



November 12, 2014 meeting

Summit Hill District 161 Board Briefs

Serving 3,265 students living in portions of Tinley Park, Mokena, and Frankfort

For additional information, please contact Supt. Barb Rains at 815.469.9103

School community honors Board of Education members for commitment and contributions

Nov. 15, 2014 is designated as School Board Members' Day in Illinois. We are joining districts across the state to thank our School Board members for their commitment and contributions to District 161. Board policies and oversight guide us as decisions are made on complex educational and social issues that affect the entire community and the lives of individual students. Each year, the demands become greater for School Board members to help lead our school district as we prepare students to be productive citizens and the leaders in a new 21st century global economy. At the meeting, Board Members viewed a video featuring their children offering words of thanks on behalf of all District students. Also, a book was selected by each Board Member's family to be donated to a school library in their honor.

Sixty-two staff members honored by school community in October for Wall of Gratitude

In response to Board Goal 2: ensuring a safe, inspiring, and welcoming environment, each school and the Administrative Center is displaying a Wall of Gratitude for staff, community members, and parents to post words of thanks and appreciation for efforts above and beyond the call of duty. 41 staff members were nominated in August/Sept. In October, 62 staff members were honored for actions that positively contribute to the District's climate. Honorees from the Administrative Center are Kathryn Klein, Bridget Nolan, Dean Gerdes, and Barb Rains. Arbury Hills School honorees are Christine Aguirre, Lauren Baker, Ann Baud, Rita Binzen, John Buchanan, Inez Davis, Joanna Olszta, John Snipes, Susan Stachler, Laura Vlosak, Amanda Werniak, and Donna Wojcik. Dr. Julian Rogus School honorees are Frances Boss, Judy Chathas, Rebecca Kevilus, Joyce Larson, Penny Petrulis, Joy Reno, Mike Ruffalo, and Sarah Turek. Frankfort Square School honorees are Megan Freeman, Jason Isdonas, Lucy Perz, and Tina Prorok. Indian Trail School honorees are Diane Dankovich, Patricia Pfeiffer, Joe Renardo, and Dana Wright. Walker School honorees are Martin Acevedo, Lisa Chikerotis, Jason Collins, Kathy Crick, Tracy DeCesare, Mary Dempsey, Erik Donovan, Laura Goebel, Julie Hein, Marianne Hourihan, Sharon James, Jill Lewkow, Kristi Linke, Jessica Malas, Jennifer McFarland, Linda O'Dell, Dan Pierson, Nicole Rafa, and Karrie Zitkus. Summit Hill Jr. High honorees are Kim Coughlin, Marybeth Egan, Katie Goddard, Jill Lewkow, Joanne Madonia, Sarah O'Keefe, Fred Pufahl, Scott Smalter, Pat Sullivan, Nancy Watt, and the Summit Hill Jr. High Teachers.

District Climate Survey indicates strong foundation as benchmark for future surveys

The District worked with the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC) to develop a District climate survey to be administered this fall and spring as part of the District's efforts to monitor our climate so it remains conducive to student achievement. The survey of staff, parents, and middle school students focused on the status of the elements necessary to provide a supportive environment. The Goal 2 Superintendent Advisory met in October to discuss the results and formulate how to present the information to the school community. It was agreed that the results would be color-coded within each goal area with green indicating 80-100% agreement, yellow indicating 70-79% agreement, and red indicating 69% or below agreement.

In terms of responses, the CEC noted that the advisory committee should utilize as its standard the response rates as designated in the 5Essentials Survey. Utilizing that model, the District was above the 50% threshold for participation by District staff with 232 responses out of a possible 367. However, the District did not reach the 30% threshold for parent participation with 116 responses from our 3,200+ parents. The CEC indicated that the District has a strong foundation as its

benchmark for future surveys with 99.9% of staff responses in the “green” band. The CEC suggested the District continue on a maintenance mode going forward until the next survey is administered in the spring.

In personnel matters, the Board

- approved the employment of Nathan Motykowski as a Special Education Teacher;
- approved the employment of Dana Porreca and Suzette Fitzpatrick as teachers to fill FMLAs;
- approved the employment of Tiffanie Jeffrey as a social worker to fill a FMLA;
- approved the employment of Maria Khattabi, Amanda Matusky, and Sophia Mirza as paraprofessionals;
- accepted the 2014-2015 retirement request of Jane E. Brown;
- accepted the 2018-2019 retirement requests of Laura Fifer, Patricia Drop, John Buchanan, and Linda Schober; and
- approved two FMLA requests.

In other matters, the Board

- will continue to observe December 24 and December 31 as holidays for 12-month staff members;
- began its discussion of the 2015-16 District calendar;
- heard a report on the 2015 summer program schedule: the Academic Enrichment Program is tentatively set for July 27-30, the Summer Bridge Program from June 22-30, and the Math Bridge Program from July 20-23 and July 27-30;
- approved the 2014 Tax Levy Estimate Resolution which includes a proposed levy of \$34.3 million; and
- heard a follow up on the 2005 bond refunding issue:
 - ✓ The District saved more than \$2.2 million in interest savings over the life of the bonds on a net present value basis despite extending the repayment schedule by two years;
 - ✓ The District debt service rises gradually over the length of the schedule, from this year’s \$5.7 million to a peak of \$7 million in FY 2025-26, avoiding the steep increases that were designed into the original 2005 schedule, when growth in the tax base was projected to cover those large, year-to-year increases in debt payments.
 - ✓ The bond payment schedule is structured to produce a tax rate of \$.70 every year starting with the 2014 levy. A flat tax rate protects the taxpayers from a rising tax rate for payment of the District’s debt and allows the District more flexibility in managing tax rates for operations in future years.