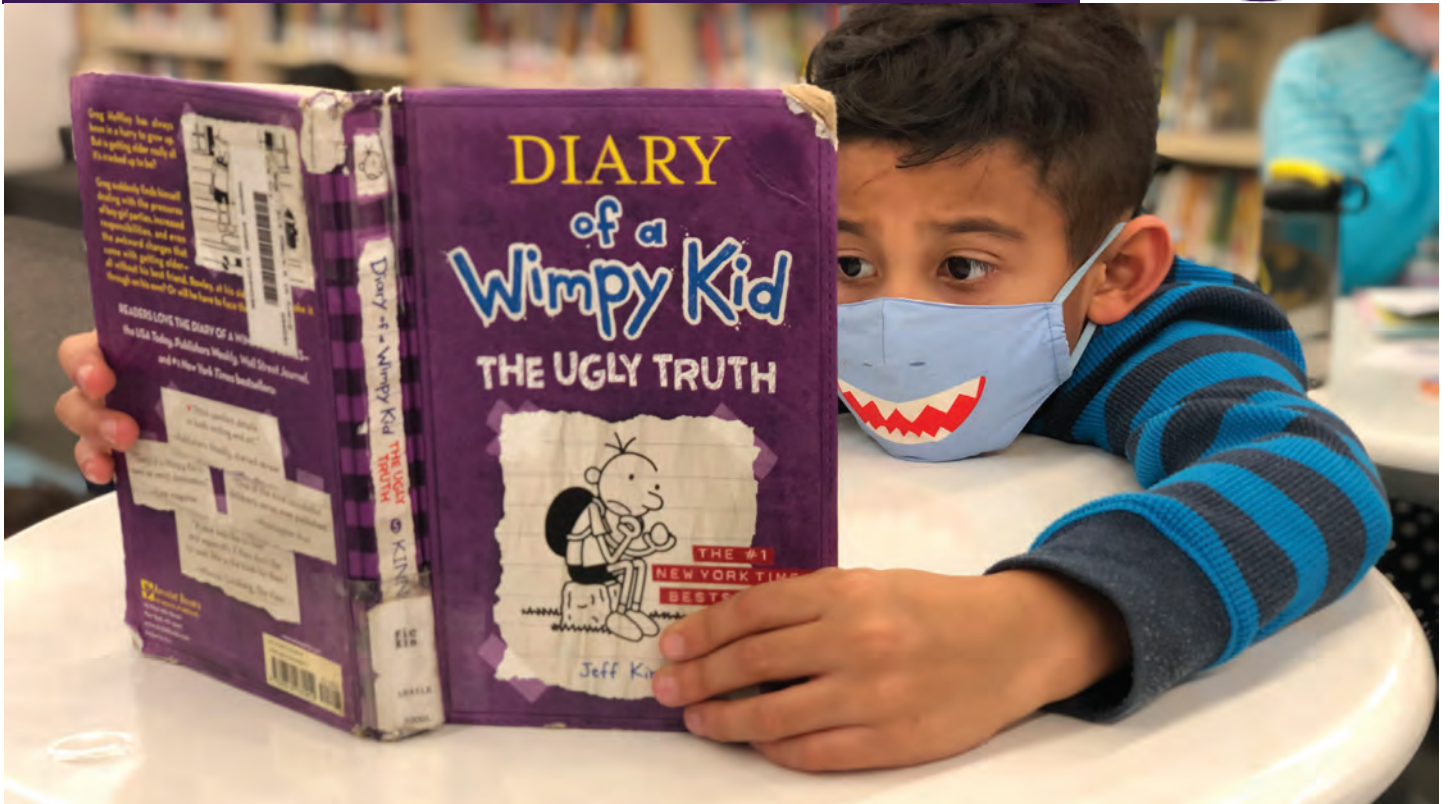




SPOTLIGHT



“RESTART, RESTORE, RECONNECT”

RESTART, RESTORE, RECONNECT



Kevin Myers, PhD
Superintendent
Districts 75 / 120

Superintendent's Message

The 2021-22 school year was one of the most exciting in memory.

Under the theme of “Restart, Restore, Reconnect, we brought back art shows, concerts and field trips that had been missing from our school schedules the last couple of years. We added some new events. In total, it infused positive energy into our district. It was reflected in our students’ smiles.

Academically, we focused on literacy this year and worked on instilling a love of reading in our students. Our staff developed creative ways to entice students to read. We started book clubs, held a Book Tasting event for students, and even brought in high school students to read to our youngest students. Programs like flashlight reading made it fun for kids to curl up with a good book.

The students responded well to the lessons and to our school environment in general. They showed great progress in academics. But it didn’t end there. They excelled in athletics and extracurricular activities and got involved in the community.

Many of their accomplishments are listed throughout this newsletter.

With the help from organizations like the Mundelein PTO and the District 75 STEAM Foundation, students had even more opportunities to learn. Thanks to the Grainger Foundation and Medline, two of our corporate partners, students began using a new state-of-the-art multimedia studio at Carl Sandburg Middle School.

I thank our amazing team of teachers and administrators who contributed to our success this year. I thank our families for their patience and support and I thank our students for their dedication, their hard work and their joyful approach toward learning.

With teamwork like this, I can’t wait to see what next year will bring. I’m already excited to have our students return in August so we can continue building bright futures together.



DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

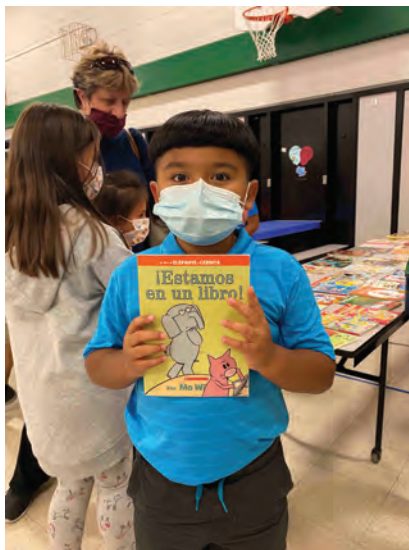
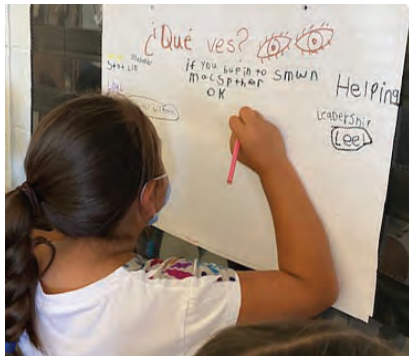
Removing barriers to success

In today's global economy, understanding multiple languages and multiple cultures can be a real advantage.

In District 75's Dual Language Program, we recognize this advantage for all of our students. The program is designed to help not only those who are learning English as a second language, but students who are learning Spanish as an academic enrichment.

In both cases, the program helps set students up for future success, said Ryan Zak, District 75 Director of Linguistic Programs.

"The benefits are enormous," Zak explained. "These students will not only be able to speak and write a second language, but they will better understand how language works. This will translate into a better understanding of math concepts, computer languages and music."



Kindergarten and first-grade students are taught in their home language 90 percent of the time and English 10 percent of the time. By second grade they teach in English 20 percent of the time and 30 percent by third grade.



Middle school students are studying in English 70 percent of the time. But the progress is often seen earlier than that. By the time they're in fifth grade, a high percentage of these students are reading at or above expected levels, Zak said.

"The program has three basic goals: bilingualism, biliteracy and cultural competency."

Ryan Zak, Director of Linguistic Programs

In District 75, students are brought into an English-speaking environment without sacrificing a sense of connection to their own cultural heritage. Students may read one book that mirrors their own life, and another book that offers a window to a culture they know less about.

"We want to assure our texts and the instructional approach we use are both windows and mirrors," Zak said. "In this way, they develop a more complex, complete understanding that helps them relate to others from different cultures and be able to collaborate with them."

That's quite an advantage for any student - English learners who enter kindergarten without an understanding of English, or those who are learning Spanish as a second language.

FOCUS ON LITERACY



Fostering a love of literacy

Students in District 75 were not only reading more books than ever this year, but they were talking about them, writing about them and even drawing pictures about them.

The focus on literacy - both reading and writing, was the centerpiece of the school year in District 75.

“Reading is the foundation of all content areas. With the ability to read, it’s easier to understand content, to communicate with others and to feel connected in the world.” said Sarah Cacciatore, EdD, while in her first year as District 75’s Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.

Her department set up ongoing professional learning opportunities for the teaching staff to learn new ways to provide targeted and specific instruction to students based on developmental needs. The process was

continuous and focused on a common theme of developing students’ reading identities.

With a better understanding of genres, writing styles and even languages, students discovered their favorite types of books and their favorite authors. Once they determine their reading identities, they discover what they like and read more.

The methods were slightly different for our early learners, pre-kindergarten through second grade, than they were for students in the intermediate and middle schools. Teachers encouraged students of all ages to use common vocabulary when discussing their books and text types to support vertical integration of literacy skills across the District.

Early learners are taught to decode words, sound out

FOCUS ON LITERACY



“ Reading is the foundation of all content areas. With reading skills, it’s easier to understand content, to communicate with others and to feel connected in the world.

Sarah Cacciatore, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning



Above, L-R: Mechanics Grove students duct tape Principal Tanya Fergus to the wall in March as a reward for reading 1,500 books in the “Duct Tape Reading Challenge;” Washington students read by flashlight in January in a fun program encouraging kids to have fun reading; Mechanics Grove teacher Jenni Rodeghero helps host a “Book Tasting” for students in September.

words phonetically and look for clues that provide context to the book or text. More experienced readers are learning to grasp the author’s purpose, main idea, nuances of voice, and tone from the author. Students are tasked to understand what the author is trying to say and what it means to them.

Assessing the progress of the District’s literacy goals will be a long-term process, but there are plenty of indicators that it is going well. One of those indicators is the use of common vocabulary across all grade levels among students and teachers.

Teachers use specific words, academic vocabulary, when teaching. Then they listen carefully to see if students are using the same academic vocabulary in conversation. The intention is that all the students, from kindergarten through eighth-graders are using similar terminology.

“That is evidence that new learning is taking root,” Cacciatore said.

While the 2021-22 school year was reading-focused in terms of strategies specific to reading genres, text-types,

and writing about reading, goals for next year include continuing the students’ reading trajectory and weaving in more writing instruction. Writing is an important part of the literacy process and writing like an author is a goal for next year’s instructional focus.

D75’s Educational Resources

District 75’s team employed a variety of resources in its literacy program in 2021-22, including:

- **Orton-Gillingham:** A teaching product with a philosophy relating to phonics and phonemic awareness (the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words.)
- **Schoolwide** provides professional development used in workshop instruction.
- **Adelante** is a core language arts program providing professional development to support District 75’s Dual Language Program.
- **Fountas and Pinnell** is a teaching product that guides differentiated learning through small group instruction. For students in District 75, that includes guided reading, book clubs and strategy groups.

Book clubs empower students

Books face heavy competition for time in a kid's world. Between social media videos, music apps, television, sports, and video games, it's a wonder they ever have time to pick up a book.

But District 75 administrators may have found one way to make books more enticing to their students. They've added book clubs as a small group literacy instruction option at



Washington, Mechanics Grove and Carl Sandburg schools. The program is designed to develop students into active, thinking readers by choosing books they like, taking notes while reading and discussing them with classmates.

“This gets kids excited about learning,” explained District 75 Teaching and Learning Coordinator Jill Unger. “A lot of the planning is done among the students so they’re taking ownership. They’re also discussing the books with each other so they’re learning how to collaborate.”

With slight differences for various age groups, the program is fairly similar across the district. A teacher will select a variety of books and each student will select one of those, based on genre, author and storyline. They take notes while reading, then discuss the books in small groups.

In Lilian Quint's seventh-grade dual language classroom at Carl Sandburg Middle School, students read books that dealt with real-life issues such as immigration and growing up in a single-parent household. At Mechanics Grove School, fourth-grade teacher Laura Orlyk focused on the students' choice - historical fiction.

“They’re beginning to figure out that if they like a certain type of book, they might also like something similar,” Orlyk said. “It used to be, when they went to the library, they would all cluster around the same books. Now they’re realizing what they like and finding other books that fit their category.”

Once the kids are focused on reading, she said, they are open to learning about writing concepts such as theme, main idea and point-of-view.

Students prepared for club group meetings by writing their own discussion questions. In this way, they were not only held accountable for thoughtful reading by their teacher, but by their peers.

“After five weeks, they’re great at it,” Quint said. “They feel empowered. This is their thing. They eventually become independent thinkers about what they’re reading.”



Besides becoming better readers, the practice helps students develop good listening habits, better speaking skills, and gives them experience in voicing their opinions about a topic in a rational, intelligent way.

“The biggest piece of this is that they’re coming to the book club with their own ideas and leading the discussion,” Orlyk said. “The whole idea is that reading is thinking.”

Mixing traditional and digital media literacy

In a world dominated by laptops, kindles and cell phones, how can old-fashioned paper books ever capture the attention of middle school students?

Easy. Just put Sarah Rafalowicz in charge of the school library, or Learning Lab as it's called at Carl Sandburg Middle School.

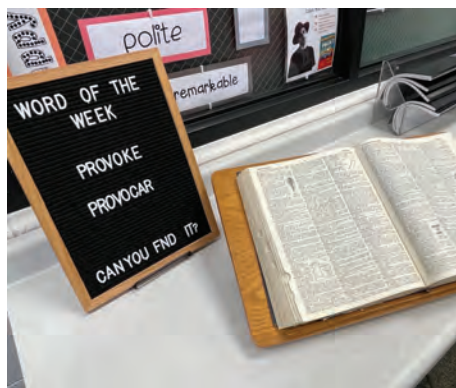
A former language arts teacher, Sarah was named director of the Learning Lab last fall. Under former director Jessica Rebella, it had become a space where students could explore their creativity and curiosity.

Sarah took it to the next level by successfully merging digital learning with old-school methods.

She introduced an interactive bulletin board and enhanced the Learning Lab's digital library webpage by integrating a CSMS Wakelet, allowing students to organize topics that inspire them and save them into folders. She also encourages kids to use the Dewey Decimal System to locate books and gives them prizes when they find definitions by thumbing through a full-size dictionary.

Her focus on digital media literacy developed from her previous post as a classroom teacher. She's proven adept at helping students think critically about the media they consume everyday. And she has the certification to back it up.

In December Sarah earned both the PBS Digital Citizenship Certification and the Newsela Certification (bridging English/Language Arts with current events). It was a big accomplishment, according to District 75 Teaching and Learning Coordinator Jill Unger.



"Media literacy is so important these days. Sarah's role is so vital," Unger said.

Sarah is also a strong advocate of the District 75 philosophy of engagement in reading and has helped develop students' love for good old-fashioned books.

“When I make reading suggestions, the books will fly out of my hands.

Sarah Rafalowicz, CSMS Learning Lab Director

Book shelves dominate the Learning Lab, with sports and World War II books as the most popular. She's researched the best and most popular books and has built a diversity of book characters for kids to read

about. Each month, Sarah highlights certain books under Fiction and Non-Fiction in her Reading Spotlight. Her excitement in the books is contagious.

Her digital library webpage enhances everything going on in the Learning Lab. It offers current events, recommended books to read by categories, links to books, and more.

She's hoping more students will start using the website to find books and learn about the world around them.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Donations help build CSMS studio

Thanks in part to Medline, Grainger and the Mundelein District 75 STEAM Foundation, Carl Sandburg Middle School has developed a state-of-the-art multimedia studio complete with a sound room, green screen and audio/video editing equipment.

Medline, a family-led medical products supplier, donated \$20,000 toward the project while the Grainger Foundation gave \$10,000. The STEAM Foundation has sought out grants for the project over the last couple of years, said STEAM Foundation Chair Nikki Earich.

“It’s wonderful to have the support of the private sector for programs that directly enhance our children’s education,” Earich said. “Making new technology available to our middle school students provides them with opportunities they might not otherwise have until high school.”

The project to turn two classrooms into a functional television and audio recording studio was completed throughout



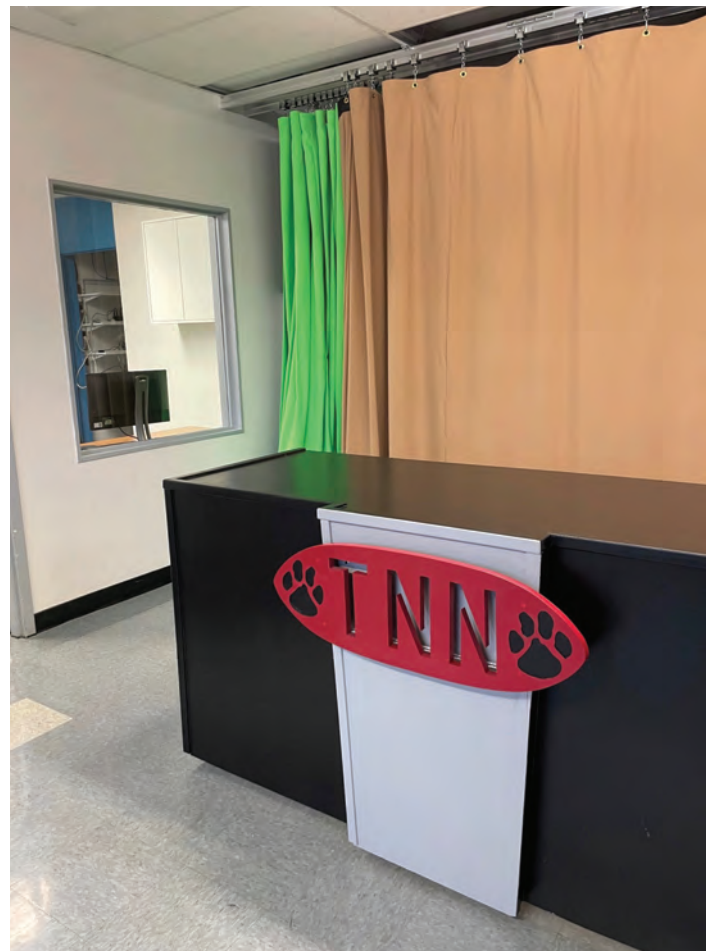
the year, thanks to the D75 Maintenance staff. CSMS students have broadcast their “Tiger News Network” broadcasts from the space and the school held its annual spelling bee to a virtual audience in January, thanks to the studio.

Medline:

Medline is a healthcare company; a manufacturer, distributor, and solutions provider focused on improving the overall operating performance of healthcare. Partnering with healthcare systems and facilities across the continuum of care, Medline provides the clinical and supply chain resources required for long-term financial viability in delivering high-quality care. With the scale of one of the country’s largest companies and the agility of a family-led business, Medline is able to invest in its customers for the future and rapidly respond to a dynamically changing market with customized solutions. Headquartered in Northfield, Ill., Medline has 27,000+ employees worldwide and does business in more than 125 countries and territories. Learn more about Medline at www.medline.com.

The Grainger Foundation:

The Grainger Foundation, an independent, private foundation, located in Lake Forest, Illinois, was established in 1949 by William Wallace Grainger, founder of W.W. Grainger, Inc., North America’s leading broad line supplier of maintenance, repair, and operating products. Since its founding, the Foundation has provided substantive support to a broad range of organizations including museums and educational, medical, and human services institutions.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT



“We’re fortunate to be the recipients of their goodwill and our children are fortunate to learn real-life skills using professional-grade multimedia equipment.

Mark Pilut, CSMS Principal



“It’s because of dedicated community partners like the D75 STEAM Foundation and these generous corporate partners that we can provide such a robust educational program for our students,” said CSMS Principal Mark Pilut. “Our children are fortunate to learn real-life skills using professional-grade multimedia equipment.”

The studio will be used for multiple programs, from music to broadcasting. Students and attendees of the winter and summer STEAM camps at CSMS will now have the opportunity to broaden their education and therefore, learn more about filmmaking, film scoring, audio recording, digital mixing, and much more. This expansion will help create more educational opportunities for D75 students, educators, and the Mundelein community.

Mundelein District 75 STEAM Foundation:

The Mundelein District 75 STEAM Foundation brings community leaders together in order to create vibrant, hands-on learning experiences that inspire children’s imaginations. The goal of the District 75 STEAM foundation is to provide unique hands-on, minds-on opportunities for D75 students, educators, and the Mundelein community that enrich Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math education with entrepreneurial experiences; empowering students as individuals and teams while impacting their college and future careers. The key is to captivate children’s imaginations at an early age with an engineering mindset that inspires them to persevere as lifelong learners and entrepreneurs that will solve the problems of the 21st century.

D75 Book Drive honors late teacher

Whenever Kristen Meister’s would be finishing up a trip to the bookstore with her family, they would always know where to find her - in the children’s section looking for new books to read in class. Kristen passed away in July 2021, but her love of reading to children has become her legacy.

In honor of her teaching career in District 75, the Mundelein Education Association and the Mundelein Elementary Education Association collected hundreds of books in her name during the Kristen Meister Memorial Book Drive last fall.

The drive brought in more than 400 books - 121 for Carl Sandburg Middle School, 151 for Mechanics Grove Elementary, 105 at Washington School, and 20 books at Lincoln School. The drive also brought in about \$500



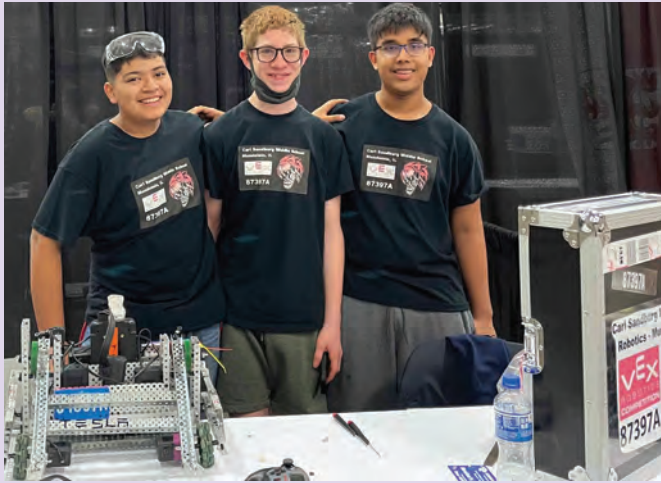
toward books for the MHS library and book covers for all librarians in Districts 75 and 120.

Kristen, who taught at both Washington and Mechanics Grove School, was a parent of Mundelein students and an integral part of the school community.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CSMS Robotics Team takes on the world

The CSMS eighth-grade VEX team, one of two robotics teams at the school, took on competition throughout the world as they traveled to the Worlds VEX tournament in Dallas in May. The five team members have been doing robotics since they were in fourth- and fifth-graders. The team members are David Martinez-Sánchez, Dylan Valeroso, Henry Kennicott, Jaden Rivera, and Ethan Carvalho.



In their first tournament they received a Judges Award at Glenbrook South. They placed first in the state tournament at Rich Township high school - STEM campus where they also won the Innovation Award. Winning the state tournament qualified them to participate in the VEX Worlds Tournament.

They are the first CSMS team to participate in the VEX Worlds tournament. The three students who competed in Dallas displayed perseverance, teamwork and patience throughout the weekend.

Middle School wrestler captures third place at Illinois State Tournament



Carl Sandburg Middle School eighth-grader Pablo Becerra competed at the highest level for middle school wrestling in Illinois and captured third place at the Illinois State Wrestling Tournament. The 105-pound-wrestler finished the season with an amazing 21-1 record.

Eighth-grader qualifies for honor band

Carl Sandburg eighth-grader Emilia Baker qualified for the Illinois Music Education Association's Honor Band on French Horn during the IMEA's Junior Festival held at Libertyville High School.



Junior Honor Society celebrated



Welcome to the newest members of the Carl Sandburg Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society! CSMS welcomed 26 seventh- and eighth-graders to the NJHS with a formal ceremony highlighting the primary values of the society: Knowledge; Scholarship; Citizenship; Service; Leadership; and Character.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Congratulations, Carl Sandburg Class of 2022!



Thirteen spellers go 14 rounds at CSMS Bee

CSMS seventh-grader Paige Robertson was polite, well-mannered and not the least bit impertinent as she spelled words correctly in 14 rounds to win the school's 2021-22 Spelling Bee. Her four-syllable winning word was "impertinent."

Paige competed with 12 classmates, including seventh-grader Kailiana Stanczak who finished in second place and eighth-grader Nate Gaschler who finished third. The 13 finalists were chosen based on the results of a 35-word spelling test. They competed in a live-stream Spelling Bee on YouTube that was recorded in the TNN TV Studio at Carl Sandburg Middle School.



D75 to start new bell schedule in August

Starting in August, school start times will be earlier at Washington and Mechanics Grove schools and later at Carl Sandburg Middle School. There will be no change at Lincoln Early Learning Center. The District 75 Board of Education adopted the new school start times in March.

The purpose of the shift is to provide a more equitable arrival and departure time for students riding the bus while allowing for increased sleep time for middle schoolers.

School will begin at 7:50 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m. at Washington, begin at 8:05 a.m. and end at 2:45 p.m. at Mechanics Grove and start at 8:45 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. at Carl Sandburg Middle School.

District 75 will also provide a “Family Bus” program for families with children attending both Washington and Mechanics Grove Schools so siblings can ride the same bus. Parents who opt-in to this program will not have to leave some children alone while



escorting other children to the bus stop. Washington students on the Family Bus will be dropped off first and Mechanics Grove students will be on the bus a few minutes longer. We realize this shift in start times will be an adjustment for our families, we appreciate your understanding as we work toward implementing this new schedule.

Visit your school libraries this summer



Our school libraries will be open to all families for selected dates in July!

School Librarians Mrs. Washburn and Mrs. Rafalowicz will be on-hand to help students find great summer reads, read books to students, and provide a craft that goes along with the read-aloud theme for students in grades K-5. Book talks will also be geared towards 6-8 grade students.

Visit us on the following days and locations:

- K-5 and 6-8 Students: Mechanics Grove 9-11am July 14, 21, 28
- K-5 and 6-8 Students: Carl Sandburg Middle School 9-11am July 13, 20, 27

Garden dedicated to retired MG teacher

The garden behind Mechanics Grove Elementary School was renamed “Anderson’s Meadow” in honor of retiring Teacher Mary Beth Anderson. The long-time District 75 educator was instrumental in facilitating the development of the space for gardening. It is being further developed for an area for students to sit and read, plant flowers and enjoy the outdoors.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CSMS track, cross country teams run to success

CSMS student-athletes showed their speed this year during state competition in both cross country and track.

The Carl Sandburg Boys Cross Country team placed 26th in Division 3A with a team score of 591 in the IESA State Meet at Maxwell Park in Normal on Oct. 16. Sixth grader Lilah Albano also competed individually in the Girls 3A Division.



The boys team, which included Izic Miller, Kellen Greenfield, Andrew Weaver, Aidan Sweet, Will Passolt, Erick Cordova and Nathaniel

Mendez, placed first in the sectional competition a week earlier in Libertyville. The team was lead by Coaches Jessica Feinstein and Sarah Rafalowitz.

This spring, the CSMS Track Team competed in running, jumping, and throwing events at the IESA State Meet in East Peoria along with more than 230 schools from across Illinois.

Seventh-grader Nahla Hill qualified in the hurdles division.

Eighth-grader Andrew Weaver qualified in the 1600M run. Seventh/grader Izic Miller qualified in the high jump, 1600M run, and the 800M run. All three athletes performed well against strong competitors and had an admirable showing in their events.



Lincoln Playground improvements

Handicapped or not, all kids at Lincoln Early Learning Center now have access to the school's playground, thanks to the efforts of the District 75 Facilities and Grounds team and a state grant.

Lincoln Principal Carol Bennett opened the improved playground in a quick before-school ribbon cutting ceremony recently while students waited eagerly to break it in. Joining her in the ceremony were District 75 Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Jamie DiCarlo,

District 75 Director of Facilities and Grounds Dave Zaremba and a pair of Lincoln students.

School District 75 used a Preschool For All (PFA) grant to pay for the improvements. The solid rubber surface pathways are designed to help children with disabilities get access to playground equipment. The rubber surface combines with a deep layer of wood chips to provide students a soft surface in and around the equipment.

Arbor Day tradition returns



For the first time in three years, Washington School second-graders gathered to plant a tree in celebration of Arbor Day. The students made posters, letters and poems about trees. Then, with Mundelein Mayor Steve Lentz present, the children helped Village and District 75 workers plant an eastern redbud.



The 2021-22 District 75 school year in pictures

