



# KCSD96

Every child. Every school. Every day.

## STATE OF THE DISTRICT REPORT

### Superintendent Julie A. Schmidt

### July 19, 2016

Kildeer Countryside School District 96, Office of the Superintendent

**STATE OF THE DISTRICT**  
**JULY 19, 2016**

**Introduction**

*What's good about District 96?* Asking that question of ourselves to begin the school year last August got us thinking—and more. Indeed, asking that question served not only as a reminder of our strengths, but also posed a challenge, leading us to opportunities to improve. We didn't "lean in"—we jumped in! From start to finish, our students and faculty were fully engaged considering, conversing, comparing/contrasting, calculating, and collaborating with a passion that inspires. Ours is a compelling, impressive story to tell. It's one that educational leaders from across the nation are eager to hear and observe. This *State of the District* report will address department highlights, celebrations, fun facts, and—because KCSD96 is a district founded on focused, continuous improvement—the recommended goal areas for the 2016–17 school year.

**Department Highlights**

**Business Services and Facilities and Transportation**

The District 96 business office continues to function at extremely high levels providing leadership not only locally, but at the state level. Exemplar practices in this department ensure the stability of finances and that constituents receive top value for their tax dollars. Once again, the District obtained a clean opinion of the District's 2015 financial audit and received Financial Recognition, the highest rating available from the Illinois State Board of Education. This marks the 12th consecutive year of receiving the top financial ranking awarded by the state of Illinois for school districts. Conservative yet innovative practices led to the abatement of \$369,233 of debt service in the 2014 tax levy, and—working with the Lake County Board of Review—led to significant savings of EAV dollars. Responsible practices on the part of both the Board of Education and the business office leadership have led to financial health and stability for District 96. In these turbulent and uncertain times, this provides us the opportunity to continue to provide a world-class education to the children in our community.

The District's ongoing 5-year capital improvement plan includes regular maintenance and yearly updating and innovation at our District facilities. Over the summer at Ivy Hall, work will be done to repair sidewalks and install life/safety doors. At Kildeer, students will return to a new gym floor; at Prairie, there will be updated landscaping near the exterior stairwell. In addition to the typical repairs at the middle schools—including the sealcoating and crack filling of the parking lots—the science classrooms are being renovated as part of our ongoing learning environment project. These new classrooms will support the new *Next Generation Science Standards* and provide state-of-the-art labs and equipment to accommodate STEM work and other innovative practices. The largest Summer 2016 project is the construction and remodeling of the Willow Grove Early Learning Center. This construction project includes adding a state-of-the-art cafeteria for students who will be attending full-day kindergarten, adding a wing with two additional classrooms, renovating the wing of the building that used to be leased, and updating outdoor playgrounds. In addition, a small interior courtyard will be dedicated in memory of

Lauren Gordon, District 96 Board member seated Apr. 2011 and re-elected April 2015. Our plan is a combination of maintenance and repair items, and updates and innovations to provide high quality programs and services for our students.

Leaders in the business and facilities departments are key members on numerous and ongoing District committees including the LES multi-year project, the full-day kindergarten implementation team, and the technology implementation team. These multi-disciplinary committees ensure that implementation and design will give teachers and students access to all the resources and tools they need for learning.

The District continues to provide high-quality student transportation systems through our subcontractor First Student, with a 98.4 percent on-time rating. Likewise, we continue to enjoy very strong collaborative relationships with other governmental agencies, including the Buffalo Grove Park District. As a public entity we continue to open our buildings for use by many outside organizations each year. This year, the following groups accessed the District 96 facilities:

**FACILITY USAGE ORGANIZATIONS FOR 2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR**

ALL COMMUNITY EVENTS  
BANNER DAY CAMP  
BG BASKETBALL GROUP  
BGRA (BUFFALO GROVE RECREATION ASSN.)  
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
BRIARCREST HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION  
BUFFALO GROVE PARK DISTRICT  
CHAMPIONS  
CHINESE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH  
FIELDS OF LONG GROVE  
FOGLIA YMCA  
GIRL SCOUTS  
GIRLS ON THE RUN CHICAGO  
HOOPS EDUCATION, LLC  
JCYS HENRY HORNER CAMP  
KUMON CENTER FOR LEARNING  
LAKE COUNTY DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION  
LATIN UNITED SOCCER  
LONG GROVE BUSINESS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS  
LONG GROVE PARK DISTRICT  
LONG GROVE ROTARY CLUB  
NEXT LEVEL PERFORMANCE  
NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
ROTARY CLUB OF LONG GROVE  
SCHWABEN SOCCER CLUB  
TORAH ACADEMY

TWIN ORCHARD COUNTRY CLUB  
VILLAGE OF BUFFALO GROVE  
VILLAGE OF LONG GROVE  
WINDY CITY LACROSSE

Jon Hitcho, assistant superintendent for business services, was recently re-elected as chairman for the budgeting and financial planning committee of the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO) and has presented at numerous state conferences on topics ranging from school budgeting challenges to budgeting for 1:1 technology. Michelle Whitlow, coordinator of business services, was recently elected the co-chair of the accounting and auditing professional development committee for IASBO.

### **Human Resources**

Any organization is only as good as its people. District 96 is recognized for its high-quality hiring processes in addition to the rigorous and growth-producing 2-year teacher induction and mentoring program. The new teacher mentoring program is a collaborative endeavor between human resources and curriculum / professional development departments that orients and supports new teachers in their growth and provides high levels of guidance in their first two years of employment. District 96 continues to have a high level of dedication to growing our professionals through high-quality, job-embedded development.

The human resources department led the committee implementing the state requirement that all teacher evaluations include student growth data entering into the 2016-17 school year. Additional initiatives led by the human resources department included the full-day kindergarten implementation committee, the non-certified staff contract negotiation process, and the use of a new demographer for enrollment projects for the consortium.

Beth Dalton, assistant superintendent for human resources, also chairs the Board of Education policy committee, whose members completed a full Board of Education policy manual review in 2015-16. In addition, the human resources department took the lead on restructuring administrative benefits and offering two separate cohorts for teachers in District 96 to work toward their ELL endorsement. Lastly, the outstanding processes implemented by the human resources department resulted in our hiring a new principal, two assistant principals, and a director of facilities and transportation. The District 96 human resources department continues to be highly supportive and an integral part of the personnel processes for the Exceptional Learners Collaborative (ELC) and assists the ELC with ongoing policy development. Other interesting information related to the human resources department includes the fact that during the 2015-16 school year 41 new certified staff members were hired, 41 non-certified staff members were hired, and an additional 16 staff members were hired for the summer season. In the recent regional election held by the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA), Dr. Dalton was chosen for a Region 2 administrative position. She also serves as a board member for the Illinois Association of School Personnel administrators (IASPA) and is a board member for the Illinois Small Colleges Placement Association. Dr. Dalton recently spoke to the graduates in the education department of Knox College.

Heading into the 2016-17, school year the human resources department will focus on the actual implementation of student growth data into teacher evaluations, the bargaining of the certified teacher contract, digitizing personnel files, and implementing a new inter-rater reliability tool for teacher evaluation.

### **Curriculum, Professional Development, and Technology**

The 2015-16 school year opened with the 1:1 iPad implementation process well under our belts. In fact, as a result of the high levels of implementation of the device—not only as a substitution for curricular materials, but in order to support high levels of learning by giving students access to information and knowledge they would not otherwise have access to—District 96 was recognized as an **Apple Distinguished District**. In addition, the District 96 technology team received recognition in the Team category of the *Those Who Excel* awards sponsored by the Illinois State Board of Education in Bloomington, Illinois, in October. The 1:1 implementation has demonstrated the value of the appropriate use of technology so well that the 2015-16 school year opened with all elementary grades 1 – 5 having all-day access to a device in the classroom. Over the course of the school year, elementary teachers have received professional development on the best use of the devices in order to enhance instruction.

The *National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project* selected KCSD96 Woodlawn Middle School as the *Illinois Junior School of the Year* and the *National Junior School of the Year*. They also received recognition for *Outstanding Energy Engineering and Design Project*. This recognition is for a Youth Awards Signature Project—an energy-focused project that is student-driven and multifaceted. Woodlawn students' work focused on energy engineering and design. Specifically, it addressed thermal energy transfer, energy conversion, and minimizing human environmental impact.

With our continued focus on research-based and highly effective instructional practices, the District continues to strive for higher levels of student engagement in classrooms, with all certified staff in the District receiving professional development around cooperative learning and engagement training using Kagan structures. Students also are using Thinking Maps to process and organize their thinking district-wide. At the elementary level the implementation of a new literacy program, ReadyGen, garnered much time and attention. Elementary and middle school physical education/health teams worked all year to prepare for the implementation of the new Illinois enhanced physical education standards. At the middle schools, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) have already been implemented and the elementary science teams began preparation for the implementation of NGSS during the 2016-17 school year.

The Willow Grove full-day kindergarten implementation team worked to focus on both curriculum and professional learning needs for the transition to full-day kindergarten. The scope and sequence and curriculum have been painstakingly planned for this new full-day opportunity for our community.

Classroom doors in District 96 are open creating places for all in the District to learn and grow. Staff are comfortable with and flourish learning from and with each other in classrooms and through modeling experiences.

In the 2015 *State of the District* report I reminded stakeholders that the ISAT state accountability assessment was no longer being used. The new PARCC College and Career readiness assessment was administered for the first time in Spring 2015. I am pleased to report through an analytic comparison of raw data, District 96 students performed at the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile in the state of Illinois in the area of reading and at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile compared to other students in the state of Illinois in the math portion of the assessment. District 96 students performed at the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile in the area of science—and we expect that score to be even stronger with the implementation of the new science standards. Overall, Kildeer District 96 ranks at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile on PARCC performance compared to the other districts in the state of Illinois. Thus, District 96 ranked in the top 10 school districts for academic performance in the state of Illinois.

The 2015-16 school year also saw the implementation of recommendations made as a result of the two-year ongoing ELL/Bilingual study. The District moved to a co-teaching model to support English language learners and provided the coaching academy for all ELL teachers, now called Language Development Coaches (LDCs). In addition, at Woodlawn Middle School we saw the implementation of the Spanish Heritage Language course to meet the needs of students who have transitioned from a Spanish bilingual program. The data indicate very strong outcomes for students moving out of this program into Stevenson High School. In addition, the District has begun focusing on the development of our own internal cultural competence meeting the needs of all of our diverse learners. We are excited to be embarking upon the implementation of a new stakeholder group that will be representative of all the demographics in our community with a focus on more highly effective two-way communication and partnerships.

Leaders in the teaching and learning department also contribute to the field of education in significant ways. Kevin Ryan, director of technology and 21st century learning did an interview on Education Talk Radio regarding our practices and presented at this year's Tech & Learning Conference on our newly designed middle school classrooms. District 96 also participated as a Midwest Apple Distinguished School Showcase participant. Jeanne Spiller, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning co-authored her second educational book this year and continues to be a sought after facilitator of professional development.

As we move into the 2016-17 school year, the focus for this department will include the implementation of NGSS at the elementary level and continuing high levels of support for the second year of the ReadyGen curriculum implementation. The department will also begin planning for the implementation of the new Illinois music and art standards, will take implementation of Thinking Maps to the next level, and will continue support for the implementation of cooperative learning and engagement strategies to enhance student learning across the District.

## **Educational Services**

The 2015-16 school year saw the opening of the Exceptional Learners Collaborative (ELC). This special education collaborative—whose members consist of Districts 96, 103, and 125—was formed as a result of the 2014-15 withdrawal from the Special Education District of Lake County (SEDOL). Preparation for the withdrawal from the county cooperative began in 2010. Over the course of the previous 8 years, the District began to build the capacity internally, and with our area cooperating districts through intergovernmental agreements, to service all of our students in neighborhood schools. This process has resulted in the implementation of three new full programs consisting of 13 classrooms spanning the early learning center through middle school. As a result, nearly 50 students are attending local neighborhood schools that, in the past, would have attended private or public day schools or sector classrooms located throughout Lake County. These programs include the creation and expansion of a blended early childhood program; 6 classrooms grades kindergarten to 8 serving our multiple-needs population in Districts 96, 102, and 103; 5 structured autism classrooms; and 3 individualized learning classrooms. Data indicate that students in these classrooms are learning and growing and being stretched continuously to reach their full potential. The structure of the new ELC includes the governing board comprising one board member from Districts 96, 103, and 125 as well as an executive board comprised of the superintendents from the same districts. The ELC board meetings are held once a month at the ELC program facilities located in a wing of the Buffalo Grove Fitness Center. The special education and educational services leaders across the consortium meet regularly to coordinate and facilitate high-quality services for children in our community.

The educational services department has also taken the lead during the 2015-16 school year in our initiative to continue to embed social/emotional learning (SEL) language into our reporting procedures. The SEL committee worked this year to connect SEL standards with “look fors” and learner characteristics with work habits for purposes of reporting. District 96 is fully committed to educating the whole child and preparing each to be college, career, and life ready. The educational services department leads our efforts in this area.

Other initiatives led out by the educational services department, or those that had strong leadership through this department, include the development of the new middle school schedule proposal, the PERA committee including the development of the accountability measures for low-incidence programs, and the implementation of the STAR curriculum for low-incidence programming.

Heather Friziellie, director of education services, along with Jeanne Spiller, assistant superintendent of teaching and learning, and Julie Schmidt, superintendent of schools, enjoyed the release of an educational book they authored entitled, *YES We Can! General and Special Educators Collaborating in a Professional Learning Community*. Heather has used her personal time and expertise to support the implementation of best practices in schools in Texas and Georgia this past year.

Heading into the 2016-17 school year, a new autism structured learning classroom will be opened at Twin Groves Middle School to accommodate students who are aging up from elementary to middle school. The educational services department will also take the lead in expanding parent communication and participation for those parents with special needs students. They will also continue to build our capacity to serve our neediest students.

### **Board of Education**

The School Board Governance Recognition given by the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) is designed to acknowledge those school boards that have engaged in activities that lead to excellence in local school governance and support of quality public education—the hallmarks of the IASB's vision statement. The KCSD96 School Board received this prestigious, 2-year recognition this year. In its recognition, it was clear that good governance requires a commitment to improvement and continual Board development. Adopting policies and attending workshops is just the beginning. This recognition honors boards that exhibit best practices on an ongoing basis. We congratulate our Board on this well-deserved acknowledgement. District 96 Board President Marc Tepper continues to serve on the executive board of the Lake County division of the IASB as our Board's work with the IASB continues,

Our Board of Education, while being recognized as a high-performing, collaborative team, remains focused on the fulfillment of our District's vision of becoming one of the premier elementary school districts in the nation. Members have continued their visioning work, which over the last several years has led to the updating of middle school classrooms to be spaces that contribute to innovation, creativity, and collaboration; the implementation of 1:1 devices at middle school and all-day access at elementary school; the implementation of a full-day kindergarten program; the completion of tracks at the middle schools; and the creation and implementation of the Exceptional Learners Collaborative. In addition, Board members serve on numerous District committees, including technology, learning environment study, social/emotional learning, middle school schedule, administrative benefits, and bargaining. Likewise, Renee Klass continues to serve as the District 96 representative on the governing board of the ELC.

In addition to the committed leadership provided by the current District 96 Board of Education members, they continue as a body to be focused with a high level of diligence on the District's healthy financial status, ensuring residents are receiving top value for their tax dollars. Once again the Board voted to abate to taxpayers over \$369,000 of debt service in the 2014 tax levy. District 96 instructional expenditures continue to be significantly lower than many other benchmark districts, while student outcomes continue to be exemplar. In spite of the constant level of instability at the state level, District 96 is happy to report we are in a healthy and stable financial position currently.

The District 96 Board suffered a loss during the 2015-16 school year with the death of Board member Lauren Gordon, who was truly a champion for children. Lauren served on the Board from 2011 to February 2016. The District 96 Board will honor her memory in conjunction with the re-dedication of Willow Grove Early Learning Center when they will open Lauren's

Courtyard—a thoughtfully designed open-air space surrounded by the early learning center. The Board appointed Meg Woodman—Prairie and Twin Groves parent—to fill Lauren’s seat on the Board for the remainder of Mrs. Gordon’s 2-year term, which is up for election in 2017.

### **Community Engagement**

The District 96 Parent-to-Parent Network hosted seven Tuesday morning discussions on topics of interest to parents that featured discussions of relevant articles and TED Talks. In addition, the following 9 programs were presented during the year on a range of parent-pertinent topics:

- ★ Kindergarten 101
- ★ Effective Discipline Techniques (guest speaker)
- ★ The Opposite of Spoiled (NYT financial columnist Ron Lieber)
- ★ “Technically Speaking” Tech Univ (guest speaker)
- ★ What Really Is Healthy Self-Esteem? (guest speaker)
- ★ Simplifying Stevenson
- ★ The Middle School Transition
- ★ The Social Transition to Stevenson for 8th Graders & Parents (The KCSD96 P2P Network developed & marketed this program for Stand Strong)
- ★ Feed My Starving Children—a community service/community–building opportunity for parents

In addition, we enjoy a high level of support through parent volunteers. Not only do hundreds of parents support PTO events, they volunteer in schools, classrooms, and for extracurricular events and activities. These include but are not limited to the following.

- Classroom immigration discussions
- Black History Month presentations
- Classroom career discussions
- Science experiments
- Mystery readers
- Art helper
- Library helper
- Supporting writing stations
- Field trip chaperones
- Fun Run
- Support for clubs
- Gym helpers
- Music performance assistance
- Frame artwork monthly
- Basketball tournament volunteers
- Volleyball tournament volunteers
- Track meet volunteers

Finally, parents representing each of our schools sit on our Parent Review Committee each year, which is led by Assistant Superintendent Jeanne Spiller.

During the 2016-2017 school year District 96 will be conducting a parent satisfaction survey. More information will be available as we begin the school year.

### **Celebrations**

Once again we opened the 2015-16 school year with an Opening Institute Day celebrating with all certified and noncertified staff on the Country Meadows/Woodlawn campus. Shortly thereafter, the entire faculty and staff came together and the administration shared the Board's adopted goals for the school year. These goals continue to focus on maintaining high levels of student growth and achievement; examination of data; tiered implementation of new standards; best practices in instruction, assessment, and reporting; and building skills around social/emotional learning. In addition, the District is committed to continuing to build capacity and engagement levels across the organization.

A thorough summary of progress toward those goals was shared with the Board during the May 17, 2016 meeting. Information and data gathered indicated that these goals were met and that feedback sessions that occurred at each school throughout the spring provided a clear direction for the development of 2016-17 goals. When analyzing progress toward goals, multiple quantitative and qualitative data points are considered. These data points include—but are not limited to—NWEA MAP data, CBM Sweeps data, Stevenson High School placement results, District formative and benchmark results, and state accountability measures. Data examined revealed that the percent of students who met or exceeded their growth targets by building and subject area for the current school year ranged from 61 percent to 78 percent. Exceeding one's growth target indicates that the student made more than one year's growth in one year's time. Another year-end indicator of college and career readiness progress is reflected in the fact that 70 percent of this year's graduating 8th graders placed into advanced or accelerated courses in math and English at Stevenson High School for the 2016-17 school year. This continues our trend of high levels of accelerated placement since 2005, when only 26 percent of our graduates placed similarly. In addition, 80 percent of last year's District 96 graduates received grades of A or B in core content classes at Stevenson High School.

With the support of middle school science coaches and teachers who fully implemented the new NGSS last year, elementary teachers did the curricular work necessary to be prepared to fully implement these same standards at the elementary level in August 2016. In collaboration with the Area 125 consortium, we also developed consensus on final C3 social studies standards and pacing. C3 standards will be fully implemented at the middle school level in August 2016 as well.

Following a full curricular adoption, a tiered implementation of ReadyGen literacy curriculum began in September 2015 and was fully implemented by October 2015. The District is providing ongoing professional development on the implementation of ReadyGen and Words Their Way at the elementary level that will continue through May 2017.

In our never-ending quest to develop the capacity to differentiate meeting the needs of *all* learners, the deep application of 4.0 targets through team and job-alike meetings occurred

throughout the school year. In addition, the District implemented ELL/Bilingual program study recommendations at both the elementary and middle school levels that included a co-teaching model transforming the roles of the Language Development Coaches; altering the middle school course options for students coming from the bilingual program; and moving the kindergarten bilingual program to Country Meadows to be part of the bilingual team. Ongoing support and professional development is occurring around the implementation of a high-quality co-teaching model for language learners.

District 96 continues to maintain a deep commitment to adult learning in addition to student learning. All adults in District 96 are expected to be lifelong learners who participate in a continuous cycle of improvement. Thus, we continue to provide professional development focusing on high-quality instruction targeting differentiation, student engagement, and comprehensible input. All staff across the District have participated in varying levels of Kagan training and a Thinking Maps rollout with job-embedded support for implementation.

We couldn't be more thrilled that on October 6, 2015, the District 96 Board of Education approved the implementation of a full-day kindergarten program and the construction and remodeling project necessary to make it a reality. At a follow-up presentation on December 15, 2015, the administration shared a master schedule and provided a tuition recommendation. The implementation committee has completed its work and construction is underway! The 2016-17 school year will open with full-day kindergarten being provided. District 96 has also continued to expand its blended early childhood programming. The expansion of the early childhood blended program is aligned with best early intervention practices.

In an effort to continue to enhance the level of reporting and assessment practices by embedding social/emotional learning practices into reporting procedures, the social/ emotional learning and standards-based reporting committees have identified three SEL reporting standards as well as aligned the work habits and learner characteristics to standards. Staff created rubrics for the reporting on SEL standards and targets as well as a companion to the rubrics to help guide teacher practice around reporting. The reporting around SEL is going to have a systematic rollout with the middle school field test in identified classes and all early childhood and primary grades during the 2016-17 school year. Full District implementation will occur going into the 2017-18 school year.

In addition to the celebrations noted above, during the 2015-16 school year the District focused on striving to build capacity and engagement levels across the organization. We continued the long-range implementation of best practices in updating our learning environments and access to support 21st-century learning by providing job-embedded professional development supporting best practices to maximize the updated learning environments at the middle school level. In addition we provided all-day technology access to students in grades 1 - 5 with ongoing development for teachers.

In order to gauge parents' interest on topics and their relevance, the District offered sessions to parents on goal-related topics including literacy curriculum implementation at the elementary

level and the new Teacher Ease grading and reporting at the middle schools. Likewise, our Parent-To-Parent Network engaged hundreds of parents through monthly conversations and learning opportunities throughout the year. Guest expert speakers gave information and answered questions about effective discipline techniques and what is healthy self-esteem, as well as teaching/modeling financial responsibility for our children. Support for transitions to middle school and high school and a community-building service opportunity for parents rounded out the school year.

We are also committed to deepening communication across the organization through refinement of processes and structures. We developed collaborative strategies to deeply embed communication norms across stakeholder groups and examined the enhancement of the District 96 ENews as a communication tool to include brief glimpses into the classroom.

Lastly, in order to ensure long-term stability and continuing excellence through visioning, the Board continued its long-range visioning work over the course of the school year, including strategic planning sessions with the full administrative team.

Each and every year I am amazed at the level of the District 96 community's commitment to improvement. This commitment to continuous improvement is what drives our decisions and goal setting processes after careful consideration of data and the reflection upon what's best for all of our stakeholders. The work that happens in District 96 could not be done without high levels of collaboration at all levels of the organization. This continues to distinguish District 96 from others across the nation.

### **Fun Highlights and Facts**

- ★ Over 200 certified staff are completing 1181 curriculum hours this summer.
- ★ The Board of Education recognized nearly 500 students during the student recognition portion of Board meetings during 2015-16.
- ★ Approximately 40 District instructors are teaching or facilitating 36 courses and book studies this summer.
- ★ District 96 hosted over 230 visiting educators who came from across the United States and Canada to learn about our Professional Learning Community practices.
- ★ District 96 ran its largest summer school program ever, with 250 students attending 5 different programs over 2 sessions.
- ★ District 96 students performed at the 97th percentile in the state of Illinois in the area of science last year.
- ★ District 96 students performed at the 98th percentile in the state of Illinois in the area of reading last year.
- ★ District 96 students performed at the 99th percentile in the state of Illinois in the area of mathematics last year.
- ★ District 96 continues to perform as one of the Top Ten elementary school districts in the state of Illinois.

- ★ The examination of leading indicators correlated with student achievement indicates that District 96 is exceeding expectations.
- ★ Woodlawn Middle School has been nominated for its second Blue Ribbon Award from the United States Department of Education.
- ★ District 96 middle schools offered an average of 25 club and activity opportunities this year.
- ★ District 96 elementary schools offered 10 - 12 club and activity opportunities that range from after-school sports and Girls on The Run, to stock market club and student council.
- ★ District 96 middle schools offer intramural sports in addition to 8 sports team opportunities.
- ★ District 96 Parent-to-Parent Network offered 7 programs and monthly conversations on a variety of topics aimed at engaging parents and building community.
- ★ Of 46 competing schools in their division, Twin Groves Middle School took 6th place in the state Science Olympiad Tournament.
- ★ Woodlawn Middle School is the Illinois Science Olympiad Division B-A state champion.
- ★ The National Energy Education Development (NEED) project identified Woodlawn Middle School as the National Junior School of the Year, the Outstanding Energy Engineering and Design Project, and the Illinois Junior School of the Year for 2015-16!
- ★ District 96 is recognized as an Apple Distinguished Program and participated in the Midwest Apple Distinguished School showcase.
- ★ The District 96 Board recognized 71 middle school students for outstanding performance and participation in the Illinois Music Educator Association and Illinois Grade School Music Association events.
- ★ Eleven faculty members were awarded advanced degrees during the current school year.
- ★ Educator Ben Levin was recognized as the state of Illinois Health Educator of the Year.
- ★ The following District 96 faculty and staff members were recognized by the state of Illinois Those Who Excel program:
  - Lynette Fowler Katsoulis - Willow Grove Special Education Aide
  - Melissa Kumin - Twin Groves Spanish Teacher
  - Liz Zorn - Country Meadows Psychologist
  - District 96 Technology Team
  - Amanda Rickel - Kildeer 3rd Grade Teacher
  - Greg Grana - Woodlawn Principal
  - Bob Gauthier - Retired Board Member
- ★ Julie Schmidt, superintendent of schools, was nominated and recognized by her colleagues as Lake County Superintendent of the Year

### **Recommended Goals for 2016-17**

The high levels of expertise among our administration, faculty, and staff contribute significantly to all we are able to accomplish each school year. Our focus on ongoing improvement and innovative practices does not waiver and we continue to build the capacity of each and every person in our organization. In order to continue to improve, it will require laser-like focus on what is most important. We will continue to focus on maintaining high levels of student growth and achievement through the implementation of new learning standards to include science at the elementary level and social studies at the middle school level. We will continue to provide high levels of professional development with job-embedded components in order to equip our teachers with the learning opportunities they need to reach every student in every school every day. With the much-expanded staff and the expansion of curriculum at that level, we will provide high levels of support to ensure that all kindergarten students have a smooth transition. Lastly, we will continue to focus on parent and community engagement through communication and participation. Specific areas of focus will include:

- ★ Continued focus on providing high-quality professional development in the areas of instructional practices, thinking strategies, differentiation/extension, and student engagement
- ★ Focus on implementing full-day kindergarten to include best practices around the model to include play based learning
- ★ Provide cross school and job-alike reflection embedded in our professional development to include an EdCamp structure during a designated Institute Day, and the inclusion of teachers in a Learning Walk structure.
- ★ Focus on best practice in our new co-teaching model for our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students
- ★ Develop and embed language objectives for CLD students on our pacing guides
- ★ Continue what was identified as a two-year goal supporting the implementation of ReadyGen as the elementary literacy curriculum
- ★ Implement state of Illinois Next Generation Science Standards at the elementary level, supported by the implementation of the newly adopted TCI elementary science curriculum
- ★ Work to add science targets to the reporting process at the kindergarten level
- ★ Implement the new C3 social studies framework at the middle school level
- ★ Conduct a pilot on SEL standards reporting, providing building-level professional development
- ★ Provide final recommendations for the new middle school schedule, to be implemented with the opening of the 2017-18 school year
- ★ Support the implementation of 1:1 access at grades 4 and 5, including 4th and 5th graders taking home their device.
- ★ Develop and implement a new District 96 stakeholder group representative of our diverse community, focused on higher levels of two-way communication and sharing
- ★ Conduct a parent satisfaction survey to help guide Board of Education visioning moving forward

- ★ Continue to focus on deeply embedding communication norms to support high levels of collaboration district wide

### In Summary

Many residents refer proudly to the “great schools” in their community. Their comments, though, often reflect a cursory understanding of the curriculum and of the academic growth that occurs inside the buildings.

To prove its mettle, a “great school” compels a close look. District 96 schools stand up to such scrutiny. Our schools are, in fact, the destination of visiting educators nationally and internationally. Annually, we host administrators and teachers requesting to observe our own faculty as they work as a professional learning community—collaborating, teaching, extending, assessing, and supporting through intervention.

Ours is a district in which change is expected, because it’s the result of the zeal for ongoing improvement that distinguishes us. “Great District 96 schools” are schools in which leaders are fostered and nurtured, where professional development opportunities abound, and where collaboration and shared best practices lead to children’s academic growth. We are a district using data to drive instruction, developing finely focused learning targets to increase students’ fundamental understanding and equip them to extend their learning in ways that high school, college, and careers require.

The data tell part of the story: An analytic comparison of raw data scores shows that—compared to other students in the state of Illinois—on the new PARCC College and Career readiness assessment administered for the first time in spring 2015, District 96 students excelled.

**KCSD96 students performed at the 97th percentile in the area of science; in the 98th percentile in the area of reading; and in the 99th percentile in the area of math.**

And the rest of the story? That’s told by energized students, committed teachers, dedicated support staff, proud parents, and a Board of Education with a long-term vision centered squarely on every student’s academic and social/emotional growth.

Indeed, our students and faculty approach their work with a passion that inspires. We can’t wait—indeed, we *aren’t* waiting, as the work already is underway this summer—to build our capacity in the year ahead to better reach and teach every child in every District 96 school, every day. We invite you to look in and follow us as we continue our quest in 2016-17:

#Inspire96