

NewsBits



October 2024

Have you visited our website?

We want to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in our spring survey regarding our district website. Your feedback was helpful to us and played a role in shaping improvements to make our website a more user-friendly and informative resource for our stakeholders.

Thanks to your input, we've made the following changes:

- The district calendar was moved to the top of the calendar site.
- The district and school calendars are no longer all in one block and have been separated.
- We have moved the download link for the PDF versions of the school supplies lists to the top of the page vs. the bottom.

Did you know?

- Our website has a site search button. For those of you who want to find information quickly, we invite you to use the search button located on the upper right hand corner just under the language button. Type in your search such as "Board of Education" or "NewsBits" and you will be taken directly to those pages.
- Our website has a translation feature. It is located on the upper right hand corner of the website.
- Over 20 languages are available including Spanish, Russian, Ukrainian and Polish.

Please continue to visit our website at www.d62.org. We will continue to review and refine our website as we focus on improvements. Thank you again for your time and feedback. Your continued engagement is essential in ensuring our website serves the needs of all our stakeholders.



EMPLOYMENT PORTALS HEALTH & SAFETY DIRECTORY CALENDARS SCHOOLS
OUR STORY LEARNING PROGRAMS & SERVICES ENROLLMENT GET INVOLVED



Future Ready Learners

**COMMUNITY
CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL
DISTRICT 62**

District 62 educates approximately 5,000 students (PreK-8th grade) in 11 schools, including one early learning center, 8 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and one year-round K-8 school. We proudly serve and support students and families from Des Plaines and Rosemont.

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NEWS & EVENTS

District 62 welcomes new administrators to the team



Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services

Amy Cengel joined the team as the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services. The Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services is responsible for overseeing curriculum and instruction and the second language programs department as well as overseeing state and local assessments, developing the district calendar and overseeing materials adoption and management. Cengel has served as Principal of Forest Elementary School for the last three years. Prior to that, she was Principal at Oak Terrace Elementary School in Highland Park and was

named Lake County Principal of the Year in 2019. Prior to that she was principal at South Elementary School in District 62 for three years and had also served as an instructional coach and middle school teacher in District 62.

Assistant Superintendent for Student Services

District 62 welcomed **Dr. Ramona DeCristofaro** as the Assistant Superintendent for Student Services. The Assistant Superintendent for Student Services is responsible for leading, managing and overseeing all aspects of the Student Services department. The Assistant Superintendent for Student Services directs the planning, development, organization, management, direction, and implementation of all aspects of Student Services for the district which include, but are not limited to, special education, student discipline, interventions, early childhood programs, social emotional learning, student safety, Section 504 and serve as a complaint manager and Title IX coordinator. DeCristofaro comes to the district with two decades of experience in special education, having most recently served as the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services in Evanston/Skokie School District 65 for the last five years. In that role she oversaw special education, multilingual programs, health services, early childhood programs and services for students experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness.



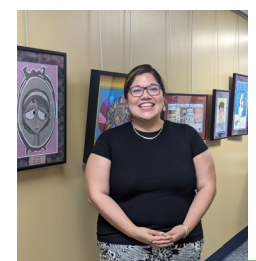
Director of Student Services



Heidi Rudy joined the District 62 team as its new Director of Student Services. The Director of Student Services shares a key role in the management and leadership of the Student Services department. This role will utilize current research and best practices to build and sustain district-wide systems that will promote the academic growth and social emotional well-being of all students, along with being responsible for overseeing a variety of student support services including special education, Section 504, social work, and health services.

English Learner Coordinators

D62 welcomed **Electra Giannakopoulos** and **Karina Paul** who are responsible for supporting school leaders and staff with meeting the academic and social emotional needs of English Learners. They will be working with schools in their efforts to support students as they transition to English. They will be responsible for coordinating schedules, overseeing the administration of ACCESS testing (as required by the state) and ensuring students are making measurable gains within state standards.





Assistant Principal

Taylor Ivan joined the team at the Jane L. Westerhold Early Learning Center as its new assistant principal. Ivan has spent the last eight years as an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher and Teacher Facilitator, serving students and families at the Westerhold Early Learning Center. She has also served on various teams and committees in District 62, including the mentorship program and the Strategic Plan Team.

FinanceBits

At its September meeting, the Board of Education approved the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. District 62 has the practice of budgeting conservatively with actual revenues likely to be higher, and actual expenses lower, than budgeted.

Revenues are projected to be \$114.2 million and expenses are estimated at \$123.8 million, creating a budgeted deficit of \$9.6 million.

District 62 schools participate in Pay it Forward Initiative this past spring

Algonquin Middle School

Algonquin Middle School students created a message of gratitude for all of the support and encouragement they receive from the parents and guardians of District 62. The signs were placed on the lawn outside of AMS for the entire community to see.



Central Elementary School

The students of Central Elementary created a “buddy bench” that is placed outside of the school building. Students signed their names in colorful markers and it will serve as a friendly place that students, staff, family and visitors can take some time to get to know each other, have conversation and rest.

Chippewa Middle School

Chippewa 8th grade students participated in a service day during Language Arts class to learn the values of service, kindness and community. One of the service projects the students participated in was planting flowers in hand-painted pots to give to the residents of Lee Manor Nursing Home. The students also made dog toys out of used t-shirts and donated them to a local animal shelter. Finally, some students chose to create “kindness cards” for the Loving Lunches initiative, a program that feeds the homeless in the Chicagoland area. The cards were given out with every lunch distributed.

Cumberland Elementary School

Students painted rocks to share images, pictures, colors and patterns to celebrate kindness and compassion. The school then created a rock garden to beautify the grounds and send a positive message to the community.

Forest Elementary School

Fifth grade students went to Feed My Starving Children and worked together to pack over 100 boxes of food for needy families across the globe. The 4th grade students stayed local and cleaned up litter around the school and in the field between Forest and Algonquin. Other grade levels left notes of kindness around the building and made thank you cards for bus drivers, crossing guards and support staff.

Iroquois Community School

ICS' 4th and 5th Grade Student Council hosted an all-school clothing drive, which benefited the Des Plaines Self Help Closet and Food Pantry.

North Elementary School

The 4th grade class ran a clothing drive and donated to Catholic Charities. Students created video advertisements to present to students promoting their donation drive. As a culminating event, the class walked to Catholic Charities to deliver their donations.

Orchard Place Elementary School

The Orchard Place Student Council members work as representatives of the student body and the school community. When the opportunity to Pay it Forward was presented, there was no doubt that giving back to our local community was a priority. As beneficiaries of the Community Backpack Program, the Orchard Place community benefits from community partnerships to supply families with meals each weekend. Over a period of three weeks, Orchard Place students collected over 200 breakfast, snack and self-care items for the Des Plaines Food Pantry.

Plainfield Elementary School

Plainfield Elementary School engaged in a school-wide read of "I Walk with Vanessa" and as an extension of this paid it forward by drawing ways to "Walk with Kindness" on shoes. The shoes decorated all lockers in the school as a reminder of the importance of walking with kindness and being kind.

South Elementary School

The students made kindness quilts with their classroom buddies and hung them up outside the classrooms on proud display.

Terrace Elementary School

The Terrace Student Council created a bulletin board titled, "We Lift Each Other Up" that is based on the "UP" movie. Then each student wrote on a balloon how they "lift" each other up or ways people can show kindness. In addition, the Student Council went on a field trip to Feed My Starving Children. They learned about why they were packing boxes and how they were working together to help not only our community but the global community.

Westerhold Early Learning Center

A Kindness Tree was created where the ELC staff and students displayed hearts with the kind acts they have seen or have demonstrated at school. Children made their own hearts as well as saw their peers and staff put up hearts on the tree. The staff are great role models for our ELC students to learn how to uphold positive values, such as empathy, compassion and respect for others.