



DISTRICT 57 REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SUPERINTENDENT



As we head into the busy holiday season, please take a few minutes to read this newsletter. There is so much going on in the District right now, including expanding enrollment, some budget uncertainties and a potential Mount Prospect TIF that could affect District finances. I thank our parents and community members for being aware of these and other issues by participating in the recent Community Forum, attending School Board meetings and staying on top of the information that is communicated.

Of course, there is also exciting news to report from the schools, and much of it is shared here. There's a lot more going on than we can fit in this newsletter, so please read your weekly school communications and follow the District on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for regular updates. I am so proud of our students for their many academic and extracurricular pursuits!

On Election Day, the community voted to abolish the position of Elk Grove Township treasurer and trustee of schools. Districts 57 and 59 have paid the treasurer for many years, and he has shared responsibility for both districts. But we believe that we can handle these functions in our own business offices and that having an outside treasurer is an unnecessary layer of government. We're thankful that voters agreed and that we can now move forward in a more cost-efficient manner. We are working with District 59 and the treasurer to determine the appropriate timeline for transitioning his responsibilities in house.

On Nov. 15, District 57 joined the State of Illinois in celebrating School Board Members Day. We honored our seven School Board members for volunteering countless hours and fulfilling their responsibilities with great dedication. I'd also like to recognize our valued staff members for their hard work all year long, and the parents for partnering with us in the education of their children. Our District, like many in the state, faces challenges. But it's good to know that the District 57 community always works together to make our schools the best they can be. It's a great team effort that pays off for our students every day.

Dr. Elaine Aumiller
Superintendent of Schools, Mount Prospect School District 57



WESTBROOK GOES CRAZY FOR THE CUBS

Westbrook students and staff showed their team spirit on Cubs Day on Oct. 14, as they prepared for their team to go all the way. (Photo by Jake Culberson, District 57)

EARLIER START DATE FOR D57 NEXT YEAR

District 57's 2017-2018 calendar has been adopted, with some changes. School will now start earlier, on Aug. 16, to be consistent with the new High School District 214 calendar. School will end on May 25 (if no emergency days are used). The high schools have moved up their start date so that final exams can take place before winter break. In District 57's Satisfaction Survey last year, the majority of parents indicated they would prefer to have a schedule that is similar to the high school schedule. Check out the District 57 calendar at this [link](#).

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Assistant Superintendent
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Dr. Susan Woodrow
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Director of Student Services

Trevor Hope
Director of Technology

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ADMINISTRATORS INVESTIGATE WAYS TO DEAL WITH SPIKING ENROLLMENT AND AN AGING MIDDLE SCHOOL

District 57 enrollment has been on the rise since 2012 and is expected to continue to grow for at least the next five years, resulting in overcrowding in some of the schools. District administrators are exploring options to alleviate the space crunch and will make a recommendation to the School Board at its meeting on Jan. 19, with Board members voting on the issue in March. The District also is looking at ways to deal with an aging Lincoln Middle School. These matters were discussed on Nov. 10 at a Community Forum, where Board members also presented the latest enrollment study and heard feedback from the public. Here are issues that are being addressed:

MOBILES AT WESTBROOK?

At the forum, Board president Joe Sonnefeldt explained that Westbrook currently is at full capacity, and enrollment is expected to increase even more next year. This will require the addition of a couple of classrooms. However, all existing classrooms are already in use, and art is offered from a cart that is wheeled from room to room.

One option that the District investigated was moving the Early Childhood program or two first-grade classes to available space at Lions Park School. Unfortunately, when enrollment projections were analyzed for next year, it was determined that sufficient space would not be available at Lions Park. Another option that was considered was renting classrooms in a neighboring school district, but surrounding schools do not have space. The District also has looked at adding two mobile classrooms to Westbrook, with a one-time installation cost of \$140,000 to \$200,000 and a yearly maintenance cost of \$40,000 to \$60,000.

Elaine Aumiller, Ed.D., superintendent of schools, says administrators continue to look at other ideas, but an advantage of the mobiles is that they enable the District to keep all pre-K through first-grade students at Westbrook, which is tailored to educate and provide services to the youngest students. "Meeting student needs is our top priority, and we think maintaining the integrity of the programming at Westbrook is the best way to do that."

A NEW LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL?

The Community Forum also addressed the needs of Lincoln, which is nearly 70 years old and becoming increasingly costly to maintain (construction projects over the past seven years have totaled \$2.4 million). Lincoln also is facing increasing enrollment, projected to go from 723 to 811 over the next three years.

Participants at the Community Forum were asked whether they support the construction of a new middle school building or believe the District should continue to maintain the current facility. They also were asked to weigh in on the possibility of a new building housing grades five through eight (as opposed to six through eight), thus alleviating overcrowding at Fairview and Lions Park. This would involve constructing two separate wings: one for fifth and sixth grade and one for seventh and eighth. Rebuilding Lincoln would require the passing of a building referendum. The District will continue to consider the future of Lincoln and seek input, with more Board discussions taking place this spring.

"We have heard feedback from many community members, and we are taking it all into account as we investigate potential solutions that are best for the students and community," Aumiller says.

PROPOSED TIF COULD AFFECT DISTRICT 57 FINANCES

As the Village of Mount Prospect moves toward creating a new Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district, District 57 is looking for ways to use funds from the TIF to benefit the schools. The Village recently notified District administrators that TIF boundaries include Lions Park School, which means TIF dollars could be used for improvements there.

TIFs funnel property tax revenues into a special account that is reserved for projects within specified boundaries. The projects are designed to assist underdeveloped areas or provide needed upgrades to encourage redevelopment. The new TIF that the Village is proposing encompasses the Northwest Highway corridor from Mount Prospect Road west to Central Road. This would freeze the revenue that the District would receive from properties inside the TIF for the next 23 years. Therefore, administrators and the School Board have had ongoing discussions about the impact of the new TIF, especially as the District looks for ways to deal with expanding enrollment.

The Village Board is expected to have a final vote on the creation of the TIF in January, after a public hearing on Dec. 20. To learn more and stay up to date, visit the Village of Mount Prospect's [TIF Portal](#).



HALLOWEEN FUN FOR ALL AGES

Dr. Mary Gorr, Westbrook principal, and her staff got

into the Halloween spirit,

by joining students for the costume parade around school. Fairview and Lions Park also held parades and parties, always a highlight of the school year. (Photos by Jake Culberson, District 57)

FINANCIAL UPDATE

WITH DECLINING RESERVES AND FUNDING UNCERTAINTIES, DISTRICT MAKING CAREFUL SPENDING DECISIONS

District 57's 2016-17 budget was adopted at the Sept. 29 School Board meeting, with projected revenues of \$23.5 million and projected expenditures of \$25.4 million. This results in projected deficit spending of approximately \$1.9 million, which will be covered by the fund balances in the reserves. The fund balances are expected to remain at an acceptable level, partly due to the sale of working cash bonds to cover the cost of the Westbrook parking lot and other capital improvements.

Adam Parisi, assistant superintendent for finance and operations, presented the District's financial projections at the Nov. 17 School Board meeting. He stated that fund balances for FY17 are at 45 percent – i.e. there is enough to pay for 45 percent of operating expenses if other revenue comes up short or is not available. Fund balances are projected to be at 34 percent in FY18. Board policy states fund balances should be within the range of 30 to 50 percent, with a target of 40 percent, so the current levels are meeting the needs

of students. But the downward trend for fund balances will continue if revenue and expenses stay the same, according to Parisi. He adds that there are many "legislative unknowns" and that state funding and a potential property tax freeze continue to be areas of concern. As a result, District 57 must continue to carefully allocate its limited resources, says Elaine Aumiller, Ed.D., superintendent of schools, including finding cost-effective ways to deal with increasing enrollment and meet the needs of this growing community.

CURRICULUM REVIEW

NEW HANDS-ON SCIENCE CURRICULUM ROLLED OUT AT ALL SCHOOLS, SOCIAL STUDIES CHANGES UP NEXT

Grades K through seven have started using new FOSS science curriculum that is based on the national Next Generation Science Standards, which identify information that students should know to be prepared for college and careers. Grade eight will adopt the materials next year. "The FOSS lessons are highly engaging and hands on, which students love," says Karl Anderson, third-grade teacher at Fairview. Carol Gray, seventh-grade teacher at Lincoln, adds that the new curriculum

encourages students to not only answer questions but to ask them. "This is an important shift that helps our students become scientists and engage in the scientific process."

Social studies will be the next subject to receive updated curriculum. A committee of teachers is researching the new standards, evaluating current materials and determining what changes will be necessary.



LIONS PARK STUDENTS THANK OUR VETERANS

Lions Park students once again were an important part of the Mount Prospect Veterans Day ceremony on Nov. 11, performing a song for the veterans and presenting them with cards and pictures. "Contributing to this remembrance matters to our children," says Lions Park music teacher Carolyn Story. "It is one of the ways they learn to appreciate those who serve our country, and it's an opportunity to be a part of something larger than themselves in the real world." (Photo by Mike Zarnek.)

CHROMEBOOK PROGRAM EXPANDED TO MORE STUDENTS

Lincoln seventh and eighth graders have quick and easy access to online learning – both in the classroom and at home – thanks to the 1:1 Computer Ratio Program, which was expanded to include even more students this school year. Last year, as part of a pilot program, a team of eighth graders received Chromebook computers. The pilot was a success, and the computers were given to all seventh and eighth graders this year. The program will be further expanded to sixth graders next year.

Teachers have found many innovative ways to incorporate the Chromebooks into curriculum, says Kate Sassatelli, Lincoln instructional technology coach. "Students have reported science observations and lab results through Google Classroom, posted main ideas and vocabulary on digital sticky notes in social studies and watched math videos at home so they are prepared for the next day's lesson."

"Students have the world at their fingertips," says principal Paul Suminski. "This program gives them a wonderful tool that helps them collaborate and problem solve."

NEW SCHOOL YEAR BRINGS NEW PRINCIPAL TO LINCOLN

Paul Suminski took the reins as Lincoln Middle School principal in July. He was previously assistant principal at a Lake Forest middle school, and a seventh-grade math teacher in Northbrook before that. He comes to District 57 with a solid administrative and teaching background and has spent his career focused on the middle school grades. Here's an interview where he reflects on his first few months at Lincoln:



1. How do you feel things have gone since you took on the role of Lincoln principal?

It's been busy and a whirlwind, but it's been great. There's a lot to learn, because I'm not only new to Lincoln but new to the principal role. So I've been focused on building relationships and getting to know systems and procedures. We have awesome students and community members, and the staff has helped immensely, especially assistant principal Randy Steen. He's reliable and thorough, and we're like-minded and work well together. I feel like I'm off to a great start.

2. What do you like best about the job so far? What has surprised you?

I'm a people person, so the relationships have been the best thing. Everyone has been so welcoming. I've been a little surprised by the fact that I'm continuously on the go. There's a lot on a principal's plate, and you don't want to miss anything. But I go home every night loving my job.

3. What do you like about working with middle school students?

This is my 13th year at a middle school, and I wouldn't change it for the world. Middle school is where it's at. This is an important transition time, and you can make a big impact as they develop and move into pre-adulthood.

4. How did teaching help prepare you to become a principal?

It keeps me grounded and connected to the classroom. I can put myself in a teacher's shoes when solving issues that arise. And I find that I want to be around the kids and teachers, not just in my office. It's also beneficial that I have a math background, as does Mr. Steen, which makes it easier for us to manage the many processes.

5. Do you have advice for parents as they navigate the important and sometimes difficult middle school years?

I have two little ones, so I don't yet know what it's like to parent a middle schooler. But I do know how important it is to stay connected to your child and try to be aware of changes and transitions he or she is going through. Sometimes when things spiral, parents have no idea. But if you can eliminate the unknowns, things are a lot easier. Also, reach out to us at school if you have questions or concerns. I'm all about open communication and am happy to talk to parents any time.

DISTRICT MOVES TO FILL KEY ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

Sara Tyburski, psychologist at Lions Park School, has been named director of student services for District 57. She will finish the year in her current position and begin her new job July 1. Elaine Aumiller, Ed.D., superintendent of schools, says Tyburski is a perfect fit for the student services position, which is responsible for special education services and overseeing positions such as occupational therapists, nurses and instructional assistants. "Sara has been an outstanding school psychologist, and we feel privileged to have her joining the administrative team," Aumiller says. "She is well respected among staff, and we expect this to be a seamless transition."

As previously announced, Cassie Black, the current director of student services, will become assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, replacing Dr. Susan Woodrow, who is retiring. Kris Gritzmacher, Lions Park principal, also will retire at the end of the year, and the District is searching for her replacement. A search committee including staff members and a parent representative is interviewing selected candidates. Administrators will interview finalists after that, with a decision to be made in the spring.



FAIRVIEW SPREADS INCLUSION AND KINDNESS WITH BUDDY BENCH

The Fairview playground has a new addition...a Buddy Bench! The bench was a gift from the class of 2016. Students who don't have anything to do during recess sit on the bench and wait for other students to come ask them to play. The goal is to eliminate loneliness and foster kindness, inclusion and friendship. Watch this [video](#) of fifth-grade mediators explaining how the Buddy Bench can be used. (Photo by Jamie OBrill, District 57)