

## WHAT'S INSIDE:

### KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Children must be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2023  
page 2

### SEEDS FOR EDUCATION

After-school club receives grant for native plant bed  
page 4

### UPCOMING CAPITAL PROJECTS

Wrapping up year 3 of five-year capital improvement plan  
page 6

### SPECIAL AUTHOR VISIT

Former student returns as published children's book author  
page 7



INSPIRING  
EDUCATION  
AND  
INNOVATION

# Update:68

YOUR GUIDE TO WOODRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT 68 NEWS AND INFORMATION

Mid-Year Update 2022-23

## Academic Transformation Plan

### Mid-year curriculum update

**Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Greg Wolcott recently shared with the Board of Education the annual mid-year curriculum update that provided updates and highlights on current year initiatives and shared instructional plans and recommendations for the 2023-24 school year.**

**District FOCUS:** Focused on "Creating engagement through meaningful experiences"; emphasized implementation of the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) instructional framework; began implementation of items from the special education audit

**Culturally Responsive Teaching & Leading Standards:** Held monthly Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading committee meetings with representation from all schools; members of the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Committee co-facilitated professional learning for all staff during four school improvement days

**English Language Arts:** Refined units to meet rigorous standards and student needs; provided systematic and strategic supports to students; set up cross-grade level "shadowing" of students between the elementary and junior high and the junior high and high school

**Math:** Trained elementary staff at all schools in the Thinking Classrooms in Mathematics concepts; district-wide book study about building fact fluency; created a math advisory meeting (21 teachers from all elementary schools and all grades); provided systematic and strategic supports to students via a new differentiated engagement block (DEB) at the elementary level

**Science/Social studies:** Visited several school districts to view social studies resources in action; initiated a pilot of the Inquired Journeys curriculum in social studies at grades three through five; began looking for ways to deepen inquiry instruction in the primary grades

**Exploratories at Jefferson:** New courses (Innovative

*continued on page 3*



**WOODRIDGE**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 68

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Steven Gustis, President | Thomas Ruggio, Vice President | Joshua Christ | Scott Coley | Cricel Molina De Mesa | Michael Toohey | Stuart Vanorny



# Preschool Screening

**Do you have a child between the ages of 3-5?**

**Is your young child ready for preschool or do you have concerns about your child's development? Contact the district to make an appointment to have your child screened.**

Woodridge 68 offers a free preschool program for 3-5 year olds living in the school district. This program offers a play-based, developmentally appropriate curriculum and is supported by certified teachers, teaching assistants, and other specialists. Families must complete the preschool screening process in order to be considered for a classroom space, and students with the greatest risk are prioritized following guidelines from the Illinois State Board of Education.

or pre-academic skills and to identify children who are eligible for our preschool program. If you have concerns about your child's development, contact the district to make an appointment to have your child screened by a team of specialists.



For additional information about the program, including frequently asked questions and information on how to enroll, go to [woodridge68.org/preschool](http://woodridge68.org/preschool). If you would like

to make an appointment or have any questions, please contact the Student Services office at [studentservices@woodridge68.org](mailto:studentservices@woodridge68.org) or 630-795-6830.

Free developmental screenings are available throughout the school year to assess any child who may have delays in communication, motor skills,

## Sharing the joy of reading

Over 100 volunteers visited our elementary classrooms to share the joy of reading for Read Across America Day. We had family members, School Board members and community members, including those from Village of Woodridge, Woodridge Police Department, Woodridge Park District, Woodridge Public Library, Lisle-Woodridge Fire District, Woodridge VFW, Woodridge Rotary, and more! It was truly a community-wide event! Thank you to our volunteers for their support of our school community!

## Kindergarten Pre-Registration

Do you have a student eligible for kindergarten attendance for the 2023-24 school year? If so, mark your calendar for Woodridge School District 68's kindergarten pre-registration to be held on Wednesday, April 5 from 3:30-6:30pm. Register at your child's home elementary school.

Children must be five years of age on or before September 1, 2023, and the student's birth certificate must be presented. Children currently enrolled in the blended preschool program need not attend, but will need to complete returning student registration.

More detailed information can be found by clicking the 'Registration' button on the Find it Fast bar on the district website or going directly to [woodridge68.org/registration](http://woodridge68.org/registration).





## BOARD LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION

The Illinois Association of School Boards recognizes school board members for individual time and effort devoted to learning and leadership activities provided by IASB and for service to the public education community. Board members can receive Established, Distinguished and Legacy achievement levels by attending IASB events, engaging in committee work, attending board level training and other learning activities. Three Woodridge 68 Board members have received recognition for their service and dedication. President Steve Gustis and member Mike Toohey have each been recognized as an Established Board Leader. Vice President Tom Ruggio has been recognized as a Distinguished Board Leader.

# Mid-year curriculum update (cont'd.)

*continued from page 1*

Communications, Flight and Space); revised existing courses Visual Arts (formerly Graphic Design), Music Mindfulness (formerly Music 700)

**Art/Music/PE:** Began revision of curriculum in order to better represent the students we serve; full implementation of Quaver music curriculum

**Instructional Technology:** Learning Resource Specialists worked directly with grades K-6 to co-teach and assist in streamlining computer literacy standards within the core content standards; implementation of Kami, Book Creator, and WeVideo for content creation and alignment within the SAMR goal; scope and sequence of core digital tools by grade level aligned to computer literacy and core content standards; Kindergarten received flip/touch Chromebooks

**Gifted Services:** Differentiation professional development provided to elementary staff who teach clustered gifted students (2 half-day

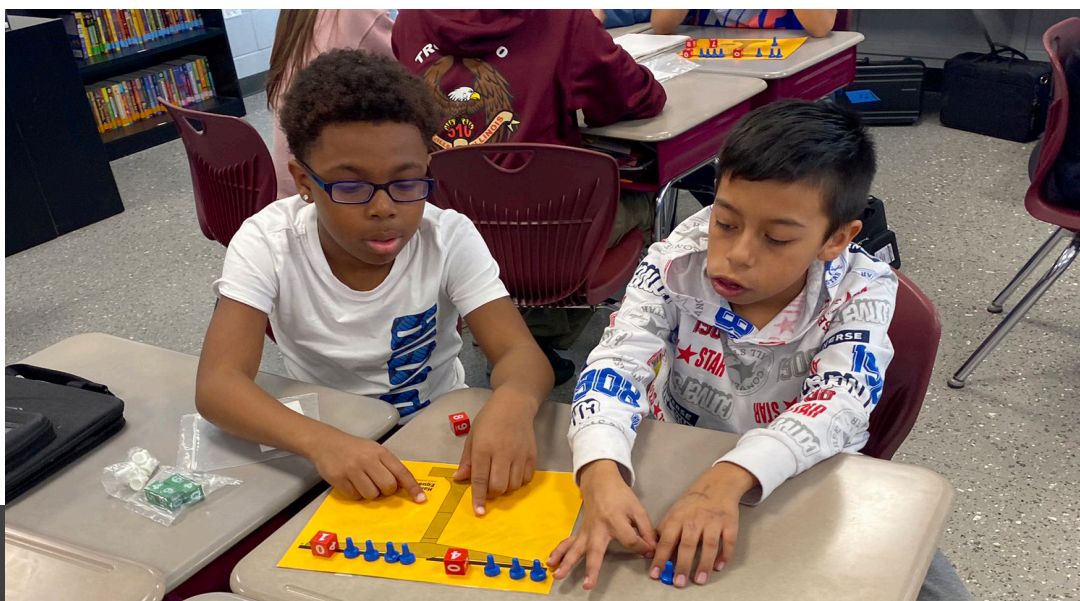
trainings with ongoing observation and support); PETS talent development targeted to 2nd grade students; capstone inquiry units for elementary gifted cohorts; continued development of enhanced writing skills in 7th and 8th grade gifted ELA

**Multilingual Services:** Implemented new newcomer protocol designed in January 2022; received record number of newcomers to the country

**Special Education:** Implementation of co-teaching model throughout the district with increased access to grade-level standards for students

with disabilities; ongoing coaching to support co-teaching practices and the implementation of specially designed instruction in general education environments; requested five additional learning behavior specialists in order to effectively meet the needs of our students with Individualized Education Plans

**Accelerated Placement Act:** what it means and its impact on Woodridge 68 students. More information can be found at [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Accelerated\\_Placement\\_Act\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Accelerated_Placement_Act_Guidance.pdf)





## Join the W68 team

Would you like to...

...make a difference in the community by contributing to student growth and development?

...work with collaborative and supportive colleagues?

...enjoy a healthy work-life balance?

Join the Woodridge 68 team! Certified and non-certified positions available. Learn more online about all the benefits of working in our school district at [woodridge68.org/humanresources](http://woodridge68.org/humanresources)



## Native Plant Bed Funding

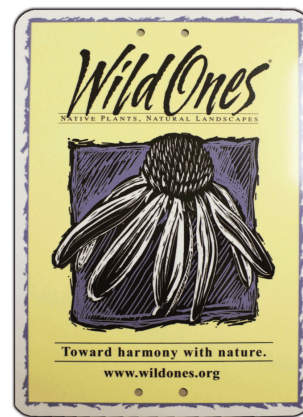
### Meadowview after-school gardening club receives Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant

Meadowview Elementary School's after-school gardening club, led by teacher Kim Martin, has been working to maintain the school's native plant bed. This fall students in the club helped design a plan to expand the native bed and applied for a grant to help fund the project. Ms. Martin recently received notice the grant proposal had been approved.

The students' plan will be implemented this spring with funds from the Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Grant Program (SFE) administered by Wild Ones. The students involved will learn about the benefits of native plants while getting a close-up view of butterflies, songbirds and other creatures that use these plants for vital food or shelter.

"I am excited to share my love of native plants with my students.

Native plants are affordable, easy to maintain, and very beneficial to the environment. A lot of the students helping with the project are gardening for the first time. I am hoping that they will learn some basic skills to make their lives a little 'greener,'" said Martin.



For more than 20 years, Wild Ones has awarded Seeds for Education grants to youth-serving organizations for acquiring native plants and seeds for outdoor learning areas that engage youth (preschool to high school) directly in planning, planting and caring for native plant gardens throughout the United States. Wild Ones is a nationally recognized, member-

ship-based non-profit organization with a mission to promote environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities.

## This Girl Glows

The SELF Workshop (Supporting Each other to Lift up Females) for Woodridge 68 girls in grades 6-8 took place in February with nearly 100 students participating in the event. The workshop is an event to educate, inspire, and lift up our young women and helps participants explore a variety of topics that adolescent girls deal with on a daily basis including body image, media messages, self esteem and beyond. Students also participated in an art activity and a mindfulness/workout session of their choice.





## FIELD TRIPS TO THE STATE CAPITAL

Fourth grade students from across all six elementary schools had the opportunity to travel to Springfield to learn about the political and economic systems important to the state of Illinois. Students visited the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, Lincoln Tomb, Illinois State Capitol and the Illinois State Museum.

# Talented Woodridge 68 Students

### District Spelling Bee Winner

Congratulations to Jefferson Junior High 8th grader Pranavi Torlikonda - our district spelling bee winner! She went on to represent Woodridge 68 well at the DuPage county spelling bee with a third place finish!

### VFW Patriot's Pen Award

Jefferson Junior High 8th grader Henry Eide was recently recognized for his outstanding essay on "My Pledge to Our Veterans" and received the Patriot's Pen award for Woodridge VFW Post 1578. Henry went on to win 2nd place at the district level, which included the winners from 15 VFW Posts in the area. This is the highest finish ever of anyone from the Woodridge Post.

Patriot's Pen is an essay contest that encourages young minds to examine America's history, along with their own experiences in modern American society, by drafting a 300- to 400-word essay, expressing their views based on a designated patriotic theme. Nearly 68,000 students take part nationwide.

### Jefferson Performing Arts

The Jefferson Singers recently participated in both the Downers Grove South and Downers Grove North Middle School Choir Festivals with other middle and junior high feeder schools.

### Winter Mosaic

The Jefferson Junior High art department and Jefferson Singers recently held the Winter Mosaic "Strong." The exhibition event featured both musical performances and artwork based on the 24 char-

acter strengths that make up the best parts of our students' personalities.

### T-Shirt Design

Meadowview 5th grade MLP student Abby V recently designed artwork for a t-shirt supporting Autism Acceptance Month in April.

*Pictured below:  
Edgewood Student Council members  
created and painted this wall mural  
at the school for a service project*





## Community Support

Woodridge 68 once again received a generous donation of games, toys and books from Toys for Tots DuPage County for our students and families during the holiday season. The donation was sorted and distributed to the schools, which identified students and families who would most benefit from the support.

Warm thanks to our friends at Woodridge United Methodist Church for donating hats, gloves and scarves for Woodridge 68 students.

A big thank you to Roadrunners Soccer Club for donating hats, gloves, snow pants and boots.

We appreciate our community partners!

## Upcoming Capital Projects

**Updated 5-year plan includes total spending of about \$12.78 million on 46 different projects**

The updated five-year capital improvement plan includes 46 projects for a total estimated cost of \$12.78 million. All work will be paid for with monies from the Capital Projects Fund and only with Board approval after the bids have been evaluated. The first two years of this plan were completed in 2021 and 2022 with year three (2023) in process right now. Following is a list of approved projects.



- Roof renovations (Murphy, Siple, Willow Creek, Jefferson)
- Solar array (Murphy, Siple, Willow Creek, Jefferson)

- Paving work (Goodrich, Murphy, Siple)
- LED lighting upgrades
- Window film installation (all schools)
- Seal coating/re-striping (DAC)

### Summer 2024

- North gym floor replacement (Jefferson)
- Front entry

### Summer 2023

- Library renovations (Edgewood)
- Office renovations (Edgewood)
- Gym soundproofing (Siple)
- Playground replacement (Edgewood, Murphy) – see story page 8

renovations (Goodrich, Siple)

### Summer 2025

- Gym floor replacement (Goodrich)
- Window replacement (Siple, Willow Creek, Jefferson)

## Band Director Performs with Orchestra

As a member of The Chicagoland Educators Orchestra, Woodridge 68 elementary band director Brad Payne performed selections of new music submitted by exhibiting publishers during the recent Orchestra New Music Reading session at The Midwest Clinic International Band, Orchestra and Music Conference. This was the 10th year Mr. Payne presented; he is the only bass trombone player in the group and one of five trombone players in total.

Chicagoland Educators Orchestra members represent music education excellence and dedication at every instructional level from grade school through college, while also remaining active as performing artists through the numerous professional opportunities available within Chicagoland's rich musical landscape.







## SPECIAL AUTHOR VISIT

Former Willow Creek student and now published children's book author Isabella Ortiz Veloz visited one of her "special places" (Willow Creek). She dedicated a copy of her book to the school library and spoke with 4th-6th graders. Ms. Ortiz Veloz also shared her desire to continue to write books and have them published. Isa's book, *Confía en él* (*Trust Him*), was written about her family's journey to America from Venezuela when she was young, sharing her story of being an immigrant. The book is written in both English and Spanish.

# National Board Certified Teachers

**National Board Certification was designed to develop, retain and recognize accomplished teachers and to generate on-going improvement in schools nationwide. It is the most respected professional certification available in K-12 education.**

Woodridge School District 68 educators Maggie Hock, math teacher at Thomas Jefferson Junior High, Rhonda Jackson, kindergarten teacher at John L. Siple Elementary School, and Lisa Wise, gifted specialist at Goodrich Elementary School have each recently renewed their National Board Certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

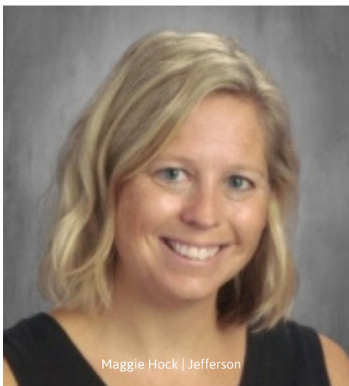
*Maggie Hock* renewed her certification in Mathematics - Early Adolescence. "I am happy to have completed my NBCT renewal because the process allows you to evaluate your teaching practices and pushes you to be a better educator," said Hock. "I like the way it challenges you to think about how and what you are teaching and requires you to plan, teach, and assess with purpose."

*Rhonda Jackson* renewed her National Board certification in Literacy: Reading/Language Arts - Early and Middle Childhood. "I feel a great sense of accomplishment that I was able to renew my certificate and demonstrate all the new things that I have learned since my initial certification," said Jackson. "The staff and students that I work with each day teach me so many things about myself as an educator and allow me to continue to grow."

*Lisa Wise* renewed her certification in Literacy: Reading/Language Arts - Early and Middle Childhood. "Renewing my National Board brings me great joy as it

is a reminder of why I obtained my National Board in the first place," said Wise. "National Board has made me the reflective teacher I am today which has allowed me to know and understand my students' learning needs."

National Board Certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment of a teacher's pedagogical skills and content knowledge. A comprehensive study by the nonpartisan National Research Council found that students taught by Board Certified Teachers make higher gains on achievement tests than students taught by non-certified teachers.



Maggie Hock | Jefferson



Rhonda Jackson | Siple



Lisa Wise | Goodrich



**Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Patrick J. Broncato

**Assistant Superintendent for  
Teaching & Learning**

Gregory Wolcott

**Assistant Superintendent for  
Human Resources**

Dr. William Schmidt

**Assistant Superintendent for  
Business Services/CSBO**

Curtis Saindon

## New playgrounds at 2 schools

New playground equipment will be coming this fall to Murphy and Edgewood Schools. Woodridge Park District staff collaborated with the Woodridge 68 administrative team and each school's principal as well as getting feedback from students and staff. The final selection of the new playground equipment was determined through an online survey for teachers and students to select their favorite playground design.

The proposed work includes renovations of the existing playground areas and site improvements consistent with park standards. Because of a long-standing intergovernmental partnership between Woodridge 68 and Woodridge Park District, the playground replacement costs will be funded cooperatively by both entities.

Construction is expected to begin in June 2023, with the non-profit organization Kids Around the World removing the existing structures to refurbish and reuse them in an under-served community as part of an international mission project. These playground replacement improvements are targeted to be finished before the 2023-24 school year begins.

More details on the projects, including visual renderings, are available on the school district website.



INSPIRING EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

7925 Janes Avenue  
Woodridge, Illinois 60517

630-795-6800  
woodridge68.org