

DISTRICT
64

STATE OF THE DISTRICT

2006-07 ANNUAL REPORT



MEETING THE NEEDS
OF THE WHOLE CHILD



MESSAGE FROM BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESIDENT

Fellow District 64 Residents:

As I review the "State of the District" this fall, I believe the outlook for the District is mixed. Although we have much positive news to share about our outstanding schools, the District's financial outlook remains troubled.

Our educational program is strong, with effective teaching and learning occurring in our classrooms each day. The recent designation of Lincoln Middle School as a 2006 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon School and other prestigious awards to teachers and the District give us much to celebrate. Another source of deep satisfaction – and a hallmark of this District – is our dedication to meeting the needs of the whole child. The Civil Behavior and Educational Ends programs that help us achieve this goal are described inside this report.

Our financial outlook, however, is not as bright. Year by year, the District's financial strength has eroded. The District has made substantial budget cuts in the past six years, which have reshaped the educational program and curtailed services. The most significant has been an increase in our classroom sizes in grades 3-8. The District also vigorously adheres to a "culture of savings" to spend less and get the most from every dollar spent.

Yet these efforts continue to fall short, and deficits are mounting. As a result, the District's Operating Fund balance is steadily dropping, and soon will jeopardize our financial security.

To help us study this situation, the Board convened a 30-member Community Finance Committee in 2004 as part of a long tradition of grassroots community involvement in support of local schools. You will be impressed by the depth and quality of the three subcommittee reports completed this fall; please visit the District's Web site (www.d64.org) to read them.

The CFC has recommended the Board of Education consider a referendum to increase revenues. The Board will spend the remainder of this fall analyzing the CFC's work, and will carefully study the impact and timing of any such rate increase on local taxpayers and our schools.

The Board is committed to being both a good financial steward of local taxpayer funds and to maintaining the educational excellence of District 64 schools, which are a great source of pride for our community. The 4,313 students currently in our schools – and those who will join them in the years ahead – demand our best efforts.

I invite your thoughts and participation as we continue to explore these alternatives.

CHRIS MOLLET

President, District 64 Board of Education

About The Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan presented within this "State of the District" report is part of a lengthy, broad community outreach effort spanning two school years.

Early in 2005, the District 64 Board of Education and administration initiated a community-based strategic planning process to guide the District as it looked ahead. The Board established as its primary goals:

- meeting the needs of the whole child, and
- restoring financial strength.

The Board wanted to hear directly about what the Park Ridge - Niles community values regarding its public schools and how local residents perceive the District's challenges and opportunities. This spring, the District conducted focus groups and surveys with almost 1,600 parents, community members, and staff. More than 60 volunteers from all segments of the community also attended a Strategic Planning Conference on April 5.

The stepped-up outreach effort expanded this fall. A new Education Finance Fact Book was launched on the District's Web site, which has been enhanced to offer ready access to a variety of Board meeting materials, District reports, and other useful information.

In addition, Board President Chris Mollet and Superintendent Sally Pryor are reviewing the "State of the District" at more than two dozen briefings for parent, civic, and community groups. Public presentations at the Park Ridge Library and a Board of Education meeting were timed to coincide with American Education Week in mid-November under the theme: "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility."

More opportunities for community input and participation will be scheduled in coming weeks; check the Web site for current dates.

DISTRICT 64 WELCOMES AND INVITES THE COMMUNITY'S CONTINUING INVOLVEMENT; QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS.

- Visit www.d64.org and follow the "Contact Us" link to send a message.



- Contact Board of Education members (at left), or attend a meeting to offer your thoughts.

- Contact the District 64 Public Information Coordinator:

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"The purpose of the District 64 school community is to enable all students to achieve their fullest potential as they develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes to live successful, socially responsible lives in a changing global society."

- DISTRICT 64 MISSION STATEMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-08

GOAL ONE:

MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE WHOLE CHILD

Civil Behavior: "The accepted and expected way of life in District 64."

GRADES K-5: R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Responsibility
Empathy
Strategies
Positive attitude
Excellence
Citizenship
Trustworthiness

GRADES 6-8: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Self-awareness
Self-regulation
Motivation
Empathy
Social skills

District 64 addresses students' social and emotional needs through a character education program. The program helps students develop skills and attitudes needed to be respectful and caring members of their homes, schools, and communities.

To foster civil behavior, District 64:

- Continually educates students on anti-bullying strategies.
- Develops a common understanding of civil behavior expectations for students, staff and parents.
- Helps staff and parent leaders develop skills in positive communication.
- Sustains the civil behavior program through staff, parent and community leader groups.
- Uses Peaceful Playgrounds™ at all elementary schools to teach appropriate civil behavior skills.
- Offers parent education programs, such as "Raising Good Kids."
- Highlights positive student behavior and related achievements.
- Reaches out to local preschools and high schools about this initiative.

"Teachers, parents and community members collaborating as partners can teach, model and reinforce the civil behavior skills we know have a positive impact on students' academic achievement and overall success in life."

— SUPERINTENDENT SALIA PRYDE

A "SAMPLER" OF CIVIL BEHAVIOR ACTIVITIES IN 2006-07:

■ Offering continuing education to students on **ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES** is a major initiative. District 64 is building on a program piloted at Roosevelt School last year with author and educator SuEllen Fried, a nationally recognized leader in bullying prevention. In addition to offering a separate evening program for all parents this fall, Fried also led training sessions for teams of teachers from all schools. This core group will now share information and techniques with their colleagues at each building. This training is partially funded by a grant from the District 64 Elementary Learning Foundation (ELF), a separate non-profit organization.

■ At elementary schools, a "No Name Calling Week" of activities is being planned for January.

■ Middle schools will focus on "cyber-bullying" via e-mail, instant messaging and internet social networking sites as a specific area of instruction and prevention. An evening program for families this spring will offer tips to keep safe when surfing the internet, and will explore the emotional dangers of cyber-bullying.

■ A team of parents from each elementary school this fall was trained to facilitate a three-session networking program, "Raising Good Kids." Designed for primary grade parents, the program already has been completed at two schools; programs at three others will begin this winter.



LEFT: As part of a "teach the teachers" effort, District 64 teachers in the audience watched a demonstration lesson with bullying expert Fried (C) working with Ms. Bailey's 4th grade class at Washington School.

RIGHT: Field School's first "Raising Good Kids" workshop series this fall was coordinated by (L) parents Pam Johnson, Principal Kathy Ciochy, Margie Figgins, and Wendy Koyler.



DISTRICT 64 BY THE NUMBERS

4,313 students

650 more students in just 10 years

87% of students "meet or exceed" Illinois learning standards (ISAT scores)

District 64 recognizes that education must have a broad purpose and do more than just provide instruction in the basic academic areas. Research shows that students perform better academically when their physical and emotional needs are addressed as part of their total school experience. That's why District 64 has long been committed to meeting the needs of the "whole child."

To fulfill the aims of education and prepare students to be good citizens of tomorrow, District 64 provides an educational program that builds students' knowledge and skills. Academics are fundamental, but the curriculum also provides opportunities for social and emotional learning, critical thinking and problem solving skills, physical development, and experiences in the fine and applied arts.

The Civil Behavior and Educational Ends initiatives support this philosophy and distinguish District 64 from other districts.

Educational Ends serve as public statements of what it means to be educated in District 64.

Educational Ends reflect the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes toward learning that District 64 wants its students to achieve. Educational Ends apply to learning experiences in: Language Arts; Math; Science; Social Studies; Foreign Language; Health; Physical Education; Visual Arts; Vocal and Instrumental Music; Critical Thinking; Problem Solving; and, Social and Emotional Development.

Scores from standardized tests do not tell the whole story of how and what students learn. A variety of assessments are used to measure whether students are actually achieving those ends.

To help students attain these Educational Ends, the District:

- Develops and implements assessments in all curricular areas.
- Continues to educate staff on the use of technology to effectively collect and analyze assessment data.
- Uses assessment information to drive curriculum review processes.
- Provides opportunities for teachers to review assessment data and instruction.
- Creates and executes a communication plan for educating parents about Educational Ends.

"In District 64, we assess what we value and value what we assess."

— SUPERINTENDENT SALLY PIGOR

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2006-07 ACTIVITIES:

- At a busy District-wide Staff Development Day in November, teachers at all grades learned how to obtain and interpret a variety of on-line reports about their students' performance on new assessments, including the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). Parents also will be introduced to the new forms, report formats and ways to think about their child's performance and improvement.
- Assessments continue to be developed and piloted for each ends statement so the entire program can be implemented in 2007-08. The modified Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) schedule and results of the new Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing also are being integrated into the program.
- To make it more efficient to record data from student assessments and use those results to analyze data more readily, a common set of standards is being selected and will be adopted by all schools.
- The District will begin developing a new model for curriculum updating. Currently, curriculum areas are reviewed in a 5-7 year cycle. A new method would allow data from a variety of sources to drive a continuous process of improvement to more immediately impact student learning.
- To prepare for full implementation of the Educational Ends program next school year, the information given to parents about these expectations will be expanded and added to the Learner Objectives pamphlet prepared for each grade level and distributed at curriculum nights.



Lincoln Middle School 7th grade students from Mr. Nasslan's homeroom prepare their computers to begin a MAP test.



Intermediate grade teachers learned new strategies to teach expository writing skills, which students must know for the District's Educational Ends. Working together were: (L) Susan Rice and Donna Barthe, Franklin School; Becky Keenan, Carpenter School; and, Mary Jones and Karin Mustari, also Franklin. The workshop was one of more than three dozen professional development sessions.

69% of teachers
have master's degrees

5 elementary schools (grades K-5)
2 middle schools (grades 6-8)
1 early childhood center

14 school buses
run 73 daily routes

\$52.8 million total
2006-07 budgeted expenditures

STRATEGIC PLAN 2006-08

GOAL TWO:

RESTORING FINANCIAL STRENGTH

District 64 provides high quality educational programs and services for the children of the Park Ridge-Niles community while being fiscally responsible to its taxpayers.

"We are committed to engaging the community to help us identify and study solutions to these challenges."

— DISTRICT 64
STRATEGIC PLAN

Maintaining and improving the District's financial health is challenging because of the way education is funded in Illinois. Here are two key factors:

A DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE OF FUNDING FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS COMES FROM LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES. Although the Illinois Constitution says that the state has the "primary responsibility for financing the system of public education," the state's share is very small. In fact, Illinois ranks 49th in the nation in the share of revenues it provides for education, as reported by the U.S. Education Department.

Result – Unless there is meaningful legislative reform, school districts in Illinois must continue relying on local taxpayers to fund public schools. District 64 depends on local property taxes for almost 80% of its revenues.

A TAX CAP LIMITS THE REVENUE FROM LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES.

The state enacted a tax cap law in 1994 that limits the amount of money school districts can raise from local taxpayers each year to the lesser of 5% or the rate of inflation (Consumer Price Index).

Result – District 64 has a "chronic structural imbalance" where revenues – limited by a tax cap – are never quite enough to meet expenses, which are not capped by inflation.

TAX CAP IMPACT

"While the value of property assessed in Park Ridge-Niles has been rising 11% or better over the last five years, the increase in property taxes collected by District 64 has been in the 2% - 4% range." — EDUCATION FINANCE FACT BOOK

District 64 is responding to these challenges by:

SPENDING LESS

■ Since 2001, expenditures have been reduced \$2.8 million each year – for cumulative savings of \$12.2 million – which impact the entire District:

- Larger class sizes in grades 3-8
- Cut-backs in programs and services to students
- Staff development and instructional technology reduced
- School maintenance projects deferred
- Instructional supplies and materials for schools limited

■ Restructured employee health insurance benefits, and held salary contract increases in the middle of comparable local districts.

■ Purchased electricity and natural gas competitively, and adopted rigorous school conservation programs.

MAXIMIZING INCOME

- Boosted student fees paid by parents for textbooks and materials.
- Monitored tax appeals that can result in permanent revenue losses.
- As a temporary three-year loan, issued \$4.9 million in Working Cash Bonds in October 2005 due to delayed tax payments from the Assessor's Office.
- Negotiated TIF agreement with the City of Park Ridge for the Uptown Redevelopment Project.

BEING PRUDENT FINANCIAL STEWARDS

■ The Board in January adopted an Operating Fund Balance policy of having four months (33%) of the expenses required to operate the District on hand at the end of each fiscal year. However, the District's Operating Fund Balance at the end of 2006-07 is expected to be 12%, and is forecasted to continue falling.

■ Closely overseeing finances on an ongoing basis by analyzing quarterly budget reports and projections.

This fall, the Board is working closely with the Community Finance Committee (CFC) to find solutions:

■ The Board is intensively exploring the specific recommendations from three CFC Subcommittees – Spend Management, Financial Structure and Communications – at seven Committee-of-the-Whole on Finance meetings (October-December).

■ Specially, the Board is studying the need for additional sources of revenue – such as a referendum to increase the tax rate as suggested by the CFC – as a means to restore the District's financial strength. As part of this review, the Board is evaluating whether selected programs and services eliminated by the ongoing budget cuts should be reinstated, and whether any enhancements to the District's current educational program should be considered.

■ The "culture of savings" is expanding. Purchasing practices are being examined to see how "spend management" techniques recommended by the CFC might yield additional opportunities to stretch every dollar spent.

■ The District is reaching out to engage the community in two-way dialogue about these current financial challenges and learn what Park Ridge-Niles residents value about education. A series of "State of the District" community talks, better access to Board and District news on an enhanced Web site, and a companion Web-based Education Finance Fact Book are part of this stepped up communications effort.

EDUCATION FINANCE FACT BOOK

www.d64.org

<i>Short Chapters:</i>	ISBE Financial Profile
Property Tax Levy Process	Employee Health Benefits
Operating Fund Balance Policy	Class Size Guidelines
Student Fees	Staff and Administration

Frequently Asked Questions