

We Envision. We Seek. We Believe.



DOWNERS GROVE GRADE SCHOOL DISTRICT 58

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



2023
ANNUAL
REPORT

2
Superintendent's Greeting /
Board of Education

3
About District 58

4-5
Strategic Plan Results 2018-23

6-7
Focusing on Learning

8-9
Connecting the Community

10-11
Securing the Future

12-13
New Strategic Plan

14
School Celebrations/
Staff Accolades

15
Contact Information

16
Calendar

Superintendent's Greeting

Dear District 58 Community,

For schools, the beginning of the year is a blank slate, a time to start fresh and to improve upon the year before.

The first year post-pandemic, we worked hard to support students and families in crisis and to recover from the pandemic. It was truly a year of growth, acceleration and improvements. Student achievement and growth are now back at pre-pandemic levels, the community supported the referendum to add onto and improve our aging and outdated schools and we've launched a new Strategic Plan.

We're beginning Full-Day Kindergarten in the fall, will begin the second year of our two-way Dual Language program this August and will have new playgrounds at all of our elementary schools. We added a Student Advisory period in middle school to provide students with executive functioning instruction and more time to access interventions, and/or enrichment activities.

These all grew out of our 2018-23 Strategic Plan and could not have been achieved without the remarkable commitment and participation of so many of our staff, parents and community members. During this rigorous process, we learned a lot about our strengths and challenges, which led to the initiatives described in this document.

As you review the annual report, you will see how supporting students was at the center of all of our plans. We did this even as we kept District 58 spending per pupil lower than benchmark schools.

There will always be new challenges every year. And, with your partnership, we can ensure that our students are supported, nurtured and eager to learn.

I am grateful for the privilege to serve this great community and humbled to lead a school system that embraces change, values involvement and welcomes improvements.

Sincerely,

DR. KEVIN B. RUSSELL | SUPERINTENDENT



Board of Education

The District 58 Board of Education holds monthly public business meetings, typically on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at Downers Grove Village Hall or a District facility. Access information about the Board's meeting agendas, committees, policies, meeting minutes and more by visiting www.dg58.org and selecting the "School Board" tab. Contact the Board, via Secretary Melissa Jerves, at 630-719-5803 or boe@dg58.org.



The District 58 Board of Education, from left to right: Kirat Doshi, Melissa Ellis, Tracy Weiner, Vice President Gregory Harris, Emily Hanus, Steven Olczyk and President Darren Hughes

View Board Briefs at <https://www.dg58.org/school-board/board-briefs>.

About District 58

MISSION

The mission of District 58, in partnership with parents and community, is to challenge and engage each child by providing quality educational programs and support services in a safe, nurturing and child-centered environment in order to prepare all students to be lifelong learners and contributing members of a global society.

CORE BELIEFS

- Each student is capable of learning and deserves to be educated and challenged to reach his/her highest potential.
- Education is the foundation for success, both in academic achievement and social emotional development.
- Within each child, we will cultivate the social awareness, self-management and responsible decision-making skills necessary to be a contributing member of society.
- Educators, students, families and community members should work together to support the healthy development of all students.
- The school environment should be stimulating and engaging, with opportunities for creative, collaborative and meaningful learning experiences.
- The school environment should be safe, friendly and nurturing, where everyone comes to learn, grow and develop.

VISION

We Envision a school district that inspires children, sparks creative and innovative thinking, celebrates diversity, and builds visionaries.

We Seek an education that excites minds, touches spirits, challenges abilities and prepares our children for life.

We Believe every child should be expected to grow, stretch, evolve and embrace the challenges of the future in a global environment.



District 58 at a Glance

4,900  **Student Enrollment**

Students live in 7 towns in District 58:
Downers Grove, Darien, Lisle, Lombard, Oak Brook, Westmont and Woodridge



- White **76%**
- Hispanic **10%**
- Asian **5%**
- Two or more races **5%**
- Black **3%**



- Low Income **16%**
- English Learners **5%**
- Students Receiving Special Education Services **17%**

1902  The Downers Grove Township School District was designated **District 58**

 **640** **staff members** (nearly half live in Downers Grove!)

 **10** **Average District 58 teaching experience in years**

 **63%** **of teachers have a master's degree or higher**

90% **teacher retention rate**

 **11** **Elementary schools**

 **2** **Middle schools**

2 **Preschool locations**

Strategic Plan Results 2018-2023

What Was Accomplished

District 58 embarked on a five-year Strategic Planning process in the fall of 2018. The district engaged the entire community of diverse staff, parents and community members to define the priorities of the district and a blueprint for the future. The district deployed surveys and focus groups and launched the Board of Education’s District Leadership Team to oversee the effort and ensure it was consistent with the priorities defined by the community.

Based on those priorities, over a period of five years, a total of 10+ planning committees were developed to investigate, deliberate and provide recommendations for improvements to the Board of Education. The committees gathered data and best practices, asked tough questions and developed relevant objectives that were actionable and feasible within budget constraints. Here are just the contours of some of the accomplishments of the last Strategic Plan. Others are contained throughout this document under these three goals and denoted with the goals’ respective colors.



GOAL
1

Focusing on Learning

The district created a systematic plan and timeline, as led by the Curriculum Council, to update curricular resources for students. The two-year process involves a content area committee studying current resources and standards, investigating emerging and best practices and sourcing and piloting resources before recommending adoption, followed by training of staff.

“Of all the things that were accomplished, this was one of the most critical. It allows the systematic examination of our academic program and how we can enhance student learning, engagement, experience and outcomes.”

JUSTIN SISUL | ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

The district streamlined reporting of assessments into two Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Academic Proficiency
- Academic Growth

District 58 partnered with education consultants ECRA to develop KPIs. KPIs, which are data points that measure progress toward a goal, are important as they help drive student success and ease understanding of student assessments. The ECRA reports combine different data points to provide growth scores for both individual students and groups of students. Each school and teacher can drill down into ECRA data to determine what students are learning, what might need to be retaught and who might need support or interventions. The full report on KPIs won’t be determined until next fall with the release of the Illinois School Report Card.



GOAL
2

Connecting the Community

The district strengthened communications in a number of ways: Ensuring consistency with a weekly publication schedule for principal newsletters, streamlining communications into a district newsletter and increasing the frequency of district newsletters. The district began streaming board meetings for the public and also heightened transparency.

“We’ve made a concerted effort to listen to parents, staff and community and fine-tune the quality, timing, length and purpose of our communications to meet our community’s needs.”

DR. KEVIN B. RUSSELL | SUPERINTENDENT



GOAL
3

Securing the Future

Referendum Passes With 67.59% Voting Yes

Source: DuPage Election Commission.

The district successfully passed the facility referendum with overwhelming community support. The massive four-year project:

- Transitions 6th graders to the two middle schools for a more developmentally appropriate education
- Installs air conditioning at every school (two already have it) and improves air quality and ventilation
- Builds more secure vestibules at the schools
- Updates aging and outdated critical infrastructure

“School environments affect learning. When we’re done, we’ll have created an environment where teachers can teach to the best of their ability and students can learn to the best of their ability.”

TODD DRAFALL | ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR BUSINESS

Schematic Designs for Middle Schools

Schematic designs for middle schools O’Neill and Herrick were presented to the Board in June and updated site plans were presented in spring. Weather permitting, work on the schools will begin in spring 2024. Most interior work will be conducted when school is not in session. An overview of the work includes:

O’Neill Middle School



- Adding a secure main entrance and vestibule to the west
- Creating a separate student entrance where the current main entrance is
- Providing more space to move 6th grade to the building
- Building a main gym that also serves as a storm shelter
- Providing new and renovated science labs
- Providing more common areas to accommodate small group learning or other flexible learning
- Providing an events entrance
- Renovating the library
- Renovating exploratory spaces and music/orchestra spaces
- Renovating locker rooms
- Consolidating student services and administrative offices
- Renovating art room and Family and Consumer Science room (FACS)

Herrick Middle School



- Increasing parking and providing site improvements
- Separating car and bus traffic
- Providing more space to move 6th grade to the building
- Adding a secure main entrance and vestibule
- Consolidating student services and administrative offices
- Adding a gym and renovating locker rooms
- Renovating and adding science labs
- Renovating art room and Family and Consumer Science room (FACS)
- Reimagining/updating the library
- Improving the flow in the building with additional hallways and stairs
- Providing an events entrance
- Building a main gym that also serves as a storm shelter

Construction Timeline

Contractors recommended three phases of work for the elementary schools based on a number of factors: the immediacy of need, the age of the building and additions, recent facility work completed, the available existing air conditioning and the efficiency of pairing larger projects with smaller ones.

- **2023-24** ● **SPRING 2024** ● **SUMMER 2024** ● **SUMMER 2025** ● **SUMMER 2026**
- Designing, engineering, obtaining feedback from stakeholders and obtaining permits
- Work begins on middle schools Herrick and O’Neill additions
- Phase I construction begins on elementary schools Whittier, Henry Puffer, Hillcrest, Highland; middle school work continues
- Phase II construction begins on elementary schools Fairmount, Kingsley, Lester and Indian Trail; middle school work continues
- Phase III construction begins on elementary schools Pierce Downer, Belle Aire and El Sierra; middle school work finishes

Learning by the Numbers

Here are the achievement results of District 58 students in K-8 who took the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment compared to students in the more than 7,800 schools nationwide who take the test.

National achievement percentile:

80th – 92nd

District 58 grade level achievement ranges in **reading**.

80th – 97th

District 58 grade level achievement ranges in **math**.

100%

The percentage of District 58 schools that earned an **exemplary or commendable academic rating**.

Source: 2022 Illinois School Report Card.

22

Average number of **students per classroom**.

Source: 2022 Illinois School Report Card.

GOAL
1

Focusing on Learning

Curriculum Updates 22-23

New Writing Resources

District 58 will implement new writing resources in 2023-24 for grades K-5, called School-Wide Writing Fundamentals, which focuses on narrative, opinion and informative writing. The implementation was planned after exhaustive study and piloting. In addition, there will be a pilot of new reading/language arts resources in grades 6-8 as well as in grades K-5. The English-Language Arts committee hopes to make a final resource recommendation in time for the 24-25 school year.

Full-Day Kindergarten

Beginning this school year, 2023-24, all students in District 58 will have access to full-day kindergarten. It is a move that provides equity to all students in the community and allows teachers to incorporate more choice and play-based learning. It also spreads the core subjects throughout the day, which is more developmentally appropriate. Previously, the district offered tuition-based afternoon kindergarten called OKEEP. Some changes in the financial picture allowed full-day kindergarten to be feasible and sustainable.

Where did District 58 find funds to provide full-day kindergarten?

With the passing of the referendum to improve and repair school facilities, it frees up operating funds that are normally spent on maintenance and repairs. Secondly, the dissolution of the downtown TIF (Tax Increment Financing District) provided a property tax revenue increase for the district. Finally, there are additional funds available through the state's Evidence-Based Funding model that counts kindergarten students as full-day rather than half-day students. There will be a small decrease in the budget from the loss of tuition for the afternoon OKEEP kindergarten enrichment program that will be offset by these revenue enhancements.

Middle School Updates

An advisory period was added at the middle schools this year to help meet each student's needs and teach social competencies and executive functioning curricula, like organization and planning. The advisory period helps also to build a community within the school and to create positive relationships between staff and students outside of a typical classroom setting.

The District also replaced homebase with Student Support Period, where students can access interventions, social-emotional groups, enrichment activities and other supports while others may continue to use it as a study hall.



Positive Student Behavior

The District has been building an evidence-based framework with the goal to enhance a positive school culture with common expectations for students. The framework will include establishing a common vocabulary around behavior expectations in various school settings—on the playground, in the halls and bathrooms and classrooms, for example. The plan is to be consistent among the 13 schools, address any potential disparities and to systemize communications regarding student behavior among teachers, building administrators and the district office. We are excited to see this implemented in the coming school year and continue to develop throughout the year.

Two-way Dual Language

Some kindergartners spent the year learning their subjects in English and Spanish in the first year of the two-way Dual Language program. The program will move with the students to first grade next year and a new cohort of kindergartners will join the program, and so forth. Dual-language immersion programs, in which academic content

“Our experience with the program has been really incredible, very welcoming from the first moment. Don’t underestimate what those tiny brains can do.”

**PARENT OF STUDENT
KINDERGARTEN DUAL LANGUAGE**

is taught in two languages, help children become bilingual and help English language learners develop skills in their native language while also learning English more quickly, said Sandy Cristobal, assistant principal at Highland and Dual Language Coordinator. “There’s a lot of research on the advantages of biliteracy with the brain,” she said. In District 58’s model, 80% of instruction is conducted in the target language during the first year, with the remaining 20% taught in English. With each academic year, the ratio of instruction in English to instruction in the target language increases slightly, until instruction is 50/50. District 58 spent considerable time working with the Dual Language team building the curriculum. “We had a lot of positive feedback from parents, students and staff,” said Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction Justin Sisul.



Gifted Curriculum

The Gifted Committee conducted a comprehensive review of the gifted program, where eligible 7th and 8th graders take gifted classes in Reading/LA and eligible 4–6 graders from all 11 DG58 elementary schools are pulled out and bused to Henry Puffer once a week for reading, English Language Arts (ELA), history, problem-solving and other activities. The study also included a review of the middle school gifted program. They will continue that study for 2023–24, creating a new model that would take place in the students’ home school. The plan would be to introduce the program one year at a time so that only newly eligible 4th graders would enter the revised gifted program beginning in the 2024–25 school year.





GOAL 2 Connecting the Community

Parent Satisfaction Survey

Results of the District 58 school environment survey, given to parents annually, have inched higher since declining slightly during the pandemic. In the 2022-23 survey, 1,335 parents responded. The chart below shows the percentage of parents who answered “Always” or “Usually” to the following statements. Parent satisfaction in District 58 is substantially higher than national results, where a recent Gallup survey showed that satisfaction with public schools dropped to 42 percent and dissatisfaction rose to a high of 66 percent.



89% My child is getting a quality education at this school.



94% My child is cared for by the adults at school.



91% This school is a supportive and inviting place for students.



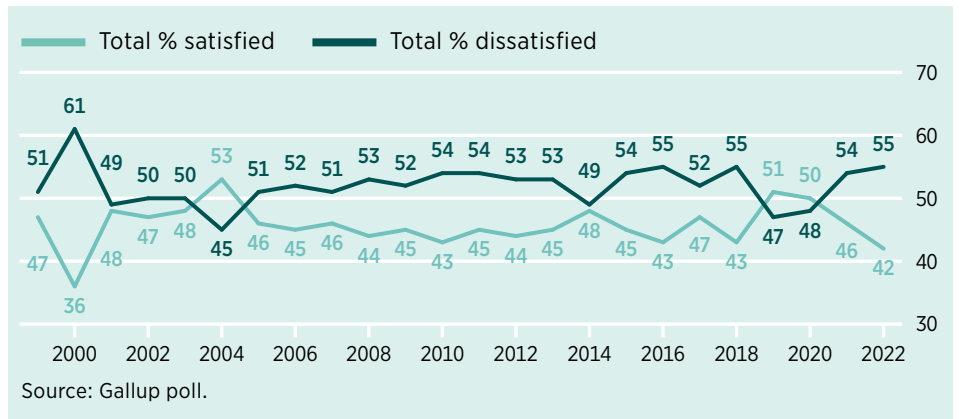
88% My child’s school focuses on teaching the whole child, including social and emotional skills.



89% My child’s school fosters an appreciation of student diversity and respect for each other.

Context on Parent Satisfaction

District 58 is grateful for the support and satisfaction of parents and the community and we strive to continue to improve in this area. For context, here is a national Gallup Poll on satisfaction with the education system in the U.S. It shows a significant decline in satisfaction during the pandemic. District 58’s data is well above the national average and tells a much more positive story.



What we do with the survey results

- Principals and building leadership teams review school-specific survey results to inform school improvement plans.
- District administrators and principal teams jointly review district-wide and school-specific data to inform district-wide improvements.
- Survey data is posted online so the community can better understand parent feedback.

How the District Has Involved the Community in Facilities Planning

District 58's facilities plans were developed with significant input from the community. Community engagement continued following the referendum with visioning sessions on design and style elements and user group meetings with staff who inhabit a particular space. Here is a brief overview of community involvement.

- **2017-18:** Strategic planning initiative developed by the community
- **September 2018:** Strategic Plan approved and includes a 10-step facility planning process
- **2018-19:** Facility Planning Council, which comprises staff, community members and architect, continues work
- **December 2018-February 2019:** Staff and community facility visioning sessions
- **May 2019:** Staff and community Facility Planning community engagement sessions
- **Summer 2019:** Draft Master Facility Plan presented
- **Fall 2019:** Citizen Task Force forms and makes recommendation in March 2020
- **March 2020:** Board of Education approves public engagement initiative
- **March 2020-June 2021:** Facility planning pauses due to pandemic
- **July 2021:** Citizen Task Force reconvenes and recommends proceeding with work
- **Fall 2021:** Board of Education accepts the Citizen Task Force's recommendation to move forward
- **Winter 2022:** Community input meetings are held with tours and presentations
- **Spring 2022:** Phone, mail and online survey initiated
- **June 2022:** Community survey results presented, Board discusses potential referendum
- **August 2022:** Board approves putting bond measure on the November 2022 ballot
- **Fall 2022:** Informational referendum open houses, presentations and tours are held at both middle schools; informational flyers are mailed to residents
- **November 2022:** Referendum passes with 67.13% voting yes
- **January 2023:** Two Visioning Sessions were held to provide an overview of the plans and timeline and to obtain feedback on seven key areas: core instructional spaces, libraries, vestibules and school offices, science labs, gym/multi-purpose rooms, Family and Consumer Science labs/cafeterias and parking/traffic
- **February 2023:** Parents and staff were given a follow-up survey on their preferences on the seven key areas of facility improvements. These will help inform conceptual plans and guidelines for all 13 buildings



Keep Up to Date with District 58



SCAN ME!

Subscribe to **Communicate 58** Newsletters



Website

Browse for news and updates about District 58 and its schools at www.dg58.org



Facebook

Scroll through photos of students and see news and updates of the schools and District 58 at www.facebook.com/district58



Twitter

Learn news and events as they unfold in District 58 at www.twitter.com/DGDistrict58 #dg58learns #dg58pride



YouTube

View concerts, events, school board meetings and more at www.youtube.com/DownersGrove58



Oktoberfest! (September 15th-16th)

Please save the date and plan to attend Oktoberfest, an annual community-wide event with live music, kids zone and authentic Oktoberfest fare in a traditional German atmosphere. The District 58 Foundation is a nonprofit that supports District 58. Visit dgoktoberfest.org for tickets and info.

Finance by the Numbers

The District earned a commendable **Aa1 rating by Moody's Investors Services** and a **AA from S&P**.

In FY22, **District 58 spent \$16,222 per student***, which is below the state average of \$17,924 or elementary state-wide average of \$16,743.

* Note: from Illinois School Report Card.

Locally, **69% of all DuPage County school districts spend more money per student** than District 58.

District 58 is tax capped. This means that District 58 cannot increase local revenues more than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 5%, whichever is less.

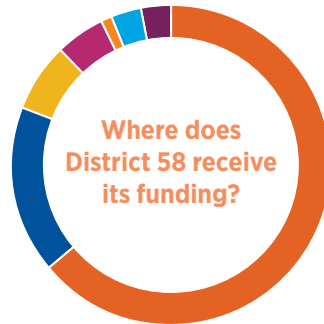
District 58 earned ISBE's **highest financial strength rating for the 21st straight year**.

GOAL 3

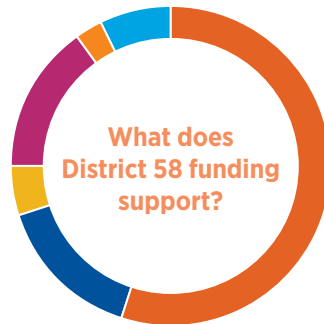
Securing the Future

Finances

District 58 Revenues and Expenses



- Residential Property Taxes **64%**
- Non-Residential Property Taxes **17%**
- Other Local Funding **7%**
- General State Funding **5%**
- Special Education State Reimbursement **1%**
- Other State Funding **3%**
- Federal Funding **3%**



- Salaries **55%**
- Benefits **15%**
- Supplies/Materials **5%**
- Purchased Services **15%**
- Capital Projects **3%**
- Other/Tuition/Debt Service **7%**

Source: 2022–23 District 58 budget (prior to audit adjustment).

District 58 Spending per Student

Comparison with benchmark school districts

Bloomington 93	\$21,393
Hinsdale 181	\$20,204
West Chicago 33	\$19,404
DuPage 45	\$19,060
Lombard 44	\$18,961
Marquardt 15	\$18,937
Bensenville 2	\$18,496
Woodridge 68	\$17,382
Queen Bee 16	\$16,309
Glen Ellyn 41	\$16,258
Downers Grove 58	\$16,222
Glen Ellyn 89	\$15,312
Addison 4	\$14,995

Source: ISBE's 2022 Operating Expense Per Pupil Report.

What difference does per student spending make?

Consider if District 58 spent **\$3,982** more per student per year, or the equivalent spending at nearby Hinsdale District 181. Multiplied by our enrollment, District 58 would have **an additional \$17 million** to spend per year. That's **more than 25%** of the District's current budget.

Facilities

Other Work is Ongoing this Summer

While referendum projects are being planned (see page 5 for an update on referendum facilities), non-referendum construction has taken place during the summer of 2023. This includes completing the Henry Puffer asbestos abatement and flooring work as well as the fire alarm and masonry projects that were delayed last summer due to supply chain and labor shortages.

Playground Improvements

District 58’s long-term goal has been to improve and renovate all of its playgrounds and ensure that they are accessible for all. The work has been funded by a combination of \$1.5 million in state grants, PTA support, community fundraising and in some cases parent/staff help with labor and installation. The district has been able to supplement any gaps to ensure all of the playgrounds at its 11 elementary schools are updated to an appropriate standard. Not every elementary school received state funding, and the amounts allocated by the state differ from school to school, and can’t be changed.

The district’s goal has been to create playgrounds to aid all children’s development. For schools with older existing playgrounds, the work includes complete playground replacements. For schools with new playgrounds, minor improvements and additions were added.

“These playgrounds not only serve as recreation and enjoyment but they are designed to help children develop important motor and social skills as well as to promote physical fitness.”

DR. KEVIN B. RUSSELL
SUPERINTENDENT



The playgrounds will all be ADA accessible and with local fundraising a few playgrounds have made inroads to becoming universal. This means that not only are they accessible to those with disabilities but they encourage engagement and participation by children with disabilities. “These small steps to inclusivity make a difference,” said Director of Buildings and Grounds Kevin Barto. The district thanks Rep. Anne Stava-Murray for her advocacy of House Bill 62, which went into law in 2019 and provided for a bulk of the playground improvements.

Playground Status

Watch for ribbon-cutting ceremonies at all seven school playgrounds this fall

COMPLETED	
El Sierra (2022)	Highland (2021)*
Whittier (2017)*	Hillcrest (2016)
UNDER CONSTRUCTION	
Indian Trail / Grove Children’s Preschool (2023)	Belle Aire (2023)
Henry Puffer / Grove Children’s Preschool (2020, 2023)	Fairmount (2023)
Kingsley (2023)	Lester (2020, 2023)
Pierce Downer (2023)	

* Future improvements planned with state funding.



Safety Continues to be a Priority

The District is taking several steps to enhance safety protocols and procedures in addition to the facilities plan to create safe and secure school entrances. All schools implemented the new Raptor screening system

for visitors following spring break. Visitors are asked to show a driver’s license or other ID, which will be scanned against a sex offender database. In addition, the District is partnering with the Regional Office of Education (ROE) on threat assessment training and a safety walk-through assessment of the schools. The District is also working with the ROE and other school districts on an Intergovernmental Agreement that will allow the ROE to develop an app that would coordinate and centralize voluntary support for districts in the event of an emergency or large-scale crisis. The district also works with local police and fire departments to review its crisis plans and protocols annually. Superintendent Dr. Kevin Russell noted that the district continues to take an “all of the above” approach to safety protocols and procedures.



How will District 58 Communicate about Construction?

Regular updates on the progress of construction and financial impact will be provided to the community in a variety of formats and at public meetings and events. These will include:

- Regular updates and presentations to the Board of Education, as well as regular updates to the Financial Advisory Committee and District Leadership Team will be held. Recaps are posted on these meetings on the web and Board Briefs will be sent to parents, staff and subscribers
- Monthly updates will be provided in the community newsletter Communicate 58
- Updates pertinent to each school project will be provided to principals monthly and included in school newsletters as appropriate
- Meetings will be held with impacted neighbors regarding traffic studies
- Weekly coffees will be hosted by building contractors for neighbors and other interested persons during construction
- A webcam will stream progress of construction at O’Neill and Herrick

Launching a New Strategic Plan

In 2018, District 58 developed a robust Strategic Plan in partnership with staff, parents and community members. With extensive community engagement, that plan set a clear direction for the district in three key areas and launched many successful initiatives (detailed on pages 4-5 and throughout this report).

Using that Strategic Plan as a framework, the district has begun working on a new five-year Strategic Plan for 2023-28, expanding those topics and adding two additional Key Areas of Focus. The five are:

GOAL 1 Focusing on Learning Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment

In the previous plan, the district focused on developing structures and systems in curriculum, instruction and assessment. In the next plan, the district will identify the next steps, which may include, among others, enhancing the school improvement process, examining pedagogy, improving curricular offerings and making gains for student growth and achievement.

GOAL 2 Connecting the Community Communication

The district worked on cultivating and strengthening community relationships by developing systems and structures for communications. Next steps are examining effective ways to share information, enhancing consistency among all 13 schools, and deepening relationships.

GOAL 3 Securing the Future Finance and Facilities

In the previous plan, the district focused on identifying needs for facility repairs and improvements, informing the public and holding a bond referendum. The next steps will include ensuring the facility work is done on time and within budget, maintaining a balanced budget, maintaining strong fund balances, examining building utilization, and saving funds for future capital projects.

New Areas of Focus

GOAL 4 Building for Success Implementing New Grade PreK-5 and 6-8 Models

The focus will be ensuring that the new instructional models reflect best practices and are effectively and fully implemented with the involvement of staff and families.

GOAL 5 Cultivating Talent Maximizing the Potential of all Students, Staff and Families

The focus is to seek input from families and staff on how to ensure, among other things, that students have access to all areas of the curriculum and a robust offering of extracurriculars; recruiting and retaining high-quality staff who are representative of the community; and finally, exploring how to tap into the talent of the community to enhance the curriculum.

Community Collaboration on Strategic Plan

With strong collaboration of parents, staff and the community, the district has undertaken the initial work on this new Strategic Plan. In spring, the district launched a survey asking respondents about their opinions for improvement. The Board then identified Five Key Focus Areas and sought feedback from staff and the community on the areas. Over two Community Engagement sessions in May, about 100+ community members, parents and staff reviewed the results of the Strategic Planning survey and brainstormed strengths and challenges and identified and ranked priorities for each of the Key Focus Areas.

The next step happens this summer. Development Teams are being formed to create action plans, timelines and evaluation measures for the top two priorities in each focus area. After tackling those two top priorities, work will shift to the next priority.

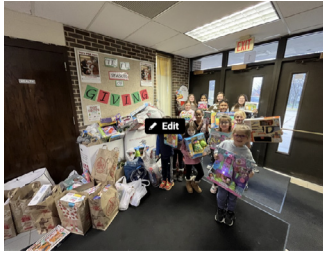
The Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board at its fall Curriculum Workshop in October.

Steps of the 2023-28 Strategic Plan



Schools Highlight Service Projects

Service to the school, community, our country and the world is a focus at all of our schools. Here is a sampling of service projects at the schools, many in partnership with PTAs and student councils or grade levels.



Belle Aire | Making the Holidays Brighter for Tots

For the second year, the Belle Aire community, led by parents and the principal, came together to help bring smiles to children during the holidays. The school community donated 377 toys for the Toys for Tots drive.



El Sierra | Creating Leaders and Role Models

It's a win-win at El Sierra recess. Fifth and sixth graders volunteer to be Recess Leaders one day a week, leading games with K-2 grade students. Not only do the older students learn to be leaders, but the youngest students have positive role models to play games with at recess.



Fairmount | A Sweet Fundraiser

Student Council typically organizes many food and clothing drives throughout the year to help others less fortunate in the community, but the end-of-the-year drive may have been the sweetest! With a special incentive to be able to pie a staff member,

students collected a whopping 320 food items for the Downers Grove Fish Pantry.



Grove Preschool | Many Lessons in Service Project

Students learned about doing good, taking care of the Earth and helping others during a study on recycling. The students walked in groups around the school grounds, picking up trash and items to recycle. They

also brought in used containers from home and learned how to upcycle them for play!



Henry Puffer | Bringing Dads to School

The WatchDOGS program at Henry Puffer provides an opportunity for fathers and father figures to volunteer at the school. Organized by two dads and the principal, the program creates positive male role models

to support academics and gives dads, grandfathers and other role models a better understanding of the school and creates wonderful memories for the students!



Highland | A Packed Giving Tree

A long-standing tradition at Highland is the Student Council-sponsored Giving Tree. Over the winter holidays, Highland families donated new toys, books and other gifts for the Humanitarian Service Project of DuPage with the goal to provide gifts for 500

children in need. The overloaded tree was a beacon of giving for the school!



Hillcrest | Students Stock the Shelves

Students and families helped stock the shelves of the Downers Grove FISH (Food Insecurity Stops Here) Food Pantry before Thanksgiving. The food drive was an initiative by the Hillcrest Student Council.



Indian Trail | Pennies Add Up

Fourth graders held a penny drive for Feed My Starving Children and also helped pack 98 boxes (21,000+ meals) at the facility that will be sent to families in developing countries. Organized by 4th grade teacher Taylor Carroll, the students already want to return!



Kingsley | Lions Make Lemonade

Kingsley's L.I.O.N.S. Club (Leadership in our Neighborhood and School), whose goal is service to others, recently held a lemonade stand fundraiser, taking in \$620. They donated the proceeds to Feed My Starving Children (FMSC) and 25 students

from the club as well as parents, students and staff joined together to pack meals at FMSC for those who are food insecure across the world.



Lester | Lots of Love and Light

Lester's Student Council more than doubled its fundraising goal to purchase 23 solar lights for Watts of Love, raising \$2,350. Watts of Love is a Downers Grove non-profit organization that provides solar lighting to those in poverty around the world. The program saves the cost of fuel and allows families to continue to work and perform daily activities after dark.



Pierce Downer | Winter Wonderland Fundraiser
The Student Council held its second Winter Wonderland Fest, which raised money to help the West Suburban Humane Society. The Fest has become a favorite school experience with families rotating activity stations, such

as decorating holiday cookies or making an ornament. This year, the PTA partnered with the Student Council to stuff stockings to support children in need.



Whittier | Putting the Fun in Fundraiser
On the last day of school, Whittier students watched a domino train of more than 400 boxes of cereal. The boxes were donated as part of the latest service project at Whittier and delivered to the FISH Food

Pantry and the West Suburban Community Food Pantry. Teachers Cheryl Lyons and Jennifer Hodkowski, along with parent volunteer Christie Nutt, organized the fundraiser/event.



Herrick Middle School | The Poppy Project
Seventh grade art students created clay poppies and gifted them to veterans from the Downers Grove American Legion and Veterans of Foreign War. As part of the Poppy Project, led by art teacher Elizabeth Lukes, veterans visited the art class and talked about their service.



O'Neill Middle School | A Busy Year of Fundraising
The Student Council had a busy time with fundraisers throughout the year. To name a few, they collected candy for the troops in Operation Gratitude Candy, held food drives in fall and winter for FISH Food Pantry and they

helped DG58 families in need during the holidays by collecting money in December.

DG58 In the News

Here are some select news articles featuring people and projects of DG58.

Please note: Some articles may be behind paywalls.



Students Learn Weather Tips from Tracy Butler
Kingsley School's 5th grade students were featured on a segment with ABC7 News Meteorologist Tracy Butler teaching viewers about increasingly severe weather at <https://bit.ly/WGNweather>.



Hillcrest School Playground Named One of Most Inclusive
WGNTV Features Owen's Playground for Kids of All Abilities at Hillcrest School at <https://bit.ly/HGplayground>. The playground was named one of the Top Ten playgrounds in the U.S. for its inclusive design and quantity of accessible play features.



Students Launch Poppy Project at Herrick
Herrick art students created clay poppies to give to veterans and honor them over Memorial Day at <https://bit.ly/HEPoppyProject>.



Energy Audit Helps DG58 to Reduce Energy Costs
DG58 initiates ComEd audit to reduce energy costs and carbon footprint at <https://bit.ly/DG58energy>.



WGN Channel 9 Features Henry Puffer Podcast Club
A group of 3rd-6th graders in the Henry Puffer Podcast Club are featured for their unique work on WGN TV at <https://bit.ly/HPpodcastclub>.



Teacher Spreads His Love of Art in DG Community
Art teacher Jon Belonio is featured about his love of art and how he integrates it into the community at <https://bit.ly/MrBelonio>.

Photo Galleries

Herrick Promotion Photo Gallery



O'Neill Promotion Photo Gallery



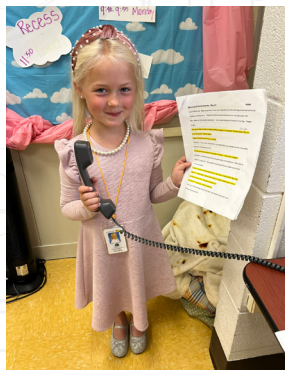
Check out other photo galleries on our website at <https://www.dg58.org/community-engagement/gallery>.

Staff Honors



Check out a video of our Distinguished Service Award honorees at bit.ly/DSAtachers.

Contact Information



District 58 Office

2300 Warrenville Road, Suite 200NE, Downers Grove, IL 60515
630-719-5800

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 Superintendent of Schools

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 Assistant Superintendent
 for Personnel and Staff
 Development

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Todd Drafal
 Assistant Superintendent for
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Michelle Kovar
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Faith Behr
 Interim Community Relations
 Coordinator

Liz Ehrhart
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 Curriculum and Instruction

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 Assistant Superintendent for
 Technology and Learning

**Eleni Gajewski, Sandy
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 Grove Children's Preschool
 Coordinator (Henry Puffer &
 Indian Trail), **630-968-0454**

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 Behavioral Support Systems
 Coordinator, **630-241-4032**

Dr. Jackelyn Cadard
 Special Programs Coordinator,
630-719-9478

Tiffany Williams
 Special Programs Coordinator,
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Schools

Belle Aire Principal: **Brent Borchelt**
 3935 Belle Aire Lane
630-719-5820

El Sierra Principal: **Jason Lynde**
 6835 Fairmount Ave.
630-719-5825

Fairmount Principal: **Lisa Niforatos**
 6036 Blodgett Ave.
630-719-5830

Henry Puffer Principal: **Mark Leipart**
 2220 Hadow Ave.
630-968-0294

Highland Principal: **Zachary Craft**
 3935 Highland Ave. Assistant Principal: **Sandy Cristobal**
630-719-5835

Hillcrest Principal: **Michelle Rzepka**
 1435 Jefferson Ave.
630-719-5840

Indian Trail Principal: **Tracey Ratner**
 6235 Stonewall Ave.
630-719-5845

Kingsley Principal: **Charles Brewster**
 6509 Powell St. Assistant Principal: **Eleni Gajewski**
630-719-5850

Lester Principal: **Katie Novosel**
 236 Indianapolis Ave. Assistant Principal: **Lauri Smith**
630-719-5855

Pierce Downer Principal: **Dr. Leland Wagner**
 1436 Grant St.
630-719-5860

Whittier Principal: **Michael J. Krugman**
 536 Hill St.
630-719-5865

Middle Schools

Herrick Principal: **Dr. David Norman**
 4435 Middaugh Ave. Assistant Principal: **Samantha Inglima**
630-719-5810 Assistant Principal: **Kelly Novotny**

O'Neill Principal: **Lauryn Humphris**
 635 59th St. Assistant Principal: **Danielle Bongiorno**
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District 58 2023-24 Calendar

Monday Professional Learning: District 58 schools dismiss students in grades K-6 at 2 p.m. and grades 7-8 at 2:10 p.m. on Mondays to provide teachers with dedicated and structured professional learning time. Learn more at www.dg58.org/pro.

AM Preschool*
8:25 – 11:05 a.m.
 Monday – Friday

PM Preschool*
11:55 – 2:35 p.m.
 Monday – Friday

* Preschool hours were adjusted slightly for 2023-24 to align more closely with K-6 elementary hours.

Half-Day Kindergarten
8:15 – 11:20 a.m.
 Monday – Friday

Kindergarten & Grades 1-6
8:15 a.m. – 2 p.m. Monday
8:15 a.m. – 3 p.m. Tuesday – Friday

Grades 7-8*
8:30 a.m. – 2:10 p.m. Monday
8:30 a.m. – 3:17 p.m. Tuesday – Friday

* Early Bird classes (band, choir and orchestra) will take place from 7:45 – 8:25 a.m. Monday – Friday.

Aug 21-22	Teacher Institute Days*
Aug 23	First Day of Classes—Full day
Sept 4	Labor Day*
Oct 12 & 18	Evening Parent/Teacher Conferences
Nov 17	End of First Trimester
Nov 22-24	Thanksgiving Break*
Dec 25-Jan 5	Winter Break*
Jan 15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*
Feb 1 & 7	Evening Parent/Teacher Conferences
Feb 19	Presidents Day*
Feb 29	End of Second Trimester
Mar 1	Teacher Institute Day*
Mar 19	Possible E-Learning Day (if schools are designated a Polling Place)
Mar 25-29	Spring Break*
May 24**	Last Day of School (half day)
May 27	Memorial Day (Schools and District Office are Closed)
May 28-29	Teachers' Inservice and School Improvement Day

* No school for students.

** May 28-June 3 are Emergency Days and may be declared holidays if not needed for emergencies. If no Emergency Days are used, the last day of school will be May 24, 2024.

District 58 seeks substitute teachers!



Enjoy a flexible schedule!

Visit www.dg58.org/subs to learn more.

We hope you find this annual publication to be informative and useful, and we welcome your feedback. If you have a question about this or any other District 58 publication, please contact Interim Community Relations Coordinator Faith Behr at fbhr@dg58.org or 630-719-5805.

District 58 partnered with USPS to deliver these reports for about \$.09 a household.

Please note: To maximize the summer 2024 construction window, the calendar eliminates some single days off, while maintaining typical break periods in alignment with District 99. Students will still attend school for the same number of days of instruction as in the past. One holiday and two teacher training days (one coincided with fall day-time parent-teacher conferences) were eliminated in the 2023-24 calendar in order to end school earlier this spring.