Dear Community Members,

Good day to all of our Forest Ridge School District 142 families and greater community members. This newsletter marks the end of another successful year of educating nearly 1,700 students in the Forest Ridge School District. We like to take the opportunity twice a year to report out to our constituents the amazing successes we have experienced, the growth we have made as a school district, and the areas where we are concentrating our efforts moving forward. Aside from the advent of 1:1 technology for 5-8th grade students this year and adding meaningful hands-on experiences for students, including STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) classes at Hille Middle School, our teachers and support personnel have embraced 21st century teaching and learning and have done an outstanding job with our students.

The goal of the Engage142 newsletter is to offer insights into Forest Ridge School District 142 so that our community feels informed, and so that the business of educating students is an effort embraced by all. A strong community helps their school; a strong school system reaches out and supports and embraces its community. Over the past year, this has been the case on a multitude of projects and initiatives. We simply could not do what we are doing without the incredible support of our teachers, support personnel, administrators, parents, families, and community members.

In the following pages, you will be updated on many exciting district doings.

We hope that the information provided is interesting, thought provoking, and meets your desires for the work that an exceptional school system would undertake.

Sincerely, and in partnership on behalf of our children,

Dr. Paul McDermott
SUPERINTENDENT
This year the state of Illinois promised to set aside money for school districts in high need. Tiered designations were assigned to school districts across the state as a variety of qualifying criteria were submitted for review. Tier One Schools were scheduled to receive the most support, while Tier Four Schools would receive the least amount of new revenues. Forest Ridge School District 142 was deemed a Tier One School District and received over $500,000 in new revenues. We determined that designating this new revenue to a variety of different areas would best serve students and protect the district in the event additional future revenues ceased to exist.

In addition to adding a new section of Kindergarten at Ridge and an additional section of first grade at Foster, we also added additional middle school staff to help with the redesigned middle school schedule. New technologies, a new grade 1-5 reading program, and new furniture for all of our elementary students were also purchased. A sincere effort was made to ensure that all students, in all grade levels, benefited from the new revenue.

Forest Ridge School District 142 subscribes to a fiscally conservative methodology and with such, have not only posted a surplus of revenues over expenditures (balancing budgets) the past two years, but have also received the State’s Highest Financial Recognition Status the past two years as well.
HILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL UPDATES

Hille Middle School will have a whole new look when staff and students return next year. During the Ten-Year Life Safety study, conducted by the District’s architecture firm to determine safety matters to address throughout the district’s schools, it was observed that many of the tiles in the Hille hallways were popping up and had broken corners. This tripping hazard was noted as in need of replacement. Hille will have all new hallway tile (Luxury Vinyl Tile or LVT) installed over the summer. The look was so inspiring, that we decided to paint the hallways a much needed warmer color and add some high impact wall graphics as well. The new flooring will be safe for our students, require no chemicals or wax to maintain, and will provide our students with an updated learning environment. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates throughout the summer.

Additionally, there are many exciting changes coming to the Hille Middle School schedule beginning next year. To align more closely with the typical number of instructional minutes in English/Language Arts (ELA) provided by middle schools in our area and across the state, and to ensure that our students are well-prepared for high school, Forest Ridge School District 142 will be increasing the amount of time students participate daily in ELA. In addition to instruction in Literature (reading) we will be providing in-depth instruction in Language Arts (writing) as well. Therefore, beginning next school year, Hille Middle School students will participate in 80 minutes (a double-block) of integrated ELA programming daily, with all other classes scheduled for 40 minutes. Students will not have an extra class; they will have the same number of courses as this school year, which will now include this double-block of ELA.

As an added support, we will also be providing focused, grade level support in mathematics. This assistance by the students’ regular math teacher will provide students with the opportunity to more thoroughly process current concepts and skills, ask questions, complete work, keep up with the instructional pace of the class, and improve overall performance in their respective math classes.

Finally, with the tremendous success of the current 6th grade STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) class, we will be offering STEAM as an elective for all students in grades 6th through 8th next year. We are pleased to expand this program as we teach an integrated curriculum with a hands-on approach to problem solving.

Our mission is to prepare students for high school and beyond. We are excited to offer these changes and look forward to the amazing progress of our students.

New Flooring–8th Grade Hallway
21ST CENTURY LEARNING SPACES:
INTEGRATING PEDAGOGY, PHYSICAL DESIGN & INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Some schools have been slow to respond to advancements in pedagogy and technology in terms of the physical design of classrooms. As you walk through the halls of most schools, they do not look that different from when we were students. 21st Century Learning Spaces promote critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity, what has come to be known as the four most important skills required for the type of education that will prepare our students for their future - in fact, preparing them for jobs that don’t even exist yet!

Why redesign our learning spaces?

Redesigning our classrooms is a research-based initiative that reflects best practice by creating student-centered learning spaces, providing choice, and opportunities to move. In reality, the shift from passive to active learning hits a literal barrier in traditional classrooms that were designed for a one-way, linear flow of information. Active learning approaches lead to greater student engagement and subsequently increased student learning while creating inclusive classrooms where all students of all abilities feel they belong.

Forest Ridge School District 142 is pleased to serve as a best practice model for creating learning environments that promote active learning, critical thinking, collaborative learning, and knowledge creation!
On May 8, Hille Middle School held the First Annual Alumni Pizza Party with the Hille Class of 2014/OFHS Class of 2018 graduates. This event was a Community Relations goal of the District’s Blueprint 2020 Strategic Plan as a means to increase alumni involvement within the District. We welcomed back scores of graduates who reported they will be attending these colleges next year:

- Southern Illinois University
- Illinois State University
- Saint Ambrose University
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- Carleton College
- Olivet Nazarene University
- Columbia College
- University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana
- DePaul University
- Bradley University
- Purdue University
- Marquette University
- Moraine Valley Community College
- St. Xavier University
- Brigham Young University
- Beloit College
- Ball State University
- Notre Dame University
- South Suburban College

Many other graduates expressed interest in the Armed Forces or entering the workforce after graduation. We wish all of our alumni the best of luck.

**FOREST RIDGE RECOGNIZES STAFF RETIREES AND ANNIVERSARIES**

On May 4, Forest Ridge School District 142 was proud to honor our retirees and staff who have served for 15 years or more. A dinner was held at Midlothian Country Club to celebrate their service and dedication to the students of our district. It speaks volumes to the support, educational practices and mission of our district when faculty serve our kids for this length of time. These faculty members truly are an example of Where Children Always Come First!

**WE WISH OUR RETIREES ALL THE BEST IN THEIR NEXT ADVENTURE:**

**CAROL ROCHE**
21 years of service,
Teacher at Kerkstra Elementary School
(not photographed)

**BARBARA BREMER**
18 years of service,
Teacher at Kerkstra Elementary School
(not photographed)

**MARY MCQUILLAN**
22 years of service,
Math/Resource Teacher at
Kerkstra Middle School and
Jack Hille Middle School
(photographed, on right)

**CAROL GOECKING**
28 years of service,
Operational Services Manager at
District Office and
Building Secretary at
Foster Elementary School
(photographed, on left)

**LYNNE KUZMENKA**
41 years of service,
Paraprofessional at
Ridge Early Childhood Center
(not photographed)

**WE THANK THE FOLLOWING FACULTY FOR MANY YEARS OF SERVICE AND WISH FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUCCESS AS MEMBERS OF THE FOREST RIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT 142 STAFF.**

**15 YEARS**

- Amanda Graczyk
- Maryann Griffiths
- Melissa Joniak
- Ann Scroppo
- Bill Tsoukalas
- Eva Voris

(not photographed)

**20 YEARS**

- Elizabeth Boersma
- Leah Carney
- Elaine Kouris
- Julie McGarry
- Kim Reilly

(not photographed)

**HILLE WELCOMES BACK CLASS OF 2014 AT FIRST ANNUAL ALUMNI EVENT**

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- Bradley University
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- Marquette University
- Moraine Valley Community College
- St. Xavier University
- Brigham Young University
- Beloit College
- Ball State University
- Notre Dame University
- South Suburban College

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**Important Dates to Remember**

**JULY**
- 24 Board of Education Meeting @ District Office: 9:00 AM

**AUGUST**
- 9 District Registration @ Hille: 2:00 – 7:00 PM
- 14 iPad 8th Grade Locker Walk Thru @ Hille: 4:30 – 6:00 PM
  iPad 8th Grade Parent/Student Distribution Meeting @ Hille: 6:00 PM
- 15 iPad 7th Grade Locker Walk Thru @ Hille: 4:30 – 6:00 PM
  iPad 7th Grade Parent/Student Distribution Meeting @ Hille: 6:00 PM
- 16 iPad 6th Grade Locker Walk Thru @ Hille: 9:00 – 11:00 AM
  or 4:00 – 6:00 PM
  iPad 6th Grade Parent/Student Distribution Meeting @ Hille: 6:00 PM
- 20 iPad 5th Grade Parent/Student Distribution Meeting @ Hille: 6:00 PM
- 22 Teacher Institute Day – NO STUDENT ATTENDANCE
  Ridge Open House – Preschool: 4:30 – 5:00 PM
  Ridge Open House – Kindergarten: 5:00 – 6:15 PM
  Kerkstra Open House: 6:30 – 7:45 PM
  Foster Open House: 6:30 – 7:45 PM
- 23 Teacher Institute Day – NO STUDENT ATTENDANCE
- 24 First Day of School – ALL STUDENT ATTENDANCE
- 28 iPad Make Up Parent/Student Distribution Meeting @ Hille: 6:00 PM
- 30 Hille Open House: 6:30 – 9:00 PM

**SEPTEMBER**
- 3 NO SCHOOL – Labor Day Holiday
- 5 Ridge Preschool AM Curriculum Night: 4:30 – 5:00 PM
  Ridge Preschool PM Curriculum Night: 5:15 – 5:45 PM
  Ridge Kindergarten Curriculum Night: 6:00 – 7:00 PM
- 18 Board of Education Meeting @ District Office: 7:00 PM
- 19 SIP Day – Half-day student attendance

**REMINDERS:**
- No packet pickup in August
- School documents available online
- School offices are closed in July
- District office is closed on Fridays in July