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(l to r) District 21 Board President Bill Harrison, Board member Rich Rosen, Superintendent Dr. Gary Mical, ISU President Bowman, District 21 PDS Coordinator Dr. Sally Stone, District 21 Board member Staci Allan, Congressman Mark Kirk. (also in attendance but not in the photo was District 21 Board member Arlen S. Gould)

# Message from the Superintendent

Welcome back to all our students and parents. We are looking forward to an exciting school year.

We hosted a visit from Congressman Mark Kirk and Illinois State University President Al Bowman this September at Mark Twain School to spotlight our 15-year collaboration with ISU in their Professional Development School Program, a comprehensive teacher training program that has provided District 21 with many fine teachers.

District 21 also received excellent ratings from Moody's Investors Service. This good news helps us put our resources to their

best use. (See Budget Gets Good Grade on Page 3) Our improved Breakfast Program will give participating students a good start to their school day. (See What's for Breakfast on Page 4) You will also find stories in this issue of *The Author* how we are making report cards more useful, an augmented math program and expansion of our Family Learning Program.



(top) Congressman Kirk and Xavier Bravo

(bottom) Congressman Kirk, Gabriela Uriostegui and ISU President Bowman

# Report Cards Now Focus on Standards

Dr. Kate Hyland

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Learning

The District has been working for the past year on developing a consistent, standards-based report card.

"We are excited about being able to communicate the progress children are making with state standards through our report cards," said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kate Hyland.

To do this Hyland explained, the District has developed Power Standards -- what we want all students to know and be able to do at each grade level. "These are the essentials on which we need to focus. We want to assess the students in their mastery of these standards. We have tried to make

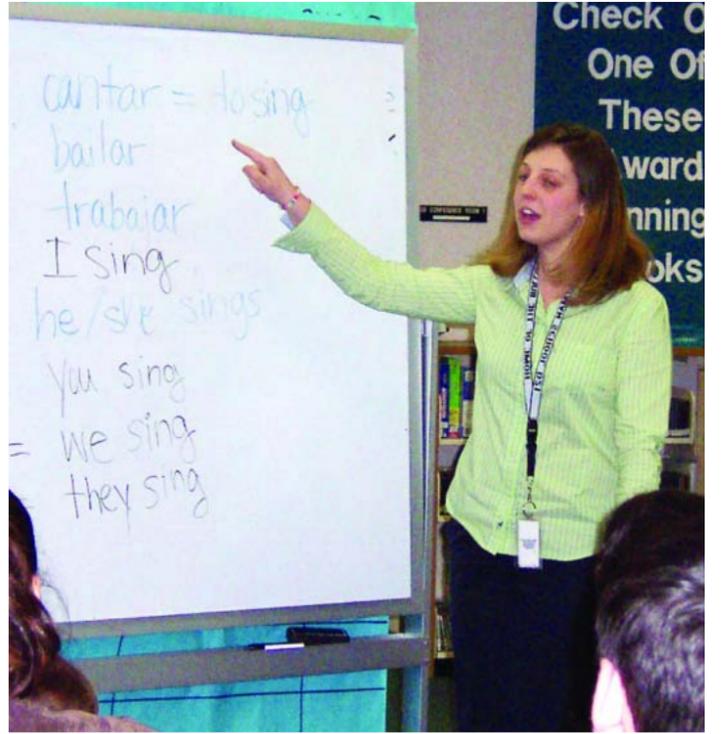
this clear in the report card for each of the core areas of science, social studies, reading and math. This year we will also be focusing on Power Standards for art, music and physical education."

"Qualities like being prepared for class and being a self-directed learner are also important," said Hyland. "These are called Learner Qualities. We want the report card to send a visual message that these qualities are separate from the Power Standards. Teachers assess student performance on these Learner Qualities and give parents feedback in terms of how their kids are doing."

*Qualities like being prepared for class and being a self-directed learner are important*



Parents in the Family Learning Program learn how to use computers



Class instruction for parents



(top) Board members Arlen S. Gould and Rich Rosen along with Twain Principal Dr. Gwen Gage share in the Family Learning Program activities

(bottom) Twain teacher Rosa Kuhn meets with parents

## Family Learning Program Builds on Its Success

District 21 is looking for new funding sources to expand the Family Learning Program by reaching out to our U.S. Representatives as well as charitable organizations and private companies. “We hope one or more of these groups will see the need that we see and allocate resources to help us move ahead and take this whole effort to the next level,” said Gregg Crocker, Director of Community Service Education.

“Right now we have about 300 students involved in after-school tutoring programs,” said Crocker. “We would like to double that. And we would like to expand our Family Learning Program. Right now we have between 250 and 300 families coming weekly. Parent classes include English, computer skills, financial planning, and parenting. We would like to expand that program from the 80 nights that we have planned for the coming year. With additional funding, we could expand that to 130-150 nights.”

Crocker said that recent state legislation (HB4832) is recommending that school districts provide evening access to computers and resource materials at local schools.

“Only a small percentage of our second-language families have access to computers at home. Opening the schools would let them take more advantage of resources that are available. We would also like to purchase more second language books for our school libraries.”

Another area ripe for expansion is field trips to Chicago area museums and cultural programs. “Given the wide variety of resources

available in Chicago, we would like to expand this program which began two years ago.” Crocker said. “These experiences increase the language, knowledge and comfort levels of our immigrant families.”

District 21 also wants to provide adult leadership training to our second-language adults. “We would like more second-language parents to step up and take positions of responsibility in our PTO/A’s and Parent Advisory Councils. Parents have also expressed interest in the following topics: GED preparation, citizenship requirements, technical training and general immigration issues.”

While the District is looking for funding sources to expand the Family Learning Program, Crocker said, “We will continue trying to enhance the program within the budget that we have.”

Crocker suggested several ways that the community can help:

- Help spread the word about the Family Learning Program to recruit more participation;
- Put the District in contact with any funding sources you may be aware of;
- Serve as volunteers in the After-School Tutoring Program; and
- Think about the kinds of resources our families are asking for, and volunteer to help.

If you can offer any help or funding suggestions, please contact the Superintendent’s Office at 847-520-2727.

Parents have expressed interest in the following topics:  
GED preparation, citizenship requirements, technical training and general immigration issues.

## Everyday Math—Developments and Alternatives

Dr. Kate Hyland

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Learning

After using Everyday Math for over ten years, the District is implementing a new edition of the program. Everyday Math is an exciting program because, in addition to emphasis on skill development, it focuses on problem solving, real-world applications and conceptual understanding. In the new series:

- Assessments have been enhanced.
- Lessons and ideas are more differentiated.
- Alignment with Illinois Standards is more explicit.

- Opportunities for professional development for teachers have been increased.

“Over the years, our students have performed increasingly well on state and district assessments,” said Hyland. “We feel the improvements made to the program are closely aligned to our district initiatives and will help our students continue to make gains in the area of math.”



# Budget Gets Good Grade

Daniel Schuler

Assistant Superintendent for Planning

District 21 has been given top grades by Moody's Investors Service, which ranks the credit-worthiness of commercial and government borrowers worldwide. At the District's request, Moody's conducted a complete analysis, including interviews and financial data review about the District and its community. Their results tell potential investors that District 21 is a very good risk.

Moody's has assigned District 21 the highest rating for short-term debt for the fourth year in a row, and this year they also upgraded their rating on the District's long-term debt.

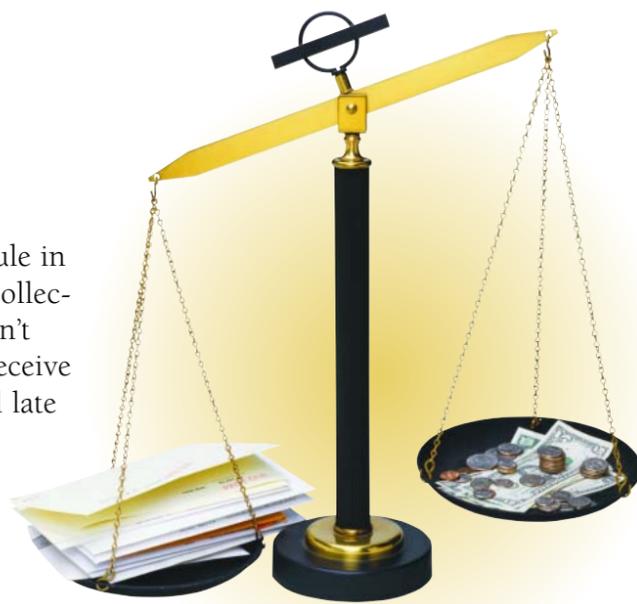
"This is good news," explained Assistant Superintendent Daniel Schuler. "It allows our bond advisor to be aggressive in the financial market, and that translates into savings to the District in interest expense on our loan obligations. It's a positive reflection on the work that the School Board and administration have done in watching our financial picture very closely and stretching out the positive impact of the 2003 referendum."

The District needs to borrow money each year, Schuler explained. "By the middle of August, the District faces a short-term cash

flow problem because of the tax schedule in Cook County. "We should receive tax collections in August, but typically that doesn't happen. This year we don't expect to receive collections from the Clerk's Office until late in October, so we borrow to cover that period."

"This has been the procedure for many years," Schuler continued. "The cost of borrowing takes away from money we would like to put toward other items in the school budget. Fortunately, in the past four to five years we have been able to reduce the amount of money that we have to borrow and shorten the time in which we pay it back."

Moody's predicts, "the District's financial operations will continue to improve," and this makes investors see District 21 as a good risk, so they ask for less in interest payments. Schuler estimated that the excellent ratings that District 21 received from Moody's will save about \$25,000 this year by beating down the interest rate the District has to pay.



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Moody's analysis results tell potential investors that District 21 is a very good risk

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## State of the School Meetings

We want to encourage our parents to attend our three State of the Schools meetings this fall. Come and learn where District 21 is going. We are holding these meetings earlier this year, in the hope that milder weather will allow parents to spend several hours learning about their children's school. Each meeting will feature a video celebrating the partnership between our schools and parents and the great things that result.

After the video, parents can choose breakout sessions in English and Spanish from the following selection:

### 1) What Are We Having For Lunch?

It will include the school lunch program, ideas for those who bring their lunches, nutrition, calories and cutting costs.

### 2) Enhancing Your Child's Voice through Writing

The session will introduce you to the 6 Traits of Quality Writing, equip you with strategies to guide your reading and writing support at home, and provide parents with opportunities to ask questions related to the district's writing program.

### 3) Making Math Real

Learn about our concept-based math program, the importance of conceptual understanding and skill development, and how parents can make the learning of math real in the home.

### 4) Understanding MAP (Measures of Academic Progress)

Learn about MAP, a unique computer assessment that adapts the child's level of understanding and mastery of skill. The focus will be on under-

standing the Parent Guide for MAP and how this assessment adds to the classroom assessments that teachers use on a continual basis.

### 5) Preparing for Your Child's IEP

This session will help parents of Special Ed students be a vital team member to facilitate successful educational planning for the child. They will discuss how parents can best be an active and beneficial member of the IEP team.

### 6) Meeting the Needs of All Students - Response to Intervention

This presentation will familiarize parents with the Response to Intervention and the Problem-Solving Model and will provide information that staff use to identify interventions to individualize instruction, monitor student progress, and implement strategies to meet the specific needs of all students.

All three meetings will be on Thursdays, beginning at 6:45 p.m. with student performances.

October 25 @ Cooper Middle School (for parents of Cooper, Longfellow, Poe & Kilmer students)

November 1 @ London Middle School (for parents of London, Tarkington, Field and Riley students)

November 8 @ Holmes Middle School (for parents of Holmes, Whitman, Frost and Twain students)

All meetings are also open to the general public and if parents can't make the meeting at their location, they are encouraged to attend another session.



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Come and learn where District 21 is going.

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**Board of Education**

Bill Harrison, *President*  
Arlen S. Gould, *Vice President*  
Pamela Becker Dean, *Secretary*  
Staci Allan  
Kathy Edmonds  
Phil Pritzker  
Rich Rosen

**School Administration**

Dr. Gary E. Mical, *Superintendent*  
Dr. Kate Hyland, *Asst. Supt./Curriculum & Learning*  
Pat McAndrews, *Asst. Supt./Human Resources*  
Rosemarie Meyer, *Asst. Supt./Bilingual & ESL Programs*  
Dr. Candace Thompson, *Asst. Supt./Support Services*  
Daniel Schuler, *Asst. Supt./Planning*

**Dist. 21 Access Information**

Superintendent's office  
phone 847.537.8270  
fax 847.520.2848  
email district21@ccsd21.org  
website www.ccsd21.org

Cooper Middle School  
Field Elementary School  
Frost Elementary School  
Holmes Middle School  
Kilmer Elementary School  
London Middle School  
Longfellow Elementary School  
Poe Elementary School  
Riley Elementary School  
Tarkington Elementary School  
Twain Elementary School  
Whitman Elementary School  
Hawthorne Early Childhood Center

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Permit No. 30



Kilmer School Principal Kim Zinman

Congratulations to Kilmer School Principal, Kim Zinman for being chosen the Illinois Principals Association North Cook Region Herman Graves winner. This award is the highest honor bestowed by the Illinois Principals Association and reflects Mrs. Zinman's high standards of leadership.



# What's For Breakfast?

Pat McAndrews

Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources

*Participation has increased in the breakfast program, but the District would like to see more families participate.*

District 21 wants to assure that each student gets the best possible start to their school day with a balanced breakfast. Breakfast is offered in every school half an hour before school starts in the same area where lunch is served. While participation has increased in the breakfast program, the District would like to see more families participate.

"A lot of children aren't ready to eat when they first wake up, but they become hungry later," McAndrews noted. "Even children who eat a light breakfast at home can benefit from having a bowl of oatmeal when they get to school so they are more awake and ready to study and learn. Most of the kindergarten through second-grade classes are arranged with their core subjects early in the day, and morning can be quite a long time for some of the little ones, especially if they are in the before-school program."

"The breakfast menu has been overhauled and the offerings must meet USDA guidelines and provide a quarter of a child's

daily calorie content," said McAndrews. "We have changed our menu to include healthier items that send the right message to kids about what they should be eating." McAndrews said. The new additions were taste-tested and approved by students on the Youth Advisory Committee.

Parents who want to pay for their child to have the school breakfast can send a check or cash, which is then credited to the child's account. The child keys in their ID number, and their photo appears on the screen as they are charged for lunch, thus identifying the correct student for the cashier.

Last year, Twain and Whitman Schools received \$1,000 in supplies from the food service vendor as an award for achieving 20% participation, and Field School received \$500 for reaching 17% participation. "We would like to reach 20% participation at all schools and then continue to increase," said McAndrews.

For additional information, please contact your school principal.