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BUTLER SCHOOL DISTRICT 53

newsline

Spring 2017

COMMENCEMENT 2017

Grads give thanks and gratitude

Gratitude and appreciation radiated through this year's commencement ceremony held May 31. The 66 Butler Junior High 8th graders who took to the stage heard their peers thank parents, families, teachers, administrators and staff with heartfelt enthusiasm. "All of you have influenced us in such a remarkable way and for that we say 'thank you,' " said Alisha Kumar, Vice President of the Student Service Board.

Mikhail Essa, Student Council President, echoed that sentiment. "Our most important accomplishment is the community and family we have formed here at Butler Junior High, no longer just our school, but now our home."

He also listed the accomplishments of the class, noting the support of teachers and staff:

Science Olympiad

■ Science teacher Kim Krupicka, who "treats us not as students, but like her own children with genuine love, care and respect,"

Spanish

■ Spanish teacher Andrea Lett whose Spanish-only classes helped push students to fluency,

Broadcast Journalism

■ Broadcast Journalism teacher Robert Philipp, who helped students broadcast the five-minute daily announcements,

Talent Show

■ Secretary Kathy Ferrell's "warm personality and loving attitude" in sponsoring and organizing the Talent Show.

Student Council

■ The council's sponsor, teacher Riley Wharton, whose support helped the council raise $1,100 in a four-hour fundraiser.

Student speakers also noted the accomplishments of their classmates. "I am truly honored and humbled to be a part of this remarkably talented class," said Alisha Kumar. In the future, she said, she will undoubtedly say, "I went to school with that person."

Student Service Board President Moosa Ahmed ticked off the accomplishments of student teams and extra curriculars. "We played until we were exhausted and we always left with a smile on our faces."

Principal Amy Read noted that together the Butler Junior High School community had accomplished something special: A school where students feel safe in taking risks to learn and grow, a place where supportive and dedicated staff are willing to go above and beyond in and out of the classroom, and a mindset where students understand that their abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work.

Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom thanked parents, staff and students for their commitment. "I hope you will look back with immense fondness for the friendships you have formed and for the teachers and staff who have mentored and challenged you."

For more photos on graduation, check out our Facebook page, Butler School District 53.

Student awards

Aanika Atluri and Ben Snukst were honored with the Oak Brook Education Association Citizenship Award for character, leadership and compassion.

Honored with the Academic Achievement Award for the highest grade point were Ansh Shah, Sidh Leekha and Adi Badlani (not pictured). Adi did not attend commencement because he was competing in the National Spelling Bee in Washington D.C.

Welcome Dr. Prosen

Brook Forest teachers welcome Dr. Prosen following his appointment. He is pictured here in the back row, third from left.

Dr. Chad Prosen was appointed as the new Brook Forest School principal for the 2017-18 school year. Regarded as a passionate, collaborative and strong instructional leader, he served most recently as principal of an elementary school in Flossmoor.

"Dr. Prosen will provide strong leadership in his role to ensure every child is successful," said Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom. "He is a caring instructional leader and is a very child-centered administrator."

Dr. Prosen said he was drawn to Butler School District 53 because of its high expectations for learning, the community's support of education and the value that everyone places on excellence. "I absolutely love being a principal. Every day is a new opportunity to work with children, parents and teachers."

He completed his Bachelor's of Art and Teacher Certificate program from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, a Master's of Arts in Education Administration from St. Xavier University and his Doctorate in Educational Organization and Leadership from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Dr. Wennstrom said she was pleased with the pool of applicants. The search process involved parents, Brook Forest faculty, administrators, superintendent, and representatives of the Board of Education. The selected candidates participated in a series of interviews in April. Two highly qualified finalists emerged and Prosen was chosen as the top prospect to recommend to the full Board of Education.

"Every day is a new opportunity to work with children, parents and teachers."

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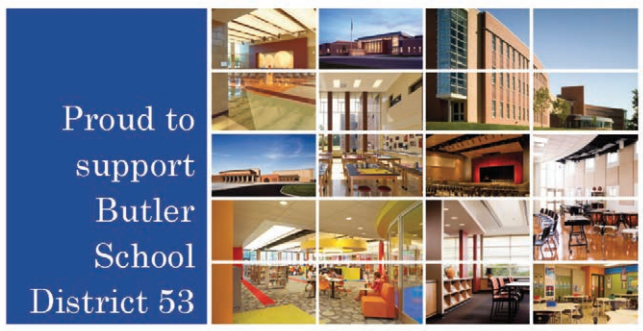

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New board members seated

Following the election, four new board members and one returning board member were seated. Pictured left to right are: Lou Paskalides, Dr. Sally Beatty, Cabin Kim, Dr. Elizabeth Chun, Christopher Edmonds, James Chow and Ahmad Sulaiman.

The Board of Education has four new faces following the April election. Dr. Sally Beatty, Cabin Kim, James Chow and Christopher Edmonds were elected along with returning board member Ahmad Sulaiman, who was appointed in October. They joined veteran board members Dr. Elizabeth Chun and Lou Paskalides. Officers were also elected: Dr. Chun as president, Dr. Beatty as vice president and Sulaiman as secretary.

Dr. Sally Beatty

Term expires: April 2021

Dr. Beatty is a consultant with Heidrick & Struggles where she is responsible for leadership consulting and executive search, working with both domestic and international clients. She holds B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from The Ohio State University, studied at the London School of Economics and completed a fellowship at Northwestern University. Dr. Beatty is married and has two children. One will enter kindergarten in the fall, and another will enter 2nd grade.

Mr. James Chow

Term expires: April 2021

Mr. Chow is the Chief Financial Officer for Oak Street Health, a leading builder and operator of primary care clinics. He holds a B.S. in Business Administration and Accounting from St. Thomas Aquinas College and is a Certified Public Accountant. James is married and has a child at Hinsdale Central and a son entering 8th grade at Butler.

Mr. Christopher Edmonds

Term expires: April 2021

Mr. Edmonds is the Senior Vice President of Financial Markets for Intercontinental Exchange Group (NYSE: ICE), leading all global client-facing activities for fixed income, credit and commodities. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He and his wife Michelle have two children in District 53 schools, entering 6th and 8th grades.

Mr. Cabin Kim

Term expires: April 2019

Mr. Kim is a Certified Public Accountant in practice with his own firm. He is a recipient of the Illinois CPA Society's Excel Award. He holds a BA from Duke University, along with an MBA and a Master's Degree in Public Administration, both from Harvard University. He is married and has two children, one entering 2nd grade and another entering kindergarten.

Mr. Ahmad Sulaiman

Term Expires: April 2021

Mr. Sulaiman is an attorney and owner of one of the largest individual consumer protection law practices in the Midwest, Sulaiman Law Group in Oak Brook. He has Bachelor's and Juris Doctor Degrees, both from Loyola University, Chicago. He and his wife live in Oak Brook with their three children, one entering 4th grade, another entering 3rd grade and a preschooler.

The five are joining two veteran Board members:

Dr. Elizabeth Chun

Term expires: April 2019

Dr. Chun has lived in Oak Brook since 1992 and has three children who have been educated in the Butler 53 school system. Dr. Chun has been a long-term member of the District 53 PTO and helped coach the Science Olympiad team. She has served on interview committees both as a parent and a Board member and serves on the District Leadership Team and as Board representative to the PTO. She has been a member of the Board since October 2010. Dr. Chun has a B.S. from Eastern Illinois University and a M.D. from the University of Illinois.

Mr. Lou Paskalides

Term expires: April 2019

Mr. Lou Paskalides is chair of the District 53 Buildings and Grounds Committee and also serves on the Technology Committee. He has been on the Board since 2011 and is the District's liaison to the Illinois Association of School Boards. Mr. Paskalides is married and has one child who graduated from Butler and is now at Hinsdale Central.

Caught on camera

Exploremore

Learning new skills, activities, sports and arts is what Exploremore Day is all about. It was the 29th year of this favorite Brook Forest tradition.

JUNIOR HIGH SCIENCE

Hooking students on science

Inspiring Instruction

Many science lessons at Butler Junior High start off with a bang – literally. At the beginning of each unit, Butler science teacher Jon Frink likes to demonstrate an experiment. One day, he was talking about motion and energy to his 7th grade class and demonstrated an ethanol canon, heating a nail in a plastic bottle and launching a cork off the spout.

Above, 7th graders Audrey Hare and Danyal Jawed test how far an object can travel when altering the angle of their marble launcher.

Students were asked to explain why it worked and then started their own experiment using a marble launcher. Using the wooden tool, teams of students tested the angle of the launcher and how far the marbles traveled, recording the data in a computer spreadsheet. That day's lesson: How angles can affect velocity and acceleration.

"An experiment usually hooks them in," said Frink.

Indeed, the students were transfixed, asking questions, getting right to their task, problem solving and analyzing the data.

It's a challenge to teach the large body of science information to 6th, 7th and 8th graders. The lessons need to be relevant but challenging, cover the large body of knowledge and methodology in science and prepare students for the rigors of high school.

At Butler, students are exposed to the major curricular areas: earth, physical and biological:

6th Grade – The major topic is biology with an emphasis on human anatomy. The minor topic is Astronomy.

7th Grade – The major topic is biology with an emphasis on cell biology, heredity and kingdoms of life. The minor topic is physics.

8th Grade – The major topic is chemistry. The minor topic is physics.

In addition to curricular content, Butler Junior High School's goal is for students to also gain the knowledge of how to work in a lab.

"Many science programs teach a little bit of each type of science every year. We focus on one area and teach it in depth," Frink said.

For example, in a 7th grade unit about microbiology, students obtain samples of bacteria from various places in the school (lunch tables, phones, etc...). Students then incubate the samples on nutrient agar (a general purpose medium that supports growth of organisms) in Petri dishes. After a period of two or three days of growth, students observe and record the results. The class further extends this activity by doing the same experiment after cleaning the surfaces with common household disinfectants.

This in-depth lesson helps students gain the rigor needed for high school science. "By the time the student leaves Butler, for example, the 8th grade chemistry curriculum has been taught in enough depth that they should be well prepared for high school," he said.

For Butler Junior High, this rigor is key. "Many students go on to pursue science in college and careers."

Science teacher Jon Frink demonstrates a chemical reaction while students look on and record the experiment. Students are exposed to the breadth and depth of science to prepare them for the rigors of high school.

GOOD NEWS

Commitment and service

Science Olympiads

The Butler Junior High Science Olympiad Team placed 8th in the state finals in April, the highest ranking they've reached since entering state.

Science Olympiad tournaments are rigorous academic interscholastic competitions that consist of a series of team events, for which students prepare throughout the year with sponsor and teacher **Kim Krupicka**. The results are as follows:

- Herpetology - 1st: **Rohan Tolani**, **Kavin Anand,**
- Anatomy and Physiology - 5th: **Ansh Shah**, **Adi Badlani,**
- Meteorology – 6th: **Yahya Junejo**, **Luke Berg,**
- Potions and Poisons – 6th: **Fatima Mohammad**, **Shivani Rao,**
- Geocaching – 6th: **Jui Khankari**, **Aishvarya Godla,**
- Hovercraft – 7th: **Aanika Atluri**, **Moosa Ahmed**
- Rocks and Minerals -7th: **Merwin D'Souza**, **Sidh Leekha.**

Brook Forest student council members give the signal for Lunch Plus One at the donation station. The lunch donation program for an area food pantry is the newest service project for the Council.

Third graders at Brook Forest simulated immigrating to American through Ellis Island. Simulations help engage students and deepen their understanding.

Fun with fitness

Health and Fitness Week in May at Brook Forest is an informative and fun way to focus on the importance of nutrition, exercise and wellness. Activities include the Nutrition Fair, where students sample and rate uncommon fruits and vegetables; Jump Rope for Heart, which raised more than $8,300 from the Brook Forest school community; and Olympic Day, where students rotate through Olympic style challenges. Wellness is emphasized during each PE class, but the special week brings greater significance to the issue.

Helping feed the hungry

Brook Forest families made dozens of extra lunches for the needy as part of Student Council's newest fundraiser. In fact, 54 of them.

The Student Council asked families to pack a second lunch in addition to the one they make for their child. As the students walked to lunch, they placed the extra lunches in the boxes, filling four large plastic bins. The Student Council partners with the PTO, which delivered the lunches to the Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry in the afternoon. The service project, called "Lunch Plus One," will be held once a month.

"Our Brook Forest students, families and staff continue to outdo themselves with their generosity and concern for others," said **Lisa Owen**, Assistant Principal, teacher and sponsor of Student Council.

Art on display

Brook Forest and Butler Junior High students' artwork were displayed at the West Suburban Consortium for Academic Excellence along with works from 15 area school districts. During the expo student artists discussed their pieces and professional artists were on hand to view the artwork and provide feedback. Student art work was chosen based on quality and effort. **Sofia Mohammed**, kindergarten; **Arzoie Bajaj**, 1st grade; **Mea Farano**, 2nd grade; **Dalia Bajwa**, 3rd grade; **Lauren Lin**, 4th grade; **Anjika Kumar**, 5th grade; **Sophia Lee**, 7th grade; **Riley Conway**, 7th grade; **Bella Schopp**, 7th grade; **Savita Sundar**, 8th grade; **Rania Arain**, 7th grade.

"Self Portrait" (top) by Anjika Kumar, 5th grade, mixed media collage; "Flower Garden" by Sofia Mohammed, kindergarten. Additional artwork is featured on the District 53 Facebook page.

Improving learning opportunities, creating efficiencies

CURRICULUM

■ Enhanced the English Language Arts curriculum by integrating the Reading and Writing Workshop models with increased word study, vocabulary and grammar,

■ Initiated a leadership, life skills and character education program, called Eight Keys of Excellence at Brook Forest, which enables students to learn at the highest levels in the classroom. The program will expand to Butler Junior High in 2017-18,

■ Launched STEM activities in the K-5 library curriculum, including digital citizenship, coding and others,

■ Launched a professional development leadership program, where teacher "leaders" coach, teach and facilitate collaboration and learning among staff,

■ Provided training to teachers that advanced the teaching of 21st Century skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity, all with the goal to elevate student learning and engagement,

■ Provided structure for teachers to meet in curricular teams across subject areas to collaborate on curriculum and assessment.

Three students presented their social studies projects at a recent Board of Education meeting. Pictured (l to r) are Arjun Krishnan, Isa Hitchens, Rayaan Rauf and Principal Amy Read.

STAFFING

■ Reviewed current staffing and implemented a new plan for next year that merges some building roles into a new position that will serve students district wide. The Director of Student Services is not an addition in personnel but a leadership reorganization designed to enhance student service delivery.

OPERATIONS

■ Provided before and after-school care at Brook Forest in partnership with the Oak Brook Park District. The program, called Dolphin Station, is entirely funded through user fees, providing a beneficial and safe option for families,

■ Published parent communications norms that establish guidelines for parents and school volunteers designed to promote healthy and productive relationships.

FINANCES

■ Instituted a study on how to reduce costs for bus transportation, which equals $2,000 per student rider in the coming year,

■ Continued the Board's practice of instituting balanced budgets despite decreasing support from federal and state revenue sources,

■ Retained the highest rating from Standards and Poors, boasted one of the lowest tax rates in the state and maintained a moderate fund balance.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

■ Approved summer plans to replace the roof and exhaust units at Brook Forest, both past their life expectancy and approved plans to repair and improve drainage in the courtyard at Butler Junior High,

■ Dedicated the new vestibule off the gym at Butler Junior High and the new improved visitor entrance to the district office, and celebrated the new traffic flow for safer bus and student pick-up,

■ Replaced furniture in the Butler Junior High STEM lab to enhance learning and create more effective collaborative 21st century learning spaces.

TECHNOLOGY

■ Expanded the use of 1:1 technology by providing Chromebooks to 3rd graders. This allows them to move beyond using Apps on the iPad and into producing works on laptops and having the ability to access the Cloud,

■ Enhanced the use of Google Classroom at the junior high, allowing parents more effective access to their child's classroom information. Plans are to move to this free resource at Brook Forest in 2017-18,

■ In partnership with the PTO, integrated the use of large touch screen devices in common or collaborative spaces in both schools and integrated their use in the curriculum,

■ Improved communications with families and the school community by rolling out Facebook to the existing communication vehicles such as the District 53 App, community newsletter, Twitter, website and school/district emails.

GOVERNANCE

■ Celebrated the retirement of four members of the Board who had a combined 32 years of experience: Alan Hanzlik, Dr. Alan Kumar, Dr. Hitesh Patel and Todd Rusteberg,

■ Approved a Board of Education Handbook that details the duties, commitments and guiding principles of the Board of Education,

■ Assembled as a Board 12 times for regular business meetings, 7 times for special meetings and 26 times in committee meetings,

■ Reviewed and approved 60 policies and an additional 70 administrative procedures and exhibits.

PTO

■ Donated approximately $25,000 in supplemental gifts to the schools, including interactive touch screens, STEM lab equipment and buddy benches,

■ Funded 10 field trips, 6 assemblies and special events like Exploremore Day, Sock Hops and sports programs, among others; operated three after-school clubs each week.

■ Totaled 1,000+ volunteer hours during 2016-17.

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Dr. Elizabeth Chun, President
Dr. Sally Beatty, Vice-President
Ahmad Sulaiman, Secretary
James Chow, Member
Christopher Edmonds, Member
Cabin Kim, Member
Lou Paskalides, Member

Dr. Heidi Wennstrom, Superintendent

Art Board

Butler District 53 students display their artwork on artsonia.com. Pictured are 2nd grade drawing, 2nd grade time machines and 5th grade family portrait.

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