



NEW LENOX SCHOOL DISTRICT 122
102 South Cedar Road, New Lenox, Illinois 60451
Phone 815-485-2169 Fax 815-485-2236



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

April 30, 2019

Dear New Lenox School District 122 Parents:

As we begin the countdown for the remainder of the year, I want to take the opportunity to share some new happenings and highlights of the District.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

The big news of the District is that the Board of Education and the Teachers' Union have ratified and approved a new 5-year contract as of April 24, 2019. Negotiations began this fall and ended in early April. Below are the highlights of the agreement:

- Total teacher annual raises: Year 1 (5.5%); Year 2 (3%); Year 3 (3%); Year 4 (3%); Year 5 (3%).
- Health benefits remain the same as the previous contracts.
- Retirement incentives and benefits align with the new 3% legislation with similar costs to the Teachers' previous contract.

The final contract maintains competitive marketplace salaries, while attracting new candidates. But more importantly, this contract reinforces the Board of Education's belief that our teachers are the District's greatest resources. Their dedication and commitment to their students is demonstrated on a daily basis and our total community benefits from the difference they make in our children's future lives.

New Board of Education

Another highlight is the seating of the new Board of Education. As a result of the April election, three of our current Board members were re-elected for four year terms: Nicole Swallow, Cindy Dykas, and Bill Pender. Aaron Raajtes, a brand new member, will be filling a two-year spot after winning his write-in campaign. Our website will be updated with pictures and biographies of all of the Board members.

Veteran Board member Rhonda Starklauf will be serving as President, with Nicole Swallow serving as Vice-President. David Rush will be serving as the Board's Secretary. Congratulations to our entire Board.

District Finances

The District continues to remain in excellent financial shape. With a Moody's financial ranking of Aa3, the District will end the year with an overall fund balance of \$33M. Our 5-Year Financial Forecast (with very conservative assumptions) has the District ending with an overall fund balance of \$27M in 2024, with all salary and compensation and capital projects factored into this end number. We continue to monitor and revise our finances every 6 months, with adjustments being made as needed due to economic changes and new legislation from the State of Illinois. Perhaps our biggest achievement is that the District continues to tackle capital improvements for our facilities with cash payments, not adding to the District's debt from building 8 schools in the last 18 years.

Capital Improvements

With our positive financial situation, the Board of Education continues to tackle renovation and maintenance projects to preserve the condition of our buildings or in other words, the taxpayers' investment in our 14 buildings. We take great pride in the fact that we have been implementing projects of approximately \$2.5M each summer to maintain optimum learning environments for your children. The biggest projects in the works are the replacement of the HVAC systems in the four oldest buildings: Haines, Bentley, Tyler, and Oakview. Last summer the District completed the Haines building with Bentley slated for the Summer of 2020. One of our goals is to complete the other two buildings over the next 8 years.

Instructional Highlights

As most of you know, the District has fully implemented a 1:1 instructional environment with all of our students, Kindergarten through 8th Grade, having their own iPads for daily instruction. Our teachers continue to amaze all of us with their innovative and creative lesson plans that utilize technological tools at the point of instruction. In addition to our technological tools, the District has also embraced two new English/Language Arts series— *ReadyGEN* in Grades K-5, and *myPerspectives* in Grades 6-8. Both series are extremely rigorous, challenging our students to reach new heights. So far, our teachers are reporting outstanding results, noting that students are tackling and conquering extremely difficult concepts and skills. Next year, the District will begin reviewing the Social Studies curriculum and materials.

Special Education Highlights

Our special education programs continue to flourish. The District's goal has been to educate every student in our community in our own buildings. We continue to offer a continuum of services, while also introducing new programs based upon the needs of our students. Last year the District started our REACH program for our students with emotional and behavior needs. In addition, the District continues to support its autistic students offering several classrooms at different age levels. This past year, we also added an extra classroom for our early childhood special education learners, with an extra section of developmental kindergarten slated for next year.

School Calendar

Due to the snow/inclement weather day this year, our last day of school is June 7th, our students in Grades 1-7 will attend for a half day of school. May 22nd will be the last day for our graduating 8th graders. Both AM and PM Kindergarten's last day will be June 6th for a full-day of school. Cherry Hill staff will contact parents with details regarding the last week of school.

The Official School Calendar for 2019-2020 was recently approved by the Board of Education and is now posted on our website.

Safety Highlights

Our district continues to be vigilant regarding all areas of safety for your children and our staff members. We continue to have great success using our CrisisGO application. As a reminder, the app allows staff members to hold all class lists, communication protocols, and over 30 different emergency checklists detailing every step and procedure.

Today, our Safety Committee met with our local police and fire departments, as well as our Park District partners. We continue to refine our procedures to address those critical areas of need that are ever present in society today. One of the biggest issues districts face is the effect of social media on communication in a safety situation. It is often disheartening when rumors are spread regarding incidents with our buildings, and more importantly our students. Please know, that any time there is a real threat, we will communicate and make our parents aware. I ask that you continue to trust us to use our threat assessment teams in conjunction with the Police, to determine credible threats. I know, as a parent, that we all worry about the safety of our children, but this is OUR primary focus too in today's times.

Personnel Highlights

Finally, I want to share some exciting news regarding personnel changes. As previously stated, the safety of your children is our priority. We have realized that the reduction of 3 assistant principals eight years ago has continued to leave our buildings short-handed when it comes to supervision and safety issues. Due to our strong financial position, the District has the opportunity to once again align our level of supervision to a student population of 5300 students.

With the addition of the assistant principals, the District will revert back to a campus concept with an assistant principal being placed at each campus. The chart below highlights the assignment of our assistant principals for the 2019-2020 year. Those staff members in yellow are the newly hired assistant principals.

2019-2020 Assistant Principal Assignments						
Haines Oakview	Nelson Prairie Nelson Ridge	Spencer Pointe Spencer Crossing	Tyler Bentley	Spencer Trail Cherry Hill	Martino	Liberty
Ed Lesniak Former Music Teacher	Charissa Swiech	Brian Laack Former Social Studies Teacher	Ryan Rekruciak	Jennifer Chrisphersen Former School Psychologist	Gwen Fisher	Dawn Pechukas

Finally, it continues to be an honor for me to serve as your superintendent. Words cannot express the gratitude I have on behalf of our school community for your support of our students and staff members. Our partnership with you as parents, as well as our partnership with our PTO and Foundation are the heart of our district.

This year our theme has been to CHOOSE JOY. I know I speak on behalf of all our staff members when I say that is has been easy to adhere to this mantra when your children bring us joy every day.

Thank you,
Dr. Peggy Manville

