



KCSD96

# staff newsletter

Staff (staf) n., 1. a group of people working together for a common goal

Kildeer Countryside School District 96 • June 2019

## End-of-Year Reflections

I'll be honest. Narrowing down a topic for a graduation speech is a challenge sometimes.

Every year I consider and discard various ideas for a message that speaks to our 8th graders and might also resonate with their parents and relatives in the Stevenson High School Sports Center bleachers.

I think of those young people celebrating an ending and a beginning that evening—8th graders composed or still fidgeting, eager or tentative—but every one, I realized, with leadership in his or her future.

Indeed, each will call on leadership skills that YOU have fostered in them, equipping them to step up and embracing opportunities to lead—in small groups in the classroom, during Flex period, in clubs and activities, and more.

In their future it's highly likely that each will be called upon to lead in some way—as a club officer, as a community event organizer, as a workplace team leader, or maybe as an entrepreneur creating and marketing the next BIG IDEA.

Seeing our faculty and staff working passionately to develop leaders in our schools this year is exciting and led me readily to the idea I wanted to be a graduation evening takeaway: A leader's words matter.

My next challenge...what leadership quote to build on? As I was considering, my 13-year-

old daughter chimed in, "Mom... don't forget 'With power comes great responsibility'...to which I responded..." "I like that one, Lily—do you know who said it?"

Her reply? "Of course, Mom. It was Spider Man!"

So, maybe not THAT quote—but I found the KCSD96 value "Model for others what you expect from others" is a great guide for leaders.

Yes, leadership IS about taking action, accomplishing goals, and meeting needs. We've all heard "Actions speak louder than words."

But as compassionate professionals, you know that a leader's words matter, too. In fact, often as much as his or her actions do....

The potential and power of social media to bring pain (online bullying) or positive outcomes (GoFundMe to help someone in need) is a 21st-century reality.

Making a conscious choice to choose words deliberately and weigh what you say before you say it or send it is the beginning. And it isn't easy.

As adults, we know that an urgent or passionate call for action can become so loud it can make it hard to stay focused and to stop

to consider all perspectives before responding.

With your nurturing our future leaders in District 96 classrooms, in lunchrooms, and on playgrounds, I see our students being prepared to raise the bar and commit to using words that are respectful and affirming. Because a leader's words matter.

With your guidance, I see our students growing into leaders who will honor the dignity of others. They'll keep conversations civil, negotiations productive, and co-workers and volunteers feeling valued and willing to follow their lead.

Because a leader's words matter.

As caring and committed educators, you show every day that you excel at nurturing our students' awareness and understanding in a richly diverse world, equipping them to distinguish themselves as leaders and as individuals.

Each one of you contributes to our students' future success in so many apparent and significant ways. I hope you'll take a moment to recognize the truly powerful and positive difference you make. I appreciate all that you do for every student in every KCSD96 school.

Enjoy a well-earned summer break!  
—Julie

**With your guidance,  
I see our students  
growing into leaders  
who will honor the  
dignity of others.**

## APPLAUSE

**Congratulations to Ellen Gartenberg**, Woodlawn math teacher, whose daughter **Brittany Gartenberg** will marry **Kristopher Kinash** in July. In addition, Ellen and her family celebrated daughter **Melissa's** graduation from Arizona State University this year.

**Congratulations to Jaime Appell**, Twin Groves tech coach, who welcomed **Madison Brooke Austin** on Jan. 24. **Austin** is a proud big brother.

**Congratulations to Vickie Kotel**, Country Meadows instructional aide, whose daughter **Taylor** is engaged to **Sam**.

**Congratulations and best wishes to Alexandra Carson**, secretary for teaching & learning, with a trifecta of celebrations with her children. **Michael** graduated in May from Columbia Law School; **Katie** will be married this summer; and **Clair** will be a freshman at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, in the fall.

**Congratulations to Cassie Smalley**, Business Office accounts payable clerk, who married **Corey Ross** on May 31.

**Congratulations to Lorna Jaegers**, Twin Groves administrative assistant, and her KCSD96 alumnus son **Eric Jaegers**, who married **Kelly O'Malley** on Apr. 20.

**Congratulations to Greg Grana**, Woodlawn Middle School principal, whose daughter **Gracie Grana** graduated from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology on May 25 with a degree in electrical engineering. She has been employed by Valdes Engineering Company, Lombard.

**Congratulations to Liz Zorn**, Woodlawn Middle School psychologist, and **Courtney O'Connor**, married on Jan. 5.

**Congratulations to Ann Tripp**, Woodlawn Middle School social worker, and **Dan Field**. Their wedding will be this summer.

**Congratulations to Pam Kupsco**, Woodlawn Middle School administrative assistant, whose daughter **Lindsay Kupsco** will marry **Bryan Wheeler** on June 14 in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

**Congratulations to Katie Sheridan**, Director of Language & Early Literacy, on the birth of her daughter. **Devin Kate Sheridan** was born on Apr. 29, weighing 7 pounds, 6 ounces, and measuring 20 inches. Devin's three proud big brothers are **Everett, Liam, and Graham**.

**Congratulations to Lindsey Emde**, Kildeer language development coach, and her husband **Luke Emde**, Kildeer PE teacher, on the birth of **Josie Mae Emde** on Feb. 28. At birth, Josie weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces, and measured 19 inches. She joins proud big brother **Casey**.

**Congratulations to Sharokeen Zaia**, Prairie 3rd-grade teacher, and her husband **Francis** on the birth of their son **Zachariah** in August.



Staff celebrating 10 service years include (back row, l to r): **Scott Eichaker, Julie Heimer, Gloria Ufheil, Katie O'Neill** (front row, l to r): **Alexandra Carson, Elizabeth Davis, Nicole Vecchie, and Sarah Gord**.

## APPLAUSE

**Congratulations to Ana Kontos**, Country Meadows bilingual aide, whose son KCSD96 alumnus **George Kontos** graduated from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, with highest honors, with a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering.

**Congratulations to Clara Casas-Maya**, Country Meadows bilingual kindergarten teacher, whose son **Beno Maya** graduated from Stevenson on May 24 and will study mechanical engineering at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

**Congratulations to Sheila O’Gara**, Willow Grove PE teacher, whose son **Ryan** is engaged to **Audrey Kirby**. Their wedding will be next summer.

**Congratulations to Robin Goldberg**, Willow Grove special education aide, whose son **Josh** is engaged to Kildeer Special Education Teacher **Kellie Jay Cristofaro**.

**Congratulations to Nicole Barba**, Prairie 5th-grade teacher, and her fiance, whom she’s known since middle school. They were engaged on Feb. 23—with the camera rolling! Their wedding will be Mar. 21, 2020.

**Congratulations to Marla Keper**, Willow Grove instructional aide, whose daughter KCSD96 alumna **Leslie Keper** is engaged to a Gymboree classmate she met at age 8 months. Leslie and **Ross Neumann** (Highland Park) will marry in Palm Springs on Mar. 21, 2020.

In addition, Marla is celebrating KCSD96 alumna daughter **Lainie Keper’s** selection as one of 25 worldwide to *Globed*—a two-year graduate school program. Lainie is leaving her teaching career in Seattle to pursue another passion.

**Congratulations and Best wishes to Linda Dolan**, Willow Grove kindergarten teacher, and her daughter-in-law **Kasie Dolan**, Ivy Hall 4th-grade teacher. Linda’s son **Tyler** and Kasie are expecting Linda’s first grandchild, due in August. In addition, Linda’s daughter **Allie** is engaged to **Paul**. Their wedding will be in May 2020.

**Congratulations to Leslie Norman**, Kildeer art teacher, whose son KCSD96 alumnus **Scott** married **Desiree** in Chicago on Feb. 2. They live in San Francisco.

**Congratulations to Cynthia Rosenberg**, Country Meadows special education aide, whose daughter **Abby** is graduating from Washington University Medical School and will begin her dermatology residency there in June.

Staff celebrating 25 service years include (l to r): **Dawn Kaminski**, **Deborah Stanton**, **Dr. Beth Dalton**, and **Jennifer Cigrand**.



# Retirees' Reflections & New Directions

## Best wishes to each one of our KCSD96 2019 retirees:

**Patricia (Patti) Buban, John (Jack) Curtis, Carrie Dyer, Vickie Kotel, Ann Lessman, Ron Lynn, Richard (Rick) Polidoro, and Linda Tandet.**

Some of our retirees share their reflections and plans for their next chapter...

### Vickie Kotel

**Instructional Aide, Country Meadows Elementary School**

"My first two years in District 96 were as a 1:1 aide., the first year being for a 4th grader (he'll always be my favorite!) in **Jason Pazol's** class. I sometimes went by the name 'Mrs. Pazol.'

The 10 years since have been in reading support—first assisting **Sue Frisch**. Most recently, it has been assisting **Lauren Fix**, who shares my OCD love of color-coding, organization, and purple. She inspired me every day and I'm grateful for getting to work with her and to call her a friend!

Some T-shirts I should have ordered over the years:

- We can do anything for 30 minutes.
- I didn't ask if it was #1 or #2.
- Don't lick the walls.
- Don't lick the chair.
- You can't read the book if it's not open/upside-down/under your chair/under the table/on your head.
- This is your chance to give them to me for 30 minutes, so take it!
- Me: "You need to read your book." Student: "I'm good."
- Me: "Let's write about your holiday." Student: "How do you spell *beer*?"

**"My friends could never understand what went on here each day that made me love this job so much...."**

It's fun to have a work environment that is supportive and interactive. Thank you to all the staff I've worked with over the years and thank you for respecting my input. My friends could never understand what went on here each day that made me love this job so much, and they've always enjoyed my fun stories. My fellow ESPs would agree that every day is an adventure!

It was always my goal to make a difference for someone—student or staff—each day. This job works only if you put your heart into it every day, and that I did!"

## Ann Lessman

**Special Education Aide, Willow Grove Early Learning Center**

"I will miss the wonderful friends I've made in the twenty years I've been in District 96.  
(I'll continue to see many of you!)

I'll also miss the children.

Looking ahead, I can't wait to do all the traveling my husband and I have planned!"

**"My advice  
to all is to  
KEEP  
SMILING!"**

## John (Jack) Curtis

**PE Teacher, Country Meadows Elementary School**

"I'll miss the students and the teachers in the years ahead.

I do look forward to unlimited time to spend with grandkids and kids, hiking, biking, kayaking, swimming, camping, traveling. And maybe even golf—if I am in need of aggravation!

Funny events I'll remember are those I experience when I'm working the Cubs games and have 35-year-old men and women who are former students of mine asking me if I remember their names!"

**"Keep track  
of the funny  
events that  
happen as you  
teach. They'll  
be easier to  
recall when  
you're ready  
to retire!"**

## Richard (Rick) Polidoro

**Science Teacher, Woodlawn Middle School**

"When it comes to science curriculum, the Battle of the Eggs was a favorite. Students took creative and sometimes crazy approaches to designing and building protection for their egg so it could survive a competitor's direct hit. Competitions were fun and funny!

Students most missed will be those who really loved science and engineering. It was inspiring kids like those that led to a career change from electrical engineering to science classroom teacher."

**"I'll most miss  
those students  
who really  
had a love of  
science and  
engineering."**

## SUMMER BUILDING ACCESS, BADGES, AND MORE

### Turn In Keys and Badges

Staff should turn in all KCSD96 keys to their building office before leaving for Summer Break. Also turn in badges, unless working in a District summer program.

Badges in poor condition will be sent to the Business Office for replacement. If a new photo is required, you'll be notified by either the Business Office or by Human Resources Secretary **Laurie Kuxhouse**. Badges and keys will be re-issued upon your return for the 2019–2020 school year.

All staff badges will be deactivated June 10 (excluding those held by District administrators, custodians, office staff, or staff participating in Summer School or Summer Writing programs).

NOTE: *For Kildeer Elementary staff only*, however, at 10 p.m. on June 4 badge access will be deactivated for abatement work, to begin at 6:30 AM on June 5.

### Varied Building Access and Project Timelines

With the exception of Kildeer Elementary, staff may coordinate with office personnel to see if there are any times they can access their classroom(s) in June.

**There will be no access by staff to ANY schools after June 28** (with the exception of District administrators).

### Building-Specific Projects Affect Access Schedules

Our goal is to make classrooms accessible by teachers as soon as possible pending completion of the work at that building.

Accessibility will be confirmed and then communicated to staff by the building principal in late July. **Please do not call the office staff or custodians to request permission to access the building.**

As previously mentioned, Kildeer staff will have access to their building until 10 p.m. on June 4.

Ivy Hall staff will have access to their building until 10 p.m. on June 7. Work at Ivy Hall will begin June 10. Due to the nature and scope of the projects, there will be no access to hallways or classrooms during this work.

Summer work at Willow Grove, Country Meadows, Prairie, Twin Groves, and Woodlawn will begin June 10. Staff wanting access to any one of those buildings during June must receive permission from the building office. Access to specific areas of buildings will be limited, depending on the status of work underway at the time.

### Summer Program Locations

Staff working Summer School, ESY, or other summer programs will have appropriate building access.

Academic Summer School is at Country Meadows. ESY

is at Woodlawn. Jump-Start Kindergarten is at Willow Grove. Staff Development and Summer Writing will be at Woodlawn weekdays from 7:00 AM - 4:00 p.m.

Remember, though you may be in your home building for summer programs, you will not have access to the entire building and may not have access to your classroom.

Custodians have limited time to complete tasks and do appreciate your understanding and cooperation. The building head custodian will know which areas are accessible and which are not.

**Friends & Alumni of KCSD96 Scholarships** were awarded to the following Class of 2019 Stevenson High School seniors who are alumni of KCSD96:

#### **Brett Myers**

*Marc E. Spivak Scholarship*  
(Twin Groves alumnus)

#### **Miranda Liu**

*Marc E. Spivak Scholarship*  
(Woodlawn alumna)

#### **Meghan Oh**

*Dr. Thomas W. Many Scholarship*  
(Twin Groves alumna)

#### **Joshua Snider**

*Dr. Thomas W. Many Scholarship*  
(Woodlawn alumnus)

#### **Ethan Kallish**

*Lauren S. Gordon Scholarship*  
(Woodlawn alumnus)

## CONGRATULATIONS TO KCSD96 STAFF AWARDED ADVANCED DEGREES



Back row (l to r): **Chanelle Savich, Katie O'Neill, Samantha LaVine, Vince Masse, Brittany Balek, Cara Anderson, Nicole Yandura, Ryan Zac.** Middle row (l to r): **Julie Shaver, Joanne Rushenberg, Bonnie Barksdale, Laurel Diaz, Paige Cohen, Carly Kolpak, Melanie Abramowicz, Jennifer Chappas; Melody Martinez.** First row (l to r): **Kimberly Strauss, Lindsay Slivnick, Stephanie Sabath, Emily Logar, Amanda Rickel, Kathleen Hoth, Jennifer Didech**

Not pictured: **Courtney Aussem; Elizabeth Doherty; Todd Halstead; Teaghan Hock**



*Staff celebrating 15 years of service include (l to r): **Barbara Satoh, Kristen Linnenburger, Elayna Spivack, Andrea Warren, Joanie Herlihy, Kristen Vileta***

## KEA Officers/ Building Representatives for 2019–2020

**President:** Ben Leven  
**Vice President:** Jeff Cummings  
**Treasurer:** Jill Leone  
**Secretary:** Samantha Schaefer

**Region Council Representative:**  
Kristina Harvat

### Building Representatives

#### **Willow Grove:**

Shelly Scoville  
Melody Martinez

#### **Country Meadows:**

Lisa Zimmerman  
AJ Loessl

#### **Ivy Hall:**

Todd Halstead  
Marci Fooden

#### **Kildeer:**

Barb Satoh  
Leanne April

#### **Prairie:**

Chris Morris  
Liz Doherty

#### **Twin Groves:**

Carolyn Pinta  
Jeff Williams

#### **Woodlawn:**

Kelly Russell

Staff celebrating 20 service years include (back row, l to r):

**Ann Lessman, Lisa Huberty, Judy Schmerer, Francisco Gonzalez, Mary Eck** (front row, l to r):  
**Elizabeth Fresen, Leslie Norman, Erica Martin, Alexis Jarrett**

## ESP Officers/ Building Representatives for 2019–2020

### Co-Presidents:

Julie Donofrio  
Ruth Fineman

### Secretary:

Ellen Shapiro

### Treasurer:

Lorna Jaegers

### Regional Council Rep:

Pam Kupsco

### Building Representatives

#### **Willow Grove:**

Karen Graham

#### **Country Meadows:**

Deb Stanton  
Nancy Wielondek

#### **Ivy Hall:**

Scott Eichaker  
Wendy Weiner

#### **Kildeer:**

Julie Donofrio

#### **Prairie:**

Sheryl Schechter  
Joan Dahm

#### **Twin Groves:**

Patricia Pazdioch

#### **Woodlawn:**

Terri Chiodo



2019 Superintendent Award recipients pictured with **Supt. Julie Schmidt** and **Principals Jessica Barnes** and **Greg Grana** include (top) Twin Groves 8th graders **Matthew Bressler** and **Bhavya Vegesna** and Woodlawn 8th graders **Ricky Tionson** and **Lance Locker**.



# Years of Service milestones...

## + 25 YRS

Greg Grana - 26 years  
Dawn Bussert - 27 years  
Mara Barry - 28 years  
Felicia Sladek - 28 years  
Kenneth Goodlow - 29 years  
Julie Holzauer - 29 years  
Todd Spangler - 29 years  
Nancy Wielondek - 29 years  
Jeff Cummings - 30 years  
Ruth Fineman - 30 years  
Ellen Gartenberg - 30 years  
Kathryn Naples-Angel - 31 years  
James Donofrio - 32 years  
Pamela Kupsco - 32 years  
Carrie Dyer\* - 33 years  
James Cichowski - 34 years  
Linda Johnson - 39 years  
Christopher Kuhlman - 42 years  
\* - Retiring

## 25 YRS:

Jennifer Cigrand  
Beth Dalton  
Dawn Kaminski  
Deborah Stanton

## 20 YRS:

Mary Eck  
Elizabeth Fresen  
Francisco Gonzalez  
Lisa Huberty  
Alexis Jarrett  
Ann Lessman\*  
Erica Martin  
Leslie Norman  
Mary Sable  
Judy Schmerer  
\* - Retiring

## 15 YRS:

Jose Carreon  
Lindsey Emde  
Joanie Herlihy  
Kristen Linnenburger  
Barbara Satoh  
Elayna Spivack  
Kristen Vileta  
Andrea Warren

## 10 YRS:

Alexandra Carson  
Elizabeth Davis  
Scott Eichaker  
Sarah Gord  
Julie Heimer  
Jonathan Hitcho  
Katie O'Neill  
Francisca Roche  
Jody Seal  
Kathryn Sheridan  
Gloria Ufheil  
Nicole Vecchie  
Tina Way



Butterflies are free to fly from Ivy Hall....

## District/Business Offices Summer Hours/UPDATE

The **District and Business Offices** will be open to the public on the following **summer schedule**:

June 3 through Aug. 2, 2018:

**Mon.–Thurs.:**

8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

**Fri.:**

7:30 AM – 11:30 AM

**July 4:** Closed in observance of Independence Day



Retiring Woodlawn Science Teacher **Rick Polidoro** leads out the graduated 8th-Grade Class of 2019.