

SPECIAL ISSUE 2024

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Thomas B. Hood

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VILLAGE OF GURNEE

325 N. O'PLAINE RD.

Village Hall: **847-599-7500**

Utility Billing: **847-599-7525**

Community Dev.: **847-599-7550**

Police Non-Emergency: **847-599-7000**

Public Works: **847-599-6800**

www.gurnee.il.us



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This newsletter is published by the
Village of Gurnee with supporting content
from Woodland District 50, Gurnee District 56,
Warren Township High School, Gurnee Park
District & the Warren-Newport Public Library.

To provide feedback, please contact:
Apollack@village.gurnee.il.us

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Residents,

Gurnee is a great community to live, work and raise a family. Recently, on a Wednesday afternoon in Gurnee, I was visiting a block party being held in the Westgate subdivision. As I walked up, I was greeted by one of the many adults gathered in a cul-de-sac and took part in the celebration. Our fire department had backed up one of their tanker trucks to a fire hydrant and were spraying water on children in bathing suits shouting and jumping gleefully in the spray while five firefighters were dispersed through the group of neighbors enjoying the afternoon. Right in the middle of the cul-de-sac was a large, impressive rig set up for barbecue. Turns out a neighbor is a competitive barbecue grand champion who had won competitions around the Midwest and was sharing his skills with his neighbors. I enjoyed the conversations that I had and the comments from the neighbors regarding how they were enjoying restarting the block parties that had been more plentiful years ago.

As you may have heard, I have started the "Neighbor Up" initiative with the centerpiece being block party grants. It is not too late to apply for a block party grant in which you receive \$500 from the Village for block party expenses, along with a bucket of fun items. So far we have had five or six groups of neighbors that have received the block party grant, and I am hoping there will be more.

I have found that the success of a Village comes at least in part from knowing and enjoying your neighbors and having a sense of community. Even though we have millions of visitors every year and more than 30,000 residents, I believe we can still have a community with a small town feel. As Mayor, I strive to strike the right balance in welcoming businesses to town that offer many different types of shopping, entertainment, living and business options for the residents, but not such that the infrastructure of Gurnee is so stressed that it is not an enjoyable place to live.

My memories of how Gurnee used to be come from growing up on a small farm in the late 1960s across the street from where Gurnee Mills would ultimately be built. My dad enjoyed being out in what I fondly remember was the "middle of nowhere." I rode my bicycle down Grand Avenue, which was a small rural road on the way to my grandparents' house near the corner of Hunt Club Rd. and Washington St. My family would drive to Waukegan to shop at Sears and go out to eat at the Quonset. Gurnee did not have many businesses, or residents for that matter. As we all know, Gurnee grew and for some, like my Dad, it was too much—my parents sold their home to Bob Rohrman (now the site of Rohrman VW and Hyundai) and moved out to McHenry in the mid-1990s. For me the growth of Gurnee was to my benefit as my law practice grew, enabling my son Dan to join the practice.

The forefathers of Gurnee were excellent planners and as a result, today you'll find more than 1,200 businesses that function well together serving more than 30,000 residents and more than 23 million annual visitors. The job is far from over and in many ways is more difficult as we work to maintain the best mix of businesses while keeping that small town feel. I do admit that when I drive by where I grew up and see the farms that I worked on as a teenager (a mink farm and pig farm) and my grandparent's property (which is now Thomas Place), I am a bit sad. However, when I am given the opportunity to visit a block party like Westgate's or other block parties around town, I can say that the choice for growth was the right one as I meet the many and diverse residents of Gurnee who continue to make Gurnee a great place to live.

I continue to pray that we enjoy all that God has given to us and to especially appreciate those that He has placed in our lives. As always, please feel free to reach out to me to discuss whatever you have on your mind.

Sincerely,

Mayor Tom Hood

GURNEE NEWS



OFFICER BRANDON GULLIFOR NAMED POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Detective Gullifor stands out for his exceptional professionalism and dedication. His actions have led to breakthroughs in many investigations. Notably, he played a pivotal role in connecting two cases that led to the recovery of \$50k in merchandise by Homeland Security. Among other achievements, Detective Gullifor's outstanding contributions extend far beyond the scope of the Village.

WOMEN VETERANS HONORED & JUNE 12 DECLARED AS WOMEN VETERANS DAY

At the June 3rd Board meeting, a proclamation designating June 12th as "Women Veterans Day" in Gurnee was passed. The Village would like to thank all women veterans for their service and sacrifices. **If you know a veteran or active service member that would like to walk in the Gurnee Days Parade, please call 847-861-7270 or email Jim Huisel at jhuisel@post771.org**



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: KATHY BLAIR

The Village of Gurnee is proud to announce that long-time resident Kathy Blair has been selected by the Gurnee Days Committee to be the 2024 Gurnee Days Honoree. Kathy Blair, a dedicated Gurnee resident since 1988, made significant contributions to the community through her roles as an educator, business owner and volunteer. After raising her children and teaching 7th grade science at Woodland Middle School for 13 years, Kathy transitioned to business ownership, opening a Nothing Bundt Cakes bakery in 2018 with her husband Troy. Her bakery quickly became a beloved community hub, partnering with over 40 local non-profits and schools. Kathy has been actively involved in the Gurnee Women's Business Association, the Gurnee Exchange Club and various chambers of commerce.

She also served on the Warren Township High School Board, further demonstrating her commitment to education and community service. Kathy's journey, marked by her unwavering dedication and numerous accomplishments, continues to inspire the Gurnee community.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Gurnee Days Open Houses

Saturday, August 10, 10:00am to 12:00pm

The Village of Gurnee is proud to open our doors at the Fire Department, Police Department and Public Works for an open house. Come join the fun and learn about these exciting Village Departments. Activities include a breakfast with the K9 team, a drone demonstration, backhoe digging, paint-a-plow, plow truck rides, bounce house, fire hose target practice, a fire demo and more. Park at Viking Park and enjoy free shuttle rides to the open house locations!

Safety Stars and Dilly Bars Back to School Bash

Friday, August 16, 5:00pm to 7:00pm

Join the Gurnee Police Department for the Safety Stars and Dilly Bars Back to School Bash! This event brings together the community partners to celebrate the new school year. Families are invited to 401 N. Riverside Dr. in Riverside Plaza for fun, games, and FREE Dilly Bars provided by the Gurnee Dairy Queen and Geico. Don't miss this exciting event!

Gurnee Mayor's Golf Benefit

Friday, August 23, 10:00am

Join Mayor Tom Hood for a day on the golf course on Friday, August 23rd at Bittersweet Golf Club located at 875 Almond Rd.! The benefit is for adults with special needs (BIG Great Lakes). BIG Great Lakes' goal is to "change the way the world views adults with special needs."

VILLAGE MEETINGS

Village Board

August 5
August 19
August 26
September 9
September 23
September 30
October 7

Planning and Zoning Board

August 7
August 21
September 4
September 18
October 9

All Village meetings are held at the Gurnee Village Hall (325 N. O'Plaine Road). Village Board meetings begin at 7:00pm on Mondays. Planning and Zoning Board Meetings begin at 7:30pm on Wednesdays. Schedule subject to change.

MORE EVENTS

Training in the Park

Join us for "Training in the Park" this September. The Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments are excited to engage with the community during their evening drills. Training and demonstrations will take place at various Gurnee parks over two weeks, commencing at 6:00pm. The schedule is as follows:

September 16, Vineyard Park
September 17, Betty Russell Park
September 18, Christine Thompson Park
September 23, Ravinia Park
September 24, Southridge Park
September 25, Hunt Club Park

Bonfire and Brews: Taste of Gurnee

Saturday, September 21, 7:00pm to 11:00pm

Join the Village and the Gurnee Park District at Bittersweet Golf Club for "Bonfires and Brews: Taste of Gurnee"! Unwind by the fire while tasting your favorite adult beverage, the flavors of local food vendors, listening to live music, and chatting with friends! Or compete with friends at Axe Throwing, Giant Jenga and Giant Connect 4! Drinks and food will be available for purchase from local brewers and food vendors at this adult-only (21+) event!



JOIN US FOR A
WEEKEND OF **FUN!**

AUGUST 10-11

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10: 12PM-11PM

LIVE MUSIC	FOOD BOOTHS & TRUCKS	FIREWORKS
RIB FEST	KIDS ZONE	AND MORE!



**SATURDAY
NO LIMIT**
5:15-7:15PM



**SATURDAY
FIREWORKS**
9:00-9:30PM



**SATURDAY
HELLO WEEKEND**
8:00-9:00PM
9:30-10:30PM



**SUNDAY
PARADE**
12:00-1:00PM



**SUNDAY
SPARKS FLY
TAYLOR SWIFT
TRIBUTE BAND**
1:30-3:00PM

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11: 11AM-3PM

PARADE	FOOD BOOTHS & TRUCKS	FARMERS MARKET
CAR SHOW	COMMUNITY ART SHOW	AND MORE!

THANK YOU TO OUR **GURNEE DAYS SPONSORS:**

JKM | THE LAW OFFICE OF
JUDY K. MALDONADO

Woody
GURNEE

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Scan this QR Code or visit
www.gurneedays.com!



GURNEE
COMMUNITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Gurnee
Park
District

WOODLAND DISTRICT 50

ABOUT DISTRICT 50

Woodland Community Consolidated School District 50 is an elementary school district covering early childhood through Grade 8. As one of the largest school districts in the State of Illinois, it has approximately 4,800 students enrolled from all of unincorporated Gages Lake and Wildwood and parts of Gurnee, Grayslake, Park City, Third Lake, Old Mill Creek, Wadsworth, Lindenhurst and Waukegan.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

President - Mrs. Anna Chang-Yen
Vice-President - Mr. Corey Holmer
Secretary - Ms. Gari Matsey
Board Member - Mrs. Renea Amen, JD
Board Member - Dr. Carla Little
Board Member - Mrs. Brianna Powvens
Board Member - Mrs. Amy Sabor

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Robert Machak



SCHOOLS

Woodland Primary

17366 W. Gages Lake Rd., Gages Lake
847-984-8700

Woodland Elementary School

17261 W. Gages Lake Rd., Gages Lake
847-984-8800

Woodland Intermediate School

1115 N. Hunt Club Rd., Gurnee
847-596-5900

Woodland Middle School

7000 Washington St., Gurnee
847-856-3400

CONNECT

www.dist50.net
Facebook/WoodlandDistrict50
Twitter.com/Woodland50News
#LifeintheW

WOODLAND MAKES PROGRESS IN YEAR ONE OF STRATEGIC PLAN

In July of 2023, Woodland embarked on Year One of the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan with an ambitious blueprint to be Brave, Bold, and Courageous for the staff and students who make up the #LifeintheW learning community. Reflecting back on the progress made across the district this past year, we have many things to celebrate at Woodland.

The themes of Belonging and Inclusion are woven throughout the Strategic Plan, and in the 2023-2024 school year Woodland increased opportunities for students to feel connected at all four of our schools. From advisory groups to cultural displays and artwork to new before- and after-school clubs based on student interest, Woodland made every effort to center student voices as part of the school culture.

District and School leaders were intentional about the creation of opportunities to come together as a community to create a sense of belonging. Woodland invested time in building relationships and encouraged students to seize every opportunity to contribute to the climate and culture of their classrooms, schools, and shared spaces across the District. These changes have contributed to some important gains in academic performance across the District:

The percentage of students at virtually every grade level from 3-8 who are meeting or exceeding grade-level proficiency on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness increased this year.

The percentage of students at each grade meeting or exceeding their Math and Reading target growth goals on the Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) Assessment mirrors these gains.

More students exited Woodland English as a Second Language (ESL) classes this year than in any other school year since 2019.

Woodland parents and families were also invited to effect meaningful change in their child's school by getting involved in new and important ways to strengthen the bond between home and school. Woodland introduced a new quarterly Parent University program, significantly increased participation in the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC), and started Parent-Teacher Advisory Committees at each school. Parents were invited to participate in the new Special Education Parents Resource Group, the Parent Mentor Program was expanded to include three of the four schools, and the Woodland PTA and newly-resurrected Woodland Educational Foundation sought families to participate in a calendar full of events and fundraisers.

Throughout the summer, Woodland leaders will be reviewing the Strategic Plan goals and initiatives outlined for implementation in the 2024-2025 school year to build on the momentum and accomplishments of Year One. Woodland invites our community to contribute to making the success of the plan a reality by getting involved, asking about our progress, and offering your suggestions to keep the district moving forward. This plan belongs to all of us! Learn more: www.dist50.net/page/district-strategic-plan-2023-2028



WATCH WOODLAND BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS LIVE

Woodland D50 streams Board of Education meetings on the Woodland Live YouTube Channel every month. The Board invites the community to attend meetings in-person, watch the meetings live from the comfort of your home, or watch the recording of the meeting at your convenience. If you wish to contact the Board of Education, you may send an email to Board@dist50.net.

Woodland Live: youtube.com/@woodlandlive9671

WOODLAND WELCOMES NEW ADMINISTRATORS TO THE #LIFEINTHEW TEAM!

The Woodland D50 Board of Education recently approved the hiring of new administrative leaders to help support the Woodland learning community.

- The Board of Education approved the hiring of Dr. Trisha Shrode as the new Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning. Dr. Shrode replaces Dr. Thomas who retired in June. Dr. Shrode most recently served as the Director of Research and Evaluation at the Midwest PBIS Network. She also spent seven years as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Elgin Area School District U-46, and held principal positions in U-46 and Chicago Public Schools.
- Vasiliki Frake replaces Dr. Yesenia Jiménez-Captain as the new Director of Educational Services. Ms. Frake comes to Woodland D50 from Antioch District 34 where she has served as the Director of Student Services since 2020.
- Following the retirement of Victoria Marble at Woodland Middle School, Mrs. Sonia Villarreal-Orson was hired to fill the spot as Assistant Principal/Special Education Supervisor. Mrs. Villarreal-Orson previously served as a Behavior Coach in District 56 and she is the parent of current Woodland students.

Dr. Trisha Shrode



Vasiliki Frake



Mrs. Sonia Villarreal-Orson



WOODLAND WILDCAST - A #LIFEINTHEW PODCAST

Introducing the Woodland Wildcast, a #LifeintheW podcast! This is a great way for community members to learn more about what is happening in your local schools, and how Woodland collaborates with community partners on behalf of area youth. Join Woodland D50's Superintendent, Dr. Machak, as he explores a variety of topics that matter to our Woodland learning community. Get to know some of the awesome people working to support your Wildcat behind the scenes, and uncover the stories that make Woodland such a great place to learn.

Episode 1: This is a Plan About People with Anna Chang-Yen

Episode 2: Inspiring Stories from Four Educators with Something Unique in Common

Episode 3: All of You are Someone's Teacher of the Year

Episode 4: Advice for Future Middle School Students

Follow the **Wildcast** for early access to future episodes with students, community leaders, and other interesting guests! <https://woodlandwildcast.podbean.com/>



HIRING IN THE W!

We want you to join the Woodland team! We are currently hiring for the 2024-2025 school year. Applications are now being accepted for Bus Drivers, Substitute/Guest Teachers, Paraprofessionals, Maintenance/Custodial staff, and Playground Supervisors. These are very important positions that support our students every day. To learn more about these positions and to view all of our current career opportunities, go to www.dist50.net and click on the "Careers" tab and follow [@WoodlandCareers](https://twitter.com/WoodlandCareers) on Twitter. You can make a difference and contribute to #LifeintheW. Don't wait. Apply today!



SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF WOODLAND AWARD WINNERS

Congratulations to Carrie Monterroso, Woodland's Gurnee Teacher of the Year

Woodland Primary School Kindergarten Teacher Carrie Monterroso has been named one of the Village of Gurnee Teachers of the Year for 2024. Carrie is a Kindergarten teacher in the Dual Language program at Primary, and has been part of the Woodland Learning Community since 2012. She is currently in her 18th year of teaching and previously worked in Chicago Public Schools. Carrie was selected as Woodland's Teacher of the Year for her many strengths in supporting students and families, as well as for her work beyond the classroom to keep the district moving forward. She is a caring and compassionate teacher for her students and an excellent resource for her colleagues in the dual language program. She is a leader in her school and in the district through her role as an Equity Leader. She is a powerful advocate for all students, passionate about educating staff on diversity and inclusion issues, and is always working to improve the climate and culture of the school district.



Woodland selects a school winner from each of the four schools in the district. From the list of finalists, an overall winner is selected for recognition as the Village of Gurnee's Teacher of the Year. This year's four finalists were:

- Carrie Monterroso, Woodland Primary
- Erica Veronie, Woodland Intermediate
- Amber Dennis, Woodland Elementary
- Richard Haines, Woodland Middle School

Drake Named Lake Region Middle School Principal of the Year

The Illinois Principals Association (IPA) selected Tiffany Drake of Woodland District 50 as the Lake Region Middle School Principal of the Year! Mrs. Drake has been part of the Woodland community for 23 years, and this is her fifth year as Principal at Woodland Middle School (WMS). Prior to serving as principal, Mrs. Drake was an Assistant Principal for 14 years and a classroom teacher for 11 years. Mrs. Drake was selected as the Lake Region Middle School Principal of the Year based on several qualities and strengths that she brings to the WMS learning community. Tiffany is known for building positive relationships by focusing on connections. Her ability to connect with staff and students builds a supportive environment and a trusting atmosphere. She is visible in classrooms, she provides encouragement in the hallways, and she can be seen dancing at assemblies. This makes her accessible to staff and students and shows them the energy and passion she brings to school each day.

Congratulations to Margarita Castrejón, Lake County Middle School Teacher of the Year!

Ms. Castrejón was named Lake County Middle School Teacher of the Year at the Regional Office of Education Awards Ceremony on May 8, 2024. Margarita is a Spanish Language Arts teacher at Woodland Middle School and a member of the Dual Language Team. In addition to her incredible work in the classroom, Ms. Castrejón was recognized for her contributions to the climate and culture of the district through the connections she builds with staff and students and her involvement in various clubs and committees. Thank you for making #LifeintheW such a great place to learn!

Congratulations to Jeff Winiger - Woodland Bus Driver of the Year!

Jeff Winiger was recently awarded the Bus Driver of the Year Award from the Transportation Department. His students know him as "Mr. Jeff," and he has been part of the #LifeintheW team since 2021. To students and families, he is known for being kind, friendly and happy. To his friends in the Transportation department, Jeff is known for his willingness to help and being a supportive coworker.

WOODLAND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION COMMUNITY PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT SEPT. 14

The Woodland Foundation is on a roll! The Foundation helps support Woodland teachers and students by providing funding to bring innovative projects, programs, and supplemental learning materials to the classroom. Join us on Sept. 14, 2024 at Woodland Middle School for the Woodland Educational Foundation's inaugural community Pickleball Tournament. This will be a doubles tournament with four divisions:

- Division 1 - Competitive (for experienced players 14+)
- Division 2 - Social (for beginners and for fun 14+)
- Division 3 - Municipal, Township and Community Organizations
- Division 4 - Woodland School District 50 Staff Members

Learn More and Register Today: [Woodlandeducationalfoundation.com/pickleballregistration](https://woodlandeducationalfoundation.com/pickleballregistration)

DISTRICT FINANCES

Credit Ratings History Moody's and Standard & Poor (S&P): 2023 AA+, 2022 AA+, 2021 AA+, 2020 AA+, 2019 AA+, 2018 AA+, and 2018-2023 Aa2 Moody's. The ratings from Moody's indicate high quality, and the Standard & Poor's ratings indicate a strong capacity to meet financial obligations. Financial Recognition Illinois State Board of Education: 2023 Recognition, 2022 Recognition, 2021 Recognition, 2020 Recognition, 2019 Review, and 2018 Recognition

District 50 has maintained the highest level of "Financial Recognition Status" for its financial profile for five of the last six school years.

GURNEE SCHOOL DISTRICT 56

ABOUT DISTRICT 56

Gurnee School District 56 is an elementary school district covering early childhood through Grade 8. It services portions of Gurnee, Wadsworth, Waukegan and Beach Park.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dr. Jim Blockinger, President
Mr. Mark Pos, Vice President
Mrs. Odie Pahl, Secretary
Mrs. Becky Kotsinis, Treasurer
Mr. Germin Castellanos, Member
Mrs. Mandi Florip, Member
Mr. Cesar Garcia, Member

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Luis Correa



SCHOOLS

Spaulding School

2000 Belle Plaine Rd., Gurnee
847-662-3701

Prairie Trail School

13600 W. Wadsworth Rd., Wadsworth
847-623-4333

River Trail School

333 N. O'Plaine Rd., Gurnee
847-249-6253

Viking Middle School

4460 Old Grand Ave., Gurnee
847-336-2108

New faces will join D56's administrative team in the upcoming school year. These changes reflect the replacement of leadership positions essential to our continued commitment to provide the best educational experiences for our students. Here are the new faces that you can expect to see at the district and school buildings next school year:

Director of Business Services/CSBO



Martin Da Costa will be serving D56 as the Director of Business Services/CSBO starting July 1. Martin began his career teaching 8th Grade Math and Science in Gary, Indiana, for four years before taking an Assistant Principal role at a high school in the same district for two years. He moved to Illinois in 2017 and served as an Assistant Principal and Principal at Winston Campus Jr. High in Palatine District 15 since then. Martin's leadership led to improvement in culture and student achievement at Winston Campus resulting in his earning the 2021 Golden Apple for Excellence in Leadership Award. Martin is a proud father of four: Max,

Lucas, Nick and Sofia. In his free time, he loves watching sports and engaging in them. Name a Chicago team and he's a fan.

Spaulding School Principal

Sara Rosheger will be the next Spaulding Principal. Mrs. Rosheger is currently serving as the Assistant Principal at Longfellow Elementary School in Consolidated Community School District 21 in Wheeling, where she has been for the past three years. Prior to CCSD21, Mrs. Rosheger taught at a Pre-K program in Highland Park for 4 years before going to Deerfield District 109 to teach grades K, 1st, and 3rd for 11 years. Additionally, her music education background afforded her the opportunity to work with a network through the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to enhance school culture and student achievement through arts integration.

Mrs. Rosheger currently lives in Highland Park with her family. She likes to spend time with family and friends and is looking forward to becoming part of the Spaulding and D56 communities.



Prairie Trail School Principal



Allison Waller will be the next Prairie Trail Principal. Mrs. Waller most recently served as the Associate Principal at Caruso Middle School in Deerfield District 109. She comes to D56 with 15 years of experience in education with a wide range of roles throughout her career. Her teaching experience ranges from Global Awareness in the middle grades to social studies in a high school setting.

Most recently, she has served as Associate Principal at the middle school level for two years and as Assistant Principal at Hillcrest Elementary in Antioch District 34 for three years. Throughout the interview process, Mrs.

Waller demonstrated having the qualities and experiences that will best serve the Prairie Trail community.

Mrs. Waller lives in Antioch with her family. She likes to spend time watching (and driving) her boys to activities and sports. She is excited to start a new chapter in her career with the D56 and Prairie Trail communities.

COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

Hispanic Heritage Celebration

On October 5th, 2023, District 56 hosted a Hispanic Heritage Celebration at River Trail School. The purpose of this event was to create an experience for our community that informed and celebrated the heritage and contributions of Hispanic-Americans. We wanted the heritage of our students to be seen, shared, and celebrated. We provided a meal, live music from students, Zumba, and a participatory soccer event led by members from Heart of the City Sports. We also had booths from members of our local Hispanic community including members from Abbott, the Warren Newport Public Library, the Northern Illinois Food Bank, and students from Warren Township High School's Hispanic American Club - Avanza. Student work aligned to state standards and related to Hispanic heritage was on display throughout the building.

We would like to invite the community to attend next school year's Hispanic Heritage Celebration planned for Thursday, October 10, 2024, from 5 to 7 PM at Viking Middle School in order to celebrate Hispanic heritage and culture, as well as strengthen the bonds between our families, schools, and community.



Black History Month Celebration

Viking School hosted our Black History Month Celebration on February 29, 2024. Many members from our community came together to celebrate Black History and strengthen the bonds between our families, schools, and our community. We provided a meal, live music performed by students, and had many contributions from our Black community members including Rhythm Plus, B.R.I.D.G.E., and the African American Museum in Waukegan. We also had a panel of community leaders including Greg Gordan, Silvia England, John Joanem, Sabrina Perrin and Natoia Franklin who spoke about why we celebrate Black History in America. Student work aligned to state standards related to Black History was also proudly on display throughout the building.

Please plan on attending our next Black History Month Celebration at Prairie Trail School in February, 2025. Specific date and time TBD.



Maker Faire

On March 20, 2024, Prairie Trail School hosted the District 56 Maker Faire. The purpose of our Maker Faire was to inspire our diverse student community to be creative individuals who are prepared to solve problems and make meaningful and innovative contributions to society. We wanted the students to see that there are people in the community who support that goal and can inspire them with their innovation and creativity. In recognition of Women's History Month, this event also included a special emphasis on celebrating the contributions of women in STEM. A meal was provided, and there were over 40 activities for attendees to participate in from building a derby car to soldering circuits. These activities were created both by our own staff and many members and organizations from our community. Please plan on attending our next Maker Faire at Spaulding School in March, 2025. Specific date and time TBD.



Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Celebration

Because we wanted the heritage of our students to be seen, shared, and celebrated, Spaulding School hosted an Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Celebration for our community on May 2, 2024. This event was designed to inform and celebrate the heritage and contributions of Asian-Americans both in our community and from around the world. Participants experienced Asian culture by “traveling” through different regions to learn about the varied art, music, food, language, and traditions of Asia. Attendees received henna tattoos, experienced a “festival of lights,” learned to fold origami, and enjoyed an authentic Asian meal. Student work was on display including posters from every region in Asia along with flags from every country. Several members of our community helped us put together this special event by preparing food, displaying artifacts, and teaching skills they have acquired. Please plan on attending our next Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Celebration at River Trail School in April/May, 2025. Specific date/time TBD.



DISTRICT FINANCES

Budgeting and Report

Copies of Gurnee District 56's budget, teacher's contract and required compensation disclosures are all available on the District's website. Go to www.d56.org, select "Menu", then select "Business Office". Residents with questions can contact the District Office at 847-336-0800.

District Finances

Gurnee District 56 has developed a Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan for maintenance of our buildings. The five-year plan includes roof replacement, carpet replacement, an upgrade to the software that controls our energy usage, roofs, HVAC upgrades, security enhancements, hard surface replacement & classroom furniture replacement and other maintenance items to achieve the most efficient use of energy. The District will plan on including the costs for these projects in its annual budget and as a part of the Working Cash bond the district borrowed funds for in 2023.

WARREN TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL

ABOUT DISTRICT 121

Warren Township High School (WTHS) District 121 is a comprehensive four-year high school with an enrollment of approximately 3,600 students. Warren is one of the largest high schools in Lake County, Illinois.

District 121 covers over 50 square miles and includes all or part of Beach Park, Gages Lake, Grandwood Park, Grayslake, Gurnee, Millburn, Old Mill Creek, Park City, Third Lake, Wadsworth, Waukegan and Wildwood.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Paul Schulz, President
Stephen E. Carlson, Vice President
Natalia Alvarez Martinez, Secretary
John R. Anderson
Tony DeMonte
Beth Pope
Susan Squires

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Daniel S. Woestman



FACILITIES

Warren Township High School is one high school district with two campuses. Each campus houses two grade levels. The O'Plaine Campus generally houses 9th and 10th grades and the Almond Campus generally houses 11th and 12th grades.

Almond Campus

34090 Almond Road
847-662-1400

O'Plaine Campus

500 N. O'Plaine Road
847-662-1400

CONNECT

www.d121.org
Facebook.com/WTHSDistrict121
Instagram.com/WTHSDistrict121

I want to thank the community for the significant support they have shown in the past years as we have moved from pandemic conversations to referendum conversations and into planning for the future.

This year the Board of Education was able to invest in our community's high school students in significant ways. We welcomed in additional counselors, psychologists, and teachers to provide direct services to students, and kept our promise to continue offering extensive academic, extracurricular, athletic, and club opportunities to students.

We are continuing to focus our improvement efforts in six areas that we believe meet the hopes of the community:

1. **Financial Stewardship:** We will prioritize financial decisions that honor our community's trust and support student success both today and in the future.
2. **Academic Excellence:** We will rethink the high school experience to provide stronger career connections and modernize the role of students in their learning process. This includes improving our career preparation and supporting our expanded student offerings.
3. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** We will give voice to students, staff, and stakeholders as we make decisions that empower all learners to reach equitable outcomes. This will include an audit of our current offerings and practices during the 2023-2024 school year.
4. **Social and Emotional Well-Being:** We will proactively create a supportive, healthy, and respectful environment that builds lifelong skills in our learners.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** We will work collaboratively to create shared accountability for student success, climate, culture, communication, and safety.
6. **Modern Facilities:** We will use effective planning and resource allocation to ensure our facilities are updated, maintained, and support a future of student-centered learning.

This continued vision for great services to our students gives us a strong foundation for the future of WTHS.

Thank you for your continued support of our community schools,

Dr. Danny Woestman
Superintendent



FINANCIAL INFORMATION

This past year was the first year of full referendum impact on the finances of the school district. We continue to be able to use the financial commitment of the community to fulfill the promises made to the community. Some of the steps we have taken financially this past year include:

- 1. Planning for long-term financial health:** We reviewed our long-term financial projections with a third-party financial advisor to ensure we are making decisions that keep the future fiscal health of the district as a priority.
- 2. Allocating funding toward additional student services:** We were able to increase the social and emotional support we provide students, the support we provide students in multiple languages, and the academic support for struggling students.
- 3. Addressing long-deferred maintenance:** We have been able to complete a facility review to help us identify long-standing building maintenance needs that have been ignored due to past financial strain. Projects like leaky roofs and broken ventilation systems are finally being addressed.

JOHN BIRD NAMED WARREN TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL'S GURNEE TEACHER OF THE YEAR:

English teacher selected by his colleagues for award from the Village of Gurnee



English teacher John Bird has been voted by his colleagues as Warren Township High School's 2023-2024 Gurnee Teacher of the Year.

Each school year, the Village of Gurnee recognizes three Gurnee teachers, including one from Warren Township High School District 121, Gurnee School District 56 and Woodland School District 50. The Gurnee Teacher of the Year receives a \$1,000 honorarium.

John Bird has worked in education and the social services for over 30 years. He began his career at the Dislocated Workers Center at Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby, Illinois, where he worked as the Employer Relations Representative. After moving to Lake County in 1994, he was employed by the College of Lake County through the National Workplace Literacy Project. Before joining Warren's staff, he also worked for a human resources consulting firm in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

In 2002, Bird was hired to teach English at Warren Township High School's Almond Campus. Since that time, he has taught numerous courses within the English department including Advanced Placement Language and Composition and Honors American Studies. As an active union member, he has served on the WTHS Federation of Teachers Executive Board for 17 years, including 14 years as Parliamentarian.

"John is a highly respected member of our teaching force here at Warren," said Dr. Danny Woestman, Superintendent of Schools for Warren Township High School District 121. "He is known by staff and students for being student-centered and dedicated to the families in our community. We are proud to recognize him through this award and grateful for his work."

"It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with such a talented and diverse group of students and staff at Warren over the past 22 years," says John Bird. "It is truly an honor to earn this award. I am humbled and deeply appreciative." Bird holds Bachelor of Arts degrees in Literary Studies and Sociology from Beloit College and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Barat College in Lake Forest, IL.

MICHELE BERTOLA NAMED LAKE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR:

O'Plaine Campus principal awarded Lake County honor



O'Plaine Campus principal Michele Bertola has been named Lake County Administrator of the Year.

Each school year, the Lake County Regional Office of Education recognizes outstanding professionals at their annual "Educator of the Year" ceremony, which was held on May 9, 2024.

Michele Bertola has worked in education for 24 years. Michele began her teaching career at Warren Township High School in 2000, where she taught six social studies courses ranging from freshman to senior students and coached girls basketball. In 2012, Michele carried out duties as a lead teacher for the social studies department before moving into an assistant principal role for five years, focused on curriculum and instruction.

In 2018, Bertola was promoted to Principal at the O'Plaine Campus, where she oversees and leads over 200 staff members and nearly 2,000 freshmen and sophomore students. Michele leads by

example of living a mission and vision focused on results, leading and managing systems change, improving teaching and learning, building and maintaining collaborative relationships, leading with integrity and professionalism, and creating and sustaining a culture of high expectations.

Michele is proud of creating a set of school values called "The Warren Way" that establishes an environment centered on being respectful, resilient, and engaged. One of her priorities is making personal connections with students, families, and staff and honoring the diversity of the school community.

DISTRICT 121 RECOGNITIONS

Class of 2024 by the Numbers:

- 941 students graduated officially as of May 19, 2024
- 103 Illinois State Scholars
- 3 National Merit Semifinalists/Finalists
- 10 National Merit Commended Students
- 13 National Recognition Program Scholar Students
- 43 Seals of Bilingualism
- 26 Commendations towards Bilingualism
- 190 Students with academic honors according to the Cum Laude system

Blue Devil Champions

Notable team athletic achievements

- Football - NSC Champion/IHSA State Quarterfinalist
- Devilettes - IHSA State Qualifier in Competitive Dance
- Girls Cross Country - IHSA State Qualifier
- Boys Basketball - NSC Co-Champion/IHSA Regional & Sectional Champion
- Girls Soccer - IHSA Regional Champion
- Softball - IHSA Regional Champion
- Girls Volleyball - IHSA Regional Champion

Notable team and individual extracurricular achievements

- Illinois Music Education Association All-State Musicians: Griffin Fox, Nora Lacey, Madesyn Tolbert
- Illinois High School Theatre Festival All-State Individuals: Lindsay McCormack and Naysa Rangai
- Claire Venisnik - Illinois High School Music Theater Association Jimmy Awards Broadway in Chicago Student Reporter, President of Illinois Thespian Society, and International Thespian Association Officer
- Avanza, Future Latino Leaders: 1st place for the Varsity team at the Chicano College Bowl Competition
- FBLA National Qualifiers: 35 students qualified to attend the National Leadership Conference in Orlando
- Science Olympiad: State Qualifier

"Michele is a humble and smart administrator who has dedicated her life to helping young adults make a successful transition from childhood to adulthood," said Dr. Danny Woestman, Superintendent of Schools for Warren Township High School District 121. "She believes our young people can change the world. Michele is an extremely wise leader who impacts so many parts of our organization and educational system at broader levels. We are proud to recognize her through this award and grateful for her work."

"I am honored to be recognized by the Lake County Regional Office of Education and the Warren community," says Michele Bertola. "I love our students, staff, and community and feel lucky to come to Warren every day. It takes a team to serve our school community and I am so grateful to be on the team Warren!"

Bertola holds a Bachelor of Arts in Secondary Education and History degree from Lake Forest College and a Masters of Science in Educational Administration degree from Northern Illinois University. Michele is currently completing a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership with a Superintendent Endorsement from Concordia University.

DISTRICT 121 RECOGNITIONS CONTINUED

Notable team and individual extracurricular achievements

- Maddie Hauder - IHSA State Track & Field: State Champion in Shot Put, Runner-Up in Discus
- Carolina Martinez - IHSA State Track & Field: 3rd place in 400m
- Aidan Porreca - WTHS Male Athlete of the Year, IHSA State Track & Field: 8th place in Discus
- Eddie Lim - State Qualifier in Track & Field
- Addison Filipowicz - State Qualifier in Track & Field
- Anna Iwuagwu - State Qualifier in Track & Field
- Finley Jezuit - State Qualifier in Track & Field
- Signe Scott - State Qualifier in Track & Field
- Sanaii Vaughn - State Qualifier in Track & Field
- Hannah Conger - WTHS Female Athlete of the Year, NSC Player of the Year in Softball
- Lucas Ahonen - IHSSCA All-State in Soccer
- Ruth Ziegler - Honorable Mention All-State in Volleyball
- Madison Wojdyla - Special Mention All-State in Volleyball
- Donovan McNeal - NSC Player of the Year in Football
- Aaron Stewart - Wrestling State Champion and All-State Special Mention in Football
- Caleb Noble - Wrestling State Champion
- Jeremija Hixson - State Qualifier in Wrestling
- Royce Lopez - State Qualifier in Wrestling
- Jonathan Marquez - State Qualifier in Wrestling
- Anthony Soto - State Qualifier in Wrestling
- Alyssa Bentley - State Qualifier in Girls Wrestling
- Alayna McCormick - State Qualifier in Diving
- Elizabeth Richie - State Qualifier in Swimming
- Evan DiVito - State Qualifier in Swimming
- Vasiliy (Billy) Lawing - State Qualifier in Swimming
- Nate Thiemeyer - State Qualifier in Swimming
- Reed Thiemeyer - State Qualifier in Swimming
- Nora Werner - State Qualifier in Gymnastics
- Reyna Hill - State Qualifier in Badminton
- Cheyenne Martin - State Qualifier in Badminton
- Sarah Oh - State Qualifier in Badminton
- Brandon Paasch - All-State and State Qualifier in Tennis
- Julia Werner - All-State Honorable Mention in Girls Lacrosse
- Lucy Moore - All-State in Girls Lacrosse
- Addison Stanciak - All-State in Girls Soccer

ABOUT WARREN-NEWPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

The Warren-Newport Public Library District, founded in 1973, serves a population of approximately 66,000 within a 55-square mile area that covers all or most of Warren and Newport Townships, including Gurnee, Wadsworth, Park City, Wildwood, Grandwood Park, Old Mill Creek, and portions of Grayslake, Millburn, Lake Villa, Libertyville, and Waukegan.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

George Kotsinis, President
Celeste Flores, Vice President
Jo Beckwith, Secretary
Andrea Farr Capizzi, Treasurer
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ryan Livergood



WARREN-NEWPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY

224 N. O'Plaine Road
Gurnee, IL 60031
847-244-5150

WARREN-NEWPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Ryan Livergood, Executive Director, Warren-Newport Public Library District

Skip the Trip, Open Doors: Apply for Your Library Card Online Starting in September!

In today's digital age, your library card unlocks a treasure trove of resources that can enrich your life, fuel your passions, and save you a significant amount of money.

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month, and the Warren-Newport Public Library is making it easier than ever to receive a digital library card. While we would love to see you in person, we know that people have busy schedules that might present challenges in visiting the physical library building. Very soon, you will be able to receive a digital library card without setting foot in the library! Consider the doors that a library card will unlock for you:

Think beyond books: Library collections offer an incredible selection of printed materials, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. Craving the latest news from around the globe? PressReader offers over 6,000 publications in 60+ languages, keeping you informed and connected to the world. Feeling a creative urge? Dive into CreativeBug's vast library of online courses, where expert crafters guide you through everything from knitting to pottery, all for free with your library card. For the language enthusiast, Mango Languages provides a fun and interactive way to learn a new language, from Spanish for your upcoming vacation, to Mandarin for a future business venture.

Fuel your entertainment for free: Movie nights just became much less expensive! Hoopla and Kanopy offer a vast library of movies, documentaries, and television shows you can stream instantly, all for free with your library card. Is streaming not your thing? No problem, we have a vast selection of DVDs. No more expensive subscriptions or rental fees! For the audiophiles, Libby provides a massive selection of audiobooks, perfect for commutes or winding down with a good story.

Learning never stops: Sharpen your professional skills or ignite a new hobby with the Library's online learning platforms. Online resources like Gale Courses and LinkedIn Learning offer comprehensive courses on everything from coding to creative writing, all accessible with your library card. No expensive online subscriptions needed!

Beyond the digital: Your library card grants access to a surprising variety of physical resources. The Library of Things collection allows you to borrow tools and equipment, perfect for tackling that DIY project or trying out new activities without breaking the bank. Need a quiet space to study for an exam or host a meeting? Libraries offer dedicated study and meeting rooms, all available for free with your card.

The library as a community hub: Libraries are vibrant community centers that host a variety of events, from maker programs and book clubs to storytime for kids and educational workshops for all ages. Attending a library program is a fantastic way to connect with like-minded people, explore new interests, and become more involved in the Gurnee community.

Visit in person or at wnpl.info, and rediscover the incredible value your library offers. Sign up for a library card and unlock a world of possibilities!



**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RYAN LIVERGOOD**

SUPPORTING DIGITAL LITERACY: GET TECH HELP AT YOUR LIBRARY

The Warren-Newport Public Library (WNPL) provides a wide range of educational and recreational resources. Despite the increasing accessibility of digital tools, many of our patrons encounter barriers to digital education. WNPL remains steadfast in its commitment to closing this information gap and promoting digital literacy across our district and beyond.

The Library serves as a gateway to the digital world, offering computer access, makerspace facilities, download services, free Wi-Fi, hotspots, Roku, and more. Computer instruction options include structured classes including, but not limited to, Excel, Google tools, streaming services, AI, and creative tools.

Computer Tutor Time offers walk-in assistance on our devices or yours, in which patrons can receive one-on-one guidance. Library staff are here to help in setting up phone calendars, troubleshooting spreadsheets, transferring photos to external memory devices, or installing library download services. With the introduction of our newly established service desks, access to free and supported resources is more convenient than ever. For more information, visit the Library's Technology Help Desk today.

LIBBY: A LIBRARY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

With Libby and your digital library card (or existing library card), you have a library branch right at your fingertips. Explore new genres, rediscover old favorites, and enjoy the convenience of reading and listening anytime, anywhere using our library's digital collection.

With Libby, you can:

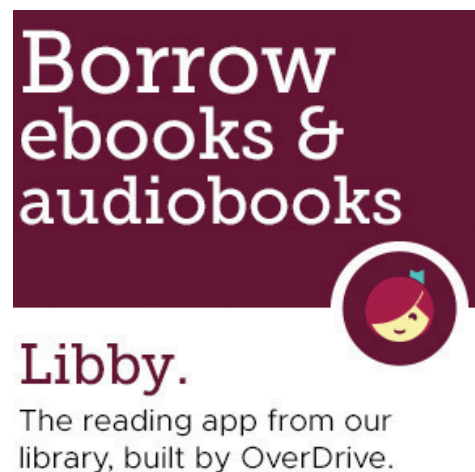
- **Discover your next great read:** Explore a vast selection of fiction and nonfiction titles for all ages and interests.
- **Borrow with ease:** Search for the title you want and borrow it with a tap. No more waiting lists or late fees!
- **Read or listen on the go:** Enjoy your favorite books on your smartphone, tablet, or eReader.
- **Offline access:** Download books for offline reading, perfect for commutes, vacations, or anywhere you might lose connection.

Getting started with Libby is easy!

1. Download the Libby app from your app store. (It is free!)
2. Existing library card holders: Sign in using your library card number and PIN.
3. New to the library? Sign up for your digital library card by visiting the library website at www.wnpl.info.

Sign up for your digital library card today and start exploring the world of ebooks and eaudiobooks with Libby!

- Find more information about Libby at: <https://www.overdrive.com/apps/libby>.
- Library staff are always happy to help with questions about digital library cards or the Libby app. Please visit the library or call 847-244-5150.



LITTLE FREE WNPLs: A FALL HARVEST OF STORIES

Our Little Free WNPLs, popping up at local businesses and hubs throughout the community, are brimming with autumnal delights! Look for cozy mysteries, heartwarming tales, and spooky stories perfect for Halloween. Share the book love and pick up a new favorite this fall!



POSTAL PATRON

BRINGING THE LIBRARY TO YOU: LOBBY STOPS

This fall, we would like to highlight our fantastic Lobby Stops program. This service removes barriers to library access by delivering a curated selection of materials directly to residents in assisted living communities throughout our library district.

How Lobby Stops Benefit Residents:

- **Convenience:** Residents do not need to travel! They can browse and check out books, audiobooks, and more--right in their own community.
- **Empowerment:** Lobby Stops allow residents to maintain their love of reading and connection to the library, fostering a sense of self-reliance.

The Warren-Newport Public Library is committed to serving all members of our community. Lobby Stops are one of several ways library staff are achieving this goal.



Calling all creators! Unleash your imagination at The Workshop this fall!

The Warren-Newport Public Library is excited to unveil The Workshop, a brand-new makerspace opening its doors this fall. Transform your ideas into reality with access to tools and technology, all under one roof!

THE WORKSHOP

— at Warren-Newport Public Library —

Learn new skills and create something amazing! Library staff will offer workshops to help you feel comfortable using our equipment.

Stay tuned for more details! Opening hours and reservation instructions will be available soon.

¡CELEBREMOS JUNTOS! HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH AT THE LIBRARY

Calling all culture enthusiasts! Join us from Sunday, September 15 through Tuesday, October 15, as we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month at the library. Enjoy a fiesta of fun with programs and events designed to engage all ages. Delight in storytelling, crafts, music, and much more from the rich tapestries of Hispanic cultures throughout the month. ¡No se lo pierda! (Don't miss it!) **Visit wnpl.info for a full calendar of library events!**

NEW BUSINESSES

Round1 Bowling & Arcade
Gurnee Mills

Pandora, Ebisu, BHOP E-Sports
Gurnee Mills

Doctors of Physical Therapy
6621 Grand Ave.

COMING SOON

Destino Ristorante
5101 Washington St.

McCullough Kubota
7225 Grand Ave.

Trio Car Wash
3419 Grand Ave.

GURNEE BUSINESS AWARDS

The Village of Gurnee is currently accepting submissions for the "Best of Gurnee" awards. This year, there's a new award category recognizing Gurnee businesses that offer opportunities for adults with special needs. For more details on how to nominate a Gurnee business, please visit our website at <https://www.gurnee.il.us>