

161 VISIONS 161

(Volume 1, Issue 1)

Dr. Dana Smith, Superintendent

Fall 2017

Cathy Perino, Editor

Dear District 161 Community,

I hope that you have enjoyed a wonderful start to the school year and that this message finds you in good health. As the new superintendent in District 161, I am glad to have the opportunity to communicate with the entirety of our organization through this newsletter. Our district serves the communities of Chicago Heights, Flossmoor, Hazel Crest, Homewood, and Olympia Fields. In addition, it is meant to inform our stakeholders about the wonderful happenings at our five district schools.

For me, the school year really got started with the Meet and Greet activity at Flossmoor Park. In all, we handed out 500 Italian Ices from Zarlengo's and I was able to connect with many of our great students and parents. We are hoping to have an even larger turnout next year! Next, the Chalk the Walk activity really delivered some positive messages to our students and teachers. The heartfelt comments and great artwork decorated our parking lots and sidewalks and were a daily reminder to our children that they have the full support of our community.

This year, we are refocusing our efforts in a few main areas. First, the Board of Education and administration

are committed to developing strong relationships with our students, families, and community members. To do that, we will increase the effectiveness of our communication strategies, to ensure that the community knows about the wonderful work happening in District 161. Second, we will continue to implement the District 161 Strategic Plan and we will use student data to measure our progress and to review our practices. A continuous improvement model of this type will help deliver the student outcomes that we expect. Lastly, we will work to guarantee that each child in District 161 has access to cutting edge 21st century instruction that prepares them for an exciting future.

This is an incredible time to be a part of Flossmoor School District 161 and together, we will help our children achieve beyond their potential.

**Sincerely,
Dr. Dana Smith,
Superintendent**



Dear Parents and Community Members,

On behalf of the Board of Education, I'd like to welcome you to the 2017- 2018 school year. We are committed to strengthening our district and making sure every student is more than prepared for the next level. We have amazingly talented students who excelled in academics, sports, and community service last year who were all lead by teachers with unwavering commitment. Congratulations to a job well done last year, but now it's time to roll up our sleeves and reach new heights.

We have exciting changes in the district that we are confident will lead to greater opportunities for our students. Hopefully you all have had the chance to meet our new administrative teams at both Western Avenue and Parker Junior High. We are fortunate to have this team complete our roster of strong school leaders in our district who are all working hard to make sure our students and staff have everything they need to be successful. We also welcome Dr. Dana Smith, our new Superintendent, who brings to us not only experience

to move us forward, but a high level of energy and commitment needed for our district right now.

The Board also approved a new math curriculum this year which is now being implemented throughout the district. The district is committed to ensuring that parents are engaged in the new curriculum and will be offering Parent Universities and other resources to help ease the transition. We are looking forward to watching our students be challenged in new and exciting ways in math.

Lastly, I'd like to personally invite you all to attend at least one school board meeting this school year. Come and listen, participate, and become engaged in all that we are doing in our district to support our students and overall growth in our schools. Our schools are truly one of our community's greatest assets.

Again, welcome to the new school year. We are off to a great start and looking forward to watching our students soar.

*Michelle Hoereth, President
Flossmoor SD 161
Board of Education*



Flossmoor Hills News

647-7100, 3721 Beech Street, Flossmoor, Patricia McCraven, Principal

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory comes to Flossmoor Hills School

Flossmoor Hills will participate in the One School, One Book Family Literacy Program. Research shows that students benefit tremendously when you actively promote family literacy in your community. Everyone (students, families, teachers, support staff, and administrators) will read the same book at the same time. Many fun activities are planned for all grade levels. We ask all stakeholders to join in with us as we devour this classic story.

Patricia McCraven,
Principal
Flossmoor Hills
School



Pre-School Screening for the 2017- 2018 School Year

Flossmoor School District 161 provides free regularly scheduled screenings for district residents whose children are three to five years of age. The screening assesses the following skill areas: speech and language, gross/fine motor, self-help, vision/hearing, and cognition. The screening dates are listed on the district website (sd161.org). The child must be 3 years old before the screening date. All screenings are done by appointment. If you would like to reserve a spot on our screening list please call the office of Student Support Services at 708-647-7026.

Robin Latman
Director of Special Education

**Please join us for the next
District 161 Math Parent
University on December 13,
2017 from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
at the district office. Parents
and guardians will learn more
about our K-8 math programs
and best ways to support all
students at home.**

About Service Learning

Heather Hill school is continuing to introduce service learning into the educational process. Service learning allows teachers to implement community service into the learning experience, teaching students about the importance of caring for and supporting their community. Last year at Heather Hill, students participated in a water bottle collection drive that sent cases of water to Flint, MI. Students learned about this water crisis in class and wanted to support movements to assist the citizens of Flint. Students also collected toiletry items to send to local shelters after learning about the needs for such items at these places.

The Heather Hill Hornets plan to continue this process in the 2017-2018 school year and to learn about ways to support the community and meet some of the societal needs. This year's Green Team has dedicated themselves to learning about the harm in using plastics and Styrofoam containers. They are prepared to research the problem and contact companies to share their concerns. The Heather Hill Green Team is also

prepared to look at how we use these materials when packaging and service meals at our local schools.

The entire Heather Hill School will also be participating in Pennies for Patients fundraising and we will also, be raising money for Leukemia and Lymphoma while learning how these forms of cancer affect our community. There will be many more service learning programs at Heather Hill in the future. We look forward to doing our part in assisting our community.

*Dr. Keith Davis,
Principal, Heather
Hill School*



From the Director of Special Education

Special Education is a service provided by District 161 for all students that demonstrate the need as identified by the special education process. My name is Robin Latman as the Director of Special Education for Flossmoor School District 161, I am excited to continue to support students' learning. I am proud to introduce my administrative special education team, case managers: Pat Ryan, Flossmoor Hills and Western Avenue, and Angel Stapleton, Heather Hill and Serena Hills, and Michelle Wisniewski, Parker and non-public schools.

One of the main emphases of special education is to educate students in the least restrictive environment. The Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team reviews a student's needs and determines what would be the least restrictive environment (as close to general education as possible) to meet those needs. We look at both "home" school location, and time spent in the general education environment. This means working to balance the needed supports and accommodations for students in between their general education classrooms, special education classrooms or in therapy settings. When a team decides a student requires more support, the

options are reviewed. I am very excited to report that most students attend their "home" schools. There are instructional level classes for all grades, K-8, within the District. These classrooms provide a smaller learning environment, which helps students focus and receive more individualized support while working on core curriculum. The K-1 classroom is located at Western Avenue; the 2-3 and 4-5 classrooms are located at Heather Hill and the 6th, 7th and 8th grade classrooms are at Parker Junior High. The district also has students attending classrooms within SPEED Cooperative, as well as some students placed in more specialized day schools. (Continued on page 5)



Building a Restorative Culture

Serena is starting the new year by celebrating our diversity and learning the importance of building respectful relationships! Our students actively take part in social-emotional lessons, talking circles, PBIS activities, service learning projects, and communicating using an affective language.

Come join us - Let's stay connected!

Dr. Shari Demitrowicz, Principal, Serena Hills School



"If you want to go fast – go alone, if you want to go far – go together" – African Proverb



"Every job is a self-portrait of the person who performed it. Autograph your work with excellence."



(Continued from page 4) We are also excited about our students ages 3-5. We offer two different classrooms within the district. The first is a Pre-K classroom located at Flossmoor Hills. This is a district wide Pre-K classroom supported by the Pre-K For All Grant. We also offer an Early Childhood classroom located at Western Avenue for students that have more significant needs as identified in their IEP. We host screenings for students ages 3-5 several times throughout the year. Please call the department if you have any questions about screenings or special education in general. I would be happy to answer any questions. We can be reached through the main district number at 708-647-7000.

Robin Latman

Director of Special Education



Supporting the Arts

We have had a wonderful start to the school year. Dr. Dallacqua has held class meetings with every homeroom so that she can begin the process of building relationships with all of our children and also to explain our school-wide expectations. Our teachers have been working hard to ensure that all students feel comfortable, safe, and ready to learn! We truly appreciate the participation and support from all of our parents during Open House. What a turn-out! The Back-To-School Picnic, hosted by our P.T.O., was on September 6th from 5-7 pm. We really enjoyed seeing you all there!

*Dr. Lisa Dallacqua, Principal,
Western Avenue School*



Math Curriculum Resources

The 2017-18 school year began with the implementation of new math curriculum in grades K-8. Teachers in grade K-5 are using the Bridges Math program and Junior High teachers are using CPM's Core Connections Program. Teachers participated in exciting professional development over the summer to help us get started with both programs and the learning continues throughout the school year. Our math curriculum is designed to better equip teachers in implementing the Common Core Standards for Mathematics while providing students with activities that support deep understanding of mathematical concepts. Students will learn math daily through complex problem solving, skills practice, visual models, writing, and group discussion. What is Number Corner?

Number Corner is a skill building structure that is implemented throughout our K-5 classes.

- Daily Skill / math fact "workouts"
- Centered around the classroom calendar
- Provides repeated practice with key mathematical concepts such as patterns, number lines, arrays, equations, geometry, and computation.

Supporting Your Student At Home

There are several math curriculum resources available to support your student at home:

- Bridges Home Connection Book (K-5) This text is for at home use and provides additional practice pages and activities for each unit. All students have a home connection book.
- Bridges Math Unit Overview - your student's teacher will send home a Family Overview at the start of every unit. Each overview lets you know what the unit will cover including visual models and vocabulary.
- Math Learning Center Apps - Free apps that are based on the visual models used in our K-5 math classes can be found at: <https://www.mathlearningcenter.org/resources/apps>.
- Grades 6-8 Homework Help Site - <http://homework.cpm.org> The CPM Homework Help site offers additional practice, alternate solutions, tips, and hints
- Grades 6-8 CPM Parent Guide - Offers additional explanation of problems from class and additional practice. Each student in grades 6-8 has the CPM Parent Guide. The guides are also available at <http://cpm.org/ac-parent-guide>
- Talk to your student's teacher and visit our website for additional resources.

2017-2018 is Starting Off Strong!

So far, Parker Junior High School students have received their schedules, lockers, gym lockers, PE uniforms, and materials for their 2017-2018 courses. On the first day of school, students participated in Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) Rotations to practice school wide expectations.

Students also had a chance to meet their homeroom colleagues and participate in teambuilding activities with their class and create a special home-base feeling with their classmates and homeroom teachers. Dressing for PE began on Wednesday, August 30, 2017. Orchestra, Band, and Choir rehearsals and lessons began on

Tuesday, September 5, 2017, and we are excited to see them grow this year!

Fred Hunter, Principal

Mardell M. Parker Junior High School



Parker Cross Country Teams Excel at State Meet!

Out of 125 teams competing, the Parker Girls Cross Country Team placed 21st, and the Boys Cross Country Team placed 25th!



**GO
FALCONS!**

Flossmoor School District 161

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Chicago Heights, IL 60411

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POSTAL CUSTOMER

Community Event Information

Homewood Science Center "Cool Coders"

November 17

5:30-7:30 PM

Homewood Science Center "Web Wizards"

November 18

9-11 AM

Flossmoor Public Library Super Hero Party

November 11

3-4 PM

Flossmoor Winter Fest

December 9

All Day