



Community Digest

Building a foundation for learning, leadership and life

Summer 2018



Dates to remember

See <http://www.sd735.org/calendar> for all events.

July 24—Residency verification for all students, 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., McCracken Middle School, 8000 East Prairie Rd.

Aug. 1—Residency verification for all students, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., McCracken.

Aug. 16—New student orientation, 9-11 a.m., McCracken.

Aug. 16—Party on the Playground, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Meyer School, 8100 Tripp Ave.

Aug. 20 and 21—Institute days for staff.

Aug. 22—First day of school, grades 1 through 8, Middleton and McCracken.

Aug. 23—First day of kindergarten, Meyer.

Aug. 27—First day of pre-school, Meyer.

Aug. 30—Curriculum Night, 7-8 p.m., Middleton School, 8300 St. Louis Ave.

Sept. 3—Labor Day, no school.

Sept. 5—Curriculum Night, 7-9 p.m., McCracken.

Board meetings—The Board of Education meets at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at McCracken unless noted. All community members are invited to attend.

Skokie School District 73½
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A tree in memory of Song Park (inset photo) now stands in the McCracken School garden.

Students, staff remember custodian's 'gentle presence'

Song Park was a longtime custodian at McCracken School who was beloved by students and teachers.

"Mr. Park was a gentle presence," said Carrie Eccleston, a 6th grade science and social studies teacher. "He was quiet and kind and took great care in all his work. Many teachers in the district have stories about how he helped them and was so supportive of what we

do. I spent many days discussing the garden with him.

"Over the last few summers, Mr. Park and I would talk about plants in the school garden and I would frequently ask for his help with watering. He loved the produce that we grew and looked forward to the food we would make for him at garden club. Sometimes we

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District adopts new 5-year Strategic Plan

Based on input from parents, community members and staff, District 73½ has adopted its latest five-year Strategic Plan.

The plan includes objectives in the areas of academics, community engagement, fiscal responsibility, learning environment and the whole child. For more on these objectives and the actions planned to achieve them, please see page 3.

SkokieCares to offer equity training

Beginning in September 2018, SkokieCares will offer a series of educational equity and diversity training sessions for anyone who lives or works in Skokie.

“This is a great opportunity for parents, staff and community members to engage in meaningful conversations with one another about our own biases and how they affect others,” said District 73½ Supt. Kate Donegan. “I am so proud to work collaboratively with other community organizations on a project that will make Skokie a better place to live and work.”

The training sessions will be offered roughly once a month at three venues:

- Mondays from noon-3 p.m. at the Skokie Public Library, 5215 Oakton St., on Sept. 17, Oct. 15, Nov. 12, Dec. 17, Jan. 28, Feb. 11, March 18, April 8, April 29 and May 13.
- First Wednesday of the month from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Skokie Park District’s Tot Learning Center, 3701 Howard St.
- First Thursday of the month (except Oct. 11 and Jan. 10) from 5-8 p.m. at Elizabeth Meyer School, 8100 Tripp Ave.

SkokieCares is a coalition of representatives from eight Skokie community organizations, institutions, government bodies and the community at large. Its primary goal is to “make Skokie the best community possible” by helping create a welcoming and supportive village. It sponsors the “Skokie Welcomes Everyone” campaign.

Donegan represents District 73½ in the organization. Other members and organizations include:

Susan Carlton — Community Member

Mark Collins — Niles Township Government

Dr. Steven Isoye — Niles Township High School District 219

Diana Juarez — Niles Township Schools’ ELL Parent Center

Richard Kong — Skokie Public Library

John Lockerby — Village of Skokie

John Ohrlund — Skokie Park District

Ann Raney — Turning Point

By listening to what community members are saying, SkokieCares has concluded that too many residents feel like they don’t belong here — that it’s hard to get to know others or they don’t feel welcome when they participate in community activities. In many cases these feelings are brought about because of the way individuals are categorized and marginalized by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, disability or socioeconomic class.

The equity and diversity trainings are intended to promote deeper, more meaningful conversations among neighbors and colleagues. In many cases, people who have completed the program have gone on to take community leadership roles.

The training sessions will be presented as SEED seminars rather than straight lectures. The National SEED Project — Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity — works to promote personal, organizational and community change toward greater equity and diversity.

SEED seminars include interactive activities and conversations that may be stimulated by films and readings. Participants offer personal reflections and testimony, listen to each other’s voices and learn collectively together.

“This is a life-changing program,” Donegan said. “I’ve had the great privilege of participating in the educational equity and diversity training, and afterward you view the world in a much kinder and gentler manner.”

For more information or to register for a seminar, go to the SkokieCares website (www.skokiecares.org).

Families can register students online for 2018-19

Parents can register children in District 73½ schools for the 2018-2019 school year using PowerSchool. PowerSchool is an online system that enables the district to collect and verify student demographic, emergency and medical information prior to the start of the new school year. Students who attend District 73½ schools are automatically added to the PowerSchool system.

E-registration using PowerSchool began July 9. Parents should have received a letter or email from the district technology department with instructions for using PowerSchool. That communication contains a secure “snapcode” that links directly to individual student information. Parents should log into the PowerSchool account and submit a registration form for each student in the family. Information about PowerSchool is available at the district website (www.sd735.org/powerschool).

If you do not have access to the Internet, contact your child’s school and make an appointment to use a school

computer to complete the process. You can also use computers with free Internet access at Skokie Public Library.

Families should complete the PowerSchool registration forms before the scheduled residency verification days at McCracken School, 8000 East Prairie Road, on Tuesday, July 24 from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., or Wednesday, Aug. 1 from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. District residency verification is required for all students.

Two of the following items are required to prove residency: gas bill, electric bill, cable/internet bill, water bill, auto insurance, cell phone bill or credit card bill. Renters must provide a copy of their current lease and an affidavit from their landlord.

Parents can pay fees and turn in required forms on either of the residency verification dates. All fees are due by Aug. 1. The first day of school is Wednesday, Aug. 22.

Please contact the District 73½ office at 847-324-0509 for more information.

Skokie School District 73½ 2018-23 Strategic Plan

Objectives	Action Statements					
<p>Academics: Nurture, empower, and prepare students to maximize their potential in a global community</p>	<p>Review, revise, and make recommendations related to STEAM opportunities preK-8; explore ways to integrate STE(A)M into the preK-5 school day.</p>	<p>Develop a systemic process for students preK-8 to analyze and respond to their growth and learning.</p>	<p>Promote equity by evaluating, identifying, and beginning to address current biases in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and materials.</p>	<p>Analyze inquiry standards and increase opportunities for students to problem solve via real world scenarios.</p>	<p>Continue to support, monitor, and/or evaluate the outcomes of the 2013-2018 strategic plan.</p>	
<p>Community Engagement: Engaging a community in which relationships are cultivated to foster a safe, supportive, respectful, and inclusive environment where every student will thrive</p>	<p>Recruit, develop, and retain a staff that mirrors the diverse population of the community.</p>	<p>Connect students and staff with the larger community in order to promote growth, learning, and a global perspective.</p>	<p>Examine, develop, and expand modes of two-way communication in order for everyone within the community to be informed, educated, and engaged regarding student learning and school, district, and community activities.</p>		<p>Continue to support, monitor, and/or evaluate the outcomes of the 2013-2018 strategic plan.</p>	
<p>Fiscal Responsibility: Maintain fiscal responsibility while providing student centered, innovative educational programs in a safe, healthy environment</p>	<p>Optimize fiscal practices of district daily operations.</p>	<p>Collaborate with other local districts to examine the possibilities of shared services and/or consolidation.</p>	<p>Research and implement new revenue opportunities.</p>		<p>Continue to support, monitor, and/or evaluate the outcomes of the 2013-2018 strategic plan.</p>	
<p>Learning Environment: Continue to foster a safe, supportive, and stimulating learning environment that encourages all students and staff to work collaboratively and creatively to live, learn and lead in a rapidly changing and diverse global society</p>	<p>Engage staff, families/ caregivers, and the community in education focused on digital citizenship and student use of technology.</p>	<p>Create learning environments that support collaboration and communication in a technological world by developing students' ability to problem solve and take academic risks while empowering them to solve real-world challenges.</p>	<p>Provide transformative learning experiences by creating an engaging, hands-on classroom environment to ensure students develop in-demand knowledge and skills for self-discovery.</p>	<p>Actively manage a facilities plan that is innovative and supports safety, district technology, open learning, creativity, and diversity.</p>	<p>Continue to support, monitor, and/or evaluate the outcomes of the 2013-2018 strategic plan.</p>	
<p>Whole Child: Using a holistic approach, establish a safe, healthy, and inclusive community that empowers students to develop compassion and empathy</p>	<p>Review, revise, and make recommendations related to social-emotional learning opportunities preK-8.</p>	<p>Develop a shared understanding and appreciation of others to create safe spaces for all students and staff.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for students to explore and foster connections with peers and the greater community in order to develop compassion and empathy.</p>	<p>Explore options to educate students on how to nurture healthy bodies and opportunities for diversified nutritional choices.</p>	<p>Explore opportunities for self-directed play.</p> <p>Continue to support, monitor, and/or evaluate the outcomes of the 2013-2018 strategic plan.</p>	

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Memorial tree

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shared produce with him to take home and he always commented on how he used it in his cooking.”

Mr. Park died earlier this year, and after he passed away, many students wrote to his family to share condolences. Eccleston wanted to do something in the garden to remember him, so she asked Supt. Kate Donegan and Principal Allison Stein whether the students could plant a tree in his memory. They agreed.

One of the students in the garden club told Eccleston about a piece called “With Quiet Courage,” which the Symphonic Band had dedicated to Mr. Park during the spring concert. The garden club decided that would be an excellent inscription to put on a memorial stone. Another custodian suggested that the tree should be a flowering variety and some students thought a fruit tree would be nice.

Knowing that Mr. Park had been born in Korea, Eccleston did some research and consulted with a Korean friend. She finally settled on a medium-sized tree called a kousa dogwood, also known as a Korean dogwood. It has white blooms in the spring, an interesting fruit in the summer and beautiful red leaves in the fall.

On June 6, the 6th graders participated in their annual Community Days project in which each student cycles through different activities with their teachers to discuss and celebrate community.

Preparing the school garden for the growing season is one of the Community Days projects. “This year, we included planting the tree,” Eccleston said. “Throughout the day, 6th graders prepared the hole and planted the tree. The custodians came by as



An inscribed stone marks Mr. Park’s tree.

we were lowering it into the ground and helped fill in the soil. The 7th graders were invited to visit the tree during their recess. The last group to stop by the garden included the student who told us about the Symphonic Band tribute and helped decide the inscription on the memorial stone. She placed the stone at the base of the tree.”

The tree now stands in the McCracken garden next to the patio. Eccleston said, “We hope that when students, staff and community members visit the garden, they can enjoy the beauty of the little tree and remember all the quiet encouragement Mr. Park provided during his time with the district.”

District 73½ guiding principles

- ◆ Our schools will support and inspire our students
- ◆ Our students will be critical thinkers and creative problem solvers
- ◆ Our community will demonstrate integrity and respect
- ◆ Our graduates will help make the world a better place