

DISTRICT OFFICE
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Dr. Glenn T. Schlichting,
Superintendent of Schools

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2016

The Newsletter of LaGrange School District 105

The Blackboard

www.d105.net

Countryside
Hodgkins
LaGrange

105

Communication Takes COMMON CORE to Next Level

For several years, schools across Illinois have been aligning their curriculum to meet the rigorous requirements of the Common Core State Standards, which establish clear expectations for what students should learn in English language arts and mathematics at each grade level. The standards are high, clear, and uniform to ensure that students are prepared for success in college and the workforce.

In District 105, the latest Common Core initiative involves communicating the goals of each K-8 English language arts and math unit to parents, then keeping parents apprised of their child's outcomes; student testing before and after each unit to determine the student's grasp of the unit's concepts; sharing the unit's learning targets with students so they can track their own

results and set learning goals; and differentiating instruction to the specific needs of each student as determined through his/her pre- and post-test results.

Based on parent feedback, and the results of a recent Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) visit, parents are receiving three communications from their child's classroom teacher for every math and English language arts unit. There are generally six to eight

of each of these units a year. These communications are: an opening letter at the start of the unit, which defines learning targets and how parents can help at home; a second communication after their student's pre-test, which defines goal setting and the focus areas for each student based on his/her test results; and the third communication, sent after the post test, which measures the student's proficiency in each of the target areas.

For example, the first letter that parents receive from their child's fourth grade teacher for the math unit "Place Values" lists the unit's 12 learning targets. These include: read and write numbers up to one million; explain how different patterns are built; compare two numbers with digits up to one million, and nine others.

First- through eighth-grade students are aware of the goals for each unit, and participate in keeping track of their grasp of the material. They indicate targets they have reached and

Continues on p. 6



Students know the targets of each math and English language arts learning unit and track their own progress.

Did you KNOW...

- District 105 parents, staff, and students gave the district a top statewide rating on the *Illinois 5Essentials Survey* last spring.
- 99% of students report that their teachers expect them to do their best at all times.
- 95% of students report that their teachers want them to become better thinkers – not just memorize things.
- 95% of students report that they set goals with their teachers and develop a plan to achieve their goals.
- 94% of parents report that teachers do their best to help their child.
- 97% of teachers report that they look forward to coming to work.
- 99% of teachers feel that their principal sets high standards for student learning.
- 100% of teachers feel respected by their students' parents.
- Emily Markert, a District 105 graduate, was recently named a National Merit Finalist. Finalists score in the top one-half of one percent among students taking the PSAT.
- District 105 will be highlighted as a case study for its use of the *Baldrige Criteria for Excellence* for the district's continuous improvement, in the book *Labor Management Community Collaboration Resource Guide*, to be published by Harvard University Press.

Currie 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
Erin Hall, Principal

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

Top row, L to R: Amanda Adducci, Leigh Becker, Kelly Caputo, Allison Cherry, Jessica L. Colton, John Fiene, Kimberly Folkening, Tara Halicki.



Bottom row, L to R: Celine Hill, Kim Kanofsky, Sarah King, Claire Lansford, Nicole Musillami, Jack Olson, Alyssa Orosz, and Arjeta Prazic.



District 105 welcomed 16 new teachers at the start of the school year. Introducing:

Guurie Middle School

Jack Olson, Read 180 Language Arts Teacher, Grades 7-8

Mr. Olson has three years of experience in education as a sixth-through eighth-grade language arts and social studies teacher. He earned a BA in English, Language Arts concentration, from the University of Wisconsin, Parkside. In college, he was a volunteer middle school tutor at the Southeastern Wisconsin Boys' and Girls' Club, and was also a coach. He played four years of college basketball.

Arjeta Perezic, ELA/Social Studies Teacher

Ms. Perezic previously taught seventh grade language arts for two years. She attended Elmhurst College and received a BA in English/Secondary Education. She loves reading young adult novels, and has devoted her summers to tackling different authors. This past summer was the summer of author John Green. She is excited about getting to know more about her students and their different perspectives.

Ideal School

Kelly Caputo, Bilingual Pre-K Teacher

Ms. Caputo has one year of teaching experience. She worked as a preschool/daycare teacher and as a Spanish tutor with Loyola University college students. She earned a BA in Spanish from Loyola University, and earned state certification in Early Childhood Teaching from Kendall College, Chicago. Ms. Caputo achieved a 3.9 GPA at both colleges. She studied in Mallorca, Spain one summer, and loves the San Diego Chargers.

Kimberly Folkening, Second Grade Teacher

Mrs. Kimberly Folkening has 20 years of teaching experience. She taught second, third and fifth grades, and was a literacy trainer and consultant for the University of Chicago.

She earned a BS in Education from Valparaiso University. After college, she taught in Puebla, Mexico. For the past eight years, Mrs. Folkening worked with teachers and leadership teams in Chicago and around the country to support literacy instruction in grades K-6. She lives in the district, and is an avid gardener.

Kim Kanofsky, Library Media Specialist

Although this is Mrs. Kanofsky's first year as a library media specialist, she has extensive classroom experience, including teaching sixth grade math and science, eighth grade math, and high school algebra, pre-algebra, and geometry. She was an instructional intern at an academic library, as well as a public library assistant while she was earning her master's degree.

Mrs. Kanofsky earned a BS in Math Education from Western Illinois University, Macomb, and an MS in MLIS (Master of Library Information Science) from Dominican University, River Forest.

She is "very excited to join the Ideal Elementary team to help students become lifelong learners, and to provide assistance to teachers through the Library Learning Center."

Married for 20 years, Mrs. Kanofsky has two sons who attend south suburban Stagg High School.

Sarah King, Physical Education Teacher (part time)

Mrs. King brings seven years of experience in PE and in health to her work at Ideal. She has a BA in Science from Western Michigan University. She is the mother of four children, ages 6-13, who

attend school in a neighboring district. They are her proudest accomplishment!

Seventh Avenue School

Amanda Adducci, Fourth Grade Teacher

Ms. Adducci has seven years of experience teaching first and fourth grades. She has a Bachelor's in Elementary Education from Illinois State University, Normal, and a Master's in Educational Leadership and Administration from the University of St. Francis, Joliet, IL. She enjoys cooking, reading, and CrossFit workouts.

Leigh Becker, General Music Teacher (part time)

Mrs. Becker has 10 years of experience as an elementary general music teacher, grades prekindergarten through sixth. She earned both a Bachelor's and a Master's in Music Education from Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY. She and her husband have two young children. Mrs. Becker enjoys reading, arts and crafts, and singing in her church choir.

Celine Hill, Kindergarten Teacher

Mrs. Hill has 30 years of experience in education as a kindergarten teacher, school administrator, and adjunct professor. She achieved a BS in Early Childhood Education from Northern Illinois University, Dekalb; a Master's in Educational Leadership (MEd) from National-Louis University, Evanston; and a second MEd in Elementary Education from Dominican University, River Forest.

She lives in LaGrange Park with her husband and three children: one is a graduate of the University of Missouri, and her twins are juniors in college.

She loves spending time with her family, especially on pizza and movie nights when everyone is at home. Mrs. Hill also enjoys gardening, reading and catching up with friends. She is "thrilled to be part of the amazing Seventh Avenue

teaching team, and grateful to be so warmly welcomed by the families."

Alyssa Orosz, First Grade Teacher

Miss Orosz knows the district well: she attended Spring Avenue and Guurie Middle schools and Lyons Township High School. She is thrilled to be back in the area. She has three years of experience as a second and third grade teacher in Iowa City, Iowa. Miss Orosz earned a BS in Education from the University of Iowa. In her spare time, she teaches BodyPump, a group fitness class, for the Elmhurst Park District.

Spring Avenue School

Allison Cherry, Kindergarten Music Teacher (part time)

Mrs. Cherry has 15 years of experience teaching music in K-5 schools, pre-school, and as a private piano instructor. She earned a BM in Music Education from St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana. She and her family live in the district, and her children attend Spring Avenue School. A runner, she has participated in two full marathons and many half marathons. Mrs. Cherry also enjoys reading, cooking, singing, and spending time with her four children.

Tara Halicki, Resource Teacher (part time)

Mrs. Halicki has four years of experience as a resource teacher (kindergarten), and as a self-contained teacher (grades 2-5). She has a BS in Communication Disorders and Sciences from Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, and an MA in Special Education from Lewis University, Romeoville, IL. She lives in a southwest suburb with her husband and their one-year-old daughter. Mrs. Halicki is "excited to be part of the Spring Avenue family!"

Continues on p. 5

STEM Initiatives Continue to GROW

STEM is an acronym for the academic disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The term is typically used when addressing education policy and curriculum choices in schools to improve the United States' competitiveness in science and technology development. Maintaining a citizenry that is well versed in the STEM fields is a key component of the country's public education agenda. In District 105, students are benefitting from many STEM programs and initiatives. Here are just a few:

Project Lead the Way

Project *Lead The Way* (PLTW) is the nation's leading provider of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs. Through world-class K-12 curriculum, high-quality teacher professional development, and outstanding partnerships, PLTW is helping students develop the skills needed to succeed in the global economy. In the Gurrie Middle School exploratory programming, new PLTW units are available to students. The units are:

- Automation and Robotics
- Medical Detectives
- Design and Modeling.

MSA (Illinois Math and Science Academy) FUSION Program

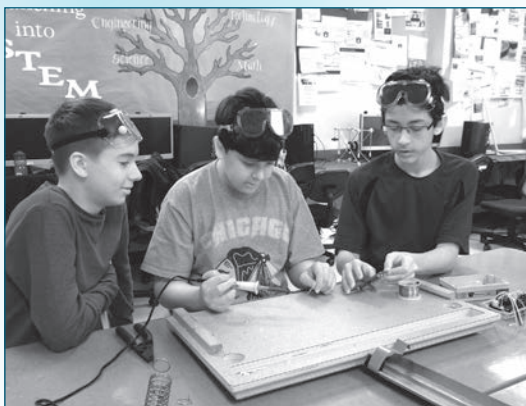
The Illinois Math and Science Academy (IMSA) is partnering with District 105 and Western Springs District 101 to offer *IMSA Fusion*, an after-school enrichment program for Illinois students who are talented, interested, and motivated in math and science.

There are two IMSA Fusion programs: one for fourth- and fifth-grade students, and another for sixth-through eighth-grade students. Through an application process, fifteen District 105 students from each of these two groups were selected to work alongside Western Springs' students during the first semester. Each group met once a week for two hours after school.

A second semester is underway. The goal of the program is to increase students' interest, involvement and literacy in science and math.

During the first semester, the fourth- and fifth-grade students studied, "Engineering: Design and Build," while the sixth- through eighth-grade students were engaged in "Twisted and Tangled: Making Sense of

Your Senses." More detailed Fusion program course descriptions can be found online at: imsa.edu/extensionprograms/fusion/curriculum and at: imsa.edu/extensionprograms/fusion/curriculum



Gurrie students build ROVs in the Underwater Robotics Club.

Regional Science Fair at Brookfield Zoo

District 105 students joined in Brookfield Zoo's second annual regional Science Fair on February 25, 2016, at the zoo. School districts in the West Suburban Consortium for Academic Excellence (WSCAE), which includes District 105 and its neighboring districts, were invited to select fifth-through eighth-grade students to participate. There was no charge for this program.

The students presented their projects to professionals engaged in the scientific community and earned recognition for their individual or group efforts. This regional program offers WSCAE schools that host a local Science Fair a venue for students to present their work in a unique environment and professional setting. It took place during the school day and parents and teachers were invited to attend.

Marjorie Baker, school programs coordinator at the Chicago Zoological Society (CZS) at Brookfield Zoo, stated, "The Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo is thrilled to host the Science Fair because it is a forum for student scientists and science professionals to interact in the context of science and STEM learning. The Science Fair is one way that CZS can truly live out our mission of inspiring

conservation leadership because it provides a stepping-stone toward science and environmental literacy in society...."

These District 105 students participated in the science fair: *Fifth Grade – Nikki Avizius, Carlo Cooley, Arturo Flores, Sofia Garcia, Sara Gjorgjevska, Katrina Phillip, Peter Sanchez, Marco Toledo, Angie Townsend, Kevyn Vital; sixth grade – Ann Babnigg, Luka Tomich, and Lana Zivko.*

Math Materials Renewal Process – Alignment to Common Core

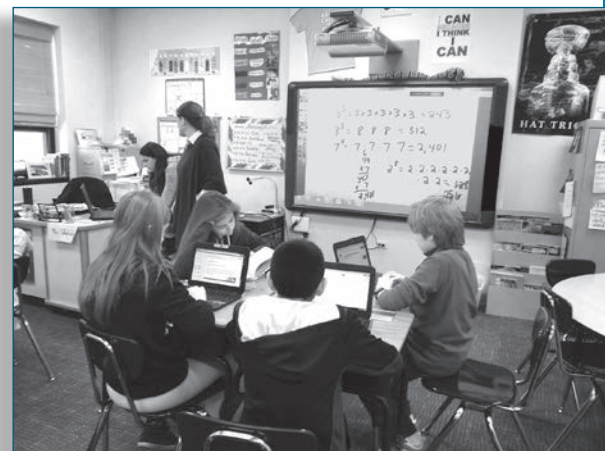
District 105 is currently in the process of examining new math materials that are better aligned to the Common Core State Math Standards, part of the state's new learning standards. A team of 25 teachers and administrators is examining multiple programs and using a comprehensive review tool, the IMET (Instructional Materials Evaluation Tool), to aid in the team's evaluation. The IMET tool draws directly from:

Common Core State Standards for Mathematics: corestandards.org/Math
Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics grade K-8: corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Math_Publishers_Criteria_K-8_Spring_2013_FINAL1.pdf

Underwater Robotics Club

Begun in 2015, the Underwater Robotics Club is an exciting extracurricular offering at Gurrie Middle School. Students build "ROVs" – Remotely Operated Vehicles –

Continues on p. 4



Seventh Avenue students use Chromebooks during a math lesson.

SUPERINTENDENT'S SEARCH PROCESS & RESULTS

Superintendent Glenn Schlichting has served the District 105 Community for 15 years. Two years ago, he announced his plans to retire on June 30, 2018. The Board of Education has worked proactively with an executive search consultant to develop a succession plan to ensure a seamless leadership transition:

- ❑ The Board of Education sought internal candidates for a new two-year assistant superintendent position to begin on July 1, 2016 (8/31/15 - 9/11/15). The costs of this new position will be offset by reductions in other administrative positions and expenses.
- ❑ The executive search consultant screened internal applicants and recommended qualified candidates for a Board of Education interview (9/11/15 - 9/28/15).
- ❑ The Board of Education interviewed the recommended internal candidates and offered a two-year assistant superintendent contract to one of the candidates (9/28/15-10/31/15).

The Board selected **Steven Bahn**, the principal of Ideal School, to fill the position of assistant superintendent.

Over the course of the two years (beginning July 1, 2016), the Board of Education will determine whether the assistant superintendent will succeed Dr. Schlichting as superintendent. The Board of Education will reserve the option of conducting a full external search during the 2017-18 school year to replace Dr. Schlichting on July 1, 2018.

All-day KINDERGARTEN Begins

After several years of planning and preparation, District 105 began a full-day kindergarten program at the start of the school year.

Each of the district's elementary schools now offers full-day kindergarten, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm, and each school has two kindergarten teachers. The district continues to offer a half-day program as an option, per state law. A bilingual kindergarten is offered in the full-day program only.

The full-day schedule, developed by the Kindergarten Planning Committee that consisted of district educators and the district's director of curriculum and instruction, developed a model of full- and half-day kindergarten programs that strives to address the academic, social, physical, emotional, and developmental needs of all of the district's kindergarten students.

During the full-day schedule, students engage in literacy, physical education, math, and active discovery centers daily. They study science and social studies three times a week; and art and music each once a week.

Teachers are already seeing success with the full-day program. Their observations include:

- Parents are feeling positive about the program.
- The longer day provides more time to differentiate instruction for each student and to meet his or her academic needs.
- Students in need are receiving increased reading instruction/support.
- There is now time for additional reading and/or math interventions as needed for students.

One more success to report: In one school's kindergarten classes, the teachers stated that they have seen their reading achievement increase from 15% of students reading at grade level in the beginning of the school year to 43% currently!

STEM Initiatives Continue to GROW (Continued from page 3)

that "fly" in the water. The club is sponsored in part by the Shedd Aquarium. One of the team's robots will compete against robots from other schools in the regional Marine

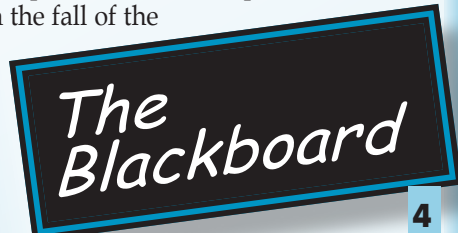
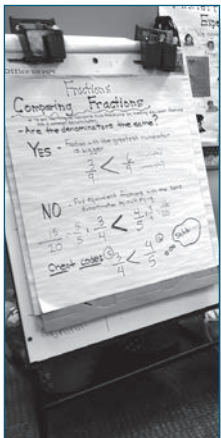
Advanced Technology Education Center competition. The club is a great addition to the district's STEM program, providing students with a hands-on, collaborative team approach to learning.

Students Learn Computer Coding

During the last school year, Kelly Rogan, a District 105 parent who works for Microsoft, with other volunteers from that company, visited Spring Avenue School to present *An Hour of Code*. Students learned that coding is the foundation for creating computer software, apps, and websites. Spring Avenue

students and teachers continued to explore coding learning opportunities on the website code.org. This year, students in the other district schools are working with the Microsoft volunteers to learn computer coding.

In December, the Microsoft team spent two days with Gurrie Middle School students, telling them about careers in the coding field, sharing their own education and career histories, and providing coding opportunities for students, all of whom participated during a two-day period. "Students gave us positive feedback," said Gurrie Principal Ed Hood. "We plan to offer a Coding Class beginning in the fall of the 2016-2017 school year. We are very excited about adding that opportunity to our Exploratory Class rotation."



DISTRICT GOALS Update

District 105 performance is updated quarterly on our dashboard, which is posted on the district website d105.net. The district dashboard contains long-range district goals, annual improvement targets, historical data trends, and comparisons with benchmark districts. Detailed information about our progress toward improvement targets is presented to the Board of Education nine times throughout the year. These presentations are posted on our website under Current Topics.

District 105 Curriculum Director Kathryn Heeke presented results from math and reading assessments to the Board of Education in November and December.

Highlights from these presentations included:

- Our current eighth grade class ranks in the 84th national percentile in mathematics and 81st percentile in reading on the fall MAP test. Most impressively, the percentile rank of this class has improved significantly since their first year of MAP testing in 3rd grade.
- District 105 students continue to significantly outperform our benchmark students of similar demographics and from similarly sized suburban districts across the country. District 105 teacher and administrator salaries are determined in part based on our performance in relation to districts most like ours.

- Fall district *Measures of Academic Progress* (MAP) achievement results were consistent with recent trends in reading and slightly below trend results in math.
- We closely follow the progress of our Gurrie graduates through the courses in which they enroll at Lyons Township High School.

Of our Gurrie freshmen:

- 53% enrolled in honors/accelerated math courses. 83% of these students earned an A or B at the end of the first quarter. The percentage of Gurrie students enrolled in these math courses and their grade achievements have significantly improved from previous years.
- 43% enrolled in honors/accelerated English courses. 84% of these students earned an A or B at the end of the first quarter. The percentage of Gurrie students enrolled in these English courses is consistent with our trend data, but their grades improved considerably from recent years.

Of our Gurrie sophomores:

- The number of students taking accelerated/honors courses increased from their freshman to sophomore years.
- 73% earned an A or B in their accelerated/honors courses at the end of the first quarter.

Welcome, NEW TEACHERS (Continued from page 2)

Multi-School Spring Avenue and Hodgkins Schools

Nicole Musillami, Advanced Academics English/Language Arts Specialist

Mrs. Musillami has eight years of experience. She taught first grade in Baltimore, and was a K-6 literacy coach in a suburban Chicago school. She has a BS in Elementary Reading, and an MS in Reading, both earned at Goucher College, Baltimore. She also achieved an ESL/Bilingual Endorsement from National Louis University, Lisle, IL. Mrs. Musillami not only began a new job at the beginning of the school year, but had her first child a few weeks earlier. She is an avid scrapbooker.

Gurrie and Ideal Schools

John Fiene, WRAP Services Social Worker (part time)

In his duties as a WRAP (Wellness, Recovery, Action Plan) services social worker, Mr. Fiene facilitates a team that develops, implements and evaluates individualized care plans for students with serious or complex needs. He has eight years of related experience as a psychotherapist, group leader, family therapist, and school social worker. He earned a BA in Sociology from Beloit

College, and a Master of Social Work from the University of Illinois, Chicago. Outside of work, he participates in an improvisational troupe and plays several instruments, including guitar, bass and drums. He is a bicycle enthusiast, wilderness explorer and entrepreneur.

Hodgkins and Ideal Schools

Jessica L. Colton, Art Teacher (part time)

Mrs. Colton has an .8 position in the district, which is almost full time. She has 10 years of experience in education, as a kindergarten preparatory and kindergarten teacher. Mrs. Colton earned a BS in Psychology from Loyola University, Chicago, and a Master's of Art in Teaching (MAT) degree in Elementary Education from National Louis University, Lisle, IL. Outside of the school, she teaches cycling and kickboxing classes as a NETA (National Exercise Trainer Association) certified fitness instructor.

Claire Lansford, General Music Teacher (part time)

Mrs. Lansford has four years of experience as a general music teacher, junior high choir director, and high school choir director. She has a BA in Music Education from Western Illinois University, Macomb.

ISSUE

IN THIS

1 COMMUNICATION TAKES
COMMON CORE TO NEXT LEVEL

1 DID YOU KNOW?

2 WELCOME, NEW TEACHERS

3 STEM INITIATIVES CONTINUE
TO GROW

4 SUPERINTENDENT'S SEARCH
PROCESS & RESULTS

4 ALL-DAY KINDERGARTEN
BEGINS

5 A MESSAGE FROM DR. GLENN
SCHLICHTING, SUPERINTENDENT:
DISTRICT GOALS UPDATE

The
Blackboard

Communication Takes **COMMON CORE** to Next Level

(Continued from page 1)

color code all of their outcomes. Under the heading, "I am learning to," they mark red for not demonstrating, yellow for beginning, and green for developing. When they know the material, they mark blue for proficient under the heading "I can."

"Students are excited about getting their test results," explained Kathryn Heeke, director of curriculum and instruction, "and to see how much they have learned."

The district's Advanced Academics teachers are collaborating and planning with grade level teachers, and working with students in small groups in the classroom. Their purpose is to plan and work with students who, based on the results of their pretest, already know the materials. Advanced Academics students who have not mastered the material

receive extra help from the classroom teacher.

Teachers have had a great deal of professional development with outside trainers to implement this new aspect of the Common Core, and are on a strong learning curve to develop the best lessons. As always, the primary goal of the new Common Core initiative is to provide the best possible education targeted to each student's individual needs.

In brief, this initiative strives for teachers to:

1. *Be clear about what students need to know;*
2. *Determine how to figure out if the students know the material; and*
3. *Know what to do if students know it and what to do if they don't.*

DISTRICT 105 BOARD OF EDUCATION

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