



# CUSD 201 Newsletter

## small schools 2020 LARGE OPPORTUNITIES

February



*Serving families and students from Westmont, Clarendon Hills and Downers Grove*

In the fall of 2019, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) released the school report cards. Schools in Illinois can receive a rating of exemplary, commendable, underperforming, or lowest-performing on the report card. The ISBE looks at several indicators that are weighted to determine a school's rating. The academic indicators are proficiency and growth in English Language Arts and math, English learner proficiency, and graduation rates. The student quality/student success indicators are chronic absenteeism, 9th grade on target to graduate, climate survey, and college and career readiness.

CUSD 201 is excited to report that Westmont High School has achieved the highest rating and has been designated as exemplary for the second year in a row. Manning, Miller, and Westmont Junior High were all designated as commendable for the second year in a row. Overall, CUSD 201 schools outperform most schools in the State.

In addition, Westmont High School was named as one of three finalists for the DuFour Award. The DuFour Award is given annually to one school in the country. In order to be considered for this honor, schools need to demonstrate a commitment to building a successful professional learning community and have an unwavering commitment to helping students achieve at high levels. Westmont High



*District 201 Superintendent  
Kevin Carey*



School will find out at the end of January if it is this year's DuFour Award winner.

Community Unit School District 201 is in the process of updating and modifying its strategic plan. Stakeholders will have input on the focus and direction of the District. There will be a meeting on February 10, 2020, for stakeholders to provide their input. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m in the Westmont High School Commons.

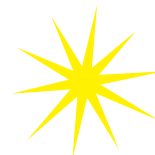
As CUSD 201 updates its plan for the future, one element will never change. Community Unit School District 201 will always have an unwavering commitment to our students, families, and community. There will always be a commitment to teaching and learning and creating supportive and compassionate environments in our schools.

## Preschool Screening

If you reside in the attendance boundaries of Community Unit School District 201, and you have a child who is between the ages of three and five, we encourage you to call the Office of Student Services to register your child for preschool screening. Our next screening event for the 2020-2021 school year is March 19, 2020.

While screening is not a requirement for admission into kindergarten, the screening process can provide information to families regarding early development and

school readiness. On the day of the screening, children are asked to participate in various age-appropriate activities related to readiness concepts, speech and language, and motor skills. As the children are engaged in the screening components, parents have the opportunity to meet with members of the preschool staff for individualized interviews and to address any questions or concerns.





## South School

### "A Night with Temple Grandin" fosters student growth

Throughout the school year, the Student Services team participates in a variety of professional development activities designed to facilitate student growth. Support staff, including social workers, speech therapists, and resource teachers, had the extreme pleasure of attending "A Night with Temple Grandin" as part of the Clare Woods Academy's 50th Anniversary Celebration. Temple Grandin is a professor of animal science and a pioneer in improving the handling and welfare of farm animals. At two years of age, Temple had no speech and signs of severe autism. Speech therapy intervention and hard work enabled Temple to produce speech.

We had the unique opportunity to listen to Temple describe her own experiences growing up and how she was able to develop the skills needed to be an independent adult. Members of the audience shared difficult experiences about themselves or client cases. This not only provided exceptional insight into the autistic



*We had the unique opportunity to listen to Temple describe her own experiences growing up and how she was able to develop the skills needed to be an independent adult.*

mind, but allowed us to think about alternative strategies and interventions to use. This was a fantastic professional growth experience for all involved.

### Kindergarten Registration

Registration in CUSD 201 for incoming kindergarten students for the 2020-2021 school year will take place at both J.T. Manning Elementary School and C.E. Miller Elementary School beginning Tuesday, March 10, through Friday, March 13, Monday, March 16, and Tuesday, March 17, 2020, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. CUSD 201 offers a full-day Kindergarten

program at both Manning and Miller, as well as a full day Bilingual Kindergarten program (housed at Miller Elementary for all district kindergarten students). State law requires that the child must be five years of age on or before September 1, 2020. In order to be admitted to kindergarten, we must have a notarized copy of your child's birth certificate with the embossed seal. Hospital birth certificates are not acceptable.







### Manning School

#### Social-Emotional Learning

As our district and individual schools continue to respond to a growing need to embed social and emotional learning into our school days, teachers have tried new ideas. Manning and Miller adopted the 2nd Step Curriculum two years ago. This curriculum provides weekly lessons that focus on kindness, empathy, problem-solving, etc. In addition to this curriculum,

teachers have tried different approaches to have students reflect on their emotional growth. For some, they do a quick check-in with their emotions; for others, they participate in class meetings and discussions. Classrooms are becoming equipped with tools and strategies to help students regulate their emotions throughout the day. As educators, we strive to be responsive to our students' needs and proactive in helping them to reach their potential.

#### Social-Emotional Learning



*To embed social and emotional learning into school, teachers have tried new ideas, including weekly lessons that focus on kindness, empathy and problem-solving.*



#### Pennies for Padilla

Pennies for Padilla is a school-wide fundraiser where grade levels compete against each other for an extra recess and to show their support for Mr. Padilla, a

loved fifth grade teacher who runs the Chicago marathon for charity. Mr. Padilla shared, "The Manning students were able to raise \$2,115.00. This amazing amount went to the OAR, the Organization for Autism Research, which was the charity that I ran for in the Chicago Marathon." As a reward for easily surpassing the fundraising goal of \$1,000, students were selected from each grade level to throw water balloons at Mr. Padilla to celebrate their success. Mr. Padilla wanted to thank all the students and the school community for their generous support of him and OAR!! "A huge thank you goes out to the students, staff, and Manning PTO!" Mr. Padilla said.

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## Manning School

### 4th/5th Grade Chorus and 5th Grade Band 2.0

Manning and Miller Elementary Schools are excited about the explosion of enrollment in fifth Grade Band and fourth/fifth grade Chorus this school year. Rachel Finnes, Band Director, and Alison LeBeda, Chorus Director, are our new directors who have joined the CUSD 201 community. We are excited to see their vision for the fine arts programming come to light. The pictures included are from our Winter Concert.



*Fifth Grade Band and fourth/fifth Grade Chorus during the Winter Concert.*

### Sharing a Life of Gratitude

Amy Liss shared parts of her story to an attentive group of fourth graders in the library at Manning School on December 17. "You may find that I'm more like you than different," she began as she shared stories from her life, including her love for the Chicago Cubs and how she enjoys volunteering and giving back to her community. Mrs. Johnson, the Library teacher at Manning, invited Amy and her mother to share their personal experiences to help students gain richer insight into the novel they are currently reading, "Out of My Mind" by Sharon Draper.

Amy said, "I love it when classes take the time to learn about people with disabilities, and I'm glad to have the chance to share my life story with you. I'm not a famous name or a professional speaker. I'm a pretty ordinary person with a few challenges – not as many as Melody in your book, but I'm very limited physically, and sometimes people don't take the time to get to know me. The disability that Melody and I have affects our bodies, but not necessarily our minds. Just because people are in wheelchairs or cannot talk doesn't mean they are not intelligent."

*Amy Liss sharing her story with 4th Graders at Manning*







## Barnes and Noble Family Reading Night



*Mr. Ritz, one of our mystery readers, reads a book to our Miller students.*

Many Miller School students and their families attended Family Reading Night at Barnes and Noble in Oak Brook on Thursday, November 21. This event was hosted and put together by our reading specialist, Mrs. Piatek, and our instructional coach, Mrs. Billie. Students and their families were invited to hear books read out loud by our staff. Our school choir, led by Ms. Lebeda, was also in attendance, and they started the night with a couple of tunes to set the stage. Mr. Ritz, Ms. Moller, and our special guest speaker Mrs. Kadela shared some books with our students. There were fun activities, two mystery readers, and raffle prizes for the students to enjoy along with families purchasing books with a percentage of proceeds going back to Miller School. Our guest readers read about a MAD scientist and how an Elephant and Piggie get along in a fictional text. It was a great time for all who attended!!! The event ended with a raffle with donated prizes from our staff. Prizes included Assistant Principal for a Day, a pizza party, and Dodgeball after school with friends.

## Literature Through Dance Program

Our second grade students participated in the Literature through Dance program. It is a movement and literacy program brought to us by Dr. Kelly Stokes of the Salt Creek Ballet. Lessons have paired folk and fairy tales with ballet steps and/or techniques.

The students' skills and abilities have increased over the six-week unit. They have an annual finale where the students perform in front of their families to show how much they grew in the program.



## Veteran's Day Lunch and Class Talks

The students and staff at Miller School prepared a Veterans Day celebration to recognize the contributions that veterans have made to our country. This celebration was held on Tuesday, November 12, during the afternoon. We served our guests at lunch.

Our Veteran friends introduced themselves to our students and shared the importance of serving in the military, stories of teamwork and being a part of a military family. They also discussed details about their specific branch of service, or job in the military. Lastly, they were able to speak with the kids about what makes each branch of military unique to our country.

## Monet Night

This past November, we hosted our first Miller Monet Night. This was a child/parent paint night where we had Mrs. Graham

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## Miller School



### Monet Night continued



*For the first Miller Monet Night, a child/parent paint night, Mrs. Graham and Mrs. Jacobs walked participants through a step-by-step process of creating Monet's masterpiece "A Starry Night."*

and Mrs. Jacobs walk us through a step-by-step process of creating Monet's masterpiece "A Starry Night." We had over 50 people in attendance and a few wonderful volunteers on hand to clean up spills, refill paint, and change out the rinse water. Halfway through the evening, we took a brief intermission to serve drinks and snacks while our base coat was drying. All had a good time, and the kids enjoyed seeing their artwork on display at the school for a few weeks following the event. We hope to make this an annual, if not biannual event at Miller.



### Miller Installs a New Garden

Jordan Graham came to Miller School a year ago to plan out a project that came to fruition on Saturday, November 2. What began as an outdoor classroom idea morphed into a revitalized garden area. With help and support from community members Jon Rudey and Amy Ng, Jordan was able to complete one of the final stages of his Eagle Scout award project. The Miller School community is excited to begin using the new garden area. Mrs. Eggler and her Environmental Club will begin to plant carrots and green beans once the spring weather allows new plant and vegetable growth. Some of the classrooms will be using the garden area as a new way to understand the Earth and how we can sustain a healthy environment. We look forward to the day where we can duplicate the garden box and increase the plants and vegetables we grow at Miller.





### Miller Family Donates Neighborhood Lending Library

The Christensen family built and donated a new lending library that was installed over the November 2 weekend. You can't miss this beautiful mini-house as you drive up and down Traube in front of the building. Parents are Dan and Linda, and children are Cassandra (seventh grade) and Anabelle (fifth grade). They worked on the project as a family.



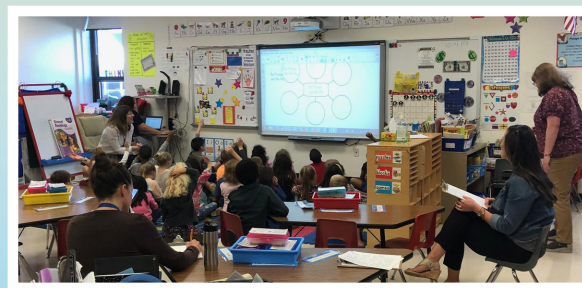
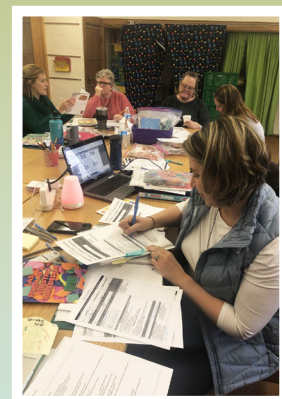
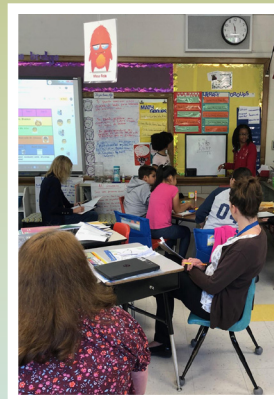
### Learning Labs

*by Tracy Billie*

Teachers at Miller and Manning have been participating in Learning Labs throughout the year. A Learning Lab is a professional development opportunity that values collaboration and trust through coaching, reflection, and peer observation. Teachers observe their colleagues in action as they seek to bring new ideas into their classrooms. Not only are these days packed with collaboration and learning, but they also showcase the amazing work our teachers do every day!

Here are some strategies and teaching practices that teachers had the opportunity to explore:

- ✓ Workshop Models for both Math and Reading
- ✓ Student Engagement
- ✓ Student Goal Setting
- ✓ Classroom Discourse
- ✓ Guided Reading
- ✓ Reading Intervention



*Learning Labs are a professional development tool for teachers focusing on collaboration and trust through coaching, reflection, and peer observation.*





## Spotlight on Dual Language

By Roxanne Engstrom



*First grade Dual Language students from Mrs. Sanchez's classroom*

From kindergarten to fifth grade, each dual language classroom was alive with activity, and the walls were adorned with student work in both English and Spanish, as well as an American flag next to a picture of Frida Kahlo in one room. Picture books in English and Spanish fill the bookshelves of the younger grades, and the students take deep pride in showing off their language skills. From spending time in the Dual Language Program at Miller Elementary in Westmont, it is clear that the teachers and leaders of the school are engaging their students in much more than just curriculum.

Ms. Moller, the Assistant Principal, who is also bilingual, stated that the Dual Language Program has grown into a program at the forefront of other programs. "We are raising the banner of biliteracy and bilingualism, and as a new administrator, I am excited to see all that has already happened in six years. We are already rolling out programs to the junior high."

As an administrator, Ms. Moller hopes to create a vision about the great things students can do with their bilingual education,

to help teachers grow professionally in the teaching of Spanish, and to help more parents and students see the value and assets of bilingualism. "The district has a goal to graduate students from high school with the "seal of biliteracy," so that they can get college credit for language competency. This will set them apart from monolingual students."

Students were eager to share why they love being a part of the Dual Language Program. Third grader Maxwell said, "I think it is so cool because we go to Mexico for summer break, and now I can talk to the people there." Fourth grader Zohanna shared, "What I like most about dual language is learning to write in Spanish!"

Emelia, another fourth grader, added, "Plus, we get to make Spanish projects!" Giovanni said, "I really like learning to speak more than one language."

Third grader Robin said, "I think it is really important to learn other languages to be able to help someone if they need something." Abigail, a fourth grader, added, "I like to translate!"





### Westmont Junior H.S.

#### WJHS: Learning from the power of story in 7th Grade Literacy Class

Seventh graders in Mrs. Poloncsik's classes at Westmont Junior High School have been immersing themselves in the narratives of refugees from different periods in history through reading the book "Refugee" by Alan Gratz.

As the students read the novel, they wrestled with trying to understand the varying historical contexts and what it would mean to leave home. Students learned about the UNHCR and the process for gaining "refugee status," as well as several historical changes to the laws since the Refugee Act of 1980 that allowed for a systemic process by which persons with refugee designations are admitted to a country



*Nazish, who shared her story about being forced to flee her homeland of Pakistan as a refugee*

of resettlement. Mrs. Poloncsik sought to take their learning and research to another level and invited a guest, Nazish, who shared her story about being forced to flee her homeland of Pakistan as a refugee. "Bringing this opportunity to our room was really eye-opening for my students," explained teacher Mrs. Poloncsik. "We enjoyed learning from an expert who truly knew what the characters in our novel had navigated."

Students shared their learning at home to open up new conversations within their families about this educational opportunity.

#### WJHS Speaker's Corner

Eighth graders deepened their understanding of unique challenges faced by veterans through a five-week research



*Students utilized multiple media sources to dig into the challenging subject matter to determine if veterans receive adequate support when returning home from deployment. On December 19, students shared their learning in small group settings. With our focus on a growth mindset, students received timely feedback and the opportunity to enhance their public speaking skills with the insights they gained from volunteers.*

study focused on Common Core standards related to Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking.

During this unit of study, students networked with high-level interviewees, including current and retired members of the military. Students utilized multiple media sources to dig into this challenging subject matter to determine if veterans receive adequate support when returning home from deployment.

For the culminating event on December 19, 2019, over 100 volunteers were invited into the doors of WJHS for a Speakers' Corner, where students shared their learning in small group settings. With our focus on a growth mindset, students received timely feedback and the opportunity to enhance their public speaking skills with the insights they gained from volunteers. Our audience was filled with committed people.

*Mrs. Poloncsik sought to take their learning and research to another level and invited a guest, Nazish, who shared her story about being forced to flee her homeland of Pakistan as a refugee.*



#### WJHS Quick Blurbs ◀.....

The WJHS Choir continues to excel in each venue! It is a joy to watch them perform. Amazingly, over twenty WJHS students attended the Illinois Music Education Association's Regional Honor Festival in early November.

Back in October and December, the seventh and eighth graders did a wonderful job at Feed My Starving Children and received two hours toward their Student Service Learning Commitment. Keep it up, Panthers!

*Continued*



## Westmont Junior H.S.

### WJHS Quick Blurbs continued

The new Polar Heart Rate monitors are being utilized in PE classes to help students track their physical health. Teachers work with students to analyze results and create goals for keeping physically fit!



*The new Polar Heart Rate monitors are being utilized in PE classes to help students track their physical health. Teachers work with students to analyze results and create goals for keeping physically fit!*

Emmy continues to bring smiles and laughter as she visits classrooms and runs the hallways at WJHS! She has also visited the Miller kindergarten classes a few times over the past semester.



*Emmy continues to bring smiles and laughter as she visits classrooms*



*Mr. Jonak and Ms. Quattrone were duct-taped to the gymnasium wall for the PTO fundraiser.*

During the WJHS Job Fair in December, Junior Achievement worked with the eighth Grade Team to bring professionals from all walks of life to discuss their careers with students. Thanks to Junior Achievement and all the individuals that donated their time and expertise.

A HUGE "thank you" to the WJHS PTO for the RAISE CRAZE fundraiser that raised over \$7,000 in two weeks! Thank you to the community for supporting the acts of kindness and making sure Mr. Jonak and Ms. Quattrone were duct-taped to the gymnasium wall.





## Westmont H.S. Receives Biggest Honor in its History

*By Jack Baldermann, Principal – Westmont High School*

Westmont High School has received the biggest honor in our history, and on January 30 in Phoenix, Arizona, there may be even better news. Westmont has been chosen as one of three schools in the country as a finalist for the DuFour Award that recognizes the best Professional Learning Community in the United States. This award brings with it the largest cash prize for a school in the country (\$25,000), but more importantly, this honor clearly states that we have one of the best schools in the nation.

The selection process was most rigorous and involved several stages. There are approximately 132,000 schools in America and it is estimated that over 30,000 call themselves Professional Learning Communities. Of these schools, 278 have earned the distinction of being named a National Model PLC.

Westmont was required to submit years of student achievement data to be named a National Model PLC. Only the 278 schools that have been named a National Model PLC can be considered for the award that recognizes the best in the nation. We have been selected as one of three finalists. A panel of 10 of the best educational leaders in the nation selected the finalists and the winner after reviewing the extensive applications and significant student achievement and performance information.

For the National PLC Summit/Conference on January 30, close to 2,000 educational leaders from all over the United States and the world will be present. At this conference we will be recognized as a finalist, and then they will name the winner as the Best Professional Learning Community in the United States.

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## CONGRATULATIONS ILLINOIS STATE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

### Westmont High School Class of 2020 Illinois State Scholars

We are proud of our Illinois State Scholars. These students are ranked in the top ten percent of all students in Illinois based on their grades and test scores:

*Front Row (left to right): Mark Naom, Bridgette Jagielo, Rylee Sharkey, Trishia Cueto*

*2nd Row: Amanda Rosland, Marta Melnyk, Aminah Mostafa*

*3rd Row: Stephanie Walker, Emily Czaplewski, Anika Bhoopalam*

*4th Row: Griffin Chapman, Rachel Padgitt, Marshall Brown*

*5th Row: Jaden Lydon, Curtis Green-Saunders, Nicholas Charlton*





## Westmont High School

### Westmont H.S. Receives Biggest Honor in its History continued

The process required that we show significant student achievement growth for more than three years and successfully employed Professional Learning Community concepts, which include a dedication to all students, genuine collaboration between teachers, S.M.A.R.T. goals, a data team process, building a healthy school climate, interventions and enrichment sessions for students and follow-through that achieves real results in many academic metrics.

After we were selected as a National Model School, we were required to submit 27 500-word essays explaining how we made real progress, as well as explain all of our successful programs and procedures to improve student learning and achievement. We were also asked to submit years of student performance information and create a five-minute video that provided an overview of our work.

Every parent, community member, board member, administrator, teacher, staff member and student contributed to this amazing accomplishment. I urge you to learn more by viewing the videos/websites that will help you understand the magnitude of this award.

It is fair to state that it may be one of, if not the most, significant award for schools in our country. Thank you for your support.

If Westmont wins this award we will make an announcement on January 31.

To learn more about Westmont High School becoming a finalist for one of the biggest and best awards in American education, please view these videos/websites:

- 1) PLC Locator – This site shows all of the National Model Schools. Click on the map of Illinois, go to Westmont High School, and see under “Evidence of Effectiveness” all of the accomplishments and data that earned Westmont recognition as a National Model PLC School.
- 2) Westmont High School DuFour Award 2019 (an overview of our work), 5 minutes
- 3) DuFour Award Overview (a 3:42 minute explanation of the award)
- 4) DuFour Award 2017 on Vimeo. (Go to the 13:45 mark for background on the award process. The entire video of the 2017 selection ceremony is 34 minutes. The few minutes starting at the 13:45 mark give an overview).

*“Every parent,  
community member,  
board member,  
administrator,  
teacher, staff  
member and  
student contributed  
to this amazing  
accomplishment.”*



**Community Unit School  
District 201**

133 South Grant  
Westmont, IL 60559  
630-468-8000  
www.cusd201.org