



Spring 2008

*We wish to extend congratulations to all of the Finley Junior High 8<sup>th</sup> graders and their families on their upcoming graduation. The event will take place on Friday, May 30, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.*

## Registration for the 2008-2009 School Year

Registration for the 2008-2009 school year will take place in the Multi-Purpose Room of Finley Junior High School on **Thursday August 7 and Friday August 8**. More information will be sent in the summer newsletter regarding documents needed for registration of your students.

## District Achievements



**Ridge Lawn School** has been recognized as an *Illinois Spotlight School* for 2006 and 2007. All Spotlight Schools meet the following criteria:

- At least 50% are low income in 2007.
- At least 60% of students have met or exceeded standards in both reading and mathematics in 2007.
- At least 50% of students met or exceeded standards in both reading and mathematics in two previous years.
- Made Adequate Yearly Progress in the two previous years as required by No Child Left Behind, which in 2007, meant the following:
  - At least 55% meeting and exceeding standards in both reading and mathematics
  - 95% participation rate in state assessments for all students and each subgroup
  - Attendance rate of at least 90% for elementary and middle schools and graduation rate of at least 72% for high schools

**Finley Junior High School** has been recognized as an *Illinois Academic Improvement School* for 2006 and 2007. To receive an Academic Improvement Award, all schools must achieve the following:

- Make significant academic improvement by either -
- Showing at least 7.5 point improvement in state test scores in both reading and mathematics between last year and this year, **OR** showing at least 15 point improvement in state test scores in both reading and mathematics over the last three years.
- Show an upward trend in state test results in both reading and mathematics

**Finley Junior High School** has also been nominated as a Blue Ribbon School. The criteria for this nomination is that at least 40% of students are identified as free and reduced. Additionally, they have to have dramatically improved their performance in at least the past three years in reading and mathematics, and have achieved at high levels. In September the winning Blue Ribbon Schools will be announced. We are extremely proud of all of our students and staff who have made these honors possible through their commitment and dedication to education. We also commend parents and community members for their support.



## Farewell and Best Wishes

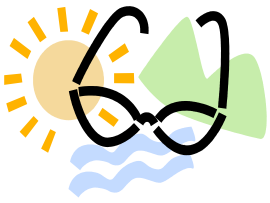
We say goodbye and best wishes to Mrs. Nina Duke, who is retiring from our district after 34 years of service to students and the community. It has been our honor and pleasure to have worked with Mrs. Duke. Mrs. Duke states, "It is with pleasure and mixed emotions that I prepare for my retirement. I have enjoyed working in District 127.5 for 34 years. I have had the pleasure of working all of the 3 district schools with most of the years spent teaching at Ridge Lawn. I taught 4<sup>th</sup> grade for 24 years and have worked as the Learning Resource Teacher for the last 10 years for grades kindergarten through fifth. I would like to thank all of my colleagues, past and present, for their guidance, encouragement, support and most of all, their friendship. A special thanks to all my wonderful students who made each day exciting, fun and challenging for me. In the future, when I reflect on my teaching career, it will be with many fond memories."



### Looking Back 2007-2008

Many wonderful opportunities and experiences were shared by students and staff during the 2007-2008 school year. Some of the highlights:

- o *All of our schools made AYP, Adequate Yearly Progress.*
- o *Foreign language was offered for the very first time in the junior high and all of the 8th graders who participated in the class passed the high school Spanish exam.*
- o *Students and staff throughout the district participated in the Rebecca Caudill Reading Program.*
- o *Failure Is Not An Option was implemented at Finley Junior High School.*
- o *Students at Ridge Central School continue to read with the hopes of having their principal kiss a cow!*
- o *All of the students and staff in the district participated in the Character Counts Walk-A-Thon and raised \$8,000, giving half to American Cancer Society.*
- o *The cheerleading team from Finley was honored with a Division 1 ranking.*
- o *For the very first time an automated message, Instant Alert, was implemented to communicate school closings and other information.*
- o *The Chicago Ridge Public Library utilized grant money to offer technology programs and professional development for teachers, as well as continued reading opportunities for all students.*
- o *The junior high students raised \$2000 in the Penny Wars for the Ronald McDonald House*
- o *A progress monitoring tool, Aimsweb, was utilized at Ridge Lawn and Ridge Central Schools.*
- o *The district has implemented Response to Interventions strategies and staff members participated in a variety of professional development activities that support RTI.*
- o *Many staff members have completed classes in graduate studies and many others continue to grow professionally through graduate courses.*



## Summer Reading

Summer offers many unique opportunities to weave literacy into everyday activities with your child. Beach trips, swimming in a pool, or family barbecues provide ideal opportunities for conversation, book reading, and looking at letters; skills that will help your child become a reader and writer later in life. PBS Parents provides these tips for making your child's summer full of literacy fun.

- **Be a reader yourself.** When you read newspapers and books and write letters and lists, you show your child how reading and writing are useful. By demonstrating why reading and writing are important, you will motivate your child to become a reader and writer.
- **Set aside a consistent time each day for reading aloud.** Choose a read-aloud time that fits your family's summer schedule and stick to it every day.
- **Connect read-aloud choices to summer activities.** When you read and discuss books about things your child has experienced, you help him/her learn important vocabulary and extend understanding of experiences.

## Response to Intervention

The focus for much of the professional development for staff has been Response to Intervention. RTI is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with high quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These Services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. RTI is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special education, creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data. We continue to update parents regarding Response to Intervention strategies and the district plan. All schools are required to create a plan by January 2009.

# District Update

THE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF CHICAGO  
RIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 127½

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Dr. Joyce Kleinaitis  
*Superintendent of Schools*



### *Dates to Remember:*

*April 14*  
*April 15*

*April 15*  
*April 19*  
*April 30*  
*May 5-9*  
*May 7*

*May 8*  
*May 13*  
*May 16*  
*May 16*  
*May 21*  
*May 26*  
*May 28*  
*May 30*

*June 4*  
*August 7-8*  
*August 20*  
*August 21*

*School in session for all students*  
*Parent Teacher Conferences: No Student Attendance*  
*12:30-3:30 and 5:00-8:00*  
*Kindergarten Registration: 12:30-3:30 and 5:00-8:00*  
*PTA Fun Fair*  
*Early Dismissal*  
*Teacher Appreciation Week*  
*NJHS Induction 6:30*  
*Spring Concert at Finley-7:00 p.m.*  
*School Board Meeting-7:30 p.m.*  
*8<sup>th</sup> grade Banquet*  
*5<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation*  
*Central Art Fair*  
*Memorial Day- No School*  
*Early Dismissal*  
*Graduation-7:00 p.m.*  
*Last Day of School: Dismissal: 9:30 a.m.*  
*Registration*  
*First Day of School; Dismissal: 11:30*  
*First Full Day of School*



