



# DISTRICT 57 REPORT

## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SUPERINTENDENT



Before we head into Winter Break, we'd like to share our fall/winter newsletter, highlighting many of the exciting things that have happened in the first few months of the 2019-2020 school year. I hope you'll take a few minutes to read it. I also have some important updates to share:

**Enrollment:** We kicked off the year with 2,230 students, which is about the same as last year. The enrollment report I presented in September projects a slight, stable increase in students for the next two years but an overall increase of approximately 46 by 2024. These projections do not include potential enrollment from new construction taking place in Mount Prospect. The space issues at Fairview have been solved thanks to the addition, and I thank our community members for their role in making that a reality. Lions Park enrollment projections do not concern us at this time. We do not plan to pursue a building addition there until and unless it becomes necessary due to increased enrollment. Lincoln will continue to be very full but should have adequate space for the next three years.

**State Ranking:** The Illinois Report Card is out, and all of our schools are ranked as commendable. The Report Card is released each year by the Illinois State Board of Education to show how the state and each school and district are performing, based on results of the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) that students take each spring. We're pleased that our IAR scores surpass the state average across the board. You can find the Report Card with detailed IAR data at this [link](#).

**Low Spending:** I'm proud that our District continues to have solid performance while ranking among the lowest in per-student spending. One reason we are able to do this is that we have an effective administrative team that continuously finds innovative ways to get as much as possible out of our limited resources. We also have talented, hard-working teachers and school staff who make sure individual needs are being met and students are achieving to their greatest potential. In addition, our School Board members play an essential role, and we're thankful for the significant time they volunteer to the job of guiding our District.

Our administrators, school staff and Board members share a passion for excellence in education and work together to make our schools the best they can be. I thank them for everything they do, and I thank our school families and all of our community members for their valued partnership as well!

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



### A SNOWY HALLOWEEN TO REMEMBER

Halloween 2019 looked more like January than October, but the wintry conditions didn't stop Lions Park students – and their spectators – from enjoying the traditional costume parade around the school. (Photo by Debbie Pavlowski, District 57.)

701 West Gregory Street  
Mount Prospect, IL 60056  
(847) 394-7300  
[www.d57.org](http://www.d57.org)

#### ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Elaine Aumiller  
Superintendent

Adam Parisi  
Assistant Superintendent  
Finance and Operations

Dr. Mary Gorr  
Assistant Superintendent  
Teaching and Learning

Sara Tyburski  
Director of Student Services

Trevor Hope  
Director of Technology

#### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Eileen Kowalczyk  
President

Vicki Chung  
Vice President

Kimberly Fay

Jennifer Kobus

Gerald McCluskey

Brian Maye

Rachael Rothrauff

To save resources, we are not printing this publication. Please help spread the word by asking your friends and neighbors to check it out at [www.d57.org](http://www.d57.org) or on our social media channels.

Are you following  
District 57 on  
Facebook and Twitter?



# FINANCIAL UPDATE

## DISTRICT PASSES BALANCED BUDGET WITH SURPLUS, LOOKS TO 2020 FOR NEXT PHASE OF BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

For the second consecutive year, District 57 has a balanced budget that does not require the use of emergency reserves to fund operations. The FY20 budget, which the School Board approved in September, includes a projected surplus of almost \$600,000, which will be used to maintain staffing and programs. The improved financial position is due to the needed additional revenue the District is receiving from the tax referendum that passed in March 2018, according to Adam Parisi, assistant superintendent of finance and operations.

The budget includes \$4 million that has been set aside for recommended capital projects for 2020. The projects come from the Master Facilities Plan, which prioritizes necessary improvements in the four schools and Administration Building. The District is now seeking bids for the recommended projects so the School Board can review and vote on them in January. Work would take place in spring and summer. The projects that are under consideration include:

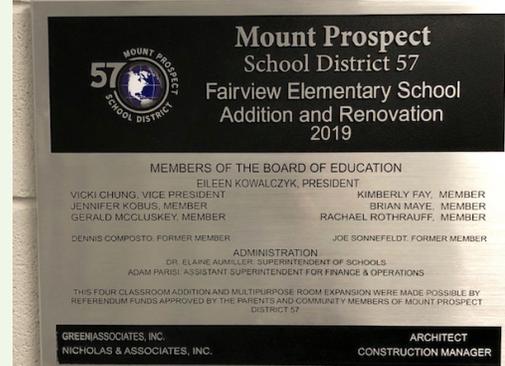
- **FAIRVIEW:** Rebuilding and expanding the parking lot to address congestion and structural issues.
- **LIONS PARK:** Rebuilding and expanding the parking lot to address flooding and congestion, installing air conditioning in the gym and replacing the 25-year-old large chiller and its HVAC controls.
- **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 for emergency lights, phones, internet, sump pumps and electrical systems during outages.

- **WESTBROOK:** Replacing HVAC controls, purchasing the mobile classrooms (the current three-year lease expires in June), 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, replacing windows and removing asbestos.

Prior to the referendum, many building needs were ignored due to lack of funds. The District began catching up last summer with the Fairview expansion, which included four new classrooms, an expanded multipurpose room and additional storage in the back of the gym. These changes addressed overcrowding in the building and better positioned the school to meet future needs, Parisi says. Also last summer, the District replaced the sprinkler system and rebuilt the courtyard at Lions Park; rebuilt the service delivery ramp, replaced duct work and repaired rotted wood and window sills at Lincoln; and added a new bank of swings to meet enrollment needs at Westbrook.

"We're proud these projects were completed on budget and on schedule and solved longstanding problems in the schools," Parisi says. "The potential projects for next summer represent the next phase of addressing our most urgent deferred maintenance needs."



Principal Dan Ophus (middle) gave tours of Fairview during an October open house, where community members learned how the addition better serves students of today and tomorrow. (Photos by Jenny Kustra-Quinn, District 57.)



### REDESIGNED LINCOLN LRC BETTER SERVES 21ST-CENTURY STUDENTS

Students have been enjoying recent improvements to Lincoln's Learning Resource Center (LRC). As part of a multi-phase project, the space has been modernized with new signage, bookshelves that are a more efficient use of space, two flat-screen interactive monitors for enhanced instruction, flexible dividers for small-group work and repurposed sofas that create an inviting area for quiet reading. In addition, each section has been painted with a designated color, using a palette that's popular in modern teen libraries. To get ideas for Lincoln, LRC director Michelle Waters-Walsh and technology integration coach Kate Sassatelli visited updated libraries to research creative options for shelving, furniture, etc. They worked with principal Paul Suminski and assistant superintendent Adam Parisi to implement the phase one changes in a cost-efficient manner. (Photo by Sharon Eliopoulos, District 57.)

# Q&A WITH DR. GORR: A BUSY FIRST FEW MONTHS ON THE JOB, WITH ROLLOUT OF NEW WRITING CURRICULUM UNDERWAY

Since taking the reins in July as assistant superintendent of teaching and learning, Dr. Mary Gorr has been hard at work supporting the implementation of the new writing curriculum and working closely with District staff to identify ways to support continuous improvements. It's been a big transition for the former principal, who spent eight years leading the District's youngest learners at Westbrook. She says Westbrook will always feel like home and she misses her daily interactions with the students and staff, but she believes her current role is a great fit. In this interview, she reflects on her new position and exciting work happening across the District:

## 1. The title of your position has changed – from assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction to assistant superintendent of teaching and learning. What was the thinking behind this?

I think this title more closely aligns to the heart of our District's central purpose: powerful teaching evidenced by powerful learning. Being a learning organization means a commitment to continuous growth and improvement, whether we are talking about our students or ourselves.

## 2. What is the most difficult part of your new job, and what do you like best?

I miss Westbrook dearly, but I have so much admiration for the new principal, Kristin Vonder Haar. The new assistant principal, Karl Anderson, has been a great addition as well. My new role has been very rewarding. I would say the most difficult part has been embracing the struggle and vulnerability that goes hand in hand with any challenging learning process. It has forced me to embrace living out the value of "not yet," which is something we all strive to foster within our students. It has given me a fresh sense of appreciation of just how difficult this can be! One of the most wonderful aspects of my new role has been seeing former Westbrook students who are now in older grades. It has been rewarding to witness their amazing progression as people, and I have thoroughly enjoyed providing updates to their former Westbrook teachers, whose eyes light up when they hear about their students from years ago.

## 3. The District is implementing innovative new writing curriculum for kindergarten through eighth grade this year. How is it different and better, and how is implementation going?

After an extensive pilot last year, the Writing Committee recommended the adoption of TCRWP Units of Study (K-5) and Schoolwide Units of Study (6-8), which both follow the writing workshop model that prioritizes daily, authentic writing experiences for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Even in our first year of implementation,

we are excited about the way our students are already showing an increased desire to write, which has been very motivating for us all. I have been so proud of the way District 57 teachers have embraced this complex curriculum by rolling up their sleeves and committing themselves to ongoing learning on behalf of their students. We have been fortunate to receive targeted instructional coaching from the writing consultants with whom we are working, Jen Burton and Eliza Aliotta.

Another critical element of our implementation success has been the meaningful contribution from our District 57 teachers who serve as content area specialists in writing in addition to their teaching duties. These individuals provide valuable professional development in writing and curricular support for their colleagues. I want to recognize these dedicated staff members who have been instrumental in the rollout: Meg Balk, Ella Bruno, Dina Bovis, Kathy Dahlgren, Christi Mueller, Tracy Hanley, Jena Hermanson, Tara Littel, Michele Logar, Sara Murphy and Roseann Schmitz.

## 4. What is the next curriculum area that you would like to update?

We will soon be reviewing the World Language curriculum at Lincoln, which is sure to be exciting work!

Keep up with Dr. Gorr on social media: [@teachingandlearning](#) on Instagram and [@GorrMary](#) on Twitter.



First graders proudly display books they showcased in the Writers Parade, a celebration of their writing accomplishments so far this fall. (Photo by Kristen Roy, District 57.)



## STUDENTS LEARN THE POLITICAL PROCESS FROM VIP VISITORS AND A MOCK ELECTION

This fall, the Lions Park PTO's Civic Engagement Committee educated students about being active, informed members of the community. In September, Rep. Mark Walker and Sen. Ann Gillespie talked to fourth graders about how state government works. In October, students took part in a mock election, casting votes from real voting booths to determine which song should be played when the new school mascot made his debut at Roar & Run. Local League of Women Voters volunteers helped run the election and talked to students about the importance of taking part in the voting process. (Photos by Vicki Chung.)

## Q&A WITH MRS. VONDER HAAR: NEW SCHOOL YEAR BRINGS NEW PRINCIPAL TO WESTBROOK

Kristin Vonder Haar became principal of Westbrook over the summer, replacing Dr. Mary Gorr, who is now assistant superintendent for teaching and learning. Vonder Haar was previously assistant principal at Westbrook. Karl Anderson, former fifth-grade teacher at Fairview, replaced her in that position. In this interview, she discusses her new role at the school she loves:

### 1. What is the best part of your job? What challenges have you encountered?

Westbrook is a special place! I feel so fortunate to be part of this beautiful community. We have incredible students who bring us so much joy, and active families who volunteer and partner with us to help our students grow. We also have amazing staff members who have helped create a school community and who are continually seeking ways to improve their practice. Although there are always new challenges, I feel confident that our school family will work collaboratively to learn from each other, grow together and conquer whatever comes our way.

### 2. What do you like about working with pre-K through first-grade students?

From the moment you step into Westbrook, you can't help but have a smile on your face. We sing, dance, laugh, play and grow together. Early childhood education plays an integral role in the life of a child. We have the power to build a strong foundation for lifelong learning by fostering curiosity, creativity, empathy, problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration and reflection.

### 3. How have you and assistant principal Karl Anderson worked well as a team as you've adjusted to your new roles?

Like our teachers, Karl is student-centered, collaborative, patient, caring and approachable, and he has a strong work ethic. He has been a great addition to our family! We use a team approach in all that we do at Westbrook. Karl and I work alongside teachers to develop a school improvement plan, plan professional learning, problem solve and more.

### 4. The focus of your staff book study this year is "Conscious Discipline." What are some of your favorite lessons from the book that parents can apply to help their children be happy and successful in school and at home?

There are three key beliefs of the "Conscious Discipline"

approach: Controlling and changing ourselves is possible and has a profound impact on others; connectedness governs behavior; and conflict is an opportunity to teach. A key point is that there's a brain-body-mind connection. Our internal states dictate our external behaviors. So if a child is displaying pushing or screaming, we can help her feel safe by noticing facial expressions and using routines. If a child is seeking attention or displaying perfectionism, we can help her feel connected by offering choices or helping her practice empathy. If a child is reflecting or managing her emotions, we can support her by helping her problem solve the situation at hand.

### 5. What do you like to do in your free time?

I love spending time with my husband and our two dogs, Milo and Gus. We enjoy long walks with our pups and watching the Cubs, Bears and Illini! I am also pursuing my doctorate through the University of Illinois. Please follow me on Twitter: [@kvonderhaar](https://twitter.com/kvonderhaar).



Westbrook principal Kristin Vonder Haar (left) greeted parents at Back-to-School Night in September, along with Dr. Aumiller, superintendent, and Karl Anderson, assistant principal.

## #DIGITALD57: EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS WITH TECH TOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

District 57 has launched a multi-year plan aligned to the seven standards of the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), to ensure that both students and teachers are equipped with the skills and tools that will be necessary to thrive in our constantly changing world. The focus of the initiative for this year is on being a good Digital Citizen, with the theme of #DigitalD57. Lessons center around teaching students how to manage their digital identity; engage in positive, legal and ethical behavior when using technology; and respect intellectual property and digital privacy and security. To make sure teachers are prepared to educate their students in these areas, the District is offering professional development that demonstrates ways to foster digital literacy and safety in the classroom and help students make positive contributions online.

"It's all about empowering our students and teachers to use technology in meaningful ways and at the same time be safe," says Trevor Hope, director of technology. He says the Digital D57 efforts are being coordinated at each school by the technology integration coaches – Ashley Patla at Fairview and Lions Park, Kate Sassatelli at Lincoln and Kim Stortz at Westbrook.

The team has created a rewards-based professional development program where staff members earn points for taking advantage of learning opportunities, such as lunch-and-learn sessions and weekly Twitter chats. In the chats, Sassatelli presents a question or topic – for example, "What digital tools have your students used in the classroom so far this year?" – and staff respond, using #D57Chat and #DigitalD57. As teachers accumulate points, they can win prizes such as gift cards donated by local businesses or a special designated parking spot at school.

The goal of this initiative is to roll out one ISTE standard per year, starting with Digital Citizen. Standards that will be highlighted over the next few years include Empowered Learner, Global Communicator and Knowledge Constructor.