

## **D155 Community Connection**

**September 4, 2015**

### **A Message from the Superintendent**

Welcome back! It's been an exciting start to the 2015-16 school year. On the first day I had the pleasure of riding the bus to school with Prairie Ridge students. We were the first bus to arrive at school. I walked in with the students and greeted staff. I visited each of our schools on the first day. At Central, I saw students experience the Collaborative Learning Center for the first time. This allows students to work in groups and get help from teachers during their study hall. When I stopped by South, I noticed every student had a note in their locker letting them know students are there to support them. The students and staff at Cary-Grove were excited about changes in their facility, which will give them an opportunity to showcase their talents and increase building safety. Students and staff at our Haber Oaks Campus welcomed their new leader Julie Duncan who was promoted from Central where she was the student services coordinator. When I visit our schools, I see that our staff works hard everyday to inspire, nurture and empower our students.

Leading up to the first day, there was a lot of preparation. Our operations team was busy this summer. At Cary-Grove, we completed the auditorium and renovated three science labs. Two science labs at Central were renovated and doors were replaced. At South two science labs were renovated and doors were also replaced. At Prairie Ridge we completed the second half of the roof project; the first half was completed last summer. In all, we replaced more than 200 doors this summer, and 193,00 square feet of roofing in 2014 and 2015.

This school year our students will benefit from new courses and technology upgrades. We added 990 additional mobile devices districtwide for classroom use.

More than 150 students are enrolled in new Advanced Placement (AP) courses. The College Board selected D155 to pilot AP Seminar and AP Research; each is a one year course. AP Seminar is being offered during the 2015-16 school year, and AP Research will be implemented in the 2016-17 school year. These courses will allow students to strengthen their research and reasoning skills, require students to write individual papers, and work in groups on multimedia presentations. D155 is the first district in the state of Illinois to implement these courses simultaneously at all four high schools. We are only one of 14 districts in the state offering these classes. Over the summer nine teachers attended a conference to teach AP Seminar.

The school year is just beginning, and I can't wait to see what our students and staff accomplish this year.

Dr. Johnnie Thomas, Superintendent

### Calendar

No School - Labor Day

September 7

Board of Education meeting

September 15

7:30 PM

Prairie Ridge High School

Parents' Night/Open House

September 16

7:00 PM

(Home High School)

### Board of Education Updates

#### **Board Approves Balanced Budget**

In July, District 155's Board of Education approved a balanced budget for the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year. This is the second year in a row that District 155 has approved a balanced budget, and it really has been a collaborative effort. Prior to this school year, all District 155 divisions reduced their operating budgets by a collective \$490,000. Projected direct revenues for total operating funds for the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year are \$93,269,279 while projected direct expenditures are \$93,122,918.

#### **Board Approves Elimination of Class Rank**

Beginning with the freshmen class of 2019, class rank will be eliminated. Next steps include developing a plan for recognizing those students when they are seniors. Instead of recognizing a valedictorian and salutatorian, the district's top performing students will be recognized. This will give students an opportunity to take classes without worrying about how it could impact their GPA.

A district committee consisting of teachers and administrators collected research regarding the elimination of class rank. They found colleges and universities don't include it on applications and several surrounding districts have also eliminated class rank. In some cases class rank put our students at a disadvantage.

### School Spotlight

#### **D155 Schools Ranked Among the Best in the Country**

Niche ranked all four District 155 high schools among the best public high schools in Illinois and

across the country. Niche determined each school's rank based on statistics and student and parent opinions. More than 14,000 public high schools in America received a numerical ranking. District 155 schools ranked among the top.

<b>Public High School</b>	<b>State Ranking</b>	<b>National Ranking</b>
Prairie Ridge High School	49	836
Cary-Grove High School	57	961
Crystal Lake Central High School	73	1,517
Crystal Lake South High School	109	3,063

According to Niche, a high ranking in Overall Experience indicates students are happy with academics, teachers, safety, resources, facilities, extracurricular activities, and sports.

### **Newsweek Ranks Two D155 Schools Among America's Top High Schools**

Prairie Ridge ranked 251 out of 500 of America's top high schools. Cary-Grove ranked 323. There are more than 20,000 public high schools nationwide. Newsweek assesses college readiness, graduation rate, ACT scores, dual enrollment and Advanced Placement enrollment data to determine school rankings.

### **PR Grad Accepted into Competitive Tech Program and Needs Community Support**

PJ Whipson's hard work is paying off. The Prairie Ridge High School alum was accepted into the highly competitive Mercedes-Benz ELITE ADVANCED Program in Jacksonville, Florida. PJ lost both of his parents and he worked several jobs to support himself throughout high school. He has set up a [GoFundMe Campaign page](#) to raise \$6,000 to help cover the cost of the move to Jacksonville, and living expenses. There will also be a fundraiser at 3-D Bowl & Sideouts, 4018 W Roberts Rd, Island Lake, IL 60042, on Saturday, September 12 from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. The \$25 donation includes bowling, appetizers, 50/50 raffle, and a silent auction. For more information, click [here](#).

### **Cary-Grove Senior Sings during Opening Ceremony of Special Olympics World Games in July**

A Cary-Grove High School Senior was center stage at the Special Olympics World Games this summer in Los Angeles. Breanna Bogucki is a talented singer and has competed at nine Special Olympics Games. In July, Bree joined O.A.R. singer Marc Roberge, singer and songwriter Cody

Simpson, and YouTube sensation Madison Tevlin to sing the anthem song at the Opening Ceremony of the Special Olympics World Games. Breanna also sang and spoke to students at Cary Junior High last month as part of "Acceptance for All." Read more, click [here](#).

### **Recent Crystal Lake Central Graduate Publishes First Book**

Sarah Natale Mondello has been writing since she could hold a pencil. She graduated from Crystal Lake Central High School in 2014 and is now a published author under the pen name Sarah Natale. The 60-page novella titled *The Kiss of Death* began as an assignment in Jerry Thiel's creative writing class her senior year of high school. To find out more about her book, click [here](#).

### **South and PR Students Experience Culture and High School in Germany**

Twenty-one students from Crystal Lake South High School and Prairie Ridge High School participated in a GAPP (German American Partnership Program) Exchange with a German High School for three weeks this summer. Each student lived with the family of their exchange partners and attended academic classes at the Schönbuch Gymnasium in the small town of Holzgerlingen, Germany. For more information, click [here](#).

### **District 155 Students Spend Summer Learning Language and Culture Abroad**

This summer 22 students had a unique opportunity to strengthen their Spanish-speaking skills abroad. Sophomores, juniors and seniors from Cary-Grove, Central, and Prairie Ridge High Schools spent 11 days in Spain immersing themselves in the language and culture. Students completed 20 hours of Spanish classes at a language institute in the town of Salamanca. Read more, click [here](#).

### **Additional Information**

#### **Text-a-Tip**

Text-a-Tip is an anonymous texting service that allows teens to reach out for help for themselves or a friend. The service is available 24/7, is completely anonymous, and is staffed with trained, licensed counselors to support you if you have a concern or crisis.

Anyone who sends the text message **MCHELP to 274637** will receive an immediate text response from a trained, professional counselor. The response team consists of licensed/certified mental health professionals from The Child, Adolescent, and Family Recovery Center in Hoffman Estates. The Recovery Center will be working closely with the McHenry County Crisis Center, who will take over as the response team within 6-12 months.

In the case of a life-threatening condition, emergency responders will be notified and be given as much information as possible to help the person in need.

### Connect with Us

#### Twitter

Follow us on Twitter

[@CHSD155](https://twitter.com/CHSD155)

[@CaryGroveHS](https://twitter.com/CaryGroveHS)

[@CLCentralHS](https://twitter.com/CLCentralHS)

[@CLSouthHS](https://twitter.com/CLSouthHS)

[@PrairieRidgeHS](https://twitter.com/PrairieRidgeHS)

#### Facebook

Like us on Facebook

[Community High School District 155](https://www.facebook.com/CommunityHighSchoolDistrict155)

#### YouTube

YouTube channel: [CHSD155](https://www.youtube.com/CHSD155)

#### SmugMug

Download photos for free of district events, activities and sporting events.

[www.d155.smugmug.com](http://www.d155.smugmug.com)

[www.carygrove.smugmug.com](http://www.carygrove.smugmug.com)

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