

# LEARNERS

A Newsletter for the Winnetka Community of Learners



SUMMER 2018

THE WINNETKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

[www.winnetka36.org](http://www.winnetka36.org)



## FUTURE READY D36

Honoring our past.  
Planning our future.

The Winnetka Public Schools (D36) and our community have been working collaboratively on a comprehensive Educational Master Facility Plan – the District's first long-range plan in over 20 years. This process initially began in December 2015 by examining enrollment. The Educational Master Facility Plan incorporates the study of facilities and sites, building capacity and utilization, and grade level configuration. It is designed to align our school facilities, our enrollment, and our vision for teaching and learning to meet the needs of current and future students in a fiscally responsible manner.

### CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

A Core Team comprised of community members, teachers, administrators, and a School Board member dedicated over 150 hours to a thorough analysis of concepts to address the District's complex challenges. These concepts varied in grade level configuration to more effectively manage enrollment. All concepts included basic improvements for safety and security, accessibility, building maintenance, systems upgrades, and varying degrees of improvements to the classroom and common learning spaces.

### SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTION

At the June 2018 School Board meeting, the Core Team provided analysis of all concepts, estimated costs, projected timelines, and options for modernization. At that time, the School Board narrowed the focus to the three (K-4) neighborhood schools and one (5-8) school campus concept.



Image above: Washburne students helped with air quality testing as part of facilities assessments last summer

The highest priority facility needs identified through the planning process include:

**SAFETY & SECURITY** updates to reflect best practices, in consultation with the Winnetka Police and Fire Departments.

**ACCESSIBILITY** upgrades per the Americans with Disability Act (ADA), to ensure that students, staff, and visitors with disabilities have equitable access to facilities.

**HVAC SYSTEM UPGRADES** to improve indoor air quality and year-round temperature control for all instructional spaces.

**Classroom, lab, and common area renovations** to support DYNAMIC INSTRUCTION, promote STUDENT COLLABORATION, and enhance EXPERIENTIAL, HANDS-ON LEARNING.

**Multi-purpose CAFETERIA and GYM SPACE** renovations or additions to serve District needs and community use.

## What are the next steps?

### SUMMER 2018

District administration is refining costs, options for modernization, and other considerations associated with the K-4; 5-8 concept.

### FALL 2018

An independent survey specialist, with expertise in public planning initiatives, will conduct a community poll to test priorities and funding level support. Results will be presented to the School Board and community. The School Board will utilize this data in their work to finalize and approve the Educational Master Facility Plan in late October 2018.

### WINTER 2018

A resolution filing deadline of January 14, 2019, is required if the School Board were to consider an April 2019 referendum to address projects within the comprehensive Educational Master Facility Plan.

## How can I stay informed?

To view the research associated with the District's Educational Master Facility Planning process, meeting materials, and FAQs, please visit [www.winnetka36.org](http://www.winnetka36.org).



**How has the community participated in the planning process?**

**OVER 850 GUESTS** attended 23 Community Engagement Workshops and Special Outreach Sessions in 2017-2018

**5 INTERACTIVE POLLS** to gather feedback on Facilities Assessments

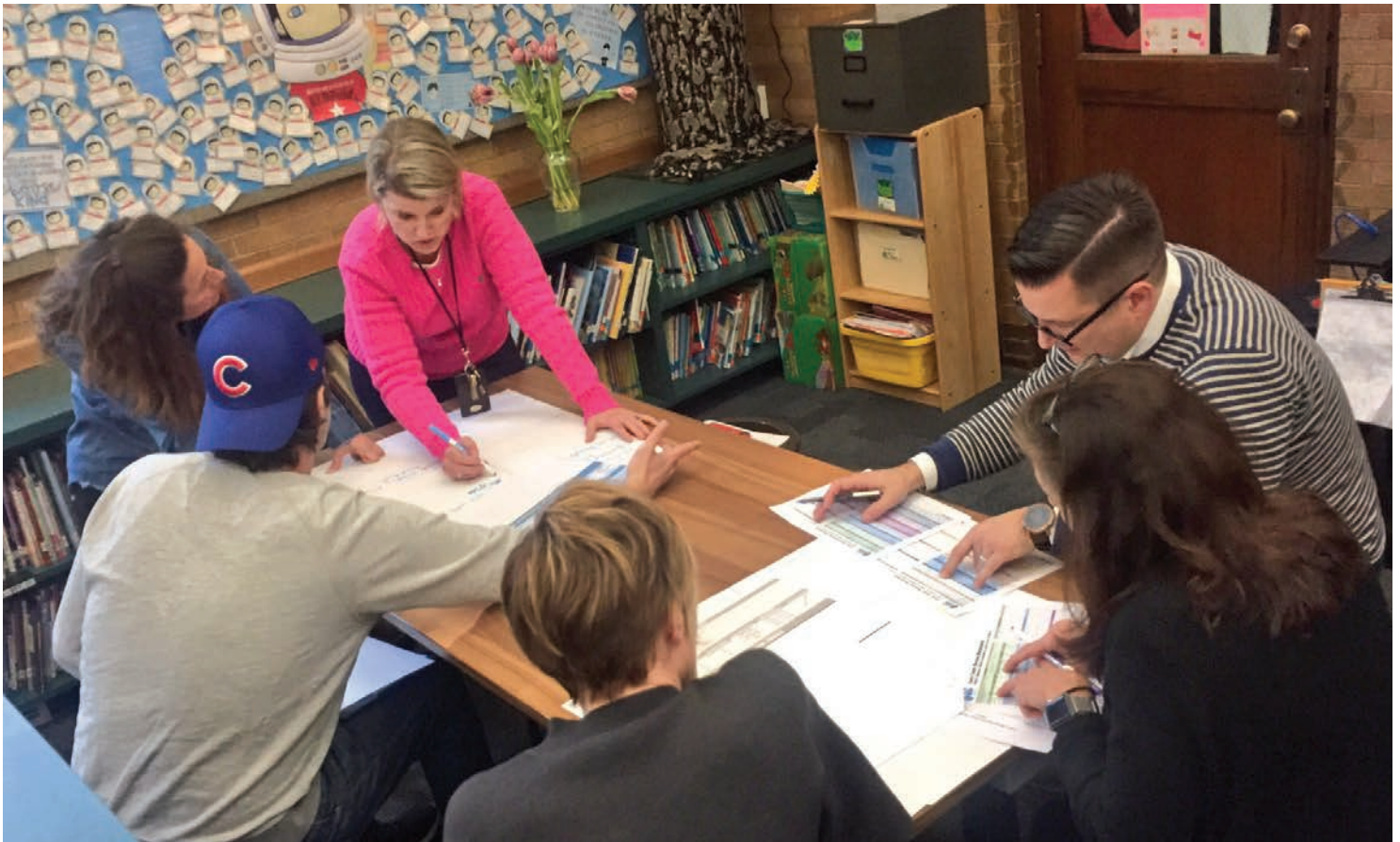
**3 COMMUNITY SURVEYS** to gather priorities and values

**150 HOURS** OF CORE TEAM ANALYSIS on Educational Master Facility Plan concepts

**6 INFORMATIONAL MAILINGS** sent to all Winnetka homes 

**26 ARTICLES** in local media about *Future Ready D36*

Image below: D36 Core Team members hard at work analyzing concepts for the District's first Educational Master Facility Plan in over 20 years.





# SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

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As you read *Learners*, our staff is in the midst of eagerly welcoming students back to campus. From revising curriculum, familiarizing themselves with the most up-to-date educational research, and teaching at Adventures in Learning summer programming, our staff dedicate much summer time to honing their craft. Together, we have made remarkable strides toward continuous improvement on our strategic goals, ensuring that student growth and achievement remain at the center of our work.

This was a momentous year in D36. A few highlights include:

**Completing our inaugural year of Extended Day Kindergarten, the result of years of research and planning.**

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**Learning from esteemed leaders who share insight with our students and staff, including Dr. Arun Gandhi (grandson of Mahatma Gandhi), and Stanford University math professor, Dr. Jo Boaler.**

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**Collaborating with organizations such as 50 Action 50, Apple, and National Geographic to enhance professional learning and improve our student experiences.**

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**Offering over 40 opportunities to welcome families and neighbors into our schools in efforts to strengthen our home/school/community partnerships. From Winnetka Parents Institute events to elementary schools hosting “Bring Your Neighbor to School Day” to *Future Ready D36* Community Engagement Sessions, it was a joy to see many friends of the District in our schools.**

Image below: A Kindergarten student engaged in an activity at Greeley School.



**Trisha Kocanda, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent



**Embarking on *Future Ready D36*, our first Educational Master Facility Plan in over 20 years (see page 1). *Future Ready D36* is focused on balancing enrollment, protecting our investment in our aging schools, and advancing our vision for teaching and learning that both honors our history of Progressive Education and incorporates best practices gleaned from modern neuroscience.**

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In 2018-2019, we will remain focused on accomplishing our strategic goals, establishing a long-term Educational Master Facility Plan and Reaching All Learners. We hope you will join us at engagement sessions to stay apprised on progress toward these important initiatives.

What we do in Winnetka is very special, but it would not be possible without a supportive community. Thank you to our families, The Winnetka Public Schools Foundation, our PTO volunteers, and to the entire Winnetka community for your efforts supporting our students and educators. We are grateful for a Village that champions experiential education and continues to value what is best for children.

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**The Winnetka Public Schools community empowers every student to flourish in an innovative, experiential environment. We support and challenge all learners to actively engage in continual growth and achievement to make a meaningful difference in the world.**

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# BOARD PRESIDENT MESSAGE

I hope this finds you well and enjoying summer in Winnetka. As we look ahead to our upcoming school year, I am proud of all that was accomplished in 2017-2018. Our students are thriving thanks to educators who care deeply about each child, parents who devote their time and energy to support the initiatives in our schools, and a community that values and upholds our history of Progressive Education.

Our Board remains committed to the growth and achievement of all students in order to ensure their success in high school and beyond. D36 students continue to demonstrate strong performance at New Trier High School, building on an excellent K-8 foundation that prepares them for the rigors and opportunities ahead. The District's strategic goals are focused on ensuring ALL learners have access to quality instructional programming. This includes ensuring we continue to both stretch the bounds for high-readiness learners and provide effective support when students struggle. Specifically, we are examining our Special Education program and collaborating with our partner North Suburban Special Education District (NSSED) to continue to deliver the highest-quality, researched-based education for our students. Our educators have also focused on redeveloping inquiry-based learning opportunities. Fiscal responsibility

**The District's strategic goals focused on ensuring ALL learners have access to quality instructional programming.**



**Kristen Hertel**  
Board President

remains a priority for our School Board (see pages 5-7); most notably the Board approved the early debt payment of \$30M in reserves to refund callable debt on June 1, 2017.

In addition to the many goals and initiatives we have worked toward this year, our school community has been engaged in *Future Ready D36*, our first Educational Master Facility Plan process in over 20 years. This process looks to determine how we can best maximize our investment in our schools. After over a year of research, engagement, and discussion, the School Board will approve an official Educational Master Facility Plan in the fall. I would like to especially acknowledge the community/staff Core Team for spending over 150 hours researching many potential solutions to address the District's imbalanced enrollment, aging schools, and teaching and learning needs. I trust that as a community, we will collaborate to determine thoughtful solutions to complex questions. In Winnetka, I am confident that we have a shared passion for excellence and strive for continuous improvement. Thank you for your partnership and commitment to ensuring that our community's children continue to flourish in our schools.

## THANK YOU, VS AMERICA! Renowned Furniture Company Celebrates Crow Island's Architectural and Educational Legacy with a Gift

Space matters and impacts student learning. Educators at The Winnetka Public Schools knew this 78 years ago when Crow Island was designed. D36 is grateful that VS America, a furniture manufacturer from Germany, has donated furniture for 18 classrooms at Crow Island School. The plan for VS America to honor Crow Island's educational legacy with new furniture has been underway since 2016 when the CEO of VS America, Claudius Reckord, attended Crow Island's 75th anniversary celebration. A D36 committee worked in concert with VS America to ensure revitalized classrooms are congruent with original design, yet fit for the demands of modern day learning.

Learn more at <https://www.winnetka36.org/crowisland>.



Image above: Crow Island students at play in a classroom with new furniture from VS America.

# FINANCIAL REPORT



## SCHOOL BUDGET

The District's budget is a planning document that provides the financial framework to support The Winnetka Public Schools' goal of providing students with a high-caliber education, while serving as responsible financial stewards. Developing and monitoring the District's budget is a year-round activity, incorporating an array of logistical, legal, and regulatory mandates. Revenue is generated primarily from local property tax dollars, while expenses are determined by programmatic needs.

The School Board and staff are diligent about careful stewardship of these funds and work to deliver educational programs and maintain District buildings as efficiently as possible. This may result in surpluses or positive ending fund balances. When savings are realized, funds are held in reserve for future educational needs. A reserve can extend the time between referenda, ensure cash flow when tax payments are not received in a timely fashion, and may be used for unexpected expenses or reduction in revenue sources as currently contemplated by State legislative proposals.

## FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

The Board recognizes its obligations to taxpayers in fulfilling its stewardship of District finances and related reserves. In response to this commitment, over the past few years the Board has returned in excess of \$4 million to taxpayers through a rebate or rollback of property taxes. In December 2016, \$10+ million of bonds were refinanced for a tax savings of over \$700,000. In June 2017 the Board abated \$30 million in reserves to refund callable debt. **This eliminated future property taxes of approximately \$39 million previously scheduled to pay principal and interest on the \$30 million of refunded debt.**

This is the culmination of the Board's 2013 plan developed in consultation with the community. Concurrent with this refunding, the Board embarked on *Future Ready D36*, the District's first Educational Master Facility Plan in 20 years. This is a holistic process that will measure, validate, quantify, and qualify opportunities to align our school facilities, our enrollment, and our vision for teaching and learning to meet the needs of current and future students in a fiscally responsible manner.

### School Budget Cycle

#### JANUARY

Budget Calendar Developed

#### FEBRUARY

Preliminary Staffing Plan Presented

#### MARCH

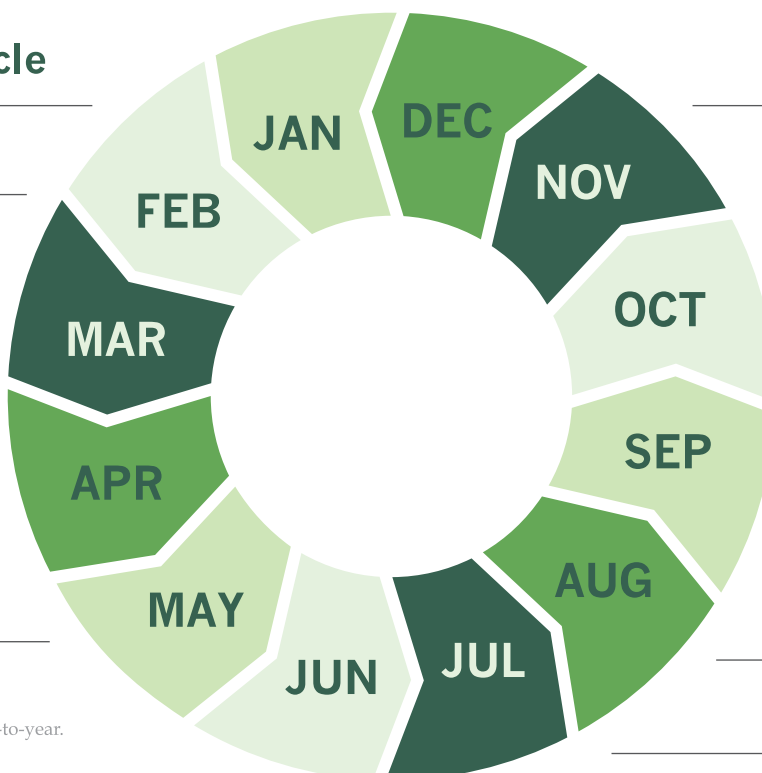
Staffing Plan Adopted

#### APRIL & MAY

Budget is Internally Developed and Refined

#### JUNE

Preliminary Budget Presented and Approved



#### JULY

Annual Financial Audit Performed

#### AUGUST

Tentative Budget Approved for Public Display & Hearing

#### SEPTEMBER

Budget Hearing and Vote

#### OCTOBER

Independent Financial Audit Completed

#### NOVEMBER

Preliminary Tax Levy Presented and Discussed

#### DECEMBER

Tax Levy Approved

Note: Timing may vary slightly from year-to-year.

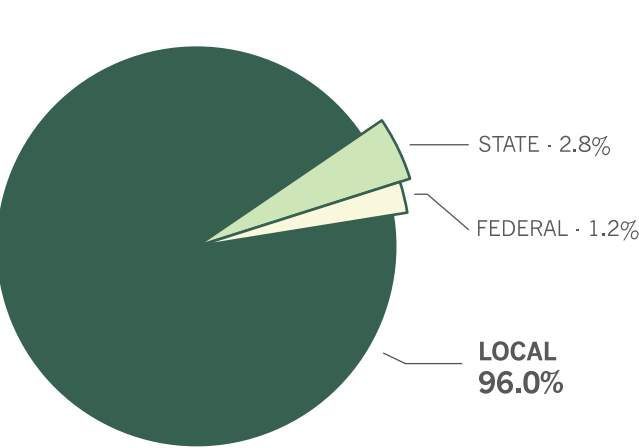


# FISCAL YEAR 2017 FINANCIAL REPORT

Thanks to the support of taxpayers and the careful stewardship of the School Board and staff, District 36 is in a sound financial position. The District maintains a AAA Bond Rating from Standard & Poor’s, and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) again bestowed its highest honor, “Financial Recognition” on The Winnetka Public Schools.

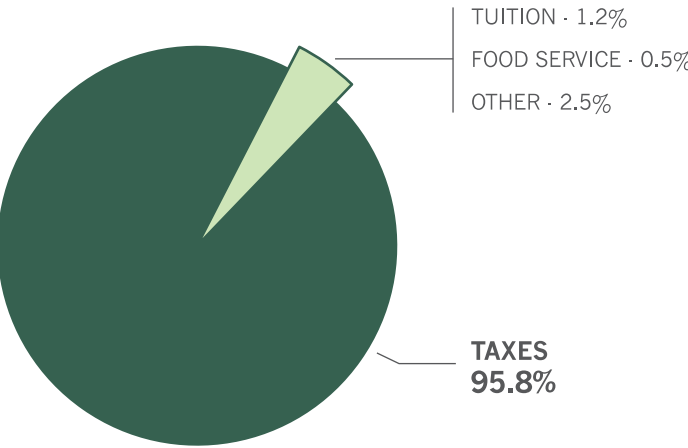
## Revenue by Source (All Funds)

District 36 receives 96% of its funds from local sources. Federal and state revenues are 4% of the District’s revenues. Despite the poor financial situation in the state of Illinois, District finances have remained stable. However, due to economic conditions in the state and federal governments, future availability of revenue from both entities is at risk. This includes the potential of a significant reduction in local property tax revenues due to proposals to freeze property taxes.



## Local Revenue by Type (All Funds)

Property taxes are the primary source (96%) of Local Revenue for The Winnetka Public Schools. Traditionally, property tax revenues have been a reliable source of revenue. Proposed legislation by the State to freeze property tax revenues, if passed, could result in significant reduction in future operational revenues and reserves.



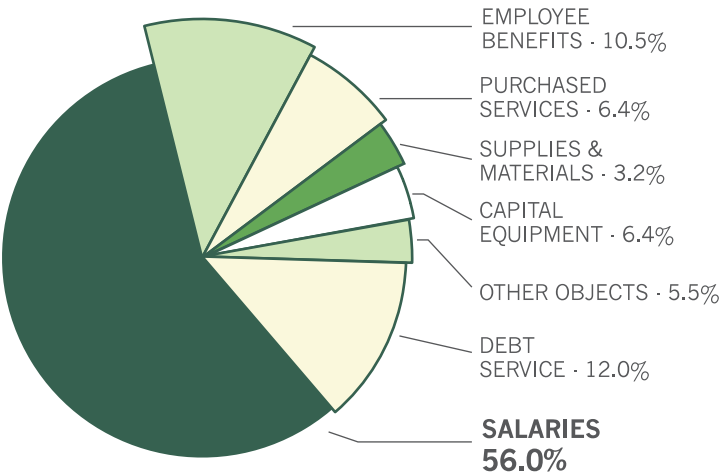
The Winnetka Public Schools Board approved the District’s 2017 Tax Levy at its December 19, 2017, meeting. A property tax levy is an annual request to Cook County for the property tax revenue a school district needs to operate the district for the subsequent fiscal year.

In March 2017, the Board approved the elimination (through abatement) of future property taxes of \$39 million scheduled to pay \$30 million of bonds, approved for refunding on June 1, 2017. This fulfilled a commitment the School Board made to the Winnetka community in 2013.

District 36 received the highest category from the ISBE in the areas of Fund Balance/Revenue Ratio, Expenditures/Revenue Ratio, Days Cash on Hand, and Short-Term Borrowing and maintains its AAA bond rating.

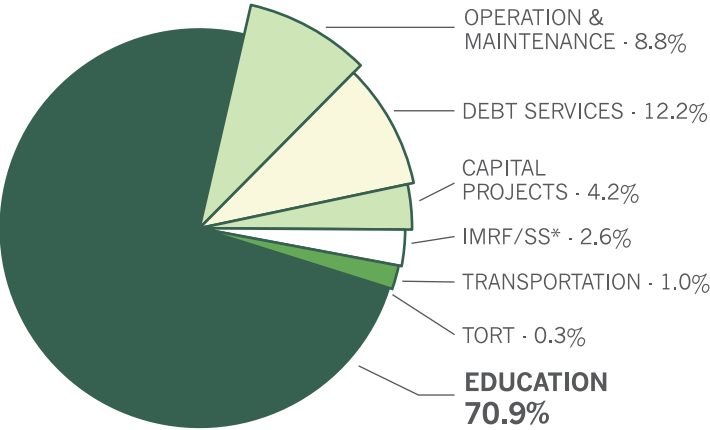
## Expenditure by Object (All Funds)

When expenditures are considered by type they are referred to as objects. Education is a people-driven enterprise. Salaries and benefits, primarily of teachers, associates, custodians, and other staff—those who provide outstanding direct educational experiences for students—constitute the majority of this (67%) category.



## Expenditure by Fund

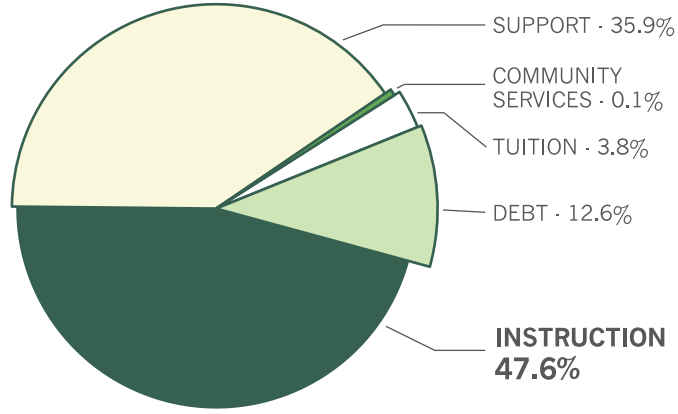
Per Illinois State Law, the District's budget is divided into categories, or funds. Each of these accounts has a specific purpose or function and funds are not fungible. Only limited types of transfers are permitted, and money in one fund cannot be used for expenses in another. For example, the District spent just under 13% of its local dollars on debt service and capital projects from these restricted funds which are not considered part of the District's Operating Funds.



\* Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund and Social Security

## Instruction Takes Priority

District budget priorities are guided by the singular goal of providing the best possible education for the children of Winnetka, while remaining fiscally responsible. This priority is reflected by how much money is devoted to teaching and learning. The majority (84%) of the District's budget is spent on Instruction and Instructional support. An important component of Instructional support is providing a favorable and safe environment for children to learn. In 2017 and over the next few years, increased expenditures have been planned for maintenance of District facilities. As part of a long-term Educational Master Facility Plan that is underway, it is anticipated that the District will seek community support to make needed improvements to aging facilities.



The Winnetka Public Schools received a "Recognition" distinction from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). This represents the highest category of financial strength. District 36 received a score of 4.0 on a 4.0 scale.

# THE WINNETKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT 36

is unique in that it is the only public school district that originated with a philosophy, one that embraced JOHN DEWEY'S

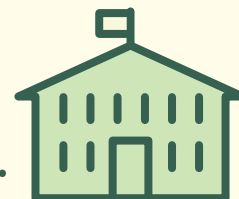
# LEARNING BY DOING

Hands-on, relevant, & engaging learning is the norm.

Our highly-skilled educators honor a **DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH** that reaps long-term gains academically, socially, and emotionally.

The culmination of the WINNETKA EXPERIENCE results in confident young adults, who demonstrate high-achievement and coveted 21st-century skills.

Our students are prepared for a rewarding high school experience that allows them to pursue talents and passions well into the future.



## OUR STUDENTS

Performed in the  
**TOP 5%**  
nationally  
on the MAP  
assessment  
on average in 2017-2018



Have access to a robust  
**FINE ARTS PROGRAM**  
ranging from a strings  
program and a musical  
theater elective in  
middle school.



**ROBOTICS,  
CODING &  
CONSTRUCTION**  
are embedded in student learning  
beginning in kindergarten.



## STUDENTS LIVE WHAT THEY ARE LEARNING

and are required to apply their knowledge, providing a real-world advantage. Neuroscience favors these immersive experiences, evidence for providing learning that "sticks."

## OUR GRADUATES



Are successful in the classroom, earning  
**EXCELLENT GRADES &  
ACADEMIC RECOGNITION**  
Grade data of Winnetka students exceeds the  
very competitive NT Freshman class average.

Report feeling being well-  
prepared for  
High School.

Hold leadership  
and service positions at  
New Trier High School.



## OUR PARENTS

**90%** are Highly Satisfied/Satisfied  
with Winnetka Public Schools,  
according to a recent survey

**31 PARENT WORKSHOPS** were offered throughout  
the 2017-18 school year  
with over 1,140 attendees



The Winnetka  
Public School  
Foundation

**RAISES OVER \$100,000**

**ANNUALLY** to accelerate innovative  
practices through an  
educator grant program.

## OUR STAFF

**REGULAR PRESENTERS** at local, regional,  
and national  
conferences

**86%** OF D36 STAFF  
hold a relevant  
advanced degree



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## D36 Alum Leads Rainforest Conservation and Entrepreneurial Endeavors in Ecuador

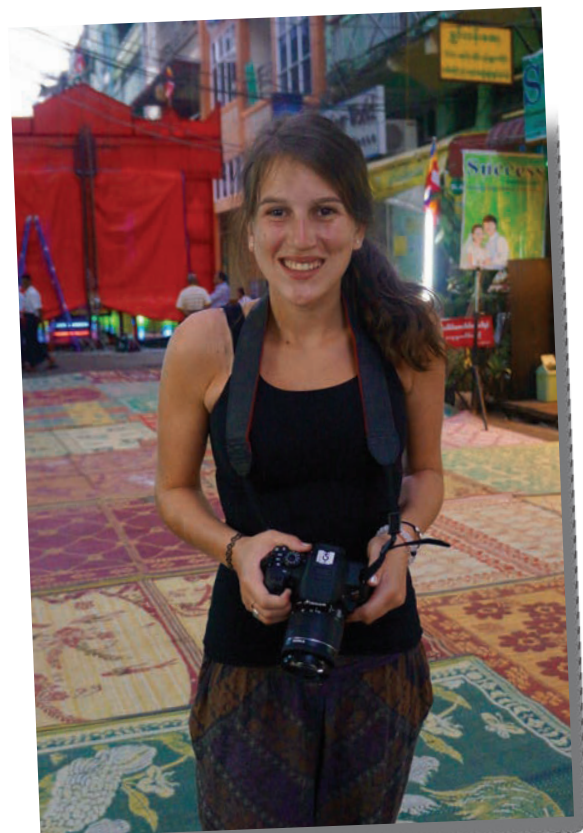
A passionate conservationist, global adventurer, and avid surfer, D36 alum Jerry Toth (Washburne Class of 1992) is making a meaningful difference in the world. After graduating from Cornell University with a B.A. in Economics, Toth worked on Wall Street but decided to pursue other challenges. He channeled his interest in environmentalism into co-founding a non-profit organization called Third Millennium Alliance, which established the Jama-Coaque Reserve in 2007 to protect 1,400 acres of rainforest and cloud forest in coastal Ecuador. Toth serves as Director of the organization, which has planted over 15,000 trees and continues to make an impact protecting the Pacific Ecuadorian Forest and empowering local communities to restore deforested land.

Toth is also using his dynamic entrepreneurial and leadership skills as Chief Strategy Officer for To'ak Chocolate, a company he founded partnering local farmers, conservationists, and multiple universities to protect the world's oldest and rarest variety of cacao and nursing it back from the brink of extinction.

Toth attended Crow Island School and fondly recalls Pioneer Day, a KW teacher who **“made school feel like an adventure,”** and remembers **“creativity was given free reign”** in art class. “When I arrived in college, I felt much more prepared than most of the other students...**The Winnetka Public Schools had trained me well.** Most people in the world don't have the benefit of starting off with such a strong foundation.” He notes, “the most important tools for the students of today, yesterday, and tomorrow are **a broad perspective, an open mind, creativity, passion, and an ability to work with other people.**”



Image above:  
Alum Jerry Toth leads conservation efforts in Ecuador



## Alumna Lucy Spahr Channels Passion for Filmmaking into Award-Winning Projects

D36 alum Lucy Spahr (Washburne Class of 2014) will be attending Cornell University in the fall where she will study English and Film. An accomplished filmmaker, Lucy has channeled her passion for storytelling and filmmaking into creating several successful projects. She produced a music video, *If We Were Rain*, an Official Selection at the Santa Monica International Teen Film Festival and the All American High School Film Festival in New York City, and *Global Warming: The Dead Zone*, a documentary to raise awareness on the impact of climate change.

Lucy submitted *Global Warming: The Dead Zone* to C-SPAN's StudentCam contest, which asked students to highlight an issue that Congress should address. The film, one of over 2,900 submissions from students around the United States, received an honorable mention in 2017. **“I cherish my D36 progressive education because it emphasized creativity,”** says Lucy. “I have fond memories of writing scripts and being on camera for WGST at Hubbard Woods. The program taught me at a young age that film is a medium that allows me to express my feelings and ideas in a constructive and fun way.”

Image at left: Alumna Lucy Spahr begins Cornell University this fall



# THE WINNETKA EXPERIENCE



## MAKING A MEANINGFUL DIFFERENCE

This past school year, students were dedicated to helping others in a multitude of ways...

Crow Island students collected warm clothing and blankets to donate to the Uptown Refugee Project during the holiday season.

Greeley students chose to raise funds to donate to PAWS during their school Walk-a-Thon.

Washburne students removed invasive species along with other projects on the Green Apple Day of Service during Earth Week.

Image above: A group of Greeley students presented a check to PAWS after raising money for the organization.

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

In D36, our tradition of Experiential Learning, “learning by doing” continues to thrive. Just a few examples of how Experiential Learning is an essential part of the Winnetka Experience are showcased below.

At The Skokie School, students participated in inquiry-based learning throughout the year including “It’s All Greek to Me,” the culminating project for their unit on Ancient Greece. Students chose a topic of interest, conducted research, and collaborated with classmates to create dynamic presentations for an audience of peers, parents, and D36 educators.

First graders at Greeley studied the lives of key figures in the Civil Rights Movement. Students chose to create a replica of Rosa Parks’ bus, a diorama of the Civil Rights March, as well as a recreation of the Washington Mall, site of the “I Have a Dream” speech. This work was informed by special guests who shared memories of the Civil Rights March and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s speech at the Winnetka Village Green.

Hubbard Woods students supported the local ecosystem by releasing 100 trout into Lake Michigan at their annual Trout Release. The trout began as eggs in the fall and students studied their habitat through literature, music, art, and science activities. Through this initiative, students make many connections regarding the important ecological role fish play in the Great Lakes.

Image below: Hubbard Woods students enjoyed their annual Trout Release in May 2018.





## LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

In Winnetka, we are truly a Community of Learners, dedicated to supporting our peers to reach our highest potential. A few highlights from this year include...

Washburne students claimed Highest Honors in the 2017-18 WordMasters Challenge™— an annual national vocabulary competition involving nearly 150,000 students. The eighth grade team placed ninth and the seventh grade team earned first place nationwide.

D36 established a partnership with 50 Action 50 to host a design thinking workshop to promote entrepreneurship to school-aged girls. Participants contributed ideas leading to action steps for increasing the STEAM pipeline for young women.

Washburne students earned highest honors in the National Council of Teachers of English “Promising Young Writers” competition.

Sixth graders at Skokie mentored fourth graders in complex problem solving, which is overseen through the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Math Forum.

Student leaders presented to adults at national conferences, School Board meetings, The Winnetka Public Schools Foundation Carlson Event, and to Illinois legislators in Springfield at Tech 2018.

Lego Robotics League members advanced to a national competition at the end of the club’s inaugural year in D36.

The Skokie School and its Integrated Service Delivery initiative was selected to receive an Advocacy Partnership Support Best Practice Award from the North Shore Special Education District.

Washburne students qualified for the Illinois Music Education Association Jazz Band and National Geography Bee contest.

D36 offered 20 Winnetka Parents Institute events, and hosted three “Bring Your Neighbor to School” days to strengthen our community partnerships.

Superintendent Kocanda received the Award of Excellence in the 2018 Distinguished Service Awards Program sponsored by the Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (INSPPRA). She also successfully completed the National Superintendent Certification Program®, administered by AASA, the national association for School Superintendents.

D36 educators helped plan and facilitate The Alliance for Early Childhood Preschool Kindergarten Summit, an opportunity to advocate for best practices with early childhood educators from around the country.



Images on this page: Washburne students celebrate their accomplishments in the 2017-18 WordMasters Challenge™ (below). Dr. Arun Gandhi visited The Winnetka Public Schools. Dr. Kocanda received an Award of Excellence from INSPPRA.





**THE WINNETKA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
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Trisha Kocanda, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent*

Brad Goldstein  
*Chief Financial Officer*

Daniel Ryan, Ed.D.  
*Assistant Superintendent of  
Professional Learning and  
Human Resources*

Beth Martin  
*Director of Student Services*

Maureen Miller  
*Director of Technology*

Barry Rodgers  
*Director of Innovation,  
Teaching and Learning*

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*Principal*

**GREELEY SCHOOL**  
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Joshua Swanner  
*Principal*

**HUBBARD WOODS  
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Beth Carmody  
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**THE SKOKIE SCHOOL**  
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Kelly Tess  
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Betty Weir  
*Assistant Principal*

**CARLETON WASHBURNE  
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David Kanne  
*Principal*

Benjamin Horwitz  
*Assistant Principal*

**SCHOOL BOARD**

Kristen Hertel  
*President*

Dawn Livingston  
*Vice President*

Jennifer Pehlke  
*Secretary*

Steve Cirulis  
*Member*

Scott Conine  
*Member*


Matthew Hulsizer  
*Member*

Nat Roberts  
*Member*

**www.winnetka36.org**

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and engaged is a high priority.  
Join our email list by visiting  
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 Youtube: [The Winnetka Public Schools](https://www.youtube.com/TheWinnetkaPublicSchools)

## COMMUNITY VOICES:

### Reflections at Washburne's 2018 Graduation.

**“Understanding our voice gives us  
the freedom to make a difference  
and gives us courage...Being  
nervous is the gateway to courage...  
with this courage we can do  
anything we put our minds to...”**

Maggie McNally  
(Washburne Class of 2018)

