Dear Community Members,

We concluded last school year in fine form and have launched into a brand new school year with several new initiatives beginning. Thank you to the parents, teachers, administrators, and community members who weighed in with thoughts, took visits to neighboring schools, researched, and ultimately helped determine the direction for our school district.

The following represents a few of the major projects Forest Ridge School District 142 has implemented for the 2017-2018 School Year:

• 1:1 Technology Program: Provided iPads for each student in grades 5-8

• Technology Expansion:
  • Provided one cart of iPads for each 1st-4th grade level at Foster and Kerkstra Elementary Schools
  • Supplied Ridge classrooms and learning centers with additional upgraded iPads
  • Installed new short throw projectors at Foster and Kerkstra Elementary Schools
  • Installed Apple TVs for all classrooms

• STEAM Curriculum: Added an integrated elective at Hille in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math). We currently have four full sections of 6th grade students who have chosen to take this exciting and relevant academic class. We anticipate expanding the programming next year to additional grade levels.

• MakerSpace: Introduced a MakerSpace component to our Applied Technology classes at Hille Middle School. This allows for students to work collaboratively to solve complex problems, creating objects and processes, utilizing both hands-on materials and high tech devices.

Forest Ridge School District 142 has fully embraced the idea of providing our students with the most current technologies, tools, and approaches so that they are the thought leaders when they arrive in high school and beyond.

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-Dr. Paul McDermott

Sincerely, and in partnership on behalf of our children,

Dr. Paul McDermott
SUPERINTENDENT
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

For the second consecutive year, a statewide financial analysis conducted by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has resulted in Forest Ridge School District 142 earning Financial Recognition, the highest financial designation in the state of Illinois.

The annual Financial Profile provides a snapshot in time that helps ISBE gauge a school district’s financial condition based on five indicators of financial performance:

- fund balance-to-revenue ratio
- expenditures-to-revenue ratio
- days cash on hand
- percent of short-term borrowing available
- percent of long-term debt remaining

Despite tough financial times and lack of full state support, Forest Ridge School District 142 has increased fund balances and posted an excess in revenues over expenditures.

Our improved status is a testament to sound financial decisions made by the Board of Education, as well as continued efforts by administrators, faculty and staff to be good financial stewards of taxpayer money.

UNDERSTANDING THE ELEMENTS OF SCHOOL FINANCE

Operating Funds for the 2017-2018 Budget

Four main operating funds:
- Educational
- Operations & Maintenance
- Transportation
- Working Cash

Four main sources of revenue:
- Local Property Taxes – 54%
- State Funding – 34%
- Federal Funding – 6%
- Other Sources – 6%

Four main areas of expense:
- Salaries & Benefits – 72%
- Purchased Services – 15%
- Supplies & Materials – 7%
- Other – 6%

School Fiscal Year

School budgets start on July 1st and end on June 30th of the following year. This is in sync with the State of Illinois’ school funding system. However, the timing of the passage of the state's budget is not always in alignment with a school district’s budget filing. Schools may have to make critical financial predictions at the time of budget adoption, as to what monies may actually be received.

Fund Accounting

This is an accounting system that emphasizes accountability versus profit. School districts, non-profit agencies, and governments use Fund Accounting. Fund Accounting is a highly-regulated form of accounting with specific accounts maintained in accordance with state and federal laws.

Working Cash Bonds

The practice of issuing Working Cash Bonds is designed to offset fluctuations in school funding. School districts issue bonds and repay principal and interest over time. Working Cash Bonds are generally used for operational expenses, new building projects, and large school improvements.

Equalized Assessed Value (EAV)

When the county assesses the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of a home, or the taxable value of a property, this value affects property tax rates. EAV is affected by property market values, exemptions, and shifts in the overall economy. The resulting total property tax impacts the amount of funding a school district receives.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change over time in prices paid by consumers for market goods and services. CPI is used as a market indicator to guide groups, such as school districts in making financial decisions. Generally, CPI represents the maximum growth allowed in a district’s local tax revenue.

Tax Levy

A property tax levy is the amount of property tax dollars a school district requests each year to operate the district for the following fiscal year. School districts are bound by strict laws to deposit tax-levied dollars into specific accounts for clear-cut uses. The money received from local property taxes is the primary source of revenue for most school districts.
HILLE STUDENTS EXPERIENCE HANDS-ON LEARNING IN NEW STEAM CLASS

Students in Hille Middle School’s new 6th grade STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) class have been busy this fall, applying the engineering design process to investigations aligned to grade-level science, mathematics, technology, and fine arts standards.

Students learned about humankind’s search for life in outer space and its connection to engineering and robotics in the first unit, “Robots on Ice.” In this module, students studied Antarctica and learned about the robot Icefin which is used to explore under ice and water. Icefin is a prototype for a robot that may be used to explore Europa, a Jupiter moon with conditions similar to Antarctica.

Students studied the conditions on Europa and then participated in an engineering simulation in which they completed coding lessons and programmed Edison robots to navigate an unseen maze and use cameras to search for alien life. They controlled the robot from outside the maze by looking at the live feed on smartphones and using the robot’s remote control, creating a map as they went. The activity simulated the real-world research of scientists and engineers developing a robot with the capabilities to explore under the ice-covered surface of Europa.

Students extended their learning and added the ‘A” in STEAM during the next activity in which they used the robot paths they documented in “Robots on Ice” to study and create artwork. They looked at the robot paths from a different lens, seeing them from an art perspective as continuous line drawings. Students studied Picasso’s famous works of art that used the same technique, learned the artistic definition of a line, and viewed examples of how it is used in different art pieces. Finally, students practiced making continuous line drawings and created wire sculptures of their drawings.

Students will move into the musical realm in the next module, investigating properties of sound including waves, pitch and frequency and learning how musical instruments create a variety of sounds. They will then apply the engineering design process to design and construct musical instruments, compose and perform a musical piece with a group, and create concert posters and a music video.

Forest Ridge School District 142 hopes to expand STEAM programming by adding 7th and 8th grade classes over the next two years.
NEW PROJECTORS ENHANCE STUDENT CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE

This summer, Kerkstra and Foster Elementary Schools received upgraded projectors as part of Forest Ridge School District 142’s “Elementary School Technology Modernization Initiative.” This initiative upgraded over 40 classrooms from their decade old projectors with new short throw Epson PowerLite projectors.

Additionally, all first and second grade, special education and preschool classrooms received short throw Epson BrightLink interactive projectors. These projectors create interactive learning areas for large and small group instruction by using dual pen-based interactivity that lets up to two students draw and write on the whiteboard at a time.

The new projectors are twice a bright as the previous projectors, smaller, and less intrusive. Learning space is returned to the classrooms with the elimination of projectors on carts, and cords which presented tripping hazards.

Students can interact, create and share their ideas and work in all subject areas quickly and easily which has transformed the look of many Forest Ridge School District 142 classrooms.
RIDGE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM NOMINATED FOR ISBE THOSE WHO EXCEL AWARD

The Illinois State Board of Education annually sponsors the **Those Who Excel** Award Program to honor individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to our state's public schools. Excellence, Meritorious Service, and Special Recognition awards are presented in seven categories. Nomination materials are evaluated by a selection committee comprised of individuals who represent a variety of educational organizations. Awards of Excellence winners are finalists for the **Illinois Teacher of the Year**.

This year’s recognition ceremony took place on October 28. The Special Education Team at Ridge Early Childhood Center for the 2016-2017 School Year has been nominated and received the “Merit” Award. The team includes:

- **Cassie Acevedo**, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
- **Laurel Carlson**, Social Worker
- **Noelle Federico**, Early Childhood Special Education Teacher
- **Nicole Koch**, Speech and Language Pathologist
- **Kristin Malone**, Occupational Therapist
- **Hannah Mrowinski**, Preschool Special Education Teacher
- **Claire Newell**, Special Education Teacher
- **Rachel Spatz**, School Psychologist

Congratulations to the Ridge Special Education Team for their excellent work!

NATIONAL PRINCIPAL MONTH

“**There are no good schools without good principals. And where you have good principals, great teachers come, and they stay, they work hard, and they grow.**”

— Arne Duncan, Former U.S. Secretary of Education
### Important Dates to Remember

#### NOVEMBER
- **3** PTA Meeting 7:00 PM
- **9** Veterans Day Assembly at Ridge 9:00AM
- **10** Veterans Day Assembly at Hille 9:00AM
- **10** Veterans Day Assembly at Foster 10:00AM
- **10** Veterans Day Assembly at Kerkstra 1:30PM
- **14** Parent Visitation Days All Schools
- **14** Family Reading Night at Ridge 5:00PM
- **14** Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting 6:00PM
- **15** Board of Education Meeting 7:00PM
- **16** Grandparents Day at Kerkstra
- **16** Family Reading Night at Kerkstra and Foster 6:00PM
- **20** Parent-Teacher Conferences 1:00 – 8:00 PM (No student attendance on either day)
- **21** Parent-Teacher Conferences 1:00 – 8:00 PM (No student attendance on either day)
- **22-24** NO SCHOOL

#### DECEMBER
- **4** Preschool Screening at Ridge
- **6** Kerkstra/Foster Band and Choir Concert at Hille 6:00PM
- **7** Supper with Santa at Ridge 4:30PM
- **7** PTA Meeting 7:00PM
- **12** Winter Band Concert at Hille 7:00PM
- **14** Winter Choir Concert at Hille 7:00PM
- **18** Winter Band Concert at Hille 7:00PM
- **19** Operations and Maintenance Committee Meeting 6:00PM
- **19** Board of Education Meeting 7:00PM
- **22** HALF DAY
- **25-29** WINTER BREAK

#### JANUARY
- **1-5** WINTER BREAK
- **8** School Resumes