

NewsBits



Summer 2022

Superintendent Michael Amadei begins his tenure in District 62

Dear District 62 Community,

It is my privilege to lead as your Superintendent of Schools for Community Consolidated School District 62. As a public school educator I have served students and families in the State of Illinois for the past 25 years with the last 15 of those years proudly served right here in Des Plaines. As I reflect on my years in the district, I am extremely proud of the leadership, compassion and dedication that makes District 62 a destination district.



For the last four years, I served as the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Prior to that I served for a decade as the principal of Iroquois Community School, the district's year-round school. I began my career in Elgin U-46 as a fifth grade teacher and then moved on to becoming an assistant principal and principal. During my time in all these radically different learning environments I engaged families that were affluent, as well as supporting families from diverse backgrounds. These experiences had a profound impact on my understanding that deep inequities could exist within the same school district and even within the same school building. Needless to say, my time spent as a teacher and then a principal influenced my role as an instructional leader, even to this day.

"The significance of my role in education is never lost on me. Every single day I recognize the ability I have to make an incredible difference for the students, families, staff and community that I serve."

Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Michael Amadei

What fulfills me is maintaining a culture that is caring, professional, ethical, collaborative and accountable. I'm feeling invigorated about the future of our district and all the work we are doing as it relates to our five-year strategic plan. One of my main priorities as your Superintendent will be to maintain the safest and most secure learning environment possible. This is not something to be compromised. We will be taking a pre-emptive focus on keeping our learning community safe. I'm grateful for the community partnerships we have in place that include the Des Plaines Police Department as they assist us in so many ways and provide us with extensive resources available to our staff and families.

I am proud to be a part of the Des Plaines and Rosemont learning communities, our staff's dedication and the perseverance of our students. I look forward to all we will accomplish, and I can say with certainty that the future is very bright!

District 62 welcomes new administrators to the team

North Elementary School Principal

Carolyn Allar comes to the district with nearly 20 years of experience in education in Schaumburg School District 54, most recently as a building principal for eight years.



Director of Social Emotional Learning

In an effort to effectively address the social, emotional, behavioral and mental health needs of our students and staff that have significantly increased over the past several years, **Allison (Allie) Brand** will take on this new role. Brand joined the district four years ago when she became District 62's first Behavior Specialist.

English Learner Coordinator

In her role as English Learner Coordinator, **Anel Escamilla** will support school leaders and staff with meeting the academic and social emotional needs of English Learners. Prior to joining D62, Escamilla was an Associate Principal at Oak Terrace Elementary.



Cumberland Elementary School Principal

Marc Infante comes to the district from East Maine School District 63, where he served as an assistant principal there for five years at Nelson Elementary School.

Director for Second Language Learners Programs

The Director for Second Language Learners is responsible for providing leadership in meeting the district's vision, mission and goals by directing the district's English as a Second Language, Bilingual, and World Language programs. **Elizabeth (Libby) Juskievicz** has been a presence in the district for 25 years, most recently serving as an English Learner (ELL) Coordinator for five years.



Assistant Principal of Iroquois Community School

John Rey has eight years of experience in public education, having served as a special education teacher at Gemini Middle School in East Maine School District 63 where he also served as department chair.

Student Services Coordinator

In this role, **Brandon Schaefer** is responsible for administering and supervising special education programs and services in compliance with state and federal rules and regulations. For the past six years, he has worked as a special education administrator in District 300, serving special education students across six buildings.



FinanceBits

Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) concluded at the end of June. The district posted a healthy surplus based on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding from the federal government, elevated Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax revenues received from the state, and the sale of old technology equipment.

While it was helpful to receive this extra revenue, this added funding is not expected to continue in the long-term. Looking ahead to Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23), the usual state and federal funding is expected to be consistent with FY22, and tax levy revenue will be higher due to the large increase in the Consumer Price Index brought on by high inflation. Expenses will be up due to the overall inflationary environment, which will consume many of the added revenue dollars.

The district is still feeling the effects of the supply chain issues when ordering new equipment and supplies. Difficulty in hiring new staff is also impacting not only District 62, but also our food service vendor and bus company. All-in-all, District 62 remains in a strong financial position and it should remain so in the coming years.

District 62 recognizes its Difference Makers

In 2020, 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 this learning community a better place through their dedication, commitment and support of public education.

District 62 Education Foundation Footnotes

As summer activities wind down, the District 62 Education Foundation is gearing up for a year’s worth of support for District 62 staff and students. The schools are ready to accept students and teachers are planning the lessons and activities that will engage their students. It is an exciting time filled with anticipation for all the learning opportunities on the horizon.

The District 62 Foundation Board is excited as well to begin its work that coincides with the district school year calendar. Thanks to our many generous supporters the Foundation is in a strong position to offer competitive grants to certified staff members in District 62. The grants enable teachers and staff to offer enhanced learning opportunities to their students. The grants fund things such as field trips, guest speakers, equipment for student based clubs, and increased classroom resource materials.

Since its inception in 2001, the Foundation has offered in excess of \$500,000 in grants to district staff.

The Board is always looking for new members as well as opportunities to support staff and students in District 62. For more information on the work of the Foundation, the grant program, or how to support our mission go to d62foundation.com or email d62foundation@gmail.com.

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

As part of the Behavior and Emotional Support Teaching (BEST) Program, **Nelly Hernandez** addresses her students' academic, social-emotional and behavioral needs. She is never phased by challenges thrown her way.

As a speech pathologist, **Haley Bieber** goes above and beyond to make sure students' needs are met and shares information with parents in a clear and informative way. Cumberland is grateful to have her as a teammate.

Sarah Hamman does a great job teaching P.E. at Cumberland. She has been mentoring her student teacher and showing him what it takes to be an educator. All of us at Cumberland are fortunate to have her.



Jennifer Santoro is an amazing paraprofessional who truly goes above and beyond every single day at Cumberland Elementary School. She handles every situation with patience and positivity and she is a great partner for all of her students!

Evan Beer of South Elementary School is very personable, approachable and always willing to help. When not cleaning or performing other tasks, he chooses

to spend time with students during both lunch hours getting to know them.

Allison Brand has been a wonderful support for the Cumberland community. She works closely with teachers to find ways to support very challenging behaviors that arise in classrooms, exploring ways to help children succeed.

Megan O'Donnell is kind, level-headed, and always meets her students with compassion at Cumberland. She is calm and collected and she is always willing to help anyone who needs it. She gives so much of her time and her heart to students and makes a difference in the lives of so many.

Tracy Mullane is an amazing Cumberland teacher. She makes sure every student she teaches finds every success that they are capable of. She works hard to meet the individual needs of each student.

Amy Huffman is one of the hardest working teachers that you will ever meet at Cumberland. She is 100% for every student on her class list. She works tirelessly to see that the individual needs for all students are met.

Viri Garay truly gives her all to Cumberland! She thinks of creative ways to help encourage progress with academics and communication, always has a positive attitude, and values students' individual needs and interests.

Cumberland is very lucky to have **Judy Adams**. She spends countless hours preparing for the students in her classroom to ensure all students feel safe and ready to learn. She helps colleagues with any challenge that they face.

Laura Gierszewicz is a wonderful Cumberland Kindergarten educator. She has a great influence on her students' growth and success. Former Kindergarten students continuously bring up the fond memories they had with her.

Tania Becerra is a Cumberland paraeducator who puts forth her best effort each and every day. She often gets up to 16,000 steps during the school day as she supports our students. Tania will always help in any way she can.

Morgan Brongel is an excellent educator. She takes the time to adjust and modify her instruction to meet the needs of her students. Morgan is always willing to step in and help her colleagues in any way that she can.

Barb Zachwieja is an excellent teacher. She has put in many years to hone her craft. She goes above and beyond for her students and her colleagues. It is amazing to see how she is able to find books that align so well with whatever we are studying each week. She is a true difference maker for her students

There are truly no words to describe **Gary Niemic** and what he does for Cumberland as a speech pathologist. His ability to bring smiles and laughter to both students and staff is an incredible gift.

Renee Brummitt is an incredible Cumberland educator. She's always ready and willing to help students either in the classroom or in a 1 on 1 setting. Renee is available to give advice and always makes time to support teachers.

Nina Sawica makes a difference each day at Cumberland! As a school psychologist, she balances working at multiple schools while always having time to help others with a positive and supportive attitude!

Brianna Schetter has been such an asset to Cumberland's Behavioral and Emotional Supported Teaching (BEST) program. Whenever the teachers are pulled from the classroom, they can count on her for support.

Stacy Simek is a difference maker at Terrace. She is very caring. Stacy not only helps her own students gain confidence and understand regarding how special they are, but does the same for other students as well at Terrace.

Parent **Janet Federico** is valued in the Terrace community, going above and beyond to help a student (other than her son) get to school safely each day, even with constant pick up and drop offs through inclement weather. Her care and compassion for students does not go unnoticed. She is always positive and helpful to anyone in need.