

# District Reporter

STEGER  
DISTRICT 194

*Winter 2022*

## Steger School District 194 Remembers Debra “Debbie” Page

Debra “Debbie” Page, current member of the Steger School District 194 Board of Education passed away Tuesday, February 15. The District is deeply saddened by this loss, and sends condolences to her family at this difficult time.

Over the last three decades, Mrs. Page volunteered her time to serve the youth of our community and improve their experiences. In 1992, Mrs. Page was elected to the Steger Little League Board where she served the baseball program for twelve years. During this time, she partnered with other board members to oversee the renovation of facilities at Fireman’s Park by modernizing the concession stand and public bathroom facilities. Likewise, she served as a member of the Steger Playground Committee from 1995 until 1998 and was instrumental in securing the funding and volunteer labor for the construction of new playgrounds at Parkview, Saukview, and Eastview Schools. Her contributions to both organizations are still utilized by Steger area youth to this day.

In addition to her work in the community, Mrs. Page volunteered many hours to various causes at Steger School District 194. From the moment she became a member of the Steger PTA in 1992, she was always willing and ready to help with any endeavor,

whether it was book fairs, fundraising events, or planning and chaperoning multiple eighth grade graduation dances. Her work with the PTA helped the organization supplement the offerings of the district and enriched the educational experience for thousands of children.

Mrs. Page’s largest contributions to the school district occurred during her tenure as a member of the Steger School District 194 Board of Education where she faithfully carried out her duties since being elected in 2009. Over the past thirteen years, Mrs. Page devoted many hours to developing and enacting district policy while being a responsible steward of the taxpayers’ dollars. She was instrumental in the transition from neighborhood schools to grade centers, and the construction/renovation of Eastview and Saukview Schools into the Steger Intermediate Center and Steger Primary Center. Her service to District 194 students did not end with her elected duties. She was an active volunteer anytime she was needed at Kindergarten nights, graduation ceremonies, and Valentine’s Day dances. She had a knack for identifying an issue, brain-storming a solution, and putting the plan into action. This was no more evident than when she co-hosted treasure hunts to defray field trip costs, or used her talents as a seamstress to create costumes for plays



and musicals, as well as sew curtains for many classrooms and offices throughout the district.

The Page family has established a scholarship to honor Mrs. Page’s commitment to the children of Steger School District 194. Donations can be made to Steger School District 194 (3753 Park Avenue, Steger, IL 60475). This scholarship will ensure Mrs. Page’s dedication to the district being the best place to learn and grow benefits our students in the future as it has done in the past.



# Around the District

## SIC Welcomes Dave DiNaso's Traveling World of Reptiles

Students at the Steger Intermediate Center celebrated positive behavior with a special assembly by Dave DiNaso's Traveling World of Reptiles. Students were excited to learn some interesting facts about a variety of animals, including snakes, lizards and toads! It was a great interactive show with many brave participants!

In 1993, DiNaso began his Traveling World of Reptiles show. Since that time he and employees, Chris Boerema, Jim Galeno and Jeremy Taulbee have performed more than twelve thousand presentations helping to dispel many of the myths surrounding reptiles as well as educating audiences as to why they're necessary and beneficial to us and the environment. Because of the growing interest in the exotic pet trade it is important to make people aware that many species do not make suitable pets for children even though they can be legally purchased at many local pet stores. These animals often suffer at the hands of inexperienced keepers, can become dangerous or escape into the wild to become invasive species that damage the environment. Despite their lack of appeal and the rare danger that certain species may pose to humans, one should understand that as long as they are far enough away from us as to not pose a threat we are much better off leaving them alone!

The Traveling World of Reptiles can best be described as an up-close, live, and extremely interactive or "hands on" experience about reptiles and amphibians from around the world. It blends education and a unique style of humor to form a totally original experience that makes the presentation every bit as entertaining as it is educational.



## Curriculum and Instruction Corner

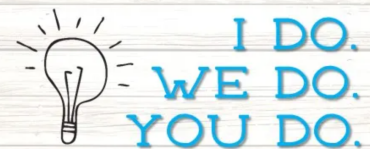
Steger District 194 is committed to providing instruction that follows best practices and insures positive learning outcomes for all students. One such strategy is the gradual release of responsibility, sometimes referred to as I do, We do, You do.

**I do-** The first part of the lesson is very focused. The teacher's most important roles are to establish purpose and to activate background knowledge and build on it to introduce new material. The student's role is to listen, observe and interact with the material by note taking and responding to questions.

**We do-** During guided instruction the teacher leads students through tasks. The teacher provides prompts and clues and practices the strategies with students. The students complete the task with others, asks questions, and responds to others. This part of the lesson requires students to work with a partner or with a small group. They will work together to complete specific tasks applying what they've learned.

**You do-** By now, students are feeling comfortable with the material, and they are ready to tackle it on their own. The teacher's role is to provide feedback and determine understanding. This knowledge will be used to set new goals and adjust lessons to fill in gaps.

Gradual Release of Responsibility





## Ms. Toran to Attend Bob and Marion Wilson Teacher Institute of Colonial Williamsburg



This summer, 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies teacher Jessica Toran will have the distinct privilege of attending the 2022 Bob and Marion Wilson Teacher Institute of Colonial Williamsburg. Ms. Toran has been awarded the Teacher Institute Scholarship that will cover the cost of her tuition and transportation.

While there, Jessica will have the opportunity to exchange ideas with historians, meet character interpreters and explore engaging instructional strategies for use in the classroom. Throughout each day, teachers work collaboratively with Colonial Williamsburg staff and Master Teachers to examine interactive teaching techniques and develop instructional materials that improve instruction, raise literacy levels, enhance thinking skills, and bring history to life in the classroom. Participating teachers agree to conduct in-service training sessions following their attendance at the Teacher Institute to share their experience with other teachers. Teachers are also required to develop lesson plans to implement in the classroom.

The Teacher Institute was developed to improve the quality of American history education in the nation's schools and ensure that every student gains an understanding of the principles behind our system of government. The program began in 1990 with 44 fifth-grade teachers from two southern California school districts. Today, more than 10,300 teachers from all 50 states, and six territories and countries have participated since the inception of the Teacher Institute.

Ms. Toran will be attending the program, Resilience, Agency, and Resistance: The African American Experience (1607–1781) from June 19, 2022 through June 23, 2022. This seminar explores the lives, roles, and perspectives of free and enslaved Black individuals in the Americas. Participants will pursue a deeper understanding of the diversity of the experiences of free and enslaved Black individuals from the period of British Colonization through the American Revolution. Participants will investigate primary sources, interact with interpreters and tradespeople, and learn how to use culturally responsive teaching strategies to effectively incorporate diverse narratives into curriculum.

Congratulations to Ms. Toran on this tremendous accomplishment!

## Columbia Central Music Returns to IGSMMA Contest and Live Performance

March is a busy month for the band and choir programs at Columbia Central. Each program had ensembles that participated in the IGSMMA Organization Contest, which is a special performance opportunity in which school ensembles perform for an audience and for three adjudicators. These respected music educators provide written and verbal feedback during each group's performance, and then one of them leads a brief clinic for the students and their director.

The Concert Choir, under the direction of Mrs. Larkin Kinsella and Ms. Alexandra Overland, and Curat Sorellanza, under the direction of Mrs. Kinsella, performed on Saturday, March 5 at Liberty Junior High School in New Lenox.

The Wind Ensemble, directed by Mr. Ed Fitzgerald, performed at Manhattan Junior High School on Saturday, March 12. Both were positive and productive learning experiences for all involved, and everyone received quality feedback from the adjudicators. The students were beyond excited to be performing live again.

On Wednesday March 16, the Columbia Central Band and Choir performed their first in-person concert in more than two years. The excitement of parents, students, and staff was palpable as the night proceeded with applause from all who attended.



# STEGER DISTRICT 194

Administration Center  
3753 Park Avenue, Steger, IL 60475  
(708) 753-4300

Columbia Central  
94 Richton Road, Steger, IL 60475  
(708) 753-4700

Steger Intermediate Center  
3411 Hopkins Street, Steger, IL 60475  
(708) 753-4200

Steger Primary Center  
3341 Miller Ave, South Chicago Heights, IL 60411  
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## A Word From Superintendent Dr. David Frusher

Dear Steger School District 194  
Community Members,

We are excited to share with you  
that we've had an exciting winter and  
start of spring in SD 194.

Educational matters continued  
to be a top focus in the State of  
Illinois. Going back to last fall,  
separate lawsuits were filed on behalf  
of more than 700 parents and dozens  
of school staff against more than 160  
school districts. These lawsuits  
challenged mask and exclusion  
mandates on children and vaccine or  
testing requirements for school staff. A  
Sangamon County Circuit Court judge  
deemed these mandates null and void  
and issued a temporary restraining  
order against enforcing the mandates.  
Although SD 194 was not a part of the  
original lawsuit, the board of  
education voted to go mask optional.

Since going mask optional in SD  
194, we've seen our COVID cases  
drop down to almost zero, while also  
continuing to not having any outbreaks  
in any of our schools. I would like to

thank everyone for their hard work  
and dedication to safety.

SD 194 has moved to normal  
school operations. We're energized to  
hold the events where all of our  
students, staff, families, and  
community members can be together,  
including: assemblies, concerts, plays,  
community dinners, dances, field trips,  
step up days, and graduation; to name  
a few.

The past two years have been  
very challenging for many of us. By  
working together and supporting one  
another, we've made it!

Yours in Education,

David Frusher, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools



### Steger School District 194 Board of Education

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