



D113A Community Board Brief

MARCH/APRIL 2015 COMMUNITY BOARD BRIEF

Message from Dr. Orzel



Dear 113A Community,

As we approach the spring season, we wanted to highlight some important items happening in our schools. I am so proud that we have so many exciting and engaging opportunities happening for our children in our classrooms. Please take a look at our principal's news bulletins along with some district-level reports as well.

Communications has been a central focus for us this year as we have been diligent in improving our communications to our families. We are now up to 254 likes on our Facebook page. If you haven't liked our page, please do so. Amazing school events and activities are posted on a regular basis.

Looking forward with our communication plan, we are in the process of updating our district website to streamline information and provide a site which is more user-friendly for our parents, students, staff, and community. We are also engaging in a logo redesign and branding process for the district to update our imaging and branding. All schools will also receive a fresh, new look as we launch our new site this summer.

As you know, the District has been evaluating its residency procedures this year. Starting with the upcoming school year, **the district will have all students verify residency for the upcoming 2015-16 school year.** More information will follow in the next few weeks.

Hopefully you had a chance to view the joint letter to the editor from myself and Dr. Ticknor of District 210 regarding Vision 20/20. If you did not have a chance to see it, I have included it in the newsletter for you.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me with your suggestions, questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Dr. Courtney Orzel

Superintendent of Schools

Welcome to Oakwood

Through the Eyes of Children

By: Cathy Slee

According to Macmillan's Beginning Dictionary, a school is defined as "a place for teaching and learning." At the heart of our school is our Mission and Vision statement, which captures our focus on children and their learning. As educators, we know that learning goes beyond the basics of ABCs and 123s. At Oakwood, we focus on the development of the whole child: academics, social-emotional learning, and physical development. We provide the foundation on which all other learning takes place.

How does this translate to what is going on in our primary building? Enter any of our classrooms, and you'll see students talking, sharing, collaborating, and exploring. Students are engaged in their learning. Teachers are modeling, facilitating, and differentiating to meet the needs of all students. Every day is new; every day is exciting; every day is fun! As the old adage states, a picture is worth a thousand words. This is Oakwood School....through the eyes of children.



Collaborating: Students learn how to regroup ones into tens using tactile manipulatives.

Those same students learn about the Hour of Code through collaborative activities with 5th grade "buddies" from River Valley.



Exploring: Students explore through inquiry-based lessons during their Pebbles, Sand, and Silt science unit. Students had an opportunity to sift rocks into different groups using various sizes of mesh screens. The real-life lesson was that large machines do the same type of thing (sifting and sorting) when building sidewalks, cement park garbage cans, or the mortar for holding bricks together.

Engaging: Learning about music has never been so fun!



Teaching and Learning in District 113A

By Dr. Mary Gricus, Assistant Superintendent

Title II Grant Supports Professional Development in Mathematics

District 113A uses its federal Title II grant funds to support high quality professional development for educators.

Through their participation in adult learning courses, teachers increase their knowledge of academic subjects and expand their repertoire of effective instructional strategies which help students to meet challenging academic standards.

During the 2014-2015 school year, K-5 teachers have been engaged in Title II professional development facilitated by Mary Jo Tavormina, Project Director for the Suburban Cook County Mathematics Initiative.

Under the auspices of the University of Illinois at Chicago, this learning series has focused on using problem solving and math talks to develop students' procedural fluency and conceptual understanding of mathematics.

Teachers have also been investigating strategies which promote the application of mathematical practices in their classrooms.

By immersing themselves in complex problem-solving experiences, teachers build a stronger understanding of the content and practices for the Common Core State Standards within and across grade levels.

The connection between student learning and teacher learning is strong...and District 113A students certainly benefit when their teachers "go to school!"



Pictured: Third grade teachers Joanne Mitchell and Rebecca Jones discuss how they will use manipulatives to clarify mathematics concepts for their students.

River Valley Has Been Busy

Debra Lynch, Principal

Close Reading Training



Teachers at River Valley School recently completed a **four-part training series on close reading**. Close reading is a technique that involves an investigation of a short, complex piece of text with the goal of deep understanding of various aspects of the text. The process includes multiple readings of a text, each with a specific purpose. Guided by text-dependent questions, students gradually discover and analyze different levels of meaning through each reading.

River Valley reading specialists conducted training with teachers that focused on creating close reading lessons using the three phases of the close-reading framework, generating text-dependent questions to guide students toward deeper understanding and discussing the role of close reading in our district's current curriculum. This training is helping the teachers adjust to the instructional shifts that are occurring with the move to the Common Core State Standards. The new standards include a focus on reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from text. Close reading is one important technique that helps students achieve that goal.

PTO Sponsored Activities

On Feb. 9th Oakwood and River Valley Schools engaged in a **PTO sponsored Fun Run** activity to kick off family fitness week. The theme for the activity was "heroes", celebrating local heroes and super heroes. Many students and staff came to school dressed in shirts/clothes that paid respect to everyday heroes in our communities such as police officers and fire fighters while others chose to wear capes or tee-shirts donning the likes of Batman, Superman, or Captain America. All students were encouraged to participate in this fun-filled activity to encourage fitness, have some fun, win some prizes, and raise some funds to support our schools.

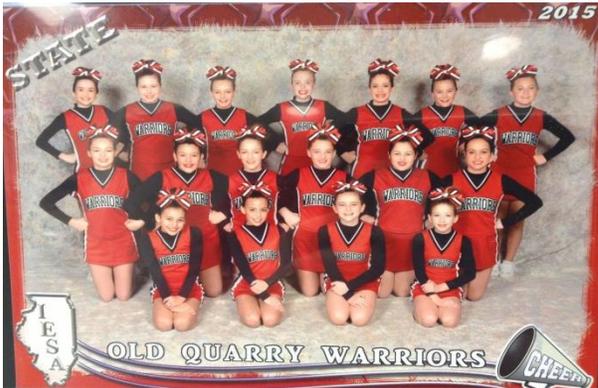
Oakwood and River Valley Schools also engaged in a **PTO sponsored fundraising event that benefitted the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society** for two weeks in February. Both schools collected loose change in hopes that they could beat previous fundraising efforts. For over ten years, River Valley School has participated in this fundraising activity during Valentine week to show their heart. This year and last year, Oakwood School joined their efforts and combined, the two schools were a force to be reckoned with, raising over \$7,000 for the organization!

The top three classrooms at each building that raised the most amount of money earned Barnes & Noble gift certificates to purchase books for their classrooms. The top classrooms at each grade level earned a PJ spirit day for their class.



Old Quarry Middle School Soars in Winter Extracurricular Activities

By Dr. Bill Caron



This past winter may have been brutally cold but it was a hot one for Old Quarry Middle School clubs and extracurricular sports. The Old Quarry Cheerleaders kicked off their season with a first place trophy at the Buffalo Grove New Year's Cheerleading Competition in early January only to follow that up with taking second place in the Illinois State Cheerleading Competition. The squad also took first place at the Eisenhower Cheerleading Competition and finished the season as Southeast DuPage Elementary Athletic Association Conference Champions.

But cheerleading is not the only team bringing in trophies to OQMS. The Chess Club took third place in the Southeast DuPage Elementary Athletic Association Conference Chess Tournament on January 31, 2015. Leading the Old Quarry Team was Devin S. who was an 8th Board Champion for the conference.



Old Quarry Mathletes heated up the winter with outstanding performances at several local math competitions before finishing their season at the Salt Creek Chapter of Mathcounts Competition in late February. Leading the team was Taylor S. who place third in the competition and will move on to the State Competition on March 15, 2014. Kirsten K. and Brendan G. placed in the top 25% of all students at the meet.

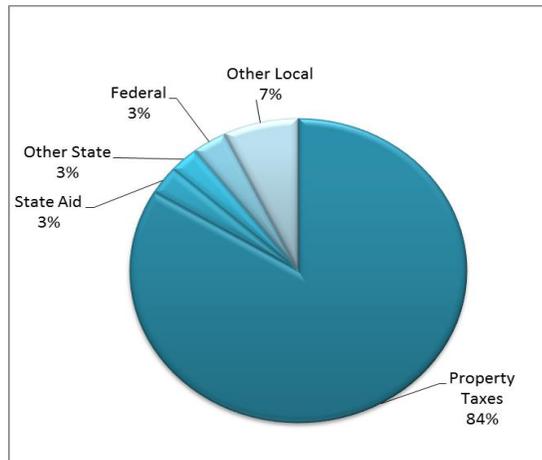
News from the District 113A Business Office

By: Barbara Germany, Chief School Business Official

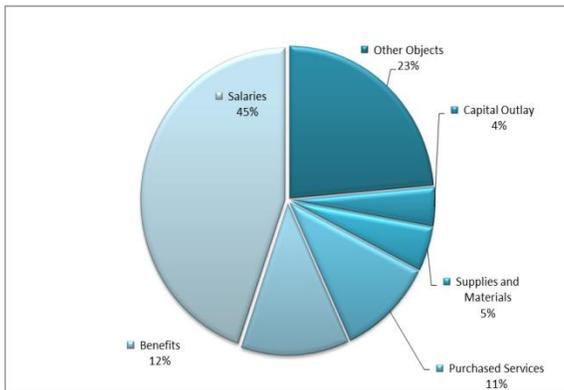
DISTRICT FINANCES

Where the money comes from: The money to educate the students and run the school district comes from four sources: local, state, federal, and other. The largest portion of District 113A’s revenue, 84%, comes from local property taxes.

REVENUE BY RESOURCE - FY 14-15	
Property Taxes	\$ 23,607,290
State Aid	\$ 854,833
Other State	\$ 801,537
Federal	\$ 932,176
Other Local	\$ 2,024,990



Where the money goes: Salaries and Benefits is our top expenditure, with over 57% of the money being spent on those items. In addition, the Bond Fund currently expends 23% of the budget as well.



EXPENDITURES BY OBJECT	
Other Objects	\$ 6,299,116
Capital Outlay	\$ 1,097,143
Supplies and Materials	\$ 1,256,350
Purchased Services	\$ 2,843,970
Benefits	\$ 3,235,381
Salaries	\$ 11,931,236

The Board and Administration continue to look for ways to be diligent in the management of district funds. Given recent legislative changes, we continue to be ever-watchful of the negative impact these changes could have on our finances.

District 113A achieved 4.0 financial recognition for the 13-14 fiscal year from the Illinois State Board of Education. Moving forward, we need to remain cognizant of our forecasting, spending, and management of funds in order to preserve this achievement.

News from the Technology Department

This school year has certainly been a busy one for the technology department. We are very proud to have rolled out a new wireless network as well as new computers for our students to use. I have witnessed our students using these computers on our new network and it is great to see them being used successfully in our classrooms.

This past month the technology department has focused on preparing our students, staff, and our new technology for the upcoming PARCC assessment. Tracy Simon, Instructional Technology Coordinator, has done an exceptional job training our staff on the use of this new assessment. Each school building's technology assistants, Marge Ihde, Karen Hennig, and Jacob Vondrak, have all done a fantastic job preparing our student computers for PARCC.

Going forward, the technology department is planning to be available at each of our testing schools to provide hands-on support. I am confident that we have done all the necessary setup and testing of our computers and network and anticipate that testing will run smoothly for us. The technology department is ready to assist where necessary for testing as well as provide support of our other ongoing technology initiatives.



Steve Davis – Director of Technology



Tracy Simon, Instructional Technology Coordinator, joins Marge Ihde and Karen Hennig from the tech department to collaborate on PARCC training and setup.

EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENTS, FAMILIES, and STAFF PARTNER WITH THE LEMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR CRAFTS AND STORY TIME



Several times each year, the Early Childhood staff hosts a light evening of family fun. Whether a picnic, cookie decorating, or crafts, this opportunity for families to spend time together enhances the sense of community for which EC is known. Children practice social skills in a new setting while parents engage in “adult talk” with one another or with staff members. This particular event featured a representative from the Lemont Public Library, who read books, played games, and provided a Valentine’s Day craft for EC students and their siblings.

A Blueprint for the Future: Vision 20/20

Educators and members of the community must have a significant voice in the conversation about public education in Illinois. We are excited to discuss a new initiative called Vision 20/20 – a blueprint for the future of public education that was developed by educators from all regions of the state.

Vision 20/20's goal is summarized in its tagline: "Fulfilling the Promise of Public Education." Education is an investment in the future of our children, our state and our nation. Educators have reflected upon the current state of education in Illinois and are taking action to create a system that meets the needs of all students.

We endorse Vision 20/20 because it focuses on real initiatives that will impact the success of our students now and in the future.

Vision 20/20's policy platform is divided into four main pillars:

- 21st Century Learning – Providing the technology and tools for learning in today's world as well as a commitment to the "whole child";
- Highly Effective Educators – Policies to attract, develop and retain the highest quality of teachers and administrators;
- Shared Accountability – Creating a model that includes more input from educators, increases collaboration with legislators and restructures mandates to allow more flexibility for local school districts and communities; and
- Equitable and Adequate Funding – An evidence-based funding model that takes into account what it actually costs to educate a student in various parts of our state and utilizes research to identify areas that have the most impact on student success.

This plan is representative of opinions and expertise from more than 3,000 diverse stakeholders, discussions with field experts, and a review of current literature on best practices. School superintendents, school board members, principals and school business officials collaborated on Vision 20/20, which already has been endorsed by the Illinois PTA and the Ounce of Prevention Fund, an organization dedicated to providing children in poverty the best chance for success in school.

Educators should be held to the highest standards, but also be given the flexibility to apply their experience and knowledge to best support each individual student.

Please learn more about Vision 20/20 by visiting www.illinoisvision2020.org, and consider signing the petition in support of these policies. You also can follow the progress on Twitter at @ILVision2020. Changing the course of public education in Illinois only can happen with grassroots support. Please help us fulfill the promise of public education to children in our community and across the state.

Dr. Courtney Orzel, D113A Superintendent

Dr. Mary Ticknor, D210 Superintendent

