



# DISTRICT 57 REPORT

## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR SUPERINTENDENT



It's hard to believe my first year as your superintendent is coming to a close. It has been a busy and eventful time, and I've been honored to serve in this role as we've gone through the ups and downs of this school year. I thank my administrative team, our School Board, the staff, students, families and community for the support, for learning along with me during these challenging times and ensuring we had a smooth transition and successful year.

**IN THE SCHOOLS:** My favorite part of this job is spending time with students and seeing the progress they're making. Whether at concerts, plays, assemblies or in classrooms, there's nothing better than seeing our amazing teachers and school staffs in action. And I'm always impressed by our inquisitive and hard-working students. We're all grateful that we've come such a long way over the past year and have been able to bring back a lot of the things that make our schools special (many of which are highlighted in this newsletter). While our COVID-19 numbers have increased lately along with the community and the nation, we believe our mitigations have been effective in keeping everyone as safe as possible. Thank you for doing your part to sustain safe in-person learning this year!

**CITIZEN FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:** CFAC is charged with looking at financial projections and supporting School Board members as they make financial decisions. The committee includes parents and other community members, as well as administrator, Board, staff and student representation. The group had its first meeting recently and learned the basics of school finance. They'll reconvene in the fall to look at projections for the next five years. Thanks to Jason Kaiz, assistant superintendent of finance and operations, for giving stakeholders the opportunity to be part of this process.

**DISTRICT EQUITY LEADERSHIP TEAM:** This team has been formed and will have its first meeting on June 2. The group will work on our District's first Equity Audit, which will examine educational services and provide students, staff and families with the opportunity to provide input. The goal is to identify strengths and areas where we can improve. I'll be providing updates next year.

**SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING CURRICULUM:** We look forward to rolling out a new social-emotional learning curriculum and bullying prevention program in the fall. A District committee, led by assistant superintendent of teaching and learning Kristin Vonder Haar, Ed.D., did a great deal of research and piloting and selected the Second Step curriculum. It is aligned with state standards and is robust, comprehensive, user friendly and relevant to students' lives. We believe SEL is essential in our schools today. I thank the staff members who ensured we chose a curriculum that will serve students now and into the future. Our ESSER III grant will pay for the new materials.

I hope you enjoy the many exciting updates from the District and the schools on the pages that follow. Have a safe, healthy and happy summer!

**Dr. Mary Gorr**  
Superintendent of Schools, Mount Prospect School District 57

## READY FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

Westbrook first graders in McKenzie Brewer's class proudly wear their Fairview and Lions Park shirts. They recently had a visit from fifth-grade Peer Mediators, along with Fairview principal Dan Ophus and Lions Park principal Katie Kelly, who talked about what life will be like at their new schools. The students were enthusiastic and had great questions. The District was able to bring back many opportunities this year, and students have made a lot of progress. They are ready for the next step in their journey of learning and growth.

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### ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Mary Gorr  
Superintendent

Jason Kaiz  
Assistant Superintendent  
Finance and Operations

Dr. Kristin Vonder Haar  
Assistant Superintendent  
Teaching and Learning

Sara Tyburski  
Director of Student Services

Mark Fijor  
Director of Technology

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Eileen Kowalczyk, *President*  
Kimberly Fay, *Vice President*  
Corrin Bennett-Kill  
Vicki Chung  
Jennifer Ciok  
Jennifer Kobus  
Chris Lettow

### ARE YOU FOLLOWING DISTRICT 57?





# A RETURN TO THE STAGE

## STUDENTS AND THEIR FANS ARE THRILLED THAT LIVE PERFORMANCES ARE BACK THIS SPRING

The weeks leading up to the last day of school have always been busy and exciting times, with the calendar full of year-end performances that showcase students' hard work. It was difficult to have those cherished D57 traditions canceled the past two years. So staff members found creative ways to bring them back better than ever this spring.

The Lincoln musical, "Come to the Cabaret," was held April 8 and 9. The fifth-grade plays – "Leap Day" at Fairview and "Could You Hug a Cactus" at Lions Park – were held over several nights in April, with each class putting on its own performance. This new approach allowed for smaller crowd

sizes and gave more students the opportunity to take on larger roles in the cast and crew. In addition, there were year-end Orchestra and Chorus concerts, as well as the grade five to eight Band concert held in front of a huge outdoor crowd at the Mount Prospect Veterans Memorial Band Shell – a first for District 57.

"We're proud of our visionary music teachers who brought our performances back and taught valuable skills and lessons so students could experience putting on these impressive plays and concerts for their families and communities," says superintendent Mary Gorr, Ed.D.



FAIRVIEW 5TH-GRADE PLAY



LIONS PARK 5TH-GRADE PLAY



LINCOLN MUSICAL



GRADES 5-8 BAND CONCERT

## MULTIMEDIA TECH TOOLS IN THE SCHOOLS

District 57 is expanding students' access to multimedia technology so they can work collaboratively to produce high-quality digital content. This includes creating mobile production studios outfitted with easy-to-use tools that classrooms can check out – like an iPad, tripod, microphone and portable green screen.

The goal is to have mobile studios at each school, according to Mark Fijor, director of technology. He says there is already some equipment available, and students have embraced the opportunity to get creative using the high-tech tools.

The District 57 Education Foundation's spring event raised funds to provide equipment for the mobile production studios, which cost about \$700 each to fully outfit. In addition, the District received a \$15,000 grant from Bosch Tools for iPads, green screens and tripods for Fairview, Lions Park and Westbrook. Cindy Larson, Fairview LRC director, worked with the other librarians and tech coaches to secure the grant earlier this year, and the schools started receiving the new equipment in April.

"We'll see more of these learning opportunities as we enhance our creative tech capabilities," Fijor says.



## ESSER III FUNDS PUT TO GOOD USE

District 57 is continuing to use funds from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) program to address learning loss brought on by the pandemic, as well as enrich student programming in a variety of ways. The ESSER federal funding, which is intended to help schools lessen the impact of COVID-19, has been distributed to states in three rounds. In total, District 57 has received about \$1.25 million.

The most recent ESSER III allocation of \$816,918 is being used for the following:

- The Summer Bridge program (see story, this page).
- Purchasing the new Second Step social-emotional learning curriculum and instructional materials for kindergarten through eighth grades, plus a bullying-prevention unit for kindergarten through fifth grades.
- Before/after-school tutoring for students needing additional math and literacy support.
- Technology and instructional materials to support student learning, including computers and subscriptions for Newsela, Reflex Math Fact Fluency and Zoom.
- The purchase of additional cafeteria tables, folding chairs, stools and tables to facilitate distancing at each school.
- Stipends for teachers who have simultaneously taught in-person and remote students. (The District's remote education option will end at the conclusion of this school year.)

## FROM FLOORS TO DOORS, SCHOOLS TO RECEIVE UPGRADES THIS SUMMER

The District is preparing to begin the building projects that are slated for summer 2022. Jason Kaiz, assistant superintendent of finance and operations, says there are no plans for major expansions or renovations this year but instead smaller-scale projects that are necessary upkeep for the District's aging buildings. This includes:

- Updating the Fairview HVAC system with a new chiller
- Adding new classroom flooring and hallway carpeting at Fairview, Lions Park and Westbrook
- Installing new bathroom hand dryers at Fairview and Lions Park
- Replacing the exterior doors at Lincoln

These projects, which account for about \$2 million of the FY22 budget, are part of the Master Facilities Plan, a prioritized list of the District's most urgent maintenance needs.

## ENSURING STUDENTS GET THE HELP THEY NEED WHILE SCHOOL'S OUT

This July, students who need additional support in math, literacy and social-emotional learning will have the opportunity to attend District 57's Summer Bridge program. The program, which is in its second year, will be held July 11-29 at Lions Park. School teams have identified students from early learners through eighth graders who can benefit from participation.

"This customized, intensive instruction will address any learning loss and help students progress and prepare for next year," says Kristin Vonder Haar, Ed.D., assistant superintendent of teaching and learning. She adds that the District is using a portion of its Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) allocation to fund the Summer Bridge program.

Also this summer, the District will once again offer Extended School Year and Emergent Bilingual Extended School Year for some students who receive special education services or multilingual services and require continued instruction in the summer.

The District will use federal grant money to provide free transportation for students participating in summer learning opportunities.



### TEAM D57 GOES FOR GOLD...AND SILVER AND BRONZE

District 57's Special Olympics team competed in the 2022 spring games held on May 15 at Prospect High School, bringing home one gold, one silver and two bronze medals in the 50-meter dash and softball throwing events. Pictured: D57 team members with the staff members who coached them, (left to right) Tim Benka, Sara Cilia, Carol Bemben, Katianna Olson and Krystal Luce.



# DISTRICT TO WELCOME NEW LINCOLN PRINCIPAL AND LIONS PARK ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL



District 57 has hired Eric Larson, who is currently principal of Patton School in Arlington Heights District 25, as the new principal of Lincoln, replacing Paul Suminski, who is stepping down this summer. Superintendent Mary Gorr, Ed.D., says the District conducted a thorough search that included multiple rounds of interviews by administrators and a committee of staff and parents. She says Larson stood out from a

strong field of candidates, due to his background as an administrator and former middle school educator.

"Eric has a strong track record of working collaboratively with staff and families to serve children and ensure high-quality outcomes for learning," according to Gorr. "He also has a unique perspective, given that he's a successful principal who started his career as a middle school math teacher."

Larson, who was previously associate principal of District 25's South Middle School, says he is excited to be part of District 57 and the Lincoln community. "Working with middle school students has always been a joy and passion of mine, as I get the privilege of watching them grow as individuals and learners," he says. "District 57 has a strong

reputation for excellence, and I look forward to joining the Lincoln team to continue the great work being done."

Gorr says she is thankful to Suminski for his years of service and his leadership at Lincoln and that the District wishes him all the best.

District 57 also has hired Breanna Pustai as assistant principal of Lions Park, replacing Elise Dean, who is stepping down this summer. Pustai, who is getting married and will go by Grzybek by the start of the school year, is currently a second-grade teacher at Windsor School in District 25.

Gorr says Pustai will be an excellent addition to the District's administrative team and the Lions Park community.

## CONGRATS, RETIREES!

The District and School Board will hold the annual Retirement and Recognition Celebration on June 1, to honor staff who are retiring and those who are celebrating service anniversaries from 10 to 30 years. The retirees include:

- Cindy Bartnicki, Fairview, 25 years
- Dave Cessna, Lincoln, 14 years
- Laurie Feinstein, Lions Park, 12 years
- Elin Lonergan, Fairview, 22 years
- Kathy Winters, Westbrook, 32 years
- Yvonne Wright, Fairview, 15 years



Westbrooke speech pathologist and early childhood teacher Kathy Winters is always all smiles with the children in her class – and they love her back! She has a 32-year history with District 57; she has even taught children of her former students. Winters is one of several long-tenured staff members retiring this year. D57 staff and families will miss them!



## NEW BOARD MEMBER A D57 GRAD

In March, the District 57 School Board chose Chris Lettow to fill the Board position of Kevin Bull, who resigned due to moving out of state. Lettow was selected from multiple applicants after in-person interviews with Board members. He will serve until the next general election in April 2023, when the seat will be added to the ballot

for a two-year term. Lettow has two children in D57 schools, and he and his wife are graduates as well. In fact, on a recent Board tour of Lincoln, he reunited with his former teacher, current LRC director Michelle Waters-Walsh!

## LINCOLN CELEBRATES HALL OF FAMER MR. STEEN

Lincoln students and staff recently surprised assistant principal Randy Steen with his very own "Rocky Run" to celebrate his induction into the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame. Steen, who has been a licensed official for 29 years and has officiated 184 state series games, was recognized "for outstanding achievement in Illinois basketball."





# #D57GIVESBACK



## ▲ A LABOR OF LOVE, SEVEN YEARS STRONG:

After being held virtually last year, Lions Park Knots of Love returned to Prospect High School on April 14, with community members of all ages gathering to make blankets for pediatric patients. Many people also participated before and after the in-person event, bringing the total to 400 blankets that will be donated to Advocate Children's Hospital in Park Ridge. Knots of Love was inspired by and honors the memory of Lauren Graver, a Lions Park student who passed away in 2017. The event, which is planned by Lions Park staff and the Graver family, is responsible for about 3,000 blankets being donated over the past seven years.



**▲ KINDNESS EVERYWHERE:** Lincoln held its first-ever all-school Random Acts of Kindness Week in February, with students getting sponsors and raising funds for PTO programs, in exchange for doing kind acts for others. There were collection boxes in the front lobby for food items for the Mount Prospect Food Pantry, blankets for Lions Park Knots of Love and letters for first responders or Lemons of Love. In addition, students came up with their own small and large acts of kindness, like purchasing wish list items for JOURNEYS. The PTO even got in the spirit by surprising Lincoln staff with sweet treats. In addition to spreading kindness throughout the school and beyond, the event raised more than \$2,500 to help the PTO fund events, clubs and activities.



**◀ SPRING VOLUNTEER EVENT:** About 80 students, staff and family members came out to Feed My Starving Children in Schaumburg on April 26 for a D57 volunteer event. The group packed more than 10,000 meals, enough to feed 28 kids for a year. Superintendent Dr. Mary Gorr, who planned the event, says she was pleased with the big turnout and the enthusiasm and that she hopes to organize another volunteer project in the fall. Pictured: Lions Park teacher Heidi Jorgenson (center) with D57 families who participated.



**◀ HELP FOR UKRAINE:** These are just some of the many items that District 57 families and staff at all four schools collected for Ukraine throughout March and April. D57 parents helped sort and pack the donations so they could be sent via a Ukrainian shipping company to an accredited charity. In addition, Lions Park Student Council raised more than \$1,300 through its FundRAZOR event and donated the funds to UNICEF and World Central Kitchen to help the people of Ukraine.



**▲ DERBY DAY DONE THE D57 WAY:** The District 57 Education Foundation brought its annual spring fundraiser back on April 10, with the Road to the Derby Gala. The District 57 community turned out in full force, helping the Foundation raise more than \$25,000 to fund grants for the schools. Pictured, several of the administrators who were on hand to show their gratitude: (left to right) Lions Park principal Katie Kelly, superintendent Dr. Mary Gorr, Fairview assistant principal Una Durkan, Westbrook principal Danielle Crandall, Lincoln assistant principal Susannah Wade, director of student services Sara Tyburski and assistant superintendent of teaching and learning Dr. Kristin Vonder Haar.



## CLASS OF 2022, CONGRATULATIONS!

We're proud of your resilience and hard work and can't wait to see what your future holds!



## D57 STUDENTS, HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!

We look forward to seeing you for the 1st day of school on Thursday, Aug. 18, 2022.