

# the author

The purpose of District 21 schools is to provide a learning environment for all students to become life-long learners and productive citizens.



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Community members,

Each year before students return to our schools, our faculty and staff gather to kick off the school year. We recognize staff members who have been in the district for a significant milestone, which this year included six staff members with 25 years of service and two custodians who have each served School District 21 for 35 years!

We also reflected on our students, families, and the community, and our purpose as educators. As our Board President Bill Harrison stated, anyone can say they are "here for the kids," but in School District 21, our staff goes beyond and is "here for the community, and here for the future."

We believe in providing our students with the opportunities to engage in real-world experiences and solve real problems that affect our world. Through *The Author* we share these celebrations with you, but we can only cover so much in this mailing. I encourage you to visit our website, and follow us on Facebook and Twitter, to share in these celebrations every day.

Sincerely,

## CCSD21 to launch new websites

**Coming this winter, CCSD21 will launch new district and building websites!** Be one of the first to check out the new features, including easier navigation on all devices and updated design.

Visitors will still find all of the important information they need, including staff contacts, district news, calendar of events, and Board of Education information.

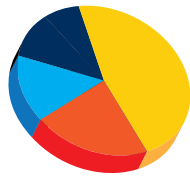
Visit [www.ccsd21.org](http://www.ccsd21.org) today for a preview, and be sure to follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates as we prepare to launch!



**The first day in CCSD21 set the tone for a successful year. Students dove right into learning and sharing with their teachers and peers, as if we were already months into the school year!**

[www.facebook.com/ccsd21](https://www.facebook.com/ccsd21)  
[www.twitter.com/ccsd21](https://www.twitter.com/ccsd21)

# An update on District finances



School District 21 Board members approved a balanced budget for 2015-2016 which outlines projected revenue and expenditures for the year. Through comprehensive planning and diligent spending, School District 21 has continued to provide for students' instructional needs despite the financial challenges imposed by the State of Illinois on local school districts.

With school funding in Illinois tied closely to property taxes, District 21 suffered an \$11 million loss in revenue for the 2013 levy when commercial Equalized Assessed Valuation fell below expectations over the previous year. This impacted the 2014-15 budget. However, revenues collected under the 2014 levy were reflective of those collected under the 2012 levy, allowing CCSD21 to discontinue deficit spending and maintain high-quality programs and services.

In the 2015-16 school year, District expenditures were reduced by \$2 million. This is one of many steps CCSD21 has taken to ensure that it is a responsible steward of the community's resources.

CCSD21 continues to monitor state and federal legislation that could further alter school funding sources and formulas.

## Hamann receives state Award of Recognition



CCSD21 Art teacher Steve Hamann was recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education with an Award of Recognition. In nominating Hamann for the award, one of his colleagues said, "Not only is Steve always willing to help every student succeed, he is consistently available to help his colleagues as well." Steve has worked in CCSD21 since 1995.



## Full-day kindergarten at three schools

Through the use of federal Title I funds, CCSD21 is able to offer full-day kindergarten for the second year at Twain and Whitman Elementary Schools. Field Elementary School is offering full-day kindergarten for the first time this school year.

**"Our students and families have adjusted wonderfully to full-day kindergarten this year, and our students are so excited about being full-time members of our learning community!"** said LaVonne Knapstein, Principal of Field Elementary School.

Title I funding is distributed by the federal government to support schools in meeting state achievement standards. The funds supplement existing programs offered within the district.

Growth in the performance of students at Twain and Whitman was tabulated just within the first year of the program. For example, 66% of half-day kindergarteners from the 2013-14 school year met or exceeded standards with quantity discrimination, or showing understanding of what numbers represent. In the 2014-15 school year, 75% of the full-day kindergarteners met or exceeded the same standard.

"Full day kindergarten was a great success last year," said Amy Kohl, kindergarten teacher at Twain. **"Through data and anecdotes it is clear that the students grew tremendously throughout the school year, academically and socially. I can't wait to continue to build upon the full day curriculum and see all of the amazing growth of this year's students!"**

Frost Elementary School offers an extended half-day kindergarten program, also through the use of Title I funds.



# Diversity cornerstone of CCSD21 success



## LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN OUR DISTRICT

The CCSD21 community enriches the lives of our students by supporting learning that connects students in a global way. Across the district, more than 65 languages are spoken in homes of our students. While English, Spanish, Polish, and Russian are most prevalent, other spoken languages range from Albanian to Yoruba.

Making connections from the classroom to real life and engaging students in work that has a real outcome helps students see the value of our diverse community and its importance in a global society.

With support from their teachers, classes participate in worldwide Twitter chats, publish their work for a global audience, and work on real-world problems that affect our communities. For example, School District 21 students have learned the curriculum by researching changes in ocean life and the stability of our ecosystem and how these changes have impacted the global supply of seafood.

This high-level work yields results in all areas and over time. While many of our

students whose families speak another language attend school in English-speaking General Education classes throughout their school experiences, other students come to school knowing little or no English and need to learn it as part of their school experience.

**Among eighth graders who were in a Bilingual or ESL program at one time in their schooling, approximately 90% of these students have met or exceeded state standards in mathematics.**

The rich and diverse culture in our community supports classroom learning as students make deeper connections with their peers and students from different backgrounds.

**“Our students are so lucky to learn in an environment today that will prepare them for their future. Each day, my colleagues and I work with people from all over the world, and our community models the importance of mutual respect and collaboration for our students.”**

**– Martin Hopkins,**  
*Holmes Middle School principal and former School District 21 student*

ALBANIAN, GHEG  
ALBANIAN, TOSK  
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE  
ARABIC  
ARMENIAN  
ASSYRIAN  
BAGHELI  
BENGALI  
BISAYA  
BOSNIAN  
BULGARIAN  
BURMESE  
CANTONESE  
CEBUANO  
CHAOCHOW/TEOCHIU  
CZECH  
DUTCH/FLEMISH  
ENGLISH  
FARSI  
FRENCH  
GERMAN  
GREEK  
GUJARATI  
HAITIAN-CREOLE  
HAKKA  
HEBREW  
HINDI  
HUNGARIAN  
IBO/IGBO  
ILONGGO  
INDONESIAN  
ITALIAN  
JAPANESE  
KANNADA  
KHMER  
KONKANI  
KOREAN  
LITHUANIAN  
MACEDONIAN  
MALAYALAM  
MANDARIN  
MARATHI  
MONGOLIAN  
PANJABI  
PILIPINO  
POLISH  
PORTUGUESE  
ROMANIAN  
RUSSIAN  
SERBIAN  
SLOVAK  
SOMALI  
SOURASHTRA  
SPANISH  
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## Join us

**Saturday, October 24, from  
9-11:30 AM at London Middle  
School for Parent Learning**

**Community**, formerly referred  
to as State of the Schools.  
Attendees can select two  
informational sessions to attend,  
covering district finances,  
STEAM (Science, Technology,  
Engineering, Arts, and Math)  
education, Internet safety and our  
new food service program. **Mark  
your calendars!**