

NORTHBROOK UPDATE

A Newsletter from the Northbrook School District 28 Board of Education

DISTRICT 28

**EMPOWER
EVERY
LEARNER**



MOSAIC IS A SYMBOL OF HEALING

Members of the Northbrook Junior High Community Art Club gather around the mosaic they created as part of a six-week program in partnership with the charitable organization Twist Out Cancer. The club brought together students and staff in an after-school activity to create art as a non-clinical experience to promote empathy, love, connection, health and rebuild a sense of community in a post-COVID year. NBJH Art Teacher Mark Hay (right of mosaic), Principal Scott Meek (next to him) and art therapist Minon Dupepe (left of mosaic) facilitated the program. The mosaic was also on display digitally at the WNDR Museum in Chicago.

Student Achievement Shows Growth Despite Pandemic

Student achievement data for 2022 shows increases – in some cases exponential increases – over a seven-year period. Student achievement did not drop in math during the pandemic and student achievement in English language arts recovered.

District 28 successfully deflected the challenges of the pandemic by providing consistent learning environments. Students were enrolled in either in-person learning while socially distanced or 100% remote learning. In addition, teachers implemented a new math program for K-5 and updated math instructional resources for grades 6-8.

“It’s important to recognize this is one data point and it’s important to maintain a growth mindset. However, these are objectively phenomenal results this year,” said Board President Tracy Katz Muhl.

“Teachers, staff and students should all be proud. It was phenomenal work running two programs – remote and in person - during the pandemic. I don’t want to miss the opportunity to stop and say thank you to everyone on the team for making it happen,” Muhl said.

Read more on page 5

SNAPSHOT

D28 AT A GLANCE

2022-23

Total Enrollment
1,830

625 – Northbrook Junior High
339 – Greenbriar
444 – Meadowbrook
422 – Westmoor (including Young Explorers)

88%
Teacher Retention

82%
Teachers with master's degree or higher

12:1
Pupil/teacher ratio

2%
Student mobility

4%
Low Income Students

14%
Students with IEP

6%
English Learners

20.8%
Students identified as Gifted

17.9
Average Class Size

Student Diversity
76% White
14% Asian
5% Two or More
4% Hispanic
1% Black



REFLECTIONS

FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Jason Pearson, Ed.D.

Finding Joy In The Classroom

The 2022-23 school year is in full swing here in District 28 and I am proud to have joined the team as the new Superintendent of Schools.

Recently, I was returning from a trip and observed an interesting set of interactions on the plane. First, while boarding, two young girls enthusiastically exclaimed to the flight attendant greeting passengers, "Are you the snack girl?" Smiling, the flight attendant replied, "Why, yes...yes I am, I've been called a lot of things, but I don't think I've ever been called that!" She proceeded to pull out a basket of snacks from the cabinet and let each girl pick one. After a thank you, the girls bounded down the aisle, ready for the journey. A few minutes later, another set of children asked to see the pilots. I watched as they were welcomed into the cockpit, and both pilots got up out of their seats and allowed the children to sit and pose for a photo. Both the parents and the children were grateful for the memorable moment.

As I reflect on the first half of the year here in District 28, I have noticed memorable moments all across our district while visiting classrooms. For example, I have been in a kindergarten room sharing a story about fall, sitting on the floor in second



grade listening to children read a favorite passage from a book, learning to play the Ukulele with junior high students, observing 3rd-graders writing a poem, standing at the board with a group of 6th-graders hearing how they solved a math problem and participating in readers theater with 7th grade language arts. Each day, our children enter our schools with a sense of awe and wonder. They ask inquisitive questions and seek to gain new perspectives. Our District 28 teachers and staff respond with engaging lessons and compassionate answers. This is learning.

In this edition of Update 28 we share a glimpse of some of those moments. We are proud of our academic achievement results, Westmoor School receiving the National Blue Ribbon award, and our expanded outdoor classroom in honor of retired Superintendent Dr. Larry Hewitt. There is so much to celebrate in our schools and community. I am grateful for the value we place collectively on the learning journey of our children. I hope that as you read you will be reminded of your own learning experience and that you, too, will find some joy in the moment.

Dr. Jason Pearson
Superintendent of Schools

*Data from the 2022 Illinois School Report Card

INSIDE OUR SCHOOLS

CLASSROOM SNAPSHOTS



Greenbriar Packs Build Community

For 30 minutes once a month, Greenbriar students and staff meet in Packs of 8 to 10 that include students from every grade level plus one to two staff members. The Packs stay together throughout their years at Greenbriar and meet monthly to do various activities that create new friendships, a sense of belonging and empathy. And, they even create hand signals! The Greenbriar Packs are the subject of Episode 2 of the District's new podcast, **Insight28**, available on popular podcast channels and at northbrook28.net

Multi Lingual Lunch

Northbrook District 28 students come from a variety of backgrounds and native languages. The primary languages other than English spoken at home are Russian, Korean, Spanish, Polish, Urdu and Ukrainian – in addition to 29 other languages spoken at home by at least one student. Meadowbrook Principal Ericka Garza created Lunch Bunch sessions to bring together multi-lingual students to meet twice a month to play games together, eat together, and speak in their first languages.



Visiting Author Inspires Young Writers

Author K.A. Holt impressed 4th & 5th grade Westmoor students during an October visit. From talking about the “messy” revising process to the power of free verse in telling a story, our 4th & 5th grade writers are forever changed! “I really try to get to kids who don't love reading. I want to write books that invite kids in and aren't intimidating and have realistic characters that are just like they are,” Holt said. Library Advisory Committee members served as the author's ambassadors during her visit.

Student Mentors Support 6th Graders

Being a 6th-grader navigating Northbrook Junior High can be a little overwhelming and a little scary after spending the last six years in a small elementary school growing up from a bashful kindergartner to a pre-teen. At Northbrook Junior High, 8th-graders are trained to come to the rescue as mentors. Each pair of mentors meets with a group of X-block students five times a year to do a team-building activity and then to simply talk about any questions or concerns the younger students may have. Pictured at right, two mentors lead a classroom activity during a fall session.



HAPPENINGS



Outdoor Classroom Surrounds Holocaust Tree

A new outdoor classroom at Northbrook Junior High was officially opened on Oct. 20 as retired superintendent Dr. Larry Hewitt cut the ribbon on the space built in recognition of his 15-year tenure in Northbrook District 28.

Adjacent to the organic garden, the gathering space is centered around the Terezin Tree, a silver maple that is a direct descendant of a tree planted in the Terezin Concentration Camp and nurtured by children during the Holocaust. Longtime Northbrook residents Sam and Dede Harris donated the sapling in 2017 and it has grown into an established tree.

“Creating a student gathering space around the tree so that it can serve as a place for reflection and learning was a goal for Dr. Hewitt. Today we celebrate his contributions to Northbrook District 28 with this new outdoor classroom,” said Board President Tracy Katz Muhl at the ribbon cutting ceremony attended by staff and community guests.

Openings For Early Childhood Program

Young Explorers Early Childhood program encourages exploration and skill development through child-centered experiences that build self-confidence and connections between learning and natural environments. The program serves special needs students, at-risk students and typically developing students in a blended classroom model.



The program is located at Westmoor School, 2500 Cherry Lane, Northbrook, and is open to all students who live within District 28 boundaries. The program has rolling enrollment so students can enter any month of the year, space permitting.

Screening appointments for next school year are also being accepted. Please contact Helene Josephson at 847-504-3809 to schedule a screening. Children must be 3 years old at the time of the screening.

Please visit northbrook28.net/YE for more information.

ABOUT D28

SCHOOLS

Northbrook Junior High

1475 Maple Avenue, Northbrook
Scott Meek, Ed.D., Principal

Greenbriar School

2195 Cherry Lane, Northbrook
Ginny Hiltz, Ph.D., Principal

Meadowbrook School

1600 Walters Avenue, Northbrook
Ericka Garza, Principal

Westmoor School

2500 Cherry Lane, Northbrook
Mary Sturgill, Principal

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STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

ASSESSMENT SCORES INCREASE DESPITE PANDEMIC

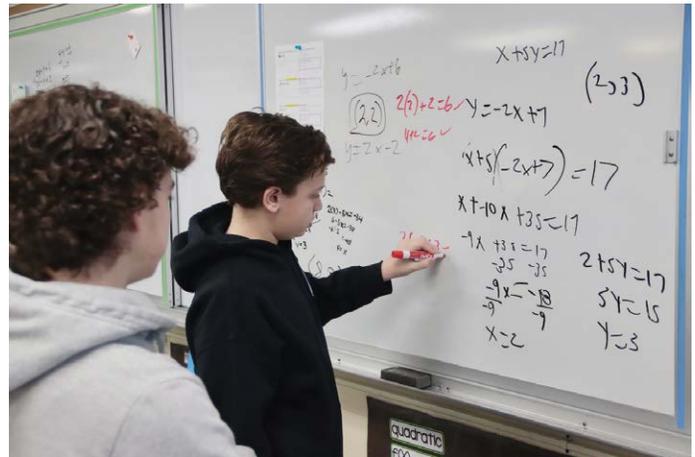
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ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The district-wide percentage of students who met or exceeded standards in ELA increased by 19 percentage points over the past seven years. Over the past three years, factors that may have positively impacted achievement include the addition of a grammar program in both elementary and junior high and new resources in grades 6-8 to support technical reading and writing skills. The district will continue to refine the strengths and define areas of need during the ELA curriculum review now in progress.

MATH

The district-wide percentage of students who met or exceeded standards in mathematics increased 16 percentage points over the same seven-year period. The district underwent a curriculum review process of mathematics in 2019-2020, which led to a number of significant changes in math instruction. The junior high adjusted the course pathways to ensure students are receiving the appropriate level of differentiation. A junior high math coach was hired to support teachers with professional development and instructional coaching. Instructional time for math was increased in all grades. Elementary grades implemented a new math program, Bridges in Mathematics.



Eighth-grade students work collaboratively on algebra problems to discuss their thinking for solving the equations in Algebra Class. Northbrook Junior High made several adjustments to the math program over the last three years.

“Teachers implemented these changes in 2020-21 at the height of the pandemic,” said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kris Raitzer in presenting the data to the board. “To say they accomplished the impossible might sound like hyperbole but in the case of our teachers, I think it reflected their true accomplishment. The commitment they made with their own learning and working together to make it happen was an amazing thing.”

Westmoor School Celebrates Blue Ribbon Award

Westmoor School is one of 17 schools in the state and 297 nationally to receive the 2022 National Blue Ribbon School award by the U.S. Department of Education as an Exemplary High-Performing School.

Principal Mary Sturgill, Superintendent Dr. Jason Pearson and veteran teacher Beth Coughlin, attended the U.S. Department of Education ceremony in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 4. On Nov. 7 students, staff and honored guests celebrated the award at school. Congressman Brad Schneider attended the celebration to congratulate students and staff.

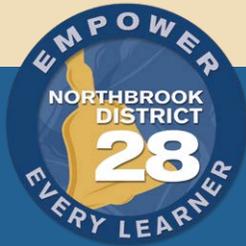


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****ECRWSS ****

RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER
NORTHBROOK ILLINOIS 60062



UPDATE 28

Kindergarten Registration

February 6-10, 2023

Visit northbrook28.net/Kreg for information

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Want to know more? Subscribe to receive monthly reports on the Board of Education meetings. Visit the district website, northbrook28.net and click on the “subscribe to e-news” at the bottom of the page.



Board of Education meetings are streamed live, and archived, on the “Northbrook District 28” YouTube Channel. Search YouTube, or access through the ‘live streaming’ link on the district website.



Follow us for classroom snapshots and school news.

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Instagram: @D28Northbrook

Twitter: @D28Northbrook

Online Registration for the 2023-24 School Year

Kindergarten registration for the 2023-24 School Year will be held February 6-10, 2023. Please visit northbrook28.net/kreg for details. You can reach out to the administrative assistant at the school your child will attend with any questions you have:

- Greenbriar School: 2195 Cherry Lane, 847-498-7950, Contact: Diane Gillis
- Meadowbrook School: 1600 Walters Ave., 847-498-7940, Contact: Anne Danstrom
- Westmoor School: 2500 Cherry Lane, 847-498-7960. Contact: Tracy Ferraro