



Pathways to Success

Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144 Fall 2022 Newsletter

Vision:

Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144 is committed to producing lifelong learners that are college bound, career ready; and are able to compete in a global society.

Mission Statement

The mission of Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144 is to ensure that we provide an enriching, rigorous and holistic learning experience promoting 21st Century lifelong learners; while maintaining high expectations for all students, staff, parents and community member.

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Kimako Patterson



Board of Education



Top Left to Right: Kathy Taylor-Vice President, Carlene Matthews, Yvette Black, and Joyce Dickerson
Bottom Left to Right: Juanita Jordan, Sharron Davis-Secretary, Barbara Nettles-President

Table of Content

Letter from the Superintendent	3
Department Letters	4
Department Letters	5
Meet the SEO's	5
Chateaux Grandparents Day	6
Fieldcrest At its Best!	7
Highlands is On High	8
Mae Jemison Soars	9
Markham Park Is Up	10
Nob Hill's Happenings	11
Prairie-Hills on the Go	12
PLC All About Pre-K	13
STEAM Academy New on the Scene	13
Student Government	14
Collaborating in Pursuit of Excellence	15
PHESD 144 Stakeholders Dinner	16
District to District Collaborations	17
Town Hall Extravaganza Flyer	18

November 23, 2022

Greetings Prairie-Hills Families and Community Members,

Welcome to the Fall edition of our newsletter for the 2022-2023 school year. We continue to re-imagine what education SHOULD be in Prairie-Hills Elementary School District 144.

We have opened our very own S.T.E.A.M academy focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. It is a K-3 building and we intend to add an additional grade level each year, until it becomes a K-8 building. We have also opened up our very own alternative program called SOAR. This alternative program is focused on those students exhibiting short term behavior difficulties with a restorative perspective geared towards supporting their social and emotional needs. In addition, Markham Park Elementary School has temporarily moved to the S.T.E.A.M complex next to our district office while the original building is fully remodeled. We are very excited about what is occurring within our district.

As we re-imagine education, my staff and I are constantly challenging ourselves, our students and staff members, along with the current status quo to ensure our students receive the BEST learning experience possible. We remain determined to meet the individual needs of our students and staff on our equity journey.

I am extremely pleased to announce that we are doing a district wide book study, "The 7 Mindsets," by Scott Schickler & Jeff Waller. Please engage your child(ren) in a discussion on the following mindsets being discussed continuously throughout the school year:

- 1.) Everything is Possible
- 2.) Passion First
- 3.) We are Connected
- 4.) 100% Accountable
- 5.) Attitude of Gratitude
- 6.) Live to Give
- 7.) The Time is Now

The discussions regarding the mindsets above have been exhilarating, enlightening and fulfilling as we continue to focus on the social and emotional health and wellbeing of our students and staff members. We would love to have our parents and community members join us in this book study.

Finally, our district is in the 2nd year of our 4 year journey towards becoming a spotlight district with AASA (The School Superintendents Association). We are now members of a national network of districts working together on best practices in the field of education based on the following:

- 1.) Student-Centered Learning
- 2.) Equity-Focused Learning
- 3.) Future Driven Initiatives
- 4.) Community Engagement

We are excited about the direction our district is headed!

Please join us as we continue the Pursuit of EXCELLENCE with equity, empathy and empowerment.

Upcoming Events

Town Hall Gala	December 15, 2022	6:30p.m.
Board of Education Meeting	December 19, 2022	5:00p.m.
School Improvement Day	December 23, 2022	
Winter Break	December 26, 2022 – January 6, 2023	

Classes resume on January 9, 2023

Business Department

The Business Department is off to a great school year! Our department oversees the financial management of the Prairie-Hills School District 144, including the Annual School Budget, the Tax Levy, Annual Financial Statement and serving on the Construction Management Team.

The renovations of the PHSD144 schools continues to go very well. Many of the renovation projects were paid by State and Federal grants, including the Illinois School Maintenance Grant and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund Grant. Highlights of the construction have included the successful development and opening of the STEAM Academy, upgrades to the interior of Chateaux, renovation of the PLC Kitchen, and upgraded HVAC systems at Highland.

As our school year moves forward, construction projects are focused on the completion of the Markham Park expansion & renovation project, upgrading the Mae Jamison partition, renovating the Nob Hill kitchen, the installation of new playgrounds at PLC, and new signs located at all school buildings.

For the financial side of D144, we are honored to hold the highest financial recognition from the Illinois State Board of Education. The recognition is based on the district's 1) Fund Balance to Revenue, 2) Expenditure to Revenue Ratio, 3) Days Cash on Hand, 4) Percent of Short-Term Borrowing Ability, and 5) Percent of Long-Term Debt Margin Remaining.

The District 144 Business Department is committed to supporting student achievement through efficient financial planning and resource allocation. Our team will remain excellent guardians of tax payer's money; provide open and honest communications which will inform and foster the trust of all stakeholders; comply with all state-mandated protocols and procedures; and design, implement and oversee all budgetary needs for our School District.



Curriculum & Instruction Department **Dr. Tiffany Burnett, Assistant Superintendent**

Although the last few years have proven to be challenging, Prairie-Hills ESD #144 remains committed to providing students with opportunities to be successful – academically, emotionally, and socially. We strive to deliver programs and activities to meet the needs of all students. We are delighted that the PHESD #144 After-School Program continues to be offered in all of our elementary school buildings as well as the junior high school. This program has been designed to focus on specific skill deficits identified through assessment data. Students are in intensive remediation sessions tailored to their academic needs in the areas of reading and math. Skills are taught through engaging and interactive hands-on activities.

This fall, PHESD #144 began a graphics art after school program at Prairie-Hills Junior High School. The program helps students expand upon their interests in the visual arts, while also creating art that will benefit the school and community. The mission of the program is not only to create art, but to make it more visible around our school and community. PHESD #144 also began an after school Spanish Club at each of our elementary school buildings. The PHESD #144 Spanish Club started with introductory Spanish features such as vocabulary, emotions, numbers, shapes, colors, and simple phrases and progress in difficulty throughout the year. The program is multi-grade, multi-sensory, and uses multimedia. PHESD #144 is gearing up to begin a broadcasting club at the junior high school in winter 2023. The PHJH Broadcasting Club will help students learn communication skills through Morning News broadcasts. Club members will learn how a small media station runs and how to perform in front of an audience and video camera. The students will be able to use their imagination and organization and technical skills to put out a Morning News broadcast.

Flag football was the newest addition to the extra-curricular sports activities within the district this fall. Flag football makes football accessible for all children—no matter their age, size, or gender. All of the elementary schools as well as the junior high school had teams that participated in practices and games in September and October of this school year. Another wonderful first this fall was the opening of the new S.T.E.A.M. Academy. S.T.E.A.M. education is an approach to learning that uses science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. This year, the S.T.E.A.M. Academy opened its doors to kindergarten through third grade students, and PHESD #144 looks forward to expanding the program next school year. In addition to the science, math, reading, language arts, and social science curriculum that is covered, S.T.E.A.M. Academy students have the opportunity to participate in art, music, dance, and foreign language classes during the school day. The S.T.E.A.M. Academy was created to foster collaboration; creativity; problem-solving; open-inquiry; experimentation; and communication, all of which impact students'

social, emotional, and reasoning growth. All of the programs and activities that are taking place within the district this year were designed to provide our students with the best educational experiences possible. We are committed to working with our stakeholders to help all students reach their full potential. Prairie-Hills Elementary School District #144 is pursuing excellence with equity, empathy and empowerment.



Human Resources Department
Dr. Kenneth Scott, Assistant Superintendent

Greetings Prairie Hills School District 144 family. Many blessings to you and yours. We have been diligent during this national teacher shortage to assure that we have certified, competent teachers in front of our students on a daily basis. We have hired more teachers in the recent past than ever before; while remaining steadfast in our effort to keep our class sizes small. To attain this, we have expanded our recruiting efforts in a myriad of ways from soliciting contract companies, to developing relationships with local universities, to developing teachers from within our existing ranks. To further support the afore-mentioned effort, we have recently partnered with Global Educational Concepts, which is a J1 educational Visa corporation. This partnership will enable PHSD144 to broaden our recruiting ambitions to include Asia, Africa, Europe, South America, Central America, and the Caribbean Islands. We look forward to exhausting every effort to provide the best educators for our student population.



Student Services
Ms. Theresa Smith, Director of Student Services

Greetings Parents and Guardians,

The Student Services Department is diligently working to enhance our programs to meet the needs of our students and families. We have hired Student Engagement Officers to assist with truancy and absenteeism. We are committed to addressing the issue of chronic absenteeism and welcome your feedback and support. Our district has incorporated the 7 Mindsets program which is a comprehensive Social and Emotional Program that addresses Growth Mindset and Social Emotional Learning for all students and staff.

We are proud to announce SOAR, our in-house alternative program. This program allows students that are struggling socially and emotionally an opportunity to receive support in a smaller educational setting on our district campus. We are increasing our partnerships with counseling agencies to meet the needs of our students. Our partner, Midwest Family Community Resources provides counseling programs on site at our Prairie Hills Junior High School. We are looking to increase our partnerships to assist more students and families. Currently, we are in discussions with Hartgrove Hospital to expand our support and resources for students and their families.

Sincerely,

Theresa Smith
Director of Students

Meet our (SEO) Student Engagement Officers:



**Brian
Kizer**



**Marlon
Cobb**



**Kelly
Hasse**



**Colen
Lee**



**De'Andre
Lowery**



**Jaleel
Muhammad**

Chateaux Grandparents Stole the Show

Mr. Glenn Greene, Principal

Chateaux Elementary welcomed grandparents to their Annual Grandparents Day event. Smiles and warmth filled the classrooms and hallways of the school as grandparents did crafts, activities, and ate snacks with their grandchildren. Principal Greene, students, and staff alike were all excited for the occasion. Let's take a look;



Fieldcrest at its Best

Ms. Kim Cook, Principal

Girls on the Run

Fieldcrest just finished their second season of Girls on the Run!! Girls on the Run is a program that teaches girls empowering skills, while training them to run a 5k. Last year five girls participated in this awesome event in the Spring. However, this year the coordinators decided to change the season to the Fall because the weather is warmer. It was a total success. The temperature was 75 degrees and sunny. Students were able to run in tee shirts and shorts. We were able to increase the number of participants from five girls to ten girls. The weather was beautiful and the girls had a lot of fun. To support the runners, staff made a balloon arch. While Fieldcrest students made banners, and posters. Music was provided by the music teacher and each student was given a noise maker to help cheer as they completed the race. Four teachers ran on the side of girls as they completed the 5k race. It was an exciting and energetic event for all!



Highlands is On High!

Ms. Rhonda Henderson, Principal

Fall into Reading was our theme for Family Reading Night, hosted on October 27, 2022. Families were invited to various activities that promoted the love of Reading. Snacks, raffles, and an enjoyable read-aloud were some of the activities for the night. Thanks to all the families that came out to make it a successful night.



Highlands Elementary School celebrated its 1st Quarter PBIS celebration. Students who displayed positive behavior were invited to join the BOO Bash on October 31, 2022.



Mae Jemison Soars!

Mr. Terence Lee, Principal

Ms. Amaris Winters, Assistant Principal

We have been busy at Mae Jemison Elementary School! It's hard to believe September and October are already over and cooler temperatures have arrived. We have had a busy past few weeks with our football team competing in their first season, our students completing their iReady and MAP testing, and our first Spirit Week of the year in recognition of Red Ribbon Week. Students enjoyed dressing up in their themed attire.

It was nice to see everyone at our first outdoor Back to School Night. Our Rocket families were flexible and worked with us as we experienced a power outage in Hazel Crest and moved the festivities outdoor. Students played at the park as teachers and parents met on our lawn. It was a fun time! We will have our first PBIS celebration coming up in November. Our PBIS team is excited about celebrating with our students. Rockets are also earning their Mood Bucks with hopes of finding some great treats on our Moon Cart!

We have begun to practice for our different safety drills (fire and lockdown). Students are doing a great job! Please be sure to talk with your child about what they learned to do in these emergency situations. Staff are preparing students in developmentally appropriate ways about the meaning and importance of these drills.

Students have been busy with their fall testing and science fair projects. We are so proud of the gains they are making academically and socially. We have been focusing on having a Growth Mindset and diving deeper into what this means by exploring our new 7 Mindsets curriculum. Our staff is dedicated to ensuring we meet the social and emotional needs of our students.

We have some exciting things planned for our winter season. Volleyball kicks off this November as tryouts begin this week. Students are already practicing for our Winter Holiday Extravaganza. This will be the first whole school performance since the start of the pandemic.

We have everyone has had a peaceful start to the school year, we are excited for what the 2022-2023 school year will bring!

Go Rockets!!



Markham Park is Up!

Ms. Tiffany Rucker, Principal

Markham Park School is off to a terrific start. Students are working hard during instruction time and the staff is eager to challenge the students to adequately prepare them for benchmark exams. The student body participated in an election where they nominated and voted for a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Markham Park is excited to exercise our civic duties and show our students how the process works. The building also celebrated the fall holiday season by having a Harvest Fest. The students were able to wear their costumes to school and participate in our Trunk or Treat. This was a major success as the students really enjoyed themselves.

Markham Park School remains focused on growing our students academically, socially, and emotionally. We know that this will aid them as they matriculate through their academic years. We have been using our first twenty minutes of the day to provide SEL for the students by addressing the topic Passion First. We have been having a terrific time talking to students for the month of October about what they want to be and how to work towards it. During the month of November, we will begin assessing the students on all first quarter skills taught. The assessment that will be used is IReady. We are eager to see how much our students have grown.



Nob Hill Happenings

Mr. Timothy Hurd, Principal



Nob Hill School got off to a great start this 2022-2023 school year. For “Meet the Teacher” night many parents came out to meet the new staff and teachers and it was a success. Grandparents Day was another big happening at Nob Hill and as always was well attended and remains to be a student favorite!

Meet the Teacher Night



Grandparent's Day



Prairie-Hills Jr. High on the Go!

Ms. Lauren Gladu, Principal

Mr. Abraham Mobley, Assistant Principal

Dr. Wade Morris, Assistant Principal

Ms. Deshonda Wright, Assistant Principal

The 2022-2023 school year took off seamlessly for the new principal and administrative staff at Prairie-Hills Jr. High. Students, staff, and parents participate in various events and activities around the campus including; Hispanic Heritage Month, PBIS Night, Morning Convocations, 8th Grade Parent Night, and many more.

Take a look:



Primary Learning Centers All About Pre-K

Dr. Gina Driskell, Principal



For the month of October, our primary students completed a tree study. Preparing to be scientist, they explored trees, leaves, animals living in trees, and the environment around them as the season changes. Students learned about who takes care of trees, how trees change, if they change, and what food comes from trees.



Prairie-Hills STEAM Academy New on the Scene

Parents from Ms. McNabb's 3rd grade class came to assist with re-potting a variety of vegetables the students planted in early September. Students will design garden beds of vegetables. Student teams will develop a healthy plate menu that will be presented to the members of the local food pantry.



Student Government

Dr. Kimako Patterson, Superintendent
Mr. Kennell Smith, Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction

It is the sentiment of Superintendent Patterson that the voice of the student body is of utmost importance. This 2022-2023 school year a Student Council team has been formed at each school building. Monthly, Dr. Patterson and Mr. Kennell Smith will sit and meet with the Student Council Executive Board; President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, as well as, the Historian and Sargeant at Arms (positions exclusively at the Jr. High School). Topics to be discussed monthly will include but are not limited to bullying prevention strategies, school safety and climate, community service projects, and much more. The students use this platform to speak for their peers openly with the Superintendent and administration to make lasting changes within the District.



Collaborating in Pursuit of Excellence!



Annually the Board of Education and the Superintendent embark on a 3 day planning retreat. This year Dr. Patterson invited her administrative cabinet to join the retreat to ensure that the decision makers were aligned with the decision enforcers. From department presentations to open dialogue and discussions, the day of collaborations were a great success!



Prairie-Hills Jr. High School and Hillcrest students in Community Service Project

July 2022 students from Hillcrest High School, organized by Mr. Kennell Smith, Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction, along with the Prairie-Hills Jr. High administrative staff, set out to beautify the community in an ongoing effort to bridge the gap between Prairie-Hills ESD 144 and Bremen High School District 228. We are looking forward to more collaborations with the staff and students of BHSD 228 this coming school year.



There is no shortage of generosity within the PHESD 144 community. Here the Great Lakes Credit Union donates prefilled backpacks to the District for the 2022-2023 school year.

Great Lakes Representative presents backpacks to Dr. Patterson



PHESD 144 Stakeholders Dinner

Prairie-Hills ESD 144 has no shortage of resources and vendors that we partner with throughout a given academic school year. This year for the first time ever the Board and Dr. Patterson brought all of the Stakeholders in one room. There another layer of collaboration was formed. It was an evening filled with information and revelation, all in the continual Pursuit of Excellence with Empathy, Equity, and Empowerment for the sake of the students and families we serve. Some guests included Representative Will Davis, Mayor V. Alsberry and trustees from the Village of Hazel Crest, Chief M. Davis, Hazel Crest Police Department, Mr. D. Champion, Markham City Hall, attorney's Todd Hayden and Zariah Udeh, Robbins Schwartz, Mr. T. Siddiqui, S & T Labs, Mr. Lawrence Love, 7 Mindsets, Dr. R. Grossi, Illuminate Financial, and many more.





Collaborations are not just subject to Departments within District 144, to achieve equity for all Dr. Patterson understands the importance of partnering with other Districts in other regions. During the 2022 Joint Annual Conference Prairie-Hills ESD 144's Superintendent, Dr. Kimako Patterson, along with Board Vice-President, Ms. Kathy Taylor, collaborated with Superintendent, Dr. Bhavna Sharma-Lewis, along with Board President, Mr. Jon Hauptman of Diamond Lake School District 76 located in Mundelein, IL. The panel discussion was geared toward relationships between the decision makers within the District developing a common goal for the students, staff and community they serve. The session was well received and a great success!



Prairie-Hills ESD 144 Invites You to the 2022 Town Hall Extravaganza

Thursday, December 15, 2022; 6:30PM-8:00PM

Student Showcases, Interactive Feedback from the Board,
Superintendent and more.



*Dinner will be served from 5:00PM-6:30PM- In order to R.S.V.P, please use the
click the link below:*

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/town-hall-extravaganza-tickets-467522832377>

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT YOU MUST R.S.V.P FOR DINNER USING THE LINK OR QR CODE!

For More Information Contact:

Ms. Nakia Matthews: (708)210-2899

