



West Northfield School District 31

Family Engagement Handbook 2026-2027





West Northfield School District 31

Family Engagement Committee Mission

Empowering and encouraging families to be active partners to support student academic, social, and emotional learning and to foster family involvement within the District 31 community.

Vision

Every family is engaged and empowered to be a collaborative partner with the school community to positively foster the development of the whole child - academic, social, and emotional - by:

- Recognizing and celebrating the diversity of the District 31 community.
- Utilizing communication tools that fosters mutual respect, trust, and collaborative partnerships between home and school.
- Providing equitable engagement and involvement opportunities for ALL families
- Supporting the District Goal that all students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Fostering involvement and family education opportunities with school and community partners.

Goals

Strategies

Goal 1: Collaborative Engagement Around Student Learning	Goal 2: Continuum of Opportunities to Foster Involvement
District 31 will build partnerships with families around supporting and improving student learning in meaningful ways.	District 31 will foster a continuum of opportunities to build meaningful involvement with school.
Develop and promote opportunities for meaningful two-way communication between home and school.	Develop a family engagement/involvement continuum that includes ongoing partnerships with school affiliated organizations.
Provide relevant family education opportunities around supporting and improving student learning - academic, social, and emotional - in meaningful ways.	Create orientation opportunities to support families new to District 31.
Develop and communicate reciprocal community partnerships designed to support family health and social emotional wellness.	Provide feedback opportunities for families around school and district improvement.

Core Values

We embrace the following Core Values as we work to achieve our Mission, Vision, and Goals:

- Mutual Trust
- Diversity and Inclusivity
- Collaborative Partnerships
- A Focus on Student Learning

Engagement Vs. Involvement

Engagement

Collaboration and partnership with families around student learning; responsiveness to evolving needs. All Families

Involvement

Continuum of opportunities for participation in the classroom, school, or district, generally focussed on building community or supporting the district/school and students

What does Continuum of Engagement/Involvement Mean?

How can you be engaged as an active partner in your child's learning?

- Attend Curriculum Night
- Attend Conferences
- Attend Spring Open House
- Communicate with teachers or administrators
- Read school, district, and classroom newsletters
- Read with your child at home
- Support homework
- Utilize standards based reporting to foster understanding of student progress
- Participate in surveys and feedback opportunities

Continuum -- The goal is supporting involvement at different levels while focusing on engagement.

Board of Education

Parent Organization Leadership

PTO, BPAC, Ed Foundation, True North Parent Representative, Hunger Free Northbrook Representative

Volunteering

Room Parents, Committee Involvement, Organizational Representatives, PTO Activities

GOAL 2: INVOLVEMENT

Families have equitable opportunities to participate and become involved in the school and district community in different ways.

Attendance at Events

- PTO Organized
- School Organized (Material Pick Up, Meet the Teacher, Spring Engagement)
- Parent Education
- Committees - BPAC, PTO meetings, etc
- Sports/games
- Concerts, musicals and open houses
- Taking surveys

GOAL 1: ENGAGEMENT

Families are engaged in school/ home partnerships around student learning

Two-Way Communication Around Learning Between Home & School

- Parent Teacher conferences
- Dialogue around progress & assessments
- Supporting reading/ homework
- Access to resources & information

31 Communication

Text Messaging

District 31 sends text messages about important news, events, and emergency situations. Subscribe by texting “yes” to 67587. District 31 also uses Talking Points allowing for two-way communication with families in 145 different languages.



TalkingPoints

Email

- **Principal Weekly Messages** -Principals send out weekly messages with school specific information and events.



West Northfield School District 31
September Newsletter

September 9, 2022

Dear District 31 Community,

I can hardly believe that we are approaching mid-September already! Every day we are grateful to see our students and staff in our buildings collaborating and learning. We have been very busy these past few weeks establishing the school routines, welcoming students and families, celebrating learning, and kicking off our fall assessment window.

As we celebrate Library Card Sign-up Month, we are thrilled that both the Glenview and Northbrook Public Libraries have waived non-resident fees for children ages 18 and younger. I know that getting my first library card was a pivotal moment when I was a child. We are thankful that all students in District 31 now have the opportunity to experience all that our wonderful public libraries have to offer. It is our hope that all District 31 students become the proud owner of a public library card. Actress Katherine Hepburn once said, “What is the world would we do without our libraries?”

Now that we are moving into the fall and settling into the patterns and routines of the school year, we are looking forward to even more opportunities to engage in activities that celebrate our students, staff, and schools. Thank you for your partnership.

Warmly,

Dr. Erin K. Murphy, Superintendent

- **Teacher Communication** - Winkelman teachers send out twice monthly communication via email or Seesaw and Field teachers send out monthly grade-level newsletters.

- **Monthly eNews** -The District sends out monthly newsletters comprised of district-wide updates, important district and community information, and upcoming events.

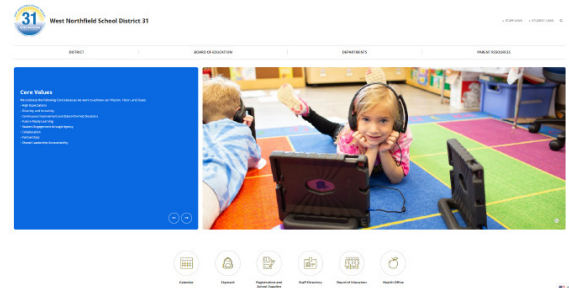
- **Important Updates and Safety Alerts** -The District sends out updates and alerts as needed.

Emergency Voice and Text Notification System

Families will receive text or call notifications from the District in the event of emergency situations or critical school alerts. Examples include: school closures, evacuation notices, lock-downs, and threats.

Website

The website is the primary source for the District’s most up-to-date information for families, staff, and all other stakeholders. Updates are made each day by District staff ensure transparent, up-to-date information to the public at all times.



to

Board of Education Meetings

Board of Education Meetings are held once a month. The public is welcome to attend. Those who cannot attend in person can watch meetings live via Zoom. Meeting minutes are available on the District’s Board Docs website.



Social Media

The District actively utilizes Facebook ([facebook.com/ WestNorthfieldD31](https://facebook.com/WestNorthfieldD31)).

Skyward

Skyward provides student class schedules, attendance records, progress reports, and other important information.



Press Releases

The District sends out press releases as needed to all local media.

Family Involvement Menu

The following volunteer involvement opportunities are available for all families at District 31. Descriptions including the level of commitment for each opportunity and contact information are provided. Check the District website for a list of the most current available opportunities.

Goal 1: Collaborative Engagement Around Student Learning

Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC)

Connects parents and staff and provides a space to work together to meet the needs of all bilingual students.

Commitment Level: Meets in person at least four times a year in the morning

Contact: Sandra Luna, sluna@district31.net

Board of Education

Interprets the educational needs and desires of the people and translates them into policies and programs that are implemented by the school administration. School Board members are elected officials. Interested candidates can find important election information and filing deadlines on the Cook County Clerk website.

Commitment Level: Monthly school board and committee meetings, preparation for meetings, budget review.

Contact: Cook County Clerk Office <https://www.cookcountyclerk.org/elections/candidates-and-elected-officials>

Caring Corner/Hunger Free Northbrook Liaison

Works with Hunger Resource Network to stock the Caring Corner. Orders food from Sunset Foods and arranges grocery pick-ups. Organizes the food in the Caring Corner and monitors the status of the shelves and replenishes as needed.

Commitment Level: .High commitment level for core volunteer, a team to help support is preferable.

Contact: Superintendent Dr. Erin Murphy, emurphy@district31.net

Family Engagement Committee

Helps support the mission of Empowering and encouraging families to be active partners to support student academic, social, and emotional learning and to foster family involvement within the District 31 community.

Commitment Level: Meets 4-8 times per year in the evenings via Zoom

Contact: Hayley Garard, hgarard@district31.net

Special Education Parent Group - CIRCLE

(Community for Inclusion, Resources, Collaboration, and Learning for Everyone)

Connects parents of special education students and staff and provides resources for students and families.

Commitment Level: Meets monthly during the school year in person

Contact: Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, jgruhn@district31.net.

Strategic Planning

Available every five years. Stakeholders are asked to participate in a series of meetings and focus groups to help review District data and needs and develop and refine goals and actions for the next five years.

Commitment Level: Moderate

Contact: Superintendent Dr. Erin Murphy, emurphy@district31.net

TrueNorth Parent Advisory Council

Organization for parents who have children with special needs. APS aims to heighten awareness and understanding of learning differences, provide ongoing training and education, and offer support and connections to all.

Commitment Level: Monthly Commitment

Contact: Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, jgruhn@district31.net.

Family Involvement Menu

Goal 1: Collaborative Engagement Around Student Learning

PTO Volunteer Opportunities

Please note, families must be members of the PTO to participate in PTO Family Involvement Opportunities. All District families are encouraged to join the PTO. Membership fees help fund PTO events, the birthday book cart, teacher conference meals, and so much more!

Committees may change based on the number of volunteers for each event. Each event must have a minimum number of members for the event to take place.

PTO Executive Board

District 31 benefits from high parental support and involvement through the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). The Parent Teacher Organization sponsors various programs to build a strong community and enhance education initiatives for District 31 students. The Executive Board is responsible for making sure the PTO is able to function.

Positions include President, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President/ Communication, Vice President/Fundraising, and Vice President of School Activities. Elections are in May for the following school year.

Commitment Level: Commitment levels vary based on position. The Executive Board attends monthly in-person meetings during the school year.

The PTO is currently in need of a Vice President of Events.

Contact: PTO Board at D31pto@gmail.com

Winkelman Room Parents

Communicate with your teacher and classroom parents to share PTO news. Work with your grade cohort to plan two room parties and organize an end-of-year teacher appreciation gift for homeroom teachers and assistants. Plan social outings for your grade's parents (optional but encouraged) to build a stronger community.

Commitment Level: Approximately 4 hours/ month during the school year.

Contact: PTO Board at D31roomparents@gmail.com

Winkelman Birthday Book Cart

Volunteer to take the book cart from classroom to classroom, letting students choose one book to keep for their birthday. Volunteers will be assigned to the month of their student(s) birthday. To allow space for as many parents to participate as possible, parents may not be chosen for more than one child's birthday, however every effort will be made for full participation.

Commitment Level: 3 hours one day a month, usually Thursday or Friday.

Commitment Level: .

Contact: PTO Board at D31birthdays@gmail.com

Winkelman Art Enrichment

Art Enrichment is a fun, non-academic PTO program that gives our children more exposure to legendary artists and their renowned masterpieces. This program provides an excellent opportunity for parents to get involved in their child's classroom while providing an educational and fun experience for the students. Parents read and present about a pre-determined art piece (all information is provided)

Commitment Level: Visit child's class 3-5 times between October and April to present an artist and their artwork

Contact: PTO Board at D31artenrichment@gmail.com

Family Involvement Menu

PTO Volunteer Opportunities Continued

Committee Member

The PTO provides a variety of fun and engaging activities for District 31 families that rely on volunteers. Committee Members will elect a chairperson who will be working directly with the PTO Executive Board. They foster teamwork, delegate tasks, and ensure that the committee operates smoothly. Members are responsible for planning and executing the event. They are responsible for all aspects of the project, including completing the PTO event planning sheet, creating budgets, and submitting receipts for reimbursement. Committee Members work closely to implement and execute the event plan. They may assist with all activities, including marketing, ticket sales, purchasing and procuring supplies, and set up and clean up.

Contact: PTO Board at D31pto@gmail.com

Committees:

- **Outdoor Movie Night** September
Help book vendors, market the event, select the movie, and plan the concessions.
- **Field Trivia Night**
Plan the evening's trivia, plan games, and market the event
- **Kindness Day**
Plan an act of service for families, coordinate with families, outside organizations and the District, market the event, and help with any setup or cleanup.
- **Bingo Night**
Organize event, select and purchase prizes, and coordinate 5th and 8th grade volunteers.
- **Around the World with District 31**
Organize and plan the annual event to celebrate our district's multicultural diversity.
- **STEM/ Science Fair**
Create an opportunity for students to showcase their creativity and STEM skills.
- **Glow Party**
Help plan the annual beloved dance event at Winkelman
- **Book Fair**
Organize a winter and spring book fair. Event planning includes coordinating with the book fair vendor, compiling teacher wish lists, and coordinating volunteers.
- **Hospitality Committee**
Volunteer throughout the year to show appreciation for D31 staff and teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week, Teacher Conference Dinners, and the Holiday Luncheon
- **Other committees may be created based on the needs of the current school year.**

Family Engagement Menu

Goal 2: Continuum of Opportunities to Foster Involvement

Events:

- **District Communication Begins** August
Receive your first communication via email from the District Office and the school principals.
- **Advisor/ Classroom Teacher Assignments** August
Receive an email learning your student's advisor or classroom teacher.
- **Field Material Pick-Up** August
Join us at Field to pick-up school supplies.
- **Winkelman Meet the Teacher** August
Come meet your teacher before school begins.
- **Curriculum Nights** September
Learn about the curriculum your child will be learning.
- **Parent Teacher Conferences** October/February
Provide an opportunity for families and teachers to discuss student progress, address concerns, and work together to support each child's learning and development.
- **Field Band/ Orchestra Concert** November, February, May
Celebrate students' musical growth and dedication.
- **Engagement Nights** December at Field, March/April at Winkelman
Discover what students have been learning and creating in school this spring.
- **Field Spring Musical** March
Enjoy a creative and collaborative performance and celebrate Field students' hard work on stage.
- **Winkelman Spring Concerts** May
Celebrate students' musical growth and dedication.
- **Field Sports** Year-round
Support our Field Tigers as they build teamwork, discipline, and school spirit.
- **Board of Education Meetings** Monthly
Get insight into District decisions, policies, and priorities to stay informed.

Community Partners

District 31 has a wealth of community partners and beneficial resources to help families on a variety of different topics.

Food Pantries

Northfield Township Food Pantry
Maine Township Food Pantry

Park Districts

Glenview Park District
Northbrook Park District

Libraries

Northbrook Public Library
Glenview Public Library

High Schools

Glenbrook North High School
Glenbrook South High School

Villages

Village of Northbrook

- Northbrook Police Department
- Northbrook Fire Department

Village of Glenview

- Glenview Police Department
- Glenview Fire Department

Cook County

- Sheriff's Office
- County Clerk

Additional Partners

Community Action Together for Children's Health
North Suburban YMCA (NSYMCA) Website
Youth Services of Glenview/Northbrook
TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804
Family Action Network
Homelessness and Food Resources
Hunger Resource Network

Mental Health and Crisis Resources
Care Solace
Elyssa's Mission
Winkelman and Field Text a Tip/ Report Bullying
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline
Operation Parent
Safe2Help Illinois
Illinois Warm Line
Illinois CARES Line (24/7)
Illinois Helpline for Opioids and Other Substances
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
Crisis Text Line
National Helpline (SAMHSA)
National Runaway Safeline
Veteran's Crisis Line
Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline
National Domestic Violence Hotline
National Sexual Assault Hotline

Visit the District's Community Partners Website Page at
District31.net/CommunityResources
for a complete list of District's community partners, mental health and crisis resources, health and safety resources, and academic resources.

