



# NEWS

COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT 64 Park Ridge-Niles

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## **District 64 Board Restores Staff from Previous Cuts; Adds Only Selected New Positions for 2008-09**

Affirming the importance of continuing to improve student achievement while maintaining fiscal responsibility, the Park Ridge-Niles District 64 Board of Education at its April 7 meeting restored several teaching and administrative positions cut previously and approved the limited addition of new staff for 2008-09.

In all, the approved staffing will add about \$500,000 to the 2008-09 budget; that amount will decrease after three years when one temporary District-level position is eliminated. The administration's recommendations for 2008-09 staffing had totaled almost \$730,000.

At the meeting, the Board and administration affirmed that the additions can be accommodated within the District's budget, and will not jeopardize the pledge made during the referendum to avoid returning to taxpayers for additional funding for 10 years. The new staff also will allow the full complement of planned program and curricular reviews to move forward on schedule.

"We are pleased that the Board was willing to restore staffing eliminated during the long period of cutbacks experienced prior to the 2007 referendum," stated Superintendent Sally Pryor. "The new positions – even on a limited basis – also will give us crucial momentum to launch a new, mandated Early Intervening Services/Response to Intervention (EIS/RtI) initiative that we believe will positively impact student learning throughout the District," she added.

The Board agreed to restore the following positions that had been cut in previous years:

- Restore 5.0 teachers to work with students to bolster literacy in grades 4-5.
- Restore the 10-month Lincoln Assistant Principal to 12 months and add summer school supervision to the responsibilities.
- Reinstate the Roosevelt Assistant Principal, but reduce to 10 months.

In addition, the Board approved two new positions as part of the EIS/RtI initiative, but made one temporary:

- Add 1.0 psychologist to provide support to teachers as EIS/RtI is implemented. District 64's current ratio of 3 psychologists for 4,369 students ranks last among a comparison group of neighboring school districts.
- Limited a new administrative position of EIS/RtI Coordinator for the District to three years only to provide extra support as the initiative is launched in all schools. The administration had recommended the position be permanent.

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## DISTRICT 64 / ADD ONE

The psychologist and EIS/RtI Coordinator will work directly with principals and teachers to help them effectively implement the EIS/RtI model – called an “Every Ed” initiative – that focuses on monitoring student progress data to improve learning.

“The overall impact of the five literacy teachers combined with the added psychologist and a temporary EIS/RtI Coordinator will build capacity at our schools to launch and sustain the program,” Dr. Pryor stated. “The three-year span for the Coordinator will provide a bridge during a critical time period to help the new initiative firmly take root,” Dr. Pryor noted. Board members expressed the hope that the Coordinator position would be filled from within District 64 to provide a smooth transition and effective leadership.

Because of this added administrator at the District level for a three-year span, the District also will be able to maintain an “aggressive timeframe” to complete a series of important program and curriculum reviews that require administrative leadership as well as participation by teachers, parents and community members, Dr. Pryor confirmed. The Middle School Program Review, a review of the Foreign Language Elementary School (FLES) program, and curriculum reviews of reading, writing and technology all are expected to move forward as planned.

Two proposals failed to win Board approval at this time:

- 2.0 Assistant Principals to be shared by the District’s other four elementary schools to free time for principals to focus on instructional leadership.
- A new administrator to coordinate the Jefferson Extended Day Kindergarten/ After School programs, which are both fee-based optional services.

The Board action on April 7 concludes a lengthy review spanning six meetings since January. Additional financial and comparison data to other districts and other analyses were developed as proposals were explored and revised. The Board had initiated the process in December by directing administration to consider what staffing would be required to improve student achievement, implement EIS/RtI, and maintain the pace of the program and curriculum reviews as well as achieve the District’s goals of meeting the needs of the whole child and maintaining financial health.

“We believe this has been a very healthy period of dialogue with the Board and the community about how to achieve important goals for our students while being fiscally responsible,” Dr. Pryor added. “Children will directly benefit from the new teachers and staff as well as from the program reviews and curriculum studies underway. We are thankful to the Board and community for giving us these added resources that we know will help improve education for all students,” she noted.

As a further measure of accountability, District 64 will be monitoring and sharing student achievement data annually with the community through new scorecards tied to the District’s Educational Ends statements for all academic and non-academic areas of learning. The scorecards will be available later this school year on the District’s Web site: [www.d64.org](http://www.d64.org).