

Community Consolidated School District 15

2025-2026

Retiree Recognition

May 13, 2026



Celebration

*E*ducation is not the filling of a pail,
but the lighting of a fire.

-William Butler Yeats

A teacher takes a hand, opens a mind,
and touches a heart.

-Author Unknown

*A*ge is only a number, a cipher for the records.
A man can't retire his experience.
He must use it.

-Bernard Baruch

*H*ow lucky I am to have something
that makes saying goodbye so hard.

-A. A. Milne



COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 15

May 13, 2026

Dear District 15 Retiree:

As we approach the end of another school year, what a tremendous range of emotions you must be experiencing as a soon-to-be retiree! I know I am feeling a deep sense of pride and gratitude toward the work you have done on behalf of students and alongside your colleagues in this very special district. I am feeling all the feelings as well!

On behalf of the Board of Education and me, I wish to extend a sincere congratulations to each of you on your retirement. It is a significant milestone. Your years of service and dedication to District 15 have certainly made a positive impact on so many students, families, and colleagues. Whether you have worked directly with students or provided the vital support that enables our schools and staff to do their jobs effectively, your many contributions have not gone unnoticed. Your contributions are also what makes District 15 such a wonderful place to work.

Together, the 51 members of the Class of 2026 have a combined total of 1,193 years of service! And even more amazing, 34 of you have been with the district for 20 years or more, 14 of you have been with the district for 30 years or more, and three of you have dedicated 35 years or more to District 15! Although the work is hard, such longevity illustrates what so many members of the staff have always known—people come to District 15 to build a career and make a difference.

As the school year draws to a close and you begin to dream of how to write your next chapter (or chapters), I hope you feel nothing but a true sense of accomplishment, knowing that your efforts made an immeasurable difference in a way few careers are ever able to.

Best wishes on whatever pathway retirement finds you. In the words of Dr. Seuss,

“You’re off to great places! Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting ... get on your way!”

With a deep sense of gratitude,

Laurie Heinz, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools



*Community Consolidated
School District 15
Board of Education
Recognizes the
2025-2026
Retirees*

*The following is a list of
Community Consolidated School District 15's
2025-2026 class of retirees,
many of whom have chosen to share stories
of their careers for this momentous occasion.*

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Mary Alberts

Special Education LEAP Teacher

Willow Bend Elementary School

35 Years

Mary started her career in August 1990 at Stuart R. Paddock Elementary School. After 35 years as a Special Education teacher, she plans to volunteer at her church and local animal shelter. Mary is grateful for the deep friendships she made over the years and is proud to end her career still truly enjoying the work she does with her students.

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Robert Blaisdell

History Teacher

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

35 Years

Robert began his career in August 1991 at Marion Jordan Elementary School, where he taught for 33 years before moving to Thomas Jefferson Middle School. In retirement, he looks forward to more time with his wife, Sharon, and their two daughters. Robert shares that he loved being part of a team and helping with extracurriculars like track and field and school musicals.



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Thomas Bramley

Director of Transportation

Transportation

17 Years

Tom began his career with District 15 in the summer of 2008 and has spent more than 17 years supporting the district's Transportation Department. In retirement, he looks forward to traveling and spending more time with his wife, Rita, and their daughter, Amy. He shares that he loved being part of the "District 15 family" and working alongside people who truly put the students' interests first.



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Anne Bridges

**8th Grade Math Teacher and
CTC Executive Director**

Plum Grove Middle School

33 Years

Anne started her career in August 1993 and spent all 33 years at Plum Grove Junior High/Middle School. Her future plans include lots of travel and family time with her husband, Paul, their three sons, and their daughters-in-law. Anne shares that the staff at Plum Grove have become like family to her over the course of her incredible three-decade tenure.



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Valentina Butzky

Grade 3 Teacher w/ESL

Kimball Hill Elementary School

30 Years

Valentina has dedicated 30 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Kimball Hill Elementary School as a Grade 3 Teacher w/ESL.

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Nori Campa

Bus Driver Aide

Transportation

27 Years

Nori's career began in September 1998, and she has dedicated 27 years to ensuring the safe transport of the district's students. In retirement, she plans to travel and spend quality time with her family, including her children and granddaughter, all of whom were District 15 kids. Nori shares that her heart warms every time she runs into a former student who remembers "Miss Nori."



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Susan C. Carlson

Comprehensive Music Teacher

Willow Bend Elementary School

35 Years

Susan launched her career in 1991 at Virginia Lake Elementary School, dedicating nine years there before serving as an itinerant teacher at several District 15 schools and eventually transitioning into her current role. Her retirement will involve mission trips and pickleball, but she will never forget the pure joy on her students' faces when they mastered a new instrument. Susan treasures the fantastic teachers she served alongside who went "all out" for their students.



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Annette Christensen

Third Grade Teacher

Frank C. Whiteley Elementary School

32 Years

Annette began her career in 1994, teaching at Thomas Jefferson Elementary School before moving to Frank C. Whiteley Elementary School. She looks forward to traveling Europe and spending time with her husband, Dave, and their sons. Annette fondly remembers her "second family" at Thomas Jefferson, specifically the morning the staff gathered to sing holiday songs to students as they entered the building—a memory that perfectly captures the spirit of the community she loved.



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Carol Coutts Siepka

Library Innovation Teacher

Plum Grove Middle School

28 Years

Carol's career began in August 1998. Over the last 28 years, she has served students at Frank C. Whiteley, Central Road, and Lincoln Elementary Schools before eventually joining the team at Plum Grove Middle School.

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Meredith Blatt

First Grade Bilingual Teacher

Virginia Lake Elementary School

27 Years

Meredith began her career in 1999 at Pleasant Hill Elementary School and has also served as a Bilingual/ELL teacher at Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Winston Campus, and Central Road Elementary Schools. She looks forward to spending more time with her husband and three adult sons. Meredith reflects that District 15 has been a consistent positive force in her life for nearly three decades, and she will miss the community very much.



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Cathi Dudczak

Special Education Program Assistant

Marion Jordan Elementary School

27 Years

Cathi started her career in 1999 in the SIP program at Jane Addams Elementary School, later moving with the program to Marion Jordan Elementary School. She is eager to visit her daughter in Reno and spend time with her eight grandchildren. Cathi's favorite memories are rooted in the rewarding work of helping her students every day and the wonderful, lasting memories she created with the kind colleagues she met along the way.



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Dana Foley

English Language Arts

Carl Sandburg Middle School

18 Years

Dana has dedicated 18 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Carl Sandburg Middle School as an English Language Arts Teacher.

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Jenny Garcia-Macko

Bilingual Resource

Carl Sandburg Middle School

27 Years

Jenny has dedicated 27 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Carl Sandburg Middle School as a Bilingual Resource Teacher.

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Teri Graf

Physical Education

Central Road Elementary School

30 Years

Teri joined the district in 1996 and has spent 30 years dedicated to physical education at Central Road. Following her retirement, she plans to give back by volunteering at the hospital that has supported her over the years. She is proud of her three-decade career promoting health and wellness for students.

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Jennifer Grosch

Principal

Marion Jordan Elementary School

23 Years

Jennifer began her District 15 journey in 2003. She served as an Assistant Principal at Central Road Elementary School and Interim Principal at Marion Jordan Elementary School before becoming the Principal of Marion Jordan in 2011. Jennifer's future will be filled with travel and family time with her husband, Tim, and children, Lauren, Alex, and Andrew. Looking back, she shares that the relationships built with colleagues and families are what she will cherish most, as being part of such a dedicated community made her time in District 15 truly special.



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Robert Harris

Principal

Willow Bend Elementary School

33 Years

Robert started in the district in 1993 as a 5th-grade teacher at Marion Jordan Elementary School. His career saw him serve as a Physical Education teacher at both Marion Jordan and Frank C. Whiteley Elementary School, and as Principal of both Frank C. Whiteley and Willow Bend Elementary Schools. He is looking forward to more time with his wife, Lindsey (a teacher at Pleasant Hill Elementary School), and their children, William and Allison. Robert reflects that his favorite part of the last 33 years was the fortunate opportunity to be a meaningful part of the lives of so many staff, students, and parents.



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Laurie Heinz, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Community Consolidated
School District 15

11 Years



Dr. Laurie Heinz concludes a remarkable 35-year career in education, including the past seven years serving as Superintendent of Community Consolidated School District 15. She first joined the district in 1998 as Assistant Principal at Winston Campus before going on to serve as a principal, Assistant Superintendent, and Superintendent in another district, ultimately returning to District 15 in 2019 as its first female Superintendent. Throughout her career, Laurie has been known for her innovative, people-centered leadership style and her unwavering commitment to ensuring students remain at the forefront of every decision.

During her time in District 15, Laurie led the district through a period of meaningful growth and progress, including the successful passage of the Moving 15 Forward referendum, expansion of full-day kindergarten, transition to a middle school model, and modernization of learning environments across the district. Beyond the work itself, Laurie has always placed a strong emphasis on relationships—building connections with staff, students, families, and the broader community through efforts like *Catch Up with Heinz*, *Hang with Heinz*, and the Superintendent’s Middle School Student Advisory.

As she steps into retirement, Laurie looks forward to spending more time with her husband and daughter, traveling, and embracing the next chapter with the same energy and curiosity that defined her career. Reflecting on her time in District 15, she shares that it is the people and the relationships built along the way that she will cherish most, and considers it an honor to have been part of such a dedicated and caring community.

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Ann L'Abbate

Special Education Program Assistant

John G. Conyers Learning
Academy

25 Years



Ann has dedicated 25 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at John G. Conyers Learning Academy as a Special Education Program Assistant.

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Irena Levitus

Support Staff

School Nutrition Services

Walter R. Sundling Middle School

23 Years

Irena has dedicated 23 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Walter R. Sundling Middle School working in School Nutrition Services.

Joyannie
Martin-Mehrl

Bus Driver

Transportation

17 Years

Joyannie first started working in District 15 in 2006, and has since dedicated 17 years of service to the Transportation Department.



Tracy Mueller

First Grade Teacher

Willow Bend Elementary School

34 Years

Tracy started her career in 1992, serving as a program assistant before teaching first grade at Willow Bend Elementary School. She looks forward to spending time with her husband, Glen, her daughter Madison (a teacher at Marion Jordan), and her sons, Tyler and Max.

Keith McKinnie

Head Custodian

Frank C. Whiteley Elementary School

28 Years

Keith has dedicated 28 years of service to the District 15 community. He most recently served the students and staff at Frank C. Whiteley Elementary School working as Head Custodian.

Yuko Nakagawa

ESL/Bilingual Teacher

Frank C. Whiteley Elementary School

25 Years

Yuko has dedicated 25 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Frank C. Whiteley Elementary School as an ESL/Bilingual Teacher.



Helen Michalopoulos

Special Education Program Assistant

Marion Jordan Elementary School

11 Years

Helen has dedicated 11 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Marion Jordan Elementary School working as a Special Education Program Assistant.

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Lyn Nawrot

Special Education Program Assistant

John G. Conyers Learning Academy

20 Years

Lyn has dedicated 20 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at John G. Conyers Learning Academy as a Special Education Program Assistant.

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Jean Nickle

Program Assistant

Kimball Hill Elementary School

9 Years

Jean has dedicated 9 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Kimball Hill Elementary School as a Program Assistant.

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Sonja Nilsen

5th Grade ATG Teacher

Stuart R. Paddock Elementary School

30 Years



Sonja started in the district in 1996 as a 4th grade teacher at Hunting Ridge Elementary School before becoming an Academically Talented and Gifted (ATG) teacher. She was honored during her career as a “Sponsoring Teacher.” Sonja is looking forward to hitting the road for travel with her husband, Ray. She cherishes the connections she built with her students and the “lifelong friends” she found among her colleagues who mean the world to her.

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Georgianne O'Donnell

Human Resources Generalist

Educational Service Center

17 Years

Georgianne has dedicated 17 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served staff and families at the Educational Service Center as a Human Resources Generalist.

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Katerina Papas

Support Staff

School Nutrition Services

Winston Campus Elementary/Middle School

10 Years

Katerina has dedicated 10 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Winston Campus Elementary/Middle School working in School Nutrition Services.

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Michael Patterson

Bus Driver

Transportation

5 Years

Michael has dedicated 5 years of service to the District 15 community. He most recently served students and families by working in Transportation as a Bus driver.

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Ewa Pitcher

ELL Teacher

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

26 Years



Ewa joined the district in August 2001, serving students at Winston Middle School, Willow Bend Elementary, and Thomas Jefferson Middle School. She also taught in Chicago and the Diamond School District. Ewa was recognized for her dedication with a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Writing award. She holds a special place in her heart for the home visits she made early in her career to support immigrant families. Ewa's future plans include volunteering, traveling, and hopefully living in Europe part-time.

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Elizabeth Prombo

Program Assistant

Lincoln Elementary School

24 Years

Elizabeth has dedicated 24 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Lincoln Elementary School working as a Program Assistant.

Alan Provenzale

Mechanic

Transportation

2 Years

Alan has dedicated 2 years of service to the District 15 community. He most recently served students and staff by working in Transportation as a Mechanic.

Lanae Recinas

Bilingual Social Worker

Lincoln Elementary School

28 Years



Lanae started her journey with the district in July 1998 and has spent 28 years supporting the students of Lincoln School. Throughout her career, she has been recognized for her excellence and dedication, earning the Those Who Excel Award as part of the Lincoln SST Team in 2011 and again as Student Support Personnel in 2018. Her future plans include traveling the world and spending more time with her family and friends, including her two children, Andrew and Kelsey.

Kyle Reid

Library Innovation Teacher

Winston Campus Middle School

34 Years



Kyle started his career in District 15 in August 1992. Over the last 34 years, he worked as a 7th and 8th Grade Science teacher as well as a Technology teacher before moving into Library Innovation. Kyle is deeply grateful for the life he and his wife, Maura (a 2025 D15 retiree), built here, noting that the district provided an incredible foundation for their four daughters. His future plans include traveling the U.S. with Maura, starting with the East Coast this fall and the West Coast in the winter.

Martha Richko-Alvarez

Bilingual Program Assistant

Virginia Lake Elementary School

16 Years

Martha has dedicated 16 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Virginia Lake Elementary School as a Bilingual Program Assistant.

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Lori Roberts

Bus Driver

Transportation

27 Years

Lori has dedicated 27 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served students and families by working in Transportation as a Bus Driver.



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Donald Sommerville

Social Worker

Stuart R. Paddock Elementary School

Gray M. Sanborn Elementary School

28 Years

Donald has dedicated 28 years of service to the District 15 community. He most recently served the students and staff at Stuart R. Paddock Elementary School and Gray M. Sanborn Elementary School working as a Social Worker.



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Carol Salerno

Math Teacher

Plum Grove Middle School

26 Years

Carol has dedicated 26 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Plum Grove Middle School working as a Math Teacher.

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Maria Sorce

Grade 4

Kimball Hill Elementary School

33 Years

Maria has dedicated 33 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Kimball Hill Elementary School working as a 4th Grade Teacher.

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Melissa Souden

Occupational Therapist

Gray M. Sanborn Elementary School
Thomas Jefferson Middle School

12 Years

Melissa has dedicated 12 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Gray M. Sanborn Elementary School and Thomas Jefferson Middle School working as an Occupational Therapist.

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Shirley S. Swiatowy

Visual Arts Teacher

Hunting Ridge Elementary School

18 Years

Shirley joined the district in 2009 at Marion Jordan Elementary School after previously teaching in Chicago. Her future plans include traveling and improving her painting skills while spending time with her husband, Jeffrey, and her three grandchildren. Shirley considers District 15 her “happy place” and feels it was a true privilege to share her lifelong love of art and learning with her students and the community.



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Margaret (Peggy) Szafranski

Special Education LEAP

Hunting Ridge Elementary School
17 Years

Peggy has dedicated 17 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Hunting Ridge Elementary School working as a Special Education LEAP Teacher.

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Tracy Templeton

Speech Language Pathologist

Winston Campus Middle School
26 Years

Tracy has dedicated 26 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Winston Campus Middle School as a Speech Language Pathologist.

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Sher Thomas

Program Assistant

Stuart R. Paddock Elementary School
26 Years

Sher has dedicated 26 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served the students and staff at Stuart R. Paddock Elementary School as a Program Assistant.

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Cynthia Torres-Ruiz

2nd Grade Bilingual Teacher

Willow Bend Elementary School

27 Years

Cynthia joined District 15 in 1998, serving in various bilingual roles. She finds great joy in remembering the Latino Family Literacy Project and International Nights. She loved seeing families discuss books, showcase diverse cultural performances, and share potluck meals, creating a vibrant, laughing community where everyone felt a sense of belonging.

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Henry Wentland

Bus Driver

Transportation

14 Years

Henry has dedicated 14 years of service to the District 15 community. He most recently served students and families by working in Transportation as a Bus Driver.

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Leah Wertheimer

Bilingual Social Worker

John G. Conyers Learning Academy

15 Years

Leah joined District 15 in 2011, serving all 15 years at Conyers Learning Academy, with some time spent at Thomas Jefferson and Virginia Lake Elementary Schools early in her D15 years. She looks forward to focusing on her next chapter while cherishing the time spent collaborating with talented colleagues. Leah feels honored to have fostered a love for school in the district's youngest bilingual learners.



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Karen Youngs

Bus Driver

Transportation

8 Years

Karen has dedicated 8 years of service to the District 15 community. She most recently served students and families by working in Transportation as a Bus Driver.

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Andre Zielinski

Visual Art Teacher

Stuart R. Paddock School

33 Years

Andre started in District 15 in 1993 as a 5th Grade Teacher. He is excited to fill his retirement with kayaking, gardening, and playing the accordion. For Andre, art and drama were about the process; he found his greatest joy in watching his students take risks and discover their own potential, whether in the art studio or while he was directing school plays and musicals.



Community Consolidated School District 15



Community Consolidated School District 15
580 N. 1st Bank Drive, Palatine IL 60067
Phone: 847-963-3000
<https://www.ccsd15.net>



**John G. Conyers Learning Academy
(Early Learning Center)**
2800 Central Road, Rolling Meadows IL 60008
Phone: 847-963-3400
<https://elc.ccsd15.net>



**John G. Conyers Learning Academy
(ABLE & REACH Programs)**
2800 Central Road, Rolling Meadows IL 60008
Phone: 847-963-3400
<https://cla.ccsd15.net>



Central Road Elementary
3800 Central Road, Rolling Meadows IL 60008
Phone: 847-963-5100
<https://cr.ccsd15.net>



Frank C. Whiteley Elementary
4335 Haman Avenue, Hoffman Estates IL 60192
Phone: 847-963-7200
<https://fcw.ccsd15.net>



Gray M. Sanborn Elementary
101 N. Oak Street, Palatine IL 60067
Phone: 847-963-7000
<https://gms.ccsd15.net>



Hunting Ridge Elementary
1105 W. Illinois Avenue, Palatine IL 60067
Phone: 847-963-5300
<https://hr.ccsd15.net>



Jane Addams Elementary
1020 E. Sayles Drive, Palatine IL 60074
Phone: 847-963-5000
<https://ja.ccsd15.net>



Kimball Hill Elementary
2905 Meadow Drive, Rolling Meadows IL 60008
Phone: 847-963-5200
<https://kh.ccsd15.net>



Lake Louise Elementary
500 N. Jonathan Drive, Palatine IL 60074
Phone: 847-963-5600
<https://ll.ccsd15.net>



Lincoln Elementary
1021 N. Ridgewood Lane, Palatine IL 60067
Phone: 847-963-5700
<https://ls.ccsd15.net>



Marion Jordan Elementary
100 N. Harrison Avenue, Palatine IL 60067
Phone: 847-963-5500
<https://mj.ccsd15.net>



Pleasant Hill Elementary
434 W. Illinois Avenue, Palatine IL 60067
Phone: 847-963-5900
<https://ph.ccsd15.net>



Stuart R. Paddock Elementary
225 W. Washington Street, Palatine IL 60067
Phone: 847-963-5800
<https://srp.ccsd15.net>



Virginia Lake Elementary
925 N. Glenn Drive, Palatine IL 60074
Phone: 847-963-7100
<https://vl.ccsd15.net>



Willow Bend Elementary
4700 Barker Avenue, Rolling Meadows IL 60008
Phone: 847-963-7300
<https://wb.ccsd15.net>



Winston Campus Elementary
900 E. Palatine Road, Palatine IL 60074
Phone: 847-963-7500
<https://wce.ccsd15.net>



Carl Sandburg Middle School
2600 Martin Lane, Rolling Meadows IL 60008
Phone: 847-963-7800
<https://cs.ccsd15.net>



Plum Grove Middle School
2600 Plum Grove Road, Rolling Meadows IL 60008
Phone: 847-963-7600
<https://pg.ccsd15.net>



Thomas Jefferson Middle School
3805 Winston Drive, Hoffman Estates IL 60192
Phone: 847-963-5400
<https://tj.ccsd15.net>



Walter R. Sundling Middle School
1100 N. Smith Street, Palatine IL 60067
Phone: 847-963-3700
<https://wrs.ccsd15.net>



Winston Campus Middle School
900 E. Palatine Road, Palatine IL 60074
Phone: 847-963-7400
<https://wcms.ccsd15.net>

Your years of commitment and dedication to your profession and to District 15 have made a tremendous difference in this community and in the lives of thousands of young people you have served.

*Thank you, and best wishes
for a happy and healthy retirement!*



Community Consolidated School District 15

Board of Education

Samantha Bray Ader, President

Frank J. Annerino, Vice President

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Wenda Hunt

Zubair Khan

Lisa Beth Szczupaj

Superintendent of Schools

Laurie Heinz, Ed.D.