



DGS students experiencing the new Learning Commons on the first day of school.

DEAR DISTRICT 99 COMMUNITY:

Better together. After a disruptive two years of remote and hybrid learning schedules, our school community was thrilled to be together on the first day of school this year. To add to the excitement, renovations were completed and ready for students after three years of major construction at North High School in Downers Grove (DGN) and South High School in Downers Grove (DGS).

A key feature of the renovations is the Learning Commons, which has quickly become the heart of each building. Students are connecting with peers in a vibrant space before, during and after school. They can easily access valuable resources including the counseling office, college and career center, student activities office, the cafeteria and an outdoor patio. In September, we were honored to open our doors to thousands of residents, former staff members and alums to tour the beautiful spaces.

Despite another school year of pandemic challenges, our staff persevered and provided our students with as close to a normal school year as possible. In this publication, you'll read highlights of what our students are accomplishing and what we are providing to help them learn and grow.

We are hopeful and eager for what lies ahead. A new five-year strategic plan will help guide our actions in continuing to provide quality academics and experiences for all students.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. **We are truly better together.**

Dr. Hank Thiele
Superintendent

Dr. Nancy Kupka
President, District 99
Board of Education



Strategic Plan 2022-2027

With the help of the community, District 99 has created a new five-year strategic plan. To start creating the plan, students, staff, families and community members were asked: **“What do District 99 students need to feel prepared for their next step and hopeful for their future?”** Implementation plans are now underway.

Learn more at www.csd99.org/strategic-plan.

Pathways to Success

District 99's curriculum is always evolving. In addition to providing students with the academics, skills and social-emotional support they need, dual credit and advanced placement courses to internship opportunities, our students are exposed to a variety of college and career possibilities.

Career & Technical Education

In the new "INCubator for Entrepreneurs" class, students create **business plans for building a product or service**. Community business leaders volunteer to serve as coaches, guiding students to develop their original business concepts. Student teams conduct research, build prototypes and make final pitches to potential investors.

English & Communications

The new **"Black American Literature" course** provides an in-depth exploration of literature written by and about Black Americans. The core texts are *Barracoon* by Zora Neale Hurston and *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine. Students learn to explore their unique interests, respectfully facilitate and respond in tough conversations and foster appreciation for Black culture and art.

Fine Arts

DGN faculty and students have been invited to perform in **London's New Year's Day Parade & Choral Festival** on January 1, 2023. In the parade, students will perform to a street audience of 500,000+ people, with up to 600 million around the world watching on television. In the Festival Concert Series, choir students will perform in some of London's most prestigious music venues. At DGS, the new state-of-the-art auditorium seats 1,200 people, significantly increasing the versatility of scheduling and opportunities for students and the community.

Mathematics

Designed for seniors, the "Preparation for Quantitative Literacy" (PQL) is a **collaboration between the College of DuPage (COD)** and its surrounding high schools. Students in PQL strengthen their math skills, which gives them the chance to be placed directly into a credit-bearing math class at COD without needing to take a placement exam.

Physical Education & Health & Drivers Education

Students taking the new **"Sports Officiating" course** can become certified to officiate Illinois School Association sports, including football, basketball, baseball, softball, soccer. Students learn the rules, signals and techniques. Many students are now employed as referees.



Above: Libraries were expanded to include more natural light, study rooms and comfortable seating for studying. Inset: New visual arts classrooms provide enhanced spaces for ceramics, jewelry and digital arts courses.

Special Services

Students with special needs in our high schools, as well as at Transition 99, which serves students ages 18-22, are provided **real-life work experiences at local businesses**. In their roles, students practice communication skills, exchanging money and engaging with customers and coworkers. We're grateful for our community partners that participate and competitively employ our students.

World Languages

The "Spanish for Heritage Speakers" course **promotes students' bilingual and biliteracy skills** in speaking, reading, writing and listening. Spanish through history and culture also fosters a sense of community, belonging and a feeling that cultural and linguistic identities are valued.



Chamber630's **Attainable Futures program** for students. It gives students the knowledge to succeed in local business professions. This year, more than 100 students have participated.

and now, we are also preparing them for life after high school. From... abilities. Here are the latest highlights from our District 99 departments:

Education, Science

Education

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This year, students in “Principles of Biomedical Sciences” watched an **open heart surgery live** on Zoom through the Museum of Science and Industry and Advocate Christ Medical Center’s “Live From the Heart” Program. Students were able to ask the doctors questions, investigate heart health and learn about various medical careers. Following the event, students dissected sheep hearts to apply their learning.

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Counseling/College & Career Center

College and Career counselors offered a variety of **informative sessions** for those interested in college, trade school or military programs. Guests speakers were welcomed throughout the school year and brought pathway possibilities and financial considerations to life for students and families. In addition, the counseling departments continued to support students’ emotional well-being and mental health.

rogram, in place since 2008, provides career exploration opportunities... knowledge and skills they need in the workplace as well as connections to... more than **100 students** participated.

Social Studies

In “Personal Economics,” students learn **workforce readiness skills, including resume writing and interviewing techniques**. District 99 administrators and teachers volunteer to interview students, so they can experience what it’s like to interact with people they may have never met. The goal is to understand how to make meaningful connections, which can lead to future opportunities.

Library

Our school libraries are lively places, and the **new spaces have enhanced** the ways in which students use our resources. Students can be found recording in front of green screens, working collaboratively on class projects, learning research and technology skills, looking for their next great read, attending events from outside organizations or just taking a break in their day.

Achievements

Notes of Distinction

20 NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARS

DGN

Madeline From
Juliana Gomien
Alexander Krejca
Helen Larkin
Elisenda Lee-Palou
Andrew Marron
Dhruv Nambisan
Adam Sitabkhan
Madison Smith
Ian Stagaman

DGS

Leka Jovanovic Davis
Brendan Gibbons
Dean Golminas
Alex Johnson
Timothy Neumann
Shiven Patel
Ashley Reynolds
Olivia Roti
Emilia Swierzb
Luca Veriotti

8 National Merit Commended Scholars

Extracurricular Achievements

6 students earned awards at the State Speech Competition; Individual Speech State Champion DGS **Gwendolynne Royle** in Prose

6 students earned awards at the State Journalism Competition; Individual State Champion DGN **Kate Gross** in News Writing

18 students earned awards at the State DECA Competition; Individual DECA State Champion DGS **Jenna Majshrazak** in Principles of Marketing

25 students performed in the 2021-22 Illinois Music Education Association All-State bands, orchestras, choirs, jazz bands and vocal jazz ensembles

5 National Medalists in the 2022 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards; Gold Medalists DGN **Haley Phillips** and DGN **Aiden Robinson**

In addition to individual medalists and state team representation in a variety of athletics, DGN teams were Regional Champions in **Girls Basketball** and **Girls Volleyball**, DGS teams were Regional Champions in **Girls Cross Country** and **Boys Wrestling** and DGN/DGS **Girls CO-OP Gymnastics** was Regional and Sectional Champions. To learn more, visit <https://bit.ly/dgnathletics> and <https://bit.ly/dgsathletics>.



DID YOU KNOW

For nearly 30 years, the **District 99 Education Foundation has invested more than \$300,000** in classroom projects, scholarships and programs. In response to critical needs as a result of the pandemic, the Foundation amended its mission to support more students and families. Since 2020, **300+ families** have received gift cards for food and household items. Donate at www.d99ef.org.

Year round, students engage with speakers in the College & Career Center.

210 Illinois State Scholars

72 Senior students designated “Distinguished Honors” with a career GPA of 4.4 or higher

800+ Students are members of Honor Societies

535 Senior students designated with “High Honors” or “Honors” with a career GPA of 4.0 or higher or 3.4 or higher



The district offers 28 athletic programs to encourage student involvement.

Staff Accomplishments

Kristyn Campos, Illinois High School Girls Gymnastics Coaches Association Coach of the Year, Illinois High School Girls Gymnastics Coach of the Year, the National Federation of State High School Associations Coach of the Year in the “Other Sports” Category

Dennis Rogala and **Kristee Toth**, National Board Certification

Ed Schwartz, Illinois Directors of Student Activities Principal Recognition Award and Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association Distinguished Service Award of Excellence

Brayer Teague, Illinois Music Education Association Distinguished Service Award

Dr. Hank Thiele, DuPage Region Illinois Association of School Administrators Superintendent of Distinction

Finances

District 99 continues to be **fiscally responsible** and secure in the long term. Seeking out and obtaining state and federal funding allowed us to continue to cover pandemic-related expenses. In addition, the federal **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)** grants have supported a wide range of needs, including the hiring of interventionists, student success coordinators, tutors, summer school teachers, teacher aides, security and student supervisors—as well as additional counselors and social workers to help support the mental health of our students.

DID YOU KNOW

District 99 received a **“Certificate of Excellence”** from the Association of School Business Officials International for the 22nd year in a row. This transparency about our financial condition goes beyond minimum requirements.

A recent Illinois State Board of Education review indicated District 99’s total tax rate is the **20th lowest** of all 856 school districts in Illinois—making it a good value to taxpayers.

District 99 is a 2022 U.S. Department of Education **Green Ribbon School District Sustainability Awardee**. We've been commended for our innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, improve health and wellness of students and staff and ensure sustainability education.

DID YOU KNOW



The Learning Commons at DGN provides access to resources and ample natural light.



The new academic wing at DGS houses modern science labs with flexible furnishings.

Both DGN and DGS now feature outdoor patio spaces for students and staff to enjoy during lunch or open periods.



The DGN cafeteria was expanded, helping alleviate long lines and allowing for more food options.



Enhanced Learning Facilities

Thanks to the investment by our community, District 99 completed the multi-year comprehensive **Master Facility Plan in August 2021**—on time and on budget. The significant improvements modernized our buildings and will positively impact students for generations to come. See www.csd99.org/MFP for details.



Students in television, radio and yearbook elective courses receive real-world experiences.



Students contributed their ideas about the district's strategic plan.

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Questions? Email:
communications@csd99.org
Call: 630-795-7100

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**.

Many thanks to our 2021-22 student board members **Jade Toledano** (DGN) and **Scarlett O'Hara** (DGS).

The Board governs District 99 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. at the Administrative Service Center. Meetings are streamed live at www.youtube.com/csd99media; find schedules at www.csd99.org/boe.



District 99 remembers former superintendent and DGS principal **Dr. Mark McDonald** who passed away on March 30, 2022.

Note: To save on postage costs, District 99 mailed this publication by USPS carrier routes. 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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