

# Community Unit School District 200

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Administration and School Service Center

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Dear Families:

As we move toward the end of another successful school year, I want to thank you for your continuing support of our students and our schools. I've said many times since I came to this District in 1999 that we have motivated, eager students, supportive parents, an outstanding faculty and staff, and a community that holds high expectations for its schools. With this combination, anything is possible.

## **Internet Safety**

I hope many of you had the opportunity to attend the meeting on Internet Safety on May 22 at Hubble Middle School. The program, presented by the DuPage County Sheriff's Department and sponsored by the PTA Council, focused on the proper use of online social networking services and the potential hazards of providing personal information online. The event was so well attended, the Council is exploring the possibility of hosting a similar event in the fall. This is a growing issue both locally and around the country. While the Internet is a place that provides social connections for students, it is also a place where "children can be seriously endangered and victimized" by sexual predators, according to the website of the Center for the Improvement of Child Caring. The Center goes on to say, "The careless use of such websites by naive and gullible young people has been putting hundreds of thousands of such children and youth in the direct lens of sexual predators from every state and country." The Illinois Attorney General's Office has provided a number of Internet safety tips for parents and students. You may access those at <http://www.ag.state.il.us/children/internet.html>.

## **Agreement on WWEA Contract**

The Board of Education identified as one of its high priority goals for 2005-06 the successful completion of contract talks with the teachers' association. I'm pleased to announce that the Board and Wheaton Warrenville Education Association (WWEA) have approved a new three-year contract, ensuring that school will start as scheduled in August. We used a new approach to bargaining by forming separate committees to resolve each issue identified by either the Board or the WWEA. As a result, the contract provides competitive salaries, respects the work of teachers, and responds to the community's expressed priority of hiring and retaining a highly qualified staff. A press release providing details of the contract is on our webpage at [www.cusd200.org](http://www.cusd200.org). I think it is important for you to know that it was a very amicable negotiations process that resulted in a contract that is fair to the teachers and local taxpayers.

## **Superintendent Search**

The Board is moving forward in its process to select my successor. On March 22 members heard from four firms that conduct superintendent searches, and on April 26 agreed to negotiate the

terms of a contract with Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ltd., the same consulting firm the Board used when I was selected as superintendent in 1999. Once a contract is agreed to, the process will move forward with the expectation that a new superintendent will be selected early in 2007. That timeline will give the new superintendent time to transition to District 200 before I retire at the end of June 2007. I'm certain the Board will provide opportunities for the community to be involved as the process gets underway.

### **Wellness Policy**

You all have heard and read a great deal about the concerns related to childhood obesity. A new federal law requires all school districts to actively address the issue by adopting a wellness policy to be effective beginning with the new school year in August. The policy will include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school based activities; nutrition guidelines for food sold in the schools; and a plan for measuring the policy's impact. The policy is being developed by a broad based committee that includes students, parents, health care professionals, food service personnel, and staff. When completed, the proposed policy will be posted for public review and comment. I expect this to occur in mid June, so please check our web page at [www.cusd200.org](http://www.cusd200.org) then to review the proposals.

### **School Safety**

District 200 continues to be a leader in school safety. Since the Columbine High School tragedy in 1999, District 200 has been proactive in implementing safety procedures and preparing staff to respond to a number of potentially dangerous situations. Most recently, the District has presented workshops on school safety at the National School Board Association's annual conference in Chicago and for the DuPage County Superintendent's Association. The District is also working with the Regional Office of Education to help other DuPage districts update their safety measures. We owe much of our success to the involvement of our community partners, including emergency officials from Wheaton, Warrenville, Winfield, and DuPage County. While there are no procedures that guarantee a school will be safe in all situations, we believe the training we have provided our staff, the drills we have practiced with our students, and the measures we've taken to secure our buildings make our schools as safe as they can be. That being said, we continue to plan practice drills, develop response plans for additional emergencies, and provide more training for our staff.

### **High School Dedication**

The improvements at our two high schools will be substantially completed in the next few weeks and all new and renovated spaces will be available to students when school opens in August. We want to celebrate the conclusion of this three-year project and the opportunities the new and improved spaces provide to our high school students. Such an event has been planned for Sunday, August 27, at both high schools. The dedication at Wheaton North will begin at 1 p.m. and one at Wheaton Warrenville South at 2 p.m. Please mark your calendar now and plan to bring the whole family so you can see how impressive these new facilities are. We'll have a short ceremony at each school, followed by refreshments and student-led tours of the building. Come share the pride. These are truly wonderful facilities that will serve our community's young people for many years. By the way, the indoor tracks at both high schools are available for community use during specified times. Please contact the athletic office at either school to check on summer hours.

### **Citizens Finance Committee**

A citizens' finance committee will be formed in the fall to recommend steps to ensure the long-term stability and predictability of District finances. While finance committees have assisted in recommending budget reductions in the recent past, the new group will be able to address issues in the long term using information and data collected from focus groups and a community survey conducted last year. If you have a background in finance, are interested in the long-term financial health of the District, and are willing to serve on this group, you are invited to contact Bill Farley, Assistant Superintendent for Business Operations, at 630/682-2005 or [bfarley@cusd200.org](mailto:bfarley@cusd200.org). As you know from previous information provided to you, District 200 cannot rely on the state to solve its financial issues. While the new budget adopted by the legislature allocates more money for public schools, our share of general state aid will be about the same as last year due to the increases in our assessed valuation and a slight decline in enrollment. Six years ago, our general state aid allotment was \$10.4 million. Last year it was \$9.3 million. This trend supports our belief that we must plan our financial future locally because the state has been unable to come up with a plan that benefits all public schools. So please let us know if you'd like to be part of a community group looking at District 200's financial future.

### **New 200 Foundation**

The N.E.W. 200 Foundation has completed another successful year supporting our teachers and students. It has given out \$10,000 in Mini Grants this year--a total of \$60,000 in the last several years--to teachers who applied for funds to support innovative classroom projects. It also has taken over the district-wide Distinguished Teacher Award formerly sponsored by the GATES 200 parent group. This year's Distinguished Teacher Award winners are Jim Stankevitz from Wheaton Warrenville South High School, Russ Hooper from Franklin Middle School, and Melissa Kessler from Lincoln Elementary School.

The Foundation is also bringing back a popular 5K Fun Run on September 16 and combining it with a festival of family and health related events at Wheaton North High School. There will be a 1 mile run for younger participants and a special grant to the school with the highest percentage of student runners. After the race, a variety of activities are planned in the new field house. Marcus Liberty, formerly of the Denver Nuggets, has promised to be there. The Foundation is hoping this event will raise at least \$20,000 to support District 200 education.

### **Hubble Middle School Update**

The Board of Education moved closer to its goal of building a new middle school in the southwest part of the District on May 24 when it authorized staff to negotiate for the purchase of an 18-acre site in Warrenville. The parcel, owned by James McNaughton Builders, is west of Herrick Road between Warrenville and Galusha Roads. We continue to believe that building a new school on a site other than the one Hubble currently occupies is the best, long-term financial decision and one that gives students a building designed for the middle school program.

The last several months have seen an increase in the number of conversations we have had with individuals regarding sites for a new middle school and/or the development of the existing

Hubble property. We have worked long and hard to find an appropriate site and are eager now to reach an agreement with McNaughton Builders on a price for the land.

The City of Warrenville has indicated in the past that it will allocate approximately \$4 million for the purchase of property if the selected site is in Warrenville. We anticipate that Warrenville will find a way to make that happen now.

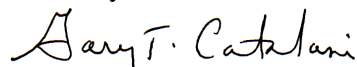
The Hubble Middle School Committee, formed to implement the Board's decision to build a new school, will resume its work and consider potential referendum dates, possible boundary changes, and the eventual marketing of the current Hubble site.

Related to this issue, several residents have formed an independent group to explore options for building a new school on the existing site or renovating Hubble. You may remember that the Board of Education explored these same options before making a decision to build a new school on another site. That decision came after the Board conducted a cost analysis of the various options and then asked for and received input from the community through public meetings, newsletters, and surveys.

Once the land is acquired, the District will hold a referendum to get money to build the new school. Architects currently estimate the cost of the new school to be approximately \$35 million, not including the cost of land. That figure includes all fees associated with the project, as well as all furnishings, cabling, and other items not directly related to construction. The construction cost will be partially offset by the subsequent sale of the existing Hubble property, which would likely be redeveloped as a multi-use project serving as a gateway to downtown Wheaton.

The next few weeks will be busy as we work out details of the land acquisition. Meanwhile, I hope you all have a successful conclusion to the school year and a great summer.

Sincerely,



Gary T. Catalani, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools