



July 15, 2024

## Student Learning and Support Services Update

### Strategic Goal Monitoring

Superintendent Michael Amadei provided the Board of Education with an overview of the progress to date as the new five-year strategic plan formally begins. The district Cabinet team met on July 12 to discuss next steps as it relates to the 2024-2029 plan. Information about the new strategic plan is on the [website](#) and includes a series of videos that includes Dr. Amadei and middle school students discussing the new plan and what it means to them and their future.

### Approval of STR Partners as Architect of Record

Over the last three months, the district has been working on securing architectural services from a new firm for the district. All of the requirements of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process as required by state law were followed. After selecting a group of firms to be interviewed from the 13 valid submissions and then ranking each firm, STR Partners was the firm ranked first. Contract language is presently being reviewed by attorneys for STR and the district, with the expectation for Board approval at the August Board meeting.

### Review of Summer Programs and Preview of SY2024-2025 Kickoff

The Board of Education received an overview of District 62 summer programs and how the district is preparing for the upcoming school year. A copy of the presentation can be accessed [here](#).

## District 62 Board of Education

**Ronald Burton**  
President

**Elizabeth Massa**  
Vice President

**Stephanie Duckmann**  
Member

**Tina Garrett**  
Member

**Gene Haring**  
Member

**Beth Morley**  
Member

**Jeanette Weller**  
Member

**Margaret Goodchild**  
Secretary to the Board of Education

## Approval of Installation of Inclusive Playgrounds

While the district's playgrounds are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant, the district has been working over the last year to make our playgrounds more inclusive in areas where the need is greatest. For approval are orders to purchase two additional play areas that are wheelchair accessible, along with the purchase and installation of the playground surfacing through the Sourcewell National Joint Purchasing Cooperative. NuToys Leisure Products has provided an order for inclusive playgrounds and surfacing at Forest Elementary for \$257,846 and at Cumberland Elementary for \$273,664, at a total cost of \$531,510. After the order for the equipment is placed, the district will be able to schedule installation with a certified playground installer, which will incur an additional cost. The Board approved the purchase of two inclusive playgrounds, along with the purchase and installation of playground surfacing, at Cumberland and Forest Schools in the amount of \$531,510. Installation may take place in spring of 2025 depending on when materials arrive.

## Approval of Purchase of Property located at 1717 Rand Road, Des Plaines

The Board of Education formally approved a contract for the purchase of a property near North Elementary School located at 1717 Rand Road in Des Plaines.

"This acquisition will serve the district well," said Board President Ronald Burton. "It will provide needed space and access to existing district property for many generations to come."

The Board of Education approved the contract in the amount of \$1,139,000 for nearly two acres of land. The property is currently owned by Maryville Academy and houses the Catholic Charities. Closing on the parcel of land is anticipated to occur sometime in the fall. The exact needs for the use of the property will be determined as part of the [2024-2029 District 62 Strategic Plan](#).

## District 62 Administration

### **Dr. Michael Amadei**

Superintendent of Schools

### **Mark Bertolozzi**, Assistant

Superintendent of Business Services

### **Kathleen Kelly Colgan**, Assistant

Superintendent for Human Resources

### **Amy Cengel**, Assistant

Superintendent for Instructional Services

### **Dr. Ramona DeCristofaro**

Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

### **Adam Denenberg**,

Chief Technology Officer

### **Jennifer Tempest Bova**, Director

of Community Relations

### **Colin Baer**, Director of Social

Emotional Learning

### **Dr. Julie Fogarty**,

Director of Curriculum

### **Elizabeth Juskiewicz**, Director for

Second Language Learners' Programs

### **Heidi Rudy**, Director of Student

Services

### **Michael Vilendrer**, Director

of Operations, Maintenance and Transportation

### **Christina Bowman**,

Curriculum Coordinator and Data Specialist

### **Anel Escamilla**, ELL Coordinator

### **Electra Giannakopoulos**, ELL

Coordinator

### **Karina Paul**, ELL Coordinator

### **Erica Tae**, ELL Coordinator

### **Jill Dzik**, Student Services

Coordinator

### **Benjamin Keele**, Student Services

Coordinator

### **Angela Riggio**, Student Services

Coordinator

### **Brandon Schaefer**, Student

Services Coordinator

### **Katerina Vaselopulos**, Student

Services Coordinator

## Consent Agenda

### Forest Elementary School Principal



Amber Soike was named Principal of Forest Elementary School.

“I am deeply honored to have the privilege of joining Forest Elementary School as principal,” said Soike. “I am eager to begin building relationships with staff, students, and their families and to team together to ensure each child’s success.”

Soike joins the District with 12 years of experience in public education. For the last three years, Soike served as the assistant principal at Tioga Elementary School in Bensenville. Prior to her time as a school leader, Soike served for five years in East Maine School District 63 as a 2nd and 6th grade teacher, for two years in Chicago Public Schools as a 2nd and 3rd grade teacher, and for two years in Riverdale CUSD 100 as a 5th grade teacher.

## Communications

### Board of Education

President Burton thanked everyone who participated in the Des Plaines Independence Day Parade. He was very happy to see all the students and staff present. Member Morley announced that members of the District 62 Education Foundation met recently. The Foundation is looking into future events including a fundraiser to honor Foundation Director Maxine Hubbard who passed away in June. Member Haring announced that the Community Backpack Project is in need of items. The [Community Backpack Project](#) supports District 62 families in need and is led by Jana Haas. Items in need include: canned tuna or chicken, 1 pound bag of rice, canned red beans, fruit cups or canned fruit, plastic bottle of pancake syrup, can of heavy/hearty soup, boxed macaroni and cheese. Donations may be dropped off at the Self-Help Closet and Pantry of Des Plaines, 769 Holiday Lane, Des Plaines from 1 to 5 p.m., August 1, 7 and 8.

### Superintendent Report

Superintendent Dr. Michael Amadei welcomed two new members to the Cabinet team, Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services Amy Cengel and Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Dr. Ramona DeCristofaro. In addition, Dr. Amadei welcomed back Iroquois students and staff. He recognized Principal Kelly Krueger and Assistant Principal John Rey from Iroquois for participating in the Des Plaines Independence Day Parade. Dr. Amadei recognized the passing of John Burke who was a fellow Kiwanian and beloved community member. Dr. Amadei highlighted the August 16 Institute Day that will be primarily centered around building culture in our district. The day will begin at 9 a.m. and will feature keynote speaker Jimmy Casas. Following Mr. Casas’ presentation to staff, lunch will be served.