The JAGUAR

LINCOLNWOOD 74 SCHOOL DISTRICT

Spring/Summer 2025



SD74 students make the most of springtime with outdoor recess fun.

IN THIS EDITION ...

Meet the District's new Board members | Page 4

AI integration in education | Page 5

Fostering intergenerational community connections | Pages 10-11

... and more!

From the Superintendent



David L. Russo, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Lincolnwood School District 74 Learning Community:

With the end of any academic year, we have the great fortune to look back and reflect on all that has transpired in the past 10 months. While it is not always easy to see on a day-to-day basis, the cumulative academic and interpersonal growth of our students is outstanding. Not only have they demonstrated their development in the classroom, but also through the numerous extracurricular activities that our District has the great fortune to offer.

This year, the District implemented a strategic plan with a new Mission Statement ... One Campus, One Community Preparing, Inspiring, and Empowering Learners: One Moment at a Time. Our teachers and students have done an incredible job of creating moments to tighten the bond that students have with each other, their school community, and the Village of Lincolnwood.

One of the initiatives implemented to create these moments was reintroducing programming with local senior living facilities. Residents were invited to our Veterans' Day assemblies; band, orchestra, and chorale students performed during the holiday season; our 4th grade classrooms participated in a literacy activity; and the cast of the Lincoln Hall musical previewed songs and scenes from the show. These opportunities help students give back and learn from community members, and the District aims to continue fostering such collaborations.

A key accomplishment this year was reaching a four-year agreement (2025–2029) with the Lincolnwood Teachers' Association, following several months of productive and collaborative negotiations between the Board of Education and union representatives. The District retains an extremely talented and professional certified teaching staff, and we were extremely pleased with a smooth and mutually beneficial outcome.

A final reflection celebrates the vibrant 2024-2025 calendar of events that welcomed families and the community into our schools. From partnerships with the People Active with Lincolnwood Schools (PALS) group to numerous curriculum showcases, these events generate so much vibrance in the school year. We also thank the dozens of volunteers who came out to all our events, providing support to ensure logistics ran smoothly.

We were also excited to celebrate the Class of 2025 at our graduation ceremony! The District takes great pride in this remarkable group of students as they prepare to take the next step in their educational journey.

Finally, although regular school year classes ended on June 12, our campus continues to be bustling as the District is hosting our Summer Adventures program, and an Extended School Year experience, sponsored by the Niles Township District for Special Education. The summer construction season includes concrete repairs, HVAC pipe replacements at Todd Hall, and new outdoor basketball hoops. We're grateful for the resources to maintain and continually enhance our facilities.

Enjoy the fun, safe, and relaxing summer!



Band students practice before a holiday performance at The Carrington.



Students support Lincoln Hall athletes during RED OUT events.



Families pack Rutledge Hall for the District's annual Bingo Night.

Curriculum and Instruction Update

Recapping Accomplishments



Dominick Lupo, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction

This time of year is always a little bittersweet! We reflect on and celebrate the accomplishments and memorable moments from throughout the school year; it is also time to say goodbye to another set of relationships and experiences that have shaped us.

The curriculum department had a big project that concluded this spring. A team of 19 staff members reviewed our current kindergarten through 5th grade literacy programming and subsequently decided on future programming for our students. The committee evaluated several options, reviewed samples, and conducted site visits to observe how students use the programs before making recommendations to the Board of Education. Initial professional development and training sessions for the new programs have begun and will continue throughout the summer.

We also intend to build on the progress of our math curriculum, which will enter its third year at the middle school and its second year in kindergarten through 5th grade. Teachers report the new materials have resonated with students. With this conceptual approach, they learn how and why math works, instead of simply memorizing and recalling different formulas and processes.

Next school year, the curriculum department will evaluate our middle school literacy and foreign language programming. As with math, we are looking to gradually increase rigor and students' ownership over their learning.

Finally, we rolled out SD74 Summer Adventures at Lincoln Hall in June with 52 total classes across four sessions. This program gives students a blend of academic and experiential learning. Some of our offerings include a culinary-focused class called *Young Chefs* and a creative writing-themed class called *Amazing Authors*.

I hope everyone has a wonderful summer filled with special moments with friends and family!

District Happenings

Register for the 2025-2026 school year

3 steps to complete:

- Submit the online registration
- Provide proof of residency
- Pay school fees in full

*Ready to register? Visit **www.sd74.org > Family Resources > Registration**.*

To avoid a $25 late fee ***per student***, complete registration by August 1.



1st Day School Supply Kits

Brought to you by PALS

Purchase pre-packaged school supply kits online to be delivered to your child's classroom before the start of the school year.

PALS will receive a portion of the cost of each kit.

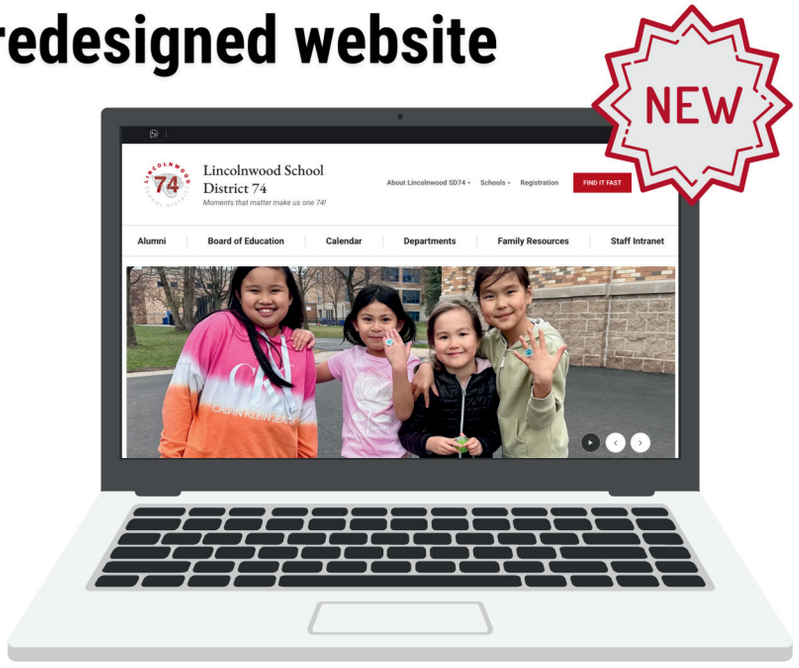
Deadline to order: July 1

District launches redesigned website

In mid-March, the District proudly launched its redesigned website -- an effort that began in April 2024. While the URL (*www.sd74.org*) remains unchanged, the site's look, functionality, and overall user experience have been significantly enhanced.

Over the course of 11 months, every page was thoughtfully restructured, with content organized in clear, intuitive categories to better serve District families and other visitors.

To further support ongoing improvements, the District has integrated Google Analytics, a tool that allows real-time tracking of the site's usage. This data shows which pages are most visited, what information users are searching for, whether they access the site via mobile devices, laptops, or desktops, and more. These valuable insights will guide future updates and ensure the site continues to meet our visitors' needs.



Highlights

- Across the website, pages are streamlined, with a cleaner and more modern design, and information is easier and more intuitive to find.
- You can translate the website into more than 240 languages with the click of a button located at the top left-hand side of the homepage.
- The 'Find it Fast' and icon menus on the homepage feature quick links to frequently visited pages.
- The District's new mission statement is prominently featured on the homepage.
- A dedicated Pre-K page makes it easier for families new to the District to find the information they need to know.

Tell us what you think!

Your feedback is important to us.

What do you like about the redesigned website? What can be improved?

Scan the QR code to let us know.

District Happenings

New Board of Education Members Sworn In

Longtime members Daly and Shah Mandal Retire



Rosenberg and Seta at the May 1 Board of Education meeting.

At the May 1 regular Board of Education meeting, Elissa B. Rosenberg and Mihra Seta were sworn in as new members following their election in April, each beginning a four-year term. The meeting also marked the retirement of two long-serving members: Kevin Daly, the acting Board president who had served since 2012; and Rupal Shah Mandal, a member since 2016 and the former vice president.

Rounding out the current Board are Ted Kwon, elected to a full term after initially being appointed last spring to fill a vacant seat; Peter D. Theodore, who was re-elected for a second term; and members Myra A. Foutris, Jay Oleniczak, and John P. Vranas.

Meet Elissa B. Rosenberg

"We love being Jaguars!"

Growing up in neighboring Skokie, Elissa B. Rosenberg recalls spending time enjoying Lincolnwood's parks and the pool with her grandparents. "They lived in Lincolnwood my whole life," she said. "I have only the fondest memories of being with them, and when it was time to look for a great place to start our family, Lincolnwood was the perfect choice."

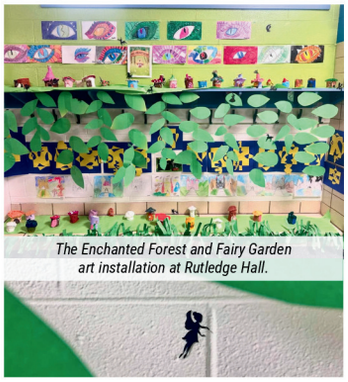
It's been 15 years since she made the move to town. Rosenberg now has a rising 5th grader in the District, Janna, and has experienced many #SD74Moments. "We love being Jaguars!" Rosenberg said. "While our experience hasn't been as sports- and teams-centered as it will be at Lincoln Hall, we have been proud to be part of music shows, art fairs, STEM nights, and Bingo Nights. If you pushed me to choose a favorite experience, it was the Fairy Garden from this year."

As she looked for ways to become more involved, Rosenberg considered running for a position on the school board. "I am so appreciative of all of the support that encouraged me to move forward and run," she said.



Rosenberg and her daughter.

After a successful campaign, Rosenberg says her focus now is on being competent, reasonable, and fair. "As a new Board member, I have a lot to learn, but I am not one to back down from responsibility or change," she said. "I also recognize that the value of the Board is a shared responsibility between members, and I look forward to the collaboration. I hope the community will continue to find me an affable and approachable member with only the best in mind for all of us."



The Enchanted Forest and Fairy Garden art installation at Rutledge Hall.

Rosenberg says she is a summer girl, through and through. When she's not at the pool, enjoying a meal in town, or reconnecting with friends, you can catch her accompanying Janna to her favorite store: Sephora.

Meet Mihra Seta

"It was meant to be."

Lincolnwood was out of reach for Mihra Seta and her husband when they first began searching for homes in 2009. However, just a year later, they stumbled upon their current home and, according to Seta, it was meant to be. They have now lived in Lincolnwood for 15 years and are raising three children in the village. Seta credits her family and friends with encouraging her to run for the school board. She says the timing was right. "My youngest daughter will be entering kindergarten in the fall, so we have many years left in the District," she said.

It helped that Seta's older children, rising 8th grader Leila and rising 6th grader Selma, have also had positive experiences in SD74 schools, leaving Seta with a desire to give back. "[They] have had terrific teachers year in and year out," she said. "They have built long-lasting friendships and have enjoyed playing sports, the violin, and the viola. Our District offers something for everyone, and we are grateful for that."

During her term, Seta plans to join the District's Finance Committee. "Given my background in banking, this will be my business goal. However, my personal goal is to help create memories for our students and teachers, as well as create connections within our community."

Building strong relationships is one of Seta's strengths. She spent three years on the executive board of PALS (People Active with Lincolnwood Schools), serving in both president and vice president roles. "PALS has been a fantastic way to get to know parents, teachers, and administrators," Seta said. "It allowed me to learn how our District operates and what an impact engaged parents can have in the community."

While her role on the school board required her to resign from the PALS board, Seta remains committed to staying involved. "I am sad to leave PALS. However, I will always look for ways to volunteer my time for events such as Appreciation Week, Ice Cream Social, and others."



Seta and her family.

In her free time, you can find Seta and her family enjoying the pool, bike trails, parks, and the many great restaurants around town.

District Happenings

Artificial Intelligence and Education

New work group explores how to leverage AI technology in classrooms



SD74 students will have the opportunity to develop AI-related skills in the classroom as early as next school year.

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly influential across all areas of society, a group of SD74 teachers and staff members has come together to explore how AI can be used effectively and responsibly in education.

"Members of the newly formed AI work group were tasked with discussing the ethical implications and potential misuse of AI in education, while also identifying practical strategies for integrating AI tools into classrooms in a meaningful way," SD74 Director of Technology Jordan Stephen said.

To build a shared understanding of AI's possibilities and challenges, the group investigated several AI tools to evaluate their strengths, limitations, and unique features. As part of their research, they also surveyed Lincoln Hall students to learn how they currently use AI, which tools they rely on, and what types of AI-related learning they believe should be included in the curriculum to prepare them for the future.

The group will continue its work over the summer, using its preliminary findings to guide AI integration in the upcoming school year. Members are enthusiastic about the possibilities ahead and are committed to supporting the District's broader goals of fostering digital citizenship and promoting the responsible use of AI among both students and teachers.

Board of Education and Teachers' Union Reach Contract Agreement

SD74 teachers will begin the 2025-2026 school year with a new four-year contract, which the Board of Education approved in March. It features salary increases to keep the District attractive to new teachers and competitive to returning staff, continued cost sharing on medical and dental premiums, and minor adjustments to how paid time off benefits are used.

Negotiations for the new Lincolnwood Teachers' Association (LTA) contract began in November. Board of Education members Peter D. Theodore and John P. Vranas met with four LTA representatives bi-weekly over approximately four months. This 'Informal Process for Expedited Negotiations' featured the two sides sitting across the table from each other, discussing individual topics and offering proposals and counter-proposals until an agreement was reached.

Of note is how collegial and productive the process was. "From the beginning of the negotiations, the Board and the LTA both clearly identified the issues that were most important to each side, and we were able to work through them by communicating openly and honestly," Theodore said. "Producing a drama-free result was always in the best interest of everyone involved, and we're thrilled with the outcome."

According to Dr. David Russo, superintendent of schools, the smooth negotiations reflect the District's deep respect for its teachers. "This process highlights our positive culture, not only as an exceptional place for children to learn, but also as a workplace where adults feel valued and professionally fulfilled."

Want to join

OUR 'ONE 74' TEAM?



District Happenings



The District held the 2025 graduation ceremony on June 9 at Niles West High School.

Donation funds A/V upgrades at Rutledge Hall

Thanks to a generous donation from SD74 alum Barry Berger (*Lincoln Hall Class of 1968*) and his wife Taffy, Rutledge Hall's gym and multi-purpose room (MPR) were outfitted with new audio-visual equipment this spring.

The MPR now features a modern projection system, while the gym has been upgraded with a new television and speakers. These enhancements support more interactive PE instruction, school assemblies, and family events like Bingo Night.

The District remains appreciative of the Bergers' continued support!



The new mounted television displayed numbers during Bingo Night in April.

Eye on Education









Recess

Not just a break from learning

Although SD74 students have recess daily, indoor activities tend to prevail during frigid months. Once spring arrives, the transition back to the outdoors brings a renewed sense of excitement.

Recess provides essential benefits for students. Moving around and playing releases built-up energy, helping to reduce restlessness during class time. Regular physical activity, such as during recess, also helps build lifelong habits that promote wellness.

Mentally and socially, recess also plays a critical role in students' development.

In the unstructured environment, they practice important social skills, which can go a long way toward fostering friendships, building confidence, and supporting their emotional well-being.

Additionally, taking a break from schoolwork gives their brains a chance to recharge, which can help students focus better, think more creatively, and solve problems more easily when they're back in the classroom.

All in all, recess isn't just a fun break -- it's an important part of a balanced education.








Eye on Education






Congratulations

to the cast and crew of
our spring musical

THE WIZARD of OZ

YOUTH EDITION








Best summer EVER!

Save the dates:

SD74 Summer Adventures runs June 23 - July 31

Questions? Email summer_adventures@sd74.org

Community Connections

PALS 2024-2025 Recap

PEOPLE ACTIVE WITH LINCOLNWOOD SCHOOLS

Connect with PALS! @sd74_pals | @SD74 PALS | sd74pals@gmail.com

Mini-Grant Program

At the start of the school year, PALS relaunched the SD74 Mini-Grant Program. It offers funding for creative projects, classroom resources, and initiatives to help teachers bring innovative ideas to life and support student learning in new and meaningful ways.

Following a competitive application process, PALS awarded eight teachers with mini-grants. These grants funded several resources, including an Aeroponic Growing Tower, a Gaga Ball Pit, and classroom materials such as educational math games, art supplies, dramatic play items, flannel boards, and sensory tools.



A Gaga Ball Pit and Aeroponic Growing Tower were among the items purchased with mini-grants.

Cahill Scholarship donation

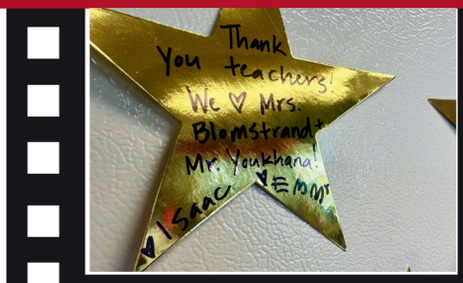
Thanks to a generous donation from PALS, the District was able to increase both the number and amount of scholarships this year, awarding five $1,000 Cahill Community Service Scholarships to high school seniors who are alumni of Lincoln Hall.

Congratulations to the recipients, listed as pictured:

- **Kira Oleniczak**, *attending Lipscomb University*
- **Lorelai Mandal**, *attending DePaul University*
- **Jonathan Nguyen**, *attending the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*
- **Saniya Khan**, *attending Loyola University*
- **Benjamin Klinghofer**, *attending Milwaukee School of Engineering*



The 2025 Cahill Scholarship Reception, held in April.



Appreciation Week

Lights, camera, action! PALS gave SD74 teachers and staff the star treatment during a Hollywood-themed Appreciation Week, held May 5-9.

From glitzy hallway decor to A-list meals, snacks, swag bags, and raffle prizes, PALS rolled out the red carpet.

The memorable week was a sincere expression of gratitude from students and families, thoughtfully organized by PALS.



Yard sign fundraiser

Deck your yard out with Jaguar pride! Order custom lawn signs to celebrate your SD74 graduate, athlete, or school. A portion of the cost of each sign will be donated to PALS.

This is an ongoing fundraiser; there is no deadline to order.

Scan to order





2024-2025 funds raised totaled **$26,500!**

When you support PALS, you support:

- Classroom enrichment
- Staff appreciation
- Student and family events
- Community givebacks

SD74 students celebrate National Poetry Month at The Carrington

Throughout April, in celebration of National Poetry Month, 4th grade homerooms from Rutledge Hall visited The Carrington at Lincolnwood to read and craft poems with residents at the senior living community.

Wearing name tags to make introductions easy and with poetry books in hand, students were paired with the seniors, who signed up to be Reading Mentors during the experience. Within no time, lively conversations were flowing.

“The children were eager to share, and it was clear that both parents and teachers had encouraged them to think deeply and to express themselves,” resident Jeanne Brady said. “We occasionally paused to talk about what the poems might mean. Now and then, they helped me write some poetry. I truly enjoyed spending time with these thoughtful and enthusiastic young people.”

4th grader Ola A. found reading to resident Kay Makarenko to be a really fun experience and believes other SD74 students would find it valuable too.

“Reading in front of an audience can be scary for some people,” she said. “This would help them build self-confidence in their reading skills.”

At the end of each reading session, residents presented the students with “Readers are Leaders” medals, and everyone posed together for a group photo.

“It was heartwarming to witness the engagement between our students and residents,” GATE Reading teacher Mona Taliya said. “Seeing the smiles on everyone’s faces was enough to brighten the entire day."

The reading visits are only one part of a year-long initiative to foster meaningful intergenerational connections between SD74 students and local senior citizens. In November, residents from Lincolnwood Place who served in the armed forces joined Lincoln Hall’s annual Veterans Day celebration, adding an impactful presence to the event. At The Carrington, orchestra, band, and chorale students spread holiday cheer with live performances in December; in May, the cast of “The Wizard of Oz” gave residents a special preview of select numbers before opening night.

These memorable experiences have not only enriched the lives of students and seniors alike but have also strengthened the sense of community across generations in the village.

“We looked forward to the visits each week and were refreshed by the openness of the students in their questions regarding senior living,” resident Jackie Favish said. “This experience was enriching for all of us."



Ola and Makarenko reading poetry together.









Thumbs up! The students and residents ended each session with a group photo.



Community Connections





"The Reading Mentors program was so well-received. The students were eager to read, and it was a good give-and-take experience. I hope we can continue it."

Trudy Schragal, resident

















Stay connected. Share moments that matter.

@LincolnwoodSD74 #SD74Moments

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*****ECRWSSEDDM*****
Residential Postal Customer

Rep your Jaguar pride!



Check out the District's spirit wear store for branded merch! Find hoodies, T-shirts, flannel pants, baseball caps, and more.



Visit **ShopLincolnwood.com** today!

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