



THE DISTRICT IN REVIEW

A Newsletter for the Northbrook School District 27 Community

FALL 2019

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



The 2019-20 school year is off to a great start. We've already seen much growth in the students in these first few months, thanks to their hard work, our valued partnership with families, the dedication of our talented staff and District 27's strong curricular and extracurricular offerings.

I am always proud of the way our schools prepare students for the global opportunities that will surely be available to them in the future. But I'm especially thrilled this year, as we have opened the doors of the new STEAM/Applied Technology Lab at Wood Oaks (see photo below). A great deal of planning went into the creation of this hub for science, technology, engineering, art and math. All Wood Oaks students will have the opportunity to work in the lab each year and develop skills to meet the incredible changes that are occurring in our world.

I'm also pleased to report some significant achievements this fall. First, we were once again proud to learn that two of our schools were ranked in Chicago Magazine's list of Best Public Schools – Shabonee placed third, and Wood Oaks placed third among middle schools and seventh overall (see story, P. 2). Second, our students continue to be among the highest performers in the State of Illinois, scoring in the top 1-2 percent on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (see story, P. 4). This state assessment is one of multiple data sources we use to monitor students' progress and help them learn in conjunction with their potential and abilities so they go on to have incredibly successful school and work experiences.

While we continue to enjoy wonderful success, we recognize the need to improve and change to meet the new demands of our world. We develop new learning initiatives through our Research, Design and Improvement Model (RDIM), which helps us identify emerging areas that are important for student learning and growth. In addition, as part of our Strategic Planning Action Plans, we survey our stakeholders biennially to better understand satisfaction and clarify areas in need of improvement. Our next survey will go out to parents, staff and students in January.

So much has changed in District 27's 186 years. One thing, however, is constant, and that is our community's commitment to high-quality education and support for the development and growth of our programs and services. You provide the foundation for the excellent work achieved in District 27. On behalf of the Board of Education, the administration and the staff, we THANK YOU!

We have created a global-oriented learning culture in District 27 that prepares students with the skills to create, innovate and problem solve in a fluid environment in our changing world. This District in Review newsletter highlights some of the ways we're doing this every day. I hope you enjoy reading it!

Respectfully,

David J. Kroeze, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

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Superintendent

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and Student Services*

Dr. Katharine Olson
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HIGH-TECH STEAM LAB OPEN FOR BUSINESS AT WOOD OAKS JUNIOR HIGH

Wood Oaks Junior High rung in the new school year with the opening of its long-planned STEAM/Applied Technology Lab. Work on the state-of-the-art learning space was completed over the summer. Wood Oaks principal Rob McElligott says the lab is a smart and forward-thinking investment that will be used by every student for the required Applied Technology class. In addition, many will use it for taking STEAM electives. He says students will benefit from the added learning space and storage, improved lighting, flexible seating, wireless projection systems, expanded counters for 3-D printers and interactive robotics tables. The lab also includes a studio that Broadcast Club is using to produce its weekly newscasts. Pictured here: Teacher Amy Varner (left) helps eighth graders Nora and Irene test a robot they created for their robotics class. (Photo by Julie Weinberg.)

FINANCIAL UPDATE

DISTRICT RECOGNIZED FOR FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY FOR 10TH STRAIGHT YEAR

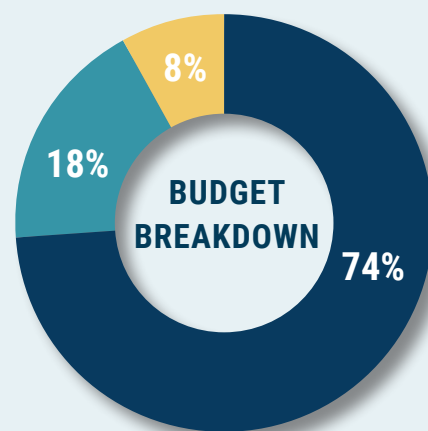
For the 10th consecutive year, District 27 has received the Certificate of Excellence Awards in Financial Reporting from both the Government Finance Officers Association and the Association of School Business Officials International. The Board of Education recently recognized Dr. Kimberly Arakelian, assistant superintendent for finance and operations, for these significant, long-running honors.

Both awards recognize districts that have met each of the organization's high standards for financial reporting and accountability. The District has earned the awards for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the fiscal years ending 2009 through 2018. The CAFR informs parents and other stakeholders about the financial and economic state of the District, making it an important communications tool for building trust and engaging with the school community. By participating in these programs, school districts demonstrate their commitment to financial transparency and high-quality financial reporting.

DISTRICT ON SOLID FINANCIAL FOOTING, WITH BALANCED BUDGET AND ANTICIPATED SURPLUS

District 27 continues to be in a stable financial position, with the Board of Education approving a balanced \$28.5 million budget at its meeting on Sept. 19. The District has contingencies of \$500,000. If the contingencies are not spent and all other budget projections are realized, the District should anticipate to end the fiscal year with a surplus, according to Dr. Kimberly Arakelian, assistant superintendent for finance and operations.

The District ended the 2018-19 school year with a 74 percent cumulative fund balance reserve. A percentage of the reserves will be dedicated to capital improvements, including a multi-year roof and HVAC replacement project. This work began during the summer of 2019.



■ Salaries ■ Supplies, Purchased Services and Capital Outlay ■ Insurance, Technology, Transportation and IMRF



SHABONEE AND WOOD OAKS MAKE CHICAGO MAGAZINE'S PRESTIGIOUS LIST OF BEST SCHOOLS

Shabonee School and Wood Oaks Junior High are once again highly ranked in Chicago Magazine's annual list of the Best Public Schools. Among suburban Cook County elementary and middle schools, Shabonee is third and Wood Oaks is third among middle schools and seventh overall (out of 20). As an early childhood school, Hickory Point does not qualify for the ranking. Glenbrook North places second on the list of best high schools.

The annual rankings identify the most innovative and academically rigorous schools in the city and suburbs. Rankings are determined using measures such as spending per pupil, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding state standards on assessments, results of the 5Essentials teacher and student survey, and attendance.

"We are proud to be cited among the best schools in the Chicago area," says David Kroeze, Ph.D., superintendent of schools. "We attribute this success to our staff, parents and students for their focus on the importance of education and a clear dedication to achieve at high levels."

COMMUNITY GATHERS FOR FUN, FITNESS AND A GREAT CAUSE AT PTA RACE

Nearly 400 District 27 students, families, staff and community members came out for the PTA's annual 5K, 1-Mile Run and Kids' Dash on Sept. 21 at Wood Oaks Park. They walked and ran and had a great time coming together to support the Rohrabough Scholarship Fund, which awards scholarships to Glenbrook North seniors who are outstanding graduates of Wood Oaks. (Photo by Gail Kahover.)

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

DISTRICT 27 A LEADER IN PROVIDING INNOVATIVE STEAM LEARNING FOR STUDENTS OF ALL AGES

STEAM education promotes problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and other 21st Century skills that young people will need to succeed in the future. The opening of the new STEAM/Applied Technology Lab at Wood Oaks this school year is a central piece of the District's effort to bring these skills and high-tech learning opportunities to students of all ages. But it's not the only important piece. All three District 27 schools are making sure their students can explore science, technology, engineering, art and math through a variety of innovative clubs and classes. Here are a few examples:

HICKORY POINT SCHOOL

LITTLE STEAMERS CLUB OFFERS EARLY EXPOSURE TO HIGH-TECH SKILLS

Hickory Point has launched the Little STEAMers Club to help the District's youngest learners start to become familiar with STEAM and get excited about the many applications of basic coding. The club, which is for first and second graders, meets before school for five weeks. Sessions run through the end of the year, so that all students who are interested can have the chance to participate. Club members use tools like Scratch Junior and Osmo to create fun projects, such as designing characters that compete in races.

Principal Maureen Deely says the Little STEAMers Club resulted from Hickory Point's Summer Library Program. Students who visited the school library this summer were given the opportunity to explore STEAM activities in addition to selecting books. "Students were really drawn to the interactive STEAM offerings, so we decided to expand that by creating a club during the school year," says Deely, adding that Little STEAMers has been well received, with 180 students signed up to participate this year. (Photo by Cindy Beranek.)



SHABONEE SCHOOL

CODING PLAYGROUND GIVES STUDENTS THE FREEDOM TO EXPLORE AND CREATE

Shabonee also has a new STEAM Club underway, called Coding Playground. Third graders meet weekly before school, and fourth and fifth graders meet weekly after school. There will be several sessions of the five-week club so that many students can participate throughout the year; 200 are currently signed up. The club takes Hickory Point's introductory coding activities a step further, and the coding programs allow plenty of flexibility for students to explore and create.

Meggan Buchanan, assistant principal of Hickory Point and Shabonee, says Coding Playground is a logical step in District 27's progression of technology education. Students can now start to learn about STEAM in first and second grade and refine their interests and enhance their knowledge while at Shabonee. Then when they get to junior high, they're ready to take advantage of the many in-depth opportunities in the Wood Oaks STEAM Lab. (Photo by Adam Werth.)

WOOD OAKS JUNIOR HIGH

YOUNG ENGINEERS TAKE ON THE CHALLENGE OF IMPROVING LUNCH

Students in the Creative Designs class at Wood Oaks are learning what it means to work as an engineer. They have examined a big-picture challenge – creating a better lunch storage product – and conducted extensive research. They are now going through the design process and building prototypes, preparing to make design boards and interactive presentations showcasing their final products at the end of the semester.

The first phase began in October when students traveled to Hickory Point to conduct field research in the lunchroom (see photo below). They studied lunch containers that are popular and talked to students, and later a parent panel, about improvements they'd like to see. The young engineers are working in teams, each coming up with its own unique way to improve the lunch experience by applying tools that architects use to create prototypes that articulate their vision.

Amy Varner, mathematics and STEAM teacher, says the new STEAM Lab has been an asset to the Creative Designs class and other electives. "The thoughtful design of the space includes opportunities for students to showcase their work and creatively communicate their thinking," she says. "The writeable whiteboard walls and flexible seating foster collaboration among the kids. The lab allows not only for small teams to work together but for large group discussions and activities to flourish. It is an inspiring space to learn in." (Photo by Julie Weinberg.)



1250 Sanders Road
 Northbrook, IL 60062

Jenny Kustra-Quinn, Editor

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OUR SCHOOLS

HICKORY POINT

Grades K-2

Mrs. Maureen Deely, *Principal*

Mrs. Meggan Buchanan, *Asst. Principal*

HickoryPoint.nb27.org

SHABONEE

Grades 3-5

Mr. John Panozzo, *Principal*

Mrs. Meggan Buchanan, *Asst. Principal*

Shabonee.nb27.org

WOOD OAKS JR. HIGH

Grades 6-8

Mr. Rob McElligott, *Principal*

Mrs. Cari Beake, *Asst. Principal*

WoodOaks.nb27.org

DISTRICT 27 STUDENTS AMONG THE HIGHEST PERFORMERS ON ANNUAL IAR TESTS

District 27 students once again performed well on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) last spring, significantly outperforming most schools in the state in English language arts and mathematics. Results for the standardized tests were released in October. Individualized score reports have been sent to District 27 families.

Katharine Olson, assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction and assessment, says the District is proud to have consistently strong scores on the state tests year after year. "These tests are considered highly rigorous, and our students' solid performance reflects their strong knowledge and skills in the subject matter."

The IAR, which measures knowledge and skills in alignment with the Illinois Learning Standards for English language arts and mathematics, is given annually to third through eighth graders. Illinois uses the performance data to determine the overall status of student achievement across the state. Olson says District 27 combines IAR data with other assessment information to thoroughly understand student growth and achievement and ensure individual needs are being met.

The State Report Card, which contains detailed district and state IAR performance data, is posted at www.nb27.org. Copies also can be requested by contacting Pat Flynn, administrative assistant to the superintendent, at flynn.p@nb27.org.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

MATHEMATICS

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS MEETING OR EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

