



BUTLER SCHOOL DISTRICT 53

# newsline

Winter 2018

## HOUR OF CODE

### Students join largest global learning event

Students as young as kindergarten were working on logic puzzles by dragging and dropping boxes on their computers. Second graders in Nettie Griffin's class "designed" a new feature for Seesaw (a learning/portfolio app) and recorded themselves explaining how it would be used. Students in Jadda Castaneda's 6th grade class were programming digital newscasts creating headlines, graphics and logos with code.

And, 8th graders in Robert Philipp's class worked to code TI-83 calculators that were strapped to wheels

and programmed them move, ask questions and travel a maze.

The simultaneous event was called Hour of Code, the largest learning event in the world. Butler and Brook Forest classrooms K-8 joined in with coding and learning throughout the day.

"Students as young as kindergarten can learn coding and logic," said Library Media Center Teacher Scott Thesen, who walked students through the steps of completing logic puzzles.

"The staff and students not only participated but also were very enthusiastic about all the different lessons and skills that were built and developed," said Technology Director Farheen Beg.

Students in Philipp's class had a choice of several challenging tasks: program their computer to hit several targets around the room, create a program to ask the user questions and move the robot accordingly, create a guessing game or create a program that will allow the robot to travel through a maze.

First, he walked the students through the calculator's basic commands, asking them to solve questions about what strings of code would do. "It was frustrating," said one student in Philipp's class working on the maze. "But ultimately, it was gratifying when it worked."



Students in Jadda Castaneda's class learn to code graphic displays as part of the Hour of Code.



Eighth graders Jui Khankari and Kevin Feng code a calculator that is strapped to wheels in order to travel a maze. The lesson was part of a simultaneous world-wide event called Hour of Code.

He and his two partners had just programmed their car/calculators to navigate corners and turn around when it bumped into a wall.

"Butler District 53 is committed to inspiring our students through coding experiences to do more, learn more and dream more as they problem solve and transfer their thinking into reality," said Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom.

The Hour of Code is an initiative to introduce students across the globe to the importance and fun of learning to code. Last year, over 15 million students took part, including a few hundred in Oak Brook.

## Schools partner with PTO and park district for new playgrounds

Butler Junior High and Brook Forest will each get new playgrounds this summer, thanks in part to the support of the PTO, the Board of Education and the Oak Brook Park District.

The K-2 playground at Brook Forest is past its life expectancy and needs to be replaced. It was installed 25 years ago. The Butler playground was removed several years ago and was not immediately replaced.

The partnerships between both the PTO and the Park District will help reduce costs to replace both playgrounds. The PTO will help fund some of the equipment and offer naming rights for smaller pieces. The Oak Brook Park District will help install the Butler Junior High playground.

"We have enjoyed many partnerships over the years with the PTO and the Park District. Together, we can provide fitness and playground equipment for our children and save costs for our taxpayers," said Business Manager Dr. Sandra Martin.

The PTO plans to purchase a lunar-shaped climbing net structure at Brook Forest. It is a large piece that encourages students to socialize while playing. The PTO is also exploring purchasing fitness pieces for the Butler Junior High playground. The structure encourages fitness while playing.

"We are very excited about this partnership and very grateful that the District has made this a priority," said PTO President Kelly Greco.

"The benefits of play are many," said Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom. "Through creative play, children develop imagination, strength, healthy brain development and build important social relationships," she said.

In February, the Board of Education approved bids to purchase equipment for both schools and to install the structure at Brook Forest.

Here are preliminary plans for the playgrounds at both schools. The PTO plans to offer naming rights for some of the equipment. The Park District will install the Butler Junior High playground.





Join our community!

We have expanded our social media reach. You can find us on Facebook and Twitter. Search for Butler School District 53 on Facebook. Our Twitter handles are @D53BrookForest and @D53ButlerJHS and @ButlerSD53

# Good News

## Author shares wisdom with students



Peter H. Reynolds, pictured above, New York Times' best-selling children's book author, illustrator and founder of a software company, shared some wit and wisdom with Brook Forest students recently. Reynolds told students where he gets his ideas, the importance of creativity and encouraged them to make their mark. Two of Reynolds' books *The Dot* and *Ish* remind us all to "make your mark and see where it takes you."

solve a problem. The move to incorporate engineering projects into the annual science fair aligns with the State of Illinois' newly adopted Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which encourages teachers to integrate both science and engineering practices into their classrooms.

"This event is a wonderful opportunity for students to create and innovate and challenge themselves," said Jon Frink, Butler science teacher. The projects are judged and students are given feedback. "It is wonderful to see our exuberant learners becoming critical thinkers, growing their science literacy and developing innovation skills," said Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom. The fair also connects students with experts in their field.

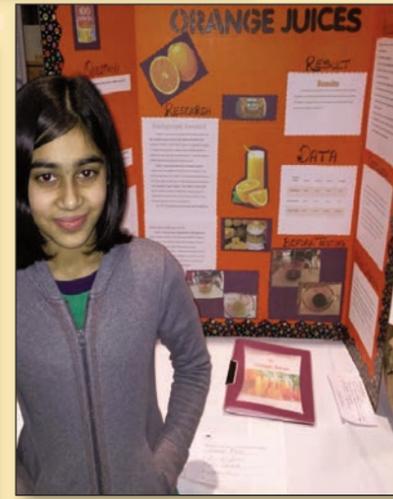
## Raising money for a good cause

Butler Junior High students raised over \$1,065 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society by hosting a 3-on-3 basketball tournament. The event was sponsored by the Student Service Board, their advisor Kim Krupicka, and the help of PE teacher Mike Finke. The event also helped increase awareness of the disease and cause.

## Science Fair at the zoo

Butler Junior High students showed off their science and engineering projects at the Chicago Zoological Society Science Fair 2018 on Feb. 22. The students, part of the West Suburban Consortium for Academic Excellence (WSCAE), presented their projects to a panel of judges from the Chicago Zoological Society (CZS) and Chicago area corporate executives.

The projects focused on science and engineering. The science projects aimed to answer a question, and the engineering projects sought to



Butler students took a Saturday off and presented their science projects to area experts at the Chicago Zoological Society Science Fair. Above is the entire group. Pictured at top right are Sophia Lee and Rama Bhagwat, 8th grade, and above right, Areeba Shams, 6th grade. The projects focused on science and engineering.

## International Day is a favorite tradition at Butler Junior High

International Day at Butler Junior High is a favorite years-long tradition. This year, students played a Korean game called Gonggi, created Indian art, learned a hip-hop dance and made some Japanese marbling art. Each year, 6th, 7th and 8th graders learn about different cultures through a variety of mini-courses.



Butler students created the Indian art called Rangoli with rice, dye and the help of Butler parent volunteers. At right, above, students learned a hip-hop dance.

## Sponsors



Your Group Benefits with Vista!

Benefit Consultant for  
Butler School District 53

Brian Walsh  
tel 630-468-6500  
www.vistanational.com



Evergreen Bank Group  
proudly supports  
Butler School District 53.



Your community. We're all in.

Oak Brook | Hinsdale | Evergreen Park

1515 West 22nd Street, Ste 100W | Oak Brook, IL 60523  
(630) 413-9580 • www.evergreenbankgroup.com



Member FDIC



LINA SHAH (Realtor)



PROUDLY SUPPORTS  
BUTLER SCHOOL  
DISTRICT 53



1225 W 22nd Street Ste.130  
OAK BROOK, IL 60523

(312)593-4818 | Linashah5@gmail.com



PRESIDENT'S CLUB  
2017

©2017 Coldwell Banker Residential Real Estate LLC. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. Operated by a subsidiary of NRT LLC. Coldwell Banker, the Coldwell Banker logo, Coldwell Banker Global Luxury and the Coldwell Banker Global Luxury logo are service marks registered or pending registrations owned by Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. Real estate agents affiliated with Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage are independent contractor sales associates and are not employees of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage.

# District reviews measures of performance

*The annual Student Achievement and Performance Report outlines results on three assessments that show Butler School District 53 is among the very top performing school districts, not only for its test scores but also its climate and culture.*

The report, which was recently presented to the Board of Education, detailed three assessments: The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers or PARCC test, the NWEA MAP test and the 5Essentials.

Here is a synopsis of each:

## 1 PARCC EXAM National percentile 99.4%

PARCC is a state test given annually that measures student performance in grades 3-8. The results look at attainment of student skills and growth. On this test, Butler District 53 students, on



average, performed at a national percentile of 99.4 percent in both English Language Arts (ELA) and math. Overall, on ELA tests, 79 percent of students met or exceeded standards, which categorized their scores as “distinguished.” On math scores, overall 76.3 percent of District 53 students met or exceeded standards, again ranking as “distinguished.” An analysis showed that generally, students are performing at or beyond two grade levels ahead.

## 2 MAP National percentile 97-99%

The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) tests what students know and their growth over time. The test is adaptive, adjusting to each student’s performance, so it precisely measures achievement.

Students K-8 are tested at the beginning of the year and at the end of year. Students in Butler District 53, on average, performed two to three grade levels above their peers nationally. The test also measures student growth over time and compares beginning of the year tests and sets growth targets for end of year tests.

The results show students are sustaining growth related to their high levels of achievement. Overall, on the 2016-17 MAP tests, 63 percent of students in reading and 66 percent of students in math met their typical growth targets as prescribed. The national average for students meeting growth targets is 50 percent.

The entire report can be found at [www.butler53.com](http://www.butler53.com)



Pictured here are 5th grader Laila Baridi with teacher Katie Pollina.

## 3 5Essentials Strong partnerships and ambitious instruction

The 5Essentials survey was given to teachers, parents and junior high students. It looks at five areas of the schools related to organization and climate – statistics that show whether a school is poised for improvement. The areas surveyed are on ambitious instruction, effective leaders, collaborative teachers, involved families and supportive environment.

Overall, results shows that classes are challenging and engaging, families are highly involved and the school is safe, demanding and supportive. The highest performing indicator was “involved families” followed by supportive environment and ambitious instruction. This means that parents, teachers and students believe that classes are challenging and engaging, the entire staff builds strong, effective partnerships and that the school is safe, supportive and demanding.

The District outperformed similar schools and the state of Illinois on some of these measures. “We are pleased and proud of these climate and culture results,” said Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom. “Each day we strive to build positive futures for our students and improve in all areas. These results are just one measurement tool to help us do that.”

# Board member accepts invitation to walk a mile in a teacher’s shoes

Butler School District 53 Board of Education Secretary Ahmad Sulaiman served as guest teacher in Brook Forest’s 5th grade classroom recently.

The unique opportunity was presented to school board members by the teachers of Butler District 53 as part of School Board Member Day. Ellen Wozny, whose 5th grade class Sulaiman visited, said the offer was a valuable opportunity to learn from each other. “We wanted to invite board members to come into the classrooms and ‘teach a mile in our shoes’ and see how the classrooms operate first hand,” she said.

Before teaching the unit, Sulaiman reviewed Wozny’s four-page lesson plan that served as a guide. Students were studying poetry and the lesson

centered on helping students discover the meaning and context in poetry using the Preamble of the Constitution.

Sulaiman, an attorney who was first appointed to the Board in October 2016, said the experience was eye opening. “I’m amazed at what teachers do here. Everything is planned, every module, every lesson down to the minute; nothing is winged,” he said afterward. “Each student also receives individual instruction to help him or her excel,” Sulaiman said.



Attorney and Board Member/Secretary Ahmad Sulaiman teaches a unit on poetry and the Preamble of the Constitution in Ellen Wozny’s 5th grade class.

# New parent group offers support, education and soundboard



Parents learn and share ideas about executive functioning at the Success for All Students meeting.

Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom has initiated a new group in partnership with parents, called Success for All Students. The group serves in an advisory role and as sounding board to the administration. It is also an opportunity to share critical information to parents and for parents to share information with each other.

The group has met twice and plans to meet at least quarterly. The first meeting was to determine the structure of the group and to seek input from parents on the future direction of the committee. For the second meeting, parents heard information on executive functioning and how it can be taught and

supported in students. Executive functioning is a broad range of skills related to organization, planning, flexibility and problem solving.

The group is facilitated by Student Services Director Andrea Prola. “It’s another opportunity to partner with parents on what matters to them,” she said. “We’ve had wonderful and insightful participation from parents,” she added.

Superintendent Dr. Heidi Wennstrom said that the partnership is invaluable.

“It helps amplify the voices of parents and ensure that we are meeting their needs and helping students fulfill their greatest potential.”

# New structure boosts reading skills



Inspiring Instruction

In a recent 6th grade Guided Study class, students are listening to a Maya Angelou poem. Reading Specialist Nora Flynn asks students to read the poem, and listen to it again and apply some reading strategies.

“Decide what reading strategy you’re going to use and write it down,” said Flynn who co-teaches the class with Jen Janis. The strategies are listed on the white board:

- Ask yourself questions about what you read
- Summarize
- Visualize what’s in your head
- Make connections
- Infer
- Predict

The units are designed for students who are enhancing their reading skills. In the past, students were pulled out of other classes and provided reading intervention and support. Now, the teaching of reading strategies is embedded in their Guided Study class.

The Guided Study class offers instruction on executive functioning skills, such as planning, organization, problem solving and study skills.

Along with Flynn and Janis, Guided Study is co-taught with Anne Soto, Jen Vargocko and Amanda Moore at various grade levels. Moore developed the Guided Study curriculum's focus on executive

functioning skills, such as planning, organization, problem solving, and study skills.

“Explicit instruction of reading strategies – making the work of comprehension visible and clear to students – helps them grow as readers and critical thinkers,” said Flynn.

In the class, the teachers highlight a variety of reading strategies as well as work on fluency and word meaning. They may ask students to decode words, visualize a piece of the text, use inference techniques, summarize, ask themselves “what sticks with you,” make connections and reflect. The teachers will also read aloud with students, stop, reflect and use the techniques to increase understanding. The class also works on fluency, which ensures the accuracy of words, the rate of reading and prosody, which means making your voice match the meaning of the text. Students also tackle decoding words and vocabulary.

On this day, as students listen to an audio of Maya Angelou reading the poem, they use their “think-aloud” comprehension strategies. The “think aloud” strategies help students have the internal conversations that readers have to help them understand what they read. Students then watch a segment where the poem becomes part of an iTunes commercial. “First, poetry is meant to be heard,” said Flynn. “Hearing it, then using familiar strategies – visualizing, making connections, asking questions –, and finally seeing the way the poem is created alongside images in a commercial helped us have a multi-media, multi-sensory experience,” said Flynn. This helps solidify comprehension.

Both reading comprehension and listening comprehension are equally important. “We listen to fluent models so we understand how the reading should sound in our heads,” she said.

Students will then transfer those skills as they work on more and more difficult poems and texts.

“They are building inference, checking on what they see and what they know. Later on we will add synthesizing techniques and build on that,” said Flynn.

The class may take the form of whole group instruction, independent learning with check-ins from the teacher, working in small groups or working one-on-one with a student. Guided Study teachers also work with core class teachers such as social studies or science in order to support students.



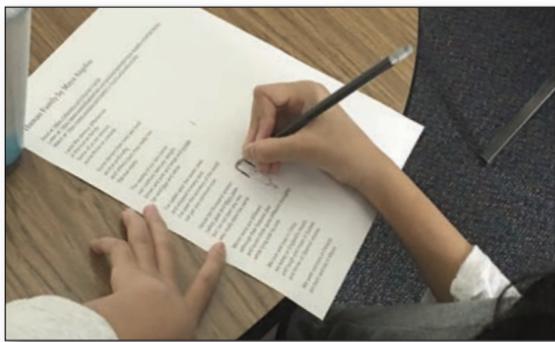
## READING WITH BUSTER

Buster, an animal therapy dog owned by Butler Junior High Principal Amy Read, visited Guided Study classes, where students read to him. Reading Specialist Nora Flynn explains the concept. “When we’re reading with someone non judgmental, we’re more relaxed, we’re more confident. So when students are reading with Buster, they’re practicing their reading strategies at a higher level. They’re asking questions and clarifying, they’re making connections and they’re really thinking about what they’re reading. It’s like they’re having a conversation with Buster about what they’re reading.”

Listen to a story CBS News Chicago broadcasted about another Buster visit to Butler Junior High.  
<http://bit.ly/Butler53>

The new model has helped students make reading gains. Flynn uses a variety of assessments to measure what students have learned and what they need to learn. So far she's seen growth on formal assessments like MAP and in students' reading levels. “Along with hard data, we're also seeing growth in students' independent use of effective reading strategies, their participation in reading discussions, and their confidence, which they leverage for continued growth with any text they read,” Flynn said.

“When students are taught reading strategies, it’s like a light bulb going off,” said Butler Junior High Principal Amy Read. “They’re learning how to apply those strategies to understand what they’re reading.”



Students pick a reading strategy to highlight when studying a poem. In this case, the student is using “visualizing” to enhance her understanding.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

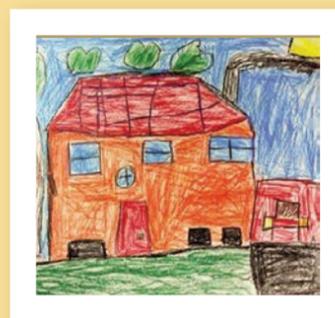
Dr. Elizabeth Chun, President  
Dr. Sally Beatty, Vice-President  
Mr. Ahmad Sulaiman, Secretary  
Mr. James Chow  
Mr. Christopher Edmonds  
Mr. Cabin Kim  
Mr. Lou Paskalides

Dr. Heidi Wennstrom,  
Superintendent

## Art Board

Butler District 53 students display their artwork on [artsonia.com](http://artsonia.com)

Pictured here (from l to r) are kindergarten, 5th grade and 4th grade art.



Butler School District 53  
2801 York Rd.  
Oak Brook, IL 60523



Follow us on Facebook and Twitter at @ButlerSD53

SPONSORS



Presort Standard  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 26  
Oak Brook, IL

Postal Customer