



Partnership

Education is a partnership involving parents, students, school staff, and the community.

Published for the residents and taxpayers of Lake Bluff Elementary School District 65 • www.lb65.org • Summer 2013

From the Board President

Dear Fellow Residents of Lake Bluff District 65:

Strategic planning is well underway in District 65. In case you are not familiar with the process, this is a big deal. This is going to be our roadmap to premier school district status, our guide for years to come that tells us how to achieve our goals. And you, the community, told us what our final destination must be and what stops to include along the way.

Whether or not we have kids in the schools, we all want what premier school status brings to the community. Premier schools attract younger families to the district. Premier schools bring value to our real estate. Premier schools bring recognition to our community that attracts families and businesses. All of this helps form a solid foundation for our tax base.

You may be familiar with the Village of Lake Bluff's branding initiative (read more at www.lakebluff.org under the Residents tab). Not much helps brand and market a community better than premier schools.

Both Phases I and II of the Plan are complete, and

continued inside



Students at Math Camp experienced coordinates first-hand by using a tarp with a taped grid to find exact positions. This year's Math Camp grew out of a curriculum partnership with Lake Forest Elementary District 67 and Lake Forest High School, with the goal of ensuring all students in Lake Bluff and Lake Forest are aligned for their entry to high school. District 65 is also working with the Lake Forest schools in the areas of English and Language Arts. This is one example of how both Lake Bluff and Lake Forest schools are working together to provide exemplary opportunities for the children in all of our districts.

Strategic Plan update

For nearly nine months, District 65 has been involved in a disciplined, inclusive planning process that will provide a framework for ongoing decision-making. As reported in the Board President's letter at left, the first two phases are complete, with the final phase now in process.

Phase I was the research portion of the plan, with input gathered through focus groups and individual interviews with the Board. To encourage community input, a postcard was mailed to every home. There were also media alerts, letters, and an email blast that encouraged participation in the focus group sessions.

The response was very good: in 23 different meet-

ings, 200 attendees discussed four topics in regard to the schools: strengths, challenges, areas for improvement, and vision for the future.

There was also a review of archived data and reports, and a rigorous analysis of achievement data.

Finally, Phase I included voluntary surveys to delve further into issues that had been brought up in the focus group sessions. There were 521 surveys completed.

The resulting data was analyzed and presented to the Board of Education.

In mid-June, the Board of Education finalized **Phase II**, approving the Mission, Vision Statement and preliminary goals which the data has shown

Lake Bluff highly values:

- ▶ achievement;
- ▶ fiscal responsibility;
- ▶ individual students reaching their potential;
- ▶ communication with and to all stakeholders;
- ▶ a safe and caring environment; and
- ▶ highly valuing the social and emotional needs of students and staff.

The Board directed the Superintendent to begin **Phase III**, which will identify actions and tactics to achieve the goals, and to establish measurements for progress to be monitored by the Board. In this phase, expert teams will be formed to provide input. *Watch for updates, and visit www.lb65.org for more.*

From the Board President

continued from front

the next task is to develop objectives and tactics for action in Phase III. Phase I allowed collection of community input through focus groups and surveys. In Phase II that input was used to craft a new Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles and Goals. (Find out more on the front page or at www.lb65.org.)

The roadmap for exactly how these goals will be achieved will be developed in Phase III, when we will work to develop objectives and tactics for action. Teams are being created, each with a mix of stakeholders such as teachers, staff, parents and community members. Each team will be asked to tackle one goal, outlining the tactics needed to reach that goal's objectives. Each tactic will be assigned a form of measurement, so we can see how well objectives are being met.

Sound interesting? Want to help? Do you have a particular expertise relevant to school district strategic planning, a passion for education, or for Lake Bluff in general? Let us know. Superintendent Dr. Jean Sophie will be interviewing interested volunteers soon, and we hope to have teams working by August. Send a note expressing your interest to her at jsophie@lb65.org or call her at 847-234-9400.

Thanks for all your help. If you have any questions please reach out to me by email at mbarry@lb65.org or on my cell phone at 973-476-8172.

Mark Barry
President, District 65 Board of Education

Staff updates

The retirement of Director of Student Services and Assessment Anne Wirtz has provided the District with a rare opportunity for growth and transition: **the Board of Education created the combined position of Director of Student Services and Curriculum** to supervise all functions related to curriculum, assessment and special education. Kevin Rubenstein was named to the new post.

Mr. Rubenstein had been student services coordinator at Deerfield's Shepard Middle School, overseeing all programming related to students with disabilities, those working below grade-level expectations, and those learning the English language. He formerly worked at Wright Jr. High School in Lincolnshire, and Lake Zurich and Stevenson high schools.

Dr. Wirtz will also be available to ensure a smooth transition. Current curriculum consultant Joanne Trahanas will remain with the District through the end of this school year to complete curriculum reviews that had already begun. In addition, Superintendent Sophie will assume some duties related to curriculum and take on some of the state reporting responsibilities that Dr. Wirtz previously handled.

The Lake Bluff Elementary School Behavior Specialist position has been reclassified to **Assistant Principal**, with primary responsibilities in Special Education. Tracy Roehrick was hired for the post and will assist with special education meetings as well as administrative duties at Lake Bluff Elementary School.

PTO report: Another successful year

It was another very successful year for the Lake Bluff PTO in its goal of partnering with parents, teachers and community in upholding the highest ideals of education for Lake Bluff students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Throughout the year, the PTO funded and organized student enrichment programs in every grade. Here are some highlights: *Find more through the links at www.lb65.org/parents/pto.*

PTO Family Science Nights

Organized and funded by the PTO, these evenings were offered at both Lake Bluff Elementary School and Lake Bluff Middle School. Students, parents and community members were invited to enjoy hands-on, interactive science with District 65 teachers, community scientists, and Lake Forest High School science teachers.

At six different stations, participants experienced physics, sound and light, chemistry and biology. Attendees gave high marks to isolating their own DNA, experiencing acid/alkaline balance, and seeing Archimedes' Principle in action (the upward buoyant force exerted on a body immersed in a fluid is equal to the weight of the fluid the body displaces).

The 2014 PTO Family Science Nights will be:

Lake Bluff Elementary School: Sunday, January 26, 2 to 4 pm
Lake Bluff Middle School: Wednesday, February 12, 7 to 9 pm

Additions to the curriculum

The PTO also provides a number of programs and events that coordinate with classroom studies. Here are some of those programs they organized and funded this past year:

- **Spirit of the Eagle program** which focused on the life of Native Americans, complete with a teepee on the school lawn
- **Time Travelers program** on the life of the Wampanoag Tribe, which moved from classroom to classroom
- **A BMX champion** who performed bike stunts while talking about bike safety and anti-bullying
- **Lake County Forest Preserve programs** in the classrooms on birds of prey, reptiles and amphibians, animal skulls and more

Equipment purchases

The PTO also provided equipment that otherwise would not be available:

- **Microphones** for the Middle School
- **Books for every grade level at the Elementary School**, chosen by teachers to coincide with curriculum.
- Funds for the **Middle School reading room**
- **Interactive whiteboards** for the Elementary School

Read more at www.lb65.org/parents/pto.

It's a busy summer behind the scenes at District 65

Things may look quiet around the Lake Bluff schools now, but there's a lot going on behind the scenes now as employees wrap up the just-completed school year and prepare for the next.

For business office, maintenance, and technology employees, "summer vacation" has a very different meaning than it does for most people — because this is actually their busiest time of year.

Business office finalizing state reports

The business office is immersed in a long list of year-end reports to the state, revolving around general state aid, grant expenditures, transportation, pension and other reports.

At the same time, they're also developing the budget for the next school year, working with the annual audit and handling day-to-day bills and payroll.

Quiet times = productive times for maintenance

Maintenance employees are taking advantage of empty classrooms and common areas to paint, wax and refinish floors, clean windows and carpets, service heating and cooling equipment, and do general repairs and maintenance indoors and out.

This summer they'll also remove and replace floor tile in all the Middle School classrooms, and oversee parking lot repairs and upkeep. And when it's nearly time for school to start, they'll process and distribute shipments of school supplies.

Technology staff making updates

The technology staff is updating software on all servers and electronic devices, managing and renewing software licenses, and preparing laptops for incoming sixth graders.

Administrators have plenty on their desks

Administrators work through the summer as well. Superintendent Sophie is planning for the year ahead by focusing on:

- The search (to kick off in the fall) for a new Principal for Lake Bluff Elementary School;
- The English/Language Arts curriculum, with possible coordination with the Lake Forest schools;
- Work on Physical Education/Wellness curriculum with the new draft Illinois standards determining what will be taught in each grade and in what order;
- Foreign Languages, with decisions to be made on what is taught and how it fits across the grades;
- Continued phasing in of the new Math curriculum;
- The District's enrichment/gifted goals and programs, including data analysis; and
- Creation of the Strategic Plan action plans.

At Lake Bluff Elementary School, the interim principals and curriculum consultant are working this summer on the transition of their duties. At Lake Bluff Middle School, the principal is creating schedules for next year, working on curriculum and doing the work that can only be done when classes are not in session.

See box at left for a list of what Lake Bluff teachers have planned this summer — you may be surprised!

The Alliance: Lake Bluff's educational foundation makes a difference

From recorded books for students with reading difficulties to the design of an outdoor classroom and workshops for teachers on creative ways to use it, funding by the Alliance For Excellence nonprofit foundation helps the Lake Bluff Schools stay on education's cutting edge.

Since 1989, the Alliance has funded opportunities that enhance curriculum, introduce new technologies in the arts and science, and recognize excellence in teaching and learning. The Alliance works with faculty, administrators and staff to identify and fund high-priority opportunities in the schools.

Most recently, the Alliance has provided funding for:

- **Virtual summer book clubs**
- **Six Flags Math & Science Day** student instruments and attendance
- Lake County Cares' Sarah's Dream: Read with Me! **inter-school reading buddy program**
- Eco-friendly **children's literature**
- **Digital SLR/video cameras** for visual storytelling
- **Musical instruments**
- **Physical Education curriculum materials**, and much more.

Funding comes from monies raised online and through an annual fundraising appeal in the fall.

To donate, please visit www.lb65.org/alliance.

Teachers' summer to-do lists

Though teachers are out of their regular classrooms for the summer, they're still hard at work planning for next year and beyond, continuing their own learning, and collaborating with other teachers and staff to benefit the students of Lake Bluff.

Here's just some of what Lake Bluff teachers have planned this summer:

- ▶ Teaching in Kaleidoscope, the District 65 summer enrichment program;
- ▶ Teaching at Math Camp — *see photo on front*;
- ▶ Working on the teacher mentoring program for state approval;
- ▶ Writing curriculum for Wellness and Physical Education;
- ▶ Continuing work on the English Language Arts curriculum to align it with National & State Common Core Standard;
- ▶ Continuing the work of the teacher evaluation committee; and
- ▶ Going to school, serving in educational internships and running a middle school camp in northern Michigan.



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Lake Bluff School District 65
900 North Shore Drive, Suite 220
Lake Bluff, IL 60044

Inside:

*News from your
Lake Bluff School District 65*

School Board meetings

Please attend, watch on cable, or see online

Regular School Board meetings are usually held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at Lake Bluff Village Hall, 40 E. Center Avenue.

Committee-of-the-Whole meetings are usually held at 7:00 pm on the Tuesday two weeks prior to the regular school board meetings, also at Lake Bluff Village Hall. Changes or additional meetings are posted regularly on the entrance to the school district office at 900 North Shore Drive in Lake Bluff, and online at www.lb65.org.

Meetings are televised live within the boundaries of the Village of Lake Bluff on Comcast channel 19 and rebroadcast throughout the week. Videos of the meetings are available at www.lb65.org within 10 days of the meeting.

Your District 65 School Board

Mark Barry, President
John Marozsan, Vice President
Christine Letchinger, Secretary
Leigh Ann Charlot
Julie Gottshall
Richard Hegg
Susan Rider-Porter

From your Superintendent

Dear Lake Bluff Residents:

Everyone who lives or works in the village is a member of the District 65 Learning Community, whether or not they have a student in the Lake Bluff Schools.

The community input through focus groups and surveys for the District 65 Strategic Plan made it so clear that this viewpoint is shared by people throughout Lake Bluff. We are all part of this learning community, and there is much to be gained by working together to achieve the community's mission for its schools: **To provide a premier educational foundation that enables each student to thrive.** Work continues on the District 65 Strategic Plan, and as the administration lays out the tasks needed to meet the specific goals assigned by the Board, we expect to reach out to subject-matter experts in the community for specific, short-term input. Please see the article on the front page of this newsletter to learn more.

Lake Bluff is a wonderful community where students develop the life-long skills they will need to be outstanding national and world leaders in their work and home environments. It takes a Village to educate our children and I am truly honored to be part of such a vibrant and well-educated community that values its schools and the education of its students. Please contact me if you would like a tour of one of the schools or to ask any questions you may have regarding the school district.

Your input is valued! We will now be publishing two or three newsletters such as this one per year to keep you informed of news about your school district.

In partnership,

Dr. Jean H. Sophie
Superintendent, Lake Bluff School District 65

Contacts

Please contact the District office with any questions or suggestions. Look to the left for information on District School Board meetings.

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♻️ Printed on chlorine-free, recycled paper purchased from an FSC-certified vendor, for wise forest management.

**The Mission of Lake Bluff School District 65:
To provide a premier educational foundation that enables
each student to thrive.**