

Challenge, Collaborate, Create!

# The 109 Way



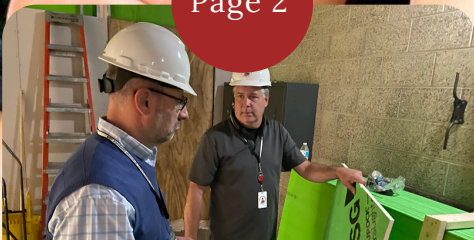
A bi-annual publication of the sights, sounds,  
and news from Deerfield Public Schools District 109

Spring/Summer 2024

[www.dps109.org](http://www.dps109.org)



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**SPOTLIGHT ON  
OUR "HIDDEN GEM"**



Thank You  
For Your  
Service!

## The DPS 109 Board of Education

(listed from left to right)

**Dr. Mitch Dornfeld**

**Mrs. Kate Joyce**

**Mrs. Kelly Jakymiw, Secretary**

**Mrs. Sari Montgomery, President**

**Mr. Ryan Kuo, Vice President**

**Mrs. Rosie Bonar**

**Mr. Andrew Morrison**

## A Word From Mike

To the 109 community,

As we reflect on the past school year, I am grateful to be in Deerfield and for the engaged community. It's easy to take our community for granted and assume that everyone enjoys the same benefits

we do. The levels of public support for our schools, the remarkable children our community sends us, and the public services in addition to our schools such as our various police and fire departments, park districts, and libraries impress us daily. These are aspects of our community that have few, if any, peers. We hope you recharge and refresh over the summer, and that your children especially find the joy and reprieve they've earned.



When you return in the fall, we will be looking for your guidance on issues affecting our children, our schools, and our community. A veteran superintendent provided sage advice years ago. He said, "Mike, treat the community like your classroom. Invite them in, and ask them to help you solve shared problems. They'll appreciate it, and it will make you smarter." That approach is exactly what we have in mind as we look to the future of Deerfield 109 and seek ways we can further our shared interest of raising happy, healthy, and productive children together.

Sincerely,  
Michael V. Simeck  
Superintendent, Deerfield Public Schools District 109

Every meeting starts on a good note! Since 2022, the Board has welcomed over **300 students** to its meetings to be recognized for their accomplishments and showcase what they are learning as part of "What's Good in 109?"



Below: A new way to get students up, moving, and excited in P.E. class! Board members took on Kipling 3rd graders in some games using the Lu Interactive Gym.



Live streams and recordings of all meetings are available at [dps109.org](https://dps109.org)

## Investing in 109's Future

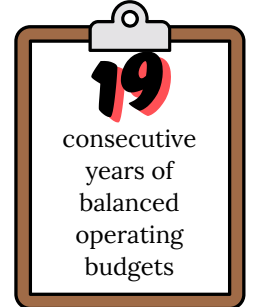
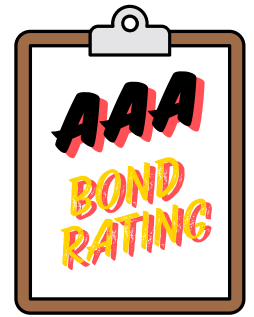
Over the last 18 months, DPS 109 has been undergoing a master facility planning process to determine the short and long-term needs to make our schools the best educational environments possible for our community.

This past spring, the Board of Education reviewed strategies and recommendations from the master facility planning steering committee as they work to vet long-range plans. The board advised the administration to further develop Strategy C, which would involve the replacement of all four elementary schools. It would also examine if any additional renovations need to take place at our middle schools on top of all of the work that has been done over the past decade and is planned, including:

- 2015-2016: New science labs
- 2018: Renovated libraries
- 2019: New cafeterias
- 2022: Caruso auditorium renovation
- 2025: Expansion of fine arts & PE space at Shepard

Follow along with our progress and opportunities for public engagement in the coming two years!

[dps109.org/master-facility-planning](https://dps109.org/master-facility-planning)



When were our schools built?

KIPLING - 1948

WILMOT - 1955

WALDEN - 1957

SOUTH PARK - 1959

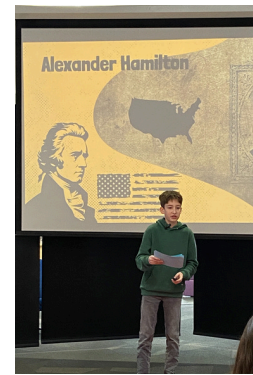
SHEPARD - 1961

CARUSO - 1968

# Curriculum in 109 is Always Evolving

We review and evaluate one or more of our curriculum guides each year to ensure we always move forward and equip our students with the most up-to-date educational practices and curricula. Staff members and team leaders meet throughout the school year to discuss modifications and how to implement those in each classroom. Every conversation is focused on how to give our students the best educational experience possible.

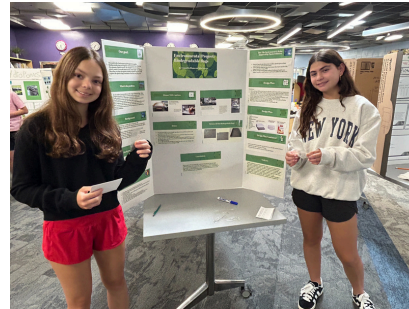
**Right:** Our STEM and CMA curriculum instructors converse about the modifications made in the most recent curriculum review.



**Above:** Shepard 6th Graders partake in “Grit Talks”, where they research an individual of their choosing and present to their class how that individual has shown grit in their life.



**Left:** Caruso & Shepard facilitate a financial literacy scenario where students are given a career & salary, then build out a budget.



**Left:** Caruso 8th graders held an environmental investigation fair. These students began preliminary work on creating their own homemade biodegradable bags! Other topics included hydroponics and reusable straws and paper towels, and creating recycled jewelry.

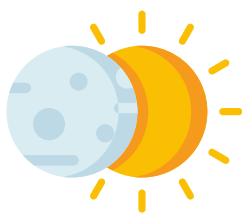
**Below:** Walden students learned about Eclipses and how infrequently they appear. In a unique turn of events, they were able to go outside and see a real Eclipse!

## A (Near) Total Eclipse of the District!

On Monday, April 8th, 2024 a near-total eclipse covered a large piece of the midwest, including Deerfield. Our educators took this as an excellent learning opportunity for our students!



Safety first for our Early Learners!



**Right:** Students and staff ventured outside to watch the Eclipse that won't be visible in the Midwest again until 2044!





## Keeping Students Safe In The Digital World

**School today is all about technology. Students use it to communicate, to solve problems, and to learn.**

Let's face it, all of this technology played a critical role in helping us navigate the pandemic. However, we have also seen the problems it can cause through social media and in developing interpersonal communication skills.

**DPS 109 is committed to teaching our students to be good digital citizens.** Starting in kindergarten, students receive lessons about how to properly use their devices, what to do if someone they don't know tries contacting them, and how to behave in potentially compromising social situations.

## A New Direct Line To First Responders



We know that in a critical situation, time is everything. This year, DPS 109 purchased new radios that feature a dedicated channel tied directly into the 9-1-1 dispatch center in Deerfield. We are one of

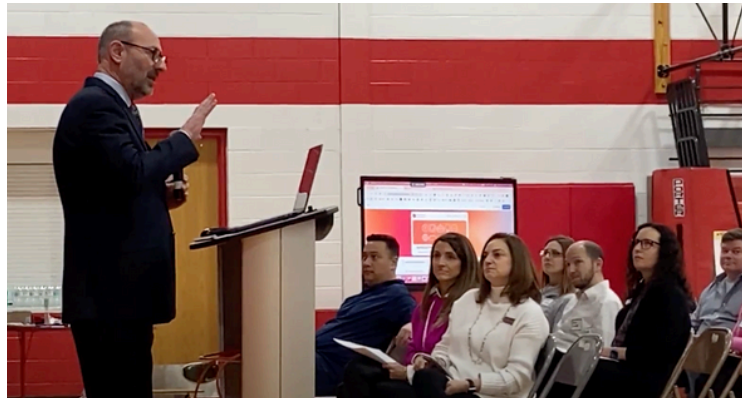
the first school districts in the area to enter into a partnership like this!

**"This integrated 2-way radio system will significantly improve communication and collaboration during emergencies, ultimately leading to a safer learning environment for everyone."**

**-Sgt. Steven Pettorelli, Deerfield Police**



## Partnering With Families & The Community



This past winter, DPS 109 hosted a Community Well-Being And Safety Night in the gym at Shepard Middle School. Various school district departments along with community partners presented information about topics that may be of interest to families like:

- **Limiting screen time**
- **What to watch for on certain platforms like Instagram, Twitch, Discord and others**
- **Common safety issues in your home to check out**



Above: Innovation Curriculum Specialist Maria Galanis discusses online safety resources with a parent while Board of Education member Kelly Jakymiw listens on.

We are thankful for the partnership of the Deerfield Police Department, Deerfield Bannockburn Fire Department, Linking Efforts Against Drugs (LEAD), and Be Smart for joining us.

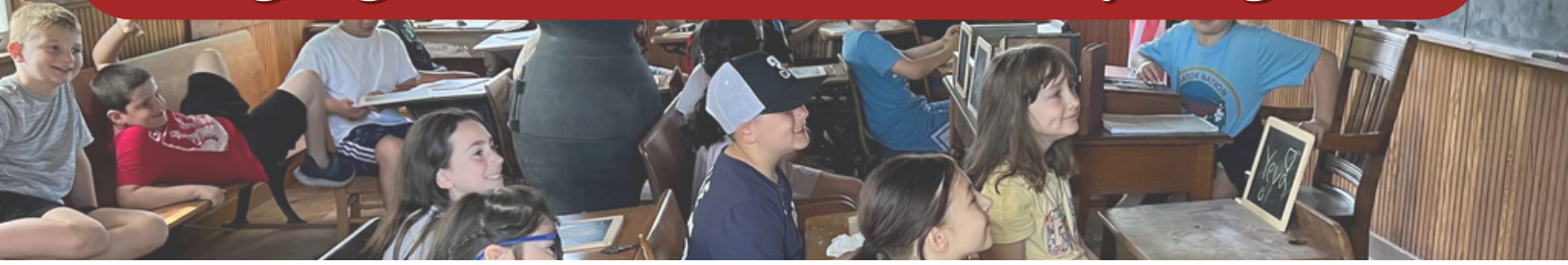


Above: Members of the Deerfield Police Department speak with attendees at the safety night



You can find lots of helpful tip sheets & watch the presentation at: **dps109.org** or by scanning the QR code on the left

# Bringing Schools & Community Together



Above: Hundreds of students visit the Historic Village each year and learn about Deerfield's past

## Two Full Gyms For Two Great Causes

Shepard Middle School partnered with the Deerfield Police & Fire Departments on the 3rd annual Pack The Place basketball game, with donations going to the 100 Club of Illinois. School Resource Officer Maldonado (on the right) even got in on the action! It was also the debut of the Shepard Pep Band (third picture down). The event raised **\$2,570!** Students & officers were also recognized at a Village of Deerfield Board of Trustees meeting.



On the other side of town, Wilmot, South Park and Caruso teamed up for a staff volleyball tournament. Students ran all aspects of the event, from selling tickets and concessions to announcing to running the scoreboard.



All proceeds went to Bounce Children's Foundation, which supports kids who have an extended hospital stay. The event raised **\$2,798!**



## Finding Your "Sole" Mate

Kipling started a running club this year, with students training all year to accomplish their goal of running a 5K, which they did on a Saturday morning on the DHS track!



## A Fitting Tribute To Our Friend



DPS 109 has installed a Little Free Library outside of Wilmot Elementary School dedicated to Maureen Wener. Mrs. Wener was serving on the Board of Education last year when her life was tragically cut short. We miss her passion and dedication that she brought in her service to the board every day. We were honored to have Maureen's husband and son, along with officials from the Deerfield Public Library (where she was a former board member) and many friends and family join us for the dedication. We invite you to visit the library and help us honor her passion for reading and learning.



This summer, Wilmot will open its library on two occasions for families to spend time together and for students to check out books!



Our DPS 109 librarians teamed up with the DPL to have starring roles in their very fun Summer Reading Video! Go to our Facebook page to check it out!



Our Shepard Baking Club continued their star-studded lineup of guest bakers this year who came in to work with our young chefs! Thank you for your support!

**Lending Their Sweet Expertise**

# EARLY LEARNERS



Our unique Early Learners program is a preschool program that provides both full and half-day services. This program embodies our commitment to foster academic, social, and emotional growth by serving a diverse mix of typically developing preschoolers and those with special needs. With a focus on preparing children for success in kindergarten, we provide targeted support in pre-academic skills, social-emotional development, motor skills, and language acquisition.



Above: Two early learners work together to build a puzzle during free play

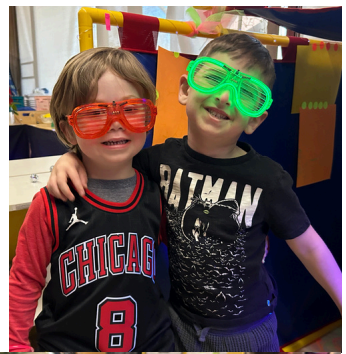


## BUTTERFLY DAY!



This Spring, our Early Learners learned (and witnessed) the life cycle of a butterfly. They watched the metamorphosis of their classroom butterflies and then set them free!

February 29th, 2024 was not only Leap Day, it was also National Rare Disease Day! Our Early Learners acknowledged the day with a Glow Day, where they celebrated each others uniqueness with a glow-in-the-dark dance party!



Our Early Learners program regularly evolves to fit our students' needs. Each year we continue to be flexible when new students enter, maintaining an average class size of 15 students per classroom and obtaining the appropriate number of multi-disciplinary teams. Our staff members know about each child's individual needs and services so they can provide the safest environment and best education possible. With a blended classroom style, students observe and learn from one another, which can result in early exposure to inclusive environments.

# The Final Chapter Of Their 109 Stories



**Above:** Designated students for both Caruso (Left) and Shepard (Right) were the opening speakers for graduation.



**What teacher has had an impact on you?**  
 "My 6th grade science teacher was always inspiring me to write, she always loved my writing, and she said I should continue doing it in the future, which I do want to do that."  
 -Madison M.



In the first week of June both Shepard and Caruso Middle Schools held their Graduation in the Deerfield High School auditorium. They were welcomed with open arms with a message from their soon-to-be new principal. Before they departed, we asked a couple of students a few questions about their time in District 109 and what they looked forward to at Deerfield High School (DHS).



**What activities are you looking forward to continuing at DHS?**  
 "I'm looking forward to continuing in track & field. Trying to get a sub 60 [seconds] because I'm just on the brink of it now."  
 -Austin W.



## Let the Endless Summer Begin!

In the middle of May, we celebrated our devoted retirees! We are so thankful for all of them and their many years of service to District 109. Their absence will be felt but we are excited to see what new adventures they have in store!



**Below:** Fellow teachers give teary-eyed sentiments for Ilene Grossman.



**Left to Right:** Mike Medow, Amy Karasick, Dawn Saarva, Erika Yaffe, Juli Mages, Ilene Grossman, Sally Wyman



**Above:** The Kipling 'Krew' gets together for one final crew picture with Amy Karasick.

## Field Day Fun!



**Left:** Walden 5th graders attempt to unfold a frozen t-shirt.



**Right:** Kipling students cheer after winning tug-of-war!



**Left:** South Park students make a smooth handoff during a relay race.



**Right:** Wilnot students participating in the balloon toss.



Deerfield Public Schools District 109  
 517 Deerfield Road  
 Deerfield, IL 60015

Check Out Our NEW Website!  
[www.dps109.org](http://www.dps109.org)



Connecting Our Students  
 With the Community  
 Read more on page 5

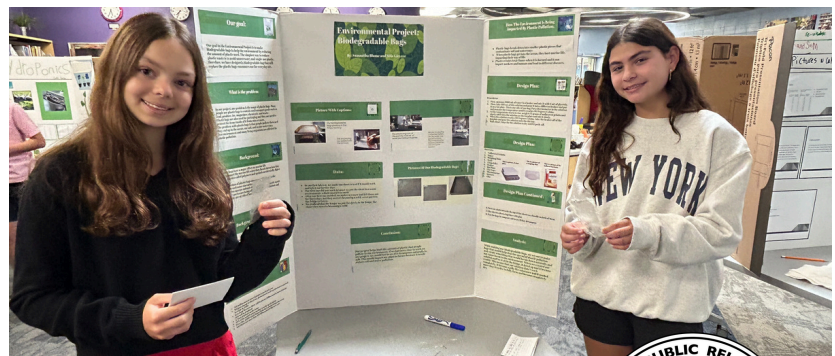


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Saving The Planet:  
 One Idea At A Time  
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2x Winner of the  
 NSPRA Publications  
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 Excellence Award!

