

2020-21 REPORT

DEAR DISTRICT 99 COMMUNITY:

When the final bell of the school day rang at 3:20 p.m. on March 13, 2020, it marked the last time our students would mingle maskless in the hallways. Despite the ongoing pandemic, learning has continued, both in person and online.

D99 completed the 2019-20 school year following a “remote only” schedule. Back in 2015, the Board of Education approved issuing Chromebooks (laptops) to every student and in 2016 we began offering wireless hotspots for any students who needed internet access. Therefore, we were prepared technologically for our new online learning environment, which has evolved ever since. Our teachers have continued to find creative ways to educate and engage all students throughout the 2020-21 school year.

Fundamental to our ability to serve students and our effort to bring students back into our buildings in person is our partnership with you. Our students, staff and families have been patient with a fluctuating schedule that aligns with ever-changing health guidance. In addition, our community has donated generously to support those in need during this time of turmoil.

Although the pandemic has disrupted our organization, it never changed our commitment to **caring for our students**. Our students always give us a reason to hope for the future, and this is true now more than ever.

Thank you for your understanding throughout this year, and for your support,

Dr. Hank Thiele
Superintendent

Dr. Nancy Kupka
President, District 99
Board of Education

D99 MISSION

Provide high quality educational opportunities for all students in a caring, challenging and inclusive environment.

#99learns #WeAreDGN #DGSPride

Thanks to the investment by our community, **District 99** will complete the multi-year, comprehensive **Master Facility Plan projects** by the fall of 2021. The significant renovations, which have updated classrooms and common areas as well as enhanced safety, security and accessibility, will ensure that both high schools provide a quality learning environment. Read more inside or visit www.csd99.org/MFP.

DID YOU
KNOW



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Looking Back

March 2020: Illinois governor closes schools; remote learning begins. D99 partners with affiliated school districts to distribute meals weekly to children throughout the community.

June 2020: Virtual graduations are held. Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) releases guidelines of how to return to in-person learning. Virtual summer school begins.

July 2020: Strategic Task Force of 300 students and family members, community members, Board of Education members and staff meets and develops hybrid, in-person learning plan.

August 2020: New emergency rules from ISBE, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) are released, forcing D99 to move to a fully remote schedule.

September 2020: Updated guidelines from ISBE, IDPH and CDC continue to be released.

October 2020: D99 follows all safety measures and starts an in-person, hybrid learning schedule.

November 2020: D99 follows mandated “adaptive pause” and moves to a fully remote schedule through the end of the semester.

January 2021: Second semester begins with an in-person, hybrid schedule. Except for the week of January 11 (due to a high transmission rate) and January 26 and February 16 (snow days), the district follows an in-person, hybrid schedule.

February 2021: D99 partners with Villages of Darien, Downers Grove, Westmont and Woodridge and School Districts 58, 60, 61, 66 and 68 to offer vaccinations to 1,200 government staff and residents aged 75 and older.

March 2021: Updated guidelines from ISBE, IDPH and CDC continue to be released. D99 surveys students, staff and families about a revised schedule.

April 2021: An expanded in-person schedule begins; approximately 70% of students opt for in-person learning.

Find additional information at www.csd99.org/2020-21.



North High students pack Valentine's Day gifts for community members living in care facilities.

Giving Back

One in five District 99 students is considered low income and depends on the school to meet their nutritional needs each and every school day. Starting in March 2020, D99 developed a meal distribution process, and with the help of volunteers, has kept families fed with over **100,000 meals**.

Students have also organized to help those who are struggling. They've collected over 4,000 pounds of food and supplies for local pantries and shelters, packed up hundreds of “Bags of Hugs” for essential health care workers and donated thousands of dollars in gift cards. The District 99 Education Foundation has raised over **\$50,000** to date to further assist those in need and continues to accept donations.



DGN students display health slips to enter the building. Photo by DGN student Olivia Shirk.

Staying Safe

To reduce COVID-19 transmission at school and in the community, D99 has followed all mitigation strategies provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Illinois Department of Public Health and DuPage County Health Department since the start of the pandemic. Strict procedures for checking for illness, quarantining those testing positive and identifying and notifying close contacts are the norm now. Every person entering the buildings must wear a mask correctly, stay physically distant from others and follow handwashing etiquette. As another layer of protection, D99 offers weekly saliva screenings to students and staff as well as face shields.

OVER 90%
of D99 staff is now vaccinated.

DID YOU KNOW

DGS Teachers **Ryan Altenburg, Mike McGinnis, Mark Molinari and Scott Parker** earned an “Award of Excellence” in ISBE’s “Those Who Excel” program. The team started creating face shields in March 2020 using the school’s 3-D printers, which had been donated by the D99 Education Foundation. The team then donated **8,000+ face shields** to over 160 different hospital facilities locally and across the state.



Protecting Wellness

Remote learning means isolation, which can lead to emotional challenges. Student surveys showed that while students felt connected to adults at school, 30%+ felt “not at all connected” to other students. To foster a sense of social connection, the schools continued with clubs and activities virtually. **Extensive counselor, social worker and psychologist outreach programs** also continued, targeting those who needed extra support.

D99 also offered parents and guardians a variety of informational webinars. In addition to regular online sessions with the superintendent, principals and other school leaders, as well as online parent/teacher conferences, D99 engaged outside experts to address topics such as mental health, resiliency and relating with teens. The district saw a large increase in online participation versus similar in-person events held in previous years.



North High and South High are designated “**Commendable**” in academic performance and student success as measured by the Illinois State Board of Education. (Due to the pandemic, there are no reported standardized testing scores to report for 2020.) Learn more at www.illinoisreportcard.com.



Moving Forward Academically

Throughout the year, D99 has **prioritized in-person learning** while following all safety guidelines. While some districts declared full remote learning for the entire first semester of the 2020-21 school year, D99 adapted its schedule to welcome as many students back in person as possible, whenever possible.

To provide extra academic support, every teacher was available daily as well as for three hours each week outside of regular class time to meet with students individually. Through a federal grant, D99 also

hired a company that offers **400+ professionally trained tutors** who are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week online. During the school year, our students accessed a tutor nearly 5,000 times.

Teachers had to adjust and learn new ways of teaching. For example, they had to simultaneously juggle teaching those students in the classroom in person and those who were joining the class online. Professional learning time supported teachers in creating new and innovative ways of instruction.

Notable Accolades

8

NATIONAL MERIT FINALISTS

DGS **Luc Alvarez** — also named National Hispanic Merit Scholar

DGN **Justin Berghorst**

DGN **Carissa Blumka**

DGS **Dyanna Boone**

DGN **Madeline Naisbitt**

DGS **Jacob Poeschel**

DGS **Christopher Sapinski**

DGS **Jonah Spandel**

21

NATIONAL MERIT
COMMENDED
SCHOLARS

206

ILLINOIS STATE
SCHOLARS

800+

STUDENTS ARE
MEMBERS OF
HONOR SOCIETIES

70

SENIOR STUDENTS
DESIGNATED
“DISTINGUISHED
HONORS” WITH
A CAREER GPA OF
4.4 OR HIGHER

Extracurricular Achievements

Throughout the first semester, traditions shifted to a virtual format. Students and teachers invented new ways to transform concerts, art galleries and plays into engaging online displays. As soon as we were permitted to hold practices, students were back on the floors, fields and courts. No matter what the limitation or situation, **students persevered, adapted and shined.**

PROUD MOMENTS FROM THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

2021 Illinois Journalist of the Year -
DGN **Sam Bull**

National Gold Medalist in the 2021
Scholastic Art and Writing Awards -
DGN **Mary Lerch**

National Silver Medalist -
DGS **Ashley DeAnda**

National Silver Medalist -
DGN **Eliot Michaels**

Illinois High School Association's
2020-21 All-State Academic Team -
DGN **Emmitt (Christopher) Thulin**



26 students performed in the 2020-21 Illinois Music Education Association All-State Bands, orchestras, choirs, jazz bands and vocal jazz ensembles

20 students placed within Top Ten at State DECA Competition; Individual DECA State Champions: DGS **Robert Grogan** and DGS **Khayriddin Muradov**

In addition to individual medalists in a variety of athletics, **DGN teams were Conference Champions** in Boys and Girls Basketball, Boys Cross Country, Girls Volleyball, **DGS teams were Conference Champions** in Boys and Girls Cross Country, Boys Golf, Boys and Girls Swim and Dive and **DGN/DGS Girls CO-OP Gymnastics was Conference Champion**. To learn more, visit <https://il.8to18.com/trojans> and <https://il.8to18.com/dgs>.

STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Illinois Principals Association named DGN Principal **Janice Schwarze** as the 2020-21 DuPage Region High School Principal of the Year.

DGN Teacher and Coach **Tom Saam** was awarded the Illinois Track and Cross Country Coaches Association Assistant Coach Award for 2020.

DGS Counselor and Key Club Advisor **Amy Klug** was recognized as Outstanding Activity Advisor by the Illinois Directors of Student Activities.



Ensuring a Fair and Inclusive Environment

We are striving to become a **more diverse, inclusive and unified** organization, one that ensures quality educational opportunities for every student to succeed. We established a diversity committee in 2013, and our efforts have expanded ever since. In 2017, we formed the D99 Equity Team, which includes faculty, staff and students, to apply equity work into learning through professional learning programs. Everyone throughout our district is focused on how to positively impact every student at D99.

505

SENIOR STUDENTS DESIGNATED "HIGH HONORS" OR "HONORS" WITH A CAREER GPA 4.0 OR HIGHER OR 3.4 OR HIGHER

The Village of Woodridge Board featured DGS senior **Aamari Taylor** in its Black History Month video; in the video she performs her original poem, "Imagine." Taylor also performed in DGS Drama's "Short Plays for an Antiracist Tomorrow."

DID YOU KNOW



Vibrant Facilities

MULTI-YEAR, MULTI-MILLION-DOLLAR RENOVATIONS NEARING COMPLETION

The community approved the \$136.6 million Master Facility Plan in March 2018, allowing for significant and impactful renovations to modernize our buildings and make them more equitable. The project is on budget and on time to be completed and fully open to students in the fall of 2021.

Improvements at both schools include: security enhancements, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements, air conditioning, new academic wings with science labs and fine arts classrooms, new culinary arts labs and renovated libraries. A Learning Commons will provide students with direct access to the offices of key resources, including college and career counselors, social workers, psychologists, counselors, activities and cafeterias.

SOUTH HIGH-SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS

New, state-of-the-art 1,200 seat auditorium, new main entrance and second synthetic outdoor field.

NORTH HIGH-SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS

New cafeteria, new plazas on the west and south sides of the building, new gymnasium and athletic loft areas and new radio/television and multi-needs classrooms.



Students placed items in **time capsules** to commemorate the renovations; the capsules will be opened by students of the future in 2071!

DID YOU KNOW

Dedications and Celebrations

We are looking forward to holding dedication ceremonies and inviting everyone in the community to tour the new spaces; we are hopeful that in the fall it will be safe to gather. We will communicate details as soon as we can; in the meantime, please watch video tours and see more photos at www.csd99.org/MFP.

Financial Update

DID YOU KNOW

Even with the economic downturn due to the pandemic, we project being **fiscally secure** in the long term. This is due in part with the issuance of \$10.3 million in working cash bonds, which the Board approved in September, along with the 2020-21 budget of \$105 million. In addition, the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding has helped us cover pandemic-related expenses such as health care services and transportation costs for meal deliveries.

District 99's total tax rate is \$1.68, the **second lowest of all high schools in DuPage County** — making it a good value to taxpayers.

District 99 Controller **Mark Staehlin** has been recognized by the Illinois Association of School Business Officials as their 2020 Monarch Award Winner, the organization's highest honor.

District 99 received a **"Certificate of Excellence"** from the Association of School Business Officials International for the 21st year in a row. This transparency about our financial condition goes beyond minimum requirements.

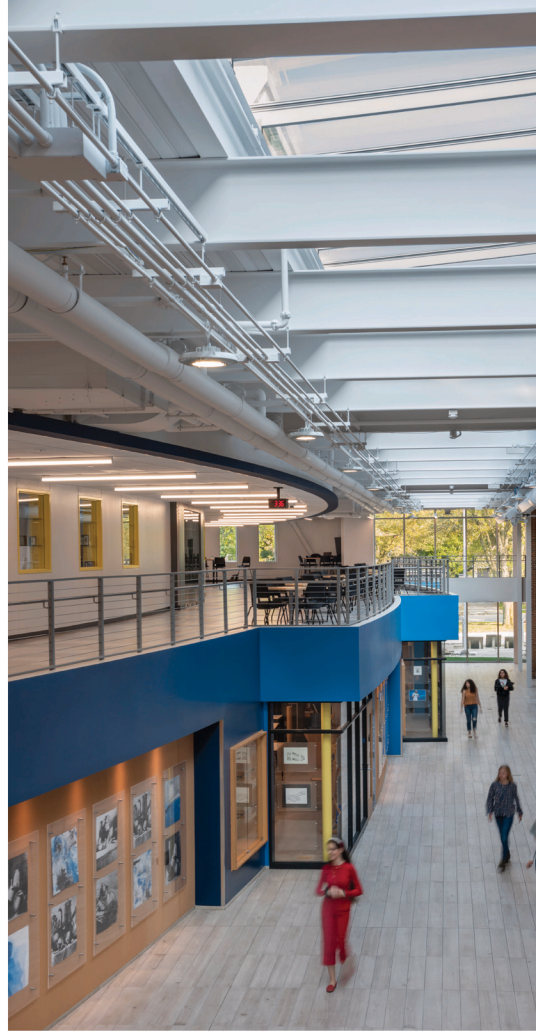
District 99 Board of Education

Board President **Dr. Nancy Kupka**,
Board Vice President **Michael Davenport**,
Members **Joanna Vazquez Drexler**,
Christopher Espinoza*, **Sherell Fuller**,
Jennifer Hagstrom* and **Terry Pavesich**.

**Welcome New Board Members*

The Board governs D99 and oversees the superintendent. Elected members are unpaid volunteers. The Board typically meets twice a month, on the first and third Mondays, at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are streamed at www.youtube.com/csd99media; find schedules at www.csd99.org.

Many thanks to outgoing members **Rick Pavinato** (2013-2021) and **Daniel Nicholas** (2017-2021) for their service and to student board members **Sam Bull** (DGN) and **Zoe Boyd** (DGS) for serving in 2020-21.



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communications@csd99.org
Call: **630-795-7100**



*District 99 remembers fan, teacher, volunteer and friend **Jim Mizener** who passed away on November 14, 2020.*

Note: To save on postage costs, District 99 mailed this publication by USPS carrier route. We apologize if you received this publication and live outside of our district boundaries. Thank you for taking the time to learn about District 99.



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