



**Community Consolidated
School District 21**



Annual Impact Report 2023-2024

What's Inside

- Message from the Board President2
- Message from the Superintendent3
- School Board Recognition4
- Prepare All Students5
- Cultivate Environment.....6
- Effective Staff7
- Recognizing Distinction.....8
- Celebrating Excellence9
- Strengthening Partnerships10
- Financial Stewardship11
- Responsible Resource Stewardship12



A message from Debbi McAtee, Board President

Dear CCSD21 community,

As we reflect on the past school year, I am proud of the many accomplishments we achieved together. Our students excelled academically, our innovative programs flourished, and our arts and athletics teams brought home a number of accolades. We strengthened partnerships within our community, invested in state-of-the-art facilities and technology, and expanded our support services to promote social and emotional well-being.

As we embark on the 2024-2025 school year, I am filled with excitement and optimism for the opportunities that lie ahead. We remain committed to building on our previous successes, and our focus will continue to be on providing a nurturing environment where every student can thrive.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support, and here's to making this school year a memorable and successful one!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Debbi McAtee'.

Debbi McAtee
President, Board of Education



A message from Dr. Michael Connolly, Superintendent

Dear students, parents, staff and community members,

As we wrap up the 2023-2024 academic year, and our 75th year as Community Consolidated School District 21, I am incredibly proud of the remarkable accomplishments and growth we have seen across the district. It has been a year of innovation, a year of resilience, a year of collective effort, and we continue our efforts to empower every student, every day.

As we look ahead to the 2024-2025 academic year, and the last year of our five-year strategic plan, we remain committed to building on these successes and addressing the challenges that lie ahead. I extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated teachers, administrators, staff, students, parents and community members for their continued support and hard work. Together, we will continue to strive for excellence and create a nurturing, inclusive and dynamic educational environment for everyone.

Dr. Michael Connolly
Superintendent

Our Vision

CCSD21 strives to empower every student, every day, in every school with:

ENGAGED EDUCATORS

A talented, caring and inspiring staff that does whatever it takes to instill a love of learning in all students

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

For every student in every school, we will ensure the knowledge, skills and dispositions we teach will have real-life application for students to demonstrate a variety of skills

ENVIRONMENT

A learning environment that encourages confidence, self-sufficiency, safety, health and well-being

CULTURE

A culture that values diversity and inclusiveness, and celebrates individual differences

COMMUNITY

A network of community partners that facilitate learning opportunities beyond the school walls

CURRICULUM

A rigorous curriculum that is future-focused and evolving to provide a pathway to high school, college, career and life success

INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCES

Instructional experiences that engage minds, respond to curiosities, and inspire continued learning

Board Finance & Operations Committee

Phil Pritzker, Chair

Arlen S. Gould, Member

Dagmara Kalinowski, Member

Board Policy Committee

Debbi McAtee, Chair

Bill Harrison, Member

Jessica Riddick, Member

Board Community Engagement & Strategic Partnerships Committee

Staci Allan, Chair

Arlen S. Gould, Member

Jessica Riddick, Member

School Board Meetings

The Board of Education holds monthly meetings, typically on the third Thursday of the month, at 7 p.m. at the CCSD21 Community Service Center and Administrative Office.

Meetings can be viewed online at ccsd21.org/board-of-education-meetings/

Read more about the CCSD21 Board of Education, as well as their individual bios, at ccsd21.org/board-of-education/



Debbi McAtee
President
Serving since 2011
Current term: 2021-2025



Bill Harrison
Vice President
Serving since 2001
Current term: 2021-2025



Jessica Riddick
Secretary
Serving since 2017
Current term: 2023-2027



Staci Allan
Serving since 2007
Current term: 2023-2027



Dagmara Kalinowski
Serving since 2023
Current term: 2023-2027



Phil Pritzker
Serving since 1989
Current term: 2021-2025



Arlen S. Gould
Serving since 1993
Current term: 2021-2025

CCSD21 introduces student board representatives to amplify student voices

In a decision to amplify student voices, administrators at Community Consolidated School District 21 and the Board of Education introduced student representatives for the first time, giving students a direct platform to influence educational policies and decisions.

Students were eligible to apply during the spring of their seventh-grade year to serve a one-year term. Interviews were held with interested students in April 2023, and the three representatives – one student from each middle school – were announced the following month.

To be eligible, students must not have had any major disciplinary referrals during seventh grade, maintained a C or higher in



all classes, and secured two letters of recommendation from a member of the faculty, staff or district administration.

Our student representatives to the board of education for the 2023-2024 school year were Aaliyah W. of Cooper

Middle School, Mario V. of Holmes Middle School and Brandon C. of London Middle School.

We are thankful for their hard work and commitment to making our schools better for themselves and their classmates.

Prepare all students for high school, college, career, and life successes



As we reflect on the past year, we are proud to highlight our dedicated efforts to address how we are preparing all students for high school, college, career and life successes. Our commitment to educational excellence and holistic student development has guided every initiative, project and decision.

This year was marked by a number of achievements, innovative programs and collaborative efforts that have enhanced our educational landscape. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement and embracing a student-centered approach, we have made significant progress in equipping our students with the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

We are incredibly fortunate to have 75 languages represented in our district, serving a majority of students in their native language. Whether it is Spanish, Ukrainian or Russian, we have helped them slowly bridge to English by teaching content in their native language, then progressing with the vocabulary to accompany the content.

We also rolled out a higher-tier science, technology, engineering and mathematics-focused “talented programming” activity track, implementing more “exposure” activities to give students a chance to build their skills in the areas of art, coding, engineering and photography by the time they graduate from middle school.

Our Children at Play (CAP) Before and After School Care Programs at Poe and Riley Elementary School also received an intergovernmental award from the Il-

linois Association of Park Districts, underscoring the district’s commitment to fostering a safe, enriching and supportive environment for our students beyond regular school hours.

After initially being delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we also started to install 21st century furniture in classrooms throughout the district. This furniture includes more tables, flexible seating and more independent work areas – a more creative approach than traditional rows of single desks.

Students from Cooper, Holmes and London Middle Schools continued to meet as part of the Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council – formed last year to provide students an opportunity to meet with and advise our superintendent and other members of the district’s administrative team on important issues and challenges they and their peers face.

Our sports teams, clubs and arts programs also thrived this year. We’ve watched as several of our student athletes reached the state level, while our musicians, artists and performers showcased their talents in a number of impressive exhibitions and competitions.

Seventeen students were named to the Illinois Music Education Association’s District 7 Junior Honor Band, Orchestra and/or Choir.

Cooper Middle School’s Jazz Band I also took home top honors from the 39th annual Jazz in the Meadows festival, placing first in the middle school division that saw 14 other programs – including those at Holmes and London – also perform.

Cultivate a safe and responsive environment that supports each learner's growth

Creating a safe and responsive environment is fundamental to fostering each learner's growth and development. This past year, we have made a number of significant strides in cultivating an inclusive atmosphere where every student feels valued, supported and empowered to achieve their full potential.

Our initiatives have focused on enhancing physical safety, promoting emotional well-being, and ensuring that each student has access to the resources and support they may need.

This includes waiving registration fees for the fourth consecutive year and providing all of our enrolled students with the supplies they need for the year. This move was initially implemented during the 2020-2021 school year, when district administrators decided that between the crunch of the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact the year would begin remote, they did not believe families should have to pay for supplies.

"By giving families the opportunity to use these funds for something else that their family needs, rather than having to use the money for registration and supplies, means we have positively impacted each family," said Micheal DeBartolo, assistant superintendent for finance and operations/CSBO.

In the past year, our district has continued to prioritize inclusive and supportive educational environments through our Special Education and Early Childhood Services programs. Our commitment to meeting the diverse needs of all students has been reflected in the comprehensive services and tailored support we have provided.

The district also reintroduced school resource officers (SROs) as a pivotal part of our commitment to ensuring a safe and supportive school environment. These individuals provide a visual presence at each of our schools and encourage positive relationships, while also addressing safety concerns. Their presence has had a significant and positive impact on our school community. Their role extends beyond traditional security measures; they have become mentors, role models, and trust advisors for our students. By fostering open lines of communication and engaging with students on a personal level, SROs have helped create a sense of trust and safety within our schools.

This step was enhanced with the hiring of our first-ever director of school safety and security. This role oversees the development and implementation of comprehensive safety and security programs between our district and Elk Grove-based Community Consolidated School District 59.

There were also a number of external enhancements to each of our campuses, as we boosted security cameras by 20% in stairwells and other higher-traffic ar-



reas outside of instructional areas, including near playgrounds, to give the district increased visibility in these spots. Minor adjustments were also made to existing cameras to maximize coverage.

During the year, we established a district-wide transportation committee and tasked them with comprehensively evaluating our entire transportation process and the impact of adding or removing hazardous designations to particular areas. We also asked them to consider parking lot designs to enhance safety, along with several other considerations.

We also announced and launched an app for parents and guardians to better manage and track their student's transportation to and from school. ParentView gave trusted parties instant access to their student's bus location and estimated arrival times, underscoring our commitment to leveraging technology to enhance communication and ensure the safety and convenience of our school community.

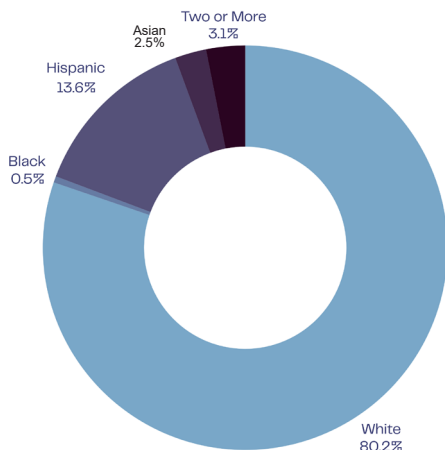
Attract, nurture and retain an engaged and effective staff



Our educators and support staff are the backbone of our institution, playing a vital role in shaping the future of our students. This year, we implemented targeted strategies to ensure that our team remains motivated, well-supported, and committed to our mission of educational excellence.

Our approach to staff engagement and effectiveness focused on three core areas: recruitment, professional development, and retention. By focusing on these areas, we have created an environment where educators and staff feel valued, empowered and equipped to provide the highest quality education and support to our students.

Teacher Demographics



TEACHER AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

364

PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
CLASSES

8,509

PARTICIPANTS



By the Numbers

587 teachers
321 staff members
6,171 students



The Board of Education annually acknowledges the hard work and efforts of educational support personnel for demonstrating and advancing the district's values and the characteristics of a professional learning community.

Recognizing Distinction 2023-2024 Staff Honorees:

Bohdana (Dana) Andrusyk
Teacher Assistant
 Kilmer Elementary School

Deyanira Sanabrajs
Building Secretary
 Tarkington Elementary School

Ana Balladarez
Building Secretary
 Twain Elementary School

Andrew Steckling
Communications Specialist
 District Office

The North Cook Region of the Illinois Principals Association formally recognized **Anastasia Netzel** and **Crystal Jimenez** as its Middle School and Elementary School Principals of the Year, respectively. The Horace Mann/ IPA Principal of the Year award recognizes excellence among middle and elementary-level principals. Netzel, principal at London, was nominated for leading the building in a positive and successful manner, particularly as the world re-emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic. Jimenez, principal at Field, was nominated for servant leadership and the ability to be an agent of change for the well-being of students and staff.



A special congratulations to **Jeremy Holtmeier**, school psychologist at Tarkington Elementary School; and **Brenda Theisen**, **Abby Pillow** and **Jaime Steineke**, Educational Life Skills Program teachers at London Middle School, for being recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education for making significant contributions to the state's public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools as part of the "Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year" program.



Licensed staff members are honored with Celebrating Excellence for demonstrating and advancing School District 21 values of a professional learning community, including embracing the district's mission and vision.

Celebrating Excellence 2023-2024 Honorees:

Rachel Becerra

Emotional Disabilities Teacher
Cooper Middle School

Jaclyn Clarke

Resource Teacher
Cooper Middle School

Michael Dax

Resource Teacher
Cooper Middle School

Kristian Kiskinov

Resource Teacher
Cooper Middle School

Allie Shenuk

Emotional Disabilities Teacher
Cooper Middle School

Barbara Slesnick

Resource Teacher
Cooper Middle School

Sarah Straughn

Resource Teacher
Cooper Middle School

Jeff Rojewski

Physical Education Teacher
Field Elementary School

Loren Marlowe

First Grade Teacher
Frost Elementary School

Cali Parisi

First Grade Teacher
Frost Elementary School

Elizabeth Sajdak

First Grade Teacher
Frost Elementary School

Rocio Tellez

First Grade Teacher
Frost Elementary School

Colleen Ross

Special Education Learning Behavior Specialist I
Hawthorne Early Childhood School

Alex Meirin

Psychologist
Holmes Middle School

Laurie Stanley

Fifth Grade Teacher
Kilmer Elementary School

Angela Banks

Seventh Grade Teacher
London Middle School

Michelle Ehrhard

ELL Interventionist
Longfellow Elementary School

Lisa Zickert

Structured Teaching Program Teacher
Poe Elementary School

Bethany Hoot

Library, Media & Enrichment Specialist
Riley Elementary School

Nori Spiro

Social Worker
Tarkington Elementary School

Margaret Connelly

Fifth Grade Teacher
Twain Elementary School

Amber Kim

Fifth Grade Teacher
Twain Elementary School

Delaney Libit

Third Grade Teacher
Twain Elementary School

Melissa McLenaghan

Library, Media & Enrichment Specialist
Twain Elementary School

Tiffany Safranek

Second Grade Teacher
Twain Elementary School

Charlene Crooks

Fifth Grade Teacher
Whitman Elementary School

Rachel Cutro

Resource Teacher
Whitman Elementary School

Lupita Hernandez

Fifth Grade Teacher
Whitman Elementary School

Liz Powers

Fifth Grade Teacher
Whitman Elementary School

Strengthen family and community partnerships

This past year, we made significant strides in strengthening our family and community partnerships, recognizing that a collaborative approach is essential to the success and well-being of our students. By fostering meaningful connections and building robust support networks, we have created an inclusive and supportive environment that extends beyond the classroom.

Our efforts have focused on enhancing communication, encouraging active involvement, and leveraging community resources to enrich the educational experience. We held registration support events for families who needed a little extra help in enrolling their children for the next school year, a safety event with our school resource officers to identify ways of staying safe in the home and online, and a community resource fair where approximately 50 vendors gathered to connect the district's families with local resources available in our community, among other initiatives.

We also attended a number of outreach events, including the Buffalo Grove Days Parade, Wheeling's Tuesday Night Market and International Festival, and three National



Night Out events.

Further, we are proud members of the Buffalo Grove Rotary Club and Wheeling Chamber of Commerce.

Financial stewardship

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024: Preliminary Operating Funds Financial Results			
Fund	Revenue	Expense	Favorable/Unfavorable
Education	\$118,393,811	\$101,261,103	\$17,132,708
Operations & Maintenance	16,235,300	11,669,373	4,565,927
Transportation	6,064,168	8,462,921	(2,398,753)
Working Cash	601,778	-	601,778
TOTAL	\$141,295,057	\$121,393,397	\$19,901,660

For detailed budgets:



Maintain responsible stewardship of district finances, and resources of people, time and physical space

This year, we upheld our commitment to responsible stewardship of district finances and resources, ensuring that every dollar, minute and square foot is effectively utilized to support our educational mission. Our strategic approach to managing finances, human resources, time, and physical space has allowed us to create a sustainable and efficient environment that maximizes the benefits for our students, staff and community.

These efforts bore fruit when we posted a balanced budget for fiscal year 2024, continuing our efforts to fund a strong educational program, complete with many offerings for extra-curricular clubs and activities beyond the school day.

Further, the district received perfect scores across five schools as part of annual inspections by the Regional Office of Education (ROE) for North Cook, and observed a 37% overall reduction in citations. This is an unusual feat, but was made possible by the dedication and attention of our entire maintenance and custodial teams in making sure all of our buildings are well taken care of, are safe, and ensuring the district is following all codes from the ROE.

During the school year, the district officially approved a contract with Advocate Medical Group for the operation of the District 21 Health Center, found within our Community Service Center and Administrative Office. After receiving approval from the Illinois Department of Health in June 2024, we are proud to announce the center is now open and ready to welcome our students and staff for a number of services, including vaccines, mental health appointments, and physicals.

Several buildings saw enhancements through a number of projects that took place during the summer of 2023: new gym floors, LED lighting, repairing one roof, upgrading HVAC, renovating bathrooms, painting and installing STEM classrooms, among other enhancements. We also fully renovated our library and media centers at London, Field, Frost and Kilmer; installed new playgrounds at Riley and Field; and reconfigured the parking lots of Field, Frost, Tarkington and Whitman to enhance traffic flow and safety for all individuals.

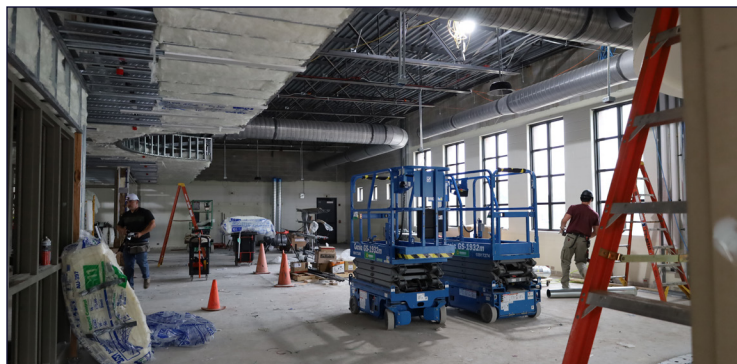
We also entered an agreement with the Village of Wheeling for a stormwater management facility on the grounds of Twain. This basin, for work which began during the summer of 2024, is a “game-changer” for the surrounding community by reducing flooding and protecting it from future 25-year storm events.

During 2024-2025, we will wrap up the LMC project with Holmes, Longfellow, Poe and Whitman. Frost, Kilmer and Poe will also see brand-new playgrounds for our students and the surrounding community to enjoy. We are also installing finishing kitchens at our remaining schools



to enhance the nutritional value, flavors, appearance and overall appeal of the food served to our students and staff.

Technology enhancements also contributed to overall building improvements. In addition to the installation of security cameras, we also approved a contract with WANRack for a private fiber wide area network solution and service. The forthcoming underground, private fiber lit ring network will give the district an extremely resilient and secure fiber network that will ensure we never have more than one site down at a time.





Community Consolidated School District 21
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