

DISTRICT 27 IN REVIEW

A Newsletter to the District 27 Community/Spring, 2017



From the Superintendent



We have had a great school year with the successful implementation of programs, services, and key initiatives. In addition, we have laid the foundation for action plans to be addressed in the 2017-18 school year. While there are many performance measures and projects that I could describe, I thought that I would provide a quick summary of seven from this school year. I then will highlight a few projects we will undertake in the 2017-18 school year.

1. Our performance continues to be outstanding on all of our assessments, positioning us as one of the top districts in the State. Our second year of PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) placed us in the top 1% of scores Statewide.
2. We continued to implement our Full-Day Kindergarten Program. We began this program in the fall of 2015 after determining we wanted to provide more time to further our students' academic and social/emotional development. Our students enjoy being with us and are making incredible strides in their learning.
3. We added two courses to our STEAM (Science, Technology, Arts, and Mathematics) program at Wood Oaks, which provides our students with pre-engineering experiences. Our students engage in 3-D modeling, robotics, engineering and construction, and design classes. We strongly believe it is important for our students to have these real-world learning opportunities.
4. We engaged our entire staff in a year-long Technology Conference. On days when students were not in attendance, our staff participated in intensive training on technology skills to better meet the needs of our students. We will continue to work in this area and ensure that our staff have the knowledge they need to use technology with efficacy and implement the curriculum with integrity.
5. With the priority of keeping our staff and students safe, we implemented our revised Emergency Preparedness Plan. This comprehensive program is built on the National Incident Command System (NIMS.) While we hope never to have to use any of these protocols, our staff are well-trained and prepared to handle any incident.
6. We worked collaboratively with our Faculty Association to negotiate a two-year extension of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Our teachers are such a dedicated group of professionals, and we appreciate our collaborative relationship. The contract will run through the 2018-19 school year.
7. Finally, many changes are occurring in the area of science, and we want our curriculum to be state-of-the-art so students have the very best knowledge of science and inquiry-based learning. To that end, we began a revision of our curriculum using the *Next Generation Science Standards*. These improvements place a greater emphasis on engineering, energy, and cross-cutting themes than currently exist in the curriculum.

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Around the District

Our Schools

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Shabonee
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Wood Oaks Jr. High
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Global Awareness: An Integral Part of District 27's Experience for Students

The District's mission is to educate students to succeed in a world that is constantly changing. We provide our students with the skills they will need to be successful in the future. We provide them learning opportunities to address global issues so that they can interact in a complex world.

At Wood Oaks, students start in sixth grade learning about ancient civilizations and world religions, and American history in seventh grade. In eighth grade, students are immersed in such relevant and timely global issues as genocide and nuclear proliferation. The Social Studies team at Wood Oaks includes Caroline Grebe, Geoff Marshall, Chris Beck, Matt Niemiec and Gella Meyerhoff.

During this school year, eighth graders participated in the following activities:

- An Immigration Summit, which featured several parents who immigrated to the United States. The parents told the students about their native countries and the challenges they faced coming to America. One speaker, for example, shared the experience of growing up in a segregated South Africa during Apartheid, and the shock at discovering racial diversity in America.
- A Skype discussion with Kingston Reif, an expert on nuclear non-proliferation based in Washington, D.C. Mr. Reif is the director of Disarmament and Threat Reduction Policy for the Arms Control Association. The students developed questions for Mr. Reif, which they shared during the presentation.
- A half-day workshop with Carl Wilkens, the only American left in Rwanda when the genocide began in 1994. He spoke with students about respect, empathy, and inclusion. The students study the Rwandan genocide as part of a unit of study on genocide.

Mrs. Meyerhoff said the eighth-grade Social Studies team wants to "build a passion for global citizenship."

"Since we cannot bring our students to the world at large, we try to bring the world to them," Mrs. Meyerhoff said. "It is through this experiential learning that students begin to build their own opinions and passions. We want them to know, as well, that all experts are available to them. Access is an empowering concept.

We change the world through action; we hope our students will find their place in the world and be inspired by their interactions with activists and personal experience to act positively for the greater good."

The eighth graders are not alone in their attempt to learn more about the global society. Each year, sixth graders participate in the Houses of Worship field trip as part of a Social Studies unit on World Beliefs.



Carl Wilkens speaks with eighth graders about his experiences in Rwanda during the genocide.



Two parents were among those who visited with students to share their stories of immigration to the United States.

During the half-day trip, students travel to a synagogue, a church, and a mosque where they learn about cultures and faith traditions different than their own. Understanding differences is key for students to develop a view of the world outside Northbrook, teachers say.

"District 27 and the Northbrook community possess tremendous multicultural characteristics and resources that help us reveal the global issues and concepts that we examine in our Social Studies curriculum at the local level in which our students live, play, and thrive, said Mr. Marshall, a sixth grade Social Studies teacher. "Visiting local houses of worship exposes our students to the richness of their own community while at the same time, creates real-world connections with the classroom content."

With these interactions, our students understand that man is not only capable of great good, but great evil as well, Mrs. Meyerhoff added.

"The issues they will have to face as adults are significant, and they will need their conviction and their ingenuity," she said. "We hope that their passion for good will rise to the top as they learn about critical issues facing humanity.

"As one of our guest lobbyists said, 'The students at Wood Oaks know more about current events than some members of Congress.' "



Sixth graders pose for a photo with Imam Hazim Fazlic of the Islamic Cultural Center.

Around the District

District's Music Program Honored

District 27 has been honored by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation for its outstanding commitment to music education. District 27 received the Best Communities for Music Education award.

District 27 is one of only 4 percent of districts across the nation receiving the prestigious award.

The designation is given to districts that demonstrate outstanding achievement in efforts to promote music and education to all its students.

District Receives Financial Reporting Awards

District 27 received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for the District's Annual Financial Report (CAFR.)

The District also received the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International, to recognize school systems for best practices in financial reporting.

This is the eighth year the District has received these prestigious awards for exemplary financial reporting and fiscal integrity.

Shabonee Art at the Library

Art work created by fifth graders from Shabonee School is currently on display at the Northbrook Public Library during the month of April.

Students in Anne Hoffman and Amber Keene's art classes studied the street artist, WRDSMTH, and created pieces that mimicked his style. The artwork includes a copy of a typewriter with positive messages.

The show will be on exhibit in the Youth Services section of the library through April 28th.

Robotics Teams Do Well in Competition

Three Wood Oaks teams competed in the finals of the VEX IQ robotics contest in Aurora in February.

Two District 27 teams took the first and second place awards. The first place team, "Destructive Construction" also won the tournament's Design Award and the Teamwork Construction Award.

The students in the Robotics II class build their own robots to complete tasks.

Spare Change Buys New Books for Charity

Students at Hickory Point collected more than \$1,140 worth of coins during the school's Coin Challenge in February. As a result, many books were purchased and donated to Bernie's Book Bank.

Hickory Point students also made pull and chew toys for dogs, and felt pillow toys for cats, all out of fabric scraps.

The toys were donated in December to area shelters.

Text-A-Tip Now Available

Middle school and high school youth in the District 27 area now can use a program called Text-a-Tip if they need social-emotional support.

The program provides teams of licensed mental health professionals who respond within minutes to help teens. Teens can text WILDCAT to 1-844-823-5323 if they need help for themselves or a friend. The service is anonymous and available 24 hours, 365 days a year.

From the Superintendent, Continued

Our Priorities for 2017-18

Through our strategic planning process, we have identified key action plans for next year. These plans are aligned to meet our key goals and challenges, and include the following:

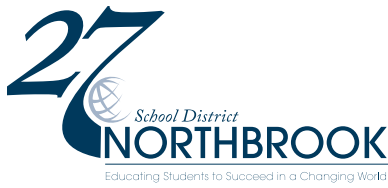
- Continue to revise our science curriculum
- Meet the growing, diverse needs of our students and train our staff in these areas
- Implement new technology initiatives with efficacy and integrity to enhance student learning and skills
- Redesign our website for greater functionality and accessibility
- Continue to ensure the District's fiscal solvency through conservative planning and cost containment
- Meet the requirements the new State "Every Student Succeeds Act" plan
- Continue to train our staff in our Emergency Preparedness Plan protocols
- Continue to attract the best teaching and leadership talent to the District in the face of a growing teacher and principal shortage.

We remain grateful to our community for its support in the education of our children. We take very seriously our responsibility to spend your tax dollars wisely and with integrity. We THANK YOU for your support of District 27 and we recognize that you want your schools to be the best they can be.

We believe that this year has been one of our best ever. We have achieved a great deal and are a better District today than we were a year ago.

Respectfully,

David J. Kroeze, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools



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Gail Kahover, Editor

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Principal, Shabonee School
Mrs. Meggan Buchanan, Asst. Principal

Mr. Rob McElligott
Principal, Wood Oaks Junior High
Mrs. Cari Beake, Asst. Principal

*Please visit www.nb27.org for a full list of
administrators and contact information.*

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Northbrook School District 27

Educating Students to Succeed in a Changing World