

Dr. Michael Nicholson Named Next District 34 Superintendent

District 34 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.

Bringing 20 years of educational experience, including the 16 months in District 34 focused on mentoring principals and overseeing instructional support of the school district, the Board of Education unanimously named Deputy Superintendent Dr. Michael Nicholson as the District's next superintendent.

"During Mike's short tenure in District 34, he has demonstrated educational leadership, expertise and a style that will allow him to be highly successful as our next educational leader," Board President Chris Northwick says. "He not only has the ability, but he also values collaboration with teachers, staff members, and the community, which is a hallmark of District 34. Additionally, he has a strong knowledge of the types of initiatives that will lead to increased student growth and achievement. We are confident he is the right leader at the right time."

Current District 34 Superintendent Dr. Gerald Hill will retire from District 34 on June 30, 2012 following an eight-year tenure.

Dr. Nicholson has been a fixture within the schools since arriving more than a year ago as he has worked to build relationships with all staff. He has provided district leadership in many important initiatives focused on student growth, including:

- Implementing a system to assist students gain a better insight into what they are learning in order to help improve student achievement. This is being done through the posting of learning targets, which helps students better understand the learning goals for each lesson.
- In coordination with a team, creating the five-year professional development plan to map out the continuous improvement of educators.
- Leading a task force that looked strategically at how the District utilizes time. This task force created a set of principles that will be considered as the District evaluates the use of time to ensure the school system is spending this valuable resource wisely.
- Planning the work of the Budget Alignment

Advisory Committee that will help shape the future direction of the school district's financial resources.

"I am very excited about the direction District 34 is taking with regard to collaboration between the Board, teachers, support staff, administrators and the community," Dr. Nicholson



Dr. Michael Nicholson (second from right) works with staff members during a recent professional development session.

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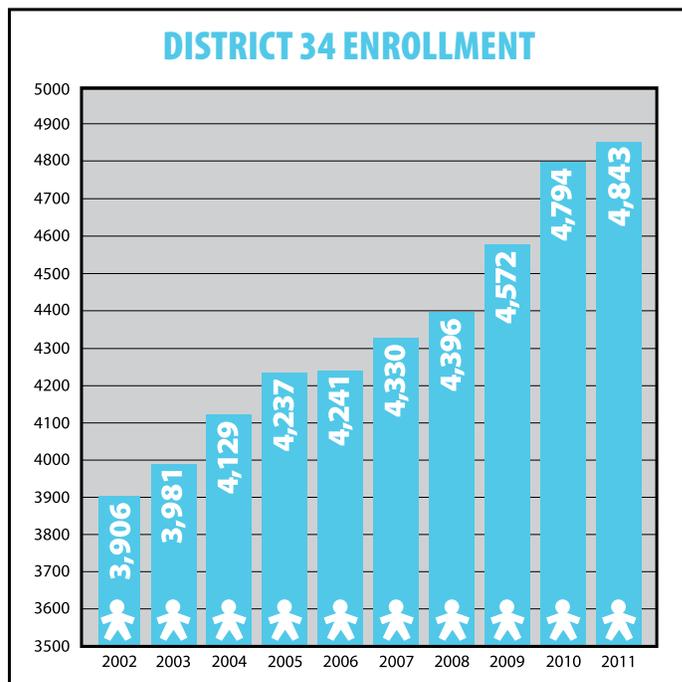
District 34 Enrollment Continues to Increase

Nearly 1,000 More Students Educated in District 34 when Compared with 2002

The number of students being taught in District 34's eight schools increased by 49 students from last year, marking the 10th year in a row the enrollment has increased. Today, District 34 educates nearly 1,000 more students than it did in 2002.

"The District has been diligently watching and analyzing its enrollment trends and figures as we work to ensure that, even with the additional students, we are providing a quality educational environment for all students," Dr. Gerald Hill says. "The Boundary Committee study last year, and the engagement of the community in a final recommendation, has helped us as we face this challenge."

Following study and community opinion through input sessions, the Boundary Committee recommended the Board increase class size by one student at the kindergarten level and by two students at the 1st through 5th grade levels.



Next Superintendent Named

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says. "That spirit of collective decision making is one of the reasons I was drawn to the District, and one of the reasons I believe we will be able to thoughtfully address challenges we face as a school system."

Nicholson says improving student assessment, solving deficit spending and working to increase teacher effectiveness are top priorities when he becomes the seventh superintendent in District 34's more than 70-year history on July 1, 2012.

When the Board was searching for a Deputy Superintendent, it was with an eye toward finding someone who would be given primary consideration for succession to the su-

perintendency based upon performance. In fact, the Board conducted the search as if it were searching for a superintendent. The Board had a leadership assessment report conducted by an independent firm that engaged both staff and the community in input sessions to identify what type of leader would be most successful in District 34. That led to more than 60 applications for the Deputy Superintendent position. As part of the search, Dr. Nicholson was interviewed by a group of teachers, parents and administrators, in addition to interviewing with the Board of Education on multiple occasions.

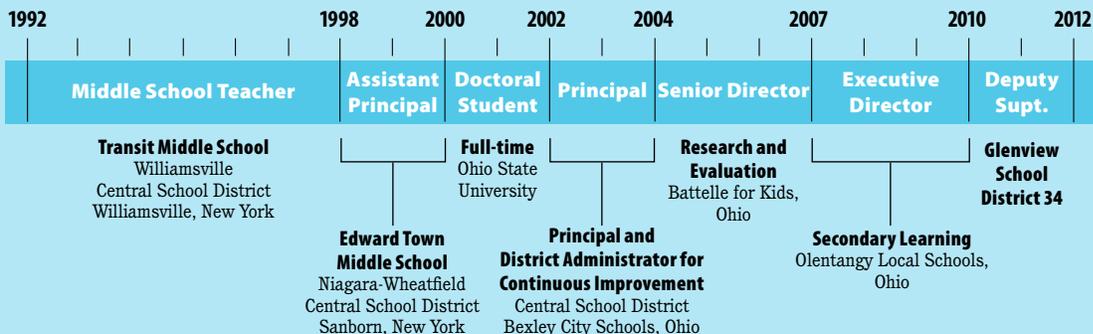
The position of Deputy Superintendent will not be filled once vacated by Dr. Nicholson in June of 2012.

Dr. Michael Nicholson: Education and Experience

Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Science
Hartwick College

Master of Arts Degree in Elementary Education
The State University of New York at Buffalo

Doctor of Educational Administration
The Ohio State University



Student Achievement Report Shows Continued Increases in Student Learning

Jenny is the student whose hand flies into the air as soon as her teacher begins to ask a question to the class. Her classmate Frank struggles at school and his biggest fear is being called upon to answer a question. Frank works hard but the concepts don't come easily to him, while Jenny latches on to just about every idea taught.

This illustration helps to show the cross section of students that walk through the doors of District 34's eight schools. These types of students, and many others, are represented in the scores reported recently to the Board of Education on both the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) and the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) assessments.

District 34 Significantly Above National Targets

On the NWEA exams in reading, math and language usage, District 34 students met or exceeded national targets on all 19 measures. In District 34, targets are set at a much higher level. Based on those much higher targets, District 34 students met or exceeded the goal on 16 of the 19 measures.

Even at those higher target levels, a student like Jenny would likely exceed that goal. For a student like Frank, this would be difficult to achieve but is something he would hopefully reach with educational support. One benefit of an exam like the NWEA (which is computerized) is that for both Jenny and Frank the exam adjusts based upon how the student answers questions. This dynamic exam helps provide the teacher with an accurate measure of the child's knowledge and helps inform the instruction provided.

NWEA also measures growth in learning from year to year and within a year. Based upon this fall assessment, individual growth measures are set for each child for the school year. In the case of both Jenny and Frank, the growth goal is set at a level that is a stretch goal for their individual abilities. The results of that assessment will be reported later in the school year.



93% of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Standards

On the most recent ISAT assessments, more than 93% of students either met or exceeded state standards. This is the sixth consecutive year more than 90% of students either met or exceeded state standards. For both Jenny and Frank, they would take the same ISAT exam. Unlike NWEA, the ISATs do not provide the teacher with as useful of information about a student's knowledge in the subject area assessed since the

results are not typically available for five months.

ISAT results and other measures are used by the federal government to determine if schools and districts are making progress as part of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The standards, called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), have been increasing since NCLB's inception and increase each year until 2014 when 100% of public school children are expected to meet or exceed state standards in all areas. NCLB requires that not just the school as a whole meets standards, but subsets of populations within the school must also meet specific levels of achievement.

Despite the high overall scores, two District 34 schools did not make AYP this year. This occurred when one or more of the subgroups at each school did not meet the standards set for this year.

Anyone interested in learning more about the academic achievement in District 34 for students like Jenny and Frank should visit www.glenview34.org.

From the Superintendent



Our Mission

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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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Future Direction Being Established

Successful organizations ensure they clearly define their mission, vision, values and guiding principles. Additionally, they find the right leaders to make those strategic priorities come to life. The District 34 Board of Education is doing just that.

As is shared in this issue of *Schoollook*, the Board has hired Dr. Michael Nicholson as the next superintendent in District 34. Having worked with Mike over the past 16 months, I can share that he is a high quality leader, big picture thinker and someone that works well in a collaborative environment. I am looking forward to the smooth transition in leadership with Mike already a part of the team.

In fact, I believe typical leadership transitions take a lot of focus, energy and time away from the work at hand. However, because of the thoughtful approach in leadership succession planning by the Board of Education, District 34 will be able to keep its focus and maintain momentum, while avoiding the delays that typically come with a new leader in an organization.

As Mike completes his second year as the District's Deputy Superintendent, the Board is completing a collaborative approach to establishing the strategic plan for the school system that he will implement. A group of approximately 50 stakeholders (teachers, support staff, parents, community members, Board members and administrators) has been working since June to establish that future direction. The Board is scheduled to review the new plan in November and adopt it in December.

With the new plan and new leader in place, I believe District 34 is poised for continued success in the future.

Dr. Gerald Hill, Superintendent

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