

# Butler District 53's Commitment to Child-Centered Education



**Butler School District 53**  
Oak Brook, IL 60532  
[www.butler53.com](http://www.butler53.com)

# Our Commitment



Dear Butler District 53 Community,

Butler 53 continues its focus on intentionally creating the conditions to build a solid foundation for a whole child and wellness foundation for all learners – students and staff – so each will succeed and thrive in our ever-evolving world. Our family of visionary educators and eager parents set our course on imagining the school experience for children and adults so that each member participates in a caring, committed, and connected culture worthy of celebrating.

Butler School District 53 is a premier school district that has a history of academic excellence. It is consistently recognized for high performance in every area, from test scores and student achievement to teaching strategies, curriculum, technology, professional development and preparing students for high school.

While our test scores and educational system earned us national and local recognition, Butler 53's leadership team understands that the world our students live in is ever evolving and that flexible skills sets and healthy environments will be necessary to truly create pathways for optimal success. We believe this intentional focus will better prepare all of our students to take on the opportunities of today and tomorrow and to solve the challenges their generation will be called upon to resolve.

I hope you will enjoy reading about the District 53's commitment to the whole child and the tenets of a child-centered education.

Sincerely,

Heidi Wennstrom, Ph.D.; Ed. D.  
Superintendent

# Butler 53's Six-Step Whole Child Commitment



Our commitment to achieve a child-centered healthy learning community across our schools has been intentional and robust. We desire to achieve an affirming culture in which students and the staff members who serve them are nurtured and supported in ways that create a strong community of thriving learners. Our whole child focus is our commitment to our educational community.

**Set a course of strategic action** - Our commitment is based upon a vision that connects directly to shared values, ensuring that all school decisions are tied to the values that have been jointly developed by a high performing team of parents, teachers, and students. This organizational step is critical to aligning strategic action plans and it creates a clear pathway to success.

**Shift from a school-centered mindset to a learner-centered mindset** - Our Butler Family has a right to expect a learning environment that is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged.

**Adjust our priorities** - These include reimagining use of time, greater student and staff choice, expanded opportunities for personal learning, creating a community of engaged learners.

We hold ourselves accountable to creating the conditions in which a community of learners, child and adult, can thrive. Job #1 is creating our welcoming, safe, healthy, caring school environment. Each team member holds themselves accountable for the individual actions that create these positive learning conditions.

**Build critical partnerships** - Our partnerships promote and fuel our pursuit of the critical developmental assets all learners need to create the foundation for self-worth, inquiry, healthy risk taking, and collaborative action, ensuring sustainability.

**Seize communication opportunities** - Our whole child and wellness approach continues to become contagious through ongoing educational efforts and communication. A variety of educational leaders at the board, administrative, teacher leadership, student government, parent partnership levels, share the message of the importance of educating the whole child. Our community understands that ambitious instruction cannot be achieved without creating the culture and foundation in which the human spirit is safe, fulfilled and nurtured.



**Recognize and celebrate** - We commit to celebrating our successes and understand the emotional, physical, and philosophical benefits of recognizing the achievements along the way. Our skilled staff and faculty work very hard; they are driven by the desire to do all that is possible to create positive learning conditions for their precious children.

The power of recognition and celebration keeps us excited about the work and personally invested in the journey. Our Twitter handles #D53Learns and #D53Cares show just some of our successes.



# Our commitment to Whole Child and Wellness: A Look Back and Ahead

Our daily work has been transformed. Each educational leader is committed to ensuring that decision making in each and every instance will result in the school choice of doing what is in the best interest of each individual learner. An unanticipated joy in the process of doing the work associated with this whole child learning environment is the delightful reinvigoration of our teaching professionals and administrative team members. Connecting to what drew us into the field of education in the first place – that desire to make a difference in the lives of children – revitalizes our pursuit of innovative and creative pathways for holistic student and adult wellness. Our journey is far from over. This is our life's work and we are just getting started.



# Tenet 1: Healthy

## Supporting a Healthy Whole Child

Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.



Above, students work hands-on with a visiting cardiologist to learn about healthy hearts.

Top, students chart their tastes, likes and dislikes at the Nutrition Fair featuring fruits and vegetables.



Brook Forest students starting the Dolphin Dash during the all-school Health and Fitness Week.

**4.9%**  
Drop in  
obesity rate <sup>1</sup>

**5,620**  
days students  
logged healthy  
meals in Nutrition  
Stars <sup>4</sup>

**20%**  
increase in  
nutritious  
hot lunch  
participation <sup>2</sup>

**800**  
miles logged  
at recess <sup>3</sup>

*Sources:*

*1 - DuPage County Body Mass Index Surveillance Report on Kindergarten and 6th grade.*

*2 - Quest Food Provider annual report, over a 3-year span.*

*3 - Miles logged in 2017-18 of Brook Forest students in Mileage Club*

*4 - 130 Brook Forest children (23%) logged 5,620 days of eating a healthy breakfast, a vegetable and fruit and lunch and minimizing fats and sweets as part of the Nutrition Stars program.*





## 5 Essentials Data

(Based on 2017 Illinois 5Essentials survey data)

**100%** of teachers report that students show each other respect

**99%** of students report they feel safe in school

**96%** of parents report that their child feels safe at school

**95%** of students report teachers treat them with respect

**80%** of students say teachers always listen to their ideas

# Tenet 3: Engaged

## Supporting an Engaged Whole Child

Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

**“The District is fortunate to have actively engaged parents and community.”**

*– Stakeholder comment from Strategic Planning Process, March 2018*

## 5 Essentials Data

(Based on 2017 Illinois 5Essentials survey data)

**98%** of students say teachers expect everyone to work hard

**98%** of teachers say they feel responsible that all students learn

**98%** of parents report they attend parent-teacher conferences

**98%** of students feel students participate in class discussions

**93%** of students feel it is important to attend school every day

## Clubs, activities and highlights of special events

**BF Clubs/Activities:** Draw Squads (boys, girls and advanced), Art Studio, Rocket Club, Dissection Club, Lego Club, Mileage Club, Nutrition Stars, STEAM, 2/3rd grade musical, 4/5th grade musical, Choir, Game Club

**BJH Clubs/Activities:** Book Club, Band, Choir, Yearbook, Musical, Play

**BJH Athletics:** Track, Cross Country, Swimming, Basketball, Volleyball, Cheerleading, Soccer,

**BJH Electives:** STAR (guidance/transition to junior high), Media Communications, music/media/technology, percussion ensemble, photography, astronomy, STEM, art exploration, Service Learning Waste Reduction Project, Geometry support, Math 8, Build an Economy, Constitutional Law, Service Learning.

**Competitions:** Math Team, Spelling Bee, Geo Bee, Science Olympiad

**PTO enrichment classes:** Cooking, Spanish, Engineering, Programming, Theater, Girl Power Yoga, TinkRworks

**Special events:** Parent Visitation Day, Family Reading Night, 7th grade Lock-ins, Sock hop, Science Fair, Iron Oaks leadership 8th grade field trip, Fitness Faceoff, Health and Fitness Week, International Day.



**Butler Junior High students learn a traditional Chinese dance during the school's annual International Day.**

# Tenet 4: Supported

## Supporting a Supported Whole Child

Each student has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults



## 5 Essential Data

(Based on 2017 Illinois 5Essentials survey data)

**100%** of teachers say school builds trusting relationships

**98%** of teachers report parents support teacher's teaching

**93%** of teachers report parents and teachers as partners

**88%** of teachers report they help each other do their best

**88%** of parents reported they feel welcomed at school

Students say thank you to the Board, administration and teachers at a board meeting.



**75.8%**  
Teachers who have a  
Masters' Degree  
or beyond <sup>1</sup>

**5**  
Number of data  
meetings yearly  
among teams of  
teachers

**13.6**  
Teachers' years of  
experience <sup>2</sup>

Sources:  
1 & 2 - 2017 Illinois State School Report Card

# Tenet 5: Challenged

## Supporting a Challenged Whole Child

Each student is challenged academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment



**Student-led activities, include donation drives, fundraising and service to others. Here, student council members hold a mitten and hat drive.**



Students K-8 are taught problem solving through STEM classes.

## 5 Essential Data

(Based on 2017 Illinois 5Essentials survey data)

- 98%** of students report that their teachers expect them to do their best
- 96%** of teachers report they take responsibility for school improvement
- 94%** of teachers report consistency in curriculum, instruction
- 93%** of teachers report that parent/teachers are partners
- 89%** of parents are very satisfied with their child's education

# Tenets 1-5: Whole Child

## Supporting a Whole Child



### Sampling of mini classes

It's Magic at BF!  
Bird House Workshop  
Obstacle Course  
Setting Broken Bones  
Capture the Flag  
CSI: Brook Forest  
Curtain Call  
A Day at the Salon  
Dolphin DRONE Drop  
Duct Tape Projects

Escape Room Adventure  
Soccer Training Fishing  
Fleece Fun Pillows  
Harry Potter - Brews & Elixirs  
Hip Hop Dance  
Knot Just Another T-Shirt  
Lacrosse Fever  
Lego Speedway  
Lotions and Potions  
Martial Arts Mixup  
Minecraft Coding  
Vertical Challenge & Trampoline  
Yoga



## Exploremore Day

Our school year concludes with our students' favorite culminating learning event – Exploremore Day. This epic day, sponsored by the District and PTO, is devoted to student choice, health, exploration, inquiry, creativity and friendship. This program supports the whole child and strengthens our desire to ensure that every child thrives. At the day-long event, Brook Forest students choose 6 out of 50-some mini classes that interest them – sports/games, crafts, arts, self care and career exploration. Teachers, administrators, parents and teen alumni guide the students and teach the classes. They day includes celebrating graduating 5th graders and retiring staff. For 30 years, Explore more Day personalizes learning, motivates students and fosters a nurturing, supportive and thriving school community.



## Our actions are aligned with our mission, vision, purpose and core values.

**Mission:** Provide the best educational opportunities for each student to achieve academic excellence, to develop **curiosity** for life-long learning, and to demonstrate **personal and social integrity**.

**Vision:** education is a **partnership** in a journey of excellence in preparing children to learn and succeed in an evolving world.

**Purpose:** We commit to do everything in our power to stand with and **inspire our children** to achieve a **personal best** for themselves and their community, every day.

### Core Values We Hold Dear

- Exemplifying state-of-the art educational and whole child best practices
- Investing in the success of every member of Butler 53
- Empowering every child to soar beyond expectations
- Ensuring a child-centric approach to all educational decision-making
- Creating a holistic pursuit of academic, social and emotional growth
- Facilitating and enriching student-driven learning
- Fostering a collaborative, team-based learning environment
- Engaging teaching professionals in continuous learning
- Providing for the highest academic achievement
- Developing partnerships with members of our educational system and broader community to support whole child success.

