


"Tax Rate" continued from page 1

The District 308 Board of Education is committed to honoring that promise to the taxpayers. For the third straight year we have had an overall tax rate of \$5.06 in each of the three counties within the district's boundaries. Though individual tax bills may change, such changes would be a result of either an increase or decrease in property value as assessed by the township assessor, or fluctuating tax rates from other governmental bodies.

While we continue to honor our promise to hold the tax rate stable, we understand that the current system of funding education in Illinois relies heavily on local property taxes. More than half of the financial burden is on area taxpayers with 58 percent (\$78,205,050) of the district's operating budget coming from local taxes. Though the amount of money coming from the state (\$45,345,208) continues to increase (by almost \$5 million in 2007-08), when viewed as a percentage of the district's total

2007-08 operating revenues, it is only a slight increase (33.81 percent to 32.9 percent).

District 308 is committed to fiscal responsibility and in addition to maintaining a stable tax rate of \$5.06, the Board is dedicated to balancing our budget each year. On September 22, the Board adopted the 2008-09 Budget with operating revenues of \$134,106,755 and operating expenses of \$134,022,741, an excess of just \$84,014. Total expenses including construction and debt payments are budgeted at \$218,069,225.

Anyone interested in learning more about the finances of the school district is encouraged to contact the district's Business Office at (630) 636-3675 or attend the School District 101 informational sessions (*see related School District 101 story on page 1*). 



EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Welcome to the Family!

Please join us on October 18 as we celebrate the opening of two new District 308 schools!


Both Southbury Elementary School and Traugber Junior High School will open their doors to the community to commemorate this special event. Each school will host a brief dedication ceremony and then welcome guests to tour these two state-of-the-art education centers.

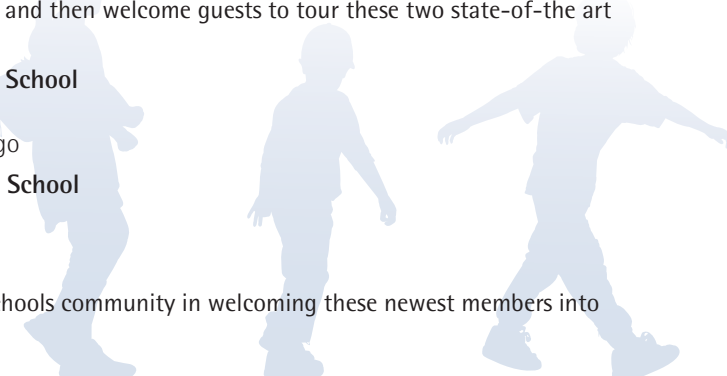
Southbury Elementary School

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
820 Preston Lane, Oswego


Traugber Junior High School

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
570 Colchester, Oswego

Please help the Oswego Schools community in welcoming these newest members into the District 308 family. 



CARING COMMUNITY

State Representative Tom Cross (R-Oswego) presented the Oswego School District Board of Education with a check for \$150,000 from the state of Illinois. Approximately \$100,000 was used for technology infrastructure throughout the district with the remaining funds being earmarked for improvements to the Oswego High School softball field bleachers. During the presentation Representative Cross noted that he was proud to be a part of the partnership described in the district's mission. 



Elementary Math adds up to student success

Start with District 308's curriculum cycle; *add* in numerous months of research by mathematics professionals; *multiply* it by the three elementary math pilot programs held throughout the district last spring; *subtract* out the programs that don't meet District 308's high standards of excellence; and it all *equals* the district's newly-adopted elementary math curriculum—**EveryDay Math 3rd Edition**.

This is the first year of implementing the district's updated math curriculum. The process to get to this point lasted two years and consisted of a thorough review process, committee evaluation, vendor presentations, program pilots, and Board of Education approval. The new curriculum is currently being taught in certain classrooms in the district, prior to the program being fully-implemented throughout the district next fall.

Although elementary students in the district continued to exceed state and national test scores in math, it was still necessary to review how and what the students were being taught. "The math curriculum, as well as all district curriculums, needs to be periodically reviewed and examined using the most current research, best practices and effectiveness in student achievement," noted Director of Teaching and Learning—Elementary Cathi Mundsinger. In District 308, this is done on a five- to seven-year curriculum renewal cycle.

District Staff

District 308 elementary math instructors are following a comprehensive staff development plan so they are well-prepared to meet the district's high expectations for its students. Teachers are currently participating in training sessions that will continue throughout the year.

"It is important for the teachers to have time to reflect on their classroom experiences this year to support a successful full district implementation next year," said Carla Wood, elementary math coordinator. "By having the teachers trained at various levels of expertise during their implementation, they are scaffolding their own learning by building on their knowledge and personal experiences."

The principals and assistant principals will also participate in an October training to learn extensively about the enhanced math curriculum. This will give them the knowledge base to address parent questions and be able to successfully evaluate teachers by understanding the effectiveness of their instruction of the program, Wood said.

Parent Participation


It is also extremely important that parents understand what and how their children are learning. "We want to build a stronger sense of community in our students' learning experiences by involving parents in how to support each child at home and working together to distinguish each child as a unique individual learner," noted Wood. To that end, two Parent Education Nights have been scheduled to demonstrate for parents the district's new math curriculum.

However, returning to school to learn about math may make some parents hesitant to attend such an event—even without the fear of a test! So a team of elementary math instructors strived to create a casual, non-intimidating atmosphere in which to hold the Parent Education Nights. To make an effort to reach all interested parents, Spanish translators will be on hand during the sessions.

The first session was held October 1 and a second session has been planned for late January. January will highlight a "meet the author" night and elementary students will demonstrate some of the algorithms and talk about their experiences in the math program.



The goal of both sessions is to answer the major questions raised by parents during last year's pilots of the various math curriculums. Parents wanted to know how the new program would address the needs of students at various learning levels; why the approaches to teaching and learning math were different than the way most parents were taught math; and which of the discussions circulating in the community about the math program were correct. To help *divide* fact from fiction and see how this new curriculum *adds up to equal* student success, topics planned for discussion include:

- ★ The current research/best practices about how students learn
- ★ How the math program addresses fact mastery and differentiation
- ★ Why the Constructivist learning approach works to help students build long-term knowledge for life-long learners
- ★ The critical component of students knowing multiple strategies and problem-solving communication skills
- ★ The adopted math program not being "new" math, but mathematics approached in a connection to real life experiences and hands-on exploration 

Families say okay to full-day

Full-day kindergarten program kicks off its pilot year

Almost 350 area families converged upon the newly opened Southbury Elementary School on August 28 holding tightly to the hands of their young children. It was difficult to tell which group had a tighter grip—the incoming kindergarten students who were just one day away from beginning their first full day of school, or the parents who would soon be watching them leave.

Sending a child off to kindergarten can be an emotional experience, but for these families there was a greater combination of excitement and apprehension—excitement because they were one of the lucky families selected to enroll their children in the district's first full-day kindergarten program; and apprehension for the very same reason.

kindergarten students (math, social studies, science, reading, phonics and writing) but teachers have additional time to extend and broaden the students' experiences. At-Risk students especially benefit from the longer day because it gives them more time to practice and master their kindergarten skills.

In addition, full-day kindergarten students enjoy "specials" such as physical education, art, music, computer lab and library time as well as a 20 minute brain break taken each day to help re-focus and re-energize the young students. However, a nap for most students isn't in the deal. "It's a little mixed up," said six-year-old student Michaela Miller. "It's hard to sleep during brain break. My brain is saying 'what to do, what to do' so when I get home I grab my pillow and blanket."

Although only in the first month of the pilot program, administration is already taking steps to make next year's program even more

BY THE NUMBERS:

Full Day Kindergarten (FDK)

230 Students chosen by lottery

119 At-Risk students

13 Buses transporting FDK students

15 FDK teachers

At-Risk: Students are identified as being "At-Risk" by having certain social, economic or demographic challenges that may influence their future success in school. This is determined primarily through preschool screenings using criteria developed by the state.



The district's first full day-kindergarten program is housed throughout the first floor of the newly built Southbury Elementary School. The blended program brings together all interested students identified as At-Risk, with students throughout the district who were selected for the program through a lottery. Individual elementary schools received a proportionate share of lottery spaces according to each school's enrollment. This helped provide some enrollment relief for a third of the elementary schools in District 308.

Full-day kindergarten students attend school from 8:50 a.m. to 2:50 p.m. During that time they have the same core curriculum as half-day

effective, said Director of Teaching and Learning-Elementary, Cathi Mundsinger. A year-long process has been implemented to evaluate the program as a whole, as well as specific issues such as scheduling "specials," transportation concerns, and the lunchtime routine.

"The opportunity to oversee a program that strengthens the learning foundation of so many children at such a crucial age is much more than a joy, it's an honor and a privilege," said Southbury Principal Phil Chapman. However, for kindergarten students such as Andrew Petrie, the appeal of a full-day program is much simpler. "It is fun because you get a long recess." 🦋

CARING COMMUNITY

Student Code of Conduct expands its reach

The Code of Conduct that governed last year's high school athletic teams has been expanded to ensure high school students in co-curricular activities are also held to the same standards of behavior.

High school students possessing tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs can face serious consequences, even if the behavior is witnessed off district property or while school is not in session. Students arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance or hosting a party at which those substances are present may receive a one-year suspension from extra-curricular activities.

Holding students/athletes accountable for their behavior provides them with the opportunity to say no to drugs, alcohol, and peer pressure. The new policy also provides students/athletes an opportunity to reduce their penalty if they take responsibility for their actions and complete a district-approved counseling program. 🦋

Rotary IMPACTS student driving through a new partnership

If friends don't let friends drive uninformed, then the Rotary Club of Oswego is certainly a friend of the students in District 308.

The Illinois Department of Transportation states that drivers ages 16 to 24 are at the greatest risk of being in a serious traffic accident while behind the wheel. Since there is typically no teacher like experience, a new program has been developed to expose young area drivers to the realities of driving on today's streets and highways.



On October 9 and 10, the Rotary Club of Oswego and District 308's driver education department joined forces to present "Operation Impact"—the first driver safety program targeted at the almost 200 driver education students in the district.

Students were able to experience the harsh realities of driving that are often overlooked due to the excitement of getting a driver's license—the sinking feeling in one's stomach when being pulled over for a traffic violation; the shock when learning about the costs associated with insurance and vehicle maintenance; and the understanding of the potential personal injuries and property damage that can occur when a two ton machine is involved in an accident.

"We as a club, wanted to do something that would directly benefit the teens in our community," said Jennifer Jones Sinnott from Brian Feltes & Associates, Inc. and chairperson of the Rotary's Operation Impact program.

"In Rotary we have so many experts in various fields that when we learned of the accident statistics for young drivers we wanted to share our knowledge and help make a difference."

During Operation Impact, students were divided into six groups that rotated between various information stations.

Two stations were set up inside the school. At one station Jones Sinnott from Brian Feltes and Associates provided the students with insurance information. In some accidents an ambulance ride and emergency room visit become necessary. Rush Copley Hospital personnel were on hand at another station to talk about emergency medical care and some of the real-life and often grim consequences of being in an accident.

Outside the school building students visited one of four stations. Motorcycle safety was presented by the Kendall County Sheriff's Department. The Oswego Police Department provided a simulation of a traffic stop including a check to see if the individual was driving under the influence. General automotive maintenance including how to change a tire and check a vehicle's oil was taught by representatives from Ron Westphal Chevrolet.

However, the station that most likely had the biggest impact on students was the impact sled. Although it may have appeared to be a fun carnival-like ride, it was serious business. Dubbed "The Seat Belt Convincer" by Illinois State Police, the 20 feet long, 9 feet high and 7 feet wide apparatus took students from a seated, seat-belted position and glided them down an incline before abruptly "crashing" into a rubber bumper. The Convincer simulated what it would be like to be involved in a crash at five to seven miles per hour. Students quickly learned how an accident at six times that speed, even with a seat belt, could have devastating effects.

Students concluded the event with an airbag demonstration that left them with a lasting impression of how quickly an airbag deploys.

Operation Impact will also be held for students in drivers' education classes during second semester. Following the October sessions, the program was evaluated for possible expansion in the spring. 📌

CARING COMMUNITY

Maureen Mills donates her "green thumb"—as well as her purple, red, blue, yellow and orange thumbs—to help beautify Wolf's Crossing Elementary School in a Character Counts! color theme so that the beautiful expression of positive character traits on the outside of the school reflects the traits being practiced by students inside the school. Mills donates her time, financial resources and creativity to landscape the school property. Pots are coordinated with the changing seasons, weeds are pulled, birds and butterflies are fed and plants in various colors from her own garden are donated to color-coordinate each Character Counts! attribute. Mills was recently recognized by the Board of Education as a parent who tirelessly strives to serve the district through a very unique partnership. 📌





CARING COMMUNITY

Home Access provides parents access to their children's school day


It's 9 a.m. do you know where your children are?

If it is a school day, they should be busy learning in their classrooms, and the district's Home Access Center can help assure parents that their children are right where they belong.

The student information system used in Oswego Community Schools provides parents of junior high and high school students with a closer look at day-to-day student achievement, as well as access to real-time information about their children's school day. The system is designed to offer parents the ability to find helpful information to support and guide their children through the educational process.

The Home Access Center can be accessed using the Internet through a secure and password-protected Web site. By using the system, parents can get an inside look at a daily summary of instruction, their children's schedules, attendance, discipline records, assigned class work, test scores, progress reports, report cards, and much more. E-mail links are available throughout the center so parents can easily communicate with the school and teachers.



To obtain a username and password parents/guardians need to register, in person, with the secretary at the buildings their children attend. 



District Administration Center

4175 Route 71 | Oswego, Illinois 60543
630.636.3080 | www.oswego308.org

EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Brokaw 630.551.9600

ELEMENTARY

Boulder Hill 630.636.2900
Churchill 630.636.3800
East View 630.636.2800
Fox Chase 630.636.3000
Grande Park 630.551.9700
Homestead 630.636.3100
Lakewood Creek 630.636.3200
Long Beach 630.636.3300
Old Post 630.636.3400
Prairie Point 630.636.3600
Southbury 630.551.9800
The Wheatlands 630.636.3500
Wolf's Crossing 630.636.3700

JUNIOR HIGH

Bednarcik 630.636.2500
Plank 630.551.9400
Thompson 630.636.2600
Traughber 630.636.2700

HIGH SCHOOL

Oswego 630.636.2000
Oswego East 630.636.2200

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