Dear Community Members,

We have successfully launched another school year and have had an incredibly smooth start. After a very busy summer ensuring that each school building reflected the care and attention required to teach children in the 21st century, we have now completed the first quarter of school. In addition to updating the Kerkstra gym and the Foster library, we recently repainted the hallways and then replaced all the hallway tile at Jack Hille Middle School. This was a part of our ten-year Life Safety plan and the school buildings look amazing! Additionally, all K-5th grade classrooms received new state-of-the-art classroom furniture. These changes in the spaces where children go to school and do their learning are critical to their overall success. The excitement has transferred over to our staff, as record high employee attendance demonstrates our team’s commitment to excellence and to the children we serve. Since the beginning of the school year, we are running daily attendance for all employees at approximately 95%. This makes a difference for our schools and for our students. Deep relationships are being formed and wonderful morale is evident at each of our four buildings—exactly what we want from our neighborhood schools.

The challenge laid before the staff this year at the Opening Institute was to show everyone that we love what we do. There’s a type of behavior and attitude that emerges when you really love what you’re doing. You show up, you engage, you make a difference…every day for every student. There’s a relentlessness that’s required to be this kind of person and I am proud report that our entire District 142 team has readily accepted the challenge and has done an exceptional job of caring for the children in our classrooms every day.

Again, we are excited to have our staff and students back in school and pledge to relentlessly deliver our best work. We are here to serve our students, parents, and community. Please view our website and district calendars for information about upcoming events, online resources, and more. We look forward to continuing to engage our community in a discussion about what is happening at our schools. Thank you for all of your continued support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul McDermott
SUPERINTENDENT
DISTRICT 142 RECEIVES
ISBE’S FINANCIAL RECOGNITION

A statewide financial analysis conducted by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has resulted in the Forest Ridge School District 142 receiving Recognition Status for the third year in a row. This is ISBE’s highest financial designation for schools.

The annual Financial Profile provides a snapshot in time that helps ISBE gauge school districts’ 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 the recent tough financial times for the Illinois State government, Forest Ridge School District 142 has increased fund balances year after year by posting an excess in revenues over expenditures. Our improved status is a testament to sound, conservative 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.

Forest Ridge School District 142 will continue to implement careful cost containment initiatives and innovative programming that best serve the needs of our students. Through it all, the district strives for continuous financial improvement, accountability, and recognition.

District 142 Honors Our Veterans

Forest Ridge School District 142 kept one of its most honored traditions going this November with our annual Veterans Day Assemblies at each school.

Over 200 Veterans attended these ceremonies at Ridge Early Childhood Center, Kerkstra Elementary School, Foster Elementary School, and Jack Hille Middle School.

Activities included song performances led by our music department, poem readings (some of which were written by students), and a concert performed by the Jack Hille 8th Grade Band and Choir. This tradition is a good reminder to our students and larger community of the sacrifice our Veterans have made on our behalf and to thank them for their service.

Special thanks to faculty, staff, and administration for their continued support of these events.

Thank you especially to our Veterans, many of whom are pictured on the following pages.
RIDGE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER EARNS GOLD CIRCLE

In August the Illinois State Board of Education honored Ridge Early Childhood Center’s Preschool for All (PFA) program with the Gold Circle of Quality in their statewide quality recognition and improvement system, known as ExceleRate Illinois. This distinguished honor acknowledges that Ridge Early Childhood Center meets and exceeds the highest quality goals set for early learning institutions. Ridge provides an at-risk preschool program and early childhood program, which serves students age three to five, as well as Kindergarten. Additionally, Ridge offers a birth to three program for families providing parent education and various group activities.

This prestigious honor was awarded based on three main criteria:
• Learning Environment & Teaching Quality
• Administrative Standards
• Training & Education

Special congratulations to our Ridge Early Childhood Center Principal, Liz Ehrhart and all the early childhood teachers, aides, and staff! These dedicated professionals truly demonstrate our mission of “Where Children Always Come First!”
Did you know that there are evidence based studies showing links between PBIS programs and school achievement? PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Intervention System and serves as the format in which a school promotes behavior strategies to keep students focused on learning. Forest Ridge School District 142 has been recognized with the highest honor a school can receive from the Midwest PBIS Network for School Wide PBIS Implementation. Each school in our district received a Gold rating based on several criteria including self-assessment, office disciplinary referral data, out of school suspension rates, and implementation of advanced Tiers and academic trends. We are proud of our teachers, administrators, and most importantly our students for using and implementing strategies to maintaining a positive learning environment. Congratulations!

DISTRICT SCHOOLS EARN PBIS GOLD

We are proud to announce that Jack Hille Middle School science teacher Marie Winston earned the IL STEM Award sponsored by the Illinois Science Teachers Association (ISTA) and the Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics (ICTM), in collaboration with ETA hand2mind. Mrs. Winston received this science focused award at the 2018 Illinois STEM Rising Star Awards for creating and implementing a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) program for our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students at Jack Hille Middle School. Congratulations, Mrs. Winston and thank you for your dedication to science and our students!

Thank you for your service!

Jack Hille Middle School
Front Row (L-R): Kelly Price, Kerkstra; Christy Scolaro, Foster; Brittany O'Neil, Foster; Emily Katz, Foster; Rebecca Johnson, Foster; Emily Hodges, Hille; Bianca Spanos, Ridge; Mandy Bartolini-Flores, Kerkstra/Foster; Gabriella Planera, Foster
Back Row (L-R): Kari Martycz, Foster; Jessica Kenton, Foster; Sarah Garrity, Hille; Alexandra Young, Ridge; Lauren Suchy, Kerkstra; Easton Joyce, Hille; Matthew Darling, Hille; Lauren Hynes, Hille; Kaitlin Adams, Foster; Tara Capouch, Kerkstra/Foster; Tara Stevens, Kerkstra; Michael Hall, Foster; Amelia Leng, Foster; Richard Fawkes, Hille; Michael DaLuga, Hille

Elementary School Students Learn How to Code

Kerkstra and Foster 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students have the opportunity to create lines of code and then control Wonder Workshop Dash Robots in Coding Club. Students program Dash through the Blockly app on the iPad to drive, animate lights, control sounds, and so much more through lessons and tangible, creative play.

This is Coding Club’s second year, and it has become so popular that there are two sessions at each school to try and accommodate all of the students who would like to join. Justin said, “I enjoyed Coding Club last year because it was challenging making the code to get Dash to move. I especially loved the challenges we had to solve.” According Mihir, “I really liked how we explored with Dash and that there was a lot of choice when it came to creating the code. I am looking forward to new challenges and using the accessories with Dash this year in Coding Club. I would really like to incorporate Dash and Dot together, if possible, to see how to code to have the two robots interact with each other.”

Programming Dash will ensure that all students are exposed to collaboration, communication, and creativity to become fluent and successful in the world of code. The need for students learning code is at an all-time high as the U.S. Bureau of Labor estimates there will be nearly 1.5 million computer science jobs by 2020, and only 400,000 people will be qualified for these positions. Giving students the opportunity to code, will peak their interest and prepare them for careers of the future.
Important Dates to Remember

**DECEMBER**
3 Preschool Screening at Ridge  
5 Kerkstra/Foster Band and Choir Concert at Hille 7:00PM  
6 Supper with Santa at Ridge 4:30PM  
11 Winter Band Concert at Hille 7:00PM  
13 Winter Choir Concert at Hille 7:00PM  
18 Curriculum and Instruction Meeting 5:00PM  
18 Operations and Maintenance Committee Meeting 6:00PM  
21 Early Dismissal  
22-31 WINTER BREAK

**JANUARY**
1-4 WINTER BREAK  
7 School Resumes  
10 PTA Meeting 7:00PM  
11 PTA Movie Night at Kerkstra 6:00PM  
15 Budget and Finance Committee Meeting 6:00PM  
15 Board of Education Meeting 7:00PM  
18 EARLY DISMISSAL  
21 NO SCHOOL