

District Reporter

STEGER
DISTRICT 194

Fall 2017

Steger Primary Center Hosts Grand Opening

The grand opening of the new Steger Primary Center was cause for celebration as it marked the completion of a 15 year journey toward creating a school district geared toward 21st century success and achievement. Hundreds of community members, parents, current and former students, and community dignitaries made their way to the former Saukview School on September 17.

Visitors were treated to guided tours highlighting the building's history as well as architectural changes focused on student achievement and staff collaboration. Guests were greeted by brightly colored and naturally lit hallways and open air spaces. Prominently featured on the tour were the new common areas which allow multiple classroom teachers to share time with one another and students in joint learning opportunities. Following the tour, guests were treated to cookies, popcorn, and lemonade in the new cafeteria which features floor to ceiling windows and open infrastructure on the ceiling which architects expect will harbor curiosity among students. The remodeled gymnasium features prominently the



Cardinal head logo ushering in a unifying motif as part of the ongoing transition from neighborhood schools to grade centers. The open concept of Steger Primary Center carries throughout the library and features soft seating areas near windows to allow natural lighting and comfort to students. Each classroom contains both large and small collaboration areas where teachers are able to use team instruction to guide student achievement.

Steger Primary Center's role in the future of our district will truly allow 21st century learning to become the standard throughout District 194.

Grade Center Transition Complete

In the Spring of 2015, Steger School District 194 broke ground beginning an extensive project to transform three existing neighborhood schools into two brand new, state-of-the-art schools using a grade center model for instruction. The completion of the brand new Steger Primary Center saw the culmination of this project which Steger District 194 considers an overwhelming success.

Teachers throughout the district have begun to collaborate in new, positive ways that promote student achievement across previous district boundaries. "The grade center model allows greater sharing of resources and expertise and has allowed stronger collaboration among our teachers," said Director of Curriculum and Instruction Paul Preuss.

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A word from the
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District 194 Welcomes Patches 'n Pieces Quilt Guild

On Saturday, September 30, Steger District 194 welcomed the Pieces 'n Patches Quilt Guild's biennial quilt show to Columbia Central. The show, titled "Color My World: A Collection of One-Woman Quilt Exhibits," saw upwards of 300 visitors from all over the Chicagoland area come together to admire the work of a very small local guild of quilters. Pieces 'n Patches is a small group comprised of about 20 members who all share a common passion for quilting. Member Barb Rucupito said of the guild, "There is so much talent from such a small group, it's truly an amazing show."



Vickie Wassall highlighted a number of the group's past charitable endeavors that included quilting cooling scarves for soldiers and walker bags for veterans. The group has also made chemo caps for cancer patients. The group's current philanthropic projects include twin sized quilts for the Crisis Center of South Suburbia, fidget quilts for individuals afflicted with dementia, baby quilts, pillowcases and baby hats for local hospitals and LaRabida. The Pieces and Patches Quilt Guild meets at 7:00pm on the second Wednesday of every month at the Lou Sherman Community Center, 3501 Hopkins in Steger, or you can check out their Facebook page, Pieces 'n Patches Quilt Guild Steger IL.



Farmer's Insurance Continues to Thank Steger 194's Teachers

To date, Steger District 194 has won \$125,000 for teachers in the Thank America's Teachers contest. Amazing! Most recently, teachers Matt Maple and Ann Geraci were awarded \$2500 grants.

Voting began for our most recent round of candidates on September 29 and goes until October 30. Please vote every day for our four teachers.

They are:

- Gina Anaclerio
- Michelle Perry
- Adam Schoff
- Frosini Smith



Gina Anaclerio, Michelle Perry, and Adam Schoff are asking for funds to help defray the cost of the Washington D.C. trip. Frosini Smith would like to invite a Holocaust survivor into her class to hear her powerful story.

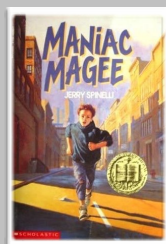
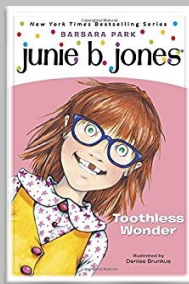
Keep our phenomenal streak alive.

Curriculum and Instruction Corner

Getting Books in the Hands of Kids

We can all agree as parents, teachers, administrators and community members that learning to read is essential. Fostering the love of reading becomes the foundation of every child's academic career. Being able to read and write are the very foundation of learning and leads to further skill development. Whether it is mathematics, science, or social studies, without literacy, there can be little quality learning.

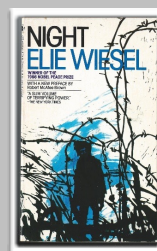
Here in District 194, we are working hard to get books home with and programs in the hands of our students. Over the



past several years, we have been able to give our students many books through our summer reading program, our literacy programs, as well as within our classrooms.

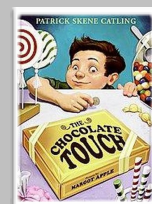
Over the past two years, we have sent books home with our students through our summer reading program K-5. We have asked our students and parents to read over the summer together which helps to reduce the "summer slide" we often see at the beginning of the school year.

During the course of the school year, we have two Literacy Nights, which promotes the importance of reading and its impact on a student's skill development. These evenings endorse the culture of literacy. Encouraging such programming within our schools highlights the importance we place on bringing our parents and schools together for the common purpose of supporting learning.



Additionally, Steger 194 is committed to providing our students books within the classroom. Many grades are using the novel or other readings to promote the importance of close reading. By giving the student a novel to keep, students can actually write in the book, highlight passages, and make connections within the margins. Close reading allows students the versatility to use the book as a tool to mark key elements found through the instructional process and they get to add the book to their own personal library.

Ultimately, we strive to empower our students with books. At home, parents can actually read to their children and the students can read to their parents. Students who regularly attend school show evidence that acquiring the ability to read sets them up for further learning enabling them to move progressively to academic advancement.



Columbia Central Sports Corner

Boys Baseball- After a difficult regular season, the Cardinal Boys Baseball team was able to power past Chicago Heights Washington in the first round of regional play. Experience will be on the Cardinals side next season as there were a number of 6th and 7th grade starters in the lineup this season.

Girls Softball- The Lady Cardinals posted a 5-5 regular season record entering into the postseason. They were able to win their opening round game against Manhattan, but were unable to advance from the second round after running into a juggernaut in the eventual State Champion Hickory Creek Tigers. Great job ladies.

Cross Country- The Cardinal Cross Country team completed its fall season in typical fashion sending seventh grade runner Paige Haut to the IESA State Finals. Despite making a strong effort in the Sectional meet, several Columbia runners fell just short of state qualifying finishes. The bright spot on the season was finishing second in conference standings for the Cardinal 7th grade girls. Falling just shy of a really strong Flossmoor Parker team. Great job Cardinals!



Getting to Know Our Faculty: Michelle Perry Columbia Central Math Teacher

Where did you go to school?

Bloom Trail High School then Trinity Christian College

What is your favorite part about teaching?

My favorite part about teaching is seeing the look on students' faces when they just get it. I can tell when a student is really struggling with a math concept and then all of a sudden has that "ah-hah" moment. I like knowing that I took part in that process, whether it be asking challenging questions or finding supplemental activities for that student. I really love helping my students succeed and meet their goals.

Is education more important today than it has ever been before? If so, why?

Absolutely! Worldwide competition for jobs, constantly renewing technology, and a limited job market in higher paying careers calls for a higher importance towards education. If students have a mastery of their education they are going to be confident in the work place which will also make them more employable and promotable.

Why did you decide to become a math teacher?

I decided to become a math teacher because of a math teacher that I had in middle school. He was always there for me and he showed me that education can be fun. I want to bring that fun to my classroom. My middle school math teacher also used higher criteria when grading my work and I really appreciated that support and push to become a better student. I want to be the teacher with high expectations but with an understanding that I am still working with children who need to have fun.

What do you do in your spare time to relax?

I do not have much spare time but with the little time that I do have I enjoy coaching volleyball. I also run a local charity called the Community Closet. In 2016, we helped approximately 3,085 families that needed help during a hard time or a family crisis. We are continuing to grow and help people in a wider territory. I enjoy spending my time helping others and getting to know the community around me. I have been actively involved in the Community Closet for five years and I want to continue this charity for years to come. We have multiple events throughout the year including a coat giveaway, a reading event where we give out books to children and adults to promote reading, and a prom/dance dress giveaway to help teens get the proper attire to attend school functions. For seven years I scared both children and adults at the Crete FMEN haunted house. I also work as a security guard at the Hollywood Casino Amphitheater. I get to see the bands, hear all of the music, and catch a few crowd surfers after that. It is a lot of fun! Many of the students and parents at Columbia have seen me at the local 7-11 as a cashier. I really enjoy staying busy!

If it wasn't teaching, what job would you like to have? Why?

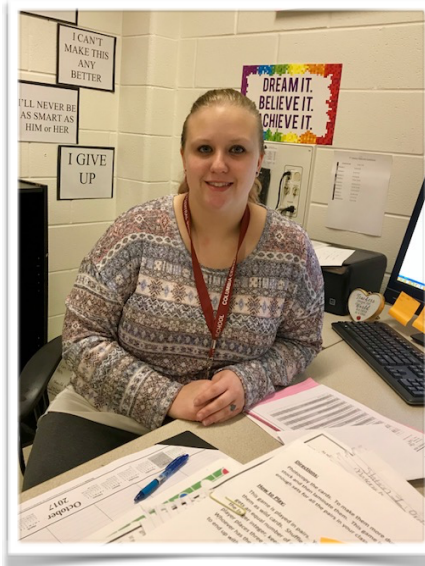
Marine Biologist would be my career choice if I was not teaching. I love animals, specifically ones who swim! I would love to spend my days working with animals and keeping them healthy!

What was your favorite book as an elementary student?

My favorite book series was Harry Potter. I consider myself quite a "potterhead"! I have attended multiple Potter events. I have read the series multiple times and I plan on reading it again once it starts to snow!

Favorite book as a junior high student?

As a junior high student, I was still devoted to reading the Harry Potter series but I also read the House of Night series, as well as the Eragon series. My choice of reading seems to be more fantasy than non-fiction.



STEGER DISTRICT 194

Administration Center
3753 Park Avenue, Steger, IL
753-4300
Columbia Central
94 Richton Road, Steger, IL
755-0021
Steger Intermediate Center
3411 Hopkins Street, Steger, IL
753-4200
Steger Primary Center
3341 Miller Ave, South Chicago Heights, IL
753-4100

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[HTTP://www.sd194.org](http://www.sd194.org)

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A Word From Superintendent Hahto

Dear Steger Community Members,

The start of this school year has provided us with many reasons to celebrate. First, the Steger Primary Center Principal, Stephanie Winborn, and her faculty and staff welcomed their Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and first grade students into a redesigned and refurbished facility that is both beautiful and functional. At the September 17 Grand Opening, community members, students and their families were treated to a guided tour of the Primary Center by District 194 staff members that concluded with refreshments and a welcome by members of the Board of Education.

The two sister schools - Steger Primary Center and the Steger Intermediate Center - stand as testament to the vision and determination of the members of the Steger Board of Education who, in 2003, began a journey to bring the district's buildings into the 21st century. Their first goal was to build a new middle school from the ground up. This they did and Columbia Central was opened in 2005. With the redesign and additions to the Intermediate and now, the Primary Centers, their vision has been fully realized and Steger School District 194 is set for success in the decades to come. I'd like to acknowledge and thank both the Board of Education and the administrators, faculty and staff of all three of the district's schools for their patience and understanding, especially during these last four years, when philosophies were changed, upgrades were being made, and teachers were required to move - either from one classroom to another, or from one building to another - to accomplish the district's building and academic goals.

With the buildings finally completed and the middle school philosophy moving forward at Columbia Central, this year finds the Steger District 194 family settling into a new normal. We continue to make the improvement of teaching and learning our school improvement focus. This standard became the district's focus in 2016. Thanks to the many fine and dedicated faculty and staff members in the district's employ whose love of teaching, compassion for students, and can-do attitude are their hallmarks, Steger District 194 has every expectation of success in this long-term effort.

One exciting way we are moving forward to improve learning for students is in providing them with a growth mindset. With the encouragement of their teachers, students are beginning to set their own academic goals and take ownership of their learning. Using data from our recently instituted MAP testing, we are finding that this effort, while new, is made easier and more effective due to the wealth of report information available to us. Like any new endeavor, we will grow in our understanding and use of the data now at our fingertips and it will provide us with the knowledge we need to help students achieve to their fullest potential in the years ahead.



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