



## FOCUS ON SCIENCE: Creating Scientifically Literate Students

Laser lights and pocket mirrors? Prisms and spray bottles? Teams of engaged students testing their hypotheses? Science lessons at East Aurora have become more interactive. With the help of enthusiastic teachers like Cathy Evans from Cowherd Middle School, students are now participating in more hands-on lab experiences. This year, kids are “doing” more science than ever before.

On a recent morning, Evans’ 6th grade class dove into a discussion on the properties of light waves. Minutes later her classroom was transformed into clusters of students, each engaged in a high-energy learning lab. In tables of four, students shined laser lights, positioned mirrors, and introduced prisms and liquids to the light beams. The students were testing their results, and demonstrating reflection and refraction. At one point, over a dozen students scrambled to a single lab station, shrieking with excitement as Evans sprayed water over a crisscross series of laser lights. Before their eyes, and with the help of their hands and minds, students demonstrated how reflection occurs when a light ray changes mediums.

During this lab, students discovered that light traveling through air, and then going through water is an example of a light ray changing medium.

While the kids love when learning is fun, there is more to it than they may realize. Students are also receiving essential

preparation for careers in the modern workforce.

We know that demands for labor have shifted in favor of skilled jobs requiring more education than the unskilled jobs they replaced. Many of the fastest growing occupations are those where science (and math) play a critical role. Thus, we have the need of accomplishing the task of developing *all students* to be scientifically literate.

Be sure to see “EA VOICES” on page 3, where our district’s Science and Social Studies Facilitator Christopher Heath shares how EASD 131 has upgraded students’ experience of learning science. Heath explains how hands-on experiences allow students to investigate real-world science questions, and how these fun experiences help kids figure out the answers.

We are excited! Not only about how students are learning science in a new way, but how aligning our curriculum and learning experiences will better support the critical education students need for future success. ❌



**Heather Kincaid**  
Assistant Superintendent  
of Teaching and Learning

## Board Update

**EA** board of education



**Annette Johnson**  
School Board President

We have all heard the phrase “a new day EA” but never have we had such bright days as we do right now. Much of the credit needs to be given to Dr. Hoyda and Dr. McDonald, our two new interim superintendents. They have brought their twenty plus years of experience as superintendents to assemble a talented group of administrators that are leading East Aurora into the future.

With all that experience comes the passion to make East Aurora a shining star. The biggest achievement to date is BUSING. The busing issue had not been addressed by many prior administrations because, as the story given to former School Boards goes, busing was

too expensive and the community could not support a tax increase. Today, the busing dilemma was resolved by experienced leadership from our Superintendents and a School Board that never stopped asking “Why?”

We are now in the planning stages to make busing a reality. While that alone is BIG news, an equally big piece of the busing news is that it will require is NO TAX INCREASE and no need for a referendum. When the 2017/18 school year rolls in, busing will be rolling with it for any child living 1.5 miles or more from their school. As part of the busing plan, the District is in the process of completing a study to address busy roads. This ‘busy roads study’ is being addressed in phases. Of course, the big question on everyone’s minds must be “How are we going to pay for busing with little increase to the budget?”. The answer is that the State of Illinois will reimburse 80% of the cost. It is anticipated that because of busing, student attendance will increase, thereby resulting in additional revenue from the State. This additional income will be applied to related busing expenses. One more cost savings will be that our current busing costs will be eliminated as the new busing plan takes effect. We look forward to next school year when the buses start rolling!

In other news, the District is exploring options of expanding our full-day preschool. We plan to create a new program at our Kindergarten Center that will focus on a STEM/STEAM Academy for Kindergarteners and 1st graders. It will be the first of its kind in the Aurora area, showing again the great educational opportunities our district has to offer.

Speaking of other educational opportunities, the district will pilot a dual language program for 50 students. The Indian Trail Center will see an enhanced plan that groups Early Learners and expands those programs.

The East Aurora High School expansion continues and we look forward to seeing the opening of additional classrooms and the completion of the changes to the first floor that will ease congestion in hallways and the cafeteria. Within the 2017-2018 school year, a new music wing will also open. The stadium is planned to open this

fall, complete with a turf playing surface and an eight-lane track. It is planned that the stadium will keep the tradition of honoring Roy E Davis but will now also honor our Veterans.

As for the remodeling, we always like to explain how these costs will be paid. The District - our teachers! - created a petition, lobbied for and received \$50 million in interest free bonds from a State of Illinois program. This money will allow the District to not only pay for the remodeling costs of East High but also complete infrastructure repairs at all our middle and elementary schools. This is another move forward that will be done without an increase to our taxpayers. Way to go, teachers!

On the issue of property taxes, the School Board was again able to pass another flat levy which continues our program of property tax relief. This was possible because of the teachers’, Superintendents’ and the Board’s collaboration on working towards what is best for the entire community.

So, as everyone can see, EA has put the past behind with strong leadership, strong curriculum, exciting learning opportunities, and well thought out financial practices and we even solved busing! Truly our best days are ahead and a new beacon of hope is shining on a new day in EA. ✖

*Enlightener* is the community newsletter published by East Aurora School District 131.  
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### Enlightener is the official community newsletter for District 131.

With this edition, *Enlightener* becomes an online publication. In doing so, our district saves tens of thousands of dollars each year in printing and postage costs, while continuing to provide information about our district to the community. Readers can now view the publication online at our website, and receive an email each time *Enlightener* is published. Limited print copies will be available in district schools and in the community.

Parents/guardians of District 131 students: you do not need to sign up to receive *Enlightener*. You are automatically subscribed if you provided an email address to your school. If you are a parent/guardian and have not provided an email address, please do so through the Infinite Campus portal, or call your school directly for assistance.

### Community Member Sign Up

Community members and alumni who do not have children enrolled District 131 can subscribe to receive *Enlightener* by completing the form found on our district website at [www.d131.org/email](http://www.d131.org/email). Community members will receive email each time *Enlightener* is published, as well as other important news and information from District 131. Sign up at [www.d131.org/email](http://www.d131.org/email).

# Ready for the Modern Workforce

EA voices

Big changes are coming to the way science is taught in school districts around Illinois. The 2016-17 school year is the first year that classrooms all over the state have begun teaching a science curriculum aligned to the New Illinois Science Learning Standards, also known as Next Generation Science Standards, simply referred to as NGSS.

The NGSS were designed with the goal of creating a more scientifically literate population that's ready for the modern workforce. The standards were written intentionally to encourage inquiry-based learning, hands-on experimentation, real-world problem solving, and, for the first time, engineering design as an application of science.

What does this mean for students? It means that rather than reading about science to learn the content, students

will be asking questions about real-world science phenomena, developing a hypothesis based on observation, designing experiments to test the hypothesis, and then communicating their conclusions like scientists do every day. In other words: **learning** science, by **doing** science.

This year EASD 131 schools are using a new science resource called STEMscopes which is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards to support our elementary and middle school science curriculum. As a program, STEMscopes focuses on hands-on science, which is required by the standards, through student investigations of real world science questions and by engaging in experiments and activities to help them figure out the answer to those questions.

Because of the hands-on and inquiry nature of the program, STEMscopes supports the Next Generation

Science Standards, allowing students to learn science by developing their own understanding of scientific concepts, thus retaining more knowledge, and growing a deeper understanding of the world around them.

STEMscopes itself is largely web based. Students and teachers are able to log-on to the website to gain access to a wide variety of lessons, activities, videos, and assessments aligned to the NGSS. In addition to the online platform, STEMscopes comes with kits containing the materials needed for the experiments that students will be doing throughout the year to build their understanding of science concepts.

STEMscopes also has a number of reading and math resources which are aligned to the math and language arts Common Core State Standards. These resources not only support what the students are learning in science, but also reinforce the content and skills they

are learning in language arts and math.

Our teachers are excited about the great things our students are doing in their science classes. As famous astrophysicist Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson once said, "Kids are born curious about the

natural world. They are always turning over rocks, jumping with two feet into mud puddles and playing with the tablecloth and fine china."

It is important to tap into that natural curiosity and develop it to help our students better understand the world around them. As we continue to rollout the Next Generation Science Standards here in East Aurora, we hope that the students will continue to grow curious about the world around them, ask questions, and explore, because as Dr. Tyson tells us again, "Science literacy is the artery through which the solutions of tomorrow's problems flow." ❌



Christopher Heath is the science and social studies facilitator at EASD 131.



## Want to see STEMscopes in action?

Go inside the classroom at Allen Elementary, as EASD 131 3rd Grade teacher Jill Jaskolski guides students through a lesson on inherited and environmental traits, through a hands-on science project.

VISIT: [www.vimeo.com/easd131/science](http://www.vimeo.com/easd131/science)

## 2017-18 Illinois State Scholars Named

East Aurora High School proudly recognizes 21 students from the graduating class of 2017 who have been named 2017-18 Illinois State Scholars for their outstanding academic achievement.

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC), confers this prestigious recognition annually to top Illinois high school students.

Illinois State Scholars represent approximately the top 10% of high school seniors from 765 high schools across the state. These scholars possess strong academic potential and are chosen based on a combination of exemplary ACT or SAT test scores and sixth semester class rank. ❌

# Congratulations, Students and Families!

## 2017-18 ILLINOIS STATE SCHOLARS!



CARLOS SANTAMARIA  
BACA



KAYLA BEKIELEWSKI



JULIE BREWER



JERRI DELGADO



CRISTINA  
GARCIA ELIAS



KRYSTAL ESCATEL



ADRIAN GONZALEZ



CARLOS GONZALEZ



JORGE HERNANDEZ



CYNTHIA LOZANO



STEPHANIE LOZANO



CRYSTAL  
MALDONADO



ARELI MORALES



GIOVANY MORALES



ALEXA ORTEGA



VICTOR RODRIGUEZ



AMY RUIZ



DANIEL SAUCEDO



BRIAN STRAND



YESENIA TORRES



OSCAR ZEPEDA

## EA Points of Pride

Two EA staff were awarded IPA Awards for Excellence from the Illinois Principals Association.

**Ms. Crystal England** **A**, Principal at Cowherd Middle School, was selected as the State IPA Middle School Principal of the Year.

**Mr. James Los** **B**, Dean at East Aurora High School, was selected as the Kishwaukee Region IPA Dean of the Year.

**Krug Elementary** celebrated "Read Across America Day" with a week-long celebration, including a free new book to every student, a new Dr. Seuss book for every teacher's classroom library, and inviting families and the community to read to students.

At **Allen Elementary**, students, staff and families participated in an Anti-Bully Walk. Students dressed in Halloween costumes and walked the neighborhood to celebrate their commitment to being an anti-bully school.

**Benavides Kindergarten Center** students performed in a winter choir concert. Children treated the packed house to many holiday favorites, showcasing the only kindergarten choir in the area.

**Gates Elementary** hosted "Read Me A Story", inviting guests to come to the school and read to classes as part of the event. Gates teachers and staff used the day to not only motivate their scholars to read, but also to instill a passion for it.

Grades 1-3 at **Brady Elementary** celebrated Black History Month by learning songs about Martin Luther King Jr. and African American spirituals. Kindergarten students learned songs about getting along with diverse people. Brady's 5th grade displayed a hallway bulletin board about important contributions from African Americans.

**Johnson Elementary** celebrated Seuss Week with special events, including research-based question contests, STEM activities, Seuss

scavenger hunts using QR codes, guest readers, and other Dr. Seuss inspired-themed activities.

**Rollins Elementary** hosted a Mother-Son Superhero Night for Rollins moms and sons. The evening event was filled with bingo, bean bag games, volleyball, caricatures and food. Moms received a framed picture of themselves with their superhero son.

**O'Donnell Elementary** **C** participated in the "One Book/One School" program, where all students and staff reads the same book. The book selected was the "Race the Wild" series by author Kristin Earhart. As part of the program, Earhart visited O'Donnell students, sharing her stories and ideas on writing.

**Waldo Middle School's** 7th graders participated in Career Fair, inviting community members from many lines of work into the school to talk about their careers. Students had the opportunity to ask questions and interact with guest speakers.

**Simmons Middle School** **D** students hosted local veterans for a special breakfast. Veterans were honored for their service, and students were recognized for their commitment to learning. Local veterans visited with students and enjoyed breakfast together.

**Hermes Elementary** staff and families participated in "Hike for Hesed" event, with students fundraising and walking in support of Hesed House.

**East Aurora High School** staff helped fight hunger in our own community in partnership with Northern Illinois Food Bank and Caterpillar. Our caring staff at East High served 295 families and a total of 1,460 individuals.

**Oak Park Elementary** students and staff created a video based on their anti-bullying / Red Ribbon Week. The school community was saluted for their hard work and for their anti-bullying efforts.



**Beaupre Elementary** hosted author Amy Logan who presented her book, "A Boy with a Cape" to students. Logan taught students how words are powerful when we speak them to others, and that what we say and how we say it can really become our "superhero cape" to build each other up.

**Bardwell Elementary** students in Mrs. Herbert's 3rd grade did their Trick or Treating for UNICEF, delivering 850 boxes to classrooms at Bardwell, collecting \$1,845 for the work of UNICEF.

Band students at **Fred Rodgers Magnet Academy** showcased their talents by entertaining guests at the East High Band Boosters annual Pancake Breakfast. ✖



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to see more EASD131  
student and staff achievements.

## EASD 131 Pre-K Programs Awarded Gold Circle of Quality

East Aurora School District 131 preschool sites have been awarded the Gold Circle of Quality through ExceleRate Illinois.

Preschool students throughout the District attend class in one of four sites for half day: Early Childhood Center, Child Service Center, Gates Elementary, and Oak Park Elementary. Two other sites, O'Donnell and Benavides Kindergarten Center, offer full day Preschool.

The Gold Circle of Quality recognizes programs that meet or go beyond the highest quality goals. Gold Circle programs have met the highest quality standards in three areas:

- learning environment and teaching quality
- administrative standards, and
- training and education

Gold Circle programs are recognized for being actively engaged in continuous quality improvement.

"This is quite a significant achievement for our preschool programs, as well as for our District," said Katie Kogut



preschool principal at Early Childhood Center. "The fact that all six of our sites received the Gold Circle of Quality means that across the board we have created an environment where children have the best opportunity to learn and grow."

ExceleRate Illinois is a statewide quality recognition and improvement system designed to make continuous quality improvement an everyday priority among early learning providers. The program establishes standards for helping infants, toddlers and preschool age children develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally.

The Gold Circle of Quality recognizes programs which have demonstrated quality on all fifteen standards, as validated by a state approved assessor. Gold Circle programs meet or exceed specific quality benchmarks on learning environment, instructional quality, and all program administrative standards; group size and staff/child ratios; staff qualifications; and professional development. ❌

### EA profiles

## Retiring Dieterich Elementary Principal Julia Doverspike reflects on leadership career



**Where I've worked:** First grade teacher Rose E. Krug, three years. Middle school math specialist (grades 6-8) two years, district math specialist (K-8) five years, Dieterich assistant principal two years, Dieterich principal eight years.

**My first year of teaching was** first grade at Rose Krug. I learned from the best—Kathy Navota and the Krug staff—about teaching with heart, working as a group of professionals, and holding

high expectations for every student. My principal ship has been modeled after Mrs. Navota's style of leadership—hire good people, give them the tools they need, and get out of their way.

**The best part of being the principal is** seeing the students excited about learning! I have enjoyed watching students grow from year to year, remembering their kindergarten tears as I watch my fifth grade patrols and Peace Jammers.

**What I'll miss the most is** student smiles, spontaneous hugs, my wonderful and caring staff, interactions with families.

**The next principal here at Dieterich will find** dedicated staff members, smart, kind and generous students and concerned parents.

**In education it is really all about** ensuring that our students are prepared intellectually, socially, emotionally, and civically to be productive and responsible adults. We must give them the tools to learn for a lifetime.

**People think principals** are problem solvers—and we are! Unfortunately we can't solve EVERY problem.

**I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to** spending time with my grandchildren and helping them grow, golf and sleep.

# Aurora East Educational Foundation

**MINI-GRANTS:** This past fall the Aurora East Educational Foundation (AEEF) awarded over \$29,000 in grants to District 131 staff who applied for funding through the AEEF Educational Grants Program. The AEEF Educational Grants Program funds innovative ideas to be tested and the education of our youth to be enriched. Past activities have been very successful, making the educational experience of our students even more rewarding. In the past two years, over \$65,000 in mini-grants have been funded, with over \$209,000 awarded to deserving teachers since the Foundation's inception. The Foundation annually reviews and selects grant projects of a broad scope that have the potential for substantial impact. These projects are normally implemented during the current school year.

**SCHOLARSHIPS:** The AEEF will award five (5) \$1,000 scholarships to deserving Class of 2017 EA Seniors

**GOLF OUTING:** This year's annual golf outing to benefit the AEEF will be held at Phillips Park on July 20, 2017. The entire community is invited to golf or be a sponsor for this event.

**CONTRIBUTE TO THE AEEF:** There are many ways to contribute to the Foundation, including cash, check, memorial gifts, naming the Foundation in your will or as a beneficiary of a Life Insurance Policy, donations of real



estate or other real property, providing a gift in tribute to a special person.

Checks should be made out to the Aurora East Educational Foundation. All donations are tax-deductible and will be gratefully received, acknowledged, and put to work promoting educational excellence for our students and staff in East Aurora School District 131.

The AEEF is a not-for-profit tax-exempt corporation, directed by a group of private citizens, many of whom are graduates of Aurora East High School. The Foundation has funded scores of programs that have touched the lives of thousands of students throughout East Aurora School District 131. ❌

Rooted  
in  
Tomcat  
Pride



of our current district employees are graduates of East Aurora High School.

[JANUARY, 2017]

For further information or to make a donation please contact:

Aurora East Educational Foundation, 417 Fifth Street, Aurora, IL 60505 [lmorales@d131.org](mailto:lmorales@d131.org) (630) 299-5554



## EMMANUEL S. LLAMAS

EA retrospect

**I graduated from East Aurora High School** with the class of 2005

**Which was** 12 years ago

**When I think back on high school** I'm most proud of the EA culture. We had great racial and cultural diversity that

allowed us to explore ideas and customs outside of our own. But we were also united by our upbringing in working class families. We were all at East High with the purpose of bettering our lives and helping our families. This drive is the EA culture.

**If I attended EA again** the one thing I would do differently is diversify my class schedule. There were many classes that I wanted to take but decided against because they were outside of the traditional honors program schedule. It was not until my senior year that I took full control of my class schedule. Between Jazz Band, Symphonic Band, and Music Theory, I was spending half of my day in the band room and I loved every minute of it!

**In high school I was busy** trying to balance school, work, extracurriculars, family obligations, and a social life.

**These days I am busy** with exactly the same thing. The only difference now is that school and work have merged into one. As an attorney at Dreyer, Foote, Streit, Furgason & Slocum, I practice civil and commercial litigation, real estate, family law and personal injury.

**Life since high school has taught me** that every new challenge is an opportunity to build and improve yourself.

**The one class that prepared me most for my future** was symphonic band with Mr. Kaisershot. I quickly learned to show up to class prepared every single day. This is especially true today when I go to court.

**My advice to today's Tomcats is** to always strive and prosper. The saddest thing in life is wasted talent, and the choices that you make will shape your life forever.

# East Aurora School District 131 2016-17 SCHOOL CALENDAR

August					September					October					November				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
1	2	3	4	5				1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4
8	9	10	11	12	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	7	8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18	19	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	21	22	23	24	25
29	30	31			26	27	28	29	30	31					28	29	30		

  

December					January					February					March				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
			1	2	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3			1	2	3
5	6	7	8	9	9	10	11	12	13	6	7	8	9	10	6	7	8	9	10
12	13	14	15	16	16	17	18	19	20	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17
19	20	21	22	23	23	24	25	26	27	20	21	22	23	24	20	21	22	23	24
26	27	28	29	30	30	31				27	28				27	28	29	30	31

  

April					May					June				
M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F	M	T	W	TH	F
3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5				1	2
10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	5*	6*	7*	8*	9*
17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	12	13	14	15	16
24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	19	20	21	22	23
					29	30	31			26	27	28	29	30

- Non-attendance day for students
- Half Day: Student Attendance
- AM Kindergarten: 8:20 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.
- Elementary: 8:20 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
- Middle School: 8:00 a.m. – 11:35 a.m.
- High School: 7:55 a.m. – 11:35 a.m.
- Late Start (Elementary and High School Only)
- \* Student Emergency Days (If Necessary)

## AUGUST

22-24 **No Student Attendance** - Teacher Institute  
 25 **Classes Begin**

## SEPTEMBER

5 **No School** (Labor Day)  
 22 **Half Day: Student Attendance** - School Improvement

## OCTOBER

10 **No School** (Columbus Day)  
 20 **Half Day: Student Attendance** - School Improvement  
 26 Start of Second Quarter

## NOVEMBER

7 **No School** - Conferences (Noon to 8 p.m.)  
 8 **No School** - Conferences (10 a.m. to 6 p.m.)  
 11 **No School** (Veterans Day)  
 17 **Half Day: Student Attendance** - School Improvement  
 23-25 **No School** (Thanksgiving Break)

## DECEMBER

8 **Half Day: Student Attendance** - School Improvement  
 22-30 **No School** (Winter Break)

## JANUARY

2-4 **No School** (Winter Break)  
 16 **No School** (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)  
 17 Start of Third Quarter  
 26 **Half Day: Student Attendance** - School Improvement

## FEBRUARY

16 **Half Day: Student Attendance** - School Improvement  
 20 **No School** (Presidents' Day)

## MARCH

2 **Half Day: Student Attendance** (Conferences 5-8 p.m.)  
 3 **No School** - Teacher Institute  
 16 **Half Day: Student Attendance** - School Improvement  
 23 Start of Fourth Quarter  
 27-31 **No School** (Spring Break)

## APRIL

14 **No School** - Non-Attendance Day  
 20 **Half Day: Student Attendance** - School Improvement

## MAY

18 **Half Day: Student Attendance** - School Improvement  
 29 **No School** (Memorial Day)

## JUNE

2 **Last Day of Classes** / Fourth Quarter Ends \*  
 5 **No Student Attendance** - Teacher Institute  
 5-9 Student Emergency Days

\* Last day for students will be June 2, 2017, if no emergency days are used. (Staff last day would be June 5, 2017) If all 5 emergency days are used, the last day of school for students will be June 9, 2017. (Staff: June 12, 2017)