

# Headlines

a publication of Hillside School District 93 ♦ 4804 Harrison St. Hillside, IL 60162 ♦ (708) 449-6490

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## Message from the SUPERINTENDENT



DR. KEVIN L. SUCHINSKI

What a great start to the school year! I'm so pleased to have become a part of this caring school environment. Everyone has been very welcoming and I look forward to continuing to work with our students and families, as well as with the community that is so supportive of our school. Thank you to our families for their participation in our many "back to school" events and activities.

Please take some time to review this edition of *Headlines* to learn about the new and exciting programs and initiatives at Hillside School District 93. We are especially pleased with our "All Day Technology Initiative," and encourage you to review the article.

Finally, our goal is to continue to provide families with updated information on school events, activities, and programs. We have expanded our use of the Home Connection System (email blasts) to inform parents. Parents who have not received emails from us should contact the school to update their contact information.

Thank you for your partnership with Hillside School. If you have a question or concern, please don't hesitate to contact my office at (708) 449-6490.

Dr. Kevin L. Suchinski,  
Superintendent

## A LOOK at the YEAR AHEAD

The school year is off to a great start! This year's school-wide theme is *Inspiring Young Minds*. **INSPIRE** is the ability to instill in someone the motivation, enthusiasm, and courage to do better things and achieve more. Hillside School teachers inspire students every day, as they help students build a strong educational and social-emotional foundation for their continuing success.

This year, there are a number of new initiatives, from technology upgrades, to learning strategies designed to help students succeed in school and throughout life. The district has new leadership: Dr. Kevin Suchinski became the new superintendent on July 1. Six teachers joined the faculty. Here's a look at a few of this year's new initiatives that will help inspire Hillside School students this year:

### All Day Technology Initiative

Each student in grades one through eight will have a laptop or iPad to use in class! Previously, students shared devices. After several years of preparation, Hillside School educators are implementing the *All Day Technology Initiative*, or all day access.



EACH FIRST- THROUGH THIRD-GRADE STUDENT HAS AN IPAD TO USE IN CLASS.

Students in grades one through three will use iPads in their classrooms, while students in grades four through eight will use Chromebook laptops. Kindergartners will share iPads. "We feel that all day access will give students the ability to work on complex projects that encourage collaboration and creativity," explained Technology Director Robert Gilmore Jr.



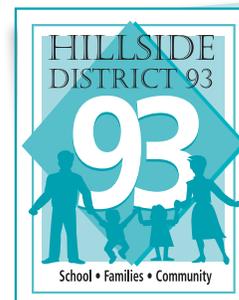
THROUGH THE ALL DAY TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE, EACH STUDENT IN GRADES 4-8 HAS A CHROMEBOOK TO USE IN CLASS.

### Google Classroom

Google Classroom, a new part of Google Apps for Education, is enhancing the way students and teachers communicate. "Classroom" lets teachers create assignments, make announcements, and start discussions online. Hillside School teachers are using Classroom to post information for their students to access safely and securely, via a computer at home or at school. The use of Chromebooks in grades 4-8 makes incorporating educational tools like Google Classroom easier than ever.

At the first teacher in-service this year, several teachers demonstrated how they are using Google Classroom to enhance education.

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DR. KEVIN SUCHINSKI,  
SUPERINTENDENT

STEVEN BOGREN,  
PRINCIPAL

JENNIFER MCGUIRE,  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

CYNTHIA WAGNER,  
DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM

SARAH JOHNSON-MILLON,  
BUSINESS MANAGER

# Welcome, NEW TEACHERS



## Sylvia Burdzinski, English as a Second Language Teacher, Grades 2-8

Ms. Burdzinski has seven years of teaching experience. She earned a BA in Elementary Education, English minor, with a bilingual endorsement from National-Louis University. "My experience here has been positive. Everyone here is close, almost like a family, and I have been welcomed with open arms...I thank everyone for their support!" Ms. Burdzinski commented.



## Janet Folkerts, Sixth Grade Teacher

Ms. Folkerts has begun her second year of teaching. She taught seventh grade social studies in her first year. She has a Bachelor's

degree in Secondary Education from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She observed: "Hillside School is a happy place where all kids learn!"

## Ruby Gonzalez, K-2 Physical Education Teacher (Part time)

Ms. Gonzalez has one year of experience in education, as a bilingual first and second grade teacher.



She has a BS in Education, emphasis on K-12 Physical Education, and a BA with emphasis on Spanish Language and Literature, from Northern Illinois University. "During my interview, the passion the principal and superintendent have toward the school made me want to teach here," Ms. Gonzalez remarked. "The way they spoke about Hillside School being a family also made me want to be here. I have been welcomed with open arms and I am glad to be a part of the Blue Jay family."



## Jaclyn Leman, Sixth Grade Teacher

Miss Leman earned a BA in Education from National Louis University, with endorsements in science, language arts, and middle school education. She has four years of teaching experience.

"I am really enjoying Hillside School," she stated, "everyone here, from the administrators, to the staff members, through students and parents, has been extremely welcoming and made me feel at home. I look forward to discovering what my future at Hillside School has in store."

## Stephanie Perez, Fifth Grade Teacher

Ms. Perez is beginning her sixth year of teaching. She has a BA in Elementary Education from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. "The staff and students at Hillside School are wonderful and I am excited to embark on this new journey as part



of the Hillside School community!" Ms. Perez stated.

## Sarah Szymanski, Consumer Science Teacher (Grades 5-8)

Mrs. Szymanski is a first-year teacher, who earned a BS in Family and Consumer Science from Illinois State University, and a Master's of Teaching in Elementary Education from National Louis University. "I am excited to be part of a school that so enthusiastically embraces what each individual student and staff member can bring to the learning environment," Mrs. Szymanski stated.



## Most PHILOSOPHICAL STUDENTS in America!

Each year, Hillside School students participate in the Philosophy Slam, an international competition in which students are asked to present their views, either in writing or through art, on a specific philosophical question. This year's question was "Violence or compassion: Which has a greater impact on society?"

When the winners were announced in June, **two Hillside School students were recognized as the most philosophical students in America** for their grade level, and seven students earned second- through fourth-place in the competition! (Note: the children's grade levels are as of the last school year.)

Congratulations to: **Kindergarten** – Christian Dunston, third place; Brooklin Robertson, fourth place. **First Grade** – Mia Ceballos, *Most Philosophical First Grader in America*; Lyric Taylor, second place; Gabriel Quiroz, third place; Cameron Strong, fourth place. **Second Grade** – Erick Mendiola, *Most Philosophical Second Grader in America*; Fatima Robledo – third place. **Third Grade** – Viviany Vazquez, third place.



SUPERINTENDENT SUCHINSKI AND THE DISTRICT 93 BOARD OF EDUCATION RECOGNIZED THE PHILOSOPHY SLAM WINNERS AT A RECENT BOARD MEETING.

## In Appreciation...

Two men, whose long-term service to Hillside School have had a deep and lasting effect, recently retired. The dedication and commitment of Superintendent Alan Molby, and Board of Education Member Terry Morgan, helped make Hillside School an outstanding place for learning. In appreciation, the Hillside School community honors Mr. Molby and Mr. Morgan.

For the past 15 years, Superintendent **Alan Molby** always put children and families first. "Mr. Molby has an amazing perspective on education," stated Principal Steven Bogren. "He always welcomed different viewpoints and looked at the whole picture, making educational decisions that were based on gathering and analyzing information. He made sure that his decisions resulted in what was the best – not what was the easiest – for our students."

There aren't too many school districts where the students know the superintendent, but Hillside School students knew Mr. Molby. He would read to them in classrooms, and knew students by name.

Superintendent Molby took great pride in, and had a real ownership of the school. Several years ago, when a major spring storm flooded the school's basement, he arrived before 5:00 am, the first on the scene, to dry out the area with a Shop Vac.

Mr. Molby always kept long-range planning in view. "He was fiscally, educationally, and morally responsible," Principal Bogren continued. "His vision shows in every aspect of the school, from the facilities through curriculum planning."

"The Hillside School Board of Education and I would like to thank Mr. Molby for his years of service, and wish him an exciting journey in retirement," said Superintendent Kevin Suchinski. "Mr. Molby's dedication to students, parents and teachers is remarkable. His passion and knowledge helped guide the district through many educational mandates, including No Child Left Behind, implementation of the Common Core Standards, and PARCC testing. Hillside School



ALAN MOLBY



TERRY MORGAN

District 93 is a better place due to his leadership...he will always be a Blue Jay!"

**Terry Morgan** served on the Hillside Board of Education for an unprecedented 27 years, longer than any other board member in the region.

Mr. Morgan believes that Hillside School is one of the best school districts around. He credits a great deal of the school's success to Mr. Molby, who was "an excellent superintendent," and also stated that, "Dr. Suchinski, our new superintendent, is an excellent fit for the district."

Of his many accomplishments, Mr. Morgan is very proud of the Board's decision to replace the building's flat roof. "It paid for itself, and saved a lot of money over time," he said.

Mr. Morgan and his wife, Judy, have lived in Hillside for 47 years. Their five children attended Hillside School. Throughout the years, Mr. Morgan always put students and their needs first. "He is very knowledgeable about all of the state's educational rules, and attended all of the state conferences for board members," Principal Steven Bogren stated. "He loves children, and could always be seen at school events. Mr. Morgan was one of the first people to shake my hand when I was hired as principal. He said, 'I think you will do great, but I will push you to always do what is best for the kids. Welcome to the Hillside School family!'"

"We cannot begin to express our gratitude to Mr. Morgan," Dr. Suchinski remarked. "He was always an advocate for children. He was an advocate for the entire Hillside community and ensured that its voice resonated in all district decisions. Mr. Morgan will always be a part of the Hillside School family!"

*This issue of Hillside Headlines, and all subsequent issues, will be produced in both English and Spanish, to enhance communications with members of the Hillside community.*

## Parents: Hillside School Needs You!

Help us help your children! Parents: be sure to keep involved with your child's assignments and communicate any concerns to their teachers. Be active in the PTO...volunteers of all kinds are always needed. The greater the parental involvement, the greater the school!

## Changes to STATE TESTING

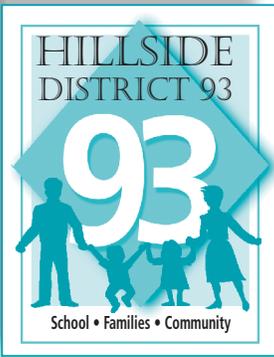
During the last school year, Illinois public elementary schools participated in the new PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) state achievement testing. Changes are being made to the way the tests will be administered during the current school year. The timeframe to administer the testing is becoming more manageable. Schools will now have a 30-day timeframe to administer the tests, from approximately the 75% mark of the school year to the 90% mark. Hillside School plans to administer the PARCC exams during the month of April.

Another change is the total testing time will be 90 minutes less than before (30 minutes less in English and 60 minutes less in math). Depending on the grade level, students will participate in six or seven test units during the testing window rather than in eight or nine test units, with the scheduled testing time for each unit 60 - 90 minutes.

Effective for 2015-2016, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has adopted the *Next Generation Science Standards*, which will be referred to as the *New Learning Standards – Science (ILS-Science)*.

The new ILS-Science is designed to help students acquire a deep understanding of core science and engineering content and ideas as well as to gain experience applying that knowledge in any context. Students will demonstrate their scientific proficiency by engaging in practices that demonstrate their ability to apply scientific concepts.

A new science assessment, based on the standards, will be administered to fifth, eighth, and tenth grade students in the spring of 2016.



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FALL 2015

[www.hillside93.org](http://www.hillside93.org)

## A LOOK at the YEAR AHEAD continues from p. 1

Google Classroom is being used in all curricular areas. For example, in the junior high social studies class, teacher Jonathan Baymon posts links to videos and text passages in his Google Classroom. He then directs his students to login to the system and retrieve that information. Students can comment about a subject or item, and complete assignments. Blue Jay Chorus teacher Louise Kelly posts links to performances and holds discussions with students in her virtual classroom.

### ***Mawi Learning***

In August, the school's opening day teacher institute featured Mawi Asgedom, an award winning author and Ethiopian refugee who has spoken to over one million students. He shared his vision, called *Mawi Learning*, with teachers. Its objective is to increase the academic and life opportunities of youth through character, social and emotional, and leadership training. Teachers and administrators are currently engaging in professional development sessions, so that Mawi Learning will be infused into the classroom setting starting in November. Mr. Asgedom will return to Hillside school on January 25 to lead a kick-off assembly.

"Our students will learn a variety of strategies and resources to increase their leadership skills, improve critical thinking skills, and help them understand the steps to becoming successful students," stated Dr. Kevin Suchinski, superintendent.

In his address to Hillside School educators, Mr. Asgedom introduced the staff to the power of "Pressing Your Turbo Button," an imaginary button inside a person's head and heart that is "pressed" whenever an individual wants to improve his/her life. It allows people to choose how they will react and take actions to make their lives better.

"Celebrating successes and choosing to take action to improve our lives and situations is a choice we make on a daily basis. As educators, we have the chance to advocate for and initiate a positive growth mindset with our students as well. Hillside School is 'Pressing Its Turbo Button' this year," said Director of Curriculum and Assessment Cynthia Wagner.

Learn more about Mawi Learning at [mawilearning.com](http://mawilearning.com).