelt School students in Grades 3-5 participated in Student Council Elections.

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