

161 VISIONS 161

Dr. Dana Smith, Superintendent

Fall 2018

Amy Kent, Editor

Welcome back to School!

My goodness, it feels great to have students, parents, and staff members back in our schools! We had a busy summer, completing construction projects at Heather Hill, Serena Hills, and Parker Junior High, but our team pushed to accomplish their tasks to get our schools ready for the first day of school. Meanwhile, our teachers were busy learning about the new literacy programs in District 161! We have adopted ReadyGen for grades K-5 and My Perspectives for grades 6-8. Both programs will provide challenging reading experiences that will help our students meet our academic expectations. In addition, we have also replaced our aging iPads with Chromebooks for students in grades 2-5. Now, all of our children in grades 2-8 have access to a device that can be used to extend and accelerate their learning. We have re-deployed our working iPads to kindergarten and 1st grade, to support 21st Century Learning in those levels as well. Don't worry though, our focus is not on learning how to use a

Chromebook or an iPad. Instead, our teachers are designing learning experiences that challenge our students to communicate effectively, think critically, collaborate, and creatively solve rigorous problems. Finally, I am happy to announce the opening of the new Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics [STEAM] Lab at Serena Hills School! The lab was funded through a private donation from Mr. Allan DiCastro, a former Serena Hills School student. The lab is part of a STEAM pilot program in District 161. We are also piloting the FUSE STEAM curriculum at Parker Junior High as well. Later this year, the Board of Education will make a determination on the pilot and its potential expansion to the other schools. We are truly lucky to be in a school district that values hard work and innovation, and I am excited to see the success that our students will have this year.

Sincerely,
Dr. Dana Smith,
Superintendent



School Board and the Community

Dear District 161 Families,

On behalf of the Board of Education, I'd like to welcome you to the 2018-19 school year. Our dedicated teachers and administrators prepared all summer for what promises to be one of our best years ever. We have many exciting things happening in the District including, implementation of our new ELA curriculum, the opening of our STEAM Lab at Serena Hills, and the introduction of a new program at Parker called Capturing Kids Hearts. All of these new programs and initiatives will have positive impacts on students and help shape the experience we want every student to have when they walk away from District 161.

Just like our staff, the Board continues to work hard to make sure tools are in place to foster growth and development for our students and our teachers. We also remain committed to engaging families and residents in different ways, a process we started last year with the introduction of our Community Engagement, and Di-

versity and Equity Committees. Our schools are strong because our community is strong, so your continued participation is needed and very much appreciated.

We are not building community in Flossmoor SD 161 – we are strengthening the community that already exists. We are celebrating diversity in every imaginable way. We are the sideline cheerleaders for all our student athletes. We are honoring students who achieve new academic goals and we are thanking our teachers every moment we can. We are carefully watching out for every student who crosses the street and we are purposely spreading kindness in a way to let all of our children and our neighbors know we care. This is community. This is Flossmoor District 161.

Wishing every student, parent, and teacher the best year ever!

*Michelle Hoereth, President
Flossmoor SD 161
Board of Education*

FUSE Studio Course at Parker Junior High School

What is FUSE Studio?

FUSE Studio is a new STEAM-based course developed by Northwestern University accessible to all Parker Junior High School students. The course is designed with student interest at the forefront and allows students to work collaboratively on STEAM-based challenges focused on architecture, sound mixing, coding, jewelry design, and much more!

Student Choice Matters!

Student choice is at the heart of the FUSE Studio course. Students are encouraged to select challenges that inspire them and allow them to work collaboratively to accomplish goals. 21st Century Learning skills are embedded throughout each challenge as students test multiple strategies and have fun in the process!

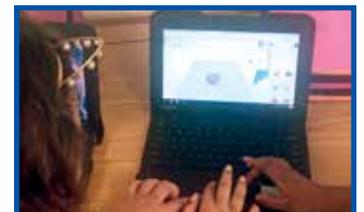
Learning From Each Other!

Students are in the driver's seat as they explore various ways to complete challenges and "level up" as they go along. The FUSE teacher serves as a guide to facilitate the

learning environment and support students, but students are encouraged to share their own expertise with each other as they learn new skills and gain confidence.

Congratulations to the PJH staff, our FUSE teacher Mr. Germeraad, and PJH students for a great start to the FUSE course! To learn more about FUSE please visit www.fusestudio.net

*Amabel Crawford
Director of Learning and Instruction*



Flossmoor Hills News

647-7100, 3721 Beech Street, Flossmoor, Haley Marti, Principal

Busy, Busy, Busy!

The students at Flossmoor Hills Elementary School have been busy at the start of this school year. Concerts, literacy celebrations, visits from community readers, STEAM projects, and so much more!

*Mrs. Haley Marti, Principal
Flossmoor Hills School*



Meet Our New Principal!

- Who:** Mrs. Haley Marti
- What:** New principal, former Assistant Principal and Flossmoor Hills classroom teacher
- When:** Marti joined District 161 in 2008 and took the position of principal at the start of the 2018-2019 school year.
- Where:** Flossmoor Hills Elementary School
- Why:** Mrs. Marti provides great leadership and does a great job of working with parents, teachers and her colleagues. – Superintendent Dr. Dana Smith

Board Approves 2018-2019 School Year Budget!

The Flossmoor School District 161 school board during the September 10, 2018 meeting, approved a budget of \$39,146,941 for the 2018-2019 academic year. The board also approved a budget with an operating surplus of approximately \$670,000, however, the board chose to utilize cash reserves to fund construction over the summer at Parker Junior High School and Heather Hill Elementary School. These construction projects place the 2018-19 budget in a deficit position of \$3,275,535. The majority of the district's revenues come from local sources the largest, 71-percent, being property taxes. The state of Illinois through the Evidence Based Funding Model and other state sources contributes approximately 24-percent of the district's revenues with the balance coming from federal sources.

Approximately \$20,000,000, or 56-percent, of the budgeted expenditures are for direct instructional programming including regular and special education, pupil support services and instructional support services. Another 9-percent funds the operations and maintenance of the school buildings, 9-percent funds transportation and computer services, 9-percent for administrative costs, 9-percent for construction and 3-percent for debt service payments.

The Board of Education will set the tentative 2018 property tax levy at the next Committee of the Whole meeting and adopt the 2018 property tax levy at the December 10, 2018 Board meeting.

Heather Hill News

647-7200, 1439 Lawrence Crescent, Flossmoor, Ashley Holland, Principal

Happy Faces at Heather Hill

Happy faces at Heather Hill. New students, new programs and a new mascot help kick-start the school year at Heather Hill Elementary School.

*Mrs. Ashley Holland,
Principal
Heather Hill School*



Mrs. Holland loved getting to meet her new kindergarten friends at the Kindergarten Open House.

Meet Our New Principal!

Who: Mrs. Ashley Holland

What: New principal, former instructional technology coordinator and assistant principal at Ridgeland School in District 122 in Oak Lawn

When: Holland was hired as principal of Heather Hill Elementary starting the 2018-2019 school year

Where: Heather Hill Elementary School

Why: District 161 received incredible feedback about what their children need and about what the Heather Hill neighborhood needs. Mrs. Holland brings all of that to the position.



Ms. Parker and Ms. Mahler pose with students right before they went on stage to sing at Flossmoor Fest.



Parents and teachers celebrate the 2018-2019 school year at the Back-to-School Bash.

Do you have a 3, 4 or 5 year-old who is ready for preschool?

Flossmoor School District 161 is accepting new preschool students aged 3, 4 and 5-years-old for the 2018-2019 school year. Thanks to an increase in grant funding, the district hopes to offer as many as six sections of preschool this year, when in years past it was limited to two sections and a maximum of around 40 students. Now, the student capacity has nearly tripled to accommodate 108. Each preschool section is two and a half hours in length and has up to 18 students with a teacher and paraprofessional.

The program is free to qualified students, but in order to qualify students must attend a preschool screening

offered by the district. The screenings assess areas of speech and language, gross and fine motor skills, self-help capabilities, vision and hearing, and cognition.

Appointment-based screening is available monthly.

To schedule a preschool screening appointment for your learner age 3+, please

contact the office of Student Support Services at (708) 647-7026 or register through our website at www.sd161.org.



Serena Hills News

647-7300, 255 Pleasant Drive, Chicago Heights, Dr. Shari Demitrowicz, Principal

Serena Hills School Shines

A new look, new mascot and innovative STEAM lab! 21st Century Learning is in full swing at Serena Hills in our state-of-the-art STEAM lab, which features all new computers, a 3D printer and other innovative learning tools.



Serena Stars are great Mathematicians!



Serena Hills School "shining" new look!



Look at this amazing innovator bringing his dot to life and so proud!



Shining Star students with "Sparkle" Serena Hills new Mascot!



Mrs. Rudolph's 1st grade class talking about their amazing day!



Serena students enjoying the new diverse spaces in the 21st century innovation Lab.



Western Avenue News

647-7400, 940 Western Avenue, Flossmoor, Dr. Lisa Dallacqua, Principal

Western Avenue embraces its inner Harry Potter, new PBIS programming and community garden and Green Team



The Green Team is HUGE at Western Avenue. This year, we have over 30 applicants in 4th and 5th grade. These students meet with Mrs. Mroch and parent volunteers to plan, plant, and harvest our community garden in the back of the school. Over the summer, parents and students volunteer to maintain the garden by watering and pulling weeds. I helped out by eating all of the tomatoes when they were ready for harvest in August!



Students created their very own Harry Potter Shields as our mid-month PBIS celebration for September. PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, which is a multi-tiered approach to social, emotional, and behavior support within our building. Every two weeks, our school participates in community celebrations. Western Avenue celebrates when our children meet their goals for demonstrating safe, respectful and responsible behaviors in school throughout our day.



This is one of our first group of kiddos to receive raffle prizes for their behavior during lunch and recess. This year, one of our SIP goals is to incorporate more PBIS components into common areas of our building. In focusing on recess and lunch, students can earn raffle tickets for going above and beyond in the lunchroom and at recess. For example, helping a friend clean up his/her lunch, playing with someone who is sitting alone on the buddy bench, or finding a supervisor when there is a conflict--these are all behaviors that we are trying to reinforce and encourage at Western Avenue.



Parker Junior High News

647-5400, 2810 School Street, Flossmoor, Fred Hunter, Principal

Parker's new Lab is running full STEAM ahead!



**GO
FALCONS!**

Great Food, Great Friends, Great Fun!



Flossmoor School District 161
41 E. Elmwood Drive
Chicago Heights, IL 60411

Board of Education

President

Michelle Hoereth

Vice President

Stephen Paredes

Secretary

Merle Huckabee

Members

Misha Blackman

Carolyn Griggs

Cameron Nelson

John Simmons

Administrative Staff

Superintendent

Dr. Dana Smith

Associate Superintendent

Frances A. LaBella

Director of Learning & Instruction

Amabel Crawford

Director of Special Education

Robin Latman

Director of Instructional Technology

Tony Le

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FLOSSMOOR, IL
PERMIT NO. 2

ECRWSS

*****ECRWSEDDM****

POSTAL CUSTOMER

Dear District 161 Community

Please let me start by thanking all of the administrators, faculty, staff, parents, guardians, Board of Education and all the rest who make up the District 161 community for welcoming me with open arms. I knew when I took the position of Communications Manager for District 161 and the Village of Flossmoor that I would have a lot waiting for me on my first day. What I didn't expect was the amount of support and enthusiasm that would accompany that workload.

It's been a pleasure meeting and working closely with you all during my first month and half, and I look forward to continue spreading the word about the great work being done by our students and staff members. I can't think of a better way to utilize my skills and expertise as a former journalist and corporate communications specialist than in this position. It really is the best of both worlds.

The year ahead will be an exciting time for District 161 as we introduce new curriculum, advanced learning techniques, a new logo and a number of other new communication streams, so be sure you're following all of our upcoming activity. Find more information on our website www.sd161.org and follow us on Facebook and Instagram for daily and weekly updates. There is a whole lot more to come!

Sincerely yours,

Amy Kent
Communications
Manager

