The Leaflet

Fall 2024

NATIONAL SCHOOL PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSOCIATION
PUBLICATIONS AND DIGITAL MEDIA EXCELLENCE AWARD
2024
HONORABLE MENTION
NEWSLETTER



Student Zoe Magana plays on the Pre-K playground built as a part of the John Mills referendum project.

401 ELMWOOD PARK COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT



2024 Elm Championship Softball Team

Elm Girls Softball Win Second Championship

The Elm Girls Softball team has won the conference championship for the second year in a row! They won the 2024 title by beating Lincoln-Norwood 11-4, coming off of both an undefeated season and playoffs. The arrival of head coach Sue Dutton in 2022, and assistant coach Kathy Demas this season, has marked a series of successes for the team. In her first year, the team made it to the championship although they failed to clinch the title. In the following season, they lost only one seasonal game and won the 2023 championship. Both the 2023 and the 2024 team have also been led by 8th grader Hailey Smith-Young, star pitcher and hitter. She set the pace for the team in the championship game by homering in the 1st inning. Congratulations Elm!

Elmwood Park Wins Big Joining Upstate 8 Conference

This year, District 401 joined 13 schools in the Upstate 8 Conference. The conference is split into East and West divisions, with 401 in the East division. The conference also extends to extracurricular activities. EPHS is set to host the Upstate 8 Conference Art Fest, and will compete in Scholastic Bowl and Math Club. EPHS teams have started off in the conference strong, with great performances in many fall sports. Junior Sam LaBarbera was the Upstate 8 Conference Golfer of the Year, finishing 1st place during the regular season and Upstate 8 Conference Tournament Championship. Girls Volleyball, Boys Soccer, and Girls Tennis all finished in 3rd place in the East Division, and Freshman/Sophmore Girls Cross Country finished 3rd in all of Upstate 8! Go Tigers!

What's Next?

As we enter the holiday season, here are some dates to keep in mind!

- Dec 23-Jan 3: Winter Break
- Mar 22-31: Spring Break
- Jun 1: High School Graduation
- Jun 3: Last Day of School

All Schools Commendable!

For the 23-24 school year, all of District 401's schools received a COMMENDABLE summative designation from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). This means there were no underperforming student groups as determined by ISBE across our buildings, and our 4-year high school graduation rate was 87.8%.

ILLINOIS REPORT CARD

Early Childhood Program Earns Quality Recognition Award From the State

District 401's Early Childhood Program has achieved the Gold Circle of Quality from ExceleRate Illinois, a state quality rating and improvement system for licensed child care. The district earned this recognition by meeting the system's set of standards focusing on early learning and development. The Gold Circle of Quality is the highest attainable achievement.

"I am incredibly thrilled, proud, and honored that our program earned the Gold Quality recognition from the state," said Dr. Stephanie Daly, Executive Director for Student Services. "This achievement is a testament to our teachers and their unwavering commitment and relentless pursuit of excellence."

This achievement would not have been possible without our amazing Early Childhood Teachers at District 401. Thank you for your hard work and dedication!



Early Childhood Student Rhiley Lockhart and Xavier Cerda play on the John Mills Pre-K playground



EPHS Students Visit the Dominican Republic



EPHS students enjoy whitewater rafting

This article's full-length edition was written by Senior Yeimi Alday, as part of EPHS's journalism program. Read more at epcusd401.org/news.

This past summer, 11 EPHS students had the opportunity to go on a school trip to the Dominican Republic, led by teacher Kendal Ahlmann

The trip included service-based learning, alongside fun exploration such as whitewater rafting, relaxing on the beach, and cultural experiences such as pottery classes. Ahlmann says the purpose was to get students more engaged with the community.

Students worked with an institute that specializes in biodiversity and participated in planting coffee trees. Senior Joaquin Aguilar looks back on the experience positively. "It made me feel like I was doing something important," he says.

The other service opportunity was a collaboration with InspireDR, a sports-based afterschool program for boys. It was senior Sophia Chora's absolute favorite activity. "Getting to know the kids living there and helping them through sports was definitely a highlight of the trip for me," she says.

The trip highlighted the lives of DR youth, including the challenges and advantages they experience. Senior Olivia Martinez-Mohabir noted the memorable social environment. "I got to see a real community — everybody was so friendly there," she says.

The students agree that this trip went beyond just a vacation. "It was a life-changing experience," said Chora. And for these students, it allowed them to get out of their comfort zone and changed the way they view their lives. "I learned to be grateful and appreciate the small things," Aguilar says.

Ahlmann leads an international trip yearly, with next year's team going to Ireland. It is open to students in the top 20% of their class, or with recommendation.

Transition Program Continues to Impact Lives in Elmwood Park

District 401 recognizes the importance of supporting students aged 18 to 22 with special needs by providing specialized educational programs promoting independence and life skills. Students in District 401's Transition Program are currently developing these essential life skills through both classroom learning and real-world experiences. Students get hands-on work experiences by partnering with local businesses.



Students Alessandra Camacho and Juan Sanabria preparing letters in the Transition Program

They also make, distribute, and sell their own products, such as dog treats and spice blends. Those profits are then used to fund special trips to places in the community for entertainment and life-skills practice.

"We celebrate the smallest victories in the biggest way possible," says Bridget Flood, a Transition Program teacher. Because each student in the program has different support needs, the staff works together to decide how to best support each student.



Get your school spirit wear!
epcusd401.org/spiritstore

Want to work for us?
Check out our job openings!
epcusd401.org/careers

Want to advertise with us?
email fentonm@epcusd401.org

Stories Around 401

Source
Mer Fenton, Writer & Designer
Dave Porreca, Photographer
Aaron Celmer, Ed.S., Editor
Sam Britten, Contributor

We have the privilege of telling the many stories of our staff and students at District 401. Below is just a small taste of what our district has been up to. Scan the QR code to view our entire district news section!

401 Recognized by INSPRA



401 has been recognized for multiple awards by the Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (INSPRA). Awards of Merit have been given for the "Join Our Team! Teaching in District 401" video and "We Are 401" series, telling stories like the Cardona family's.

The Cardonas are leaving a multi-generational impression on EPHS. Along with exploring their individual interests, Junior Eric, and Freshman Kylie, play both soccer and percussion, just like their father Alex Cardona ('03) did! To watch the Cardona story and other INSPRA-awarded videos, scan the QR code above!

Elmwood Walkathon for the Win



The annual PATT walkathon was a success, as Elmwood students were spurred on by all kinds of fun. Students raised over $8,000, motivated by fundraising milestones including the chance to be principal for a day!

EPHS Adds College & Career Center



Long-time EPHS counselor Paige Kozyra has moved into the role of EPHS's College and Career Counseling Specialist, where she can spend all of her time focusing on helping students prepare for life after high school.

401 Celebrates Legacy With Decade Wall



The unveiling of the EPHS decade wall captures what D401 is all about. After a year of coordinating with the community, the best of every decade is now proudly displayed, celebrating the legacy of Elmwood Park High School!

EPCUSD 401 BOARD OF EDUCATION



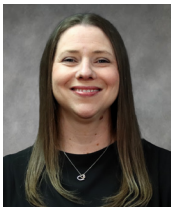
Frank Parisi
President



Peter Volpe
Vice President



Susan Capraro
Secretary



Jennifer Ranallo
Member



Jonathan Rivera
Member



Jason Shipinski
Member



Michelle Silver
Member

Building Principals

Dr. Amanda Brode-Rico, Elmwood Park High School
Ashley Groeneveld, Elm Middle School
Matt Lerner, Elmwood Elementary School
Frank Kuzniewski, John Mills Elementary School



Dr. Leah Gauthier
Superintendent of Schools

401 ELMWOOD PARK COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT

**********ECRWSS****
Residential Customer
Elmwood Park, IL 60707

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
PALATINE, IL P & DC
PERMIT NO. 7133