



Board Briefs

Mission: Empower student growth and achievement through equitable, challenging opportunities that promote excellence, innovation, critical thinking, and respect.

Board Briefs from School Board Meeting Feb. 24, 2025

Board Briefs are a communication tool designed to highlight essential conversations and decisions made on behalf of students, families, staff, and the larger community by the District 70 School Board at each monthly School Board meeting.

Student Recognition

Copeland Manor and Highland Middle School students involved in service projects this year were honored by the Board of Education and Supt. Rebecca Jenkins last night.

Those honored included:

Copeland Student Council members for organizing several drives and fundraisers to support the D70 Community Care Close and making Valentine's Day cards for the organization "Card for Hospitalized Kids" of Chicago. The students included Michael G., Emily M., Angela H., Elizabeth M., Harrison D., Sylvan W., Elise B., Olivia M., Abigail P., Luke B., Wes M., Holden P., and Daniel B. The school sponsors are staff members Eileen Hoch and Victoria Vaccaro. Principal Annette McBride and Mrs. Hoch presented.

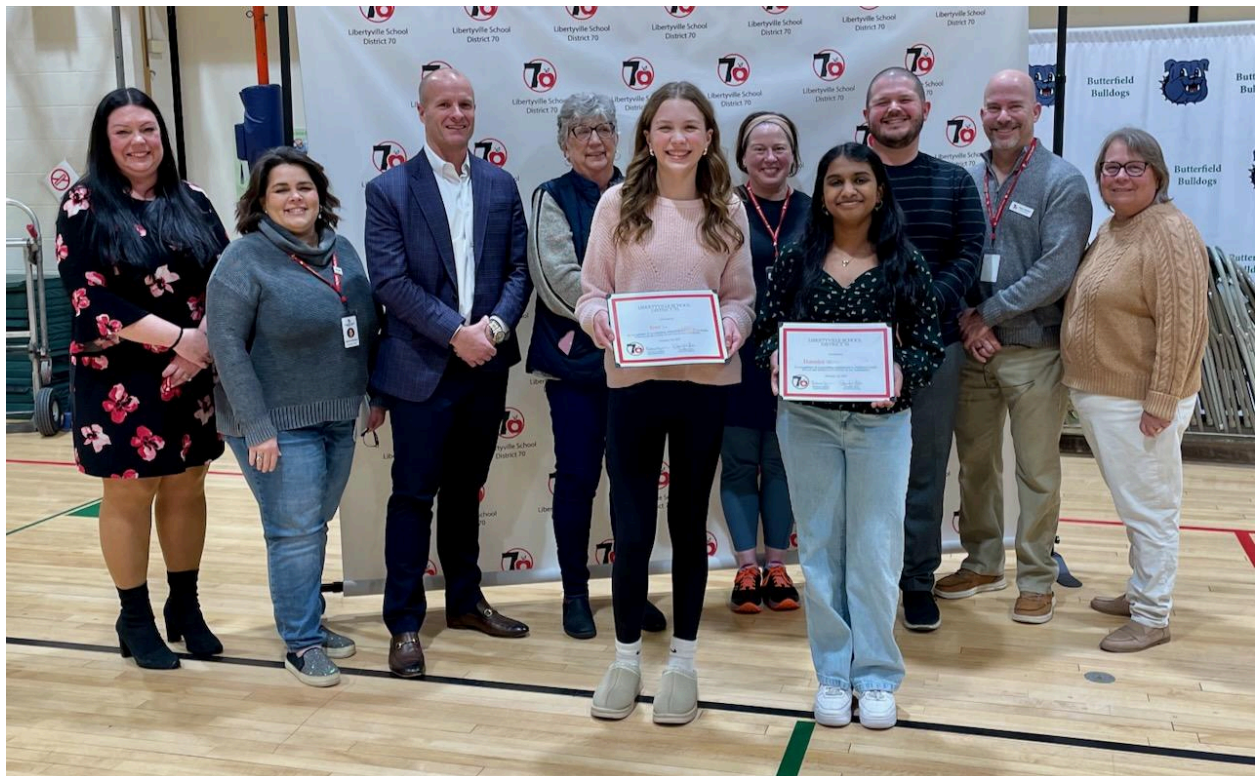


Three groups of HMS students were honored for service projects. Principal Dr. Jon Hallmark talked about the students and their work. Students honored included:

Charity Committee Student Representatives (these students help to run the yearlong fundraisers for the school's annual charity drive): Nathan C. (6th Grade Student Council), Molly T. (7th Grade Student Council), Sasha S. (8th Grade Student Council), and Maxine M. (NJHS)



Recognizing the fundraising efforts of the National Junior Honor Society officers: President: Bree S., Vice-President: Kinsie G., Secretary: Jack K., and Public Relations Hamsini R.



Recognizing the members of The Green Team Club, to be honored for their sustainability efforts this year. Including Ella R., Rosa T., Kylie W., Hannah K., Bella W., Olivia W., Allison D., Audrey K., Aila Q., Ainsley R., Michael P., and Hank B.



2025 HMS Science Adoption

During Monday night's Board of Education meeting, board members unanimously approved Activate Learning's OpenSciEd platform for Highland Middle School next year. The program, which was unanimously supported by the science committee which met for nine months, will have teachers being trained in April and September.

Here is a [link](#) to the School Board presentation (Item 11.1 on the agenda.)



[New Director of Student Services](#)

The Board of Education unanimously approved the hiring of Dr. Kate Cavanaugh as the new director of student services to start in August.

Here is a [link](#) to the School Board recording (Items 11.2 on the agenda.)

[2025-26 School Board Meetings](#)

The [Board of Education approved meeting dates](#) (link to dates) for the next school year.

Here is a [link](#) to the School Board recording (Items 11.3 on the agenda.)

[Personnel Update](#)

The Board approved the following personnel recommendations on Monday night:

Administration Change of Assignment:

Jim Cieciwa, to Student & Family Engagement Liaison, from Rockland Principal, 7.1.25.

Administration - Resignation

Valerie Rivera, HMS assist. principal, 6.30.

Certified Staff - Resignations, Retirements

Kristen Madden, Copeland speech pathologist, retires in 2029-30 school year;

Jill Przybylski, Copeland kindergarten teacher, retires in 2029-30 school year;

Analiese Siwik, HMS special ed teacher, resigned on 5.30.

Certified Leave of Absence

Dorena Birkenbach, HMS special ed teacher, FMLA from 3/09 - 4/25/2025.

Non-certified Staff - Resignations

Christopher Rodriguez, District Maintenance Technician, resigned on 02/05.

Non-Certified Staff - Leave of Absence

Mark Zottman, District Systems Administrator, FMLA, from 1/22/ - 1/31/2025

Summer School/ESY 2025

The following is the staff set for D70 Summer School. Unless otherwise noted, staff will work from 6.4 - 7.3.25.

Kevin Joyce, Principal;

Robin VanDyke, Principal;

Michaelle Illian, Nurse;

Nancy Johnson, Nurse;

Stephanie Meo, Admin Assistant;

Stepahnie Bleichman, Teacher;

Erika Brown Thomas, Teacher;

Shelby Burton, Teacher;

Shane Crown, Teacher;
Samantha DeRose, Teacher;
Elisa Diaz, Teacher;
Jose Diaz, Teacher;
Sllie Frega, Teacher;
Laurie Friedman, Teacher;
Michael Goldberg, Teacher;
Kari Hartzell, Teacher;
Allison McLean, Teacher;
Sarah McPherren, Teacher;
Leslie Mueller, Teacher;
Janae Murphy, Teacher;
Kristen Norwood, Teacher;
Lisa Pinsky, Teacher;
Christine Policht, Teacher;
Mike Rumpf, Teacher;
Christopher Seidel, Teacher;
Carrie Shea, Teacher;
Amber Taylor, Teacher;
RuthAnn Vegter, Teacher;
Jani Vuckovic, Teacher;
Julie Perez, Band Teacher;
Carol Janossy, Orchestra Teacher;
Elizabeth Boron, Social Worker;

Diana Davellis, Social Worker;

Lisa Entin, Speech/Language Pathologist;

Michelle Smith, Speech/Language Pathologist;

Laurie Early, Physical Therapist;

Beth Buttlere, Life Skills Teacher;

Meghan Gallop, Early Childhood Structured Teacher;

Carly Goff, K-2 Structured Teacher;

Elizabeth Bruckner, Resource Teacher;

Jason Friedman, Resource Teacher;

Marley Friedman, Resource Teacher;

Shannon Herrick, Resource Teacher;

Annika McKnight, Resource Teacher;

Rianna Roos, Resource Teacher;

Ed Balanag, Paraeducator;

Judy Bergman, Paraeducator;

Noelle Bergman, Paraeducator;

Nat Brautigam, Paraeducator;

Molly Buss, Paraeducator;

Pam Champney, Paraeducator;

Carla Engstrom, Paraeducator;

Marion Hayes, Paraeducator;

Donna Hegwood, Paraeducator;

Josh Kraft, Paraeducator;

Ashley Martinez, Paraeducator;

Katie Michols, Paraeducator;

Laurie Neir, Paraeducator;

Daniel O'Donnell, Paraeducator;

Fiona Sutter, Paraeducator.

Policy

The administration and school board use a policy subscription service provided by the Illinois Association of School Boards as the basis for developing, reviewing, recommending, and approving policy language. This service is used by the majority of school districts in Illinois and is known as the Policy Reference Education Subscription Service (PRESS).

There was no first reading at the school board meeting.

Policy Approvals

There was a second reading of [Policy 1:162](#) (a new D70 Policy) at the school board meeting.

Second Reading

Superintendent's Report

Monday's Supt. Report from Rebecca Jenkins celebrated school events held in February, including the Special Education Parent Network event to connect D70 families with local support groups and organizations, and celebrating Adler Park fifth grade teacher Lisa Piskule's recognition as she will be receiving an Award of Special Recognition in the Classroom Teacher category for the state's Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year! Supt. Jenkins also talked about Butterfield students celebrating the New Lunar Year, as well as students working on Chromebooks, and what students do for a Crazy Hair and Crazy Hat Day. She also highlighted a classroom Valentine's Day party and Copeland Manor second-graders learning about measurements. Supt. Jenkins also honored Highland Middle School for being named an Illinois Horizon School to Watch for the fourth time. This is a long and involved process and credits HMS staff for their remarkable teaching and programs. HMS also held a special Hornet Day this month where students worked on strengthening their connections and belonging. Supt. Jenkins highlighted HMS's National Junior Honors members working on a fundraiser at Culver's for a schoolwide charity and shared some photos of a consumer science classroom at HMS as students learn about cooking. Supt. Jenkins rounded out the report with photos from Rockland's Winter Classic

floor hockey competition and a look at Rockland first-graders learning about presidents for Presidents Day, and created a project about what they would do if they were President.