

**Strategic Plan Goals:**

- Student Achievement
- Climate
- Resource

# State of the District Reveals Successes and Challenges

*Superintendent Dr. Gerald Hill presented his State of the District report to the Board of Education recently, showcasing incredible student achievement, while at the same time revealing fiscal challenges on the horizon.*

**D**r. Hill shared in the report the realities of what schools across the country, and specifically Illinois, will be facing in the coming years:

- **Economic Uncertainty:** The State of Illinois has major financial issues and currently owes \$2.2 million to District 34.
- **Accountability for Results:** While the federal No Child Left Behind Act will likely be changed, one idea that will remain is that schools and districts will be held accountable for results on standardized tests. This is something District 34 welcomes, as long as the exams are in alignment with local standards for achievement and are reflective of community expectations.

The strategic plan for District 34 centers around student achievement, climate and resources.

**Student Achievement**

In the area of student achievement, Dr. Hill informed the Board that on national tests students were extremely successful. Students surpassed very high goals set by the Board. More detail is provided on page 2 of this issue.

The Board asked what led to that success, and factors mentioned included: high quality staff, literacy and reading initiatives, providing time for teachers to work together in teams, reductions in class size, and a new approach to addressing individual student needs, titled Response to Intervention (RtI).

**Climate**

Climate indicators measured include items like staff, parent and community surveys, as well as retention rates. District 34 has a very selective hiring process and just 2% of individuals who applied last year for certified positions were selected. This past year the District enjoyed a 94% retention rate. Additionally, 98% of parents either agreed or strongly agreed their student receives a high quality education.

**Resources**

In the area of resources, a cautionary tale was shared with the Board. The



Student achievement is at an all-time high in District 34.

District is currently in a strong financial position given 54% fund balances and a balanced budget for the 2009–10 school year. However, projections indicate that by the end of the 2011–12 school year those fund balances will be depleted to the Board mandated minimum of 30%. This will occur in order to balance the budget given the projected deficit spending. A Budget Alignment Advisory Committee will begin work in the fall to provide the Board with suggestions on changes that could balance the budget.

# Student Achievement Reports Show Incredible Success

*Students in District 34 are learning at a level that has never been reached previously, according to reports recently provided to the Board of Education.*

The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) assessments are given in the fall and spring of each school year. These exams are used by the District to measure not only the levels at which students are learning but also the amount of growth in learning they have made during the academic year.

## Goals Reached

Students across the District are assessed on 19 grade level and subject area NWEA exams. District 34 measures its students against other high achieving school districts across the country and raises the bar from that level to set its goal. Even with an elevated target level, in 19 of the 19 measures students surpassed the District goal. In fact, in 13 of

the 19 measures, students were significantly higher than the goal.

“This success is a tribute to the dedicated work of the educators at the classroom level with support from both their individual school and the District as a whole,” Superintendent Dr. Gerald Hill says. “To be meeting or exceeding a level of achievement that is higher than other high performing districts across the country in all 19 of our measures is simply amazing.”

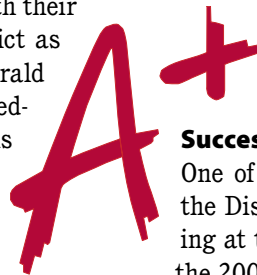
## Individual Growth

The District also analyzes growth scores for individual students. The goal is for the average growth of each child in District 34 to be greater than the average growth for students across the coun-

try who started with the same score on the exam given in the fall. If reached, the growth goal would put District 34 in the top 5–10% of school districts in the country. In 11 of the 15 measures, the District reached this lofty goal.

## Success at GBS

One of the other areas reported by the District is how students are doing at the high school level. During the 2009–10 school year, 82% of the first-semester grades earned by District 34 freshmen at Glenbrook South High School were either A or B, compared to 81% of the grades earned by non-District 34 students. District 34 students have earned a higher percentage of A and B grades for the past four years.



## Thank You Retirees

The District thanks its recent retirees for their dedicated service. The retirees include:

**Claire Meyers**, Attea Teacher  
**Teresa Cavallini**, Hoffman Teacher

## District 34 Again Earns Bright Red Apple Award

District 34 was awarded the 2010 Bright Red Apple Award as one of just 83 school districts in Illinois (out of 869 districts) to earn the honor. All districts in Illinois are considered for this award.

It is based on five main criteria: academic performance, pupil/teacher ratio, expenditure per pupil, educational level of teachers and average salary. District 34 was strong in all five family-favored areas.



**Bright Red Apple Award recognizes District 34 for Excellence.**

## Hoffman Teacher Earns Regional Award

**Beth Naulty**, a teacher at Hoffman School, recently earned the North Suburban Special Education District (NSSED) Association of Parents & Staff Dave Peterson Possibilities Award.

The Award is given to one NSSED educator among 18 districts who displays an outstanding commitment to the inherent possibilities in children with special needs.

“Beth is an extraordinary teacher who has helped her students to become more than they ever thought possible through her true devotion to them and their families,” says Hoffman Principal Mark Walther.

NSSED is a special education cooperative in the northern suburbs. As one of the participating districts, District 34 receives services from NSSED staff for the District’s special education students as needed.



**Beth Naulty**

# Dr. Michael Nicholson Hired as Deputy Superintendent

*The Board of Education unanimously appointed Dr. Michael Nicholson as the District's Deputy Superintendent this spring. He has nearly 20 years educational experience and most recently served as Executive Director of Secondary Learning in Olentangy Local Schools located in Lewis Center, Ohio.*

**D**r. Nicholson has served in several education roles during his career including coordinator of continuous improvement, elementary principal, middle school assistant principal and 5th grade classroom teacher.

In 2004, Dr. Nicholson took a position with Battelle for Kids, a national, not-for-profit organization that provides strategic counsel and innovative solutions for educational improvement. As the senior director for research and evaluation, he led professional development for hundreds of Ohio educators.

## **Improved Student Achievement**

Olentangy Local Schools had worked with Dr. Nicholson when he was with Battelle for Kids and recruited him for the executive director of secondary learning position for which he was hired in October of 2007. In his time there, he worked to help implement a change in

math delivery at the middle school level that allowed for more students to take higher level math courses. He also assisted with the development of a walk-through system across the 20-building school district to capture classroom instructional data to support best teaching practice.

## **Education Background**

Dr. Nicholson earned his bachelor of science degree in computer science from Hartwick College. He earned a master of arts degree in elementary education from The State University of New York at Buffalo. His doctorate degree in educational administration was earned from Ohio State University.

## **Search Process**

The Board began its search for a Deputy Superintendent in March after a leadership needs assessment conducted for District 34 indicated the need to add



**Dr. Michael Nicholson**

the position for several reasons including the anticipated turnover of central office leadership in the coming years. Dr. Nicholson's major role will be as supervisor, mentor and coach for the eight principals. Additionally, he will oversee instructional support and implement a comprehensive professional development program for all staff.

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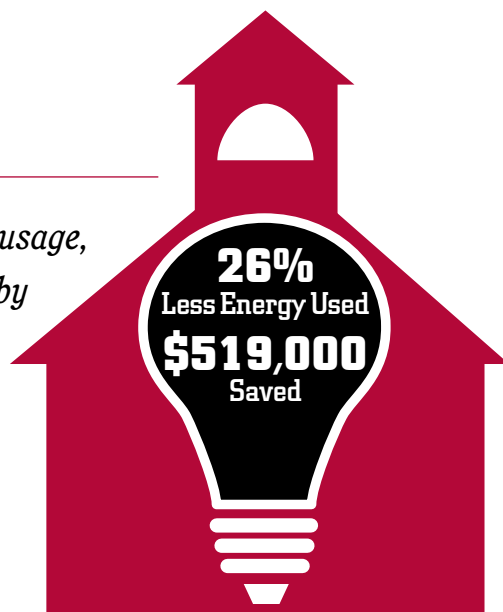
The position is a cost-neutral addition since the Board decided this spring to eliminate a curriculum facilitator position and significantly reduce the District's consulting budget in 2010-11 related to responsibilities that will now be assumed by Dr. Nicholson. These changes result in approximately \$175,000 in reductions.

# Energy Reduction Results in More Than \$500,000 in Savings

*For nearly two years District 34 has been working to reduce energy usage, lower its carbon footprint and ultimately save money. Those efforts by all employees over the past 19 months have resulted in \$519,000 (or 26%) savings.*

**T**his has been accomplished through the way we use our heating and cooling equipment and other energy saving efforts by all staff members.

The District recently received the Pacesetter Award from Energy Education Inc. in recognition of the level of savings it has achieved in the short time the program has been implemented.



# From the Superintendent

## Student Achievement and Financial Challenges

**A**s we reflect on the school year just completed and prepare for the school year that will begin in a few short weeks, I focus on the incredible academic success we have achieved. At the same time, I am concerned about the future threat to that success.

District 34 will arrive at a crossroads in the coming years. By most measures, we are a highly successful school system – from test scores, to parent satisfaction, to financial management, to meeting the individual needs of students. However, as I look to the horizon, I see a threat to that success in the form of fiscal uncertainty.

The State of Illinois is in dismal financial shape and I believe there will be major shifts in services and support, including education. These cuts are above and beyond the \$2.2 million the State currently owes the District. Additionally, many of the reasons we are able to achieve our current success relates to class size, hiring of highly qualified staff and retaining dedicated teachers, support staff and administrators. All of this takes fiscal resources. Our projections show that deficit spending will begin next year.

While I paint a dire picture, I do so with a purpose. I believe firmly in transparent governance and I pledge that District 34 will continue to communicate and share information with the community. Additionally, I encourage residents to become informed. One such opportunity will be this fall as the Budget Alignment Advisory Committee begins to look into solutions to the fiscal challenge we face together.

I look forward to continuing to provide as much information as possible on this challenge to our success. Additionally, I anticipate partnering with the community as we work together to weather the storm on the horizon.

Dr. Gerald Hill  
Superintendent



### Our Mission

*Recognizing the needs of each child  
and believing all children can learn,  
the mission of Glenview School District 34  
is to empower children to be responsible learners  
and decision makers in a changing society.*

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