



## Prospect Heights School District 23 Board Memorandum Information Item

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**Date:** June 11, 2026

**Subject:** Programming & Services Update

**From:** Dr. Craig Curtis, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning  
Dr. Chrys Sroka, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services  
Mrs. Dominique Guza, Director of Student Services  
Mr. Chris Alms, Director of Technology and Information Services

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This update is provided to the Board of Education to highlight some of the program and service accomplishments in the departments of Student Services, Teaching and Learning, and Technology, as well as provide a glance into our work for the 2026-27 school year.

### Student Services Department

- **Early Childhood (EC) Services:**
  - **Early Childhood Screenings** are conducted monthly at Eisenhower School and are used to determine the need for a special education evaluation or eligibility for our at-risk preschool program. This meets one of many Child Find obligations the district is required to have.
  - **Preschool for All** is a grant-funded preschool program for students who meet a variety of at-risk criteria that may impact their success in school. The district has a partnership with ECDEC (Early Childhood Developmental Enrichment Center), which provides support to manage the grant, provides assistance with grant compliance, and offers opportunities for family support and resources. We ended the year with approximately **60 students** in our at-risk program.
  - **Early Childhood Special Education Services** are provided through multiple programs at Eisenhower. Students are identified through Early Childhood Screening or through Early Intervention. Students who qualify for services can receive those through our blended classrooms (at-risk and special education students in class together), our instructional classrooms (special education students only), or our walk-in services. We ended the year serving **38 special education students** through our Early Childhood Program.
  - We are in our second year of implementation of the Creative Curriculum Cloud as our core curriculum. This year, we have implemented the **Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment**, which aligns with the core curriculum. The teachers have found a great benefit to the data they are collecting through the GOLD assessment, which they use through a team-based approach when reviewing student growth.
  - **Next year**, we will continue our work with the GOLD assessment. We will also focus on our inclusive practices and shift some of our support to promote student transitions into our blended classrooms.
- **Resource Program:**
  - A majority of students with IEPs are provided services through our Resource Program. These students spend the majority of their time in the general education classroom and receive support from a special education teacher or related service provider either in the classroom or

pulled out into a small group. Related Services can include: Speech/Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Social Work/Counseling services, Nursing services, Hearing Itinerant services, Vision Itinerant services, etc. We ended the school year with **111 students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)** being served through our Resource Program.

- **Structured Adapted Individualized Learning (SAIL) Program:**
  - Our SAIL Program supports students with a variety of needs in a small, special education classroom that has a high level of adult support and often uses an alternate, life-skills-based curriculum. Currently, there are 4 SAIL Program classrooms in the district, one in each building. The program serves **29 students**. Next year, we project having one class in each building with a total of 31 students in the program.
- **“STRIVE” Social-Emotional Learning Program:**
  - Our STRIVE Program will begin its fourth year as a district program next year. We continue to support students in their home schools by having a responsive level of support with a consistent team approach. The students maintain their academic rigor while learning regulation strategies and how to access tools that can help them manage their emotions and behaviors.
  - We were able to expand the program to MacArthur Middle School this year, in more of a hybrid model due to lower numbers, however the program has grown over the year and will support **5 students** at the start of next school year.
  - We ended the school year with **3.5 students** in the STRIVE classroom at Sullivan (1 student was transitioning from Timber Ridge), and we anticipate 4 students to start the year in that classroom next year.
- **Special Education Coaching Services:**
  - The District 23 Special Education Specialists & Coaches focus on curriculum, assessment, behavior, engagement, and communication.
  - Our Adapted PE Coach has focused on building the Unified PE classes across the district.
  - Special Education Specialists and SAIL/Behavior Coach have focused on supporting the students in our STRIVE and SAIL Programs as well as providing professional development around Functional Behavior Assessment, Behavior Intervention Plans, and Verbal Behavior-MAPP Assessment. They continue to use strategies from Cognitive Coaching in order to model and support strategy implementation in the classroom.
- **Other Student Services Programs:**
  - **NSSEO Public Therapeutic Day School Placements**
    - As a member district of NSSEO (Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization), we access their therapeutic day school programs throughout the school year. We will start next year with 5 students enrolled in their programs, a decrease of 4 students.
  - **Private Therapeutic Day School Placements**
    - When students require the support of a therapeutic day school, we typically look at the options we have through NSSEO. There are occasions when those options are still not the best match for students. We finished the year with **2 students** who are served in other therapeutic day schools outside of NSSEO but will only have 1 student next year.
  - **McKinney-Vento Services**
    - Students are made eligible for McKinney-Vento services when they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime abode. This may include students who are doubled-up, living in shelters, living in motels, runaways, lockouts, or migratory children. We support them by providing transportation to and from school from wherever they are seeking shelter, as well as free lunch, free breakfast, fee waivers, and other supports. We currently have **14 students** who qualify for this service.
  - **Section 504 Services**



- The 2025-26 school year was the first year of our 6-year Mathematics and Library Media Center (LMC) Curriculum readoption. Both Ready Math (K-8) and our teacher-created LMC curricula (K-8) are reported by our teachers to be engaging for our students. The hands-on, interactive approach to learning continues to provide powerful daily learning opportunities. The district also continued the partnership with our D214 feeder districts through the Metro Chicago Mathematics Initiative (MCMI) Partnership. Our focus for the year was student discussion and discourse, especially focusing on Algebra.
- The year also saw specials and exploratory teachers investigate their curriculum. The team reviewed standards, conducted a needs assessment, piloted curriculum, and created curriculum maps. It was a phenomenal way for our staff to see the ways our standards come together in education.
- One of our biggest undertakings this year was Year 2 of our Grading and Assessment Committee. We are planning for the committee to be a 3-5 year investment that will lead to reshaped thinking around grading practices. Thus far, we have laid a foundation and facilitated productive discussions around best practices in grading and feedback. We plan to continue this work by diving into educator practice in 2026-27.
- Throughout the year, our Full-Day Kindergarten Committee met to gather feedback around the implementation of the Full-Day Kindergarten Program initiating in 2027-28. As part of this committee, representative stakeholders gathered to provide insight on successes of our half-day program that can be carried over to full-day, as well as improvements that can be made with the additional learning time. The results of this committee were presented to the Board of Education earlier this year.
- **Instructional Coaching Services**
  - Our coaching staff continued partnering with their principals to facilitate instructional rounds in their buildings this year. Staff members truly take advantage of this opportunity. The instructional coaches now plan visits within and even across buildings, while facilitating reflective conversations afterward to ensure professional growth. The practice is truly impactful!
  - Another way our coaches have grown their leadership capacity is through networking. Our district has established several partnerships with other neighboring districts to provide coaches opportunities to meet with like-positioned professionals. They regularly meet with the other districts for planning and collaboration purposes and learning opportunities. While we knew this already, we are hearing from other districts that our coaches continue to LEAD the way!
  - This year, we were excited to reinvigorate the professional development offerings throughout District 23. We developed and planned Gamified PD to increase engagement across the district for all professional development opportunities. Staff participated in group and individual learning opportunities that gained points, prizes, and most importantly, knowledge!
- **Family & Community Partnerships**
  - All of our schools provided a plethora of family engagement opportunities this year, including literacy nights, music performances, extra-curricular experiences, and much more. Some of the favorites across the district included Cosmic Bowling Night (Ike), Elementary Music Concerts (Ross/Sullivan), Career Fair (MacArthur), and Family Fest (District).
  - Once again, our D23 Heritage Night celebration grew dramatically this year. The event grew from representing 23 countries to 45 countries. Additional improvements included an increased level of student-led activities, increased family-led activities, food trucks, and student dances. This year's student participation involved activities created through the Ross/Sullivan IDEAS class and MacArthur advisory classes, which increased attendance by approximately to well over 600 attendees.

- This year's Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC) was also a huge success. The group decided to bring back the resource fair as a valued event for our families. For the event, we were able to partner with nine different organizations. In addition, we were able to bring a highly anticipated cultural event into the mix. The first-ever Día del niño made its first appearance on our event roster. Approximately 125 individuals attended the ever-popular event.

## **Technology Department**

Through developing strong and mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships, we continue to have exciting and fun opportunities to improve processes and experiences for students, families, and staff in the District!

- **Visitor Management Software**
  - We are finishing our first year using Singelwire's Visitor Aware program to manage our guests and visitors. We now have iPad kiosks in each office, and our families have become accustomed to smiling for the camera as part of a self-identification safety crosscheck. Our new system has allowed us to more efficiently check in guests and visitors, especially for larger events where our offices can use multiple iPads to get our guests and visitors checked in and going out to classrooms!
- **Partnerships**
  - Last summer, we hosted the regional Lunch and Learn for our partners at Incident IQ. This event brought together current and prospective Incident IQ customers to learn and share strategies for success. As a bonus for hosting, we received a day of free, personalized professional development.
  - We earned three seals (Leadership, Business, and Classroom) out of the five from the Trusted Learning Environment (TLE) seal program, which recognizes districts around the country that meet rigorous data-privacy standards. We have applied for the Professional Development seal and are finalizing our application for the Data Security Practices seal!
  - We continue to partner with local groups, including a local group of tech directors. I (Chris) went downtown this year for the international COSN conference, which allowed me to partake in national conversations about data privacy and cybersecurity.
  - We continue to participate in the North Cook Collaborative, which is a group of school communication specialists. This group reviews best practices and trends for communicating with all stakeholders.
- **Network Update**
  - This year, we completed our multi-year project to add network authentication as one of our core security measures. For our staff and student network, devices can now only connect if they are validated in our mobile device management system. We maintain a separate, segmented "Guest" network, which is the best-practice setup.
- **Cybersecurity Professional Development**
  - We continue to leverage partnerships to introduce lessons and build skills when it comes to our human firewall: our staff! We continue to leverage phishing campaigns and audits with our insurance collaborative, Cyberpools. We also work with the Learning Technology Center (LTC) of Illinois, doing multiple no-cost phishing campaigns, and the LTC also led us in a special cybersecurity workshop geared specifically at our Administrative team. Finally, we worked with our partners at Empist and created a formal curriculum and roadmap for building skills around awareness and best communication practices through our phishing and training campaigns.
- **Projects for 26-27**
  - Through a professional development lens, we will use the District Technology Connect Committee to continue to review impactful, engaging, and rigorous lessons and how the use of technology can impact the planning, teaching, and assessing of the relevant learning. We will also continue to learn about the safe, intentional, and effective use of artificial intelligence (A.I.)

as we fully implement the district guidelines we created this year. For both these professional development initiatives, we are conscious of gathering data to drive our next steps!

- We continue to plan for and perform scheduled, needed infrastructure and network upgrades, including important cabling work (being done currently at Ross and Sullivan) and updating and modernizing all of our equipment closets. For these projects, we used our available Category 2 reimbursement dollars through E-Rate, partnering with our consultants to maximize the allocation we have.
- We also continue to partner with the Facilities department to review building security, specifically hardening our exterior main entrances and setting up camera phones at Ross, Sullivan, and MacArthur. (Eisenhower will follow as part of the construction work there.)