



# LAKE ZURICH COMMUNITY UNIT School District 95

*Empower every learner to achieve personal excellence.*

ANNUAL  
UPDATE |  
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2021



## From Superintendent Kelley Galt,

Greetings! Like many of you, I am happy to be welcoming 2021 with great hope for a healthy and happy new year. We could not have imagined how different the landscape of the world, and in particular education,

would be since last year's annual community newsletter. The COVID-19 pandemic changed so much about how we educated our students in 2020 and challenged us to rapidly find new, creative, and safe solutions to meet the learning needs of our students. For some this meant remote learning, for others this meant hybrid learning (in person at times, with new safety protocols in place). We have learned a great deal about new modes of learning, technology, the needs of families and students, and about ourselves as an organization and as individuals. For more about this past year, be sure to read the article on pages 6-7, Pandemic Silver Linings.

Remaining unchanged is our steadfast commitment to our strategic plan, Forward95, developed by a wide range of stakeholders including parents, students, staff, and community members, and supported by our

community through the passing of a referendum in Spring 2018. I remain committed and excited to continue the leadership necessary to achieve this plan, which provides goals, strategies, and action plans to fulfill our district's mission and vision.

Action Plans within Forward95 include supporting students through the development of Social Emotional Learning strategies and by providing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, developing customized learning pathways for students and committing to the responsible allocation of resources. Some of the work is highlighted within this newsletter, along with where to find more information about our other goal areas on our website.

I am excited to start this new year with HOPE as my beacon and silver linings from challenging times in my heart. I am honored to have the privilege to serve Lake Zurich Community Unit School District 95 and our community! If you ever have questions, please feel free to email me at [Kelley.Galt@lz95.org](mailto:Kelley.Galt@lz95.org) and follow me on Twitter at @GaltKelley.



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## FORWARD 95 OVERVIEW

In 2016, the District underwent an important community engagement and strategic planning process that we called "Forward95". The Forward95 Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board of Education in Spring 2017. It identified our Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, and Strategies. Included within the Goals and Strategies, our administrative team identified Actions Plans that guide our work through 2022.

This newsletter includes highlights of some of our action plans. In addition, we continually add new information to our website at [www.lz95.org](http://www.lz95.org). Under District, select "Strategic Plan - Forward95" to learn more about strategic plan and referendum updates including time lapse and drone footage of the new May Whitney construction and a strategic plan dashboard.



**GOAL 1** Maximize every student's growth and achievement of personal excellence.



**GOAL 2** Recruit, develop, and retain innovative staff who embrace collaboration and continuous improvement.



**GOAL 3** Engage families and community partnerships to ensure student success.



**GOAL 4** Prioritize resources to achieve the district's mission, vision, and goals.

### CUSTOMIZED LEARNING PATHWAYS



**ACTION PLAN 1D24** *Create and implement a plan that aligns and customizes learning pathways for learners, including learner agency, while providing greater access to Nationally recognized programs and connections to universities.*



The Department of Curriculum & Instruction has added an additional strategic Action Plan to specifically address *customized learning pathways* for students. Providing students with greater "voice and choice" in their learning, along with offering access to nationally recognized programming and connections to universities

helps us to achieve our mission of "empowering every learner to achieve personal excellence". The Curriculum & Instruction and Student Services Departments will lead this work in partnership with student, community, and staff stakeholders. Current plans include:

- Implementing four new dual credit courses at the HS level

- Offering **INCubator**edu at the high school as a full year course offering an authentic entrepreneurship experience as students build a business. In addition, the **ACCE**Leratoredu course will be offered enabling students to take a business from startup to launch, including a "pitch" for funding.
- Expanding entrepreneurial courses to elementary and middle schools by offering **freshINC**edu at grades 4 and 5, where teams collaborate to develop a product, pitch their idea, and launch their business. Additionally, we will be expanding the **mxINC**edu course to both middle schools, where student teams identify a problem to solve, create a product concept, pitch an idea, and participate in an e-commerce selling experience.
- Developing and collecting critical stakeholder input via a survey to guide the Learner Pathway work. Over time, additional pathways will be designed and implemented which support students in achieving post-secondary success.





## REFERENDUM, CONSTRUCTION & FINANCING UPDATES



**ACTION PLAN 4B22 To develop and implement facility designs that support the teaching and learning of 21st century skills.**

As part of the Forward95 strategic plan, all of our schools have received planned improvements, which were defined and shared publicly, prior to the passage of the financing referendum. Shown here are just some of this year's construction highlights. **More information is available on our website at [www.lz95.org](http://www.lz95.org), click on District -> Referendum Updates.**

### SETH PAINE ELEMENTARY, RENOVATION AND ADDITION

The Seth Paine renovation and addition project began in December 2019 and was completed in August 2020.

The project included a 13,000 square foot addition featuring a library, cafeteria, band room, and administration offices. This addition was significant as it moved the cafeteria and band room from the basement to the main floor where it is accessible for all students and increased the overall student capacity of the building.

Along with the new school office area, the main entrance was moved to the side of the building in order to create a safer location for student pick-up and drop-off as well as additional parking. Some of the highlights of the main office addition include a more secure entrance design, an accessible nurse's office (including full handicap access), and the addition of the assistant principal office.

### NEW MAY WHITNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The construction phase of the new May Whitney Elementary School is nearing completion. At the end of the current school year, staff will be moving from the current school to the new building. With great excitement, the district will welcome students to the new May Whitney Elementary School at the start of the 2021-22 school year.

The new May Whitney school features six classroom wings which are able to house five separate sections (classrooms) for each grade level, Kindergarten through fifth grade. There are additional classrooms for specialized programming for special education and bilingual classes. The building also features a separate Early Childhood wing with a motor hub and a separate, age appropriate, playground.

The school is a state of the art, geothermally heated and cooled, energy efficient building. The building design includes many student collaboration spaces, including Learning Hubs where students will learn, create, and collaborate. It features a large shelter area for emergencies, and an artificial turf field that can also be used by the high school.



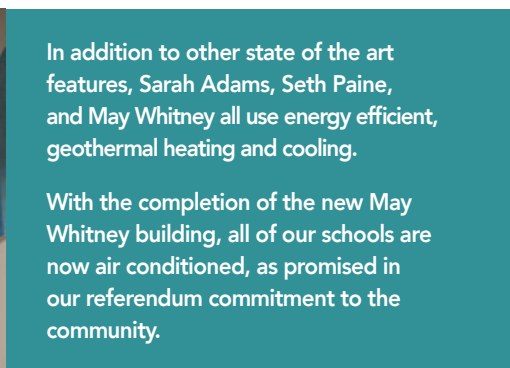
New May Whitney library



New Seth Paine library



New May Whitney hallway



New May Whitney gym

In addition to other state of the art features, Sarah Adams, Seth Paine, and May Whitney all use energy efficient, geothermal heating and cooling.

With the completion of the new May Whitney building, all of our schools are now air conditioned, as promised in our referendum commitment to the community.



## REDISTRICTING SCHOOL BOUNDARIES



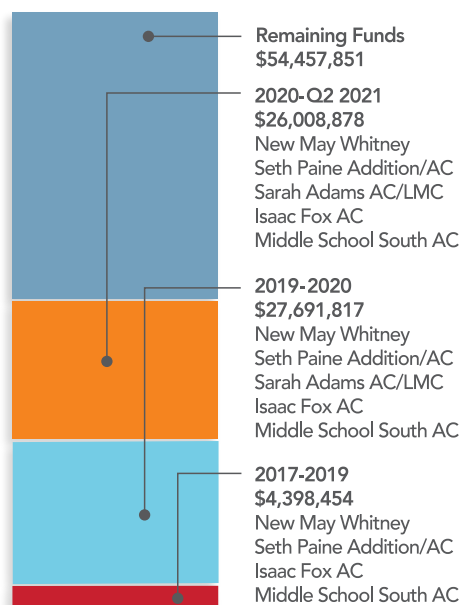
Forward95's School Boundary Action Plan aims to balance enrollment capacity while ensuring equitable learning outcomes, long term sustainability of physical resources, and greater fiscal responsibility. RSP and Associates (national specialists in boundary analysis), worked together with the Board of Education and a Boundary Advisory Committee to facilitate this work through a public process. Despite COVID-19, opportunities were provided for collaboration and feedback from the community as part of the overall open, transparent process. The timing of this redistricting coincides with the opening of the new May Whitney Elementary School, the completion of air conditioning at all schools, and the removal of mobile classrooms at Spencer Loomis.

**The process included the following steps:**

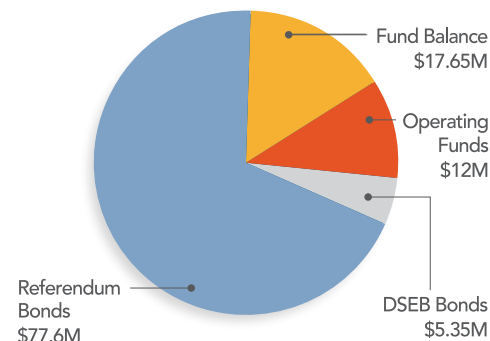
- **Enrollment Analysis and Demographic Study presented to the Board of Education**

## Referendum Project Spending to Date:

### REFERENDUM PROJECT SPENDING TO DATE



### TOTAL FUNDING FOR REFERENDUM PROJECTS \$112,557,000



*The district is on track to complete all referendum projects within original referendum budget.*

**ACTION PLAN 4C19B Develop and implement a district enrollment map that enrolls students in schools according to criteria maximizing student and family engagement, student learning, and fiscal responsibility.**

- **Board of Education established guiding principles and priorities for redistricting**
- **Advisory Boundary Committee formed, consisting of community members and school administrators**
- **Boundary Committee meetings, moderated by RSP, held in September, October, November, and December to review proposed enrollment maps, community feedback, ask questions, and discuss options**
- **Feedback sessions in October allowed for community input through the ThoughtExchange platform**
- **Feedback from all avenues shared with the Boundary Committee**

In early January, RSP & Associates presented the proposed enrollment maps to the Board of Education for review. The Board is expected to vote on a final school boundary map at the end of January, effective next school year.

## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)



**ACTION PLAN 1A22 Integrate Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programming with other existing initiatives, including academic improvement, at the school and district levels.**

We know that learners who have self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills have improved academic success. In addition, these Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills foster sought-after workplace competencies such as effective communication and collaboration. This year with changes in learning environment due to the pandemic and fewer opportunities for typical peer interaction, social emotional needs have been even greater.

The District SEL team launched a series of resilience lessons to start this school year across all levels. During these lessons, students learned key skills for building resilience such as staying connected with others, taking time to “re-charge”, and goal setting. Schools also incorporated weekly practice opportunities

for self-regulation during the school day such as practicing mindfulness or deep breathing.

Based on feedback from student needs assessments, more social emotional supports were developed throughout the year at all grade levels. This included more in-person counseling opportunities, elementary “lunch bunch” where students are able to eat and connect with peers virtually, and virtual self-calming rooms – think petcams, peaceful music, art, journaling, yoga and meditation, puzzles and games, and more.

A next step for the District SEL team in partnership with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction will be to integrate SEL skills across all core content areas through the adoption of identified curricular resources beginning this Spring.

## MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT (MTSS)



**ACTION PLAN 1C22 Review and enhance a tiered system of support that meets the differentiated learning needs of all students.**

In order to meet student needs, the district must deliver quality core instruction, provide additional support to striving students, and provide **differentiated instruction** for both striving students and those exceeding expectations. This approach allows schools to respond to the varied learning needs of all students.

A Multi-Tiered System of Support provides district wide academic and social emotional supports to ensure success for all students.

Examples of in-class interventions might be establishing different levels of reading groups to meet varied student needs, a reading specialist joining the classroom to assist students, or setting up a “calm area” where students can go if they are having trouble focusing in class. Examples of out-of-class interventions might include joining a group with a

reading specialist outside of core literacy instruction, or joining a group with a counselor or social worker to get additional practice interacting with peers. New supports developed this year in response to the pandemic include setting up a tutoring system across all levels for students in need of additional academic support and providing additional social emotional resources to students and families at all levels.

The Department of Student Services continues this work of establishing and implementing consistent, district-wide protocols and practices to ensure positive student outcomes. The department is also ensuring that teachers are equipped with tools and training to support students with different learning needs within their core classes (literacy, math, science, social studies).



## PANDEMIC SILVER LININGS

## A DIFFERENT LOOK TO SCHOOL



*Since March 2020, school has looked different* than ever before thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to maintain health protocols in accordance with the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the Lake County Health Department, these are just a few of the measures taken by District 95 to ensure safe learning environments for our students:

- **Remote Learning (all grade levels) for part or all of the day as determined by grade level/program, for those periods when schools are closed, and for families that choose remote learning**

- **In-Person Hybrid Learning with students attending in-person for part of the day as the district's capacity allows for it**
- **Masks required for all students and staff**
- **Reconfigured classrooms in all schools with desks six feet apart (bus seating also reconfigured)**
- **Reminders in all buildings for maintaining six feet of social distancing, regular handwashing, and wearing masks**
- **Additional disinfecting and cleaning measures**
- **Protocols for moving classrooms any time a student or staff member displayed one or more symptoms of COVID-19**
- **Contact tracing in conjunction with the Lake County Health Department**

We are pleased to report that as a result of these stringent measures, to date there have been no reported outbreaks occurring as a result of students attending District 95 schools. Although these measures limit our capacity and add a great deal of extra work and cost to our operations, we are pleased to be able to provide a safer learning environment for our students and staff.

## TECHNOLOGY WINS

### New Devices and Tools for Learning

*At the time the pandemic hit*, District 95 had just completed an evaluation of extending our "one-to-one" (1:1) technology initiative at the elementary level. District 95 students in grades 6-12 have been successful for several years with the 1:1 iPad initiative and the evaluation for elementary concluded that similar benefits were likely for younger students. Staff and students at all levels have mastered new skills from the rapid deployment of approximately 2500 elementary student iPads, to utilizing video-conferencing tools like Zoom, expanding use of tools such as Canvas (a Learning Management

System) and Seesaw (a communication and student engagement app), and more. Due to the pandemic, students and staff were immediately immersed in different learning environments with new tools and limited time to plan. Yet they rose to the challenge, making the best of a difficult situation, and thereby *have accelerated the integration of technology in our Curriculum & Instructional practices*. In addition, equitable access was ensured by providing 'hotspots' for those families without internet access who qualify for our fee waiver program.



## Parent Teacher Conferences

*In a typical year*, parents who wish to attend Parent-Teacher Conferences sign up in advance and then come to the school for face-to-face meetings with each teacher. For middle and high school parents this meant moving from classroom to classroom to meet with multiple teachers in a short amount of time, requiring time between each to move within the school. This year, with no ability to have such large group gatherings, District 95 utilized a parent/teacher conference scheduling system called 'Meet the Teacher,' which enabled parents to sign-up for conferences online and then attend those conferences remotely. Meetings started and stopped at their scheduled times with no gaps needed between conferences and eliminated waiting times if a prior conference ran long. The system supports cell phones, tablets, or any compatible web-browser. We heard from many parents that this was a game changer and *provided a much easier means of conferencing with multiple teachers in a short period of time.*

## CONNECTING & SUPPORTING

*The District 95 learning community* is filled with families who demonstrate caring and kindness on a daily basis. If the pandemic taught us one thing, it is that we have a resilient community that will band together for the greater good. We could not be more proud of our students, families, staff, and the greater community for weathering the storm of this pandemic while showing great compassion and care.

Despite the distancing required to keep everyone safe during the pandemic, our District 95 families, staff, and community found ways to connect. Staff and students alike improvised as they connected and sent messages of support. Here are just a few images from the Spring when students were eLearning from home as a result of governor's Stay-at-Home order.

Our school community and the larger community also helped us create connections and celebrations as we held a motor parade through the community, celebrating our 2020 high school graduates.

The District 95 Educational Foundation kept students engaged with a Diversity Coloring Contest, and kept staff feeling valued with weekly "Thanks a Latte" raffles. In addition, Joanie's Closet, a subcommittee of the Educational Foundation serving under-resourced District 95 families, was able to distribute restaurant gift cards to those in need prior to Thanksgiving and Winter Break. The community generously donated to this cause, which helped both families in need and local restaurants.



## OUR MISSION WHY WE EXIST

Empower every learner to achieve **personal excellence**.

## OUR VISION WHERE WE ARE HEADED

Learners achieve **personal excellence** when they:

- aspire to make a positive impact on the world.
- contribute to a collaborative and diverse learning community.
- develop habits to promote self-direction and growth.
- are prepared for college, career, and/or personal aspirations.
- are continuous learners who make and fulfill life goals.

## OUR VALUES WHAT WE STAND FOR

- Collaboration
- Continuous Improvement
- Equity
- High Expectations
- Integrity
- Perseverance
- Respect

# LAKE ZURICH COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT 95



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Visit our website at: [www.lz95.org](http://www.lz95.org)

f Follow us on Facebook at: Lake Zurich Community Unit School District 95

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## BOARD OF EDUCATION

Contact the District 95

Board of Education at:

BoardMembers@lz95.org



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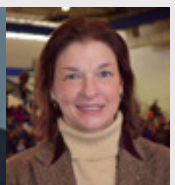
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