



Board Briefs

Mission: To ensure that District 70 students experience learning that prepares them to live and work in the 21st Century.

Board Briefs from School Board Meeting Jan. 25, 2021

Board Briefs are a communication tool designed to highlight important conversations and decisions made on behalf of students, families, staff, and the larger community by the District 70 School Board at each monthly School Board meeting.

Summer School

This year District 70 is taking a more robust focus on academics to address learning loss experienced by the pandemic. Summer school will be in-person and will have a different look and feel. Please consider reviewing the presentation for more information.

Summer School 20-21 basics include:

- In-person classes will run for five weeks, Monday through Thursday, beginning on June 14 through July 15, with classes offered from 8:30 to 11:45 a.m. at Rockland and Highland Middle schools;
- Registration will open on April 1 and close on May 15.
- Open to all district residents with priority given to District 70 students.

[Here is a link to the School Board presentation](#)

2021-22 School Calendar

The 2021-22 school year calendar was unanimously approved by the school board Monday

night. Key aspects of the calendar include:

- 176 actual student attendance days according to state law;
- The first day of student attendance will be on August 19, 2021;
- Alignment of both winter break (December 23, 2021 - January 7, 2022) and spring break (March 28, 2022 - April 1, 2022) with D128;
- The last day of student attendance (if no emergency days are used) will be on June 6, 2022.
- The last day of student attendance, if all five emergency days are used, will be on June 13, 2022.

[Here is a link to the 2021-22 School Calendar](#)

Life Safety Update

Mr. John Herrin and District 70 architect Mr. Peter Graves provided the Board of Education with an update on the status of Life Safety work that was approved by the school board as a part of the more recent tenure Life Safety plan.

[Here is a link to the School Board presentation](#)

Personnel Update

The Board approved the following personnel recommendations on Monday night:

RESIGNATION

- **Dennis Busic**, Paraeducator at Highland, effective date TBD;
- **Crystal Hernandez**, Paraeducator at Butterfield, effective January 22, 2021;

NEW EMPLOYMENT

Mike Sansonetti, eSchool Center Supervisor at Rockland, effective January 5, 2021;

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FMLA

Rita Byrne, School Psychologist at Butterfield, affirming request received January 19, 2021, effective on or about April 5, 2021, through the end of the school year, with additional weeks during the 2021-2022 school year;

RETURNING FROM LEAVE

Abby Vaughan, Social Worker at Butterfield, effective 2021-2022 school year.

Policy

The administration and school board use a policy subscription service provided by the Illinois Association of School Boards as the basis for developing, reviewing, recommending, and approving policy language. This service is used by the majority of school districts in Illinois and is known as the Policy Reference Education Subscription Service (PRESS).

Policy Approvals

Following the required second reading of recommended policy language, the school board approved changes to the following policies:

- 7:40 **STUDENTS**: Nonpublic School Students, Including Parochial and Home-Schooled Students
- 7:70 **STUDENTS**: Attendance and Truancy
- 6:110 **INSTRUCTION**: Programs for Students At Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School
- 8.30 **COMMUNITY RELATIONS**: Visitors to and Conduct on School Property

[Link to Policies Approved January 25, 2021.](#)

First Reading

Revisions to the following policies were presented for a first reading and consideration:

- 4:80 **OPERATIONAL SERVICES**: Accounting and Audits

4:90 **OPERATIONAL SERVICES**: Activity Funds

6:340 **INSTRUCTION**: Student Testing and Assessment Program

7:325 **STUDENTS**: Student Fund-Raising Activities

A link to the policies that were presented for the first reading is located [here](#).

Watch the recorded Jan. 25th School Board Meeting

A recording of the Jan. 25, 2021, school board meeting can be found [here](#).

Superintendent's Report

This and Next School Year

The school board and I have received feedback from the parent community about my communication last Thursday on the likelihood that we will be completing the rest of the school year in hybrid.

I was asked this question directly at a recent FAD 70 meeting and, in the spirit of transparency, determined that I would inform our entire staff and parent community.

Our hybrid model is driven by two factors: social distancing and the number of families who have requested in-person instruction. There also are staffing considerations.

Planning for the remainder of this year and next year will require creativity and flexibility unlike any other time in our district's history. As far as next year is concerned, under the expectations that we will be required to continue to adhere to social distancing guidelines, we will likely have to use spaces for academic instruction that have not been used before - gyms, art and music rooms, multipurpose rooms, and even our learning centers (libraries).

The school board provided clear direction to both myself and the administrative team last evening to:

- 1) Increase instructional time for students this year (2020-2021);

2) Reopen all schools in D70 for full in-person instruction next year (2021-2022).

I will be directing the elementary and middle school reopening committees to begin meeting regularly to plan for both of the above scenarios with an expectation that a plan is shared with the board and community at the March 15, 2021, school board meeting.

HMS Update

On January 6, 2021, the Highland Middle School Reopening Subcommittee, which is composed of parents, teachers, both building administrators, and board member Mr. Chris Coughlin, met to discuss opportunities for continuous growth and improvement with the hybrid model. I joined this meeting and will say that it was both well planned and facilitated by Principal Dr. Hallmark. Before going into greater detail about the meeting, it is important to share the following information about HMS as of 1/24/21:

- 19 school days of our hybrid plan have been completed
 - In-person hybrid resumed on 1/21 @ HMS
- 267 Virtual students out of 842 = 32%
- 575 In-Person students out of 842 = 68%
- Requests to change from virtual to in-person or vice versa are fairly even at this point.

The subcommittee reviewed and provided feedback on a draft survey that Dr. Hallmark and I developed. The survey was issued to staff first with the survey window of 1.11.21 to 1.15.21. Parents on the committee believed that parents and students, who returned from winter break back in full remote due to being in our preventive pause, would provide more meaningful feedback if their survey window was later from 1.27.21 to 2.3.21. Both students and parents at HMS should be expecting this survey this week. Please help us by completing this voluntary and anonymous survey.

Our next meeting is scheduled for 2.4.21 to unpack the results of the survey and recommend action steps toward continuously improving the experience for our HMS students. The subject of live-streaming is a potential pathway forward that could increase instructional time for both in-person and fully virtual students that will require careful thought and deliberation.

Discussing Controversial Topics in Classrooms

As demonstrated by recent events, our country is divided in many ways (socially, economically, racially, and politically) which has been further exacerbated by the pandemic. Our students are not immune to what is happening around us and may discuss these matters in class.

Navigating classroom conversations about difficult or controversial topics can be challenging even for the most experienced educator. That is why we have policy 6:80 in place about dealing with controversial issues and we have the expectation that employees do not discuss their own political beliefs with their students.

District 70's teachers are amazing, but they will make mistakes from time to time. We all make mistakes. Along these lines, a family contacted me and a building principal to share that their child was upset from a conversation in their classroom where politics was being discussed and the staff members shared their political beliefs and did not redirect students back to the lesson at hand.

The principal and I worked collaboratively with the family and staff member to resolve this matter, but it is a good reminder for us all.

5Essentials

It is once again time for the 5Essentials survey. The 5Essentials is an online survey designed to seek input from students, parents, and staff to drive continuous improvement in our schools. Each public school district in the state of Illinois is required to participate in the 5Essentials.

The survey window for the 5Essentials **opens on Feb. 3 and closes on April 2, 2021**. It is requested that one adult from each D70 family complete the survey while it is open. *The feedback is very important to D70, so please have your voice heard and complete the survey.* Students in grades 4-8 and staff will be given time to complete the 5Essentials survey while at school. Teachers also will be given time to complete the survey which typically occurs during a staff meeting.

We are awaiting log-in information from the publisher of 5Essentials. Once we have that information, we will launch our communications efforts to our parents and staff community.

Good News In the Schools!

Adler Park School

Adler Park School's Student Council is working with Learning Center Director Ms. Erin Carr to roll out the school's first "One Book One School" initiative. Ms. Carr and Student Council representatives are targeting early February for starting the schoolwide event in partnership with Cook Memorial Public Library to read the book "Skunk and Badger" by Amy Timberlake with illustrations by Jon Klassen. The Gator Community is excited about debuting the program with the hopes of bringing the school community closer together. More information to come in the next few weeks!

Butterfield School

Butterfield's Student Council is holding a donation drive for Lake County PADS, starting on Tuesday, Feb. 16, and running through to Feb. 23rd. During the drive, students will donate food and requested items for an area PADS shelter. The items range from clothing and nonperishable food to cleaning and sanitizing materials. Both in-person and virtual students will be able to donate safely by using bins set up around the school building. Fifth grade teachers and Student Council coaches Ms. Kattlyn Deal and Ms. Melissa Stein will then deliver the items to a safe PADS dropoff in Waukegan.

Copeland Manor School

The Copeland Family Association is creating a new fundraising effort by working collaboratively with members of Copeland's Student Council.

The fundraising event will sell meal preparation kits for crockpots. A local business has created the kits and will also benefit from the fundraiser. Money raised will be split between a not-profit, Lurie's Children's Hospital, and an instructional extra for the students that still is being decided.

FA is working with Copeland's Student Council for a shared fundraising effort. Money raised

will be split between philanthropy (Lurie's Children's Hospital) and something for the students (instructional extras). The fundraising will also benefit a local business selling meal preparation kits for crockpots.

Highland Middle School

On Wednesday night, Jan. 27, Highland Middle School administrators and social workers are presenting a virtual session on "Social Media Awareness, Digital Citizenship, and Cyberbullying: A Virtual Parent and Guardian Training provided by [Safer Schools Together](#)."

The event will run from 7-9 p.m. with a 90-minute Zoom presentation followed by 30 minutes of questions and answers. With parents' permission, children also may listen along.

The session will cover recommendations for monitoring, family rules, parent controls, and developing a family tech plan.

Pre-registration is required, click [HERE](#) to register.

For more information, click [HERE](#)

Rockland School

Rockland students, families, and staff are competing in the first Rockland Sock Olympics. Physical education teacher Mr. Michael Kolar said he borrowed the idea from Butterfield PE teacher Mr. Pat Krech who held a similar event earlier this year. Sock Olympics involves students using two socks wrapped into a ball for a variety of Sock Olympic activities that can be done from the comfort of your own home. Mr. Kolar's spin on the Olympics has students competing against family members and staff, creating a competition to engage the entire school community. The fun part is seeing students encourage their families to participate in the silly events. Mr. Kolar also credits Rockland staff members, Mrs. Stephanie Weatherly and Mrs. Tayler Hamrick, along with Rockland Student Council representatives for creating videos to demonstrate some of the activities on the school website and step in as event judges. Each week, four activities are posted for students, families, and staff to choose from. During week 3 of the five-week competition, students were in the lead. This is week four, so we'll see how it goes.

