

## District 67 APT Liaisons

February 1, 2016

*Next Meeting March 7 at 9am in the Admin Offices – all questions due to APT Chairmen **by no later than Tuesday, March 1.***

One of the questions I have is what will be the timeframe for the district/BOE to evaluate the Inquiry pilot and make going forward decision? Will it be April, May? Parents who have children registering for kindergarten would like to know what options will be available before school year ends.

The pilot evaluation will be presented to the Board of Education in the spring (date TBD). Incoming kindergarten parents will receive more information at Kindergarten Info Night and kept informed, as more details are determined.

The Sheridan and Everett Kindergarten parents have not been told that Cherokee has a Mandarin program that their kindergarteners can opt into. Is this because the program is ending?

Not at all – there are no plans to end the Mandarin program at this time. However, we are in the process of evaluating the pilot to determine exactly what it will look like next year. This discussion will be part of Kindergarten Info Night next week.

My oldest son was in the gifted program at Cherokee. At that time, the program pushed him 2 years ahead in math. He is at DPM and thrives in math. Now, I have heard the gifted program at the elementary schools is being watered down and only pushes kids one year ahead, is that true? Also, at Cherokee, the gifted program is disproportionately girls. I have talked to other moms and my son has comparable test scores to some of the girls in the program, yet my son was not accepted into the program. It seems that the subjective part of the evaluation is skewed toward girls. He

is not being challenged and I don't feel people are listening to me when I show them the paperwork.

Previously, we followed the Illinois Learning Standards for grade level goals. They reflected basic, and fairly minimal standards, that legislators wanted all children to meet to be prepared for the next year. We are now fully aligned with the new Illinois Standards, which are more advanced and rigorous.

We are finding that the Bridges in Mathematics program, one grade accelerated, is proving quite challenging for our Explore students. They are covering 3 grade levels of materials (3-5) in two school years.

The same is true for our reading program. Students in Explore are being asked to delve deeply into complex literature. They are making connections well beyond what's expected for their grade level placement.

That being said, our teachers, including Explore teachers, have our full support in pulling from standards from higher grade levels when they have sufficient data that demonstrates that that's what a child needs.

As for gender, we do track and discuss trends. However, we do not balance Explore classes by boy/girl, since we do not want to limit student entrance by capping students by gender category. Our gender make-ups ebb and flow, by school, by year, and by subject.

Have we ever thought about formalizing a program to welcome new families? Like a "welcome to the district", coupling an existing family with kids of the same (or similar) ages with a new families to the district?

We have a new parent orientation and an APT group who "welcomes families" at DPM. At DPM there is an ambassador program for new students as transitions can be difficult for some children at this age/stage. APT has been doing more as well to welcome new families. If a

family has an individual concern about their new student, they should reach out to their teacher or building principal.

I'm curious how the new ELO program started at DPM is being evaluated. When I've asked my daughter and her friends what they do in these classes, it sounds like filler and could be spent in better ways. Like study hall or silent reading or independent research.

We have given surveys to both students and staff at the end of the first session of ELO. This provided us feedback to tweak some ideas for the current ELO. The homeroom that was in place of ELO was not used in a productive way across much of the school. We'll be collecting data to support this in the near future as we've had a number of questions about bringing homeroom/study hall back instead of ELO. We are looking into all aspects of this new program to ensure success.

Since it's new, I'm hoping there is some type of evaluation that is done to gauge the effectiveness of it.

Yes. And we'll evaluate it after each session.

Could you point to where the official District 67 policy is listed on the web site regarding at what temperature/wind chill the elementary school (and middle school if different) students do NOT go outside for recess? Also, what source does the District use as the official temperature? It helps on cold days to lighten my children's backpack by not having to lug all the extra outside/warm gear. Also, we would like to know that the students have the option to stay inside when it is bitterly cold out.

Information can be found under school closings on the website <http://www.lakeforestschoools.org/about-us/district-67/emergency-school-closings/index.aspx>

Additionally, details about temperature, wind chill, and school closings

were sent home to parents in the Friday Flyers this winter. Children are not sent out to play at recess if the temperatures are too cold. Attached (see below) is the info from the website – we shared this at an earlier meeting.

## How Closing Decisions are Made

District 67's first priority is the safety of our students, staff, and parents. The decision to close our schools, or adjust our start or dismissal times for an emergency-related situation is a complicated one and based on a number of factors. These factors include available information from local law enforcement and city agencies, information from weather forecast services, [wind chill](#), reports from our bus company, reports from our buildings/grounds staff, and conversations with neighboring school district administrators. Road conditions and the possibility of dangerously unsafe temperatures are the main factors that drive the decision. If we need to close or delay the start of school, parents will be notified using our Instant Alert system and through postings on our website.

For winter weather health and safety information, visit the [CDC website](#).

## Severe Cold Response Plans

### Wind Chill Warning

Schools will be closed under the condition of a **WIND CHILL WARNING**. A wind chill warning indicates that life-threatening conditions and a risk to safety exists. Measures should be taken to safeguard life and property immediately. A wind chill warning is typically issued when the wind chill will be -30°F or colder OR the actual air temperature is -15°F or less.

#### Severe Cold School Closure: Wind Chill Warning

- Classes will be cancelled and school closure protocols will be instituted.
- All notification systems will be leveraged to send school cancellation communications to families.
- Extracurricular activities will be suspended while the wind chill warning is in effect.

### Wind Chill Advisory

A **WIND CHILL ADVISORY** is issued when conditions do not meet the wind chill warning criteria but still cause significant inconvenience. The weather during a wind chill advisory is not life threatening but presents conditions that may result in inconveniences or pose moderate risk to safety. A wind chill advisory is typically issued when the wind chill is -20°F to -29°F OR the actual air temperature is -5°F to -14°F.

#### Severe Cold Action: Wind Chill Advisory

- Schools will be open and student attendance is expected.

- Extracurricular activities will be evaluated and may be suspended if conditions persist.
- All outdoor student activities will be suspended.
- Any evacuation drills scheduled will be cancelled and rescheduled to a more weather-appropriate day.

The National Weather Service will be the meteorological source to determine and declare a wind chill warning or wind chill advisory - <http://www.weather.gov/>

All about lock down drills/protocol - Are the kids shown how to open the windows in all of the classrooms? And how to push a screen out if necessary? If not, and kids are being 'locked' in, why can't we do this as part of an evacuation safety measure? Do the classrooms have locks on their doors? Is there Internet/phone service during a lockdown, or is it blocked? Are children who have electronic devices at school allowed to use them to communicate with parents?

During lockdowns all communication avenues remain open. However, in the event of a real lockdown, students will be encouraged NOT to use their cell phones due to the following reasons:

- Students need pay 100% attention to the adult(s) overseeing them. They need to hear and follow all directives immediately.
- There is a strong potential of jamming cell service due to overload from emergency personnel, school staff, etc.
- Speaking on a cell phone while an intruder is near may attract attention and put the user's life at risk as well as others in the vicinity.

All classroom and office doors are in the locked position. We use Door Bloks so doors can be shut and locked swiftly (no need for a key). Our windows have easy to open handles, with screens that can be pushed out. For evacuations purposes, all rooms have primary and secondary routes identified.

A parent that is relatively new to District 67 posed the following question

at a recent APT meeting, we would love Mike's perspective (I am summarizing the question). She had noticed that District 67 is very process driven compared to her previous school district. While this is good in many ways, she has found that it is a little over the top in the Elementary school. Her child has been working on the same concept for months. He is bored because he knew how to complete the task from the very beginning and now months later he is just presenting his findings. There is a need for process, but can it be a little more age or skill level appropriate. How is this process handled at the different age levels?

This concern should be brought to her child's teacher or building principal.

I realize that a few of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders are taking a math class over at the HS. I understand this class to be very difficult and only a handful pass out of the freshman requirement. Those that do not will be retaking the class freshman year with the rest of their classmates. All students are graded on the curve for this difficult class. Those students that get a second chance at the class not only are accelerated in math, but also have been exposed to the material. Can you please clarify how this will be handled next year? \*Please not that my question is not in reference to the overarching math program, but instead a question about grading in the freshman math class.

It is a rigorous class, but almost all students who take AATH (Advanced Algebra Trig Honors) in 8th grade finish and move on to PSGH as 9th graders at the high school. In fact, all the students that took it last year as 8th graders are currently taking PSGH (Plane and Solid Geometry Honors).

There are a small number of students from other feeder schools who may be 9th graders taking it again (ten students across five sections). If a student is taking it again, we are assuming that their middle school is recommending that because they have not mastered the material. For 8th grade students who took AATH at DPM, we don't program them for AATH again because they already have credit. Grading is based on work done at the high school. Most of the tests are not curved. The final is curved.

Why can't kids take Brainstormers at any elementary school – not just their own?

We strive to offer classes at each home school for convenience for students and parents. It also allows for greater accountability where students know the teachers in their school. We also try to offer similar programs at each school. By providing similar experiences at each location, there would not be the need to go to other schools.

The problem with having students attend classes that may have an opening at another school is time. Classes start at the conclusion of the school day, 2:50 pm, and end at 3:50 pm. The travel time it would take for students to be transported from one building to another would require the start time to be delayed realistically until 3:15. This creates a situation where students in their home school would either start the class before others arrive making the offering complicated, or would create a supervision issue where students would spend 25 minutes waiting for class to begin waiting for a few students to arrive.