

# THE PROUD 2BD23 COMMUNITY Connection

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE PROSPECT HEIGHTS SCHOOL DISTRICT 23 COMMUNITY

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for Finance and Operations*

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## A FEW WORDS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

It's hard to believe we've almost made it to the end of the epic 2021-2022 school year! We've been through many challenges and changes, but we've supported each other and stayed strong. More than ever, I am **PROUD TO BE D23!**

Our community has been incredibly adaptable over the past two years. Our students have continued to work hard, learning and growing despite much uncertainty. And now, as our schools and the world around us begin to open up a bit more, I am pleased to see so many of our students taking advantage of opportunities to get out there and get involved. We've been able to run full athletics and fine arts programs, even school and community events.

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You'll read many examples of this in our Community Connection newsletter – from Eisenhower's Family Engagement Nights to the Sullivan musical to our Bulldog Ambassadors to MacArthur's St. Baldrick's Day Celebration (which all of D23 and much of the Prospect Heights community enthusiastically supported).

This newsletter also features some financial updates, including how we're investing our federal ESSER funds in creative ways that have academic and social-emotional benefits for the students of today and tomorrow. In addition, be sure to read about the benefits of expanding early childhood learning programs. We are early in the process. I feel it's important to begin by educating the community on the needs and funding options, then gather feedback and incorporate it into the plans. You'll be hearing more about this over the next few months.

It has been a fun and interesting spring for me, as I've been able to accomplish my goal of visiting a classroom every day. In fact, I haven't missed a day in almost three months! I enjoy getting a chance to see what students and staff are working on (and how hard they're working). I also spend time reading to them, playing games and answering their questions about the District. I've asked our middle school students for their input about what we can do differently, and they've had some great ideas.

As we watch events unfold in the world, we are reminded that we have a lot to be grateful for and much work to do. Thank you, D23 residents, for your support of the children of this community and our school district.

**Don Angelaccio, Ed.D.**

Superintendent of Schools,  
Prospect Heights School District 23

The District has started to explore the possibility of adding on to Eisenhower School to expand early childhood education offerings. Administrators have formed a citizen task force to get input on the need for program enhancements like full-day kindergarten. The task force also is weighing in on potential funding options to ensure sustainability of programs and services.

Superintendent Don Angelaccio, Ed.D., says early childhood education creates a foundation for academic and social-emotional success and provides benefits that last a lifetime. “We believe expanding our services and reach is necessary, but we currently do not have the capacity,” he says. “That’s why we’re partnering with a team of architects and construction managers to explore options for adding classrooms at Eisenhower, address safety and parking issues at the building, and identify other capital project needs.”

But Angelaccio stresses that he wants to be sure the District comes up with a plan that reflects the community’s priorities. So in addition to the task force, the School Board and administration will seek input via meetings and a survey in the summer and fall, before deciding whether to pursue a program expansion and potential tax referendum.

## BREAKING GROUND: SUMMER PROJECTS INCLUDE OUTDOOR LEARNING ENHANCEMENTS

District 23 is gearing up for a busy summer construction season, with federal funding from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) program playing a key role in the enhancement of outdoor learning spaces. The District will add updated playground equipment and covered picnic tables at Eisenhower School. The MacArthur Middle School courtyard will be transformed into an engaging outdoor classroom and gathering area, with the addition of seating and other inviting elements. Betsy Ross and Anne Sullivan Schools also will receive added outdoor seating and enhancements.

The outdoor projects will be paid for with approximately \$300,000 of ESSER III grants, along with District funds. ESSER funding is intended to help schools address the impact of the pandemic. Amy McPartlin, assistant superintendent of finance and operations, says the District has thoughtfully planned how to allocate the federal money in ways that improve facilities and support student learning for years to come.

In addition to enhancing the outdoor spaces, the District will work on roofing replacement projects at MacArthur and Sullivan and will continue HVAC retrofit work throughout the buildings, including the replacement of several Bard air conditioning units and controller upgrades at MacArthur. Following a successful mediation over the winter, Phase 1 of the MacArthur HVAC work will be fully funded from settlement proceeds.

The District also will complete the following interior projects:

- Add a Sensory Path at Eisenhower
- Paint and make final improvements in the MacArthur Library
- Replace Promethean whiteboards throughout Ross and Sullivan with new whiteboards, projectors and Apple TVs
- Make improvements to the basement office and work areas of the Grodsky Administration Building

These summer projects will begin in late spring and are expected to be completed in the fall.



New-and-improved MacArthur Library



Eisenhower playground rendering

## D23/PROSPECT HEIGHTS PARTNERSHIP TO EASE FLOODING

District 23 will partner with the City of Prospect Heights this summer to address longstanding flooding issues in the community. The District has agreed to grant a temporary easement at Eisenhower School to assist the City in continuing its work on the Arlington Countryside storm water management project. This has been one of the worst areas for flooding in Prospect Heights for the past 40 years.

The city plans to install a pumping station on Forrest Avenue and construct a storm sewer along Camp McDonald Road, to McDonald Creek. The work is scheduled to take place in July and will be confined to the front parking lot, with trenching and new piping being added between the lot and the sidewalk along the north side of Camp McDonald. In addition to helping the surrounding neighborhoods, this project is expected to improve drainage on the Eisenhower property.



## BRING ON THE BALD HEADS! D23 UNITES TO FIGHT CHILDHOOD CANCER

District 23 students, staff and community members proudly participated in MacArthur Middle School's St. Baldrick's Day Celebration on March 11. Many had their heads shaved as their peers cheered from the sidelines, as part of a district-wide effort to raise money for pediatric cancer research and support kids who are fighting, including a couple of their own classmates.

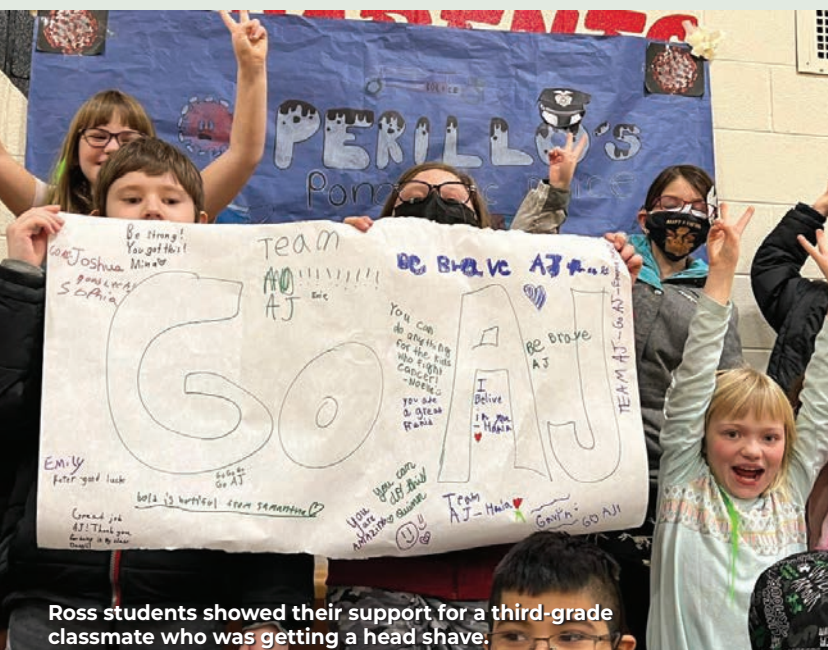
The event raised \$13,748, far surpassing the \$5,000 goal. The money was raised through pledges for those getting their head shaved, other donations and raffle sales. MacArthur's Student Senate, made up of sixth through eighth graders, planned the fundraiser, working hard to publicize it and organize the raffles, according to MacArthur teacher and Student Senate leader Athena Kalaras. Student Senate members even presented their St. Baldrick's plans at a School Board meeting.

While the St. Baldrick's Day event was planned by and held at MacArthur, students and staff from Anne Sullivan and Betsy Ross Schools also got in on the excitement, with some choosing to go bald and many making signs and serving as an enthusiastic cheering section. In addition, community members turned out to have their heads shaved or get green hair extensions, including members of the Prospect Heights Police Department.

The funds that were raised were donated to the St. Baldrick's Foundation, which supports promising pediatric cancer research and efforts to improve the quality of life for patients and survivors.



Students and staff went bald to help fight childhood cancer, while their peers cheered them on.



Ross students showed their support for a third-grade classmate who was getting a head shave.



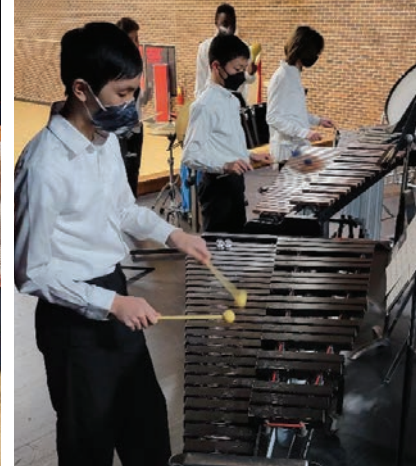
Officer Jocelyn Garza of the Prospect Heights Police Department went a little green in support of the St. Baldrick's Day Celebration at MacArthur.





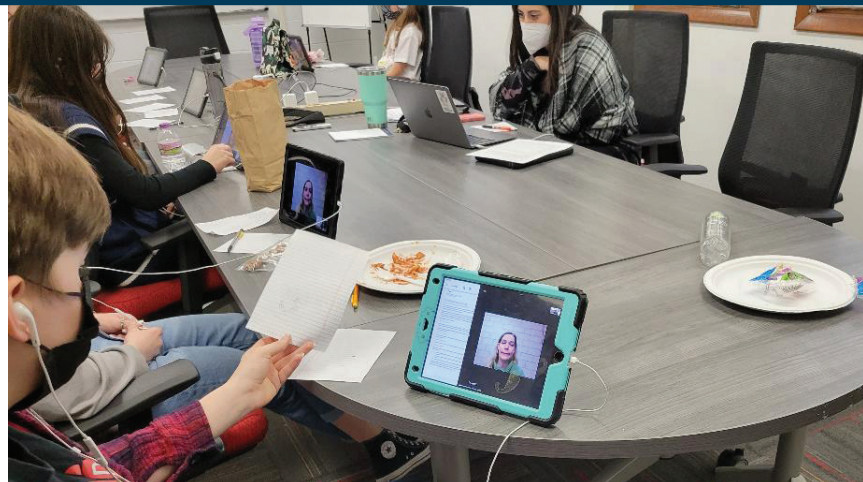
## LIVE PERFORMANCES ARE BACK! SPRING MUSICAL AND CONCERTS SHOWCASE D23 TALENT

This spring, students and staff presented several performances that delighted audiences. The Sullivan musical, "The Little Mermaid Jr.," took place in March, with in-person and livestreamed school-day shows and evening performances for families. Fourth/fifth graders made up the cast and crew and worked as set designers. Director Karen Luehr says everyone was eager to return to the stage. The last Sullivan musical, held in 2020, had one school-day performance and then had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. The Sullivan and MacArthur Band, Orchestra and Chorus also have received rave reviews in recent performances and have more coming in May. May also will bring the MacArthur musical, "Adventures of a Comic Book Artist." Pictured: Eighth-grade Orchestra members lend a hand at a morning fourth-grade rehearsal (the students pictured are siblings). MacArthur musicians warm up for the March Band concert. The cast and crew of the Sullivan musical.



## INSPIRING LEADERSHIP FROM A YOUNG AGE

Bulldog Ambassadors representing Betsy Ross second- and third-grade classrooms spread awareness of "Bulldog Beliefs," like being respectful, responsible and safe. They have helped promote incentives like the Rockstar Effort Wall, which rewards students with stars when they show their best effort. Principal Craig Curtis, Ed.D., says these programs emphasize that students can "overcome any challenge they face through dedication and perseverance."



## HOLOCAUST MUSEUM PROGRAM MOTIVATES MACARTHUR CHANGEMAKERS

A group of MacArthur eighth graders participated in an intensive middle school leadership day run by the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center on Feb. 24. The virtual gathering of students from the Chicago area and nearby states was designed to inspire young leaders and give them a deeper understanding of the Holocaust and other human rights issues. Students had group discussions and listened to an inspirational keynote speaker, 15-year-old activist Chazzie Grosshandler, then returned to their schools with tools to promote acceptance. The MacArthur group began developing a plan to help younger students accept each other's differences. Teacher Melissa Joffe says the program was a valuable opportunity for students to meet peers from different backgrounds and explore important issues, then apply their learnings to benefit their own community.



# FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

## COMMUNITY EMBRACES OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

Eisenhower School has opened its doors for Family Engagement Nights this year, to build a sense of community among students, families and staff. The events, which target kindergarten and first grade, were held from October through April and have been quite popular, according to principal Luke Lambatos, Ed.D.

“Hundreds of people have come out,” he says, “and I think the great turnout shows that students are eager to see their classmates, and our families really want to connect with each other and meet staff in a more informal setting.”

Eisenhower launched the events in the fall with Family Fitness Game Nights, where traditional board games like Chutes and Ladders and Trouble were modified to present physical challenges and get everyone moving. There were also Math and Science Nights, where families worked together to solve problems, do experiments and play math games, and a Bilingual Polish Night, with crafts and displays centered around holiday and cultural traditions. The series of family events closed with kindergarten and first-grade Literacy Nights in April. All of the events were held with COVID mitigation strategies in place, including managing the crowds by spreading activity stations throughout the building.

Lambatos says the Family Engagement Nights are especially important during the pandemic because there are fewer chances for parents to come into the buildings during the school day. He says the staff members who volunteered to put together the activities were eager to plan creative and fun opportunities for the school community to come together.

Eisenhower’s outreach efforts tie into District 23’s Strategic Plan goals and objectives related to Family and Community Partnership. All of the schools have held parent Coffee Talks, opportunities for parents and school administrators to connect. The District and PTO have hosted a movie night, a family fun night, classroom and holiday parties, Art Volunteers in Classrooms (AVIC) programs and many other events. The year will be capped with a District 23 Day at the Dogs on May 31, when students, staff and families will be invited to a Chicago Dogs baseball game in Rosemont.



Family Bilingual Polish Night



Family Fitness Game Night



Family Math and Science Night



**Prospect Heights School District 23**  
700 N. Schoenbeck Rd.  
Prospect Heights, IL 60070

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## OUR SCHOOLS

### **MacArthur Middle School**

Grades 6-8  
Dr. Camron Nystrom, Principal  
Mr. Chris Alms, Asst. Principal

### **Anne Sullivan Elementary**

Grades 4-5  
Ms. Traci Meziere, Principal

### **Betsy Ross Elementary**

Grades 2-3  
Dr. Craig Curtis, Principal

### **Eisenhower Elementary**

Grades PreK-1  
Dr. Luke Lambatos, Principal



# IT'S TIME TO REGISTER FOR THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

**D23 FAMILIES HAVE RECEIVED (VIA EMAIL) A 'SNAPCODE' AND LINK TO ONLINE REGISTRATION. REGISTRATION TAKES PLACE APRIL 6-MAY 31, WITH PAYMENTS DUE IN JULY.**

## D23 STUDENTS CONTINUE TO GROW

**IREADY WINTER BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT (2022)  
PROGRESS TO ANNUAL TYPICAL GROWTH (MEDIAN) IN READING & MATH**



■ **D23 AVERAGE GROWTH**  
■ **NATIONAL GROWTH AVERAGE**

