

News from around the district at MSD114

- At the monthly meeting, I shared an update with the Board on the 4 goals that the administrative team will be focused on this coming year; *Becoming One, Literacy, Using Data to make decisions, and Professional Development for Staff*. It is our goal in everything we do, to work together as “One” and to place the goals of our district and the students ahead of all personal and all building goals. We truly want to continue to improve what is already a great district. In doing so, another one of our goals is to make Literacy of focus and work with staff to include literacy instruction in all subjects across the curriculum and grades. We are currently in the process of developing an action plan for each one of the goals and timelines for continued implementation and to make them ongoing. It is very rewarding work that we believe will lead to continued improvement of instruction.
- Mrs. Samantha Ramsey and Mrs. Timoney Elliot presented how technology is being utilized in their classrooms. These two ladies are piloting a 1:1 in the classroom and are preparing to train/offer professional development to other staff as we continue to prepare for 1:1 throughout the other grades and classrooms. Mrs. Elliot will also be piloting the concept of the flipped classroom, a concept where students view the lesson by video as their homework, then come back to school the next day to work with Mrs. Elliott. It is all very exciting, to say the least.
- In addition to Mrs. Ramsey and Mrs. Elliott, three other teachers presented information to the Board as well. Mrs. Ftitz, Mrs. Gernon, and Mrs. Hallihan were on hand to talk to the Board about the new English/Language Arts curriculum that is currently being adopted. The report from these ladies was very positive and they explained why the new curriculum was leading to much more effective instruction in the classroom for the students. What the District Curriculum & Instruction Committee was currently working was also shared by the three teachers. The committee continues to work together to implement the new ELA curriculum, establish non-negotiable items that should be present in every English/Reading classroom, as well as ensure that the non-negotiable list of items that are a big part of every math classroom is also being implemented with integrity. This will go a long way in establishing the consistency and rigor as well as the type of necessary instruction that is needed, K-8.
- I met with the Parent Advisory Committee this month to update them on the beginning of the new school year and to list to feedback from them as well. There was some excellent dialogue and questions. The parents that were able to attend had very complimentary things to say about the new teachers in the district and what the district is doing in regards to technology. They were also very complimentary on what is taking place with writing within the new ELA curriculum. Lastly, they were very pleased with the work the admin team had done on developing the 4 Goals for this year and two goals in particular, *Becoming One* and *Literacy* (across the curriculum).

- **I also presented information on the upcoming Tax Levy that will take place in December. The good news is that the EAV has finally begun to reverse the downward trend. The average sale price of existing homes has begun to increase and the new three-year average is resulting in approximately a 3% increase in assessed valuations of homes in the district. The expected EAV will be approximately \$230,000,000. That is an increase of approximately \$5,000,000. Speaking with Mr. Oldani, the EAV on existing homes should expect to increase by approximately 3-5% each of the next two years as well. It is still a long way from making up for the loss of approximately \$45,000,000 in EAV over the last several years, resulting in a loss of about \$1,027,764 in annual revenue. The loss of this revenue in addition to the loss of State Funding, and along with the possibility of the State shifting its pension liability to local taxpayers are all reasons why the district restructured current debt payments last year. We will also have to continue closely monitoring the talk in Springfield regarding a 2-3 year property tax freeze. There appears to be no real end in site for the budget standoff between the Governor and the Legislature.**
- **Our district also continues to grow in numbers. In the 2014-15 school year, we have 1355 students enrolled at the end of September. This school year, we have 1390 students enrolled at the end of September. We will continue to work very hard in order to make our schools the kind of education program that draws new families into our community.**
- **The auditors presented the annual audit report to the Board at the monthly meeting. The overall report was very positive and there were not any significant findings. The auditor reported that there was a decrease in the overall fund balance due to several things that included; depreciation of assets, payment of debt, restructuring of long-term debt payments, entering into a lease agreement for technology, and the condition of State Funding. Overall, the financial condition of the district is strong, despite delayed or reduced State funding and a significant decline in local assessments over the last six years. Manhattan continues to be a school district that operates very efficiently with the resources available, spending just slightly more than \$8,000 per student, placing the district in the bottom 25% of all school district in the State of Illinois on terms of spending per pupil. This is something to be very proud of since our students continue to be some of the top performing students in the State of Illinois.**
- **The following reports were presented by the other Administrators:**
 - Mrs. Renee Karalus:
 - The Administrative team is continuing development and clarification of district goals, and a 2 year plan to roll out these goals, and continue to work on them. This is very exciting for all of us! This process has resulted in fantastic team building conversation and really has led us to define our goals and use specific language to define them.

- Alicia Tooley's student teacher has almost completed the first half of her practicum, and will soon be joining Mrs. Anderson at Wilson Creek to conclude her practicum through Eastern.
- We welcomed 2 new students to our A.M. Early Childhood Program this month, and will welcome another student returning from out of district in November. We have also continued to have very successful Preschool Screenings this year. We screened 8 children in September, with 3 being referred for further screening, and have 7 already scheduled for our November screening! This is a great opportunity for our youngest students and parents within the community! Our screening team consists of Jenelle Hoffman, Lisa Reh, Meghan Muckian, Pam Dodd, Kathy DiSalvo, and Jennifer Lynch. They have done a fantastic job assisting students to and from screenings, completing the screenings, and also reporting the results to parents! Thanks, team!
- The member districts of the Lincoln-Way cooperative have planned service specific team meetings for service providers from all of our districts (Manhattan, Mokena, Summit Hill, Frankfort, and Lincoln-Way along with the cooperative providers) to meet to discuss common practices, ask opinions and questions from each other, etc.
- We have different providers meeting each month. An agenda will be created for each meeting, including topics generated from the participants. We are excited to begin this practice and offer this opportunity to all of our service providers

Mrs. Kim Maher:

- Apples and fall leaves have swept Wilson Creek. Bulletin boards, student work and writing indicate a definite move into the month of October. We have a busy month ahead and we'll be wearing orange on Wednesdays to recognize the Character Counts trait of fairness.
- **Gold Ribbon Week**
September 21-25 was Gold Ribbon Week to raise awareness for Childhood Cancer. Students participated in spirit days, donated spare change, and teachers participated in a \$5 denim day. We have several Manhattan students that have been directly affected by childhood cancer in addition to most of our families that have been touched by it through someone they know.
- **Palesh Dedication Walk**
On Friday October 2nd, all Wilson Creek students participated in the Palesh Dedication Walk. Students walked for their own personal cause and collectively raised over \$1,400! Most of that money will benefit the children of former Wilson Creek teacher, Patty Ditty. We will invite her family to attend an upcoming School Pride Assembly to present them with the check.

- **2nd Grade Field Trip to Plum Creek**
Our 2nd graders are studying habitats and visited Plum Creek Nature Center on October 8th and 9th to learn more about natural habitats. They had great weather and the students enjoyed the experience. Our students will demonstrate their learning and understand about habitats through writing.
- **843 ACCESS Field Trip to Alsip Nursery**
Our ACCESS students and their teachers visited Alsip Nursery to see and learn more about living things. They enjoyed seeing the animals and were happy to report about what they saw when they returned.
- **1st Quarter STAR Assessments**
Wilson Creek students will be STAR tested again this month during the last week of the 1st quarter. These results will help teachers monitor their instruction and planning following our fall Data Days as well as provide updated information for Parent/Teacher Conferences in November.
- **Kindergarten and EC Field Trip to Konow's Corn Maze and Pumpkin Farm**
Our Kindergarten students have been studying apples and pumpkins and look forward to a fun day at Konow's Corn Maze and Pumpkin Farm on Friday, October 16th. Our EC students will travel there earlier in the week with all of their teachers and related service therapists. They will use this trip as a therapeutic experience for their students.

Mr. Ryan McWilliams:

- Palesh Run raised \$1,700 for Gift of Life Bone Marrow Foundation; Touchdown for Mia & the Education Initiative for Oncology and Hematology patients at Lurie Hospital; and a small portion to former Manhattan 114 student Kaley Albrecht & her quest to be Ms Illinois. The money she raises will be donated to a charity of her choice.
- 5th grade field trip to Cantigny was Oct 6
- 4th gr music program is Oct 15 at 10:30am and 7pm
- Thank you to Mrs. Pacheco for a wonderful 5th gr music program.
- Reading and SS committees began preliminary discussions on opportunities to absorb SS concepts/topics into the reading block as well as begin reviewing the newly proposed SS standards.
- Mrs. Gernon, Ms. Bradbury, Mrs. Pascarella, Mrs. Kijewski, Mrs. Schueler, Mrs. Rossi, Mrs. Boersma, and Mrs. Kaluzny attended Illinois Reading Conference Oct 1-3.
- Top STAR Performers (attached)
- Congrats to all the Trustworthy Students of the Month. 3-4 students from each classroom were recognized and treated to lunch with their parents on Sept 30th. Next luncheon recognizing students for RESPECT will be October 28th.

- Thank you to our Nurse Mrs. McCleverty for arranging the Robert Crown Human Body pep talk to our 5th graders. This year we hosted the presentation and it went exceptionally well.
- Anna Mac's PRIME TIME READING NIGHT kick-off assembly is scheduled for Friday, October 16th @ 2:45. Thank you Mrs. Pascarella for coordinating this year long event.
- Power of One Bullying assembly scheduled for Monday, October 19th
- 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders will be visiting the newly renovated Fire House in Manhattan October 27th & 28th in recognition of Fire Safety month.
- Thank you to our Manhattan PTO for organizing and hosting the PTO Color Run on October 4th.
- Updated assessment data is on website.
- Mrs. Kirk, Mrs. Paskauskas, and Mrs. Horwath all return from their maternity leaves the week of November 9th - 13th. Look forward to having them back in action.
- Band / Orchestra concert is scheduled for Nov 12 at MJHS @ 7pm

District News

- PERA Joint Committee for Teacher Evaluation will meet on Tuesday, October 13th to review evaluation documents for teachers and administrators as well as discuss questions, comments, or concerns moving forward.
- District C & I Team met on Sept 10th to review expectations for staff attending the IL Reading Conference; Review Math non-negotiable instruction list; and discuss new reading series and presentation to the Board of Education. Staff involved in implementing the new reading series will be meeting with the publisher rep on Friday, October 30th from 11-1pm @ WC.

Mr. Ron Pacheco:

- Data Meetings - after the first benchmarking period, data teams met and studied the information. Teams included ELA staff, math, reading support, and content areas (Sci/SS). As a result, we determined specific standards that we would like to see improved by the second data point in January. As an example, the focus for Grade 7 will be ELA: 6-8.R.H.8 (distinguish among fact, opinion and reasoned judgment) and 6-8.R.ST.8 (distinguish among fact, reasoned judgment, and speculation) The plan includes how in addition to ELA, how other content areas can support literacy.
- The annual Palesh dedication run occurred district wide on October 2. Members of the cross country team and Blue crew helped run the events. The money raised goes to a donation of the school's choosing. MJHS is sending theirs to "Protect your mellon," an organization that helps provide hats for children undergoing childhood cancer treatments.

- Dr. Ferrer (Spanish teacher - Summit Hill) and I are starting a Spanish Pen Pal program to see how it works this year. Both of our 8th grade LW Spanish I students will be exchanging four letters each throughout the school year. We are very excited about it!
- MJHS has 8 students participating in the NFPA Fluid Power Challenge. The NFPA Fluid Power Challenge is a STEM competition that challenges 8th grade middle school students to solve an engineering problem using fluid power technology. The NFPA Fluid Power Challenge is sponsored by Caterpillar and is held at Joliet Junior College. We are sending 2 teams of 8th grade students again this year. The first team of students is Brody Ceh, Jessie Marshall, Brady Forsythe and Ethan Whiting and the second team of students is Ryan Towner, Madilyn Bernhard, Noelle Miller, and Griffin Vaughn. Last year there were 17 total teams and this year the competition will be much harder with a total of 28 teams.
- Congratulations to the Marching Band for participating in the Manhattan and Elwood Parades in September.
- Congratulations to Libby Kaminski and Calvin Horsley being accepted in to the ILMEA Honor's Band Festival on trumpet for the 2nd year in a row! This festival will take place on Sat. November 7 at Lockport HS. From Choir IMEA: Lilah Hernandez 7th grade; Orch IMEA: Courtney DeVenuto 7th, Epiphany Shaw 7th, Noelle Miller 8th, Ilya Jucius 8th.
- Orchestra/Choir fall concert is Thursday, October 22.
- 7th grade boys VB team finished the regular season co- conference champions.
- Cross Country is in the post season! Of worthy news, the Boys team made history by WINNING the DesPlaines Valley Conference Meet on Oct 6 at Round Barn Farm. This marks the first time ever, the district boys team has accomplished this feat. Special thanks to Pete and Dave for their hard work making the course look wonderful. Additional thanks to the park district for helping us schedule the event and assist with parking. Also, thanks to Manhattan EMT and MFD for providing traffic assistance and an ambulance as a safety precaution.

***Thank you,
Rusty Ragon***