

The Newsletter of LaGrange School District 105

The Blackboard

www.d105.net

District Office
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Dr. Glenn T. Schlichting,
Superintendent of Schools

April/May 2013

Countryside
Hodgkins
LaGrange

105

New Foundation Brings **SOCIAL** and **ACADEMIC** Opportunities

A new foundation will provide exciting social and educational opportunities for the District 105 community. School District 105 is forming a foundation in anticipation that it will be formally established in the fall of 2013. Typically, school district foundations are created to provide alternate funding to cover budget shortfalls or the costs of special school or district initiatives. However, the District 105 Foundation will be unique in that its primary purpose will be to strengthen family and community relationships throughout the district.

The foundation kicks off with a “District 105 Day” of Kane County Cougars’ baseball on Sunday, May 5. District attendees will enjoy the game in a reserved section of the ballpark and participate in several specially planned game-day activities. This event, as will be the case with all foundation activities, is

designed to foster widespread participation, not to raise funds from participants.

The foundation is also being formed to raise funds through community sponsorships and donations in order to provide college scholarships for high school seniors from each of the district’s four elementary school attendance areas. This community support will further the district’s mission to *Empower Our Students to Pursue their Interests, Talents, and Dreams*, and the district’s goal of *All Students Achieving College and Career Readiness Standards*.

Foundation events for the community will be posted on the district website: www.d105.net and listed in this newsletter. Community members are also invited to get involved in the future work of the foundation as the organization becomes established.



Gurrie Hosts International Visitors

In March, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) held its annual conference in Chicago. Because of its success in implementing the “Whole Child” approach to learning, ASCD selected Gurrie Middle School as a demonstration school for conference attendees. On March 15, Gurrie hosted conference visitors from Singapore and Honduras (photo at left). They met with Gurrie Principal Ed Hood (left), Superintendent Glenn Schlichting (second from left), Director of Curriculum and Instruction Kathryn Heeke, (third from left), spoke to teachers, toured the school, and watched classrooms in action.



Gurrie Middle School
1001 S. Spring Avenue
LaGrange, IL 60525
(708) 482-2720
Ed Hood, Principal

Hodgkins Elementary School
6516 S. Kane Avenue
Hodgkins, IL 60525
(708) 482-2740
John Signatur, Principal

Ideal Elementary School
9901 W. 58th Street
Countryside, IL 60525
(708) 482-2750
Steven Bahn, Principal

Seventh Avenue Elementary School
701 S. Seventh Avenue
LaGrange, IL 60525
(708) 482-2730
Sherry Krzyzanski, Principal

Spring Avenue Elementary School
1001 S. Spring Avenue
LaGrange, IL 60525
(708) 482-2710
Elizabeth Webb Peterman, Principal

Clubs Encourage Interests, Develop **STUDENTS' SKILLS**

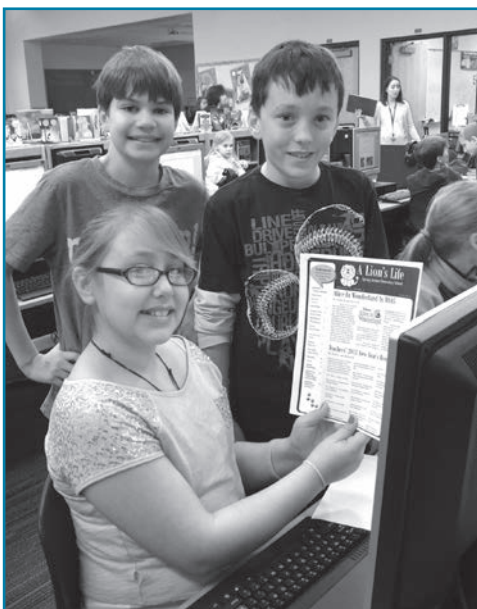
Throughout the district, a wide variety of extra curricular offerings helps students concentrate on their special interests, gain experience, and build leadership skills. This issue of *The Blackboard* focuses on two popular clubs at Spring Avenue School.

Leadership Club

The new Spring Avenue School Leadership Club is this year's Student Council. According to Spring Avenue School Principal Elizabeth Webb Peterman, "They are a very large group of strong leaders in sixth grade. We thought that all of them could join the 'club' to participate in establishing and addressing issues of concern."

Earlier in the school year, over 30 Leadership Club members held a drive for needy families, collecting non-perishable food, stuffed animals, clothing, and books. Club members collected, sorted, and helped deliver more than 1,200 items!

Recently, the students donated \$250 to the American Red Cross for disaster



Several Newspaper Club students with the latest edition of *A Lion's Life*.

relief programs. A community member/parent generously matched that amount to double the donation.

Students have expressed interest in raising more money for a variety of non-profits, identifying and leading fundraising opportunities, volunteering for a food drive organization, and determining special School Spirit Days throughout the school year.

"Leadership Club students can sign up for the opportunities they are interested in. The members are energetic and eager to help," Mrs. Webb Peterman remarked.

The Leadership Club is sponsored and mentored by Spring Avenue teachers Maggie Melone and Kelly Ahern.

A Lion's Life

The Spring Avenue Newspaper Club produces the school's newspaper, *A Lion's Life*, named for the school's mascot. Over 30 students in grades four through six research, write, edit, design, and layout six issues of the colorful newsletter during the school year. Since an issue can be 10-15 pages in length, the club members work hard to meet the publication schedule deadlines. Students bring the newspapers home for the entire family to enjoy.

There are clear requirements for joining the Newspaper Club. Students must:

- Write well.
- Be able to do research or conduct interviews.
- Have strong areas of interest, such as sports, comics, animals, current events, etc.
- Have a vision for reporting news to others.



The newsroom: Spring Avenue reporters work on their articles.

- Do their best work and be willing to edit their own articles and articles written by other students.

The club generally meets once a week after school in the Library Resource Center, where the students use their computer skills to research and write their articles. They are encouraged by the club's sponsors, teachers Joanna Marek and Victoria Faldani, to think out of the box and consider their audience at all times. The teachers work tirelessly to motivate the students, coordinate their efforts, and assist in editing and layout.

The Spring Avenue Newspaper Club began about eight years ago with three students under the tutelage of Principal Elizabeth Webb Peterman. Today, some of the Newspaper Club members have participated in the club for all three years of their intermediate education.

"The school newsletter is of exceptionally high quality and everyone involved in its production should be very proud," Principal Webb Peterman stated.

An archive of *A Lion's Life* newsletters is available on the District 105 website, www.d105.net. Go to the Spring Avenue School page, click on "Extracurricular Activities" in the left column, then click *Lion's Life*.

Summer **CONNECT** Program Builds on Past **SUCCESS**

This summer will mark the fourth year of the district's "Summer CONNECT" program. The goal of the program is to reduce students' summer academic regression. This regression is endemic to students everywhere, and simply means that students often start school in the fall having to relearn information they were taught during the previous school year. However, when students keep learning during the summer, the amount of regression can be greatly reduced.

Over the past three years, the regression rate among District 105 students has significantly diminished due to a collective focus on continuous learning by students, parents, and teachers over the summer months. The district continues to analyze the program's results and fine-tune it to further benefit students.

During the first year of Summer CONNECT, the district linked students and families to websites that provided educational resources, and also kept a school library open all summer.

The second year, Summer CONNECT expanded to include a more structured program with a focus on reading. Teacher coaches were added. Each teacher "coach" worked with 10-18 students. Throughout the summer, the coaches communicated to the students about the results of their studies via e-mail, regular mail, and also met in person.

Last summer, the third year of Summer CONNECT, an online math program was added to the curriculum. Coaches met with students at least three times during the summer to review their work. Over 400 students participated in the program in 2012.

This summer, based on the collected data from the past programs, and the results of parent, student and teacher surveys, the program will build upon the work of the past. Different levels of support will be offered to meet the variety of student and family needs. From very structured – for families who desire a great deal of one-on-one help from teacher coaches, with face-to-face teacher/student meetings, home support, and guided learning – to unstructured learning with students visiting a District 105 school library as often as they desire, and everything in between, students will have many options for summer learning.

Benchmark Process Helps Measure District Achievement

District 105 students in grades one through eight take the online Measures of Academic Progress® (MAP) test three times during the school year to help determine the annual progress they are making in reading and math. The test results pinpoint each student's academic needs – where they are ready to advance and where they need help. MAP also provides a snapshot of overall school and district performance to show collective student progress.

MAP has been administered in the district since 2007. The district is also using data from MAP testing to benchmark the district's progress compared to similar districts. The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), the non-profit organization that designed and administers the MAP tests, uses the District 105 demographic data to create a "virtual district" to compare to District 105's MAP results. NWEA then generates a report that benchmarks District 105 MAP test results to the virtual district.

The benchmarking data showed that District 105 students are significantly outperforming districts with similar demographics.

The district first engaged in this benchmarking process in the fall of 2011, and repeated it in the fall of 2012. Benchmark data will be further analyzed with the spring 2013 MAP testing.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Kathryn Heeke stated, "Our district has a very diverse population. It is unique, and different from any other district in the LaGrange Township High School region. The MAP data helps provide a solid comparison with which to measure our work."

Board of Education ELECTION

On April 9, voters elected five members to the District 105 Board of Education. Four incumbents will return to the board, and one new member will begin his term of office. Elected to a four-year term are returning board members **David Herndon**, **Eileen Tucker** and **Kristine Lonsway**. Incumbent **Virginia Kogen** was also re-elected and will serve a two-year term of office. **Robert Webb**, who is new to the board, will serve a four-year term. He was elected to the seat held by board member Mark Smith, who did not run again (see article on page 4). Board members serve without pay.

As members of the District 105 Board of Education they will:

- Set standards of governance.
- Address administration and personnel issues.
- Provide oversight of fiscal management issues.
- Approve the educational program.
- Support school and community relations.

Goal Setting Prepares Students for Future

For several years, an important focus throughout the district has been on helping students acquire goal setting skills. Toward that end, teachers are setting classroom level goals, such as targeting a number of books that a class reads each quarter, and individual goals, such as identifying what precise actions a student must take to master a subject area. Goal setting is an important skill. Learning how to set and achieve goals is a tool students can use throughout their lives to help overcome obstacles and strive for success.

An example of how teachers are helping students identify and meet goals is through data from the students' MAP (Measures of Academic Achievement) testing. Teachers receive the students' test scores in the fall, then help each student develop an action plan to target areas that need improvement and identify the specific steps they must take to achieve that goal. Teachers have access to reports from MAP that list the skill sets that students need to learn to move forward in that subject. Teacher communication to both students and parents regarding the student's personal academic targets is an important part of the goal setting process.

Eighth grade student Kali Huynh reports that goal setting has become an integral part of her life, and is grateful to her teachers at Ideal and Gurrie for helping imbed goal setting skills. The process started in about third grade when teachers began to help her set goals. Eventually, she began setting her own academic goals. Goal setting helps Kali be responsible for her own learning.

Kali says that her teachers help her identify what she needs to do so she can meet goals and reach the next step. For example, in algebra, her teacher not only circles her errors, but also helps her see where she went wrong and identify what she needs to learn. She knows that she can count on her teachers to find the time to give her individual help, and that they also provide additional learning

opportunities. For example, she can go to her teachers' web pages to find links to online sources that will help improve her skills. These sources may even include "quizlets" and learning games.

Although Kali began the goal setting process in third or fourth grade, she noticed that her little brother, who is in first grade, has already begun to practice goal setting in his classroom!

She acknowledges that all students may not embrace goal setting. However, she says that even students who are resistant at first will respond to a teacher's persistence and encouragement. "The students realize that the teacher is helping them by setting goals. These students come to accept goal setting when they see how it benefits them," Kali explained.



Eighth grade student Kali Huynh, and all District 105 students, learn how to set goals.

Kali is already taking some LTHS-level curriculum. The straight-A student is excited to go on to LT in the fall where she looks forward to engaging in the high school curriculum and "figuring out who I want to be."



IN APPRECIATION



Mark Smith is ending his eight years of service to the district as a Board of Education member. For half of that time he was the board president, providing strong leadership that helped advance the district. Superintendent Glenn Schlichting recently said:

"Mark has been a remarkable board member. His honesty, integrity, and ability helped lead the board in a way that focused on student needs. He worked and planned at the policy and strategic levels, but also focused on community outreach, helping to create a board culture that is accountable not only to parents and to students, but to the community as a whole."

He served on the finance committee, construction committee, and was the lead negotiator in the teacher and support staff contracts.

Mr. Smith's accomplishments are overarching. During his tenure on the board, test scores improved significantly; school/district surveys indicated strong and trusting relationships among students, staff and parents; the district remained financially sound despite increased enrollment and reductions in state and federal funding; and the schools' infrastructures were improved for increased health and security.

As his parting gift as a Board of Education member, Mr. Smith is making a donation to the District 105 school libraries.

However, his service to the district is far from over. Mr. Smith will soon become a District 105 Foundation board member, applying his time, talents and expertise to help develop the new organization.

District 105 extends its appreciation to Mr. Smith for his service to the schools and to the community.

*The
Blackboard*

A Message from Dr. Glenn Schlichting, Superintendent

Strategic Plan is **UPDATED**

The District 105 Board of Education and community members, parents, staff, students, and administrators from all five of our school communities worked throughout the first half of this school year to update our District 105 Strategic Plan. This important process focused on strengthening the alignment of our resources to the needs of our students and included:

- ❑ Careful review of feedback from parents, staff, students, and community members.
- ❑ Comprehensive review of the wealth of District 105 baseline data about finances, facilities, technology, the learning environment, and student achievement.
- ❑ Thorough analysis of our District 105 strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- ❑ Examination of research about the “best practices” in classrooms, schools, and school districts.
- ❑ Setting of long-range district goals.
- ❑ Development of strategies to achieve district goals.

The Board of Education formally adopted the plan on January 28, 2013. The Strategic Plan serves as a foundation for continuous improvement by enhancing an already excellent system of setting goals and annual performance targets, analyzing and using data for improvement, and reporting results through district and school dashboards. Highlights of the District 105

Strategic Plan follow. To view the plan in its entirety, visit the district website: www.d105.net.

Strategic Plan Highlights

District 105 Mission: *Empower students to pursue their interests, talents and dreams.*

District 105 Motto: *Today’s learners are tomorrow’s leaders.*

District 105 Vision: *District 105 strives to be a high-performing school district that celebrates the importance of each individual student.*

- ❑ We want each student to feel that he/she is a valued member of the school community, prepared for future academic and career success.
- ❑ We want our communities to feel pride in our work and express confidence that we are good stewards of their resources.
- ❑ We want each staff member to make a positive difference in the lives of our students and their families.

District 105 Values

- ❑ We believe the diversity of our communities contributes to our students being successful in our world.
- ❑ We believe students learn in different ways and at different rates as they become self-sufficient in their learning.
- ❑ We believe education is a shared responsibility of the student, family, school and community.

- ❑ We believe an engaging, innovative, technological learning environment is critical to the learning success for all students.
- ❑ We believe data and clear information accelerate both teaching and learning.
- ❑ We believe building strong, collaborative school communities are critical to the learning success of our students.

District 105 Long-Range Goals

- ❑ All students will demonstrate continuous growth and achieve college and career readiness standards.
- ❑ All students will attend school in a safe, supportive, and healthy learning environment.
- ❑ District 105 will enhance learning partnerships by connecting schools, families, and communities.
- ❑ District 105 will recruit, retain, and develop high quality, collaborative staff.
- ❑ District 105 will make effective and efficient use of its resources.

District 105 Critical Strategies

- ✓ *Ambitious Instruction*
- ✓ *Whole Child Commitment*
- ✓ *Early Learning Success*
- ✓ *Closing Achievement Gaps*
- ✓ *Engaging Families and Communities*

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Gurrie Athletes Achieve

The Gurrie Tigers had the best Cross Country season in recent years. The teams won the LT Conference's "best overall team" honors. Despite having many new team members, the boys' Cross Country team came together to form the single fastest team in Gurrie's history. They won the LT Conference and also received honors for their "three-peat championship performance." The girls' Cross Country team, led by eighth grader Jenna Fuller who finished fourth overall, achieved second place in the LT Conference.

The boys' Cross Country team went on to finish fourth of fourteen teams in the IESA State Championship. Eduardo Molina's sixth place overall finish earned him a trip to the state finals, where he finished 22, capturing the title of "All State."

The eighth grade boys' basketball team's hard work resulted in a conference record of eleven wins and four losses, earning them an LTESAC South Conference championship and an overall record of twelve wins and five losses. The coaches were Joe Pontrelli and Eddie Alvarez.

In October, the eighth grade boys' softball team completed another outstanding year,

with a record of seven wins and three losses. Throughout both their seventh and eighth-grade years, the team dominated their conference, with a combined fifteen wins and five losses during the two years. The team's coaches were Jennifer Sutsser and Matthew Eigel.

In wrestling, three team members recently qualified for state. Congratulations to Gurrie students TJ Cassella, Nick Rivera, and Jerry Presley. Luke Arneson is the wrestling coach. Mike Yena also helped coach the team.

DISTRICT 105 BOARD OF EDUCATION

David Herndon
Virginia Kogen
Kristine Lonsway
Larry Prystalski
Jan Reagan
Eileen Tucker
Robert Webb

*The public is invited to
attend board meetings —
generally held at Gurrie
Library Learning Center on
the fourth Monday of each
month, 7:30 PM.*

