



63 SUCCESS

DECEMBER 2018 • VOL. 8.1 • EAST MAINE DISTRICT 63

DISTRICT EARNS HIGH MARKS ON STATE SCHOOL REPORT CARDS

ISBE 2018
Summative Designations

Exemplary

Mark Twain, Melzer, Nelson,
Stevenson, Washington

Commendable

Apollo, Gemini Junior High

All seven East Maine District 63 schools received high summative designations on their 2018 Illinois State Board of Education Report Cards. ISBE assigns one of four designations to each school (see chart below); **D63's schools earned the top two.**

Summative Designations: A Focus on Growth

New this year, **ISBE summative designations** offer a comprehensive picture of how well a school is serving its students and the community. Guided by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), designations are assigned based on a number of factors, but instead of relying solely on “point in time” test scores, **student growth** carries the most weight.

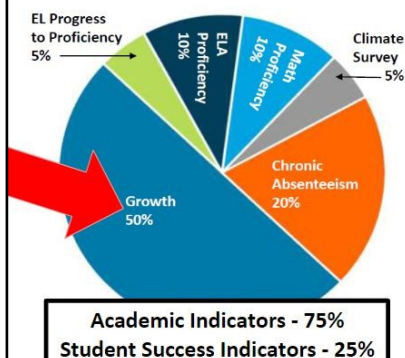
In fact, as the pie chart below indicates, student growth comprises 50 percent of the score. Other factors include chronic absenteeism (20 percent), and proficiency in English language arts and math (another 20 percent). School climate and ELL progress make up the final ten percent. This emphasis is a change for ISBE. Instead of concentrating on the percentage of students meeting or exceeding certain standards, the focus is now on **academic gains over time**.

The goal is to measure the **school's impact on student learning** – regardless of where that student starts.

“ISBE's affirmation of our work is indeed welcome,” notes District 63 Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning **Aaron Roberson**, “however, these designations come as no surprise to those working with our students every day. D63 students have always demonstrated tremendous growth during their time with us, the result of a skilled and caring staff and the strong support we receive from our families.”

“We are obviously delighted with our designations,” adds **Dr. Scott Clay**, Superintendent, “but D63 never rests on its laurels. Our focus is on continuous improvement. Families will see many changes in the coming year – from our expansion to full-day kindergarten and Gemini's shift from junior high

K-8 ESSA Official Designation Indicators



Exemplary	Schools performing in the top 10 percent of schools statewide, with no underperforming student groups .
Commendable	A school that has no underperforming student groups , a graduation rate greater than 67 percent, and whose performance is not in the top 10 percent of schools statewide.
Underperforming	A school in which one or more student groups is performing at or below the level of the “all students” group in the lowest performing 5 percent of schools.
Lowest Performing	A school that is in the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools in Illinois and any high school with a graduation rate of 67 percent or less.

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FROM PRESIDENT ALEXANDRA BROOK

BECOMING A BETTER BOARD: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We all may remember Tuesday, November 6, as Election Day, but for District 63 it was a **Teacher Institute Day**. Institute Days, held several times throughout the school year, are thoughtfully designed opportunities for teachers to learn new curriculum, materials, techniques, and specific knowledge in their teaching area. Our students achieve more when their teachers are using the latest tools and knowledge.

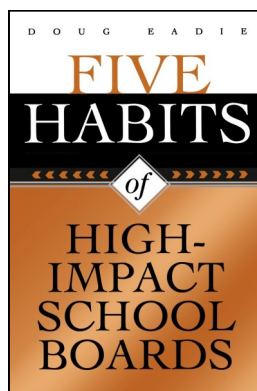
But teachers aren't the only members of the D63 community who participate in professional development; we Board members do also. We're charged with providing oversight for the entire District, and just as with our teachers, it's important we seek a deep understanding of our role. Our Board belongs to the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) which routinely offers required training as well as workshops on performance monitoring and self-evaluation.

Additionally, over the course of the past several months, our Board and executive staff have undertaken a book study, reading *Five Habits of High-Impact School Boards* by Doug Eadie. Each month, I assign a chapter or "habit" to read for discussion during the Board meetings.

This book study has lent itself to useful self-reflection. How involved in the day-to-day operations of the District do we need to be? How should we best set strategic direction for the District? Should we view our relationship with the Superintendent as a partnership—and what shape should that partnership take? How involved do we need to be in the community?

D63's Board comprises seven different voices speaking as one. Every day, we think about how our actions will affect our students and community and I'm proud to be part of such a dedicated Board. On that note, on behalf of the Board, I wish you a happy and healthy holiday season and all the best in the New Year.

Alexandra Brook



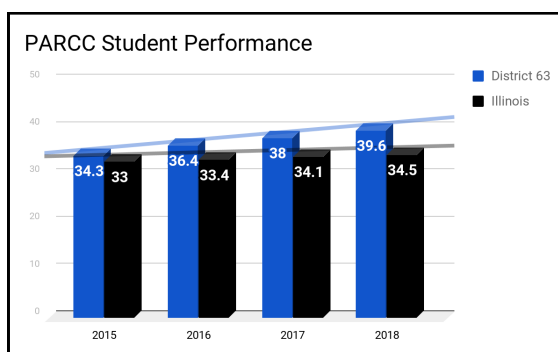
State Report Cards ... continued



to middle school, to strengthening the District's inquiry-based learning philosophy."

Scores Still Matter

The 2018 State Report Card does include scores. This year District 63 continued to exceed state-wide English language arts and math scores, and to widen that gap. As noted in the chart below, **scores for D63 schools are more than five percent higher than the aggregate state-wide school score** — up from 3.9 percent a year ago.



Changes on the Horizon

Since 2015, all Illinois school districts have used Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) scores to measure student achievement. But there's change on the horizon which may have a substantial impact on how D63 interprets its scores.

ISBE is moving away from the PARCC test. Beginning next spring, all schools will administer an **Illinois Assessment of Readiness**.

At this time, no additional information has been shared with school districts regarding the test — and as analyzing trends over time is a key part of planning strategically for academic growth, it may be that D63 must alter the way it assesses forward progress.

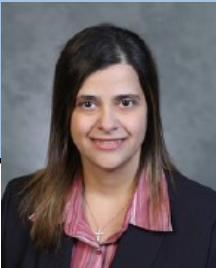
However, it's clear that D63's focus on student growth is making a positive difference.



KATIE ANDERSON APPOINTED TO D63 BOARD OF EDUCATION

At its October 4 meeting, the D63 Board of Education appointed **Katie Anderson** to fill the seat left vacant by former Board member Angelo Scarsella. The appointment runs through April 2019, when the seat will be filled through local elections. Anderson has three children – one who attends Melzer School. An active volunteer at her church and a past American Youth Soccer Organization Board member, she holds bachelor's degrees in English and marriage, family, and human development from Brigham Young.

"I'm truly honored and excited to serve on the D63 Board," Anderson notes. "I've been impressed with the enriched educational experience our schools offer - and the way they celebrate inclusiveness, family and community participation, and diversity. I look forward to supporting the District's focus on student success - and on the growth and development of every child's mind and future."



VASILIKI FRAKE NAMED DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL SERVICES

At its meeting on June 8, the Board approved the appointment of **Vasiliki Frake** as the District's new Director of Special Services. Frake previously served as Assistant Director of Student Services for Park Ridge-Niles School District 64.

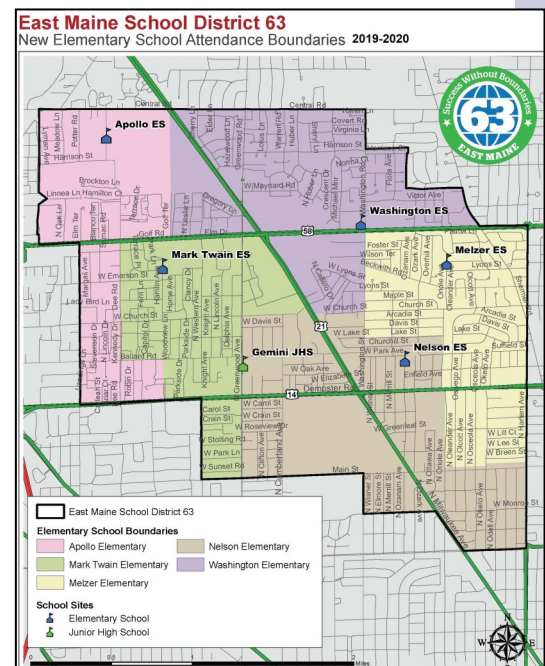
Frake earned her BA and MA in special education from Illinois State University and National Louis University, respectively, and is currently working on her Ed.D. in disability studies – also from National Louis. She began her career as a special education teacher at Lake Forest District 67, moving on to serve as Student Services Administrator for Glenview District 34's Springman Middle School, and then Student Services Coordinator at Palatine Community Consolidated District 15. Frake joined District 64 in 2014.

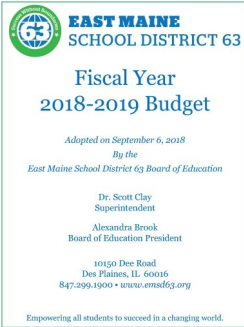
NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOUNDARIES FINALIZED

In August, D63's Board of Education made a final decision on new elementary school boundaries for the 2019-2020 school year — which will result in the **closure of Stevenson School**. Due to the shift of all 6th grade students to Gemini, the transition to full-day kindergarten, a new free-standing preschool, and other factors, redrawing boundaries will ensure that each school operates efficiently and is staffed appropriately.

All families impacted by the change were notified in September. Next spring, schools will host welcoming events for those who will be transferring in the fall. Learn more at www.emsd63.org —choose the *Building for Success: The D63 Master Plan* link on the Home Page.

In other Master Plan news: design is underway on D63's First Steps Preschool building, which will open in 2020. And staff continues to work toward the 2019 transition to full-day kindergarten and to a Gemini middle school model.





D63 BOARD APPROVES 2018-2019 BUDGET

At its September meeting, D63's Board of Education unanimously approved a balanced budget for the District's 2018-2019 school year. **The budget reflects operating revenue of approximately \$52.1 million and operating expenses of approximately \$51.7 million, resulting in an operating surplus of approximately \$400,000.**

In addition, the Board approved capital projects for the year 2018-2019 in the amount of \$15 million. These projects are part of ***Building for Success: The D63 Master Plan*** and are being funded with bonds issued last year.

You can find the full District 63 budget at www.emsd63.org — choose "Business Services" under the "About Us" tab.

ARE YOU IN TOUCH WITH DISTRICT 63?

Stay in the loop with D63 news and information.

Bookmark our Website
www.emsd63.org

Follow us on Social Media

@EMSD63 **@EastMaine63**

And all of our school Twitter pages

Sign up for *East Maine Update*

Our E-newsletter goes out every other Friday. D63 families already receive it, but community members are welcome!

Visit www.emsd63.org,
choose **About Us/Communications**
and follow the link.



**FROM
SUPERINTENDENT
DR. SCOTT CLAY**

**GEMINI CONSTRUCTION
WELL UNDERWAY**

In 2019, Gemini will transition from "junior high" to "middle school." And it will open its doors to all D63 6th-8th graders, increasing enrollment to more than 1,000 students. To accommodate this growth, work on our new 66,500 square foot addition – and 38,400 square foot remodel — is well underway. **Ultimately, the work will add more than 104,000 square feet of new and improved space to the building and enhance amenities from performance space to parking** (even our front entrance will be transformed—see image below).

Early in August we held a ceremonial ground breaking to celebrate the project start — and in the months since we've made much progress.



By the end of the calendar year, **excavation, underground plumbing, and foundation work** should be complete. Keep an eye out for **brick walls and structural steel** going up during the winter months, as weather permits.

Project cost is budgeted at \$33 million. However, as we work with our architects and construction management company to finalize the design and approve all subcontractor bids, labor and some material costs are coming in higher than originally budgeted. Our goal is to stay within the original budget, and so D63 is evaluating design modification options to bring costs back down. Regardless, the District won't require any additional property tax revenue to finance this expansion of the school.

When the dust settles, Gemini will be at the forefront of cutting edge learning space and an asset to the entire community. You can find more images — and a "virtual video tour" on our website. Visit www.emsd63.org.

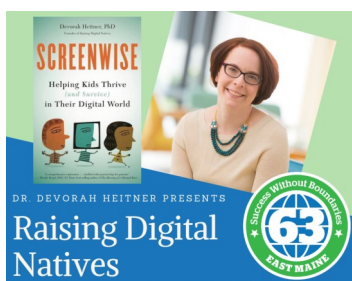
Scott W. Clay

DISTRICT NEWS: #63SUCCESS



Welcome to new Gemini Assistant Principal Brian Gariti. Gariti comes to the District from River Trails School District 26's Euclid Elementary School, where he taught 5th grade for four years, served as a grade level team leader, and completed a Principal Internship. Past professional teaching experience also includes working as both a reading instructional aide and special education aide for Oak Park and River Forest High School. Gariti holds a BA in English from Northern Illinois University and an MA in teaching from Concordia University. He also earned an MA in leadership from Northeastern Illinois University.

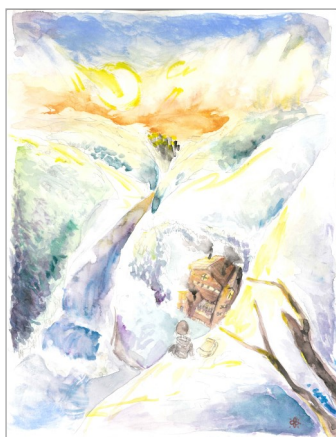
Preschool Goes Gold (Again). In September, First Steps Preschool once again achieved an **ExceleRate Illinois rating placing it in the Gold Circle of Quality.** The high rating recognizes programs that have met or exceeded specific quality benchmarks on 15 standards ranging from the learning environment and inclusion of children with special needs to continuous quality improvement and family/community engagement. ExceleRate Illinois is administered by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA).



Mentoring Not Monitoring: Help in Raising Digital Natives.

Parents gathered on a September evening to gain insight into their children's digital habits from **Dr. Devorah Heitner**, founder of Raising Digital Natives and author of *Screenwise: Helping Kids Thrive (and Survive) in Their Digital World*. Her key takeaways? Mentor—don't monitor. Be aware of your own digital habits. And use your own mistakes and opportunities to mentor.

Environmental Experts at the Farmer's Market. Last spring, Washington students won **five top awards and three honorable mentions in the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's 31st annual Poster and Poetry/Prose Contest.** In April, all eight students traveled to Springfield where they were recognized for their work. The resulting press coverage garnered an invitation to take over the "Green Table" at the Glenview Farmer's Market late in October. Many of our winners — most now at Gemini — came out on a chilly morning to show off their work and speak with market visitors about how to be an "environmental pioneer."



Winter Card Contest Takes the Chill Off. More than 70 K-8th grade students submitted artwork for the District's third annual Winter Card Design Contest. D63 staff and leaders cast "blind" votes (without knowing the student or the school) for their favorites in each grade. Our top winner, Apollo 6th grader **Camille Bajamundi**, created a hauntingly snowy scene touched with a glorious sunset in the distance. Camille's piece will be featured on D63's 2018 winter card and she'll be honored — with our Best In Grade winners — at the December 6 Board of Education meeting. All entries will be on display at the Niles-Maine District Library, 6960 West Oakton Street in Niles, throughout the month of December.

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East Maine School District 63
Educational Service Center
10150 Dee Road
Des Plaines, Illinois 60016

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CONTACT US
EAST MAINE SCHOOL
DISTRICT 63
847.299.1900
WWW.EMSD63.ORG



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SCHOOL ROUND UP FALL 2018

Apollo (*Des Plaines*) A new **Free Little Library** is available to any student. In November, our **Apollo Ambassadors** presented at the Board of Education meeting, sharing the many ways they foster kindness at the school.

First Steps (*Apollo, Melzer, Washington*) Parents joined their students for two **Parent Participation Days** this fall, learning more about what their children were doing in the classroom, participating in fun activities, and getting to know teachers.

Gemini Junior High (*Niles*) After a September fire displaced all residents at a nearby apartment building, **students jumped in to help**, collecting everything from toothpaste to soup and creating essential items donation boxes.

Mark Twain (*Niles*) On Halloween, Twain's young ghouls and goblins **paraded through the nearby Embark Senior Living** facility, bringing smiles and applause from residents. This annual "march" always fills the lobby to capacity!

Melzer (*Morton Grove*) Students welcomed special guest **WGN-TV meteorologist Mike Janssen** in October, who shared the ins and outs of weather and forecasting whether rain or snow is heading our way.

Nelson (*Niles*) The nonprofit **Enchanted Backpack** arrived in October with a generous school supply donation — and a film crew. Students "starred" in a video about the program and Ram Trucks, which are used to deliver the items.

Stevenson (*Des Plaines*) While students know they'll have a new school "home" next year, they're **jumping into their last year at Stevenson**, with Movie Nights, Fall into Reading Literacy Night, and Family Game Nights.

Washington (*Glenview*) Working with the District's Expanded Learning Program, the school piloted a new after school **Soccer Club** this fall. A Read and Play Picnic combined hot dogs and great books.