



63 SUCCESS

SUMMER 2022 • VOL. 11.2 • EAST MAINE DISTRICT 63

SUPERINTENDENT SCHLEIZER TAKES THE HELM



At its meeting on January 6, the East Maine School District 63 Board of Education approved the appointment of **Dr. Shawn Schleizer as the District's new Superintendent of Schools**. Dr. Schleizer, who currently serves as the District's Associate Superintendent, will replace Superintendent Dr. Scott Clay, who retires on June 30.

Dr. Schleizer joined the District in 2010 as Melzer Elementary School Principal. In 2014, he was promoted to Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, moving into his current position in 2017. Previously, Dr. Schleizer served as Assistant Principal for both Elmwood Park CUSD 401 and Evanston/Skokie School District 65 – and as Principal at School District U-46. After receiving his bachelor's degree in kinesiology from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, he earned a master's degree in planning and social policy administration from Harvard University. Dr. Schleizer completed his doctorate in educational leadership at National Louis University.

"We are delighted to be able to build upon Dr. Clay's legacy of student-centered excellence here at the District," notes Board President Alexandra Brook. "Dr. Schleizer has been a key part of our leadership team for more than a decade and an integral part of our success. His in-depth knowledge of D63, ability to build and manage an outstanding staff, and unwavering commitment to ensuring that every student receives an equitable education is exceptional. We look forward to a smooth transition, and to taking our District to the next level."

Laying the Groundwork

Dr. Schleizer's many years here have given him a deep knowledge of the District. But he spent this spring building on that knowledge base to better prepare for this new role.

At the top of the list: meeting with Board of Education members, parents, and employees to solicit key stakeholder feedback. He also introduced himself to the larger community, attending school and community events, and meeting with elected officials and local leaders.

Moving Forward

So what's on the new Superintendent's plate? Key objectives include:

- Leading a District-wide **strategic planning process** that will chart our course for the next three to five years.



Continued on page 2



FROM PRESIDENT ALEXANDRA BROOK

NAVIGATING TIMES OF TRANSITION & CHALLENGE

Transition, challenges, and normalcy: these are words I hear myself saying almost every day. Even though students returned to in-person instruction this year, there was still nothing “normal” about the school year. Our District faced many challenges, but made it through with the perseverance and dedication of our staff—and the patience and understanding of our families.

COVID was still an unwelcome member of our school community. In the span of a few short months, we had to navigate mask mandates, COVID testing, a COVID surge, a substitute shortage that required an adaptive pause last January—then, finally, transitioning to a mask optional policy.

The threat of violence also loomed over not just our District, but the entire country. Mass shootings, threats through social media, racism, anti-Semitism, and bullying were sadly commonplace.

As parents, guardians, and educators of our children, it is our responsibility to be positive role models. I implore all of you to be kind to your neighbors, tolerant of others, and respectful of those whose opinions differ from yours.

On the bright side, under the leadership of Dr. Clay, we *did* successfully complete another school year. We even experienced a bit of normalcy, with an in-person staff recognition event and Gemini graduation returning to the stage at Maine East High School!

Sadly, all good things must come to an end. As June rolls into July, we say goodbye and good luck to Dr. Clay. After 19 years of service to our District, 13 years as Superintendent, he will retire—and the transition of leadership to Dr. Schleizer (see page 1) is underway.

On behalf of the Board of Education, I wish you a safe and relaxing summer. We look forward our families in August!

Alexandra Brook

Superintendent Schleizer . . . *continued*

- Reviewing the District’s **instructional program and learning environment**, identifying strengths and opportunities to improve student access to high-quality learning—as well as co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and social, emotional, and behavioral growth.
- Assessing **staff engagement, needs, and strengths** while supporting, developing, retaining, and hiring high-quality staff.
- Identifying **key issues at the building and District levels**, including safety, climate, and student achievement.
- And developing and strengthening **connections to parents, community partners, elected officials, and local leaders**.



“When I joined the District in 2010, I was struck by the community support for education, and by the abundance of humanity, care, and dedication to children by the staff,” recalls Dr. Schleizer. “Our educators are skilled, knowledgeable, and deeply committed to ensuring that students have access to a high-quality education. We’ve created an outstanding environment, and I’m excited to continue working with the entire D63 community to build on our past success.”

D63 AWARDED GRANT FOR BILINGUAL EDUCATION



District 63 is one of only 47 Illinois school districts to **receive a 2022 Illinois State Board of Education Bilingual Education**

Award, designed to provide high-quality supplemental services to districts serving a large number of English learner students.

The \$25,000 award—the highest level of funding provided—will be used to support students (and their families) who are new to the U.S., as well as English learners with special needs.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW D63 ADMINISTRATORS



DR. JHOON 'JAKE' CHUNG • ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Dr. Chung, formerly Superintendent of Salt Creek School District 48, began his career in the Aldine Independent School District near Houston. In 2004 he joined Schaumburg CCSD 54 as Principal, first, of its Lincoln Prairie School and then of its Hoover Math and Science Academy. At Arlington Heights District 25, Chung served as Principal of South Middle School beginning in 2012, moving on to become the District's Assistant Superintendent of Personnel and Planning, where he remained until taking on his role at Salt Creek in 2019. After receiving a BA in elementary education at the University of Iowa, Chung earned his MA and doctoral degree in educational leadership from National Louis University. A 1998 Sallie Mae Foundation First Year Teacher of the Year award recipient, he received a 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Iowa, where he currently serves as the Dean's Advisory Chair for the College of Education. Dr. Chung also serves as Education League of Illinois Membership Chair and on the DuPage Illinois Association of School Administrators Executive Committee.



LINDSAY SUDOL • ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF TEACHING & LEARNING

Ms. Sudol comes to D63 from Schaumburg District 54, where she had served as a 5th/6th grade magnet program teacher since 2013. She began her career as a K-5 gifted program teacher at Pinellas County School District in Largo, Florida, moving on to Chicago Public Schools, where she worked as both a general education and special education teacher. Sudol also served as a summer program teacher for Northwestern University's Center for Talent Development. She holds a BA in elementary education and an MS in exceptional student education from State University of Florida—and earned an MA in principal preparation from Concordia University.



TIMOTHY MACKIN • GEMINI DEAN OF STUDENTS

Mr. Mackin comes to the Gemini team from St. Charles CUSD 303, where he has served as Dean of Students for North High School since 2020. A licensed clinical social worker, Mackin also works with Barrington Behavioral Health and Wellness as a therapist/clinician. He began his career in education as a social worker at Wheeling CCSD 21's Cooper Middle School, ultimately moving into the Dean of Students role there. Before kicking off his education career, Mackin was an Associate Producer with the *Judge Mathis* television show. A graduate of Illinois State University, where he earned his BA in communication, Mackin holds an MA in educational leadership from Concordia University—and an MSW from Aurora University.



SAMANTHA EISEMAN • MELZER/WASHINGTON ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Ms. Eiseman has been working with Glenview CCSD 34 since 2003, beginning her time there as a teacher at Hoffman School and moving on to serve as both an Instructional and Literacy Coach. She holds a BS in elementary education from Illinois State University and an MA in education curriculum & instruction from National Louis University. Last March, Eiseman received her MA in educational leadership from the American College of Education.



SARAH EZZAT • NELSON ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Ms. Ezzat will be heading west to take her new position. She joins D63 from Baltimore City Public Schools, where she has worked since 2011 as a classroom teacher, Instructional Coach, and Assistant Principal. After earning her BA in communications/social influence from the University of Maryland, Ezzat attended Johns Hopkins University, where she received her MS in education administration and supervision.

Free Summer Meals at D63 July 11 - August 5

Available for any District
resident aged 18 or younger

Breakfast: 7:45 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch: 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Family Resource Center
9000 Capitol Drive
Des Plaines

Meals must be
consumed on site.



WALKING FOR OLIVIA

On May 19, the Melzer community came together to help a fellow Mountain Lion: kindergartener Olivia, who is battling cancer. **Students, staff, and families raised more than \$9,100 for the family** with a day-long walk-a-thon.



Walkers collected donations and took turns doing laps on school grounds. "Team Olivia" t-shirts, live music, and cheering supporters (including Olivia and her family, above) kept the energy level high. Thanks to all of those who joined the Melzer team to make a difference!



FROM SUPERINTENDENT DR. SCOTT CLAY

Saying Farewell

As my time here at D63 comes to an end, my gratitude for having the opportunity to lead this District for the past 13 years can't be overstated. This is a special place that has grown into a progressive leader within the educational community. I could not have hoped for a better professional home or a better group of professionals to work with. And I have been inspired by them every day.

Together, we have accomplished wonderful things.

- We now offer **full-day kindergarten** at no cost.
- Gemini has grown to **incorporate new, state-of-the-art features** and expanded student learning choices.
- Our **award-winning Early Learning Center** is custom-built for our youngest learners.
- We opened a **Family Resource Center** featuring a Newcomer Center, adult education, youth programming, a food pantry, and more.
- Expanded Learning now offers **year-round programming**—and is still a great bargain.
- We've strengthened **local relationships** and developed a community-wide presence.
- Our **Dual Language Program** successfully serves hundreds of Spanish-speaking students.
- We've greatly expanded the extent to which our children with special needs are **included in the schools' general population** and fine-tuned our program for children with autism to a highly successful option for them and their families.
- Our **District is financially stable**, which was not the case 13 years ago

I leave the District in excellent hands, with a Board that is caring, thoughtful, and committed to our students—and a new leader equally committed to our success. I have no doubt at all that Dr. Schleizer will lead this district to become even better. More wonderful things are in store. Of this I am certain.

Here at D63 we know that learning is a lifelong process, and I know that I will continue to learn and grow in my own next chapter. But I will miss D63, the many ways it changed me for the better, and the people who make it great.

Scott W. Clay

DISTRICT NEWS: #63SUCCESS



GOING GREEN: PLASTIC BAG DRIVE • Throughout April, all D63 schools—as well as the Family Resource Center—collected plastic bags for recycling, working in partnership with local nonprofit Clean Up-Give Back. Collectively, **District 63 students and staff diverted more than 1,165 pounds of plastic from landfills!** Those bags will be “upcycled” into a community bench for all to enjoy.

FROM PAGE TO STAGE: STUDENT AUTHORS WATCH THEIR WORKS COME TO LIFE

• On May 5, 14 Apollo, Melzer, and Nelson 4th and 5th graders—and their families—were treated to a special performance at Maine East High School. “From Page to Stage” featured plays based on the D63 students’ own short stories, brought to life by Maine East drama students (pictured, right). Selected out of 55 entries submitted for the show, the original stories ran the gamut—from overcoming shyness to compete in a singing contest to the trials (and joys) of having a twin.



D63 Charity Basketball Game



CHARITY BASKETBALL GAME RETURNS • After a two-year hiatus, D63’s charity basketball game benefitting Lurie Children’s Hospital returned for its 42nd year on May 6. Sponsored by the Gemini Student Council, the game pitted Gemini staff against staff from D63 elementary schools and First Steps Preschool—all in good fun. Students, staff, and families enthusiastically cheered on their teams, and the event **raised \$5,000 for the hospital.**

CELEBRATING OUR GEMINI GRADS

• More than 370 8th graders crossed the stage at Maine East on May 31, graduating from Gemini—and from District 63. Graduates and their families were serenaded by Gemini orchestra students and enjoyed the 7th Grade Choir’s rendition of *Wicked*’s “For Good.” The ceremony featured remarks by **Principal Lewis Roberts** (pictured, right), **Superintendent Dr. Scott Clay**, and **Board of Education Vice President Tom Simmons**. Students **Lara Rivera**, **Jackson Slamowitz**, **Yannoue Narcisse**, and Student Council President **Riya Parekh** also spoke. Congratulations to the Class of 2022!!



HAVE YOU REGISTERED YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL?
SCHOOL STARTS AUGUST 16

All registration is online; visit www.emsd63.org/registration to get started.

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ADMINISTRATION

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SUPERINTENDENT

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Expanded Learning 2022- 2023

**Before School • After School • Early
Dismissal Days • School's Out Days •
School Breaks • and more . . .**

Register today!

**Visit www.emsd63.org/expandedlearning to learn
more and sign up.**