

NewsBits



Summer 2021

A strong start for District 62

It's been a strong summer here in District 62. We welcomed back nearly 450 students at Iroquois Community School on July 14 and are quickly preparing for the return of our 10-month students on August 18 (1-8) and August 19 (ELC and Kindergarten).

We recently partnered with the [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) to host a series of vaccination clinics open to those aged 12 and older. All members of the community were welcome. Our hope is that we will continue to provide these opportunities to the community throughout the school year.



Although this year may look different, I am very happy that we began this school year with students in our classrooms, engaged and ready to learn. We intend to follow Governor Pritzker's Executive Order issued on August 4 that states that masks are required to be worn by staff and students in our schools, regardless of vaccination status. As a public school district, it is our responsibility to not only educate students, but to prioritize the health and safety of our learning community. I will continue to monitor guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) as well as Governor Pritzker's Office.

I have appreciated the many conversations I've had with members of our community and thank you for your understanding. I will continue to do my best to support the well being of the children here in Community Consolidated School District 62. I truly look forward to this school year.



Sincerely,

Paul E. Hertel, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
[#62workingtogether](#)

Interested in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine?

Find a clinic near you by visiting
<https://coronavirus.illinois.gov>
Hotline: 1-833-621-1284

Elizabeth Massa seated to the Board of Education

Elizabeth “Liz” Massa was appointed to the Board of Education for a two-year term at the June 21 meeting.

Massa, 37, is a former high school teacher and also an active member of the Forest Parent Teacher Council. She has been married to her husband Sean for 12 years, and has 4th grade and 1st grade students at Forest Elementary.

Some of her favorite memories in the classroom include helping students realize they can succeed despite their obstacles, and hearing students argue over novels she brought in.

“I have always been interested in making education accessible,” said Massa. “I learned from my experience teaching that all students can learn. It is our privilege as educators to guide them.”



District 62 recognizes its Difference Makers



Last year, District 62 began a formal recognition program to honor those staff members considered “Difference Makers” who are a defining example for the learning community of District 62. This recognition program aligns directly with Goal 3 (Work Environment) of the district’s five-year [strategic plan](#). Those recognized as a Difference Maker will receive a coin to commemorate this honor. We thank our Difference Makers for doing a great deal for others

without seeking recognition or acknowledgment. They make the District 62 learning community a better place through their dedication, commitment and support of public education.

Congratulations to our summer **District 62 Difference Makers:**

There are multiple instances on a daily basis when **Peter Aponte** goes above and beyond his job duties to support the greater goals of the Orchard Place School community. Whenever the need arises, Peter responds without hesitation to support our school. He is hardworking, personable and a very effective communicator. He can be seen routinely going the extra mile in all parts of our building and grounds. As an OP alumnus, this custodian has always exuded pride in his work and care for our building and school community. Throughout the pandemic, he has been quick to respond to the needs of teachers, has taken initiative to make improvements in the building, and has been a creative partner in planning for students returning to in-person learning. His positivity and responsiveness are appreciated by all!



District 62 Education Foundation Footnotes

The District 62 Foundation is preparing for the 21/22 school year and looking forward to sharing in making it a school year like no other. After a year of isolation and distancing the Foundation Board members are looking forward to their part in reconnecting students and families with each other. Through intense planning and increasing their role as stakeholders in the community, it is the goal of the Foundation to create new experiences for students that will enhance their education as well as their lives.

The Foundation supports District 62 staff and students through their annual programs such as competitive staff grants, athletic events for students, educational and cultural programs, and entertainment. In the coming school year there will be new and numerous avenues of support in an effort to re-balance lives and contribute to the overall health and well being of the community.

The technology team has gone above and beyond supporting staff, students, and families with their technology needs during the past year. Scrambling to get a device in all students' hands last April and then supporting the majority of the district remotely as we worked and learned from home. In addition the team worked to set up, support, and deliver hotspots to families in need of wireless Internet at home. During 2020-2021 the team worked hard to provide hundreds of devices and accounts to new students, Early Childhood Students, substitute teachers and para educators. The team continues to support students and staff working from home and at school and in addition provides evening support for families as well. Thank you to **Dan Chianelli, Justin Heller, Jennifer Arciniega, Brandon Cummings, Christian De Los Santos, Dave Gladys, Shanaz Fatima, Judy Pecucci, Pablo Sands, Samir Shyamani, Gary Sullivan, Ejaz Syed and Adam Denenberg.**

Sophia Sidlowski is new to Terrace this year and has done such a great job learning the ropes in the STEP classroom and has been such a positive impact at Terrace and for her students. She always stays so calm when dealing with difficult behaviors and is very solution-based when problem solving. She has such a positive attitude and is a great teammate to have.

Claire Asher has been such a positive presence at Cumberland this year. She has supported students and families in a variety of situations. She is the first one willing to help out when a crisis situation arises and always remains calm. She goes above and beyond for the students, families, and our building. Thank you for everything you do! We are so lucky to have you at Cumberland!

Bailey Stearns has been a fantastic addition to the Terrace Staff. She has entered the profession as a teacher during one of the most challenging years and has risen to the occasion. She is positive, reflective, willing to learn and cares deeply about her students. She has established

wonderful relationships with this community. Bailey challenges her kids and finds innovative ways to engage them in the curriculum. She makes everyone feel welcome in her classroom and is a great collaborator.

Jackie Fuentes is not only an amazing human being but a great coworker! She goes above and beyond for our Terrace Family every single day! Jackie wears many hats at Terrace and always gives 100%. Jackie coordinates Parent Workshops throughout the year. She is a great human being and is loved by everyone.

Lisa Bojarski and Jessy Perez are the front line workers at Terrace. They manage the office, day-to-day events in the building, the nurse's office, COVID management, attendance--to name a few. They truly go above and beyond.

Janet Tisza has been the #1 go-to sub at Cumberland during this unprecedented year. Janet had to learn all of the technology complexities that went along with synchronous instruction for in-person and remote learning. She also worked hard each day to keep students safe and always adhered to the COVID protocols. Finally, Janet always showed up when scheduled and never complained about where she was assigned for the day. Janet, we can't thank you enough for your service.

Charity Briske is, and always has been, a team player at Cumberland. As their library media assistant, Charity is always willing to go out of her way to help out. She loves encouraging students to read and embrace literacy. A lot of the time, one of the first couple sentences out of her mouth is, "How can I help?" When you pass her in the hall, it's almost impossible not to smile because she brings a positive energy wherever she goes.



Michelle Cucchi has done amazing things at Cumberland. No matter what challenges she faces she overcomes them with ease. Her patience, passion, and drive to make students successful is admirable.

Mackenzie Barnes is an amazing Occupational Therapist at Cumberland! She is a supportive and collaborative coworker and is so patient and caring with all of her students. She stepped up and handled so many changes this year - always with a smile, creative ideas, and a helping hand for others.

Berdie Diaz always has a smile on her face. Her positivity and willingness to help anyone in any situation makes her a difference maker. Berdie is always willing to do anything you ask of her, and always with a positive attitude. She is always so friendly and a true asset to our Cumberland team.



Milagros (Millie) Bravo has gone above and beyond to provide support for our students and their families. Millie has made many home visits throughout this year. For those families who needed her the most, she created a weekly schedule where she came to the house to help trouble-shoot all aspects of the child's learning needs and could end up spending several hours with each family, providing support in a variety of ways. Millie made an effort, especially during the winter months with COVID-19, to support the social-emotional well being of families.

District 62 welcomes new administrators to the team

Amy Cengel was named the new principal of Forest Elementary School. Cengel will return to District 62 as she was a former principal of South Elementary School for three years from 2014-2017. Most recently, Mrs. Cengel was principal of Oak Terrace Elementary School where she was principal there for three years and was also named Lake County Principal of the Year in 2019. During Mrs. Cengel's time in District 62, she served as an instructional coach and middle school teacher.





Juliana Vissering was named the principal of Chippewa Middle School. Vissering has served as the assistant principal for the last four years. Prior to her arrival to District 62, Vissering was a math teacher in Evanston School District 65 for nearly a decade. While there, she became a National Board Certified teacher in 2012. Prior to her time in Evanston, Vissering worked in Chicago Public Schools and taught overseas in Mali, Africa.



Katerina Vaseopoulos was named Student Services Coordinator. In her role, Vaseopoulos is responsible for administering and supervising special education programs and services in compliance with state and federal rules and regulations. Vaseopoulos most recently served as a school psychologist at South Elementary School for seven years. Prior to that, she served as the school psychologist at Forest Elementary School in District 62.

FinanceBits

Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) concluded at the end of June. Needless to say, FY21 was a unique and challenging time for District 62. Much was done to support our students and families during the pandemic, some examples include: the district hired additional staff to support in-person and remote learning, Personal Protective Equipment items were purchased, internet hotspots were made available to our families in need, drive through meal pickups supported our families. District 62 will receive federal funds to offset many of the costs caused by COVID-19. Looking ahead to fiscal year 2022 (FY22), the usual state and federal funding is expected to be consistent with FY21. While we expect expenses to be higher in the coming year, as they were last year, expenses should normalize as we fully emerge from the effects of the pandemic. District 62 should remain in a strong fiscal position for years to come.

Community Consolidated School District 62

D62 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

August 18: Grades 1-8
August 19: ELC and Kindergarten