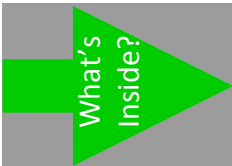


to the point

news from champaign unit 4 schools



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Fall
2011



OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY IS BUILDING **GREAT SCHOOLS,** TOGETHER.

**DEAR PARENTS, COMMUNITY
MEMBERS, STAFF MEMBERS,
AND STUDENTS,**

Our school district has experienced some big changes in leadership positions these past few months. As a result we have put into place an organizational structure that will serve the District while consistently keeping the top focus on the students of Unit 4.

Here are some important updates:

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH:

The firm hired to conduct the search for the next Superintendent has identified and presented top candidates to the Board of Education at the November 7th board meeting. The board is in the process of narrowing the list to 2-3 candidates and will welcome public input in the next few weeks. The board hopes to have a candidate selected and under contract to begin work on or before July 1, 2012.

TRANSITION: DR. JUDY WIEGAND

Upon the conclusion of my service to Unit 4, Dr. Judy Wiegand, current Unit 4 Assistant Superintendent, will become the Interim Superintendent for the District. Dr.

Wiegand has been with the District for 25 years so this will be a seamless transition. The Board has also named Gene Logas as the Chief Operating Officer for the District. Unit 4 will benefit from the wisdom and experience of several retired administrators to fill interim positions in the District: Arlene Blank, Dr. Margie Jobe, Patricia Lewis, Mary Muller and Dr. Carol Stack. Together these educators have over 140 years of combined experience and we are fortunate to have this dream team return to Unit 4.

FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES

You can expect more positive changes in the future. We are continuing with our elementary school upgrades. All eleven elementary schools are now air conditioned and we will begin the major remodeling and expansion efforts at Westview, Bottenfield, Kenwood and Robeson. The new Carrie Busey building in Savoy is currently under construction. In addition, watch for news about some draft options for a new high school, plus technology that is wireless and comprehensive. At the end of December, the Family Information Center will be mak-

ing a move to a convenient location in the historic Columbia Building at the corner of Neil and Bradley with plenty of free parking.

I want to assure you that the Board of Education of Champaign Schools remains focused on keeping the needs of the students of Unit 4 their top priority. A solid operation is in place and the District is expected to move forward without interruption. Our foremost goal is to meet the needs of our students, parents, and staff. There is a quotation which reads: "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is a process. Working together is success. Our goal is working together for success of Unit 4. We are in great shape moving forward. Thank you for your trust and support.

Dr. Robert T. Malito,
Interim
Superintendent



➔ Champaign Unit 4 Schools, 703 South New Street, Champaign, Illinois 61820 217-351-3800 www.champaignschools.org
➔ Dr. Robert Malito, Interim Superintendent
➔ Board of Education: Sue Grey, President; Stig Lanesskog, Vice-President; Tom Lockman, Secretary; Greg Novak, Parliamentarian; Jamar Brown, Member; Kristine Chalifoux, Member, Dave Tomlinson, Member.

Explore our Magnet Schools



BOOKER T. WASHINGTON STEM ACADEMY MAGNET FOCUS: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH

Essential Elements:

- A working partnership with The University of Illinois;
- Integrated curriculum focusing on the STEM components;
- Inquiry based learning promoting student engagement;
- A new building designed for STEM instruction;
- Student involvement in real world problem solving, making and investigating mathematical questions;
- Student engagement in the analytical process and problem-solving found in the world of engineering and in technology;
- Student opportunities to produce multimedia presentations that utilize state-of-the-art technology;
- Staff specially trained in STEM instruction techniques.



GARDEN HILLS ELEMENTARY MAGNET FOCUS: PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME (INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE)

Essential Elements:

- All students will receive instruction in Mandarin Chinese;
- Students become inquirers, thinkers, communicators, and learners who are knowledgeable, principled, caring, open-minded and well-balanced;
- Community service opportunities promote caring and responsible attitudes among students ;
- International mindedness and ideas from all cultures are emphasized;
- Hands on activities and project based learning support active learning;
- All students have the opportunity to be involved in integrated studies, instruction and individualized activities using technology;
- All staff members are trained by IB staff members that work with schools around the world;
- School is a candidate school for IB, actively working toward accreditation.



STRATTON ELEMENTARY MAGNET FOCUS: LEADERSHIP IN A MICROSOCIETY

Essential elements:

- Students will form business ventures. Some will be designed as privately owned and some as non-profit organizations;
- Students will form and staff government agencies including a court system, legislature, bank, peace-keeping team, post office and even an Internal Revenue Service;
- Students will develop a plan for currency and taxation;
- Students will create retail and labor markets, including producers such as manufacturing and consumers who will purchase the produces create;
- Parent and community involvement is essential. Community partners Illinois and local businesses will infuse the program will real life experience.
- Communication and leaders focus through partnership with IBM and Covey training.

For more information on enrollment and magnet school options, please visit our website at www.champaignschools.org.



Learn more at our Schools of Choice Forums -
 January 10, 2012 at 6 PM at Temple Baptist Church
 Thursday, January 26, 2012, at 6 PM
 at Booker T. Washington STEM Academy
 Thursday, February 16, 2012 at 6 PM at
 Barkstall Elementary School

Magnet Schools Registration—K-5th
January 23-February 17, 2012

Kindergarten Registration—
March 1-30, 2012



A DECADE of PROGRESS

The consent decree ten years later

We asked two Unit 4 administrators to reflect on their experience throughout the Consent Decree. Look for more reflections in future issues of *To The Point*.

Working at Unit 4 during the Consent Decree years has transformed me both personally and professionally. I was a high school administrator at Centennial during the early years of the Consent Decree. The main focus was on addressing issues related to access and outcomes for our African American students in honors and Advanced Placement courses. It was during this time that I had the privilege of being part of the AVID (Achievement Via Individual Determination) Program. At the District level, I continue to engage around matters related to social justice and am committed to prioritizing issues of access and equity so that we ensure Champaign Unit 4 is a District that promotes the highest academic achievement for every one of its students.



Dr. Judy Wiegand
Assistant Superintendent for Achievement and Pupil Services

Many of my administrative years have been spent working with the Consent Decree. It has been a challenging endeavor and the results have been life-changing. The Consent Decree challenged our district to be progressive and forward-thinking about our policies, practices and opportunities we offer African American students. We focused much of our work on closing the achievement gap which included ensuring equitable access to rigorous courses. As a result of strategic work, I have developed a keen understanding of data-driven decision making and best practices. I feel privileged to be a part of a school district that has successfully implemented systems and professional standards that will forever change the way we educate children. We placed student achievement at the center of our decision-making and we continue to be committed to do what is best for all children.



Ms. Angela Smith
Principal, Franklin Middle School

Be sure to weigh in on the options for our future facilities. Visit our website at www.champaignschools.org to take a survey and post your comments.

High School Highlights



- Each high school now has a full time college and career counselor;
- Unit 4 currently offers 15 different AP Courses;
- Students can enroll in our 15 distinct Dual Credit courses in partnership with Parkland College, earning college credit without leaving the high school campus;
- Three of our 2011 grads scored a perfect 36 on the ACT college admission test;
- Approximately \$4.6 million in scholarships awarded to 2011 grads;
- Fifty four Unit 4 students have honored by the National Merit Corporation over the last four years;
- 2011 grads admitted to many prestigious universities including MIT, Princeton, University of Chicago, Notre Dame, University of Illinois, Northwestern University, Washington University, DePaul University, Illinois Wesleyan, and Cornell, to name a few;
- Unit 4 students excel in arts programs, including winning national music awards;
- Competitive Science Olympiad and debate teams.

Elementary Extras

⇒ On the first Friday of every month, **Barkstall** students hold a concert in the front hall of the elementary school. Students share musical performances with their classmates, parents and staff members.



⇒ Comic Club meets after-school on Tuesdays at **Bottenfield Elementary School**. Mr. Grant Thomas, himself a published graphic novelist, teaches the fine points of telling stories through drawing comics.

⇒ The Coordinated Approach to Child Health is in full swing at **Carrie Busey**. Students are learning about “go, slow and whoa” foods and building endurance in physical activity. They are an ambassador school for the St. Louis Rams as part of the NFL’s Fuel Up to Play 60 program.

⇒ **Dr. Howard’s** fifth graders created their own Rube Goldberg devices (complicated machine to accomplish a simple task), rubber band cars and marble mazes in a collaboration between gifted and general education classes. Working together was the most important lesson learned by the students who participated.

⇒ **Kenwood** students are studying coral in enrichment classes. They built models of different



types of coral and are learning about coral habitats and why they are endangered. The students have partnered with the Coral Restoration project in Florida to help protect the future for sea life.

⇒ One **Robeson Elementary** student made his mark on history by naming the new surgical robot at Provena Covenant Medical Center. William Ding gave the machine the name Dr. R.U.S.S. or Robotic Ultimate Surgical System.

⇒ **South Side Elementary** will receive the gift of a new piano for the whole school thanks to the generous gifts of parents Mr. and Mrs. William Hobbs, grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Dean Cavey, and the Champaign Rotary Club. The piano should be in place for the annual holiday sing along.

⇒ **Westview** after school math and Spanish clubs have wrapped up a successful fall season. Students interested in working on math or learning Spanish have had the opportunity to work with volunteers from the University of Illinois in these afterschool enrichment programs.

The Family Information Center is moving!

In order to better serve our families, the Family Information Center is moving to a new, convenient location. The Center will be located in the historic Columbia School located at the corner of Neil and Bradley, where there is plenty of free parking. Visit the Family Information Center for school enrollment, information on Kids Plus afterschool program, student records and more. The Family Information Center will remain open, first at its current location at 405 East Clark Street until December 21st, and then at its new location at 1103 North Neil. The phone number remains 217-351-3701.



News from the Middle Schools

⇒ **Edison Middle School**—is the home to the TAP In Leadership Academy, a 21st Century Community Learning Center. It provides academic help to Edison students. It also gives students the opportunity to participate in hands on activities and take field trips, all to connect learning to life experience and personal interests. The Academy sets a positive atmosphere through fun activities, while improving academic strength. Principal Justin Uppinghouse believes the program will gain momentum as it expands to serve more students, “I am looking forward to watching the program grow. The kids enjoy it. I think it will only get better.”

⇒ **Franklin Middle School**—This year Franklin Middle School's National Junior Honor Society, made up of 7th & 8th grade students, have truly demonstrated the principles upon which this society was founded: scholarship, leadership, citizenship, character, and service. In October NJHS raised money and awareness for the fight against breast cancer. In December students will volunteer their time over Christmas break wrapping gifts to raise money for Habitat for Humanity. At recent meetings students have been brainstorming & planning for future projects to improve our school, our community, and our world.

⇒ **Jefferson Middle School**—How Can One Person Make A Difference? That essential question has become a focus for some 8th grade classes at Jefferson. After reading the book, A Walk to Remember, by *Newberry Award* winning author Linda Sue Park, the story of two young people in the war-torn Sudan. The book was part of a semester long service learning project and essay contest sponsored by Rotary Clubs of Champaign. Thanks to the Rotary Clubs, the students were able to meet the book’s author via Skype and then began to look for ways to make a difference in our community. The school-wide **Hero Walk** and courtyard clean-up and helping fund *Honor Flight* were just a few of their projects.