



# Community Unit School District #205

..... Helping Students Achieve Their Dreams .....

## Curriculum & Instruction

APRIL

### Breaking News

#### Upcoming Dates

April 27 - PARCC window opens

May 6 - Early Dismissal

May 14 - Early Dismissal

May 25 - Memorial Day

#### H O M E W O R K

Each year, Finland's educational system ranks at the top of the list in the world. The basic principles of the Finnish system are *quality, efficiency, equity, and internationalism*. A child's socioeconomic background cannot be an impediment to their learning.

In order to provide all children with supports, teachers in Finland keep the *homework load to a minimum* so all children can get supports at school. The Finnish system focuses on the *whole* child rather than just academic achievement.

*The United States placed 17<sup>th</sup> in the developed world in education.* Unfortunately, teachers in the United States have a larger class load, numerous standardized tests, and less parental involvement than many other nations. Somehow, we must find a balance! (Finnish-NBE)



### The Every Child Achieves Act of 2015

Due to the negative outcomes of so much of the No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB), The Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee has proposed *The Every Child Achieves Act of 2015*. After extensive hearings and a good deal of negotiations and modifications, in January, The Senate HELP Committee released their new proposal on April 17 to submit to the Education Secretary and President. The bill will end the federal test-based accountability system of NCLB, restoring states the responsibility for determining how to use federally required tests for accountability purposes.

States must include these tests in their accountability systems, but will be able to determine the weight of those tests in their systems. States will also be required to include graduation rates, one measure of postsecondary education or workforce readiness, and English proficiency for English learners. States will also be permitted to include other measures of student and school performance in their accountability systems in order to provide teachers, parents, and other stakeholders with a more accurate determination of school performance. ([www.help.senate.gov](http://www.help.senate.gov))

#### ***Excellence is Never an Accident!***

*I don't know*

*What your destiny will be...*

*but one thing I know...*

*the only ones among you*

*who will be really happy...*

*are those who will have*

*sought and found how to serve.*

*Dr. Albert Schweitzer*

## ***End of Year Testing Window – April 27 – May 22, 2015***

Since testing began last month, more than **1.4 million PARCC Performance Based Assessment (PBA)** test sessions have been completed by Illinois students with no major difficulties being reported. Taking this assessment on-line has tremendously reduced testing costs in the future. The second part of the test, **End-of-year (EOY)** assessment, which is given when approximately **90 percent** of instruction is complete and consists of multiple choice questions, will begin next week. The **PBA** and **EOY** are two parts of the same test which are added together to result in one score. The tests will demonstrate whether or not students have learned the content provided and whether they are deemed proficient on the **measured standards**. (ISBE)



## **Professional Learning Communities**

The term **professional learning community (PLC)** has become quite common place in the field of education. Generally, the term describes a group of people with an interest in education who work in either grade-level teaching teams, school committees, or departments. Galesburg CUSD #205 has over 330 teachers. The average teaching experience is 14 years. **Over 200** of our teachers hold Masters Degrees. We have a wealth of knowledge within our district. It is critical that we “tap” into this strong knowledge base. Working together collaboratively as colleagues, mentors, and coaches we have the knowledge that it takes in our district to improve the academic achievement of all of our students. (Richard DuFour)



## **Science, Technology, & Math (STEM)**

When it comes to technological innovation, the United States remains number one. In order to maintain this status, we must continue to incorporate more STEM activities into our classrooms. Science education is vital for our future. Besides, STEM is everywhere; it shapes our everyday experiences. Science is our natural world. It is the sun, moon, stars, lands, oceans, weather, animals, plants, food, medicine and fuel. The list is endless. Technology means computers and smartphones. Engineering designs buildings, roads, bridges, machines, appliances, and the environment. Mathematics is important because it pervades every aspect of our lives such as shopping at the grocery store, banking, taxes, and family budgets. According to the U. S. Department of Commerce, STEM occupations are growing at a rate of 17%. Having a strong STEM background can be financially rewarding to children in the future. (Science Pioneers)

## What is going on in Galesburg Community Unit School District #205?

**Research** shows that students who *participate in sports, music, and other school activities perform better academically at school and have fewer discipline problems.* Also, a recent report from the *Institute of Medicine* asserts that *“children who are more active show greater attention, have faster cognitive processing speed, and perform better on standardized academic tests than children who are less active.”* Congratulations to Galesburg High School. They are doing an outstanding job engaging students. This year, they have students who are receiving **National Merit Scholar Honors**, winning **Softball** and **Baseball** teams, a record number of **Boys Tennis** players (26), and a nationally recognized **Track** Athlete (100, 200, 400). We must continue to encourage students to be members of all types of clubs, sports, musical groups, plays, volunteer opportunities, and other activities that we offer.

“Difficulties mastered are opportunities won!” Winston Churchill

*Illinois Young Authors* was designed to celebrate and honor exceptional writing by students in **grades K through 8** around the State of Illinois. This activity supports teachers in their efforts to encourage and improve students' abilities in writing, reading, listening, and sharing, and to recognize the accomplishments of young authors. This year, **over 800** students in Galesburg CUSD #205 participated in the Illinois Young Authors program. **Over 80** of these students were recognized for their exceptional work at the breakfast on April 16, 2015. **James Zahara**, Chief Meteorologist, of the Channel 8 News was the guest speaker this year. Thanks to Deb Pittard and Cindy Benson for helping to orchestrate this wonderful event. (IYA)



Last week, Bright Futures Preschool program celebrated NAEYC's Week of the Young Child. Children are working together exploring math, science, social studies, art, music, physical education, technology and building early literacy skills. Children learn the most between the ages of birth to five. Therefore we must continue to build these skills at an early age. (NAEYC)



Charity work and volunteering benefits our whole community. Recently, Nielson and Lombard Schools raised thousands of dollars for St. Jude's and The Epilepsy Foundation. The organization and participation of our students in these activities builds job skills, empathy for others, and a sense of community. (Kidshealth.org)



