

District



News

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Building Bridges to Success

A Message From the Superintendent

The 2009-10 school year certainly presented us with plenty of challenges as we stretched to reach higher levels of academic achievement in our schools amid significant funding uncertainties.

The financial crisis, along with low numbers of students in some classrooms, prompted the district to make more than \$2 million in budget reductions including teacher/staff layoffs and cuts. Those heart-wrenching decisions were necessary as we forge ahead during these difficult economic times and seek ways to maintain quality programs and services for children.

On a brighter note, our schools are reporting improved student behavior as a result of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program. Fewer discipline problems in schools helps promote safe, positive learning environments for children.

In January, we offered students and staff the opportunity to receive free H1N1 vaccines. The Cook County Department of Public Health provided the vaccines to help prevent the spread of this potentially serious disease. We appreciate the efforts of the health department as well

as our school nurses who worked to educate children about staying healthy.

Once again, our students shined during local and regional Science Fairs. Congratulations to those who earned first- and second-place honors at the regional competition in Cicero along with their teachers and our Science Fair Coordinator Michael Hurst.

Lastly, I would like to extend my deep gratitude to the eight retiring staff members: Christine Geisler, Connie Kerber, Ruth Lenz, Jack Lewandowski, Dr. Sandra Mickles, Tobin Mitchell, Linda Veal and Rita Carter-Winter, for their years of devoted service. Each one has left a lasting imprint on this district and I wish them much happiness in their retirement years.

Have a great summer!

Dr. Jayne E. Purcell



From the Board President

As another school year ends, I reflect on the accomplishments that were made on behalf of our students.

Despite the budget cuts and hard decisions made as a result of the State of Illinois' funding troubles, the Board of Education was able to authorize the purchase of approximately 700 laptop computers for students, provide calculators for all students in Grades 3-8, and enhance the appearance of our school buildings by having building improvements made throughout the district.

We strive to provide excellence in education to the children of our community.

We also thank Mrs. Willa Williams for her service to District 148. Mrs. Williams resigned from the board in April.

The board welcomes its newest member, Thornton Township Youth Committee Program Manager Mr. Larry Lawrence who was sworn in on May 20th.

Enjoy your summer and we look forward to serving you in the fall of 2011.

-Joyce Jackson



Dates to Remember:

- June 14 – July 14
Districtwide Summer School
- August 4
Registration for
2010-2011 School Year
- August 17
First day of
student attendance
- August 18
First full day of school

Inside this issue:

- District addresses
funding concerns..... 2
- Students honored
at regional fair..... 2
- H1N1 vaccines
by the numbers..... 2
- PBIS offers incentives
for good behavior..... 3
- Keeping students, staff safe 3
- Great things are happening..... 3
- Retirees leave their mark..... 4

District addresses funding concerns



Dolton West Elementary District 148 is responding to state funding uncertainties in a proactive and prudent manner by cutting about 10 percent, or more than \$2 million, from the 2011 budget.

The financial crisis affecting schools across the state and country had

the Board of Education making difficult decisions regarding job cuts and teacher/support staff layoffs due to declining state funds and reduced student enrollment.

“We respect and appreciate every member of our District 148 family and it pains us to have had to make these reductions,” Superintendent Dr. Jayne E. Purcell said. “It’s happening across the State of Illinois, and lawmakers need to understand the huge impact they are having on education.”

Those affected include permanent substitute teachers, classroom teachers, supplemental special education teachers, paraprofessionals, speech and language assistants and media centers teachers.

But Purcell notes the cuts will not mean larger class sizes for students. In addition, many tenured teachers being displaced after this school year have agreed to move into other available positions in the district this fall.

Unlike other school districts where music, art, and extracurricular programs are being eliminated due to school funding woes, District 148 is committed to keeping those programs intact. The district also is continuing to invest in new technology for students.

Meanwhile, as Illinois school districts brace for the possibility of more cuts next year, District 148 continues to closely monitor spending as it focuses on maintaining quality educational programs and services.

Some belt-tightening measures being implemented include concentrating on currently-available grants to supplement teaching and learning activities that otherwise would not be possible without such funds; maximizing energy savings with the district’s new comprehensive heating, ventilation and air conditioning management system; and using newly-available, money-saving copiers to scan documents and view facsimiles rather than printing them.



2010-2011 Registration Info

Registration for the coming, 2010-2011 school year will be held from **9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, August 4th** at the school your child or children will attend. Registration for Early Childhood Center students will be at Riverdale School. Parents completing registration on time will receive a free polo shirt for every child attending schools in District 148. The **first student attendance day** will be from **8:55 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Tuesday, August 17th**.

Students fare well at regional science competition

Students from Lincoln, Roosevelt and Washington Junior High Schools came away from this year’s Regional Science Fair competition with first and second place awards.

District 148 students who achieved first place honors include Jamal Spruiell, Tabitha Manning, Desiree Wease and Ashaley Maxey, Bottrice Stewart, Darius Pace, Corshon Townsend-Patrick, and Torrian Akins.

Students who received second place ribbons and certificates include Genesis Lee and Joslyn Spruiell, Kaylynn Sanders, Zaaria Jordan, Diondre Jennings, Albert Cox, Briana Washington, Ja’Neka Lewis, Jaisyn Passmore, Machond Livingston, Tahari Woods, Tyera Adugba, Howard Hillman and Deante McCants.

Congratulations to all of our students and their exceptional science teachers and parents!

H1N1 vaccines by the numbers

In the midst of concerns about the spread of the 2009 H1N1 (swine) flu among children and adults, District 148 agreed to have the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) come to our schools to vaccinate those who wanted to get the vaccine.

As it worked closely with schools and day care centers throughout the suburbs, the CCDPH on January 14th provided H1N1 vaccines to those who volunteered to get them.

Here is a count of those vaccinated that day in District 148:

Franklin School - 55 students; 8 staff
Harriet Tubman School - 40 students; 6 staff
Washington School - 58 students; 18 staff
Roosevelt School - 59 students; 8 staff
Lincoln Avenue School - 71 students; 3 staff
Park School – 41 students; 12 staff
Early Childhood Center – 20 students; 4 staff
Riverdale School – 24 students; 13 staff

PBIS provides incentives for good behavior

District 148 staff members are reporting favorable results from the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program being used in most of the district's schools.

PBIS is the behavioral component of the Response to Intervention (RTI) approach to providing high-quality instruction and scientifically, research-based interventions to meet individual student needs.

All District 148 schools will be using the program beginning this fall.

Our discipline referrals are down. PBIS works, said Washington Junior High School staff members. The program requires involvement by students and their parents, they add.

The PBIS approach is data driven and uses a tier system of addressing student behavior. Each tier uses a different intervention technique. Students are taught the behaviors expected of them at school, such as how to walk in the hallway in a quiet and orderly manner, and proper conduct during school-wide assemblies. They are then rewarded when they act accordingly.

At Washington Elementary and Junior High Schools, Bulldog Bucks and the PBIS store are helping to promote positive behavior among students.

The children can earn Bulldog Bucks and use pretend paper money to purchase items from the PBIS store.

From candy and chips to toys, sporting goods and more – countless items are available for students to buy when the store is open every other Friday. Students say they enjoy having the chance to buy things they want without having to use “real” money.

At Riverdale Elementary School, students earn tickets for displaying good behavior. Twenty tickets are needed to participate in monthly “Fun Fridays.” During one recent Friday event, students sang karaoke, made crafts, watched movies, worked on puzzles, danced, and more.



Keeping students, staff safe

Standards, procedures, plans, policies, and staff, are in place throughout District 148 to protect and keep all students and employees safe.

Staff members wear easily-identifiable name tags on lanyards around their neck and visitors to the schools are admitted via an electronic buzzer system. Visitors also must sign in and leave a driver's license or photo identification before being allowed further entry into the buildings.

Each school also has interior and exterior security cameras and a safety facilitator whose primary responsibility is to handle student behavior issues. The safety facilitator works closely with the school's principal to help maintain a secure and productive learning environment.

In the event of a crisis or emergency situation, the district has a Crisis Management Plan and a District Crisis Team. Both were developed and established to prepare the district to respond to emergency situations. The Crisis Management Plan is reviewed annually.

Every school also has its own Crisis Management Team which varies in size based on the enrollment and makeup of the building. The principal/assistant principal serves as the school crisis team manager.

The teams make sure the operating procedures of the Crisis Management Plan are followed. Members also are responsible for

knowing the characteristics of their building and staff, and for educating and assuring everyone understands the importance of each part of the crisis plan.

Districtwide color codes are used to convey to the school population when an emergency situation occurs. Specific colors are assigned to each situation whether it is a weather-related or medical emergency, a fire, a bomb threat, an intruder in the building, or a community incident.

Another color code is then given when students and staff are clear to return to normal activities.

Students and staff are trained to know what steps to follow depending on the color code announced. Emergency and evacuation procedures are practiced during drills.

Parents are kept informed of all situations and are called when an emergency requires immediate evacuation and dismissal of students. The automated School Messenger service also is used to send important messages home to all parents/guardians. Such situations illustrate the need for parents/guardians to provide schools with updated and current phone numbers.

Great things are happening

The following are just some of the positive happenings in District 148:

1. Franklin, Lincoln, and Roosevelt Elementary Schools and Lincoln and Roosevelt Junior High Schools were chosen by the Illinois State Board of Education as Spotlight Schools.
2. Park Elementary School received recognition from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois PBIS Network Technical Assistance Agency as a great location for legislators to visit and see the positive impact of PBIS.
3. District 148 Advanced Vocal Ensemble members, under the direction of Ronisha DuBose, sang during an IEA Representative Assembly in Schaumburg. The students wore pink shirts imprinted with “Save Our Teachers” and received a standing ovation from the audience.
4. Washington Junior High School's National Junior Honor Society coat drive benefited some fellow students who needed something warm to wear during the winter months.

5. Lincoln Avenue School demonstrates how the Success For All comprehensive school reform program helps improve student learning.
6. Riverdale Elementary School received a grant from ArcelorMittal to purchase hands-on math and science manipulatives for K-4 students.
7. RESPRO and ISBE representatives commend Washington Elementary School for its School Improvement efforts.
8. Harriet Tubman Elementary School raised a combined total of more than \$1,200 during fund-raisers for the American Heart Association and \$500 for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.
9. Early Childhood Center students' artwork was on display at the Dolton Public Library during the month of April.
10. The district received recognition from the South Suburban Superintendents' Commission for the Study of Demographics and Diversity.

Retirees leave their mark on District 148

District 148 is losing to retirements the talents and contributions of eight individuals whose combined years of service spans more than two centuries.

We thank these dedicated people for giving so much to our students and to our school community.

Christine Geisler has served as an art teacher in the district for 35 years. She traveled between schools for 30 of those years and retires as Harriet Tubman Elementary School's art teacher. "I have been blessed with many wonderful people around me in this district," she said. "I will especially miss my friends at Tubman. They have become my second family."



Connie Kerber has worked in various capacities during the past 34 years, most of them as a third grade teacher. "I am just as passionate about teaching as I was my first year," she said. She calls her impending retirement 'bittersweet' and hopes to return part-time in the Retired Teacher RTI Tutoring program in District 148. She leaves as a second grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary School.



After more than 43 years in the district, **Ruth Lenz** retired in September as a secretary in the assistant superintendent's office.



Known as "Papa Jack" by his social worker colleagues and some administrators and as "Mr. Lew" by the students, **Jack Lewandowski** leaves as Roosevelt Elementary School's social worker after 25 years in District 148. He said he will miss the children's hugs and "high-fives" and he plans to continue his ministerial studies after retirement.



Dr. Saundra Mickles has given 16 years to the district and served in various capacities including Washington School principal and assistant superintendent. She retires as music teacher at Harriet Tubman Elementary School.



From teacher to principal to 21st Century Community Learning Centers director and the district's first technology director, **Tobin Mitchell** has worn many hats during her 19 years. During her tenure she has brought in more than \$10 million in competitive grant funding to District 148. Her favorite field trip is taking the 21st Century students, equipped with small digital cameras, on the annual architectural boat tour downtown. "They're experiencing something for the first time," she said. "We've given them the opportunity and the tools to validate their learning - and I think that's what technology does." She retires as director of information services.



Linda Veal retires after 15 years as an Early Childhood Center teacher. She said she particularly enjoys working with small children and will miss the parents she has been involved with at ECC.



Rita Carter-Winter has spent the past 24 years in District 148. She retires as Franklin Elementary School's media specialist. "I might have had the title of 'teacher' all of these years, but I have 'learned' so much from my students. They have taught me many valuable life lessons," she said.

Congratulations and best wishes to all of you!

For additional District information: www.district148.net Visit District 148 on the Web at:

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