



DISTRICT 57 *REPORT* special edition



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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SUPERINTENDENT

I hope this special remote learning edition of the District 57 spring/summer newsletter finds you and your family in good health. We've all faced our own personal challenges due to COVID-19, and every facet of life has been turned upside down – including our schools.

We learned in mid-March they would be closed for several weeks, and then in mid-April that those closures would last through the end of the school year. We've faced uncertainty and disappointment, but through it all, our community has come together in ways that have made me very proud. We certainly would have preferred to finish the year together in the schools. But our administrators, staff, families and, of course, students ensured that these past few months were not simply lost time, but instead were full of meaningful learning experiences and activities that made the days a little brighter. I thank all of you for the important role you played in this.

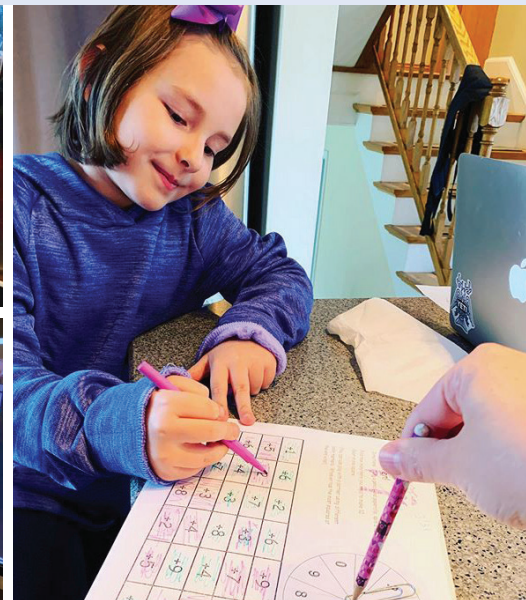
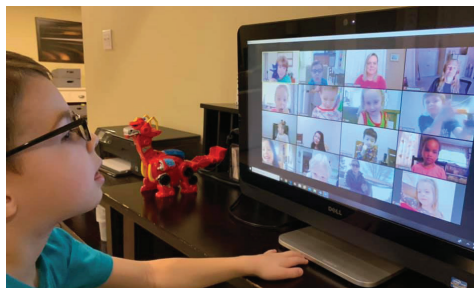
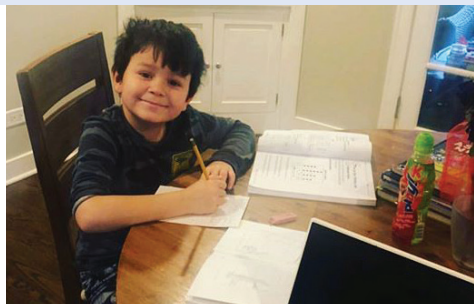
This special edition of our newsletter recaps our efforts to institute remote learning, as well as the special and creative ways our schools and families have dealt with social distancing. This issue also pays tribute to those to whom we are saying goodbye who will not get their usual sendoff: staff retirees, the Fairview and Lions Park fifth graders, and our Lincoln eighth-grade graduates. I look forward to honoring the graduates during District 57's first-ever virtual graduation on June 8!

We do not yet know what next school year will look like. We are monitoring guidance from the state and making our own contingency plans for a variety of possibilities. We are also putting together a survey and parent/guardian focus group so that family input can be incorporated into our plans. We will be ready, no matter what the fall brings. In the meantime, I hope you have a safe, healthy and happy summer.

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

HOME SWEET CLASSROOM

Kitchen tables everywhere have been converted into mini classrooms. Many District 57 parents report that their children miss their schools but have adjusted well to working at home and have enjoyed their virtual interactions with teachers and classmates (like the Westbrook students pictured here). Read the story on Page 2 to learn more about how the District has implemented this new approach to learning.



A NEW MODEL FOR LEARNING IN THE MIDST OF COVID-19

When District 57 administrators and staff learned in mid-March that COVID-19 was forcing the schools to close their doors, they had a daunting task in front of them. They had to quickly develop a structure for disseminating assignments and communicating with families, while planning lessons that would help students continue to learn and progress even though they were away from their classrooms.

"The sudden school closures forced us to rethink our instructional approach to make sure students continued to enjoy the learning process and also keep accessing critical content," says Dr. Mary Gorr, assistant superintendent of teaching and learning. "Fortunately, we have such talented, innovative educators in District 57, who never shy away from a challenge."

To help address this challenge, the District formed a Remote Learning Task Force made up of administrators and staff. The Task Force was charged with developing a remote learning model, using guidelines from the State of Illinois and taking parent and staff feedback into account. Flexibility was built into the model, given the wide range of student and family needs during the COVID-19 crisis.

The model also gave teachers the freedom to create lesson plans and activities that they thought would be most effective, whether using virtual technology, pre-recorded videos, assigned reading or worksheets. Learning opportunities over the past

couple months have ranged from Circle of Friends teachers reading to their preschoolers online to elementary classrooms having meetings via Zoom to middle school musicians receiving one-on-one band and orchestra lessons over Skype.

"Our staff jumped right into remote learning with their usual passion," Gorr says. "We had hoped this wouldn't go on for as long as it has, but I believe we minimized the negative impact on our students and that this experience has helped build their resilience, critical and creative thinking skills and empathy."

Gorr adds that the District is thankful to parents and guardians for being such strong partners and playing an invaluable role in remote learning.

It is not yet known if Illinois students will be able to return to their schools in August and September. But the District is already making plans to ensure that academic and social-emotional needs are met this fall, whether learning is happening in the schools or at home. The District is seeking input from families, via an electronic survey that will be sent at the end of the school year and a focus group. Parents/guardians who would like to participate in the focus group should fill out this [form](#).

All remote learning updates can be found on the District website at this [link](#).



SPIRIT DAYS MAKE LEARNING AT HOME FEEL MORE LIKE A FUN WEEK AT SCHOOL

Once the school closures were announced, the principals, assistant principals and staff put their heads together to come up with creative ideas for Spirit Days that students and families could take part in from home. The goal was to bring everyone together during a challenging time – in spirit, at least – and provide some fun activities that would make remote learning feel more like a regular week at school.

There have been a couple of themed days each week since early April. The Spirit Days kicked off with Chalk the Walk, with families writing encouraging messages and drawing happy pictures on their sidewalks and driveways. The day turned out to be a huge hit – many Mount Prospect streets were lined with bright and beautiful chalk art.

Other Spirit Days have been Pajama Day, Kindness Counts, Take a Hike Tuesday, Wellness Wednesday, Thankful Thursday and Fun Day Friday. Families have been posting pictures on social media, using [#d57spiritdays](#).

On Chalk the Walk Day, Lions Park and Fairview students showed their school spirit, while Westbrook music teacher Rebecca Connelly shared some uplifting advice.



GOODBYES CAN BE HARD, ESPECIALLY IN THE MIDDLE OF A PANDEMIC

Fairview and Lions Park fifth graders and Lincoln eighth graders are preparing to leave their schools and head to new adventures. These transitions normally involve long-standing District 57 traditions like clapouts, picnics and dances. These things won't be possible this year, but staff and families are doing their best to celebrate the students' accomplishments and see them off with pride.

In early May, Fairview secretary Carolyn Young drove school mascot Captain Feathers around town so he could deliver congratulatory signs to all of the fifth graders. For Lions Park, principal Katie Kelly and parent volunteers helped mascot Leo the Lion surprise students with their signs. In both Fairview and Lions Park neighborhoods, it was a sight to behold! The signs were purchased by the PTO fifth-grade activities committees.

The Lincoln PTO also has honored its eighth graders with Class of 2020 yard signs (many of which were delivered by teachers), graduation shirts and a video featuring baby pictures and special Lincoln memories.

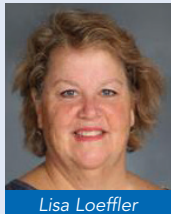
The eighth graders won't be part of a graduation procession at Prospect High School this year, but they will still get to take part in a special ceremony – in fact, the first one of its kind for District 57. A virtual graduation will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, June 8. Students will have collected their diplomas and gowns at Lincoln by then, so they are encouraged to dress up. Families will receive a link to the ceremony closer to the date.



Janet Anderson

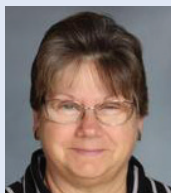
CONGRATULATIONS, DISTRICT 57 RETIREES!

Four staff members are retiring at the end of the school year. Since they won't be able to enjoy their usual sendoffs and celebrations, we are paying tribute to them here:



Lisa Loeffler

- Janet Anderson is an instructional assistant who worked at Westbrook for 13 years.
- Lisa Loeffler has been the Fairview music teacher since 2009. She has also taught at Lions Park and Westbrook and has a total of 20 years of service in the District.
- Cathy O'Donnell is literacy support teacher and coach at Fairview and has a total of 19 years in the District.
- Jung (Sue) Sulik is an assistant Kids' Corner supervisor at Westbrook and has a total of 19 ½ years in the District.
- In addition, Barbara Bertolucci, a Lions Park Kids' Corner assistant, retired in November 2019, after 14 years in the District.



Cathy O'Donnell



Jung (Sue) Sulik

District 57 thanks these staff members for their valued service. They made a difference in the lives of many children throughout the community, and their schools will miss them!



A STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK LIKE NO OTHER

Staff Appreciation Week was May 4 to 8, and families had to get creative to show their love for their teachers and school staff from afar. The school PTOs came together to plan an activity for each day, from making signs to sending thank you emails to creating chalk sidewalk and driveway drawings. The PTOs placed yard signs all over town, and some Westbrook parents even painted messages of appreciation on windows in downtown Mount Prospect.

DISTRICT NEWS

SUMMER TO-DO LIST: PARKING LOTS AND OTHER URGENT NEEDS AT THE SCHOOLS

COVID-19 is not slowing District 57's progress in addressing urgent building needs. The District is moving forward this spring and summer with capital projects that were included in the FY20 budget, which sets aside \$4 million for necessary improvements in the four schools and Administration Building.

The work follows last summer's Fairview expansion and other necessary projects at the school buildings. It is the next phase of projects taken from the District's long-term Master Facilities Plan, which prioritizes needs that had been previously ignored due to lack of funds. The District is now able to address this deferred maintenance thanks to the additional revenue from the successful tax referendum in 2018, according to Adam Parisi, assistant superintendent of finance and operations. The District's 2020 building projects are:

- Fairview and Lions Park – Rebuilding and expanding the parking lots to address congestion and structural issues.
- Lions Park – Installing air conditioning in the gym and replacing the 25-year-old chiller and its HVAC controls.
- Lincoln – Replacing the Busse Gym HVAC unit and installing air conditioning; replacing HVAC controls for the gym and main offices; replacing floors in classrooms, the cafeteria and locker rooms; repairing and repainting hallway lockers; and adding two generators that can be used to restore power, internet and phones during outages.
- Westbrook – Replacing HVAC controls, replacing asphalt in the basketball courts and installing sensory floors in the early childhood hallway.
- Administration Building – Building a receiving room at the dock entrance.

Parisi says some of the work, such as the floors and lockers at Lincoln, has gotten off to an early start due to staff and students being out of the buildings. All projects will continue throughout the summer and are expected to be completed by the start of school.

DISTRICT SAVES MONEY AND TREES WITH COPIER/PRINTER UPGRADE

District 57 has upgraded its copier and print systems to reduce usage and costs – saving about \$24,000, nearly 800,000 pages and an estimated 100 trees per year since 2018. The savings are the result of replacing all outdated copiers and printers with a more efficient Secure Print system.

"In the past, print orders would often go to a default printer by mistake, and then never get collected," says technology director Trevor Hope. "Now staff members know exactly where they're printing. Also, it's much easier to immediately cancel an order if they print something by mistake."

Hope says staff members are now able to print from any device in the District, simply by swiping their badge. He says he's received a lot of positive feedback that the new system is easy to use and less wasteful.

Photos in this issue taken by District 57 families.

#D57GIVESBACK



FROM MEALS TO WHITE BOWS, SUPPORTING EACH OTHER THROUGH THE CRISIS



District 57, the PTOs and individual families have found many generous and kind ways to support people who are facing hardships and challenges as a result of COVID-19. The District set up a D57 Cares Fund to help local families in need, collecting almost \$11,000 from individual donors in just the first couple of weeks. Donations are still being accepted at this [link](#) (select "one-time payment"); those

who are in need of support can make a request for funds by filling out this [form](#). In addition, twice a week since the schools were closed, District administrators have been distributing free lunches to kids who need them.

The Lions Park PTO has provided meals from local restaurants to first responders, medical staff and those who are struggling financially. The Fairview PTO brought lunch to workers at Lutheran General Hospital. Fairview staff provided fabric for families to tie white bows on their trees, in honor of healthcare workers and first responders. Staff placed the cut fabric pieces in the school's Little Library for families to pick them up. They inspired a community-wide movement, with people throughout town tying white bows on their trees to spread hope, support and gratitude and bring the community together.

