

# FOCUS

A Newsletter for the District 303 Community



**ALL ARE WELCOME** - The Board of Education will hold a special meeting to discuss middle school facility upgrades on Thursday, November 3 at 7:30 p.m. at Thompson Middle School.

## A Proposal to Meet the Educational Needs of our Middle School Students

Two modern middle schools for students, annual budget savings, and a reduction in taxes are the goals of the District Administration's plan to improve the middle school buildings.

The plan would modernize and expand Thompson and Wredling Middle Schools while closing Haines Middle School. The closing of Haines will save the District an estimated \$2.4 million per year.

The Thompson improvements will include 11 modern science labs, 31 new classrooms, air conditioned classrooms, a 500 student cafeteria, improved traffic flow around the school and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Wredling improvements are 10 upgraded and modernized science labs, and a 500 student cafeteria.

The cost of the improvements is \$50 million and would be paid for through a combination of existing funds and the issue of \$15 million in bonds that do not require a referendum.

For more details on the proposed middle school boundaries, construction timeline, and sources of funding, see the other articles in this edition of FOCUS.

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## Superintendent's Message

Even though I'm a math teacher by trade, I have always enjoyed history. Knowing where we have come from is very helpful in making good decisions on where we are going.

Next month, the Board of Education will consider an Administration proposal to improve our middle school facilities. This process is a decade in the making and along the way, we've incorporated things we have learned from the community about what they want for the students of District 303.

We first started discussing facility needs at our middle schools during the original Summit 303 which began in 2007. Based on the Summit 303 community meetings, we placed a referendum question on the ballot in April 2009. The question sought approval to issue bonds for the construction of a new Haines Middle School on Silver Glen Rd. and Randall Rd., upgrades at Thompson and Wredling Middle Schools, and construction of a new Davis School.

Voters were cautious at that time because the recession hit in September 2008. The referendum question was not approved, but the facility needs remained.

About seven years ago we began to notice our incoming Kindergarten classes were declining in number. We began asking the question, "Is this a temporary drop, or, is this a trend?"

In Fall 2014, we convened a citizen's committee to study enrollment in the District to answer that question and to determine what the likelihood was for future huge residential developments similar to what occurred in this District in the 1990's and early 2000's. This Growth Committee recommended that District 303 always have space for 12,000 students.

Our next step was to investigate if the decline in enrollment offered an opportunity to operate more efficiently by closing some existing schools buildings. Last Fall, I toured the District asking for community input on four options based on declining enrollment: Option 1- Do Nothing; Option 2 - Close 2 elementary schools; Option 3 - Close Haines Middle School and make elementary schools Kindergarten through 6th grade; Option 4 - Close Haines and 2 elementary schools.

The community did not come to a consensus among the four options, but three-quarters of those responding to our Feedback Form did express they wanted to see something done.

Last winter, the Board decided to keep all the elementary schools open, but asked Administration to investigate if we could close Haines and capture a \$2.4 million annual savings and at the same time, address the still lingering needs in our middle school buildings. Those needs are: modernizing science labs, expanding cafeterias, installing air conditioning at Thompson, and upgrading for the safety and security of our middle school students.

In the spring, we conducted a Middle School Summit and proposed a \$60 million referendum to upgrade Thompson or an \$80 million referendum to construct a brand new Thompson. Summit attendees were supportive of both ideas. Those attending also insisted on any plans going forward be clearly detailed with boundary changes, construction timelines, and that students in the middle school during construction not be separated from their friends.

Next, the Board of Education commissioned a scientific poll of 400 registered voters in the District to gauge if either referendum was likely to pass. The survey said the \$80 million request would not pass and the \$60 million question only had a chance if an extensive information campaign were conducted.

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# How We Pay For It

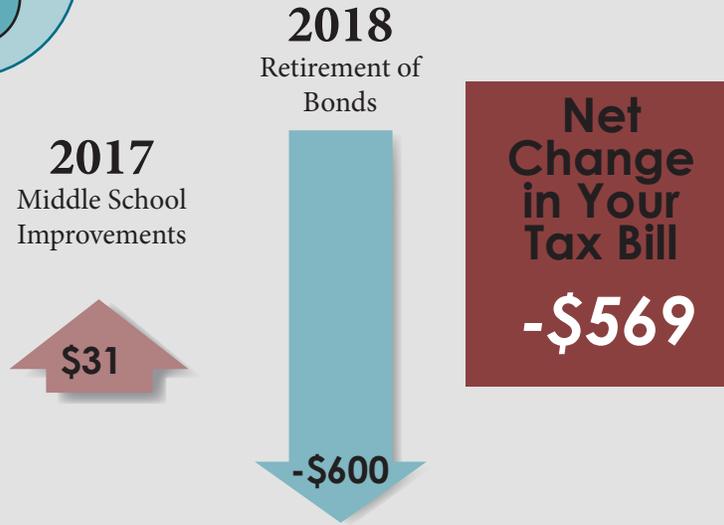
District 303 Administration is proposing a \$50 million plan to upgrade Thompson and Wredling Middle Schools while closing Haines Middle School.

The \$50 million comes from four sources: Non-referendum bonds; a construction grant from the State of Illinois; fund balance; and future budget savings.



## Retiring Bonds in 2018 Impact On District 303 Taxpayers

Source	Amount
Construction Grant (CDB)	7.8 million
Fund Balance	19.3 million
Non-Referendum Debt (DSEB)	15.0 million
Budget Surplus 2015-16	1.7 million
Budget 2016-17	2.2 million
Budget 2017-18	2.0 million
Budget 2018-19	2.0 million
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>\$50.0 million</b>



\* Estimates Based on a \$300,000 Home

## Superintendent's Message (Continued from page 2)

Which brings us to where we are now. District Administration proposes accessing \$50 million from non-referendum sources to complete the discussion we began a decade ago. Our District would go from three middle schools to two modernized middle schools. The plan includes the boundary changes, the timeline, and a limited amount of inconvenience for students.

The project is scheduled for completion in 2019.

The Board of Education will hold a special Meeting to discuss middle school facility upgrades on Thursday, November 3 at 7:30 p.m. at Thompson Middle School.

We hope to see you there.

*That's what I think, let me know what you think.*

**Donald D. Schlomann, Ph.D.**

District 303 Superintendent of Schools  
Donald.Schlomann@d303.org

## Elementary to Middle School Assignments

The reduction from three middle schools to two middle schools will necessitate changes in middle school attendance boundaries. The plan proposes that elementary and high school boundaries remain the same.

Elementary students will be assigned to attend middle school as detailed below:



**Thompson Middle School**

- Bell-Graham
- Ferson Creek
- Lincoln
- Richmond/Davis
- Wasco



**Wredling Middle School**

- Anderson
- Corron
- Fox Ridge
- Norton Creek
- Munhall
- Wild Rose

# Why Middle School Facilities Improvements are Being Considered

These explanations are from the people who understand the needs of our middle schools the best - our three District 303 middle school principals.

"At the middle school level, they grow at a faster rate than at any other time in their lives except for infancy. Students in middle school are developing their connections with others. From a curricular standpoint, middle school students need the opportunity to **COLLABORATE**. We owe it to our kids to have facilities that facilitate that process in our District."



*Mr. Steve Morrill  
Wredling Middle School*

"From my previous experience as principal at Thompson I can tell you, the current parking at Thompson is crazy. If you've ever been part of a **DISMISSAL** on a bad weather day and you're anywhere near Thompson or Haines, forget it. Route 64 ends up at a standstill. Buses can't get in. Kids are trying to find their parents, it is crazy."

"Today's science curriculum has physical science, life science, and earth science. We need to make sure our learning facilities accommodate those three types of scientific learning. We want today's **SCIENCE LABS** to be able to develop the engineers and scientists of the future."



*Mr. Tim Loversky  
Thompson Middle School*

"We have kids who sit in dark rooms with fans on them. We have parents who come and pass out bottles of water out of big garbage cans filled with ice and water to keep our kids cool. We've lost a significant amount of instructional time because the heat exhausts kids by the end of the day. We've had classrooms with temperatures well into the 90's. We **AIR CONDITION** animals in shelters, we need to do it for our middle school students too."

"We have three **SCIENCE LABS** in our mobile classrooms. We don't have things in these labs you would expect to see. There's no sink. There's no natural gas jets. There's no countertops. There are no cabinets for materials. Do we make it work? Absolutely. But students have to walk back and forth to the bathroom to collect and then dispose of water."



*Mrs. Pam Jensen  
Haines Middle School*

"One of our large issues with scheduling is **CAFETERIA** space. We are not able to fit a full grade level into one lunch period. That causes us to start lunch at 10:12 and end at 1:28. We have to make three different bell schedules. We have students who go to class for 25 minutes. Go to lunch. Then go back to finish the class that was interrupted by lunch."

## The Timeline

Summer 2017

- Science labs upgraded and cafeteria expanded at Wredling Middle School
- Renovation work begins at Thompson Middle School

2018-19 School Year

- 6th grade students assigned to Thompson attend portion of existing Thompson building
- 7th & 8th grade Haines and Thompson students attend Haines

2017-18 School Year

- New middle school boundaries go into effect for 6th graders
- 6th grade students assigned to Thompson attend portion of existing Thompson building
- 7th & 8th grade Haines and Thompson students attend Haines

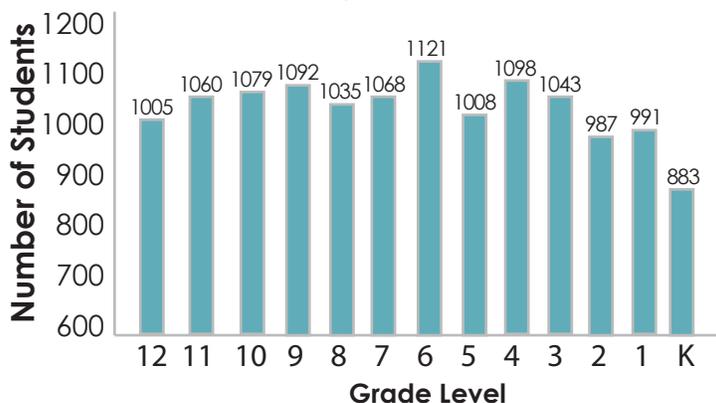
2019-20 School Year

- Renovated Thompson opens
- Haines closes

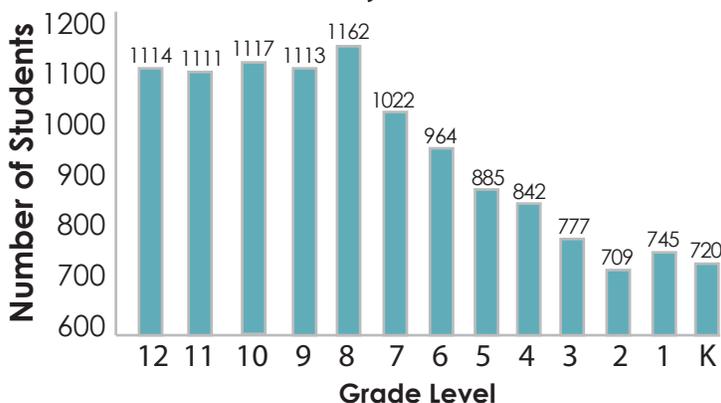
# District 303 Enrollment Update

The two graphs show District 303's student enrollment by grade level from 10 years ago and for the current school year. The total enrollment for the 2007-08 school year was 13,470 with an average of 1,036 students per grade level. The total enrollment for the 2016-17 school year is 12,281 with an average of 945 students per grade level.

**Enrollment by Grade Level 2007-08**



**Enrollment by Grade Level 2016-17**



## D303 Future Movie Maker



When it comes to finding the perfect birthday gift for a young gentleman of middle school age, the safe bets are- video games, a new bike, maybe a cell phone. Haines Middle School 7th grader Jonah Maxwell did indeed receive an Apple product for a recent birthday, but it wasn't a phone. It was Final Cut Pro, which is video editing software that allows movie-quality film editing.

Jonah got his start when he was about nine years old when he borrowed his dad's camera to collect footage of radio controlled race cars. If Jonah goes on to become the next Steven Spielberg or Ridley Scott however, the video of those RC cars will become legend, but will never again be viewed. "I lost all those clips when I accidentally deleted the files," Jonah explained.

**“ I do love making movies. I watch a lot of short films on YouTube and I've always thought it would be really cool to make movies. ”**

- Jonah Maxwell

However, those first films started Jonah on his movie-making path. Last January, he began scripting and storyboarding a film that eventually became "Bully", a look at bullying through the eyes of middle school students. "I got bullied in 2nd through 4th grade and couldn't find a solid group of friends," Jonah said. "My family moved straight from Ireland to the U.S. and I had an accent."

Jonah completed "Bully", posted it on YouTube and 15 minutes later, "Bully" had 82 views. "Bully" is now a YouTube sensation with nearly 600,000 views. The movie has been shown by schools around the world and Jonah has been interviewed by WGN and ABC7. "I had no idea how big this was going to be."

The obvious question is "What's next?"

"I want to make a sequel or spinoff of 'Bully' on social media and how it allows bullies to be even more cowardly," Jonah explained. "Social media allows a bully to be able to inflict harm without even being face-to-face."

As for the big picture, Jonah admires the work of J.J. Abrams who produced "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" and the Star Trek reboot. "I'd like to make a major motion picture action movie."

# Q & A with East H.S. Social Studies Teacher Mr. Neil Currie

## “The Voice of St. Charles East”

St. Charles East H.S. Social Studies Teacher Mr. Neil Currie is fascinated by history, and for the last eleven years, he has brought his passion for the subject to his students. Mr. Currie also possesses a marvelous baritone voice, which can be heard over the public address system at East H.S. football and basketball games.

### Why did you become a teacher?

I actually wanted to become a teacher because I come from a family of teachers, but I became a computer programmer instead. I hated it. I changed professions and was hired here at East 11 years ago. I'm glad I made the change.

### More specifically, why did you become a social studies teacher?

I have always loved history and especially American History. My dad was born in Scotland and both he and my uncle served in the Korean War. I have other uncles that fought in World War II so I am especially fascinated by the Greatest Generation and the sacrifices they made by fighting a world war and also surviving the Great Depression.

### What is it about the Greatest Generation that you try to convey to your students?

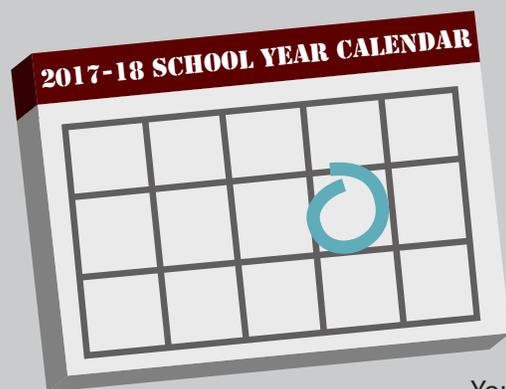
I tell my students that when you hear about previous generations having to walk uphill both ways to school - that was my parents and their friends because of the Depression. My dad left Scotland because believe it or not, things were much better in the United States at the time than they were in Scotland.

### Your hiring in St. Charles by former East H.S. Principal Mr. Bob Miller has a bit of an ironic twist, doesn't it?

I was interviewing for the last job available and I thought I had blown the interview. Mr. Miller asked me if I had anything to add and I said, "Some people think I'm funny." I found out after I was hired Mr. Miller said, "He's not funny, but I'll hire him." Later, I became the auctioneer at the annual holiday toy auction because of my sense of humor.

### You also serve as the PA announcer at East H.S. football games. A previous social studies teacher who held that position is current St. Charles Mayor, Mr. Ray Rogina. Will you be following in his footsteps?

If nominated, I will not run. If elected, I will not serve. But I would like to say that Mayor Rogina is a great guy.



## 2017-18 Calendar

The District 303 Board of Education recently approved the 2017-18 school calendar. Here are some key dates:

**First Day of Classes:** Wednesday, August 23

**Winter Break:** December 25-January 5

**Spring Break:** March 26-30

**Last Day of School:** Monday, June 4\*\*

\*\**(If no emergency days are used)*

You can view the full calendar by visiting the District website [d303.org](http://d303.org) and choosing calendars under the "About Us" menu. Look on the right side of the page for the printable copy of the full school year calendar.

# BOE Update

## Notable Recent Actions by the Board of Education

### Approval of a 3-Year Contract with St. Charles Education Association-

At the May meeting, the Board approved a three-year contract with the St. Charles Education Association (SCEA). The contract, which was also approved by a vote of the SCEA on May 3, went into effect in August, 2016 and runs through the 2018-19 school year. The contract calls for an average annual increase in teacher pay of 3.0% in each of the three years.

**Approval of 3-Year Contracts with SCTM and SCESP-** During the summer, the Board approved new contract agreements with St. Charles Transportation and Maintenance and the St. Charles Education Support Professionals. Both agreements run through the 2018-19 school year.

**Approval of the Fiscal Year 2016-17 Budget-** At the September meeting, the Board approved the District 303 operating budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year. The budget shows revenue of \$214.2 million and expenditures of \$213.4 million.

## News From the St. Charles Education Foundation

*"The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future in life."*  
--Plato

The St. Charles Education Foundation is excited about all the changes coming in the fresh new 2016/2017 season.

To date the Foundation has donated \$1.4 million in grants and scholarships to D303 students. It is our intention to continue to assist and augment District and community efforts to give our children the best possible start.

This year our premier fundraising event (formerly known as the Jazz Event) will be held on April 8, 2017, at the Hotel Baker for the first time. We are excited to partner once again with the Distinguished Alumni Association. Please mark your calendar and come out to support our collective efforts.

If you are interested in joining the Board and being part of our wonderful community, please contact Jane Combs, President, at 630-292-4443.



Jane Combs, President  
St. Charles Education Foundation  
630-292-4443  
combsjms@gmail.com

Board of Education Special Meeting

Thursday, November 3 at 7:30 p.m.

Thompson Middle School

## D303

## Communications

Community members can be notified of District 303 and other Fox Valley announcements by visiting the Community Backpack, ENews, Facebook, Twitter, District Website or download the District 303 App.

### COMMUNITY BACKPACK

The Community Backpack is frequently updated with events happening from non-profit organizations, intergovernmental agencies and business partners from the entire Fox Valley Area.

### ENEWS

The District ENews is sent out weekly via email. The ENews contains information regarding Board of Education announcements, schools events, school calendar events and much more. Visit the District website under "News" and subscribe to the Newsletters you would like to receive.

### FACEBOOK & TWITTER

Like the District Facebook page St. Charles District 303 or follow us on Twitter at @StCharlesD303.

### DISTRICT APP

The District 303 Mobile App is available for free download for Apple and Android devices. Search CUSD 303 in the App Store or Google Play to download the app.

### DISTRICT WEBSITE

Visit the District website at [d303.org](http://d303.org).

## ECRWSS Postal Patron

Please note: Because District 303 mails its publications by postal route, some individuals who do not live in District 303 may receive this mailing.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**03**  
NOV Special BOE Meeting 7:30 p.m.  
at Thompson Middle School

**14**  
NOV Board of Education Meeting-  
St. Charles North High School

**21-22**  
NOV Parent-Teacher Conferences

**23-25**  
NOV Thanksgiving Break

**12**  
DEC Board of Education Meeting-  
Administration Building

**19-30**  
DEC Winter Break

**02**  
JAN Winter Break

**03**  
JAN Classes Resume

**04**  
JUN High School Graduation  
*Northern Illinois Convocation Center*

**06**  
JUN Last Day for Students if no  
"Emergency Days" used