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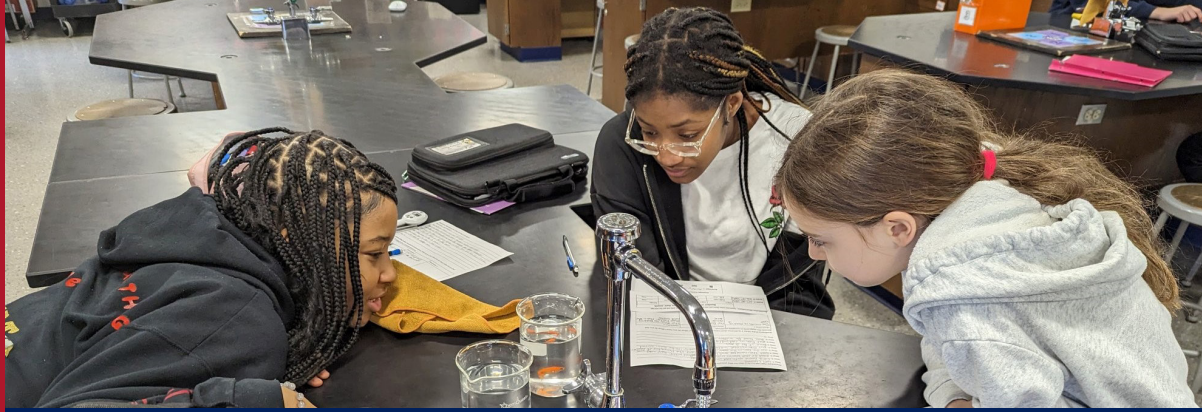
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INSPIRING  
EDUCATION  
AND  
INNOVATION

# Update:68

YOUR GUIDE TO WOODRIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT 68 NEWS AND INFORMATION

End of Year Report 2022-23

## Board of Education New members and officers

**New members sworn in, outgoing members recognized, new officers elected at Board of Education reorganization meeting following April 4, 2023 consolidated election.**

The Woodridge School District 68 Board of Education held its reorganization meeting on Monday, May 1, 2023. Newly elected and re-elected Board of Education members were administered the oath of office to begin their new term expiring April 2027. Dr. Cricel Molina de Mesa (Board member since 2019) and Stuart Vanorny (2019) were re-elected, and Donna

Hebreard (2023), and Dr. Joann Wright (2023) are new members of the School Board. Learn more about the newest Board members:

Donna Hebreard earned a BS in Elementary Education from Illinois State University before beginning her middle school teaching career in 2001 for the Plainfield School District, where she currently enjoys teaching 7th grade social studies. Early in her career, she also earned her MS Ed in Instructional Technology from Northern Illinois University, along with her Media Specialist endorsement through additional classes at Illinois State.

Donna is also a co-leader for her daughter's Girl Scout Troop and has most recently served as the secretary for the Meadowview PTO board, after being an active volunteer for several preceding years. She has enjoyed living in the Meadowview attendance area of Woodridge with her husband, Daniel, and their two children, Kevin and Lea, since 2009.

Dr. M. Joann Wright received her Ph.D. in Clinical and School Psychology from Hofstra University in 1996. Throughout her career, she has used her school psychology skills to apply psychological assessments to better understand children's behavior and make recommendations for improvement in their lives. Additionally, she worked with Orland School District 135 to implement a new program

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### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Stuart Vanorny, President | Dr. Cricel Molina De Mesa, Vice President | Joshua Christ | Scott Coley | Donna Hebreard | Thomas Ruggio | Dr. Joann Wright



## Half the day, all the fun

Every day counts! The first day of school is a HALF day of school.

Wednesday, August 16

Elementary  
8:20 - 11:40am

Junior high  
8:20 - 11:55am

## Important summer dates

Mark your calendar now for these important dates as we gear up for back-to-school time

**Now:** Online student registration open

**Now:** Registration fee payment accepted

**July 1:** Proof of residency accepted

**July 1:** Free / reduced lunch applications available

**July 1:** Fee waiver applications available

**August 7:** (junior high) Class schedules & locker assignments posted at 8:00am

**August 9:** (junior high) Link Day, 3:00-7:00pm;

incoming 7th & 8th graders accompanied by an adult are invited to visit Jefferson Junior High to tour the building, locate their classrooms, and try their locker combinations



**August 11:** (elementary) Class lists posted in Skyward

Family Access and at each school after 2:00pm

**August 11:** Bus routes will be posted online and at the schools after 2:00pm

**August 15:** Open house/meet & greet/orientation

**August 16:** First day of school, half day



## Student registration

Woodridge School District 68 will no longer host a walk-in registration event. All new & returning students are to register online using PS Enrollment by PowerSchool.

New & returning families can get detailed registration information on the district website ([woodridge68.org/registration](http://woodridge68.org/registration)), including information on the following: important dates, returning students, new students, kindergarten, preschool, residency information, student fees and health requirements.





## OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS RECOGNIZED

Outgoing Board members Mike Toohey (pictured, left) and Steve Gustis (right) were each recognized for their years of dedicated service to Woodridge School District 68 at the Board reorganization meeting in May. We appreciate their commitment to the community, and their contributions will be missed.

# Board of Education (cont'd.)

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to identify and give assistance to struggling students.

As a clinical psychologist, Joann in part opened programs at two institutions - Linden Oaks Behavioral Health and Suncloud Health - for adolescents with anxiety. Joann has focused on diversity, equity and inclusion throughout her career. She has worked with disenfranchised youth and finds this work very rewarding.

Joann serves on the Association of Contextual Behavioral Sciences Foundation Board as well as attending the Lisle Township Mental Health Board meetings.

Joann moved to Woodridge in 2013, and it is by far her favorite place she's lived, which includes St. Louis, MO; Edwardsville, IL; Tempe, AZ; and Glen Head, NY. She particularly enjoys the library and the park district for activities. She lives with her husband Larry, and when lucky, her bonus sons visit from Portland, Oregon.

## Board officers elected

Stuart Vanorny was elected for the office of President and Cricel Molina de Mesa was elected for the office of Vice President until the next organizational meeting of the Board of Education in April/May 2025.

## Board appointments

Kim Superits was re-appointed as Secretary to the Board of Education.

The Board of Education appointed Thomas Ruggio as the SASSED Governing Board representative

and Cricel Molina de Mesa as the alternate. Thomas Ruggio was also appointed as the SASSED Board of Directors alternate; the superintendents of the member districts serve as representatives on the Board of Directors.

We appreciate all our Board members' service and dedication to Woodridge 68.

*Pictured l-r:  
Dr. Joann Wright, Donna Hebreard,  
Dr. Cricel Molina de Mesa, Stuart Vanorny*





## On to high school

Congratulations to the Thomas Jefferson Junior High School class of 2023! Good luck and all the best to these students as they begin a new adventure and continue their education in high school.

The promotion ceremony took place on Thursday, May 25 at Downers Grove South High School and included the presentation of awards, a band performance, and speeches from Superintendent Dr. Patrick Broncato, Principal Justin Warnke, National Junior Honor Society President Shubreet Kaur and Student Council President Sarina Abraham.

## New playground equipment

### Collaboration and feedback lead to new playgrounds for Edgewood and Murphy schools

Woodridge Park District collaborated with Woodridge 68 and each school's principal as well as getting feedback from students and faculty. 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 at Murphy and Edgewood Schools. The scope of work includes: the replacement of existing modular playground equipment at both sites, the replacement of swings at Edgewood School, the replacement of existing wood timber borders with poured concrete barrier curbing and seat walls, replacement

of engineered wood fiber playground safety surfacing, drainage improvements, the addition of accessible ramps, paving for accessible site amenities (benches and trash receptacles) and landscape plantings for increased shade.

The playground replacement costs will be funded cooperatively by both Woodridge 68 and Woodridge Park District.



Construction is scheduled 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 underserved community as part of an international mission project. These playground replacement improvements are targeted to be completed before the 2023-2024 school year begins.

## Director elected to lead state board

Amy Melinder, Director of Community Engagement, has been elected President-Elect of the Board of Directors for the Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (INSPPRA). This is a three-year commitment as President-Elect, President, then Past President.



The mission of INSPPRA is to strengthen support for Illinois public schools and improve education for students through responsible public relations. Amy was sworn in to her office on the INSPPRA Board at their April 14, 2023 meeting.





## JEFFERSON STUDENT ONE OF 14 IN STATE SELECTED FOR NATIONAL AWARD

Jefferson 8th grader (now rising high school freshman) Ellen Toohey is a recipient of this year's National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) Outstanding Achievement Award! She is one of only 14 students in the state of Illinois and 500 across the country who were selected. The National Junior Honor Society Outstanding Achievement Award recognizes middle-level students for their commitment to the five pillars of NJHS: scholarship, service, leadership, character, and citizenship. Students selected for the Outstanding Achievement Award receive a \$500 college savings plan to support their educational aspirations.

# Students excel in many different ways

## Wrestlers represent at state meet

Congratulations to the Jefferson wrestling team who took 5th place at the IESA state championships! JJH also had 5 individual place winners:

- Tanner Stone: 1st place (80 lbs). He is the 4th individual state champion in school history.
- Chris Cali: 2nd place (275 lbs)
- Noah Green: 2nd place (167 lbs)
- Christian Chiarelli: 3rd place (119 lbs)
- Jadon Dinwiddie: 3rd place (105 lbs)

Jefferson teacher Connor Cummings is the head coach.

## Musical theatre performance

Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students from across the district performed and participated in the musical, *All Shook Up*. The production was directed by Alex Buda, music teacher at Jefferson, and Sabrina Hector, music teacher at Willow Creek.

## Battle of the Books

Battle of the Books is a reading incentive program for students who read a list of books and come together to demonstrate their abilities and test their knowledge of the books they have read. The purpose is simply to encourage students to read good books and have fun while competing with peers. Teams (grade 3 and grades 4-6) from each elementary school competed at the district office. Who won? Everyone who reads!

## Junior high band wins award

The Jefferson 7th and 8th grade band recently participated in the Music in the Parks festival at Great America and won 1st place in their division!

## Girls soccer three-peat

Jefferson girls soccer team was undefeated regular season conference champions for the third consecutive year. Their combined record for the 2021, 2022 & 2023 seasons is 21-0! The team is coached by Jefferson teacher Jennifer Riskus.

## Student leaders

This spring Jefferson student council members traveled to Springfield and participated in the Illinois Association of Junior High Student Councils (IAJHSC) Leadership Convention. (pictured below)



# Congrats and thank you

To the following individuals for their dedication and continuous years of service to the district, its students and the community

## 20 years:

- Rebecca Adams, Kindergarten teacher, Edgewood
- Jennifer Becker, Gifted Specialist, Meadowview
- Miguel Castillo, Bilingual Resource, Edgewood
- Analiese Gremillion, Graphic Arts teacher, Thomas Jefferson Junior High
- Amy Medows, Math teacher, Thomas Jefferson Junior High
- Jennifer Riskus, Language Arts teacher, Thomas Jefferson Junior High
- Joseph Schrom, Learning Behavior Specialist, Goodrich
- Lesley Schwichtenberg, 5th grade teacher, Edgewood
- Michelle Strezo, Social Worker, John L. Siple
- Cindy Tulo, Early Childhood teaching assistant, Meadowview
- Sheryl Walker, Learning Resource Center assistant, Thomas Jefferson Junior High
- Gregory Wolcott, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning, District Administrative Center
- Julie Zei, 6th grade teacher, John L. Siple

## 25 years:

- Tracey Beidelman, Learning Resource Specialist, William F. Murphy
- Therese Danko, Inclusion teaching assistant, Meadowview
- Alexander Gliwa, Director of Buildings & Grounds, District Administrative Center
  - Kelly Harrigan, Network Technician, District Administrative Center
  - K a r e n Kennard, Inclusion TA, Meadowview
  - Leslie Loboda, Gifted Services Coordinator, District-wide; Instructional Coach, Thomas Jefferson Junior High
- Trina Perez, 4th grade teacher, Edgewood

thank you!

## 30 years:

- Keith Carlson, Band director, Thomas Jefferson Junior High
- Douglas Dvorak, 3rd grade teacher, Meadowview
- Gail Hartig, PE teacher, Thomas Jefferson Junior High
- Lynda Karum, Secretary, John L. Siple

## 35 years:

- Laura Hester, 4th grade teacher, William F. Murphy



## Summit for Bilingual Parents

Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC) members and staff from our Multilingual Services department attended the 17th annual Statewide Summit for Bilingual Parents. Presenters addressed various important topics including equitable funding and services for ELs, family engagement, PreK-12 educational programs and services, higher education opportunities, parental leadership and advocacy, and immigrant and community issues.

*Fáilte Bine ati venit*  
 Hoş geldin Witaj 欢迎  
 Bienvenido Willkommen  
**Welcome**  
 Välkommen Croeso  
 Καλώς Ορίσαστε स्वागत  
 ようこそ Bienvenue  
 Добро пожаловать! Bula Welkom  
 Tervetuloa أهلاً وسهلاً  
 Velkommen Benvenuto  
**Vítej** Bem-vindo  
 Dynnargh dhis

## Multilingual Services by the numbers

<b>531</b>	English Learner students in Woodridge 68, 19.4% of the total student population
<b>36</b>	different languages spoken in Woodridge 68 student homes
<b>90+</b>	newcomer families, coming to us primarily from Mexico, Central & South America, Russia and Ukraine
<b>11</b>	students received both EL and gifted services in 2022-23, an additional 4 are being considered for next year
<b>24</b>	MLS staff for 2023-24 including 6 bilingual PreK-2 Spanish teachers, 16 EL resource teachers (13 Spanish, 1 Arabic, 1 Lithuanian, 1 Russian) and two bilingual liaisons





## SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

From June 5 through July 28, Woodridge 68 will operate with the following summer hours schedule: Monday-Thursday 7:30am-4:45pm; Friday closed.

School offices will reopen Monday, July 24. Regular office hours will resume Monday, July 31: District Administrative Center: 8:00am-4:30pm; schools: 7:30am-4:00pm.

## Reflections of retirees

**The Board of Education recently recognized and honored those who will retire at the end of this school year, each having contributed to the district in so many different and positive ways. These retirees represent a combined total of over 244 years of service to Woodridge School District 68.**

**Peter Ceresa, 5th grader teacher, John L. Siple**

Pete has been with Woodridge 68 for 14 years, and all of them teaching at Siple. One of his fondest memories is last year's autumn celebration. As part of the festivities, students had the opportunity to smash a pie in their favorite teacher's face. Pete volunteered for the pie smashing booth and subsequently found whipped cream on his head and in his hair for days afterward.

**Cheri Chesney, Inclusion Teaching Assistant, William F. Murphy**

Cheri's fondest memory is being able to work in the school that her daughters attended and with some of the best teachers in the district. She worked her entire 27-year Woodridge 68 career at Murphy, starting when Murphy was then known as Woodridge School.

**Barbara Connors, Secretary/Registrar, Thomas Jefferson Junior High**

Barb spent 21 years with Woodridge 68 before retiring in August. Her fondest memories of her time in the school district include the kindness of teachers, admin-

istrators, district office staff, students and parents who made it a pleasure to work in the district.

**Laura Hester, 4th grade teacher, William F. Murphy**

With the exception of one year at Meadowview, Laura spent her entire 35-year career with Woodridge 68 at Murphy. She will miss all of her friends at school; people who have become her second family.

**Vanessa Johnson, Secretary, Jefferson**

After 15 years with the school district, Vanessa retired in September. She does miss seeing her friends at school but is excited to be moving on to her next adventure.

**Susan Oczkowski, kindergarten teacher, Meadowview**

Sue taught classes in kindergarten through 4th grade at Meadowview for over 32 years. She loved when a former student or parent would come back to visit and tell her how much their child loved to read because of a certain author or illustrator she had read to them.

**Bradley Payne, elementary band director, District-wide**

Brad's fondest memories and the things he will miss most are the kids that he's worked with throughout his 21 years as

Woodridge 68's elementary band director. He is looking forward to what lies ahead.

**Roseann Schneider, 3rd grade teacher, Goodrich**

Roseann started and finished her 33-year career in Woodridge 68 at Goodrich. In her retirement, Roseann is looking forward to sleeping late, traveling and visiting family.

**Susan Siemek, Inclusion teaching assistant, Edgewood**

Susan started as a lunchroom supervisor at Goodrich, but spent most of her career in Woodridge 68 as an inclusion teaching assistant at Edgewood. She retired over this past summer and we thank Susan for her 20 years of service to Woodridge 68.

**Kathleen White, 2nd grade teacher, Meadowview**

After one year as a TA, Kathy has been a classroom teacher at Meadowview for 25 years. Kathy will miss teaching and the students; and she will miss her coworkers who made her laugh and smile every day.

*Read more from these retirees on the district website.*





## WESS collective bargaining agreement approved

The Board of Education approved the 2023-26 collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Education and the Woodridge Educational Support Staff (WESS) at the May 22, 2023 meeting. Some of the substantive changes included in this three-year contract include salary, insurance, health aides' working hours, internal substitutes, early childhood and PreK teaching assistants' salary schedule, reduction in force clarification, and childbirth leave updates.

"The administration is pleased to be able to continue to work in a collaborative nature with WESS in an effort to ensure that our students have the best educational opportunities available," said Dr. William Schmidt, chief negotiator and Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources. Sheri Walker, chief negotiator for WESS said, "WESS has always stressed the importance of relationships and culture in Woodridge School District 68, and this new agreement will help to ensure that those positive relationships and culture continue to grow." Board of Education President Stuart Vanorny said, "I would like to thank everyone for all their hard work and effort throughout this process and addressing issues in a collaborative nature in the best interest of our students."

### 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



**WOODRIDGE**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT 68

INSPIRING EDUCATION AND INNOVATION

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