



**Community Consolidated School District 181 • Learning for All**



**Clarendon Hills Middle School**  
301 Chicago Ave., Clarendon Hills



**Hinsdale Middle School**  
100 S. Garfield Ave., Hinsdale



**Elm**  
15 W. 201 60th St., Burr Ridge



**The Lane**  
500 N. Elm St., Hinsdale



**Madison**  
611 S. Madison St., Hinsdale



**Monroe**  
210 N. Madison St., Hinsdale



**Oak**  
950 S. Oak St., Hinsdale



**Prospect**  
100 N. Prospect Ave., Clarendon Hills



**Walker**  
120 S. Walker Ave., Clarendon Hills



**Administration**  
6010 S. Elm St., Burr Ridge



## Our Vision

To be a school district where all children experience success and grow in excellence.

## Our Mission

To educate each child in an environment of excellence that provides a foundation for contributing to a complex global society.

**[www.d181.org](http://www.d181.org) • On Twitter @CCSD181 • 630-887-1070**

*Opposite Page: Walker School students share in the joy of reading in front of the school's Recycling Mural. The 32' x 15' mural was created in 2012 by the school's staff and art club, led by art teacher Hillary Andrlik, who was named the Illinois Elementary Art Educator of the Year (2012). The mural is based on the style of Gustav Klimt and includes several recycled elements, including re-used canvas and lids from frozen orange juice cans.*

# 181

## Annual Report Table of Contents

### **Service for All**

News from the  
Board of Education & Superintendent

Pages  
4-5

### **Learning for All**

News from the  
Department of Learning

Pages  
6-7

### **Support for All**

News from the  
Department of Business & Operations

Pages  
8-9

### **Educators for All**

News from the  
Department of Human Resources

Pages  
10-11

### **Involvement for All**

News from the  
Schools & SELAS Committee

Pages  
12-13

### **Engagement for All**

News from the  
Department of Communications  
& Our Partner Organizations

Pages  
14-15

### **Success for All**

Visit our website at [www.d181.org](http://www.d181.org) to read the story  
of U.S. Gold Medal Paralympian Megan Fisher's  
return to her alma mater, Madison School.





# Service for All • News from the Board of Education & Superintendent



*Top, standing from left to right: Michael Nelson, Member; Glenn Yaeger, Member; Dr. Renée Schuster, Superintendent; Gary Clarin, Member; Brendan Heneghan, Member; Sitting from left to right: Jill Vorobiev, Vice President; Marty Turek, President; Mridu Garg, Secretary. • Middle, left: Michael Nelson reads to Walker School students. • Middle, right: Mridu Garg, Jill Vorobiev and Gary Clarin recite the Oath of Office during their induction to the Board following the April 2013 election. • Bottom, left: Marty Turek and Dr. Schuster present an Ambassador of Excellence Award to a Monroe School student who was the co-state chess champion (K-1 Division). • Bottom, right: Glenn Yaeger and Dr. Renée Schuster present Ambassador of Excellence Awards to the District's Spelling Bee Champions from Prospect School.*

## Connect with Your School Board

**BoardDocs:** Our electronic Board packet provides public access to Board meeting agendas, presentations, reports and minutes. To access BoardDocs, visit [www.d181.org](http://www.d181.org) > Board of Education.

**Board Meetings and Summaries:** Business meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and take place at Elm School. Committee of the Whole meetings rotate among all District schools. For a schedule of Board meetings, visit [www.d181.org](http://www.d181.org) > Board of Education. A summary outlining action and key discussion is published after each meeting and posted on the website.

**Email:** The Board has a group e-mail address ([boe@d181.org](mailto:boe@d181.org)) and individual email addresses. Each e-mail and contact information for Freedom of Information Act requests is listed on our website at [www.d181.org](http://www.d181.org) > Board of Education.



[www.d181.org](http://www.d181.org)

*Our Board of Education is committed to collaboratively supporting students and staff while representing the community and being responsible financial stewards.*

In 2012-13, the Board of Education presented 300 Ambassador of Excellence Awards to students and staff of District 181 for success ranging from the state's top Kindergarten and Grade 1 chess team to middle school students who earned outstanding SAT scores, from volleyball tournament champions to participants in the area Special Olympics athletic event.

## **Dear District 181 Community,**

Thank you for reading the 2012-13 Annual Report for your elementary school district. This publication was designed to review the school year that is now completed and look ahead to the future. Whether you are a parent in the District, a staff member, a resident, or a community leader, our hope is that you come away not only better informed about District 181, but also enthusiastic about what we have accomplished and what we see on the horizon.

You may have noticed "Learning for All" on this year's Annual Report cover. Those are not simply words, but a guiding philosophy that has helped to shape our direction. We believe that a school system must be dedicated to both nurturing the potential in every child and meeting each student's instructional level. Our exceptional staff uses every piece of information at their fingertips to personalize the educational experience of their students to ensure that every child, every day is growing in excellence.

In February, the Board of Education unanimously approved the Advanced Learning Plan (ALP), which addresses not only the needs of our advanced learners, but all students. The ALP touches on nearly every aspect of a strong educational system and will be our compass as we work to continually improve our already outstanding school district. What was the Advanced Learning Plan has evolved into Learning for All - the best practices discovered through extensive research this year and the changes being put into place will benefit every student in District 181.

Each section of this year's Annual Report is "for All" – Service, Learning, Support, Educators, Involvement, Engagement – every component of our work is crafted and refined to address the "all" that defines public education.

In closing, know that we welcome your collaborative partnership and open, ongoing communication. Please do not hesitate to come to a Board meeting, send an e-mail or give us a call. This is your elementary school district, and we are honored to serve you.

Sincerely,



Marty Turek, Board President  
boe@d181.org



Dr. Renée Schuster, Superintendent  
rschuster@d181.org

# Learning for All • News from the Department of Learning



Top, left: An Oak School student uses an iPad to scan a QR code on a library book so she can view a video trailer by the author. • Top, right: Elm School students engage in a study of the Civil War. • Bottom, left: Students read together before class begins in the Early Childhood Education program for three and four year-old students with and without disabilities. • Bottom, right: Monroe School students dance with members of musical group Ladysmith Black Mambazo as part of their yearlong study of South Africa.

## Academic Honors & Noteworthy News

- The Illinois State Board of Education recognized all nine of our D181 schools with the Academic Excellence Award, earned by schools that have sustained high performance for at least three years.
- In the September 2012 issue of *Chicago Magazine*, our schools captured seven of the top ten listings for the Best Elementary Schools in DuPage County.
- For the 20th consecutive year, we earned the 2013 SchoolSearch Bright Red Apple Award for academic excellence, earned by only 78 districts in the state. We were also among 59 of 868 Illinois districts to earn the SchoolSearch Bright A+ Award for the top 5% of districts academically. Both awards are based on data from the Illinois Standards Achievement Test.
- Between 2011-12 and 2012-13, all seven of our elementary schools earned the Blue Ribbon Schools Award for their P.E. programs from the Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.
- The @d181 Initiative was named an Apple Distinguished Program. The @d181 Initiative was implemented in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years with a mission to promote student creativity, problem solving and risk taking through the innovative use of technology. A committee led action research on 1:1 learning environments to study any change in levels of engagement and student achievement.
- The Advanced Learning Plan was presented at the recent Illinois Includes Conference to an audience of 100 individuals from many school districts.



*We believe that a successful school system nurtures the potential in each student and strengthens the classroom experience to ensure that every child learns and grows every day.*

The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) is administered each spring to students in Grades 3-8; it measures knowledge in reading, math and science. On the March 2012 ISAT, our results rank District 181 as the third highest performing elementary school district in the state. When considering elementary districts with an enrollment of at least 600 students, we are ranked #1 in the state.\*

## Preparation for the Common Core State Standards

### What are the Common Core State Standards?

*"The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy."* - [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) establish a national-level understanding of what students should know and be able to do from Kindergarten through 12th grade. 45 states, Washington D.C. and four territories have adopted the CCSS. Illinois has joined with 21 states to create a consortium called PARCC (pronounced "park") (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). The PARCC states have developed a set of computer-based common assessments for English Language Arts and math. The PARCC assessment will replace the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in 2014-15, which was based on the Illinois Learning Standards created in 1997. - [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

### Why CCSS? - From the Illinois State Board of Education

- Our expectations for what students must know and be able to demonstrate were different in 1997.
- The new standards aim to provide clear, consistent academic benchmarks with "fewer, clearer and higher" academic standards for essential learning and skills. The standards were developed while considering the standards of top performing countries and the strengths of current state standards.
- The New Illinois Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core provide benchmarks for academic progress (skills and knowledge) that students should have at the conclusion of each grade level. This will allow teachers to establish the best approach to help their students meet those standards.
- Students and parents will clearly understand the knowledge students are expected to attain each year.

### What does this mean for District 181?

#### How is District 181 preparing for this change?

As the new standards are released for each content area, we work to identify curriculum revision needs. Language arts and math standards were released first. We anticipate completing our curriculum revision for English Language Arts this summer and look forward to next finalizing the math revisions. As part of this process, we also review our materials, including textbooks, workbooks, and online resources. Our new language arts materials for K-5 were piloted in 2012-13 and are being implemented in 2013-14. For K-5 math, we are using a specially-designed Common Core supplement and online tools along with our existing Everyday Math materials to ensure our students continue to move forward in their learning. Publishers are in the process of developing fully revised materials to meet the rigor of the CCSS, but those are not yet available.

Our staff members continue to be trained both by colleagues and outside professionals to effectively teach the standards through the revised curriculum and with the tools we have provided.

Beginning in the 2014-15 school year, our students will no longer take the ISAT once per year, but instead will take the computerized PARCC assessment twice per year. Our data will be compared to not only other school districts in Illinois, but also data from the other 21 states using the PARCC assessment. Given the increased rigor, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) anticipates all school districts in Illinois will initially see a decrease in the number of students who meet and exceed the new assessment's standards. However, that doesn't mean our students know any less than they did before. They simply have a more stringent benchmark. In order to prepare for this change, ISBE recently raised the cut scores for the 2013 and 2014 ISAT.

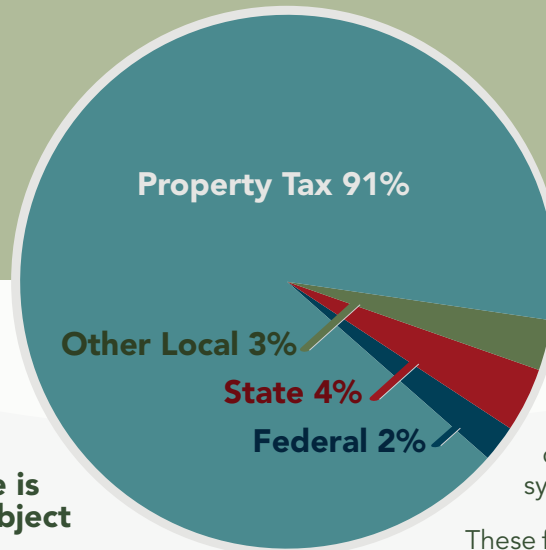
More information about the Common Core Standards, the PARCC consortium and assessment, and our preparation is available on our website at [www.d181.org](http://www.d181.org).

\*Sources: SchoolSearch; 2012 Illinois State Report Card / Overall average percentage of students in Grades 3-8 who earned Meets/Exceeds in reading and math on March 2012 ISAT.

# Support for All • News from the Department of Business & Operations

## 2012-13 Fiscal Year Revenues: How Our Income is Generated by Object

As noted in the chart above, 91% of our revenues come from property tax, with the remaining 9% from state and federal aid, as well as other local sources. The property tax base that comes from residents is 94%; less than 6% of our property tax dollars come from other sources such as commercial, industrial or railroad revenues. It is also important to note that many of

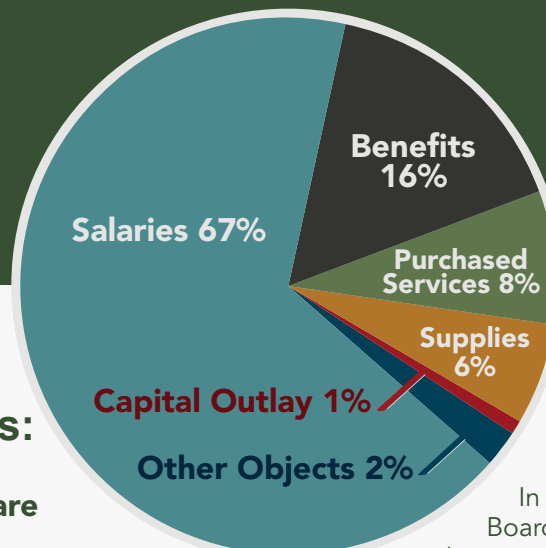


the D181 residents in our tax base do not currently have children in our school system.

These figures tell the story of a school district that is reliant on local funds and rooted in a community that understands the value of high quality education. A home's value is considerably weighed by the success of its school district. But more importantly, a school district is at the heart of a community, charged with the task of preparing tomorrow's leaders for their future.

## 2012-13 Fiscal Year Expenditures: How Operating Fund Revenues are Allocated

As noted in the chart above, 83% of our expenditures are allocated for the salaries and benefits of our staff members. (You can learn more about the exceptional educators of District 181 on Page 11.) The remainder of our dollars support operations, ranging from electricity and water to curriculum materials and technology infrastructure. This allocation is common



for school districts and service-based industries.

In partnership with our Board of Education, we have maintained a balanced budget since 2010-11. We have contained costs while maintaining an education of the highest caliber through means such as long-term staffing, sensible reductions, and responsible project bidding. We are committed to making financial decisions that are not only best for students, but also responsible to the residents who support this district.



*We understand and value the support needed from our community to sustain a high quality school district and strive to maximize the impact of our resources.*

When considering performance on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in tandem with the cost to educate students, District 181 demonstrates an outstanding return on investment. We are consistently among the highest achieving elementary school districts while our operating expense per pupil is less than any other elementary district also in the top five for ISAT meets/exceeds percentages.\*

## The District's Financial Picture

### Where We Stand and What's to Come

In District 181, we strive to give our students and staff the resources they need, while being mindful financial stewards. We are planning investments in technology, facilities and curriculum, while living within our means and carefully monitoring our expenditures.

Below, we have outlined some of the long-term improvements we have planned for 2013-14 and the years ahead.

- We will continue to implement a technology replacement cycle so students have tools to support the District's curriculum.
- We will phase in a variety of security improvements to our schools. Providing a safe learning environment is essential to student success.
- We will be investing in a variety of facilities improvements. We are establishing a Facilities Committee this year that will help consider the long-term planning for those projects. This summer, we have been completing considerable renovations on the first floor restrooms at Hinsdale Middle School.
- We are standardizing classroom equipment to ensure that no matter which District 181 school students attend, they will have access to the same resources, such as interactive white boards and document cameras.
- We will phase in furniture purchases and building renovations for our Media Resource Centers (libraries) to create spaces aligned with the Learning Commons concept. With flexible furniture and more collaboration-friendly space, students and staff can more effectively engage in 21st century projects ranging from group work with iPads to digital audio and video recording.

Important financial considerations for the immediate future include certified staff contract negotiations, which will begin in 2013-14, and the status of state funding. Together with our Board of Education, we will continue to keep our community informed of these critical issues and updated on the status of the above-noted projects.

### The Tax Levy & Creative Cost Containment

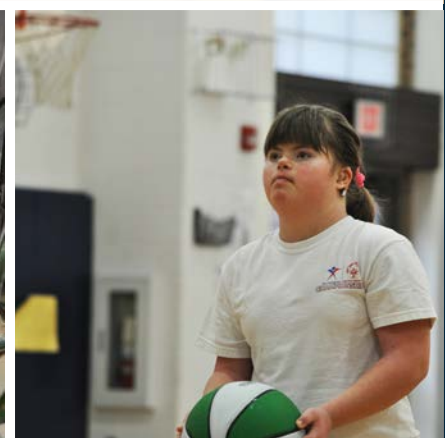
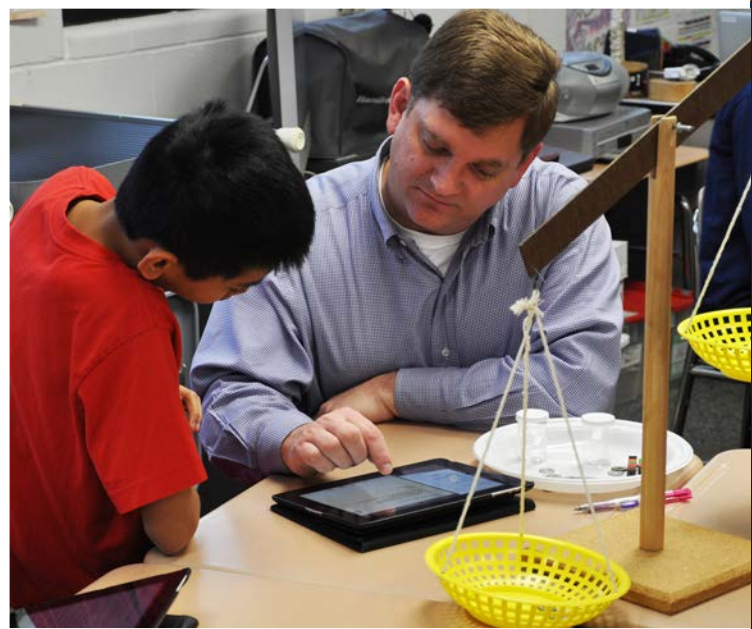
- The Board of Education raised the tax levy by the Consumer Price Index (cost of living) to maintain adequate funding for our schools. (See BoardDocs, [www.d181.org](http://www.d181.org) > Board of Education, 12/10/12 Meeting.)
- By reconfiguring our summer cleaning schedule, closing our buildings on Fridays in the summer, and having in-house staff manage snow plowing, the District's maintenance team has generated significant cost savings.
- We developed a two-year budget for the Board's review for the first time in 2012-13. We are now developing a three-year budget to further aid in long-term strategic planning.
- Through the most recent bond refunding in 2012-13, we generated interest savings of \$1.7 million. When combined with refunding done earlier this year, the District has saved \$3.7 million in lower interest costs.
- In 2013-14, we are implementing a new phone system that will improve building safety and reduce costs. This change will likely mean that many if not all of our building phone numbers will change. We will alert the community when that contact information has been established.

### A Business as Exceptional as the Education We Provide

While learning is of course our primary focus, a school district is a business, too, with a Board of Directors, a CEO, shareholders, employees and customers. For our educators to focus on the learning, we must also successfully manage the business. As our "shareholders," we want the residents of District 181 to have a clear understanding of how their investment is being managed. We have a perfect AAA bond rating from Standard and Poor, and we have earned an Award of Excellence on our Comprehensive Annual Financial Report from the Government Finance Officers Association for the last eight years. With the help of the volunteer community members on the Superintendent's Finance Committee, we are next pursuing the Meritorious Budget Award, an honor bestowed by the International Association of School Business Officials.

\*Sources: SchoolSearch; 2012 Illinois State Report Card / Overall average percentage of students in Grades 3-8 who earned Meets/Exceeds in reading and math on March 2012 ISAT.

# Educators for All • News from the Department of Human Resources



Top, left: An incoming Hinsdale Middle School student performs in an orchestra concert. • Top, right: A student from The Lane shows a craft she made during the school's study of Brazil. • Middle, left: A Clarendon Hills Middle School athlete competes in a track meet. • Middle, right: Elm School teacher Matt Haeger works with students using iPads and scales to complete a science activity. • Bottom, left: In the same lesson, an Elm student measures the density of liquids. • Bottom, right: A student practices her basketball skills; she participated on the District's special needs basketball team created by a Hinsdale Middle School student with staff support and a District 181 Foundation grant.



*Our team of committed and talented education professionals is dedicated to the students we serve and to continuous improvement for the betterment of our schools and our staff.*

**Staff Statistics:**  
The average D181 teacher has over 14 years of experience. More than 80% of District 181 staff members have a Master's degree or higher. We have an average teacher:student ratio of 16.8:1 and an average class size of 21.2 students. Since 2003, District 181 has 28 teachers who have received National Board Certification, the highest mark of teaching excellence.\*

## High Quality Education Begins with High Quality Educators

District 181 is home to exceptional staff members, each contributing to the success of our students. The information below and at right highlights just some of our recent staff news.

- We are welcoming two new principals (Justin Horne at Monroe and Eric Chisausky at Walker) and one new assistant principal (Joni Sherman at Clarendon Hills Middle School). More information about these administrators is noted in our website news.
- We have implemented new teacher and principal evaluation models.
- We have updated the job descriptions for all administrators.
- We have revised our hiring process, and we are implementing a new online screening tool to help identify the top applicants for open positions.
- We are implementing a new staff professional development model that emphasizes learning throughout the year and in-class coaching.
- We are restructuring the use of plan time and staff meetings so that teachers of the same grade, content area and team can more systematically review student achievement data and collaboratively discuss best practices.
- We will research and then implement a new software system that merges information from both the Human Resources and Business and Operations Departments.



## Staff Honors, Noteworthy News

- Hillary Andrlik was named the Illinois Art Education Association Elementary Art Educator of the Year (2012) for exemplary contributions, service and achievements.
- Lainey Hatley and Jennifer Zock were honored with an Award of Excellence from the Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association for their role in the Family Resource Network.
- Theresa McGee was one of only 90 educators in the country named a Class of 2013 Apple Distinguished Educator for "using Apple products to transform teaching and learning in powerful ways."
- Bridget McGuiggan was included in the first class of "35 Under 35" top school PR professionals under 35 years old, an honor given by the National School Public Relations Association.
- Frank Rossi became the 28th District 181 teacher to achieve National Board Certification since 2003; the certification is among the highest honors in the teaching profession and takes one to three years to complete.
- Dr. Kurt Schneider was recognized for contributions in his previous district (Stoughton, Wisconsin) that led to the receipt of the 2012 June Downing Breakthrough in Inclusion Education School District Award by TASH, an international leader in disability advocacy.

*Above: CHMS teacher and coach Jen Scheuerman poses for a photo with Class of 2013 graduates.*

*\*Source: 2012 Illinois State Report Card*

## Congratulations, Retirees!

We wish our retirees well in the years ahead and thank them for their service to District 181! With our community, we honor: Sheila Chatham, Joe Durczak, Regina Griskelis, Lynn Kastholm, Cynthia Michaelis, Nancy Schifo, Donna Shelby, Rosemary Volenec and Linda Wright.

# Involvement for All • News from the Schools & SELAS Committee



Students participate in the 2013 Summer Learning Program, which included classes for support in reading, math and writing and advanced classes in math, Enriched Language Arts and social studies. Students also had the opportunity to participate in more than 30 enrichment classes ranging from guitar and claymation to robotics and insect studies.



*Our students have exceptional opportunities to experience learning beyond the classroom through community service, athletics, extra-curricular activities, the arts, and a focus on social emotional learning.*

Our students have donated countless hours and resources to benefit local, national and international organizations, such as the Avon Women's Foundation for breast cancer research and Feeding Children Worldwide. They regularly participate in both the local Rotary Run and the Walk the Walk for Autism event benefiting Charlie's Gift.

## Social Emotional Learning for Academic Success (SELAS)

Research about social and emotional learning (SEL) confirms what we know intuitively, that in order to learn, children need to feel safe. And to feel safe, they not only need an orderly learning environment where they are treated well by others, but they also need to have skills to manage themselves, be focused, work with others, make good choices, and perform to their fullest potential.

In Illinois, Social Emotional Learning Standards define three goals that schools are expected to address at all grade levels:

- Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.
- Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.
- Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school and community contexts.

These standards guide District 181 in how we incorporate SEL in the classroom, in school, and at the District level, with lessons and connections to other areas of curriculum, teachable moments, school-wide activities, and District coordination and curricular support. To learn more about what and how our children are learning these fundamental skills for learning and life and how we can support their SEL development at home and at school, visit: [www.d181.org](http://www.d181.org) > Resources > SELAS.



Top, left: Monroe, Prospect, and Walker School students created a variety of art pieces as part of the "Seashells for New Jersey Shores" project to raise funds for Hurricane Sandy relief. • Top, middle: Hinsdale Middle School students joined peers around the country in making paper snowflakes to create a "winter wonderland" at Chalk Hill School, where Sandy Hook students attended following their winter break. • Top, right: 67 students in the Symphonic Band of Clarendon Hills Middle School participated in the 66th Annual Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago; they were led by Terry Melbourn and Australian guest conductors Jemima Bunn and Jo Heaton (pictured, in rehearsal with CHMS students). • Bottom, left: Hinsdale Middle School students and staff participated in a day of service projects as part of their SELAS lessons (more on SELAS above), including time volunteering at the Hinsdale Humane Society. • Bottom, middle: An Oak School student participates in Chefs for a Day as an after-school activity; students follow recipes and cook while learning about health and wellness. • Bottom, right: Walker School students held a celebration to welcome home PFC Adam J. Tomanovich, the son of a Walker staff member.

# Engagement for All • News from the Department of Communications & Our Partner Organizations

## FOUNDATION



**Foundation Funding at Work in District 181** • Top, left: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Exploration Labs gave students an opportunity to see physics principles in action and provided teachers with ideas to incorporate into the science curriculum. • Top, middle: Over 600 staff members, parents and residents attended events featuring Dr. Michael Bradley speaking on raising teenagers. • Top, right: Through the KIDS Grants program, 65 students were able to put their service ideas into action. • Bottom, left: Through the Inquiry Grants program, teachers received summer training at Brookfield Zoo in leading inquiry-based learning in the classroom. • Bottom, right: Through a Foundation grant, Clarendon Hills Middle School held an all-school reading challenge; 68 students read more than one million words in three months.

## Inspiring Innovation, Encouraging Creativity, Enriching Education

*"We believe that excellence is achieved and maintained by an ongoing commitment to improvement and innovation. The Foundation shares that belief and provides above and beyond opportunities that enrich students' educational experience. By supporting our students and staff as they develop new and exciting ways to strengthen classroom learning, we are building for the future." - Dr. Renée Schuster, Superintendent*

The District 181 Foundation is composed of community members who enjoy working on projects and issues that support the Foundation's mission to inspire innovation, encourage creativity and enrich education. The Foundation is actively engaged with our staff to help fund new and creative opportunities. Since the Foundation's creation in 1997, over \$700,000 has been invested in our schools. All

funds are made possible through the generous contributions of individuals, families and businesses. If you would like to learn more about volunteering and getting involved with the Foundation, please contact the Foundation by emailing [mcooper@d181foundation.org](mailto:mcooper@d181foundation.org). Donations are gratefully accepted online at [www.d181foundation.org](http://www.d181foundation.org).



*We are a District not of staff and students alone, but also of parents, residents, business leaders and community representatives who are partners in providing our students with all they need to excel.*

We held two community engagement events in the fall to discuss advanced learning and the District's values with parents and residents. We also conducted parent and resident surveys, welcoming feedback from nearly 650 individuals on topics that included advanced learning, communication, finances and technology. In spring, we hosted a symposium, *Advancing the Learning for All: The Future of Our Schools*.

## Strategic Meetings Focus on Vision & Collaborative Support

In June, a strategic meeting was held that included representatives from the District 181 Foundation, Parent-Teacher Organization/Association (PTO/A), administration and Board of Education. The meeting was held to discuss the District's long-term vision and how each partner group can collaborate in unison and with more efficient communication strategies. Next, the representatives will be invited to gather with the full Board at a public meeting led by a facilitator, where they will again discuss long-term vision and "big picture" ideas. This gathering will be the first of its kind in District 181 and is a significant step forward in helping our partners more effectively, and with more support, benefit our students.

## PTO/A Connection that Bridges Home and School

The Presidents from each school's PTO/A gather monthly to share ideas and discuss strategies for moving the District forward in a positive direction. Below, 2012-13 Presidents pause for a photo before starting their final meeting of the year.



Top: PTO/A Presidents in 2012-13 - Susan Rubin (Oak), Pam Kolnicki (CHMS), Heather Blanck (Madison), Elena Baroni (Madison), Claire Rathnau-Minnella (Prospect), Karen Czerwicz (Prospect), Sakeba Issa (Oak), Kate Schlie (Monroe), Lisa Romberger (Monroe), Lori Brackett (Elm), Cate Cook (Elm), Robin Thrana (HMS), Heather Shalgos (HMS) and Jill Biegansky (The Lane) with Superintendent Dr. Renée Schuster. Not pictured: Peggy Fuechtman (The Lane), Lynn Slone (CHMS), Kelly McMahon (Walker), and Lisa Newlin (Walker). • Bottom, left: A student and grandparent from The Lane School enjoy family folk dance activities as part of a P.E. unit. • Bottom, middle: Elm School parents led students in a collection benefiting Toys for Tots. • Bottom, right: Madison School Principal Melinda McMahon is pictured with VFW member and veteran George Hogrewe, who is also a Madison School graduate and Senior Reader.



# Success for All • News from the Department of Communications





## U.S. Gold Medal Paralympian Megan Fisher's Return To Her Alma Mater

One of the most exciting highlights of the 2012-13 school year for Madison School students and staff alike was a visit by Madison graduate Megan Fisher, who demonstrated the success of a world-class athlete with a heart of gold.

Megan Fisher was born in Canada and moved to the United States when she was young. Her childhood was spent in Hinsdale during the school year and in Alberta in the summer. She recalls June and July months filled with riding horses, chasing cows, and enjoying the wide-open spaces on her family's farm in the town of Rocky Mountain House, roughly 1,600 miles from Hinsdale.

Fisher came to Madison beginning in first grade. When thinking back nearly 25 years, Fisher has memories she remembers with fondness – field days, the school's former sledding hill and gymnasium (now Kindergarten Room 110), a burned bagel that required a call to the fire department, the school song she still has memorized. "I remember many of my teachers, too," Fisher says. "I thought Ms. (Theresa) West (who taught third grade at the time) could fix anything. One day, I brought a mouse to school that had been caught in a trap so she could help me rescue it - I had to call my mom from work to come remove the mouse!"

Academically, Fisher recalls that she had to "play catch-up" in first grade. "My previous school had not emphasized reading, and I was not reading at the same level as my classmates. Now, I am an avid reader. The foundation of academic rigor prepared me well to contribute to the classroom and my life outside of school. I credit the fundamentals I learned as a child."

Fisher attended Hinsdale Middle School for sixth, seventh and eighth grade and graduated from Hinsdale Central High School in 2001. "I am very grateful for the opportunity I had to learn from and with the best," she shares. "I was surprised by the seamless transition into college."

"It is difficult to have the perspective, as a younger person, on the importance of education. The truth is that school years are some of the best years of your life. Throughout the experience, you make lifelong friends and gain the tools that will serve you in whatever role you choose."

In 2002, while a freshman at the University of Montana, a car accident resulted in the loss of her leg and the life of her best friend. Through incredible hard work and focused purpose, Fisher competed in a triathlon less than one year after the accident. She continued to push herself. Following graduation, Fisher participated in more triathlons and with

increasing success. Her best event of the three-part competition – cycling. In 2012, Fisher represented the United States at the Paralympic Games in London and earned the gold medal in women's C4 road cycling and the silver medal in women's C4 individual pursuit (track cycling).

"I am honored that I could bring home two medals to share with everyone. Simply, I love the challenge of trying to go faster and be stronger. I am so thankful that I have been given the opportunity to chase my dreams. I owe a mountain of gratitude to countless people. The least I can do is give my best effort."



Fisher currently attends the University of Washington and will graduate in 2014 with a doctorate in physical therapy. "I will be joining patients on their journey to regain health so that they can resume their happy lives. No person is an island, and we all affect each other. I hope to positively impact the lives of my patients, just as healthcare providers have done for me - I believe in paying it forward. I have been helped along the way and been shown kindness by so many. Through athletics and my future career, I hope to be able to share the compassion and caring that inspired and influenced me."

Fisher came to Madison in December to visit with former teachers and current Madison students. She walked with Principal Melinda McMahon, who also had the good fortune of being the principal at the time Fisher was a student. "Megan's fierce determination to succeed was heard by many of the students she eagerly spoke with," noted McMahon, who says she was elated to become reacquainted with Fisher and observe her influence on current students and parents. The District's former Physical Therapist Mary Angelico, whose husband (a prosthetist) worked with Fisher shortly after her accident, arranged the visit. Staff and students had an opportunity to ask questions of the athlete and hold the official Olympic / Paralympic medals. Fisher joked with the K-5 students, "For as long as you have been alive, I've been training for this one thing." Her success, she said, is due to stubbornness. "Stubbornness and persistence is a good thing. People told me I wouldn't do things I can do now and that I'd never be as athletic as I was. Things may happen that are sad and not very fun, but it's your own belief in yourself that will get you through."

"I am honored that I could bring home two medals to share with everyone. Simply, I love the challenge of trying to go faster and be stronger. I am so thankful that I have been given the opportunity to chase my dreams. I owe a mountain of gratitude to countless people. The least I can do is give my best effort." - Megan Fisher, U.S. Gold Medal Paralympian

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Aug. 22	First Day of School (Full Day)
Sept. 2	Labor Day*
Oct. 14	Columbus Day*
Oct. 15	Institute Day*
Oct. 25	End of 1st Quarter, Elementary
Nov. 1	End of 1st Trimester, Middle School
Nov. 25-26	Parent-Teacher Conferences*
Nov. 27-29	Thanksgiving Break*
Dec. 23-Jan. 3	Winter Break*
Jan. 17	End of 2nd Quarter, Elementary
Jan. 20	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*
Feb. 17	Presidents' Day*
Feb. 18	Institute Day*
Feb. 21	End of 2nd Trimester, Middle School
Mar. 28	End of 3rd Quarter, Elementary
Mar. 31-Apr. 4	Spring Break*
Apr. 18	No School
May 16	Institute Day*
May 26	Memorial Day*
June 2	Grading Day*
June 5	Last Day of School, End of 4th Quarter and 3rd Trimester (with no emergency days)

\*No school

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