

District 303 E-NEWS

Connect with us!



St Charles District 303



@StCharlesD303

Administration Center

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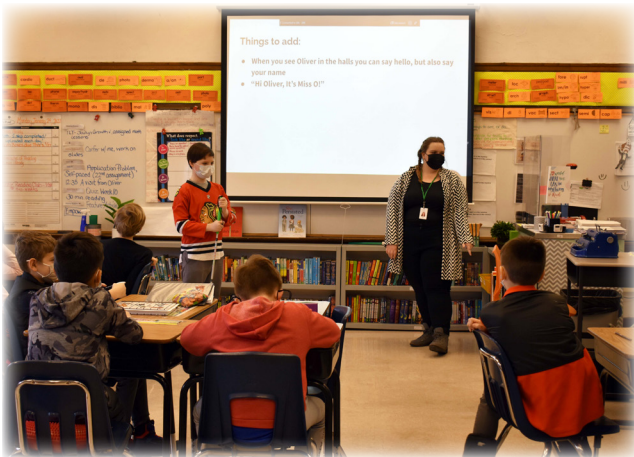
Let's Talk!

January 28, 2022

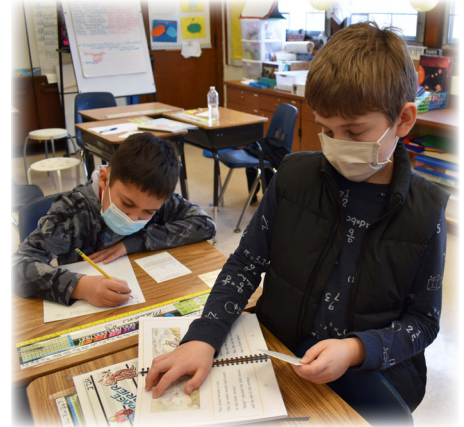


Celebrating Braille Literacy Month at Lincoln

January is Braille Literacy Month and, as a way to help raise awareness about braille literacy, students at Lincoln Elementary welcomed two special guests to their classrooms. With support from Ms. Ozehowski, Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired at Lincoln, 4th-grade student Oliver visited classrooms around the school to help students learn more about braille and his experiences.



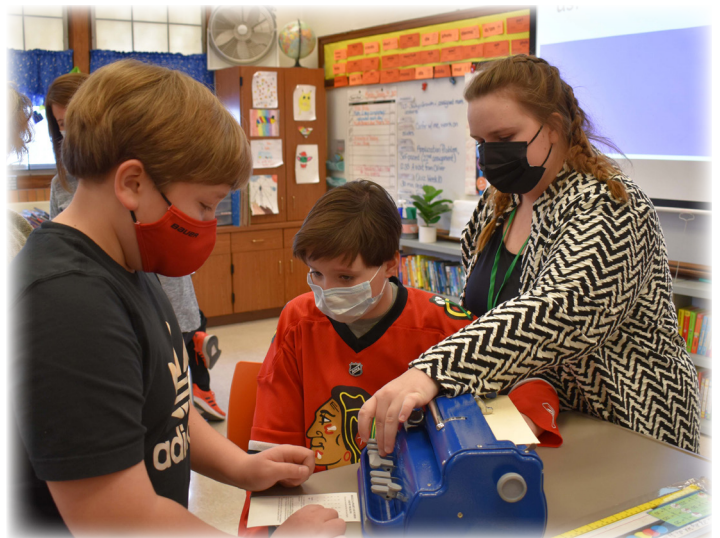
much in the classroom. Students also thought that it was very cool how he plays hockey and likes to ski, and were impressed by his Taekwondo skills.



As a challenge, he gave each student a card with the braille alphabet and numbers to decipher a message written in braille. Ms. Ozehowski also passed around a couple of books in braille and students practiced reading the book using the card. To conclude the visit, Oliver and Ms. Ozehowski used the braille writer to write each student's name in braille.

Oliver shared with Mrs. Kelly's 5th grade class that he started learning uncontracted braille, or Grade 1, when he was in 1st grade. Ms. Ozehowski explained that Grade 1 braille is the most basic form of braille, but that she was working with Oliver to help him learn contracted braille, or Grade 2, where one letter might represent an entire word.

Students were very curious about Oliver's daily routine and asked questions about his likes and how fun or challenging school activities can be. Oliver shared that he uses a collapsible cane to walk around the school but that he doesn't use it too



Earlier this month, St. Charles East welcomed Kate Hennessy, Certified Financial Planner and Partner at AssetGrade; Leah Jenski, business owner and lawyer; and Lauren Lollini, Clinical Therapist and Parent Coach, for the “Women in Leadership” panel discussion.



Organized and moderated by St. Charles East Juniors, Natalie Gibbard and Elyse Jens, the “Women in Leadership” speaker series provides a platform to help promote women who are in leadership positions and connect interested high school students with women of influence in a variety of careers. Guests talk to students about their careers, provide advice based on their experiences, and share information about internship opportunities.

During their freshman year, Elyse and Natalie noticed the lack of girls taking accelerated classes and electives with higher difficulty, recalling how only six girls were enrolled in their Introduction to Business class.

“Originally we named this initiative ‘Women in Business’ but realized this wasn’t inclusive of all positions, so we changed the name and focused more on leadership,” explained Natalie. “Our main goal is to show girls the abundance of opportunities available to them. It is very important to us to provide a variety of speakers to provide many different perspectives.” They also seek to have every speaker and event align with their mission statement:

*Discover opportunities available to women in the workplace
Encourage each other to celebrate successful women
Promote education, empowerment, and personal development*



Despite the initial challenges of promoting online events, close to 40 students tuned in for the virtual experiences. Students connected with Shannon Foley, entrepreneur and artist; Megan Moore, software engineer at GroupOn; and Lora Vitek, Mayor of St. Charles and Director of Delta Dental Foundation.

“By showing strong women leaders to girls, we hope to show them that they can be successful. We also hope that our speakers help to provide them with insight on how to achieve what they wish to achieve,” said Elyse.

The group plans to have additional online and in-person events to continue to inspire and encourage girls to be the leaders of tomorrow.



Emergency Day Plans for 2021-2022 School Year



The following is the plan for how District 303 will manage emergency days for the 2021-2022 school year.

- The School Board has approved an e-learning plan that gives the District the option to offer remote learning in place of emergency days
- If we experience inclement weather, the first three days will be "snow days" that will be made up at the end of the school year on May 25, 26, and 27 as needed
- Subsequent emergency days will be remote days so the last attendance day will still be before Memorial Day
- If there is a long stretch of inclement weather (blizzard, polar vortex, etc.), we may split the days into "snow days" and e-learning days so as to not have too many non-attendance days in a row
- Families will be notified via Parent Link when there is a closure due to inclement weather
- Information about any closures will also be posted on the district website, on social media, and broadcast on Chicago TV and radio stations
- Please [log into HAC](#) and make sure your contact information is correct

Authentic Language Learning Experiences at Richmond

Last semester, 3rd grade FLES (Foreign Language in Elementary School) students in Mrs. O'Reilly's class learned about the Monarch butterfly migration to Mexico when learning about the country's culture and language. For a fun activity, students colored paper Monarch butterflies which were then sent to Mexico in support of conservation education.

"This is the first time we have participated in this conservation program through Journey North," said Mrs. O'Reilly. "It is creating a connection for our new FLES Spanish learners between their home culture and the culture that they are learning about." During class, lessons focus on integrating subjects such as science, geography, and social studies into their language learning experience in an authentic way.

The class found that Mrs. Romero, a teacher from Mexico, recently received the drawings by Richmond students with sweet notes and curious facts about the butterflies. The students' Symbolic Monarchs, along with those drawn by children from other states, were sent to children living near the monarch sanctuaries in the country. In the spring, Richmond students will receive

paper Monarchs that schoolchildren in Mexico colored.

The Symbolic Migration is a partnership project between Journey North and Monarchs Across Georgia, a committee of the Environmental Education Alliance. To view more pictures and future collaborations, [click on the following link](#).



A Teacher's Legacy Lives on at Wasco

The Wasco school community helped raise over \$3,000 in memory of a beloved educator. Donna Pieniazek was a 2nd grade teacher at Wasco for 15 years and continued to volunteer at the school until 2020. On April 2, 2021, she sadly passed away due to complications from a previous cancer battle.



Knowing that she would want her legacy to have a local impact, the community rallied together to raise money for the school to which she dedicated her life and career. Funds from the donations helped to create a new butterfly house and garden area at the school, which will be used for the annual 2nd grade Butterfly Release Event. A cozy sitting area with new picture books was placed in the Wasco LRC for all to enjoy.



"These gifts are special reminders of Donna's values and a lasting tribute to her contributions to our school," said Wasco Principal, Mrs. Brennan. "As we utilize these valuable resources, staff and students will remember an exemplary educator whose gracious spirit touched so many."

Shortly after her passing, a former Wasco parent shared, "Donna was the loving and caring teacher we all dream of for our children. Her influence will be felt forever." Longtime friend and colleague, Mrs. Donohoo, also remarked, "Donna was so loved and is missed by so many. It was an honor to help create the space in the LRC and butterfly garden at Wasco to preserve her memory."

Donna is a true example that you never truly leave a community when you make an impact on the hearts and minds of others. When future generations of Wasco Wolves settle in the library with a picture book or watch butterflies take flight in the spring, she will be with them.

"We all felt such peace when we visited last month, knowing that my mom would be both humbled and genuinely grateful to be remembered in such a beautiful way," expressed Kim Rich. "My family is so grateful to the Wasco community for everything they have done," she added.

Thank you to Norton Creek teacher and Donna's daughter, Kimberly Rich, for sharing her story. Thank you also to Wasco staff members Jody Anderson, Laura Donohoo, Jo Druffel, Dawn Eberhardt, Kerri Furlong, Susanna Hartmann, Amy Heinz, and Gina Smith for their collaboration on these projects.



Happy 100th Day of School from Bell Graham Kindergarten

Making it to the 100th day of school is truly an exciting time for many students across the district. To celebrate, students participate in a variety of activities that revolve around the number 100. Counting to 100 by 10's and 1's is a math standard for kindergarten students. And, in Ms. McKee's class, they use a calendar to keep track of how many days they have been in school. Every 10 days, the class completes a page in their "100 days of school" book which they finish on the 100th day.



"Once we get to the 100th day, we incorporate a lot of math and literacy activities that have to do with 100," said Bell Graham kindergarten teacher Ms. McKee. As part of their celebration, they do 100th day read alouds, measure 100 items, engage in math games, and participate in pattern block and Lego challenges. Students and staff members all around Bell Graham took part in Student Council Spirit Days and dressed up in honor of the 100th day. Mrs. Kerber, Ms. McKee, and Mrs. Friedrich also surprised students by dressing up as 100 year old ladies.

Former North Star Realizes Olympic Dream

As preparations are underway for the 2022 Winter Olympics, students and staff at St. Charles North could not contain their excitement as they gathered this morning to wish Olympic-bound Long Track Speed Skater and former North Star, Austin Kleba, the best of luck during the games.

Staff and students created a video for Austin with congratulatory messages and chants of, "USA! USA! USA!" Austin will be competing in Beijing on the day after the opening ceremony.



AUSTIN KLEBA

LONG TRACK SPEEDSKATING

East Dance Team Goes to State!



The St. Charles East Dance Team has worked incredibly hard this year and is excited to compete at State in Bloomington this weekend. Best of luck to all the incredible students and Go Saints!



[Click here](#) to learn more about the District 303 Community Backpack and to view events happening in the community.

Illinois Rental Payment Program

The Illinois Rental Payment Program can provide up to \$25,000 in emergency rental assistance.



So many families have experienced financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic. For those who have fallen behind on rent payments, the Illinois Rental Assistance Program may be able to help keep them in their homes.

The [Illinois Rental Payment Program](#) provides financial assistance for rent to income-eligible Illinois renters and their landlords who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Illinois renters may be eligible for up to \$25,000 and 18 months of emergency rental payments under the program. This is a grant that does NOT have to be repaid.

Please help us spread the word about this opportunity and share this information with your school communities.

Illinois Rental Payment Program

Preserving Housing Stability During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Applications will be available Monday, Dec. 6, 2021 and will close at 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022. Apply at ILLINOISHOUSINGHELP.ORG.

Questions? Contact us:
QUESTIONS.ILRPP@IHDA.ORG
Toll Free: 866-454-3571



The Illinois State Board of Education is the State Education Agency for Illinois. Our mission is to provide each and every child with safe and healthy learning conditions, great educators, and equitable opportunities by practicing data-informed stewardship of resources and policy development, all done in partnership with educators, families, and stakeholders.

McKinney-Vento Children— Who are they?

McKinney-Vento eligible children are those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime abode. In general, children or youth living in motels, transitional housing, shelters, the street, cars, abandoned buildings, and other inadequate accommodations may be considered eligible for McKinney-Vento services. This includes, but is not limited to, the following groups:

Doubled-up Children	living with another family due to lack of a permanent residence
Children in Shelters	including transitional living programs
Children Living in Motels	due to lack of alternative adequate living situation
Migratory Children	if accommodations are not fit for habitation
Runaways*	children who have left home and live in a shelter or inadequate accommodations, even if parents are willing to provide a home
Lockouts*	children whose parents or guardians will not permit them to live at home

- *These two categories are Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY), child not in the physical custody of their parent or court-ordered guardian and lack a fixed, regular and adequate abode.*

McKinney-Vento Children— What are their rights?

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, as part of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures eligible children have the right to:	
Choice of School	McKinney-Vento Eligible children may attend their school of origin (school last attended or school attended when child lost permanent housing) or attend the school that serves their temporary living situation. Their Caregiver makes the choice.
Immediate Enrollment	even if medical or other records, birth certificates, transcripts, cannot be produced at time of enrollment
Transportation	if requested, transportation must be provided
Preschool	priority consideration to preschool programs for eligible youngsters
Free Lunch & Fee Waivers	categorically eligible for free lunch
Access to remote learning	including meals, devices and WIFI access
Supplemental tutoring	if needed

If you think you might qualify for McKinney-Vento services please contact your school social worker or the district McKinney-Vento Liaison, Dr. Cindy Ruesch at 331-228-6738, cindy.ruesch@d303.org.

For more information you can access the contact information for your local Regional McKinney-Vento liaison at <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Subgrant-Liaison-Contact-List.pdf>

Niños McKinney-Vento – ¿Quiénes son?

Los niños elegibles para el McKinney-Vento son aquellos que carecen de un domicilio nocturno fijo, regular y adecuado. En general, niños o jóvenes que viven en moteles, en hogares de transición, en refugios, en las calles, en los carros, en edificios abandonados, y cualesquiera de otras acomodaciones inadecuadas pueden ser considerados elegibles para los servicios de McKinney-Vento. Esto incluye, pero no se limita a, los siguientes grupos:

Niños duplicados o agrupados	<i>viviendo con otra familia debido a la falta de una residencia permanente</i>
Niños en refugios	<i>incluyendo los programas de transición de vivienda</i>
Niños viviendo en moteles	<i>debido a la falta de una situación de vida adecuada alternativa</i>
Niños migrantes	<i>si los alojamientos no son aptos para ser habitados</i>
Fugitivos/Que han abandonado su hogar*	<i>niños que han abandonado su hogar y viven en un refugio o alojamientos inadecuados, incluso si los padres están dispuestos a proporcionarles un hogar</i>
Bloqueos/Cierres*	<i>los niños cuyos padres o guardianes no les permiten vivir en casa</i>

- Estas dos categorías son jóvenes sin hogar no acompañados (UHY por sus siglas en inglés), niño(a) que no está en la custodia física de su padre o guardián ordenado por la corte y carecen de un domicilio nocturno fijo, regular y adecuado.

Niños McKinney-Vento – ¿Cuáles son sus derechos?

El programa de educación para niños y jóvenes sin hogar, como parte de la Ley de Asistencia a los Desamparados de McKinney-Vento asegura que los niños elegibles tienen derecho a:

Su elección de escuela	<i>Los niños elegibles para el McKinney-Vento pueden asistir a su escuela de origen (a la última escuela que asistieron o la escuela a la que asistieron cuando el niño(a) perdió su hogar permanente) o asistir a la escuela que sirve a su situación de vida temporal. Su cuidador toma la decisión.</i>
Inscripción inmediata	<i>incluso si los records médicos u otros records, actas de nacimiento, expedientes, no pueden ser producidos en el momento de la inscripción</i>
Transporte	<i>si se solicita, se debe de proporcionar transporte</i>
Preescolar	<i>consideración prioritaria a los programas preescolares para los jóvenes elegibles</i>
Exención de cuotas y almuerzo gratuito	<i>categoricamente elegible para el almuerzo gratis</i>
Acceso al aprendizaje a distancia	<i>incluyendo alimentos, dispositivos, y acceso a internet</i>
Tutoría suplementaria	<i>si lo necesita</i>

Si crees que calificas para los servicios de McKinney-Vento, por favor, contacta al trabajador(a) social de tu escuela o a la persona de contacto del Distrito para el programa McKinney-Vento, la Dra. Cindy Ruesch al 331-228-6738, cindy.ruesch@d303.org.

Para más información, acceda a la información de contacto de su enlace regional local de McKinney-Vento en <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Subgrant-Liaison-Contact-List.pdf>

Upcoming School Board Meetings

January 31

Special School Board Meeting - 5:30 p.m.

Business Services Committee Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

Policy Committee Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

February 10

CAC Executive Team Meeting - 6:00 p.m.

February 14

School Board Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

February 22

Learning & Teaching Committee Meeting - 5:30 p.m.

2021-2022 Calendar Highlights

February 9

High School Early Release Day

Parent University - iGen: Understanding the

Smartphone Generation, Presented by Jean M. Twenge
(6:30 p.m. through Zoom - [Register here!](#))

February 21

Presidents' Day (No Students, Offices Closed)

February 23

All Grade Level (PreK-12) Early Release Day



Early Release Dates & Times for the 2021-2022 School Year

Early Release Dates for all Grade Levels (Pre-K-12)

~~September 1~~

~~September 29~~

~~October 27~~

~~December 1~~

~~January 26~~

February 23

March 23

April 27

Additional Early Release Dates for High School

~~September 15~~

~~October 13~~

~~November 10~~

~~January 12~~

February 9

March 9

April 13

May 11

AM Kindergarten: 8:00 - 10:30 a.m.

PM Kindergarten: 11:40 a.m. - 2:10 p.m.

AM Early Childhood: 9:00 - 11:05 a.m.

PM Early Childhood: 12:05 - 2:10 p.m.

Kindergarten - 5th Grade: 8:00 a.m. - 2:10 p.m.

Middle School: 8:40 a.m. - 2:52 p.m.

High School: 7:20 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.