



Dr. Dana Smith, Superintendent

Winter 2018

Cathy Perino, Editor

Greetings District 161 Community Members!

I hope that the start of the new year has been positive for you and your family and that you are ready for the second half of the school year! This is going to be a very busy next few months in District 161. First, we are in the process of finalizing the summer 2018 construction projects for Heather Hill and Parker Junior High School. This work will address roofing and HVAC issues at those two locations to ensure a safe environment that is conducive to learning. Second, we are in the process of reviewing and piloting a new K8 literacy curriculum. Our focus is on providing our children with rigorous and challenging learning experiences at all levels and the updated materials will provide consistency across our school district. Finally, we are moving forward with multiple plans to increase the effectiveness of our communication and the opportunities for us to collaborate with the District 161 community. In the coming months, you will receive information about the School Communication Performance Evaluation [SCoPE]

Survey. This instrument will help us review and revamp our communication practices to develop meaningful dialogue with our families and community members. We are in the process of reviewing data management and analysis solutions to help us track and respond to student data effectively. Lastly, the plans are being finalized to reinstitute the District 161 District Leadership Team [DLT]. The DLT is a representative group of staff, parents, and community members who will meet periodically to review our practices and to make recommendations for improvement.

All of this work is focused on providing a high quality education for our children and adding value to the communities that we serve. There are a lot of moving parts in District 161 and I encourage you to contact me by phone 708.647.7030 or email dsmith@sd161.org if you have any questions or comments.

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

Community Event Information

Kindergarten Registration, Elementary Buildings

March 21, 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Lucky Egg Hunt, Irwin Park

March 24, 10:00 AM

Earth Day, Iron Oaks

April 26, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Fishing Derby, Dolphin Lake

April 28, 8:00 - 11:30 AM

Homewood Memorial Day Parade

May 28, 10:30 AM

Happy New Year to our Families and Residents in District 161!

After a long holiday break, we are all refreshed and focused on the second half of the school year. As we work towards reaching our district's goals this year, I'd like to challenge all of us to think about the roles we can play to help our district have an outstanding year. One of our priorities this year is our commitment to community engagement. In the coming months, we'll present more opportunities to support our efforts to inform and educate the community on district activities. Our newly established Community Engagement Committee has been working hard over the past several months and our conversations with community members have helped inform many new ideas and approaches we hope to roll out this year.

That being said, I'd like to encourage the community to continue to bring forth ideas. Think outside the box

on ways to enhance our children's learning experiences in and outside of the classroom. Create a reader's theater group, a young photography club, or a district wide service learning project. There is no limit to ideas.

I have lived here for fifteen years and I know firsthand we have amazing residents with some incredible skills that both our children and district can benefit from. I fully believe in the "it takes a village" concept and together we can make our district stronger than ever before. Successful schools are not only about strong curriculum, but also an environment and programs that supports the overall growth and development of our students. Our board, administration, and our teachers are 100% committed to having successful schools. Let the ideas flow!

Best Regards,

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

Parent University

District 161's Parent University offers free learning sessions to help parents build upon skills, knowledge and support systems to advocate for student success. On January 25, Anne Tyler from the Tyler Institute presented the first of a two part series focusing on Executive Functioning Skills Development for High Achieving Children. This year we have hosted several Math Nights to give parents more information and ideas on how to support their children at home with our new math curriculum. Upcoming event topics and dates are listed below. If you are interested in attending a session, please RSVP by visiting the district website and selecting the RSVP link for the session. Additional information will be posted on the district website closer to each session. All Parent University sessions will take place at the District Office.

It is our goal to expand Parent University session offerings and also partner with local organizations to provide relevant and timely topics that our parents can use to support their children in learning at home, at school, and in the community.

Upcoming Parent University Sessions

Monday, March 19 (7:00 8:00 p.m.)

K8 ELA Curriculum Pilot Information Night RSVP by March 5

Thursday, April 5 (6:00 8:00 p.m.)

Part 2: More EF Skills Development for High Achieving Children (K8) with additional Examples, Coaching Strategies and Creating Personalized Plans RSVP by March 22



Flossmoor Hills News

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

Busy, Busy, Busy!

The students at Flossmoor Hills have been busy with a variety of activities including concerts, literacy celebrations, visits from community readers, STEAM projects, and so much more!

*Patricia McCraven, Principal
Flossmoor Hills School*



Students show their STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) projects



Families listen to Mr. Behrens' animated reading of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory during Literacy Night

Students show off their silly side with mustaches to celebrate Peace Week



Kindergarten students are ready to sing at their Winter Concert on December 13th



Fifth grade students show Mrs. Marti their best thinking faces



Mr. Daley and Ms. Davis help students make slime at Family Literacy Night



Former Chicago Bears player/Prairie State University Athletic Director reads to students during Community Readers Day

The Flossmoor Hills' Xtreme Boys Running Club completes a 5k with family and friends at Apollo Park



Exploring Passions through Discovery

Part of the Heather Hill learning and engagement process is to introduce students to a variety of extracurricular activities that absorb students in critical thinking and problem-solving. It is also our goal to give students the opportunity to enjoy and develop a passion for new things. To that end, the Heather Hill PTO, administration and teaching staff have focused on community partnerships in order to introduce a variety of after-school activities that will engage our students in these areas.

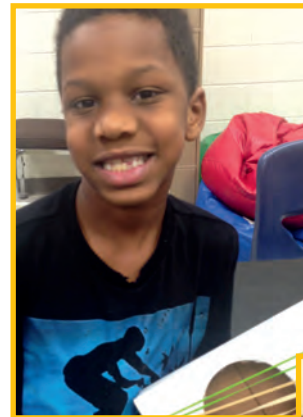
Mrs. Sang Park is introducing students at Heather Hill to beginning piano. This program gives students a solid foundation in basic two-hand piano skills. They learn how to read notes, as well as understand musical symbols and rhythms. Mrs. Park is assisting in continuing Heather Hill's tradition for the love of music.

The Robotics Club is led by Mr. Jerome Carter from Learn Tech. Students are learning programming, coding and exploring the scientific method using Lego Robotics. This club is for students grades 3-5. Engineering for Kids, led by Mr. Keith Poole, is a group focused on teaching engineering concepts through hands-on learning. In a lesson on December 13th, students were learning about the vibration of sound by creating their own guitars using rubber bands of different widths. Students then explored how the differences in the bands' widths produced a variety of sounds. This group is for students K-2.

Heather Hill also has established a 4th and 5th grade choir run by Mr. Ryan Kirby and a step club spearheaded by Mrs. Haley Marovich and parent volunteers. Our Green team, led by Mrs. Joan Mahler, has been involved in many community initiatives seeking to make our community and world a cleaner and greener place. Mrs. VanDongen has led our Girls on the Run program, which inspires young women through character-building while promoting fitness.

We at Heather Hill are dedicated to enhancing the student experience through these activities. Students have the opportunity to explore and pursue passions outside of the standard school curriculum, exposing them to a robust and diverse assortment of interests.

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



The Students of Serena Hills Have Been Busy With a Variety of Activities



"Building Relationships"

"We Enjoyed Our Very Own Ms. Crawford as a Guest Reader During Peaceable Week"

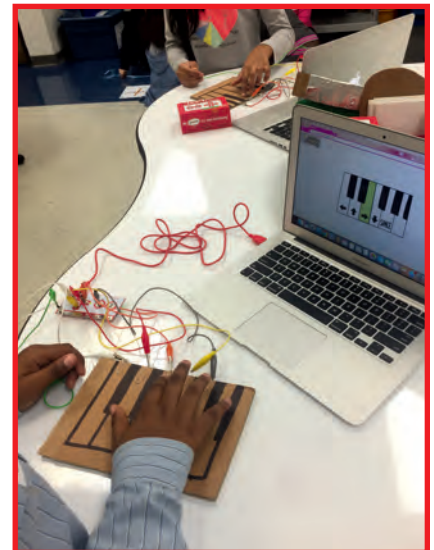


"Wear Red Day with Mentor and Mentee"

"Serena Hills and Flossmoor Hills 5th Graders Collaborating"



"Serena Hills - Hour of Code in the Maker Space"



"Deck the Halls With Team Ski"



"This Little Elf is Ready for the Holiday Season"



"Oh Fitness Tree"

Supporting the Arts

These last two months, Western Avenue began new after-school enrichment programs, offering STEM Club, Study Buddies, and organized basketball teams for the children. Our Girl Scout program continues to grow, and Chess Club and Extra Innings remain steadfast afterschool program at Western Avenue. We are excited to offer more afterschool programming for the children at Western Avenue, and we hope to continue to grow our offerings based on input and feedback from our parents and children. A special thank you to our parents and community members who have volunteered to either coordinate, coach, or work for these programs!

Our last two weeks with the children have been outstanding. We started a new December tradition at Western Avenue for our fifth grade students: A Winter Sock Hop! The students earned snowflakes for each day of positive behaviors, and

on December 15th, we held our first ever dance. There were board games, snacks, a teachercreated photo booth, and even a studentcreated playlist. Many thanks to our fifth grade teachers, Mrs. Santoro, Ms. Hentsch, Mr. Hall, Mrs. Panozzo and our parent volunteers for working together to create our first ever sock hop.

We also spent our last day doing many fun activities together. We sent our choir caroling at a senior home and at district office. Our entire school participated in a singalong of fun winter songs in the afternoon, followed by the best classroom parties! There was wonderful parent participation, and we are so thankful to all of our families who organized games, snacks, and activities for our children. Also, a huge thank you to our teachers who worked tirelessly this past week to close our year at Western Avenue with a bang!

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



2018 is Starting Off Strong!

After two academic quarters, Parker students have accomplished a lot! We have had Honor Roll Assemblies, PBIS celebrations (including a visit by the Jesse White Tumblers), Color War, sports teams going to state, National History Fair qualifiers, a visit from a Holocaust survivor, and numerous other exciting activities both inside and outside of the classroom. Parker's PTO-sponsored walk-a-thon raised over \$5000 towards implementing STEM at Parker. Look for more updates on STEM in the upcoming months. Parker students have also participated in service for the community. Parker students participated in Red Ribbon Week, had a canned food drive for Thanksgiving, a toiletry and personal item drive before the

holidays, and participated in a variety of projects for the MLK Day of Service. As the weather gets warmer, outdoor sports like Track will be getting ready to begin at Parker. As 8th graders near their Graduation Day, H-F representatives have been giving presentations to Parker students to prepare them for their futures outside of the nest!.

Fred Hunter, Principal
Mardell M. Parker
Junior High School



Flossmoor School District 161
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Chicago Heights, IL 60411

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POSTAL CUSTOMER

Special Education

In order to consider a student eligible for special education, a structured process for identifying areas of concern is followed. These areas of concern are documented on a form called Parent Consent for Evaluation Identification of Needed Assessment. The areas that the team (including the parents) review are: Academic Performance, Functional Performance, Cognitive Functioning, Communication Status, Health Domain, Hearing/Vision, Motor Abilities and Social Emotional Status. Not every student needs information in all of these areas. In special education lingo the gathering of this information is typically called the Domain Review. Once it is determined whether any additional information is needed, parent provide written consent. The evaluation process is initiated. From the date of consent, there is a maximum of sixty school days before the team must conduct an eligibility and if eligible an Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting. During an eligibility meeting, all the information requested at the domain is presented and discussed. To be eligible for a service under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, specific criteria must be met. Each area of disability has specific inclusionary and exclusionary criteria. These thirteen categories will be discussed in the next Visions Newsletter. If you ever have any questions related to special education, please feel free to call the office and ask for me,

Robin Latman,
Director of Special Education
708-647-7000

