

# School District 29

## BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT

Middlefork School  
405 Wagner Road  
847/881-9500

School District 29  
Northfield, Illinois 60093  
www.sunsetridge29.net

Sunset Ridge School  
525 Sunset Ridge Road  
847/881-9400

February 2008



Dr. Linda Vieth

### Dear Sunset Ridge Parents and Community Members,

At District 29 we care deeply about our students' school experiences. As part of our effort to improve the experiences of all children attending Middlefork or Sunset Ridge, we are conducting a District survey to better understand what we do well and where we could

improve. We recognize the important role our schools play in the community, and we value your input as a resident. Whether you have children who currently attend Middlefork or Sunset Ridge, young children who may attend our schools at some point in the future, older children who have graduated from Sunset Ridge, children in private schools, or do not have children at all, we are interested in your feedback. We are asking for 15 to 20 minutes of your time to help us maintain the excellence for which our schools are known.

We have hired School Perceptions, a company with considerable experience and expertise conducting surveys and providing feedback to districts like ours. A committee of District 29 parents, staff members, and community representatives worked with School Perceptions to develop our survey. We understand the importance of keeping your responses confidential. All responses will be received and tabulated by School Perceptions. Data will be reported for groups of respondents, and individual names will never be used.

A letter explaining the survey process will be mailed to all residences in early February. If you do not receive a letter please contact the Sunset Ridge office at (847) 881-9400 and the necessary information will be provided to you. Please complete your survey by Sunday, February 24, 2008. The survey is

please see **VIETH**, page 4

### Middlefork Service Night Teaches the Rewards of Helping Others

More than 150 Middlefork students and their families experienced the gratification that comes of helping others at the annual Middlefork Service Night in November. Together they made lunches and collected Halloween candy for Hilda's Place, a homeless shelter in Evanston, decorated quilt squares for Project Linus, which crafts and donates completed quilts to children in area hospitals, and created bookmarks and school supply kits for inner city Chicago schools.

Sincere appreciation is extended to the Sunset Ridge-Middlefork PTO for its generous contribution to the service night and to these local sponsors, who graciously donated food items and supplies for the event: Dominicks in Northfield, Grand Foods in Winnetka, Sunset Foods in Northbrook, Trader Joe's in Glenview, Rex's Mobile, The Northfield Restaurant, and Peapod.

The Sunset Ridge Service Night will take place on April 17. Both evenings are sponsored by the District 29 Character Education Parent Committee.



Character Education Parent Committee member Hollie Oh (r.) helps Middlefork students sort and bag Halloween candy for donation to Hilda's Place.

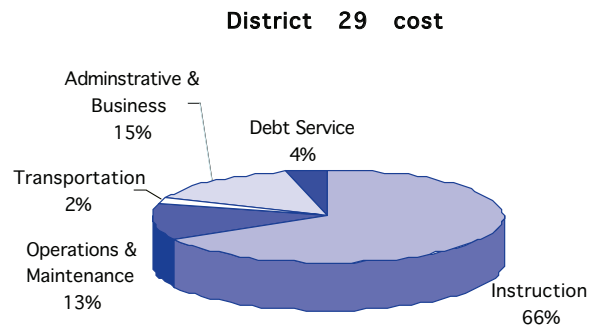
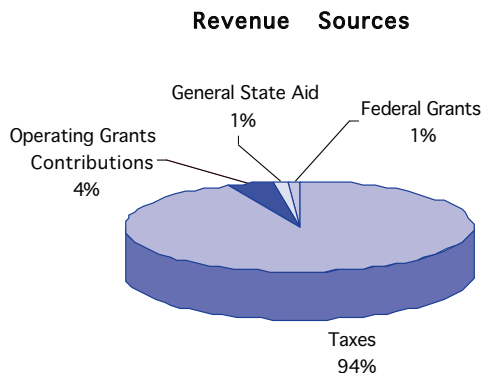
## District 29 Finance Update

District 29 is financially healthy and no additional referendum is anticipated in the near future. For the sixth year in a row District 29 earned the highest financial recognition rating from the Illinois State Board of Education for its FY2007 financial operations. Management earned an unqualified audit opinion. Fiscal Year 2007 spending was below budget by 3.7% overall.

The current year budget adopted this summer by the School District 29 Board of Education is available on the District website at [www.sunsetridge29.net](http://www.sunsetridge29.net). Current and past Annual Statements of Affairs are available on the ISBE website. Terrie Simmons, Assistant Superintendent of Business & Finance, and the Board of Education welcome your questions or comments.

In December the Board adopted the 2007 Tax Levy of \$10,594,714. This is a 3.28% increase over the 2006 Levy. Of this increase, growth per the tax cap is limited to a CPI of 2.5%. The remainder is expected from new property within the District. The total tax rate is estimated at approximately \$2.08, which is lower than each year since 1999.

One of the School Board's highest priorities each year is to solidify the District's financial position in order to assure adequate resources for the level of programming the community expects. The District's financial health is a function of numerous variables, many of which are out of our control, including enrollment trends, the development of new properties which are added to our tax base, the appeals by existing residential and commercial taxpayers to lower their taxes, the pressures on state and federal budgets that impact their monies available for various educational programs, and the ever rising cost of insurance.



*Student council members help unload boxes of food and gifts at the Northwestern Settlement House.*

**Did You Know...**  
**170 packing boxes filled with food and gifts for 36 families were delivered to the Northwestern Settlement House by 25 members of the Sunset Ridge Student Council and the 55 students in the 3 fourth grade classrooms on Monday, December 10.**  
**Each classroom and advisory at Middlefork and Sunset Ridge sponsors 1 family.**  
**For more than 32 years the students of District 29 have made the holidays happier for families in need through the Northwestern Settlement House Project.**  
**The program is sponsored by the PTO.**



## Winter Concerts: A Joyful Tradition

Such wonderful music fills the halls of Middlefork and Sunset Ridge each December! The Middlefork Winter Sings and Sunset Ridge Holiday Concert, beloved traditions among parents and students alike, are a festive way for the children to share what they are learning.

Middlefork students performed songs of the season and provided their own accompaniment on Orff instruments. Their small but accomplished voices delighted the audience of families and friends. In what has become an annual favorite, third graders sang “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” complete with gestures representing each day’s gift (*top photo*). Kindergartners performed their own concert of wintery wonders, entitled, “It’s Snowing!” Dr. Sheran Fiedler directed the Middlefork Sings.

The Sunset Ridge Holiday Concert included festive choral arrangements performed by the fourth grade singers under the direction of Mrs. Carol Broos. Their finale featured tap and break dance solos by two of the students (*middle photo*).

Instrumental highlights of the program included holiday compositions performed by the fifth, sixth and junior high bands under the direction of Mr. Don Golden. The fifth grade flute sextet played “Rockin’ Round the Christmas Tree” by Johnny Marks (*lower photo*). Sixth grader Derek Hawley performed his own solo arrangement of “Carol of the Bells” on baritone. The evening concluded with audience members joining the students in singing “America the Beautiful.”

On the last day of classes before winter break, more than eighty Sunset Ridge students were involved in a talent show, whether announcing, performing, or supporting the various acts as stage crew members. Seventh grader Paddy Donahue was the inspiration for show. As he explained to Mrs. Broos, “We have so much talent in this school, we really ought to let everyone see what other students can do!” Middlefork students gathered together to enjoy once again the songs from their Winter Sings.



VIETH, continued from page 1  
electronic and can be taken on any computer, including your home computer or those at the Winnetka-Northfield Public Library, North Shore Senior Center or Sunset Ridge and Middlefork Schools. Contact the schools for times when computers there are available. Please note that computers are available at the North Shore Senior Center only on Friday mornings from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Paper copies will also be available for those who prefer to take their survey in that fashion. Additional identification numbers can be obtained by calling the Sunset Ridge office in the event that two adults in your home wish to take the survey.

Your input is very important to our goal of continued school improvement. A survey report will be prepared and shared with the Board of Education and community later this year. In addition, data from this survey will form the basis for our upcoming Strategic Planning, which is scheduled to take place this spring. Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

*Linda Vieth, Ed.D.*

Superintendent of Schools

**Congratulations  
to  
Carol Broos  
upon receiving the  
2008 Mary Hoffman  
Award of Excellence  
from the  
Illinois Music Education  
Association**

### District Committees Support School Improvement

Nine committees are meeting this year to support the District's ongoing emphasis on academic excellence. Here, at a glance, is what each is doing:

Committee	Status
Air Conditioning	Studying the feasibility of air conditioning the schools
Assessment	Now in Phase II, considering MAP and Scantron systems as possible replacements for Terra Nova
Green	Looking at education, activities and service projects regarding environmental concerns such as waste in the lunchroom and idling cars during student pick-up
Character Ed	Held Middlefork Service Night, planning Sunset Ridge Service Night. Developing grade-level parent networking groups. Working with PTO to bring Hal Urban to meet with parents, students, and faculty
Survey	Creating surveys for four "stakeholder" groups that will be distributed in February
Technology Curriculum	Creating a cohesive document representing the technology knowledge and skills acquired by students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Piloting an online curriculum mapping program
Technology Steering	Reported to the School Board on Phase II implementation of the technology plan. Phase III of the plan will be discussed at the March School Board meeting
Web Site	Conducted an online survey to determine desirable components; is reviewing various formats and pricing
Wellness	Created subcommittees for communications, website, curriculum, and lunchroom



*"Environmental Care Crews" enjoy keeping the grounds at Middlefork litter free. Equipped with gloves, tongs and trash bags, the students volunteer a recess to perform this service. The clean-up is one of the activities of the Dedicated Dolphins, Middlefork's student council.*

## Technology Committee Presents Status Update to School Board

*“The mission of technology at Sunset Ridge School District is to enhance the way our students, teachers, and community access resources and data, allowing us to continually improve the ways we teach and learn as members of an information rich, technology driven global community.”*

*District 29 Technology Plan*

Midway through the District 29 three-year technology plan, the Technology Committee presented a status update to the Board of Education at its January meeting. The District plan is predicated on these beliefs:

- Instructional Technology use promotes engaged learning by supporting a variety of student learning styles and educator teaching styles.
- Technology is most effective when appropriately integrated within the District’s curriculum and available at the point of instruction, thus becoming one of the many resources utilized by the District to support teaching and learning.
- Technology will maximize productivity within the District in operational and instructional ways.
- Technology will provide ways to communicate effectively with our District community.
- Access to technology resources should not be limited to the school premises or school day.

As reported in the previous *School Board Report*,

new technology resources are in place this year in accordance with the phased approach delineated in the technology plan. Highlights include a total of nine laptop carts for use in grades 3-8, repurposing of desktop computers to provide four to six computers in each first and second grade classroom, installation of projectors in each classroom, and expansion of the interactive white board pilot project to nine classrooms. Ongoing staff development supports these initiatives.

As technology resources have moved increasingly out of computer labs and into the classrooms where instruction occurs, it affords many opportunities to enhance learning. Rather than entire classes working in a computer lab on the same activity or project twice a week, classroom-based computers have become an integral, individualized resource for daily learning. Moreover, this resource is available on demand, and not only during regularly scheduled lab times.

Some of the ways teachers are now using technology that were not feasible before include:

- Podcasts that provide a fun vehicle for students to share what they have learned. Examples such as traveling books, a sound unit, and an enrichment unit about the renovation of Willow Park can be viewed at [www.pod29.com](http://www.pod29.com).

please see **TECH**, page 6

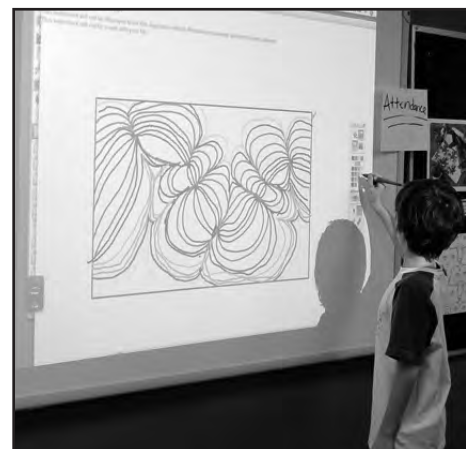


*Students readily assist one another in learning to use technology resources.*



*At left: Desktop computers afford opportunities for differentiated instruction in Robin Bell’s second grade classroom. Shown: students work independently on a language arts activity.*

*At right: Interactive white boards, which are being piloted in several classrooms at Middlefork and Sunset Ridge, promote active and engaged learning. Shown, a student adds to a cooperative drawing in art class.*



**TECH**, continued from page 5



*Students practice spelling with individual laptops from a classroom cart.*

- Student directed activities that support differentiated instruction and learning. For example, in some third grade classrooms students record individualized spelling lists into the computer and then play them back to take their tests.
- Accessibility to web-based research allows students to easily peruse a variety of resources and

educational videos on a specific topic. These can be utilized independently and at the student's own pace.

- Daily practice in subjects such as vocabulary and math.

"In all subject areas, students are engaged in an interactive educational experience," notes third grade teacher Sheri Styczen. "The enthusiasm is ubiquitous."

Fifth grade teacher Trevor Hope adds, "The 1:1 access in 5th grade allows us to infuse technology into every subject, every day. We no longer have to prioritize what tech projects we can do based on the available time in the lab. In this age of technology, having a computer for every student is no longer a luxury, it is rapidly becoming a necessity."

**Looking Ahead**

Assessment is ongoing as the District moves forward in implementing the technology plan. While priorities are fluid based on that assessment, current priorities include:

- Continuing to integrate a variety of technology applications into daily instruction.
- Continuing to use technology to differentiate instruction and student learning.
- Enhancing in-house resources to troubleshoot tech problems more independently.
- Preparing the next wave of staff for managing a laptop classroom.
- Providing focused, small-scale staff development opportunities for identified specific skill areas (e.g., adding effects to iMovie, manipulating Excel graphs, organizing media files, etc.)
- Allowing more time for staff to work together on technology curriculum integration.

*Fourth grade students engage around a group activity.*



**District Restructures  
Technology Duties**

At the January Board of Education meeting, Superintendent Linda Vieth discussed the restructuring of technology responsibilities. As the District implements the technology plan, tech-related needs and responsibilities have grown significantly. The revised job descriptions reflect a restructuring of duties which were previously handled by various faculty and outsourcing to private companies.

As delineated in the job description, the Director of Technology will oversee technology implementation throughout the District by providing leadership and support to all District staff, students, and facilities in the area of technology.

In addition, the Director of Technology will work with the Director of Technology Integration, the Teacher Technology Facilitator, and the staff technology committee to support curricular uses of technology.

The Board also approved the hiring of Steven Bosco to fill this position. (See page 7.)

## BOARD BULLETINS



### SAVE THE DATE

*A community reception in honor of Karen Byrnes and Pam Kennedy upon their retirement from teaching in District 29 will be held on Sunday, April 6, 2008 at Middlefork School*

**3:00 Reception**  
**4:00 Presentations**

*If you have a memory to share or want to thank Mrs. Byrnes or Mrs. Kennedy, please send your cards or letters to Middlefork School, Attention: Retirement Reception.*



### ATTENTION 2004 SUNSET RIDGE GRADUATES

Applications for the newly established **DR. B. SCHOLARSHIP** will be available in late January.

If you are a 2004 SRS graduate, will matriculate from any high school in 2008, and plan to attend college in the future, you are eligible to apply.

If you or your family has moved since leaving SRS please forward your new mailing address to [btberlinghof@comcast.net](mailto:btberlinghof@comcast.net). Applications will be mailed to 2004 graduates for whom addresses are known or can be picked up in the SRS Office.



### Calling All Kindergartners

If you have a child who will be five years old by September 1, 2008, and that child is not yet enrolled for kindergarten, please call the Middlefork School office at 881-9500 for information about registration. Early determination of enrollment figures is critical as the District plans for the new school year. Parents or guardians of kindergarten age children are requested to register as soon as possible.

### Meet Our Newest Faculty Members



**Ila Ziembra** (Fourth Grade Student Services) brings her knowledge and experiences as a classroom, itinerant and resource teacher to Sunset Ridge. A graduate of Illinois State University with a Bachelor's degree in elementary education, she earned her Master of

Arts in special education from the University of Illinois-Chicago. Mrs. Ziembra taught most recently in the Lincolnshire-Prairie View School District where she served as a resource teacher and inclusion specialist. The mother of three young adults, she enjoys spending time with her family, gardening, horseback riding, and vacationing in the Northwoods.



**Steven Bosco** (Director of Technology) spent several years in the business world before joining the faculty of a private day school in North Carolina as Director of Technology. He enjoyed the school setting so much that upon relocating to the Chicago area, he sought a

similar position. Mr. Bosco earned a Bachelor's degree in communications from Columbia College and a Master of Science in telecommunications management from Golden Gate University in San Francisco. He brings to District 29 his considerable knowledge of networking and telecommunications combined with creativity, organizational and interpersonal skills.

## PTO Ways and Means Funds District Initiatives

District 29 staff and students are grateful to the Sunset Ridge-Middlefork PTO for approving funding for the following proposals. Ways and Means provides funds for school activities that do not fall within the District budget. The ongoing support of the PTO enhances District curricular and co-curricular programs in so many ways and is greatly appreciated!

Offset Yearbook Cost	\$ 1,000.00
Sunset Ridge School Administration Discretionary Fund	\$ 1,000.00
All School Pizza Lunch (Sunset Ridge School)	\$ 600 .00
Author Pam Munoz Ryan Visit	\$ 250 .00
2 Scope Cams and Accessories (Sunset Ridge School)	\$ 4,800.00
3 Sterescopes for Middlefork Science Classes	\$ 777.00
3 Califone Wireless Learning Centers and a Starter Library of Books With CD's (Middlefork)	\$ 1,059.80
CD Projector and Installation for Sunset Ridge Large Gym	\$ 6,684.94
2 Alto Glockenspiels and Temple Blocks on Stand (Middlefork)	\$ 654.95
Student Art Work Framing (Sunset Ridge)	\$ 1,200.00
Math Club Pilot Program (Sunset Ridge)	\$ 1,880.00
Total cost of approved proposals	<u>\$19,906.69</u>

# School District 29

## BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT

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Marti von Kluck  
Editor

District 29 website  
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