



BUTLER SCHOOL DISTRICT 53 newsline

Fall 2019

SCHOOL REPORT CARD

Student scores rise again on state tests

The needle moved up again on Butler student test scores, based on data in the 2019 State School Report Card, released in late October. Both schools again were designated as “exemplary,” which means they are among the top 10 percent of high performing schools in the state. This designation is based on eight indicators of academic success and school quality.

“We are proud of our student achievement scores in math and English Language Arts (ELA),” said Butler District 53 Superintendent Dr. Paul O’Malley. “It’s extraordinary that student scores, which are already high, continue to progress,” he said.

On the tests, called the Illinois Assessment of Readiness or IAR, 82 percent of students showed English Language Arts proficiency and 79 percent in math. This compared to 82 percent in ELA the previous year and 75 percent in math.

Those results are among the top in Illinois. In fact, in a comparison of 18 similar schools in geography and socioeconomics, District 53 scores ranked 2nd in Math, 2nd in English Language Arts and 1st in Science on the Illinois Science Assessment (ISA). However, combining all three scores, Butler ranked No. 1 of all schools.

“This shows excellence in all academic areas,”



District 53 students again scored among the highest in the state on the Illinois Assessment for Readiness. Combining scores on ELA, math and science, Butler District ranked No. 1 of 18 similar school districts.

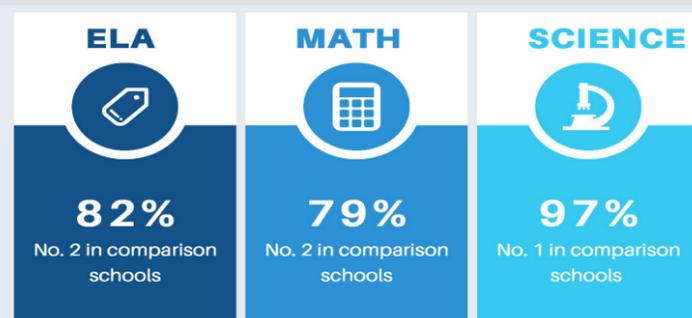
said O’Malley.

For the first time, the designations and academic indicators appear alongside site-based expenditures – how much money our District spends per student at our schools, noted O’Malley.

“These two data points allow the opportunity to take a closer look at the relationship between financial investments and student outcomes,” he said.

He noted the high expectations of the District and community. “I believe every student can meet our expectations with the right support systems in place.”

Exemplary designation



Historical Comparable School Districts

School Districts	IAR test		ISA test
	ELA	Math	Science
Butler 53	82	79	97
Aptakistic-Tripp 102	70	68	78
Avoca 37	78	72	84
Bannockburn 106	83	70	86
Glencoe 35	63	68	73
Glen Ellyn 41	55	60	75
Gower 62	63	59	83
Hinsdale 181	77	72	86
Kildeer 96	75	73	83
Lake Forest 67	63	63	75
Lincolnshire 103	81	80	89
Kenilworth 38	73	74	92
Northbrook/Gvw 30	78	79	82
Pleasantdale 107	61	58	73
River Forest 90	69	63	80
Sunset Ridge 29	72	73	84
Western Springs 101	77	75	83
Wilmette 39	66	63	84
Winnetka 36	72	73	76

Source: 2019 Illinois State Report Card
<http://www.illinoisreportcard.com>

Veteran District 53 educators lead Butler



Two veteran educators, Andrea Prola and Melissa Zaniewski, were named as principal and assistant principal at Butler Junior High. Prola had served as director of student services in District 53 and will continue in that role in addition to principal.

Long-time Butler Junior High English Language Arts teacher Melissa Zaniewski serves as assistant principal.

Both are student-centered leaders, have deep knowledge of data-based interventions and curriculum and have a strong history of building quality programs. “Their inclusive, whole-student philosophy, high standards and respectful leadership are serving our students, staff and families well,” said Superintendent Dr. Paul O’Malley.

Prola joined District 53 in 2017 and Zaniewski in 2004. Already, they are developing a team approach, helping

Melissa Zaniewski (left) and Andrea Prola lead Butler Junior High as assistant principal and principal, respectively.

spur student and school spirit and worked to reorganize the school schedule to add more arts and STEM.

Prior to joining Butler, Prola served as case manager in Troy Community School District and as a learning behavior specialist. She is also a graduate level instructor at both Lewis University and University of Illinois/Chicago and has served as a special education coordinator and graduate instructor at University of St. Francis in Joliet. She is expected to complete her doctorate later this year.

Besides teaching, Zaniewski has lead professional development programs, developed learning objective frameworks, helped create the District’s new state-required teacher evaluation process and served as the intervention coordinator. She has been described as a “master teacher” who is both child-centered and has a unique ability to motivate students and teachers alike.



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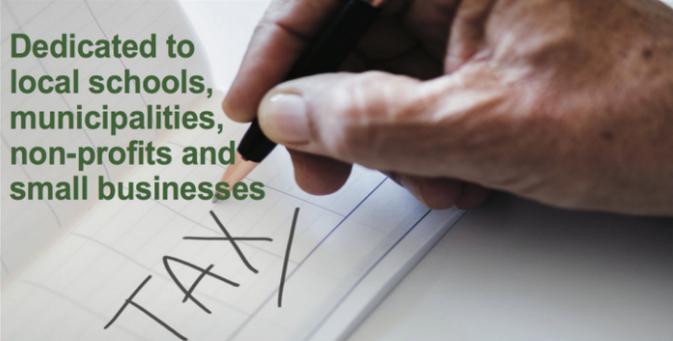


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SUPERINTENDENT COLUMN

The plan and vision for Year One



Dr. Paul O'Malley

From Exemplary to Epic

It is a privilege to serve as your superintendent. In the summer, I had the opportunity to meet many of our educators, parents and

groups to find out a) what they like about the school district, b) what improvements they would like to see, and c) what they would like from me as superintendent.

I also analyzed student achievement data and that along with the meetings helped create a vision for the next three years.

While this vision affirms our exemplary program and curricular practices, our work will focus on consistently raising the bar for all of our students and doing what is best for all students every day. Our task is to create an overarching pre-K–12 curriculum that aligns the written, taught and tested curricula. These documents create opportunities for teachers to compare their curriculum with colleagues who teach the same grade or subject, to view curriculum content across time, and, ultimately, to compare the curriculum with state or national standards.

Curriculum mapping is a robust tool to accomplish both curriculum alignment and curriculum-focused school improvement. Through this process, the district is also facilitating alignment of the curriculum across grade levels and with grades above and below. This will result in shoring up gaps, removing repetition, promoting cross-disciplinary areas, and reinforcing essential skills and extending the skills with increasing complexity.

I believe these expectations will help us transition seamlessly and move our schools from

exemplary to epic. You can find some of the expectations below:

Year One:

1) Create a Guaranteed Viable Curriculum (GVC)

Stakeholders and users alike will be able to see which learning standards are being used, how students are being prepared for the next level concepts, and how they're being assessed consistently.

- Create Unit Maps of curriculum
- Create Year-at-a-Glance documents
- Create Common Assessments
- Create Whole Child curriculum guides

2) Create a Continuous Improvement Curriculum Review Cycle

Teachers and principals review assessment data and based on those results will revisit curriculum and the timeline, and make changes as needed. This allows for continuous improvement.

The development of these materials are complex and tedious but also a labor of love. The maps and guides will grow and change to meet the needs of students. At the same time, they are guides and teachers will follow the lead of the children.

I believe these overarching expectations will provide the academic rigor and consistency needed to ensure that we move from exemplary to epic. We are well on our way!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your superintendent of schools. In this short time in District 53, it has truly been an honor to serve you.

With Butler Pride,

Superintendent Dr. Paul O'Malley

Decoding what is a Guaranteed Viable Curriculum

Year-at-a-Glance

The Year-at-a-Glance document aligns the curriculum of the school year with the learning standards. The first step for the teachers is to review the State of Illinois learning standards or national standards for their subject and determine when they will be taught throughout the school year. Additionally, teachers included ISTE (technology) standards and the 4C's (communicator, creator, critical thinking and collaborator) and 21st Century Skills. During Institute Days, School Improvement Days, and release time, teachers were guided with the expertise of consultants and collaborated with their colleagues to create the documents.

Unit Maps

After the Year-at-a-Glance documents are

complete, teachers begin to work on the more detailed unit maps. Each unit map includes academic vocabulary, resources, materials, activities and eventually assessments.

The Unit Maps will articulate the essential learning standards. These are the skills that students will learn and apply while studying the topic of this unit and on which they will be assessed.

Common Assessment

Finally, developing a common assessment that measures the standards for that unit and is consistent across the grade level is key to curriculum development.

Assessments/products are the work products that students will do as part of the unit to demonstrate their knowledge of the skills and understandings.

“We will work together to challenge our students, to support our students, to find new opportunities for our students and to help our students grow.”

— Superintendent Dr. Paul O'Malley

CLASSROOM DESIGN

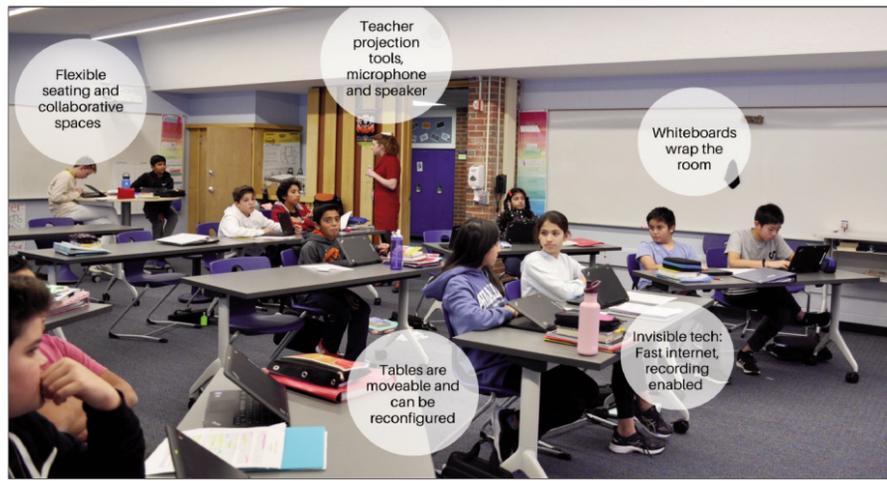
The first phase of creating a classroom of the future

Imagine a classroom that inspires students. Spaces that are light and airy and can be arranged in traditional seating, or set up in circles and collaborative spaces – however the teachers want them – because not every learning environment should follow a template. Imagine a space where students feel good to be at school, where there are comfortable chairs, art, and technology that is fast and seamless.

Students are greatly affected by the learning environment. In fact, recent studies show that the physical arrangement of the classroom affects both students and teachers and can boost motivation and student achievement.

“Classroom design is so important and should meet our learning objectives,” said Andrea Prola, principal of Butler Junior High. The first phase to create a model classroom at the school is already under way.

The room has wrap around white boards that are touch sensitive projection screens. There is also a projector where teachers can display a lesson and can move throughout the



room helping and observing and not tied to the front with their keyboard. There’s a microphone so students can hear and a recording device so lessons can be taped to be replayed. Tables can move and be reconfigured and chairs can be stacked and put away for a more open space.

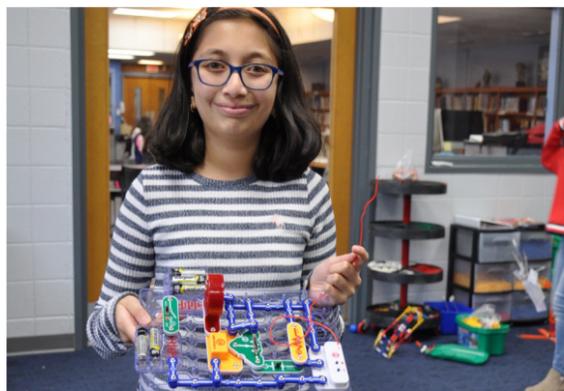
“Flexible learning spaces are important to support collaboration, research activities and hands on lessons,” said Prola.

In developing this classroom, the team researched the concepts, surveyed teachers and toured classrooms in other districts that are on the forefront of classroom design. The work was presented to the Board’s Education and Infrastructure Committees. Three teachers in Spanish and English Language Arts are now testing the room.

The study team will follow up with surveys of teachers, develop an analysis and move next year into Phase II of the project. That will likely mean improvements in furniture to make it more flexible and functional and storage for teaching materials as well as other improvements.

“Flexible seating options and collaborative spaces are vital ingredients in making a classroom feel warm and creating an encouraging, efficient learning environment,” said Director of Technology Farheen Beg.

When visiting other schools, the Phase I classroom often looked far different than the Phase III room. “It’s a process and we want to do what’s best for how we teach and learn at Butler Junior High,” Beg said.



More music, fine arts and STEM

Sitting with laptops and ear buds, 6th graders are creating an "audio drama" using sounds, pre-recorded loops, and sound effects to tell a short story. They replay the audio for their teacher and class. Later on in the term, they’ll create a song, then a radio commercial podcast and as a final project, they’ll learn to “play” and record the drums on a controller called a MIDI device. The device can be turned into any instrument and gives students huge editing power on a series of tracks.

This is one of three classes required at Butler Junior High as part of a schedule change this year.

Beginning this fall, every Butler Junior High student takes art, STEM and media music during a trimester rotation. Previously, STEM and art were electives and general music was not taught in grades 6-8.

The move is to ensure that all students have access to the arts and to STEM (Science/Technology/Engineering/Math), which they will take each year over a three-year period with increasingly more complex learning and projects.

“It’s a richer experience for them, gives them balance and gives them options beyond academics,” said Principal Andrea Prola. “It’s also exposing students to different things, introducing them to careers and allows them to have many more experiences to prepare them for high school,” she said.

“The feedback we’ve received from students is wonderful. They love the classes,” said Prola. Another benefit is greater collaboration. Special projects require students to collaborate, problem solve with their peers and explore new things together. “As a result, I feel their relationships with their peers have grown,” she said.

Along with the schedule revamping was adding a 30-minute elective choice, a study hall or open gym at the end of the day. Most students have opted for study hall.

The changes still allow students to receive 42 minutes of core instruction and an 84-minute block of English Language Arts.

Pictured above (from top), Anika Bhagwat shows off her radio board during STEM class; Ayaan Bandukda works on water color for art class, and Alexandra Odishoo melds sound tracks in her media music class. The three classes are new for students at all grade levels this year.

Art educator honored for teaching, humanitarian work and contributions to art

Brook Forest Art teacher Mike Divelbiss was named the 2019 Illinois Elementary Art Educator of the Year, the highest award given to art educators in the state by the Illinois Art Education Association (IAEA).

Divelbiss, better known as “Mr. D” is “a student-centered educator who continuously explores, contemplates, and adapts his craft and instructional practices to meet the needs of his students,” said Brook Forest Principal Dr. Chad Prosen. “The connection with his students permeates his work, beliefs, and philosophies both in and out of the classroom.”



He has been a teacher at Brook Forest since 2002. Not only a master teacher, Divelbiss has intertwined his passions for teaching, art and travel to help make the world a better place. He and his wife created an organization called “Art with a Mission Inc.” (AWAM) in Zambia, which empowers artists of all ages to create and sell quality work that produces resources to help children in need. The organization has since raised \$30,000 to provide for children in need in Third World countries. He also worked with an orphanage in Cambodia called “Friends of the Orphan Children Organization” to help the children create and sell their artwork to raise funds to build a new school building. In Ecuador, Divelbiss worked alongside the Peace Corps to paint a huge mural to educate the village about sustainability.

At Brook Forest, he uses a technique called Choice-Based Art, which allows students a choice in projects and materials based on a specific lesson. Divelbiss said it’s important because it develops forward-thinking individuals who can innovate rather than just follow directions.

His philosophy of teaching, global service to art and to help others, and his personal works of art were all part of the application for the honor. In selecting Divelbiss, the IAEA said “Our awards and scholarship committee found Mr. Divelbiss’s professional performance, service, and leadership to the field to be exemplary in every regard.”

Good News

The 'Largest Small' art show



Butler Junior High students could create any artwork they wanted, in any medium but with one guideline. It could not be bigger than 4-inches by 5-inches. The challenge was for the Chicagoland's 4x5 art show or the "Largest 'Small' Art Show," previously only open to high school students. Thirty artworks by Butler Junior High students were chosen as were the teacher's entry. They were displayed Nov. 6 at Oswego High School.

Choir Fest for middle school

Butler students joined the Middle School Choir Festival at Hinsdale Central High School, banding together with students from District 86 and 181. It was a great opportunity for students to learn from high school directors and guest directors, meet future classmates and collaborate. Pictured below are Butler students performing.



More choices, more nutrition

Add "getting kids to eat healthy" to the list of job descriptions for principals. "A healthy body supports healthy learning and Butler District 53 is dedicated to building strong minds and bodies," said Butler Junior High Principal Andrea Prola.

This year, junior high students have more food options. At the start of the school year, students filled out a survey about their preferences and what a meal should comprise.

Now, there's more options and more healthy alternatives. There is a weekly pasta bar, salad bar and fruit/yogurt bar and like many cafes, a protein box. Each day, three options for lunches are provided. "Students in junior high like to be more independent and want to choose what they eat," said Prola. Also part of the switch-up is bringing in more outside vendors and offering raffle incentives. In addition, parents are invited to help volunteer in the lunchroom.

Educators from across the globe study our practices

An 18-person delegation of educators and ministers of education from Shanghai, China spent the day at Brook Forest in October. This is the second time in two years that the delegation visited the school. "We were proud and honored to show off our school, our exemplary and creative teaching practices and student achievement," said Brook Forest Principal Dr. Chad Prosen. The delegation wanted to observe high performing schools in the U.S., learn about curriculum, teaching strategies and how partnerships benefit learning. The delegation was part of the 21st Century Learning Institute in Oak Brook.



An honor for Oak Brook

The Butler choir was invited to participate in the Village of Oak Brook's Patriot Day memorial ceremony on Sept. 11. Held at the Butler Government Center, the morning featured the choir, guest speakers, patriotic songs and presentation of the military colors.

An international soccer experience

It was a trip only young soccer players could dream of. Brook Forest 4th grader Aarin Malik was chosen from hundreds of students in his age group from across the U.S. to participate in the international FC Barcelona soccer training camp. It was a chance of a lifetime and only a handful of children were chosen. Students are selected based on their skills and their demonstration of the Barcelona principles of heart, humility, effort, ambition, respect and teamwork.



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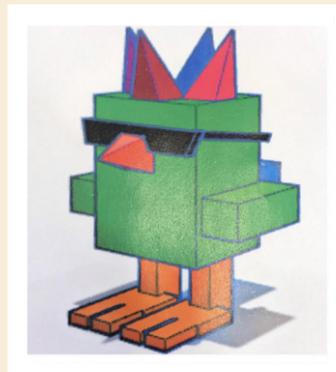


Butler School District 53
 2801 York Rd.
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Art Board

Here we feature a sampling of recent artwork by students in Butler District 53. These works (at right) are by Butler Junior High artists and were shown recently in the "largest small" art show. The story and more art are featured above.



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