



LEARNERS

A Newsletter for the Winnetka Community of Learners

FALL 2020

SPECIAL
EDITION

www.winnetka36.org



THANK YOU, WINNETKA!

As a community, we met a significant milestone by welcoming over 1,500 K-8 students back to campus and 100 students learning remotely on August 27, 2020. Our return to school involved over 4,000 hours of summer work and significant involvement of our entire community. Much has changed in our world, but one thing that has not changed is our steadfast, collective commitment to our schools and students.

Thanks to the Park District and Village leadership for collaborating with us on numerous logistics, our Police and Fire Departments for helping uphold our health and safety, and the Winnetka-Northfield Public Library for helping support our students' access to literature and other learning tools! We appreciate our entire community's efforts to help support our safety and dedication to learning during these unprecedented times.

Visit our website to follow updates on our school year at www.winnetka36.org.

The District and Village of Winnetka partnered on a public service announcement at the start of our 2020-2021 school year. View [here](#).



Top to Bottom:

- A Crow Island third grade student works on a math exercise.
- Third grade students engage in a learning activity at Hubbard Woods.
- A Kindergarten student at Greeley.
- Safety guidelines, such as mandatory mask-wearing in all school buildings, are in place Districtwide.





SAFETY PROTOCOL DURING COVID-19

Buckets to help store personal items (rather than cubbies/lockers which create social distancing challenges)



Desk shields to help prevent the spread of airborne particles



Tented Learning Spaces installed from August through November to allow for increased air flow and outdoor classroom space

Totes for students to store educational materials



Face masks while on campus

Water bottles in place of drinking fountains



Rubber mats to help support social distancing and provide outdoor comfort

Floor markers to help support social distancing in hallways

DISTRICT NEWS

Critical Facility Work Addressed and Potential Referendum Postponed:

The District continues to move forward with its Educational Master Facility Plan and addressing crucial Health/Life Safety issues. Due to COVID-19 there will not be a referendum in April 2021, as had been previously considered by the School Board. The Board will continue to evaluate how to remain fiscally responsible yet continue necessary improvements to our aging school facilities.

In summer 2020, work was done at all five District schools including plumbing-related work to address water safety issues, including lead mitigation at all schools; Americans with Disabilities Act renovations at Crow Island; and the replacement of a portion of the roof, doors, and windows at The Skokie School. Next summer, work is scheduled at Greeley, Hubbard Woods, and The Skokie School to address Health/Life Safety issues and other necessary facility maintenance needs.

The District will continue to keep the community apprised as long-term financial and facilities decisions are made in light of the pandemic.



• New doors and windows were installed at The Skokie School in summer 2020.



• Kindergarten students were welcomed back to Crow Island School, due to redistricting.



Redistricting 2020:

Last fall, the Board approved a Redistricting Plan to balance enrollment at the three elementary schools that was implemented in August. We are grateful for our community's flexibility and the strong partnership with the Village to foster safety and support infrastructure improvements (such as the Willow Road Tunnel) related to redistricting. We are also pleased that Kindergarten has now returned to Crow Island School.

• A crossing guard stationed at Willow Road helps students safely travel to Greeley School.



FINANCIAL UPDATE



Strategic Planning Process:

The District's recent strategic plan sunset in June. In March 2020, the District initiated a process with a group of stakeholders including students, educators, and community members. However, due to a number of factors associated with COVID-19, the District postponed the strategic planning comprehensive process until winter 2021. As an interim step, a core group of team members will continue to meet over the fall to refine the initial work.



- The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) awarded a Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. This was the fourth year the District received this prestigious award. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Excellence, a governmental unit must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, whose contents conform to the program's standards. Such a report must satisfy both accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and applicable legal requirements.
- The District has received a top rating of AAA from Standard & Poors Rating Services and Aaa from Moody's Investors Service in consideration of the District's stable financial outlook, strong fund balances, household buying income, overall net debt as percent of market value, and debt per capita. These ratings allow the District to receive better interest rates on bonds.
- Components of the Financial Philosophy include:
 - Expectations that District revenues will not increase by more than 3% each year, and will cover expenses;
 - Establishing long-term fund balance targets of 50% to 60% for the operating funds;
 - Targeting growth in operating fund expenses per pupil at 3% annually, with the exception of identified program enhancements with multi-year cost implication estimates;
 - Proposing staffing targets for certified and classified staff;
 - Implementation of changes to some internal financial reporting practices.

Access the District's 2019 Financial Report here.



DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS



Celebrating 100 Years of Progressive Education

Superintendent Carleton Washburne introduced Progressive Education to The Winnetka Public Schools when he arrived in the District just over 100 years ago. Washburne transformed the student and educator experience during his tenure and made The Winnetka Public Schools a prominent, nationally recognized public school system. Progressive Education has impacted thousands of students in Winnetka, inspired lifelong learning, and fostered a deep connection in the community that is still prevalent 100 years later.

To celebrate this milestone, the District hosted an event in early March 2020. Approximately 250 community members, staff, and families attended the celebration, which featured learning opportunities with educators; choral, band, and orchestra performances; artifacts from the Winnetka Historical Society; refreshments; and more.

“For over a century, the children of Winnetka have benefited from the community’s investment in Progressive Education. This 100-year milestone encouraged us to reflect on what we have accomplished as a community, as well as provide an opportunity to look ahead,” said Dr. Trisha Kocanda, Superintendent. **“We are grateful that Washburne’s vision continues to thrive in The Winnetka Public Schools.”**



[Click here to view a video commemorating 100 Years of Progressive Education in The Winnetka Public Schools.](#)





1235 Oak Street
Winnetka, IL 60093



Thank You,
WINNETKA!

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED



Congratulations to the middle school students who competed in the First Lego League State Championship in January 2020. Skokie's "Cyber Storm" received the "Presentation Award." Washburne's "Nerd Herd" received the "Spirit Award" and "Alliance Robot Round High Score Award." Skokie coach Mr. Martinsen said, "This group of 10 and 11 year olds came together and put the team before all else to pull off an incredible victory." Washburne coach Mr. Selgrat remarked, "These students are a wonderful group of problem-solvers who exemplify our core values as a District."



**TOP
WORK
PLACES
2020**

Chicago Tribune

The Winnetka Public Schools was honored as a Top Workplace by *The Chicago Tribune* (for the second consecutive year) in October 2020. The Top Workplace award is based solely on the feedback on the District's work environment collected through an employee survey administered by a third party.

The District received six awards from the Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association in September 2020.

In February 2020, the Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) awarded The Winnetka Public Schools the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting (COE), which recognizes Districts that have met the program's high standards for financial reporting and transparency.

We celebrated the Washburne Class of 2020 (virtually!) in June 2020. Congratulations to our graduates...we know you will continue to make a meaningful difference in our world!