



39 EXPRESS

Celebrating Differences

District 39 has a history of celebrating diversity. And, we continually strive to recognize and embrace the differences within our classrooms as we create a safe and welcoming environment for everyone. Here are a few examples:



➤ Ethnic and racial diversity presents opportunities to learn. Several D39 schools have International Day celebrations where students and their families can share customs and foods from their heritage. World language classes highlight culture as well as language. Highcrest and WJHS staff spent a professional development day focused on racial diversity; for next year, a 5-8 Equity Team will be formed to involve students and staff in building a climate of equity, inclusivity and tolerance.

➤ Food allergies are a serious concern. For more than a decade D39 has taken a leadership role in addressing food allergies at school. Among the recent steps taken is a change in the focus of classroom parties so they are no longer food-driven. For everyday snacks in the classroom, only fruits and vegetables are permitted. This allows for all students to be safe and to develop an awareness of potential risks faced by others.

➤ Gender identity is another area of diversity. Knowing that each student's gender identity may pose unique considerations, we work with students and their families, along with the guidance of an expert, to develop an individual plan. In addition, a specialist from the Lurie Children's Hospital came to D39 earlier this year; separate sessions were held for staff and parents to provide education and guidance on gender diversity. These discussions broaden our outlook and provide insight for thought provoking reflection on our practices. This specialist is an ongoing resource to our District.

➤ Students with physical and developmental disabilities are an integral part of the school community. We focus on opportunities to have children with special needs learn and play alongside those who are typically developing. It starts in our Connecting Kids preschool where all classrooms are made up of a combination of special needs and typical students. In all grades, inclusion and individual support are part of the everyday experience. And, students in grades 5-8 have additional opportunities through a Peer Buddy program and the Hi-Five Junior Choir where typical students can be paired with a special needs student to facilitate successful involvement.



What's New



SOCIAL MEDIA

You can now find District 39 on FaceBook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, & LinkedIn. We encourage members of the community to follow us on these platforms to keep up with what's happening in the District. Social media provides an increased opportunity for D39 to engage with the community.

WEBSITE AND DISTRICT BRAND

Over the summer, you will begin to see our new brand including a new logo and tagline. We will also launch a new and improved website this summer.

REFLECTIONS

District 39 held its annual Reflections celebration on May 11th. More than 200 staff members turned out to honor retiring employees and those reaching significant career milestones. Five employees reached the 25 year mark, 23 reached 15 years of service, and 22 celebrated five year anniversaries. The 27 retirees were each highlighted in a video and then were individually honored with heartfelt remarks from their administrator. District 39 is fortunate to have such a dedicated and talented staff, and this event provides an opportunity to come together to acknowledge the contributions of so many who spend all or most of their career in D39.

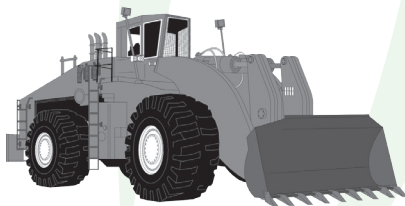


From left: D39 superintendent Dr. Ray Lechner; retiring Highcrest staff Vicky Lundy, Pam Green, Sue Grishaber, and Lorraine London; and Highcrest principal Kelly Jackson



Many of the 15 year honorees.

Summer Construction



The summer months will include two projects in D39. Harper and Wilmette Junior High will both have their library/media/technology spaces renovated to become Learning Commons. At Harper, this is in conjunction with roof replacement in several areas, and at WJHS the work will incorporate a needed large space HVAC project. Work will begin as soon as school is out and is scheduled to be completed before the beginning of the

2016-17 year. This is part of the District's long term plan to have a Learning Commons in each building. Central School was the first in 2015-16.

Curriculum Update

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction has been successfully led for the last five years by Melanie Horowitz, who is retiring after 13 years in D39, which includes eight years as Central School Principal. Curriculum Coordinator Katie Lee has been named Interim Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction. Melanie provided an update on the current state of curriculum and instruction in D39 at the March Board of Education meeting.

Curriculum Reviews

- **English Language Arts (ELA)** encompasses reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing, as well as handwriting, spelling, and vocabulary. Writing curriculum and materials will be implemented K-8 during 2016-17; this will initiate the first district-wide writing curriculum. Materials selection for reading is being finalized; implementation will be in 2017-18.
- **World Languages** began a two year review this year, which will continue through spring 2017. Implementation of revised curricula for Spanish (K-8) and for German, French, and Latin (grades 5-8) will happen during 2017-18.
- **Related Arts: Drama** curriculum review took place this year. A review of related arts offerings will follow. A **Technology Applications** strand in grades 5-8 will be explored. A review of **Library Media and Technology** curricula began in January in conjunction with the Department of Technology and Media Services.



KIDS Assessment

The State Board of Education continues to develop the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS), currently slated for full implementation during 2017-18. As an unfunded mandated assessment of kindergarten readiness, KIDS creates an additional assessment burden on kindergarten teachers and the department. District 39, along with other districts, applied for a waiver that was denied, as was the subsequent appeal. In concert with other districts, District 39 continues to be actively involved in discussions with the State Superintendent emphasizing the need for flexibility and local control in determining whether KIDS is appropriate for specific districts.

Professional Development

D39 continues to provide a wide range of Academy 39 offerings for staff development. This year, an additional option for teachers was an online math course through Stanford University. Teachers from all content areas participated because of the emphasis on mindset in student learning and success. The sessions are all interactive and include various thinking tasks to promote active engagement. More than 100 teachers completed the course this year, which was taught by Dr. Jo Boaler, professor of mathematics education at Stanford. Based on interest in this topic, we have arranged for Dr. Boaler to work with our staff during the September 30th institute day and to present to D39 parents the evening of September 29th.

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District 39 Educational Foundation Update

ED FOUNDATION GIVES GIFT TO D39's LEARNING COMMONS INITIATIVE:

The Foundation announced a \$40,000 gift, to be given over four years, towards the District's Learning Commons Initiative. Each school will receive funds to purchase innovative learning materials for their newly designed learning spaces. At right, Superintendent Ray Lechner accepts the gift.



SPRING GRIPP GRANTS ANNOUNCED

The Foundation awarded \$12,502 to three District 39 schools and one grant to the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

- Staff and parents District-wide will benefit from Professional Development and Parent Training with Stanford University Professors, Dr. Jo Boaler and Dr. Cathy Williams, research leaders in math.
- Harper will purchase hanging white boards and 25 Google expeditions View-Masters for the school's Learning Commons.
- Central will have a Lego learning wall in the learning commons and two mobile Lego learning units that can be moved to classrooms that will be used in math and language arts classes.
- Central will have a Stride Track to automate the tracking of each child's accomplishments in the popular Mileage Club.
- Highcrest Latin students experienced the Ancient Greek exhibit at the Field Museum and created a virtual museum highlighting the artifacts they saw and connections the students have made between them and the modern world.

DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN EVENT 2016

Wilmette community members gathered at The Michigan Shores Club on April 7th to honor the Foundation's 9th Distinguished Citizen, Keating Crown. Mr. Crown shared his experience in getting out of the 2nd tower of the World Trade Center on 9/11 and how it shaped his life. More than \$17,000 was raised for the Gripp Grant program.

SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

Over 130 students participated in the Science Olympiad program. Eighteen courses were taught by 29 volunteer leaders. The enrichment program wrapped up with a "Science Fair" Open House and the competition program finished 9th at State.

MATH IN THE REAL WORLD

Chris Karabas, D39 father, singer/songwriter/producer and co-owner of The Rock House, completely engaged the WJHS students, while showing how he uses math every day both as a business-owner and as a musician.

TRIVIA NIGHT

More than 200 friends, neighbors, and trivia buffs formed teams and came to the Masonic Lodge in Wilmette on February 6th. Each team dressed according to their own creative theme. This event continues to sell out in record time and display the intelligence and creativity in the D39 community!

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TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

Whether or not you have children in our schools, we are interested in your ideas, feedback, and suggestions. Send them along via email to opinion@wilmette39.org or contact Dr. Ray Lechner at 847-512-6030. Mail can be sent to the Mikaelian Education Center, 615 Locust Road, Wilmette, IL 60091.