

"Becoming
Responsible,
Respectful,
Lifelong
Learners"

Something to Celebrate

at Germantown Elementary School

Letter from the Superintendent

*Dear Parents,
Staff, Students,
and Community*



Germantown Elementary School District #60

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School Board Members

Kathleen Fauke | Denise Haake
Charlene Hemker | Darin Johnson
Mark Kohnen | Jeff Lampe
Gail Theising

Superintendent

Robin Becker

Happy New Year to you and your family! As we look ahead, we have plenty of reason to feel hope and optimism for what we can achieve as a school district. We have a top notch faculty and staff working very hard to provide the youth of the community with a well-rounded education. Our students are great kids. They are committed to doing their best in all aspects of life. The support from parents and the community at large serves to guide our students to make good decisions. The Board of Education is dedicated to making decisions that best meet the needs of the school community. Together, we can send the message that academics must be a top priority as academic success leads to future success in life.

The first half of the school year went by quickly and smoothly. We successfully completed the window and door replacement project in conjunction with the Energy Efficiency Grant the school district received. We are excited about the increased energy savings and the modernized look created by this project.

In the academic arena, we have just begun the third quarter. We encourage all students to get the quarter started on the right foot by writing down homework and test information in their student planner. Using the student planner is a great way to stay organized. This effective study habit will help the students now and in the future. We encourage parents of all students to reinforce the importance of using the student planner by checking it on a nightly basis.

The third through eighth grade students will be participating in ISAT testing

March 5-16. Every year, state law requires a minimum percentage of students to meet or exceed state standards as measured by the ISAT. This year, the state goal is 92.5%, thus we are working hard to help our students achieve and surpass that goal.

While academics are the district's top priority, studies show that students who participate in extra-curricular activities in elementary school and high school experience increased success in college and in life. With this in mind, Germantown offers a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. We are currently in the midst of basketball season with the post-season upon us. Volleyball practice has begun with games beginning later this month. The Scholar Bowl Team will be busy at work this month as well. We wish all groups the best of luck as they look to achieve success in areas outside the classroom.

To see a recap of the highlights from 2011, go to the district website, germantownbulldogs.org, and click on the Superintendent Newsletter link at the top of the page. Then click on January 2012.

Here is to a happy, healthy, and productive 2012!

Sincerely,

Robin Becker



Celebrate Success

Stock Market Game

Germantown Eighth Grade students went back in time during the second quarter. They relived the Great Depression. On November 4, the students were given jobs and salaries that fit the 1920's. They had previously worked out a budget, so once they received their salary, they had to pay their expenses, rent and of course Uncle Sam. With their remaining money, they were allowed to purchase stocks or invest their money in various banks. Of course along the way some banks went out of business and some stocks collapsed. Some students wound up out on the street and some managed to hold on to their money. Spencer Kohrmann and Jessica Albers were the top money makers in this year's Stock Market Game.



Through their study of the Great Depression, the eighth grade students also participated in the Stock Market Game™ program, an educational program of Econ Illinois. This program teaches students about the world of investments, helping them learn to research companies, make sound

investment decisions and follow those investments over a number of weeks during the school year. Student teams begin with a virtual cash account, with which they create and manage a portfolio that includes stocks, mutual funds and bonds. Teams conduct research and evaluate potential investments. They decide together how they want to invest their cash based on what they have learned. Even though the money is not real, stock transactions are processed at real-time prices, connecting The Stock Market Game experience with real life.

Basketball News

The Lady Bulldog Varsity Basketball Team under the direction of head coach, Gerard Albers, and volunteer assistant coach, Jeff Lampe, captured third place in the Clinton County Conference Tournament held at Albers the week of December 5. In the Collinsville Tournament held January 4-7, the Lady Bulldogs walked away with the second place trophy. The Lady Bulldogs are now in the midst of post-season play. They defeated Albers/Damiansville in



Regional Champs

the Regional championship game to earn a berth in the State Tournament at Rend Lake. Their first round game will be held on Saturday, January 21, at 2:30 against St. Mary's Mt. Vernon.



2011 Tourney Champions
7th Grade Carlyle Tournament

The JV Lady Bulldogs competed in the 7th Grade Carlyle Tournament December 2-4. The team finished pool play 3-1 and avenged an earlier loss to Aviston by beating them soundly in the championship game.

The Bulldog Varsity Basketball Team under the direction of head coach, Jon Hoelscher, and volunteer assistant coach, Cody Finan, captured fourth place in the Clinton County Conference Tournament and third place in the Hoyleton Tournament. The Varsity Bulldogs are wrapping up their regular season with a tournament at Irvington. Regionals will be held January 26-30.

The 6th Grade Boys' Basketball Team captured third place in the ASA Tourney January 13-14.

Congratulations to all Bulldog Basketball teams and coaches for their success this season. Good luck in the post-season.



Community Connection



Veteran's Day

The Germantown Elementary student body commemorated Veteran's Day on November 9th. During an all-school assembly, 22 local veterans introduced themselves to the students and the branch of the military they served. The Veterans represented all the branches of the military. Under the guidance of band director, Pat Henrichs, several students escorted the Veterans into the gym while playing the military cadence. Joe Langenhorst led the Vets in the Posting of the Colors. Superintendent Robin Becker thanked everyone for coming and introduced Father Buerster, who read a poem called, "Heroes." Following his touching tribute, Tony Parr, a Germantown teacher and Veteran,

talked about the sacrifices that all Veterans make. A fifth grade student, Chloe Albers, then read a tribute she had written for the Veterans. Veteran's Day ceremony coordinator, Cindy Zurliene, asked Ben Koch to demonstrate and explain the meaning behind the 13 folds of the flag. This was followed by the chorus singing, "How I Love America." Two very touching slide shows titled "American Soldier," by Toby Keith, and Lee Greenwood's, "I am Proud to be an American," were presented and brought a touching finish to the assembly. After the Retiring of the Colors, the Veterans were invited to stay for a brunch following the assembly. A special thank you goes out to Joe Langenhorst for working closely with Cindy Zurliene to coordinate this ceremony.

Germantown Elementary School hosts a Veteran's Day ceremony every school year to honor those who serve and protect our country. We will once again host a Veteran's Day ceremony next school year sometime the week of November 5. Once the date is finalized, we will share it with everyone. All Veterans of Germantown Elementary students are welcome and encouraged to participate in the ceremony.

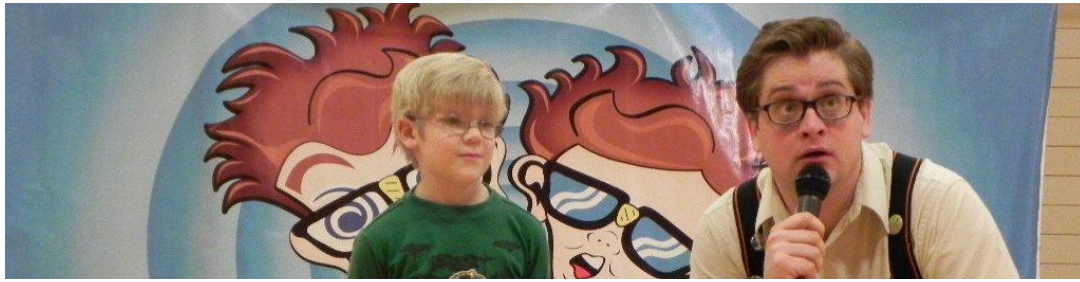


Kids Health Fair

Germantown Elementary is committed to promoting the Health and Wellness of its students. On Friday, March 9, we will host our second annual Kids Health Fair. This year's Health Fair will target students in grades K-4. We would love the support of the community in our efforts to educate students about making healthy choices. If you or someone you know would be interested in helping us with the Health Fair, please contact Kris Shubert at 523-4253 or kshubert@clinton.k12.il.us.

At Germantown Elementary School, we are committed to opening our doors to all members of the community. By working together collaboratively, we will be better served to develop responsible, respectful, lifelong learners.





News and Notes

PreK Program

Germantown Elementary offers both a state funded Pre-K At-Risk program and a tuition-based preschool program. This year our school was one of only a few schools in the county fortunate enough to receive money from the Illinois State Board of Education to provide a preschool program for 3-5 year olds who qualify through a screening process which takes place each spring. This program meets from 8:15-11:15 five days a week. Our tuition-based program offers a similar academic setting 3 days a week from 12:15-3:00.

Many parents often ask, "Why should I send my child to preschool? They will have enough years in school the way it is." If you were to step into a kindergarten classroom today you would see that what is expected of today's kindergarten children is what we would have done as first graders years ago. The academic expectations of young children in the 21st century are quite high. National research has shown that kindergarteners who start the year off academically behind their peers tend to struggle catching up with those peers.

The benefits of a quality preschool program are limitless. Research has provided evidence that the majority of a child's brain development occurs before the age of 5. These early years are a time when young children need to be given the opportunity to grow

intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically in a climate that is stimulating and builds self-esteem and self-discipline. Through the use of a play-based curriculum, preschool programs lay the foundation for knowledge, social skills and confidence, paving the way for success throughout their school careers and life. Children learn how to socialize, get along with others, share and grow in independence and confidence. All of these qualities make for a smooth transition into kindergarten where they will be ready for the rigorous expectations that are a part of today's classrooms.

Germantown Elementary uses the Creative Curriculum goals and objectives which are aligned with the Illinois Early Learning Standards. These goals and objectives help us to track children's progress in the areas of Social/Emotional, Cognitive, Physical and Language Development. Goals are met through the use of active play, cognitive play, creative play and role play in a variety of settings - small group, large group and individually.

Screenings for the 2012-2013 preschool program will take place at Germantown Elementary on March 14, 2012. During these screenings professionals meet with children to assess their language development, pre-academic and physical abilities, vision, and hearing skills. Parental questions and concerns are addressed and parents are given an overview of

the screening before leaving. Be sure to call the school office at 523-4253 to reserve a time to have your child screened and to get him/her on the path to academic success!

Check Us Out on Facebook



One of the goals included in the 2011-12 Strategic Plan is to promote active school-home partnerships throughout the school year. We use a variety of communication tools, such as STI, Blackboard Connect, the school district website, media outlets, newsletters, and the marquee to keep families updated on important school news and events. Because social networking outlets play a major role in today's society, we have decided to host our own school district Facebook page. We are hoping that through this outlet we will be able to provide the school community with up to date information in a timely manner. This Facebook page went live for a trial basis on Friday, January 13. For Facebook users, simply log into your Facebook account and conduct a search for Germantown Elementary SD #60.

To ensure that the Facebook page is used properly by our "fans", we have created a Facebook Disclaimer-Guidelines document which is accessible on the left hand side of our Facebook page.



2011-12 Germantown Elementary Strategic Plan

Every summer, the Board of Education conducts a Strategic Planning meeting. At this meeting, we outline areas of strength and weakness and review the findings of the Internal Review Committee. We use the information shared to create goals and strategies for the upcoming school year.

In the October publication of the School-Community Newsletter, we highlighted the 2011-12 goals associated with buildings and grounds, community, and curriculum and instruction. In this publication, the district's finance and personnel goals will be the focus.

IV. Category: Finance

1. GOAL: The Superintendent of Germantown SD 60, with the assistance of the Bookkeeper, will make fiscally responsible decisions that will serve to promote maintaining a balanced budget.

A. Strategy: The administration will constantly monitor the financial condition of the district relative to the resources made available from local, state, and federal sources.

B. Strategy: The Superintendent of Germantown School District 60 will encourage members of the faculty and staff to write for grants that will help secure funds for educational activities.



C. Strategy: The administration will provide the Director of Buildings/Grounds, the Director of Transportation, and the Head Cook with a monthly report outlining their monthly expenditures and the percent of their budget that has been used for the fiscal year. The administration will meet with these individuals on a quarterly basis.

D. Strategy: The administration will keep the public informed of the financial condition of the school district.

V. Category: Personnel

1. GOAL: The faculty, staff, and administration at Germantown SD 60 will be highly qualified, involved, and motivated.

A. Strategy: The administration will maintain a long range staffing pattern based upon enrollment projections that maximizes resources of personnel and money and accounts for potential retirement obligations and faculty/staff attrition.

B. Strategy: The administration of Germantown SD 60 will provide yearly updates on potential staffing patterns to the Board of Education for their review and action.

C. Strategy: The administration will foster a plan to promote positive staff morale and employee recognition.

D. Strategy: The administration at Germantown SD 60 will maintain a commitment to hiring the best and retaining the best.

Mark Your Calendars

January 28: Come join us for an evening of fun with trivia as the Germantown PTA hosts its second annual Trivia Night. The event will be held at the Germantown American Legion Hall. Call 523-4253 for more information.

February 2: PreK Family Fun Night is scheduled for Thursday, February 2, from 6:30-7:30 in the school cafeteria. All Germantown residents with 3, 4, and 5 year old children are invited to join us for an evening of fun and games.

February 15: Kindergarten registration for the 2012-13 school year will be held at the Germantown Elementary School office on Wednesday, February 15, from 5:00-8:00 P.M. Kindergarten students must be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2012. An official copy of the child's certificate of live birth, the child's social security number, and 2 proofs of residency are due at registration. Physical/Immunizations, dental exams, and eye exams are required by the first day of school 2012.

March 14: A free Pre-school screening Clinic for children from birth to 5 years of age is being offered at Germantown Elementary on March 14, from 1:00-7:00 P.M. Call the school office at 523-4253 to schedule an appointment.



Teacher Feature

After 34 years in the teaching profession, all of them at Germantown, Ms. Susan Lienen will be retiring at the end of the 2011-12 school year. With her impending retirement only a few months away, she is being spotlighted in this Teacher Feature.

Why did you decide to become a teacher? I started wanting to be a teacher in high school. I became very interested in business classes such as typing, shorthand, office management, etc. and was going to teach high school students. Then when I was in college, I decided to switch to elementary education.

What grade levels have you taught in your career? I started Germantown teaching first grade for a large class. The class was put together for 2nd grade, so I was let go but rehired in the summer to help teach reading to K-2. When the 3rd grade position opened, I grabbed it, and taught third for about 28 years. Last year the Literature/RtI position opened so I gave it a try...great decision!

What is your favorite part of the job? My favorite part of my job is definitely working with kids. I've always loved seeing kids have that "moment" when they realize they love to read! I also like trying to think of ways or "tricks" to make reading and math easier for students.

When you retire, what is one thing you will miss about working at Germantown? Other than the kids, I



2009-10 School Year

will miss seeing the teachers on a daily basis. The teachers here have helped me plan weddings, given advice on raising kids, shared the joy of having a grandchild, and dried my tears. I can't imagine not seeing them on a regular basis.

What is one of the biggest changes in education you have experienced since you started teaching? Technology definitely. When I started teaching, kids wrote on the chalkboard with chalk, did all their papers with a pencil (not on a computer), we made our own worksheets and copied them on the "purple copier" that the kids LOVED to smell, and tried to get the purple out of our clothes. Their world consisted of what was in their textbooks. Now with the click of a mouse they can experience anything both on earth and in space.

What is your favorite children's book? *The Cat in the Hat*....it didn't matter how many times I read it, I was a nervous wreck when the mother got closer and closer to the house and the snow was still blue, the house was a wreck, and the cat and Thing 1 and 2

were still running around! My favorite "older" book that I read in school was *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

What piece of advice would you give all children regarding school? Read! Turn off the TV, step away from the video games, turn off the iPad and open a book. Let your eyes and your imagination create characters, settings, situations, and soak up the words of a great author!

What one memorable event or quote "made your day" during your career? About ten years ago, I wrote an Internet Unit on Native Americans. One day at school I was told there was a newspaper reporter from California that wanted to do an article on my website. After I realized that it wasn't a teacher playing a trick on me, I did the interview and received a copy of the newspaper with a picture from my website and about a half page article in the newspaper. It was quite exciting and unexpected.

If someone wrote a biography about you, what would the title be? You're Not Living if You're Not Having Fun!



1985-86 School Year