



# The School Scene

Fall 2007

The Newsletter for Prospect Heights District 23

## The Facts about Combining Betsy Ross and Anne Sullivan Schools

In 2004, the Board of Education studied the concepts of grade level centers, an arrangement that would move all sections of a grade into one building, and combining Ross and Sullivan schools as one educational center. After considerable research and discussion, it was decided to continue with the current arrangement.

When long-time Sullivan principal Betsy Muir made her retirement plans known last year, some discussions again ensued about the possibility of combining Ross and Sullivan. And, in their long-range planning meeting in August, the current BOE again revisited the issue.

“Just like every decision made in District 23, the Board of Education’s first consideration is what is best for all kids,” said Board President Judi Zimmerman. “We consider all the facts and gather input from faculty and staff before making a determination. In this case, we definitely felt that combining Ross and Sullivan at this time would diminish the quality of education for our students.”

### Here are the facts.

There are 279 students currently enrolled at

Sullivan. Ross has 321, for a combined student population of 600. Eisenhower has 327 students, only six more than Ross. MacArthur has 512 students, 88 less than Ross and Sullivan combined.

If Ross and Sullivan were one school, only one building principal would be required but the size of the student body would make an

assistant principal necessary resulting in a cost savings of approximately \$20,000 per year. One part-time secretarial position also could be eliminated resulting in a savings of \$10,000 per year. The total estimated savings per year in personnel would amount to about \$30,000.

The Board also conducted

an administrative comparison study of neighboring school districts and found that the administrator-to-pupil ratio was considerably lower in District 23.

“When we look at other school districts, we compare extremely favorably,” said Dr. Greg Guarrine, Superintendent. “We are definitely not top heavy. In fact, we’re pretty lean. Our administrators wear lots of different hats.”

Besides overseeing day-to-day operations, the principals at Ross and Sullivan are responsible for leading the problem-solving teams at their respective schools. This process is used for meeting the needs of children at risk prior to getting involved in special education. The principals also must take part in all special education staffings. In addition, they are required to do staff observations and evaluations. All of these duties are time intensive and would be difficult for one person to accomplish.

More and more, Ross and Sullivan are functioning as two separate units. The culture and the nature of the environments at the schools are very different. Ross has evolved as an early childhood center. It houses the District’s ECDEC (at risk early childhood program) and early childhood classrooms. The Ross principal oversees these programs offering a hands-on approach to the 54 students and their families. Sullivan functions as an intermediate center.

### Fast Facts

School enrollment:

Betsy Ross . . . . . **321**

Anne Sullivan . . . **279**

Eisenhower . . . . **327**

MacArthur . . . . . **512**

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District 23 has been very fortunate to retain their administrative team offering consistency and a smooth-running operation. An assistant principal position at the primary grade level may invite more turn over and become a training ground for other districts. One less secretary would affect the efficiency and timeliness of taking incoming phone calls from parents, making outgoing phone calls to check on students who are absent without a parent call, and attendance reporting in general. Other logistical challenges that would impact the learning environment in an education center double the current size include providing lunch and break periods for staff, No Child Left Behind reporting, staff and administration time for various meetings, student lunch procedures, decreased contact with students and parents, and adequate time for student discipline issues, special problems of students and parents, and new staff interviewing.

### What is really important?

Those are the facts, but what really got to the heart of the issue for the Board was not so much about the money and the numbers. It had more to do with what District 23 families, staff, administration, and Board have all worked so hard to achieve and that is about the intangibles — those things that cannot be measured but are part of an

environment that values what is best for kids.

“What we want to do is continue to keep the family atmosphere in District 23 — the personal touch we’re able to afford children and parents,” said Dr. Guarrine. “This is part of the reason our children perform well academically and grow emotionally and socially. Over the years, we have prided ourselves on our fiscal responsibility but we don’t want it to be at the expense of how well our youngsters do.” ●

Soaring into the future...  
creating communities  
of eager learners,  
daring to achieve  
great things.

*District 23 Vision Statement*

### Administration

**Dr. Gregory P. Guarrine**  
Superintendent  
847/870-3850 ext. 102

**Dr. Deb Wilson**  
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction  
847/870-3850 ext. 103

**Richard Ewanio**  
Business Administrator  
847/870-3850 ext. 107

**Jan Travis**  
Director of Technology  
847/870-3850 ext. 105

**Amy Walter**  
Special Education Coordinator  
847/870-3850 ext. 120

**Ron DeGeorge**  
Maintenance Supervisor  
847/870-3850 ext. 110

## New Objectives Reflect the District's Goals

The Board of Education officially adopted the annual District Objectives. For the 2007/2008 school year, the Board, administration, and staff will be focusing on the following objectives:

- ✓ *Develop a comprehensive five-year plan for the District that encompasses the educational, financial, and physical plant needs of the District.*
- ✓ *Investigate the development of a District-wide foreign language program.*
- ✓ *Investigate the efficacy of providing a full-day option for kindergarten in the District.*
- ✓ *Formalize the alignment of curriculum standards and student assessments for the District.*

For the past few years, the BOE has sent out a survey to parents, staff, administrators, and community members seeking input about District issues. The objectives were culled from the collective responses.

Because the May installation of new Board Members did not allow for enough time to complete the survey process, the decision was made to base the objectives on feedback from the administration and current Board Members. Several Board meetings over the summer were spent determining which objectives would be most beneficial to the District.

"The Board asked me to provide input on the objectives," said Dr. Greg Guarrine, Superintendent. "Based on administrative team suggestions, three were recommended. This will give staff the opportunity to explore some of the issues we've considered for continuous improvement in the District."

The Board decided on one objective for itself. "The Board objective provides time for a complete review of the District's current position and planning for the next five years," said Judi Zimmerman, Board of Education President. "I think this objective is very appropriate given that we have four new members. It allows everyone to get on the same page. Once this is in place, I think the Board will be in a good position to have a discussion with the community about needs and goals for the future." ●

## Good Bye, "Mr. B"!

Students, staff, parents, and alumni mourned the passing of Thomas Andrew "Tom" Bujnowski this summer.

Mr. Bujnowski passed away unexpectedly on August 17. Mr. B, as he was affectionately referred to by his students, was a physical

## Board of Education Committees

On April 17, 2007, the Board of Education elected the Executive Board for 2007/08. *Mrs. Judi Zimmerman* is serving as **Board President**; *Mrs. Martha Olsen* remains as **Vice Present** and *Mrs. Mari-Lynn Peters* is **Board Secretary**. The next Board election of officers will be held in the spring of 2009.

In accordance with Board policy, Board President Judi Zimmerman appointed Board members to serve on standing Board committees for Finance, Policy, Buildings and Sites, Community Relations, and Negotiations. Some Board members also attend meetings of the Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization (NSSEO) and Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB).

Committee assignments established at the April meeting are: *Mrs. Carol Botwinski* – **Communications and NSSEO**; *Mr. Jeffrey Bowes* – **Policy and Communications**; *Mr. David Hess* – **Policy and Buildings and Sites**; *Mr. Tom Klingner* – **Buildings and Sites and IASB/Ed-Red**; *Mrs. Martha Olsen* – **NSSEO and Negotiations**; *Mrs. Mari-Lynn Peters* – **Finance and Communications**, and *Mrs. Judi Zimmerman* – **Finance, IASB/Ed-Red, and Negotiations**.

These committees meet at various times prior to Board Meetings and report back to the Board as a whole. Advisory in nature, the committees are essential to accomplishing the work of the Board and keeping the Board informed of actions taken by other organizations that could affect the School District. Board committees do not take final action on behalf of the Board; they may only make recommendations to the Board. ●

## It's Debbie Gardiner!

She's everywhere, that Debbie Gardiner. The new principal of Sullivan School has been spending her time at school functions, at PTO meetings, in classrooms, in the hallways, in the teachers' lounge, in the parking lot – anywhere she can get better acquainted with students, parents, and staff.

"I want to attend everything. My goal this year is to get to know everyone. The staff, students, and families have been incredible. It's a very collegial place," said Ms. Gardiner. "In spite of the prolonged heat, we've had a great start to the year at Sullivan."

Debbie is also on a quest to understand the processes and systems that are currently in place at her school and determine how they are working. She likes to get feedback from staff. Any improvements, she says, will be made collaboratively.

"It is important that everyone is supportive of what we're doing."

Debbie has been pleasantly surprised to find "best practice" in place at Sullivan. "You don't always find that in a smaller district because the support for staff to attend workshops or have access to other learning avenues isn't



there. But I've found District 23 promotes being on the cutting edge."

Debbie's strength as an administrator lies in her varied teaching experiences with all types of learners from primary to fifth grade.

"There are many different ways to resolve issues for children," said Ms. Gardiner. "I base my decisions on what's best for kids, always asking the question 'Is this the right direction for this child?'"

As a parent herself, Debbie can relate to the challenges facing moms and dads today.

"I have a daughter who is a junior this year at the University of Illinois, so I've been there. I miss her. I take our puppy down to Champaign to visit. I also have two cats at home."

The Tech Path software used for curriculum mapping is new to Ms. Gardiner; she definitely recognizes the value in its ability to align curriculum with standards and ensure that there are no gaps across grade levels and the focus is not on just one skill.

Debbie also is serving on the Gifted Advisory Committee. "We're working on tweaking the identification process and how to use gifted teachers with younger children. We want gifted to be more inclusive, as opposed to exclusive, while maintaining the integrity of the program. This is about meeting the needs of children who can't get them met in a regular classroom."

Debbie has enjoyed the activities at Sullivan this year including the visit by author Steven Layne, the assembly about responsibility, and her role as a non-English speaking police officer in the Ellis Island project. In the long term, she is looking forward to standardizing the problem-solving team process and the gifted program throughout the District and offering more training to second-language learners.

If she doesn't get to you first, stop by and say hello to Debbie soon. ●

education teacher at MacArthur Middle School for almost 20 years. In addition to his love for kids and dedication to teaching and coaching, Tom will be remembered for his long-time devotion to the Chicago Cubs.

Mr. B, you will be missed! ●

# MacArthur Principal Steven Lee Is Where He Wants to Be!

Not even Mother Nature could throw off the “mighty Mac” family from coming together to get the 2007/08 school year off to a smooth start. “The teachers, support staff, and custodians were well-prepared, organized, and very child-centered,” said an appreciative Steven Lee, MacArthur Principal. Referring to the threatening winds and severe thunderstorms that occurred about the time of dismissal the first week of school, Mr. Lee praised District 23 personnel for handling the situation with professionalism, grace, and dedication.



direction by providing the best educational experience for kids – academically, behaviorally, and socially. As Mr. Lee continues to familiarize himself with the District’s programs, procedures, and policies, his goal is to improve upon a system that he feels is already excellent. He believes in the motto “You don’t have to be sick to get better!”

But don’t expect any major changes at Mac this year. Mr. Lee is carefully evaluating existing programs, curriculum, and procedures. He plans to work with Mac staff, the administration, and community members to help each child succeed to the best of his or her ability. He has a passion for middle school and middle school programs and activities. Under his leadership, a commemorative week of activities to honor the events of September 11 was added culminating with a Red, White, and Blue day. An eighth-grade Veteran’s Day celebration is planned for November including a breakfast for veterans and an eighth-grade assembly.

Yes, everything is going well at Mac this year. Mr. Lee loves being in District 23. However, he has noticed that some Mac staff and students have taken issue with the fact that he is an avid White Sox fan. We’re sorry to inform you, Mr. Lee, although we’re glad you’re here, this was not your team’s year. ●

“The kids were amazing, too. They have been resilient and thoughtful.”

The fact is District 23 has made quite an impression on Mr. Lee who was hired this past spring. He is especially struck by the sense of “family” and the urgency and importance placed on learning.

“Everyone has been very welcoming,” said Mr. Lee. “It’s a warm and inviting place where teachers and parents can work together as a family with the best interest of kids in mind.”

Getting to know the staff, students, and parents is a priority for Principal Lee this year. He is pleased that Mac is headed in the right

## New Assistant Superintendent Set on Serving Children

Deb Wilson’s history with District 23 began in 1990. She was hired as the eighth-grade math and science teacher at MacArthur where she remained for seven years until she moved into the role of Assistant Principal. After four years of administrative experience, she was offered the principal post at Hawthorn Junior High in Vernon Hills in the fall of 2001 and she took it. Two years later, the principal job at Mac opened up and Dr. Wilson jumped at the chance to return to Prospect Heights. She held that position until this fall when she was tapped for Assistant Superintendent of District 23.



Now her understanding of educational practices and knowledge of the District are coming together to benefit the entire student body.

“As the Assistant Superintendent, I am responsible for overseeing special education, curriculum, bi-lingual and transitional programs of instruction for non-English speaking students, early childhood, and staff development,” said Dr. Wilson.

She holds a Masters in Administration from Northern Illinois University and a Doctorate from National Louis University. She and her husband live in Mount Prospect and have two grown children.

To keep the District moving in a positive direction, Dr. Wilson believes in systems theory and the importance of making sure there are effective processes in place in all areas of operation.

“Working with the entire system in mind, whether we are talking special education or curriculum, allows us the opportunity to avoid random acts of improvement and instead imbed best practice at all levels. My goals this year and in the future revolve around this idea as it applies to the areas that fall under my supervision,” said Dr. Wilson.

The multiple positions she’s held in District 23 give Dr. Wilson valuable insight into how the systems work. Add to that the many relationships she’s developed over the years with staff, administrators, and community members and she is on solid footing to step up and serve our children.

“I feel fortunate to work with so many staff members who are committed to providing a quality learning experience for our students. It makes this job a truly joyful experience,” concluded Dr. Wilson. ●

## Welcome New Staff

District 23 welcomed 24 new full- and part-time staff this school year.

Kim Basile	MacArthur Science/Language Arts Teacher	Grade 8
Kevin Bazan	MacArthur Art Teacher	Grades 6-8
Joseph Behun	MacArthur Reading/Language Arts/Social Studies Teacher	Grade 6
Dale Bernstein	MacArthur Physical Education Teacher	Grades 6-8
Andrew Bessick	Sullivan Special Education Teacher Aide	Grade 5
Vlada Bruk	MacArthur Social Work Intern	Grades 6-8
Perry Campbell	Mail Custodian	District
Marcy Craig	Ross Special Education Teacher	Grades K-2
Megan Di Cicco	Eisenhower Social Worker	Grades K-5
Debbie Gardiner	Sullivan Principal	Grades 3-5
Tina Gauthier	Sullivan Art Teacher (part time)	Grade 5
Megan Groenwald	MacArthur Special Education Teacher	Grade 8
Sandra Howard	Eisenhower Reading Teacher (part time)	Grades K-5
Deborah Lee	Ross Early Childhood Teacher (part time)	Grades Pre-K
Steven Lee	MacArthur Principal	Grades 6-8
Maggie Leja	MacArthur Science/Social Studies Teacher	Grade 7
Elissa Miller	MacArthur Social Work Intern	Grades 6-8
Megan Murray	MacArthur Music/Chorus Teacher	Grades 6-8
Natalie Neuman	Sullivan Social Work Intern	Grades 3-5
Beth O’Neil	Ross LBS Teacher	Grades K-2
Kristine Polster	Ross Reading Teacher (part time)	Grades K-2
Mark Weiland	MacArthur Reading/Language Arts Teacher	Grade 8
Cory Wills	Network Manager	District
Abra Zaveduk	Ross Social Worker	Grades K-2



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## PROSPECT HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT 23

700 N. Schoenbeck Road  
Prospect Heights, IL 60070

### SUPERINTENDENT

Gregory P. Guarrine, Ed.D.  
Phone: (847) 870-3850

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Judi Zimmerman, President  
Martha Olsen, Vice President  
Mari-Lynn Peters, Secretary  
Carol Botwinski  
Jeff Bowes  
David Hess  
Thomas Klingner

### DISTRICT WEB SITE

www.d23.org

**Betsy Ross Elementary School**  
**(847) 870-3868**

**Eisenhower Elementary School**  
**(847) 870-3875**

**Sullivan Elementary School**  
**(847) 870-3865**

**MacArthur Middle School**  
**(847) 870-3879**

## Question of the Day...

*WHAT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU DID  
THIS FALL TO GET YOUR CHILD READY FOR SCHOOL?*



Maria Donova  
(Kristiyan—4th  
at Sullivan)

*Most important thing we did is the reading we did all summer. We did the summer reading program; went to the library. He read all the books, plus all the math work.*



Trish Richards  
(Shannon—5th  
and Kylie—3rd  
at Sullivan)

*We bought school supplies, new clothes (since they have grown over the summer); plus got them going to bed earlier.*



Natalie Herazy  
(Lindsey – 1st  
at Eisenhower)

*We started going to bed earlier and getting up earlier; continued reading and working on math facts.*



Jim Leonard  
(Sarah – 2nd  
at Eisenhower)

*We set aside time in August to work on a second grade activity book to get back into the routine of school; shopping for school clothes.*

## Upcoming Events

- November 19 . . . . **No School**, Parent/Teacher Conferences 1-8 p.m.
- November 20 . . . . **No School**, Teacher Institute Day
- November 21 . . . . **No School**, Non-Attendance Day
- November 22-23 . **No School**, Thanksgiving Holiday
- December 12 . . . . Board of Education Meeting 7 p.m.
- December 22 . . . . **Winter Vacation Begins**
- January 4 . . . . . **Winter Vacation Ends**
- January 9 . . . . . Board of Education Meeting 7 p.m. @ Betsy Ross
- January 21 . . . . . **No School**, Martin Luther King Day
- January 22 . . . . . **No School**, Teacher Institute Day
- February 13 . . . . . Board of Education Meeting 7 p.m.
- February 18 . . . . . **No School**, Presidents Day



*Five newly-tenured teachers were honored at the October School Board meeting. Pictured l-to-r are Kristene Ganek, Eisenhower, Jill Scholmann and Michelyn Sabath, Sullivan, and David Alexander, MacArthur. Not pictured is Julie Haenisch, MacArthur.*