



# Baby Steps to Success

District 69 is engaged in a unique collaboration to better prepare children for school before they ever enroll.

Through grant funds provided by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Ready for Success Network (RSN) has paired District 69 with the Infant Welfare Society of Evanston (IWSE) to establish coordinated programming for children from birth to age five.



*Families participate in a Baby Talk playgroup.*

For children and infants under the age of three, IWSE trains Family Support Specialists (FSS) to conduct weekly, hour-long home visits. Utilizing the research-based Baby Talk program, activities are designed to engage the parent and child in an age specific developmental area. The Baby Talk program is designed to build strong relationships with families utilizing an approach titled "walking alongside" where the parent and child are assisted by an FSS.

While the program just began, District 69 administrators are pleased with the high rate of family interest and participation. "Home visits allow families the opportunity to work with a trained professional in the comfort of their own home," says Assistant Superintendent Dr. Megan Aseltine. "Parents are their child's most important teacher. Through home visits, the FSS promotes positive parent-child interactions, and teaches families about the different stages of child development. The FSS also helps connect families to other community-based services that support the early parenting years."

Studies have demonstrated positive educational benefits of home visits, including that children whose parents are involved with a home visit program demonstrate greater readiness for kindergarten.

"In addition to the weekly home visits, there are bimonthly opportunities to join other families for educational workshops and playgroups," says Superintendent Dr. Margaret Clauson. "Children and families in the RSN can access wraparound supports that include dental, medical, mental health and social services as well as access to family events and a lending library. The RSN allows the district to establish an important connection with our families long before children enter the school system."



*A mother and daughter participate in an activity during a home visit.*

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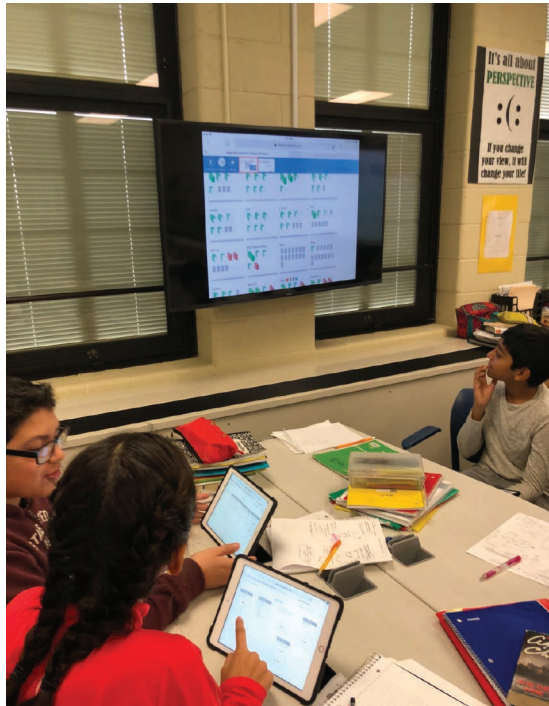
# Classrooms First Collaborative: A Partnership for Student Success

Since the 2014-15 school year, Niles Township High School District 219 and District 69 have been engaged in a joint initiative called the Classrooms First Collaboration (CFC). The purpose of CFC is to ensure that all students from kindergarten through 12th grade benefit from a guaranteed and viable common curriculum and assessment program that properly prepares them for high school and beyond. The program has shown dramatic gains for students.

Through the CFC partnership, targeted professional development for teachers supported by District 219 curriculum experts has been provided. New instructional materials aligned to college and career readiness standards also have been implemented. Additionally, after school clubs, intervention supports and summer programming have been collaboratively developed and implemented to support students.

“The initial focus of CFC was developing and strengthening the mathematics curriculum, resulting in the implementation of a new math program in 2015-16,” says Superintendent Dr Margaret Clauson. “Through the partnership, the district is analyzing student performance during their high school years as an indicator of success. By all measures, the changes in mathematics instruction have resulted in significant gains in student achievement.”

One such indicator of college and career readiness is the percentage of students who earn a “C” or better in their freshman year math course. In just three years, the percentage of Lincoln students who earn a “C” or better in their freshman year, first semester math course has risen dramatically from 67% to 85%. That percentage surpasses the overall percentage for ALL freshman at Niles West.



*Students work collaboratively during math class at Lincoln School.*

District 69 also has dramatically increased the number of 8th grade students who are enrolled in a high school level geometry class, typically considered a sophomore level class. During the 2018-19 school year, the Lincoln enrollment tripled, resulting in the district offering a satellite class at Lincoln and incorporating the course into the regular school day.

Finally, one of the CFC goals was to reduce the number of students who require remedial summer classes between their 8th grade and freshman year. During the past three years, the number of District 69 students who were required to enroll in a remedial mathematics class decreased nearly 43%.

# Impacting Learning through Healthy Food Options

The Centers for Disease Control reports that skipping breakfast is associated with decreased cognitive performance and that deficits of specific nutrients is associated with lower academic grades. Through a variety of programs, District 69 ensures students are provided healthy foods at breakfast and lunch, as well as healthy snacks throughout the day and after school.



*Students now have much more healthy food options during lunch after the district partnered with a new vendor.*

The District recently contracted with a new food service provider, OrganicLife, because the organization emphasizes fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the meals provided to students. OrganicLife prides itself on working “collaboratively with all of their partner districts to implement green solutions and operate a program that reflects the whole health mindset of each respective school community.”

Edison Principal Andy Carpenter reports that “the quality of the food has dramatically improved and therefore students are trying new foods and eating healthy.”

In addition to serving healthy lunches for students, District 69 implemented “Breakfast After the Bell” (BATB) this year. “Many students arrive at school without having had a healthy breakfast and rely upon our hot breakfast served before the day starts,” Superintendent Dr. Margaret Clauson says. “However, we also know that we have students who do not arrive early enough to school to take advantage of the traditional breakfast. We also have students who are not ready to eat that early, but get hungry long before lunch. BATB provides an option for those students.”

The BATB program supplements the before-school, cafeteria-style breakfast by providing a “grab and go” breakfast. Students stop by a food cart and take their breakfast with them to eat during the first few minutes of class or later in the morning. A start-up grant from Kellogg’s allowed the district to implement the program this school year.

In a further expansion of its efforts to provide healthy foods for students, District 69 has implemented an after school snack program for students participating in programs at Lincoln and Edison. The Greater Chicago Food Depository provides healthy snacks daily that are distributed through the Youth & Opportunity United, Inc (Y.O.U.) after school program. There is no cost for the nutritional snacks to the more than 200 students involved in afterschool programs that range from athletics to clubs to park district programs.

Finally, the Education Foundation (formerly the District 219 Foundation) has been generously providing approximately 2,000 nutrition bars annually to District 69 schools. School nurses at each school are provided with the donated food and utilize them to feed students who find themselves hungry during the day.





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## School Upgrades Continue Under Master Facility Plan

One of the goals in the current District 69 strategic plan was to develop a long-range facility plan to support the educational programming and address facility needs that were raised by stakeholders during the 2014-15 school year. Following an extensive process that included input from staff, parents, students and community members, the Board of Education approved a Master Facility Plan in May 2016. That plan included a six-phase, multi-year plan to expand instructional space and modernize all classrooms.

The multi-year plan is expected to take more than 10 years to complete. The district recently completed Phases 1 and 2, which included the addition of five classrooms, a playground, a driveway extension, district professional development space and community schools space at Madison School; two additional classrooms, a new front entrance, a gym, a cafeteria addition, renovation of existing interior spaces, renovation of the learning commons (the former library) and a new playground at Edison; and new lockers and new hallway flooring at Lincoln.

The Board recently sought input from staff, parents and community members to assist in evaluating the prioritization of the original plan and determine the next phase. The process resulted in the Board determining that the facility needs at Lincoln are a higher priority and should be addressed during next phase.

"The plan was always intended to be reviewed and revised to reflect the changing needs of the district," Business Manager Justin Attaway says. "The Lincoln facility issues are limiting the educational programming for our students. Additionally, the aging building has some major structural issues that need to be addressed sooner rather than later."



The new library at Edison School.



### MISSION STATEMENT

Engage each child's passions to achieve educational excellence and foster positive character development.  
Excellence, Passion, Character

### VISION STATEMENT

Engaging students to be successful lifelong learners within a vibrant and thriving community.

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