



Awarded the INSPRA
2006 Award of
Excellence

Right: **Tim Dettlaff**
shares information with
forum participants.

Board, Community Talk School Facilities

More than 120 parents, community members and district staff—including a sizeable contingent from Charles Quentin Elementary School—learned about the current status of the district's school buildings, along with the current and project enrollment trends for the district's nine schools during a Sept. 21 community forum at Middle School South.

After being welcomed by Board Vice President **Kathy Brown** and **Dr. Brian Knutson**, **Tim Dettlaff** with Ameresco presented an overview of current and projected student enrollments, lifecycle summaries of each building, and the costs required to maintain and address both new and aging school buildings.

According to projections from Rolf Campbell and Associates, the district's demographic consultant, elementary school enrollments will continue to decline over the next five years, while middle school enrollments will increase slightly and the enrollment at Lake Zurich High School will continue its steady increase.

The school district currently spends nearly \$590,000 per year on its facilities. According to Ameresco report, if the school district and its



constituents simply want the school facilities to be in "fair" condition, District 95 would need to spend \$4 million at some point within the next three years. That would include at least \$1.5 million in repairs that are commonly referred to as life safety related issues.

According to the Ameresco report, Charles Quentin, May Whitney,

Sarah Adams and Seth Paine schools will soon be dropping from a "fair" rating to a "poor" rating within the next five years unless the district invests significant funds into their upkeep and repair.

The Ameresco report can be found on the school district's web site at: www.lz95.org/business/FacilitiesSP2007.htm. Enrollment data can be found under the "Fast Facts" menu at www.lz95.org/business/.

Following the presentation, the audience broke into four smaller groups so that school board members and school/district administrators could gather input from the audience. That input—which covered a multitude of subjects—has been recorded and will be considered by the school district as it begins putting together a strategic facilities plan for CUSD 95.

Board of Education Approves Balanced 2006-07 Budget

During its September 28 regular meeting, the Community Unit School District 95 Board of Education completed a budgeting process that began in November of 2005 by unanimously approving an approximate \$75 million budget for 2006-07.

If one looks at the paperwork that has to be filed with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), it appears that the district has a \$1.6 million deficit. However, in reality, the district has projected a more than \$530,000 surplus. Confused?

Unfortunately, the ISBE rarely makes things easier or less complicated. That is particularly the case when it comes to school finance. The state-required forms indicate that the district shows a deficit in the IMRF/Social Security for non-certified staff retirement and also in its transportation fund, however, according to Assistant Superintendent

Jon Hitcho, the forms required by ISBE do not reflect financial reality.

The district is required to report approximately \$2.2 million in revenue from its annual school bus buy back program. The buy back program allows school buses purchased each year to be sold back to the school bus provider for 87 percent of the purchase price. According to the ISBE, the district cannot count the funds as direct revenue. Without that revenue, it gives the appearance that more is being expended than received in the transportation fund.

When you count the bus buy back funds as the true revenue source that it is, the district's overall 2006-07 budget reflects a budget surplus of \$530,680.

"The reality is we do have a surplus budget," said President **Gary Robillard**.

The mission of Lake Zurich Community Unit School District 95 is to inspire all students to be passionate, continuous learners and to prepare them with the skills to achieve their goals and flourish as responsible, caring citizens in a global community.

National Merit Semifinalists, Commended Named

Lake Zurich High School seniors **Christine Evans** and **Michael Wang** have been named semifinalists in the 52nd annual National Merit Scholarship Program, sponsored by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). The two were among approximately 16,000 students nationwide selected as semifinalists. Evans and Wang now have the opportunity to continue the competition for some 8,200 Merit Scholarship awards, worth \$33 million, that will be offered next spring.

More than 1.4 million juniors in nearly 21,000 high schools entered the 2007 National Merit Program by taking the 2005 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as an initial screen of program entrants.

In addition, four students at Lake Zurich High School have been named 2007 Commended Students in the 2007 National Merit Scholarship Program. According to **Dr. Michael Egan**, Principal of Lake Zurich High

School, the four students receiving the honor are **Matthew Gilbert**, **Alison Kremer**, **Thomas Nielsen** and **Eugene Park**. The four honored students will receive a letter of commendation from Lake Zurich High School and the NMSC, which conducts the program.

Approximately 34,000 Commended Students throughout the nation are being recognized for their exceptional academic promise. Although they will not continue in the 2007 competition for Merit Scholarship awards, Commended Students placed among the top five percent of more than 1.4 million students who entered the 2007 competition.

Established in 1955 specifically to conduct the annual National Merit Program, NMSC is a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance. Scholarships awarded through the program are underwritten by NMSC's own funds and approximately 500 business organizations and higher education institutions.

Dist. 95 Publications, Staff Program Win State Awards



Gail Drake, INSPRA two-time award winner for the District 95 Calendar.

Community Unit School District 95 received three awards in the 2006 Communications Contest sponsored by the Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (INSPRA). The district received its awards during a special luncheon on September 15 in Oakbrook, IL.

Receiving the Award of Excellence, the organization's top award, was *THRIVE in 95*, the weekly electronic newsletter published by the school district's Office of Communications and Community Relations. *THRIVE in 95* has previously won the Award of Merit in the international publications contest sponsored by the National School Public Relations Association. *THRIVE in 95* was created during the 2004-2005 school year by the district's Office of Communications & Community Relations as a way to share timely information with staff members, parents, local leaders, the news media, citizens and others who want to be kept informed about news and events within District 95 and its schools. In addition to news and information, the publication occasionally features *The Mill*, which addresses rumors, questions and concerns from staff and community members. The publication is emailed to recipients on Fridays when schools are in session. The publication is also available on the district's Internet web site at www.lz95.org.

For the second year in a row, the district's annual school calendar, produced by Information Technology staff member **Gail Drake**, received the Award of Merit in the calendar category. The calendar is produced annually by Drake and features a month-by-month listing of the many school and district events, meetings and holidays. It is printed and distributed to staff and community members. An electronic version of the calendar is also available online at www.lz95.org and click on "Calendars & Schedules" under the "Information" menu on the district's main page.

The district also received the INSPRA Golden Achievement Award of Merit for its annual Staff Recognition Program, which honors staff members for specific years of service (5, 10, 15...), retirees, and those staff members who have demonstrated excellence in both teaching and non-teaching positions. Combining video vignettes with live performances and several presenters, the annual recognition program has been well received by staff. The annual recognition program is produced by the district's Office of Communications & Community Relations, Office of Human Resources, and the Office of Superintendent Dr. Brian Knutson. The INSPRA Golden Achievement Awards—which feature both an Award of Excellence and an Award of Merit—are presented to outstanding programs and initiatives that enhance communication efforts in Illinois public schools.

Anyone interested in receiving the *THRIVE in 95* e-newsletter can simply email Jennings at jim.jennings@lz95.org, or call (847) 540-5489.

Join an Action Team

Community Unit School District 95 is currently seeking staff, parents, students and interested community member volunteers to serve on action teams which will develop the necessary steps for successfully implementing the five strategies of the district's strategic plan which was renewed last spring and approved by the Board of Education on May 25. The five action teams include:

Staff Commitment
Community Commitment
Trust & Collaboration
Recruitment/Retention
Curriculum & Learning Opportunities



Action teams will begin meeting in October, with their final product expected in January/February. The finished action plans will then be reviewed by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee before being submitted to the school district and its Board of Education.

If you are willing to participate on an Action Team, simply call the district's Office of Communications, (847) 540-5489. For more information, visit the district's strategic plan web site at www.lz95.org/strategic.

Show the Spirit of 95



Students, their families and district staff are showing their school spirit on the new Spirit of 95 web page. The pictures were received last spring after the Office of Communications & Community Relations asked staff, students and their families to send vacation and other photos of them and/or their families wearing their school spirit wear. The idea came from a similar wall of fame website for Eskimo Joe's, a popular collegiate hangout in Stillwater, OK.

You can view the Spirit of 95 web page by clicking on "Publications" menu on the district's main web page (www.lz95.org), or go directly to it at www.lz95.org/spiritwall.

To submit a photo for the Spirit of 95 spirit wall, email your photo(s) to jim.jennings@lz95.org. Please note that by emailing your photo, you are giving the school district permission to post it on the Internet and to potentially utilize it in district publications such as *THRIVE in 95*.

Save a Tree, Go Paperless with SIGN



Are you tired of sorting through mounds of flyers, bulletins, and memos in your child's school backpack? If so that you should join the hundreds of District 95 families who have dropped the paper habit and joined the School Information Gathering Network (SIGN).

First piloted at Seth Paine Elementary School and spreading quickly to other schools, SIGN is a web-based approach to keeping parents informed about area activities and programs available to their children. Where before, parents had to literally sort through piles of paper in their student's backpack, SIGN allows parents and students to view the same information with a few clicks of a computer mouse.

While the SIGN website (www.lz95.org/sign) focuses on flyers and other information from area non-profit organizations who have requested distribution of their materials, Seth Paine School has expanded the idea on their own website by including important school information and PTO news. You can access the Seth Paine website at www.lz95.org/sp/.

SIGN was developed as a way to address the parent and staff complaints about the hundreds of flyers and brochures that are sent home through student backpacks.

According to **Jim Jennings**, Communications Director, SIGN allows parents to access the flyers and other information from any computer or web-based device that has Internet access. From a standpoint of environmental stewardship, it is expected that SIGN will greatly cut down on the amount of paper, ink and toner being used by non-profit organizations and the district's schools.

Parents, students, staff and interested community members can access the SIGN website at www.lz95.org/sign/. It is important to note that only those flyers that have been approved for distribution will be posted on the SIGN website.

MSN Students Climb the Walls for JDRF



Recently, the student council at Middle School North encouraged their fellow students to put their best foot forward by donating a dollar to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF). Those who donated a dollar during the lunch time fundraiser received a paper cutout of a tennis shoe that they could then tape to the wall at



MSN. In total, the student council raised

approximately \$800 for the JDRF.

The student council got involved after being approached by seventh grader **Maggie Monson**, who suffers from the disease. All the monies raised are being donated to the JDRF to help with researching the cure for this disease. In addition to the sneaker, the grade with the most "sneakers" earned the chance to have their names drawn for a Best Buy gift certificate that was donated to the drive. Sponsors of the MSN Student Council are **Melanie Honegger**

and **Jackie Giese**.



Are You in the Know?

A new school year brings new opportunities and fresh beginnings. So start of this school year by being in the know when it comes to news about your schools by joining the Community Unit School District 95 **Key Communicator Network**.

Our Key Communicator (KeyCom) program is a network of community residents, leaders, opinion shapers and watchdogs whose opinions are well respected by friends, colleagues and neighbors.

We are not looking for cheerleaders, but people who care about our schools and want to be kept informed and are then willing to share that information with others.

As a Key Communicator, you will receive timely, factual information via a regular newsletter e-mailed to you about the work we're doing and

the issues affecting your school district and your schools.



Because this is designed to be a two-way communications network, we encourage you to give us your input and share your opinions. As a KeyCom member, your responsibility will be to share the information with friends, neighbors and colleagues.

To become a Key Communicator, simply call, email or fax:

**Community Unit School District 95
Communications & Community Relations
400 S. Old Rand Road
Lake Zurich, IL 60047-2459
Phone: (847) 540-5489
Fax: (847) 438-6702
jim.jennings@lz95.org**

THRIVE in 95 is produced by the Community Unit School District 95 Office of Communications & Community Relations for staff and interested community members. Story submissions are greatly encouraged.

Annette Jacobsen,
Editor
Jim Jennings,
Publisher
(847) 540-5489
jim.jennings@lz95.org
www.lz95.org



The Mill

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Rumors and inaccurate information seem to fly faster than the speed of light. Left unchallenged, such misinformation is often mistaken for fact. The Mill is designed to answer such questions, rumors and issues with factual information.

Q: *I have heard rumors regarding the closing of Charles Quentin Elementary School and the redistricting of area neighborhoods. Will the Board of Education unveil its plan for Charles Quentin and the other school facilities at the September 21 Community Forum?*

A: Neither the school district nor the Board of Education has formulated plans to close Charles Quentin School or any other of the district's schools. There is also no imminent redistricting of Charles Quentin School under consideration.

Prior to developing a school facilities plan and/or considering any school closing, the Board of Education wants to receive input from the community. The purpose of the Sept. 21 Community Forum at Middle School South was to share information regarding the district's school buildings and to receive comments from the community and district staff. With the feedback received from the forum and the comments left via the district website, the district will begin to develop a comprehensive facilities plan. Information from the Facilities Forum will be posted by September 26. Residents and staff members are encouraged to provide their comments via the link established on the district's website (www.lz95.org).

The Mill is produced by the Community Unit School District 95 Office of Communications & Community Relations for staff and interested community members. We encourage you to send us your questions, rumors and issues. However, due to the volume of questions, not all may appear in this publication. Issues that would be considered confidential personnel matters will not be discussed by this publication. **Rumors, questions and issues can be sent to:** Jim Jennings, (847) 540-5489, jim.jennings@lz95.org.