



District welcomes newcomers

Imagine a child whose family pulls up stakes from her native country and resettles in an unfamiliar land. How does she make her way in this new setting? Make friends? Get ready for school? And how can her family help her?

In District 68, this is no hypothetical situation—it is reality for many new immigrant families. This summer, school officials created a program for newly arrived youngsters to help them begin to answer those questions.

Called “Newcomer Summer School,” the three-week, four-days-per week program ran alongside the district’s normal summer offerings, but was geared to students new to America, its customs and typical school expectations. It was administered by Dr. Barbara Marler, the district’s Director of English Language Services, and Diana Juarez, Coordinator of Family Services and Engagement.

Marler said the program was intended to help the students (22 in all, in grades K through 8) build their oral



Newcomer Summer School participants work on an assignment (above left), play with water balloons with teacher Lisa Goyco (above right) and search for items at a local grocery store (below right).



English, start relationships with fellow students and adults, and get to know their community.

“The research tells us this is the most effective way to help students,” said Marler, who has prior experience developing such programs at larger districts and through her consulting work. Four teachers led the students through a series of activities that included recess games, field trips and hands-on projects, all aimed at the program’s objectives.

The recess games, for example, involved “a total physical response,” Marler said. Students learned not only how to play the games, but also the vocabulary associated with them. “Combining movement with language makes the lessons more ‘sticky’ and easier to retain,” she said.

Field trips included a scavenger hunt at a grocery store, as well as outings to the Skokie Fire Department, Skokie Public Library, Weber Leisure Center and Old Orchard Junior High School.



Students also got the chance to make ice cream, popcorn and s’mores. Chrisy Han (ESL specialist at the elementary schools) served as the lead teacher, while Alyssa Vitulli (third-grade teacher at Jane Stenson School), Lisa Goyco (fifth-grade teacher at Jane Stenson), and Judy Solway (teaching assistant at Stenson) were the Newcomer Summer School teachers.

Juarez works with newcomer

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New leaders for student services, junior high

The District 68 administrative team welcomes four new members for 2022-23.

Sharon Jacobellis will be director of student services. She comes to the district from Barrington District 220, where she served in several different capacities over five years. She previously was an administrator or teacher in St. Charles, Round Lake and Elmwood Park.



Sharon Jacobellis

In her new job, she said, “my first responsibility is to ensure that every student receives the services that he or she needs to be successful in school both academically and social/emotionally. My role also provides support to our amazing special education teachers, school psychologists, social workers, speech and language pathologists, nurses, and staff to ensure that

our students are learning and receiving appropriate support.”

She added that she is excited to work with students, their families, and teachers and administrators.

“The philosophy that every child can learn is at the forefront of my work,” Jacobellis said. “I see and appreciate the whole child and the potential in every single student.”

Jacobellis will work with John Siegler, who will be coordinator of student services. Siegler comes from Evanston-Skokie District 65, where he was an elementary school assistant principal, and had served as a special services supervisor. Before that, he was an administrator and teacher in West Aurora.

His primary responsibility will be to oversee the Reaching Independence through Support and Education (RISE) program at Devonshire School. The program is designed for students who are three or more years below grade level and who are progressing more slowly

than their peers.

Siegler also will support student services teams at all three district elementary schools, and collaborate with



John Siegler

the Niles Township District for Special Education. “I am very excited to work in a District with such incredible diversity,” he said. “This job brings me back to my roots in public

education, which is student services and special education. Supporting our most exceptional learners has always been my passion!”

Old Orchard Junior High School will begin the year with two new assistant principals, Tandalaya White and Ferial Atto. Old Orchard Principal Greg Hanson said White is the primary administrative contact for families of seventh graders and Atto will play the same

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Newcomers

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families year round to help them find needed resources and get acclimated to their new surroundings. For the summer, that meant meeting with individual families to walk them through

the program, often with the help of interpreters. No detail is too big or too small. “It’s easy to take for granted something as simple as a school bus picking up kids to go to school,” she said. “Communicating where to get the bus doesn’t necessarily make sense if you’ve never lived here before.”

Juarez said the program was welcomed. “We just want to make sure students are successful and feel good about coming to school,” she said. “These families were amazing. I heard nothing but positive feedback.”

For Juarez, the program was also a valuable starting point for a continuing relationship with newcomer families. For example, she met with a mother after the program finished to get her thoughts. “She had so many questions,” Juarez said. “She asked about day care, community college, employment for herself and her husband, the library.

This conversation would not have happened without this program.”

Marler observed that, while recent immigration restrictions and pandemic had slowed the inflow of immigrant students, numbers are beginning to increase. She noted that the lull gave more teachers the chance to receive training and earn their ESL endorsements, meaning that district staff are more prepared than ever to work with newcomers. The summer program set out a plan for the new students that will continue throughout the school year, she said.

“On the final day there was a field day with water-balloon races and pop-sicles,” Marler said. “The children were friendly—joking, laughing and taking care of the little ones. There was a real community built in 12 days. I asked children, ‘Do you feel ready for the fall?’ They said, ‘Dr. Marler, I am ready.’”

HIGHLIGHTS is a community newsletter published three times a year by Skokie School District 68.

District 68 Board of Education

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Board of Education meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. All are invited to attend.

HIGHLIGHTS is written and produced by Complete Communications, Inc. Skokie, IL.

Welcome, new teachers

District 68 welcomes these new teachers for 2022-23:

Matthew Block - Special Education RISE, Devonshire Elementary

Jonathan Bolek - Physical Education, Old Orchard Junior High

Angelina Brady - 3rd Grade, Devonshire

Carrie Browne - Social Worker, Early Childhood Center

Tina Cappelluti - Kindergarten, Devonshire

Jammie Gold - Special Education Resource - Devonshire

Maria Higgs - Bilingual Spanish Resource, Jane Stenson Elementary

Hasson Khalil - 8th Grade Math, Old Orchard Junior High

Andrea Meighan - Returning LA, Old Orchard

Jaclyn Pink - Special Education Resource, Devonshire

Michael Rosenbaum - Special Education Resource, Jane Stenson

Tanya Salgado - Special Education Resource, Old Orchard

Shana Schneider - MTSS Specialist, Old Orchard

Angela Schroeder - Kindergarten, Devonshire

Jennifer Sevilla - Gateway to Technology/STEM, Old Orchard

Victoria Stearns - Art, Jane Stenson

Sarah Sullivan - Speech/Language Pathologist, ECC/Devonshire

Bradley Worrell - 3rd Grade, Devonshire

Lauren Wright - Special Education Resource, Devonshire

Garrett Zika - Science, Old Orchard

Linda Zukancic - 2nd Grade, Devonshire

New leaders

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role for families of sixth graders. They will divide that responsibility for eighth graders.



Tandalaya White

White comes to Old Orchard from East Aurora High School, where she was dean of students. She previously taught in the Chicago Public Schools, then on to Naperville and Kankakee before landing in East Aurora. She will begin work this fall on a doctorate at Northern Illinois University.

She will work with students, their families and staff, supporting the students' learning and social and emotional learning needs. She will work primarily with the math and social studies departments, and also work with club and activity sponsors. "I am excited to work in an environment that supports learning and academic growth for all students," she said. She added that the

school is "collaborative, supportive and inviting."

Atto has worked in the district for six years, most recently as a reading specialist at Jane Stenson School. Before that, she was an ESL teacher and department chair at Old Orchard. She also taught in the Chicago Public Schools.

"My focus will be on the continued development of student social-emotional learning and building an environment where our students feel safe, confident, and productive," she said.

"Moreover, I will work to build strong relationships with students and staff, and I will collaborate with teams and community members to meet the unique needs of our diverse student population."

She added, "As an educator, I like to reach before I teach, and that is what makes this profession so special to me. I look forward every day to meeting our students, teachers, and families."



Ferial Atto

District notes

To kick off the new school year, District 68 partnered with Niles Township government to give a boost to families of students who qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program.

Niles Township Supervisor Bonnie Kahn Ognisanti and Diana Juarez, the district's coordinator of family services and engagement, filled more than 800 school backpacks with school supplies for the students.

Juarez said about half of district students qualify for the federal program. She said the township began collaborating with High School District 219 last year, and sought to expand its relationship with elementary districts this year.

* * *

District 68's technology team has been honored by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for their efforts during the pandemic.

District officials nominated the team in 2020, when schools were forced to implement fully remote learning. Due to the pandemic, however, the recognition was delayed until earlier this year.

"We had to rely so heavily on the team to pull the year off, and they worked pretty much around the clock," said Supt. James Garwood. "They had to serve staff, students and families and performed superbly."

The team which earned a "Meritorious Service" honor from ISBE's Those Who Excel program, includes Derek Senn, director of technology; Matt Conwell, system engineer; Ken Meyer, solution specialist; Jennifer Rutzen, data services specialist; and Shawn Smith, support specialist.

HIGHLIGHTS

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Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Community Members,

Have you ever thought of serving your community by becoming a school board member?

An effective school board plays an invaluable role in maintaining

the quality of education in your local schools. The board sets the vision and goals for the district, allocates resources, and monitors progress. Each board member contributes his or her unique talents while collaborating with other members and the superintendent.

A typical school board meeting includes a variety of business items, such as approving the school calendar, adopting policy and curriculum, overseeing construction, and approving contracts. A successful board looks after the mundane business of running the district while paying close attention to its priorities for student learning.

Board members come from all walks of life. The ability to function as part of a seven-member governing board is not determined by gender, occupation, race, income, or social standing. Effective school board members have:

- The capacity to work on a team, with an open mind and an ability to engage in give-and-take conversation to arrive at a consensus.
- The willingness to become informed and do the homework needed to take part in effective meetings.
- The desire to serve children and the community, along with a strong belief in the value of public schools.
- Respect for the needs and feelings of others and a well-

developed sense of fair play.

- A recognition that the school district is probably one of the largest “businesses” in town and that the board is responsible for seeing that it is run by highly skilled professionals.

Residents of Skokie School District 68 will elect three members to the board of education in April 4, 2023. Those elected will hold four-year terms that expire in April 2027.

Candidates must be at least 18 years old, U.S. citizens, registered voters, and residents of the district for at least one year. Candidates may begin circulating petitions and collecting signatures as of Sept. 20, 2022. Nominating papers must be filed between Dec. 12 and Dec. 19, 2022 with the Cook County Clerk.

Nominating petitions and filing requirements can be obtained from the County Clerk’s office at 5600 W. Old Orchard Road, Skokie (847-470-7233), or downloaded from the Clerk’s website (www.cookcountyclerk.com/elections).

For a step-by-step explanation of how to run for a school board position, the Illinois Association of School Boards offers the School Board Election Webinar Series, “How to Navigate Running for the School Board” at <https://bit.ly/3xbacME>.

Interested parties may also consult the Illinois Association of School Boards’ “2023 Candidate’s Guide” available on the elections page of the Illinois Association of School Board’s website at <https://bit.ly/3RB4plk>.

Being a school board member requires time and energy. But it is a rewarding way to give back to your community.

Sincerely,

James E. Garwood, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Our mission is to develop children who are confident and creative learners. We provide a rigorous curriculum and a supportive school environment that promotes high achievement, encourages personal growth, and meets the unique needs of each child.