



ETHS DIGEST

**Evanston Township High School
District 202
Evanston, Illinois**

*Popular Annual Financial Report
For the year ending June 30, 2019*

Welcome to ETHS District 202

Eric Witherspoon, Superintendent



This *ETHS Digest* is designed to be an easy-to-access annual report with short articles and helpful visuals, providing an abundance of information about Evanston Township High School District 202 (ETHS). Whether you are just becoming familiar with this extraordinary high school district or your family has been part of the Wildkit family for multiple generations, I trust you will enjoy learning more about one of our nation's premier high schools.

No single publication can completely capture the vibrancy, diversity, enthusiasm and energy at ETHS; no single publication can document all the accomplishments of our students and staff; and no single publication can come close to conveying all the opportunities and access for all students in this unparalleled learning envi-

ronment. This is not an ordinary high school. It is, simply, one of the best.

I hope this *ETHS Digest* stimulates your curiosity to learn even more about ETHS. Today's Wildkits enjoy boundless school spirit and, just like generations before them, proudly wear the orange and blue. They excel in academics, in the fine and performing arts, in competitions, and more. But most of all, our students excel in being good human beings who are learning and growing in a challenging and nurturing environment, reflecting on their own mindsets and experiences, developing their skills, and recognizing they are highly valued for their individuality, talents, and aspirations. ETHS is a place of belonging for our students as they learn and grow.

ETHS has a powerful story to tell. Enjoy.

Snapshot of ETHS

Mary Rodino, ETHS Chief Financial Officer

This 8th annual *ETHS Digest: Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR)* is designed to give Evanston/Skokie residents an overview of Evanston Township High School District 202—a snapshot of the district's finances for the prior year, as well as general information that highlights student achievement, academic initiatives, partnerships, and programs.

The selected financial information is taken from statements found in our audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the last fiscal year, a detailed report prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). The PAFR, however, is unaudited and summarizes, in an accessible manner, the financial data reported in the CAFR.

For the 7th consecutive year, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada, which reviews this publication, granted last year's *ETHS Digest* an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, a prestigious national

award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports. To receive this award, valid for one year, a government unit must publish a PAFR whose contents conform to program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability, and reader appeal. We believe this new *ETHS Digest*, which reflects 2018-19, continues to conform to those standards.

The ETHS administration and school board firmly believe in public scrutiny and transparency of the district finances. Full copies of the district's financial documents, including the CAFR that contains detailed financial information, are available in the ETHS business office or at the district website: www.eths.k12.il.us. Call 847-424-7100 for more information.



On the cover: Here, on March 12, 2019, three four-year, varsity starters on ETHS's boys' basketball team (l. to rt)—Ryan Bost, Jaime Holden, and Lance Jones—are minutes away from winning the 2019 Super Sectional Championship. The powerhouse team went on to place 2nd in the state, losing to defending state champ Belleville West. This was the WildKits 6th state trophy overall after reaching the Final Four in back-to-back seasons for the first time in school history. Photo by Ann Tarpey.

ETHS by the Numbers 2018-19

Students and Faculty

- 3,613 students (2018-19)
- Student ethnic distribution: Am. Indian–0.6%, Asian–5.6%, Black/African American–27.3%, Hispanic-Latino–18.5%, Two or more races –2.3%, White–45.6%
- Low-income enrollment – 37% (2019-20)
- Number of certified teachers – 312 (92% with advanced degrees)
- 4-yr. graduation rate – 92% (2019)
- 5-yr. graduation rate – 94% (2018)
- College attendance rate – 76% (Class of 2018)

ETHS Class of 2019 profile

- 7 National Merit Semifinalists, 39 Commended Students
- 221 Illinois State Scholars

Meet the ETHS Board of Education



Back row: Jude Laude, Supt. Eric Witherspoon, Pat Maunsell; Front row: Stephanie Teterycz, Echo Allen (student representative), Gretchen Livingston, Pat Savage-Williams, Liz Rolewicz, Monique Parsons

District Goals for 2018-22

Adopted by the Board of Education, May 23, 2016

GOAL 1 **Equitable and Excellent Education**

ETHS will increase each student’s academic and functional trajectory to realize college/career readiness and independence. Recognizing that racism is the most devastating factor contributing to the diminished achievement of students, ETHS will strive to eliminate the predictability of academic achievement based upon race. ETHS will also strive to eliminate the predictability of academic achievement based upon family income, disabilities and status as English language learners.

GOAL 2 **Student Well-being**

ETHS will connect each student with supports to ensure that each student will experience social-emotional development and enhanced academic growth.

GOAL 3 **Fiscal Accountability**

ETHS will provide prudent financial stewardship.

GOAL 4 **Community Engagement and Partnerships**

ETHS will strengthen parent/guardian relationships to create an effective continuum of learning and seamless transitions into and out of ETHS.

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Budget overview

2018-19 was a challenging year financially for many Illinois school districts, including ETHS. While the Illinois legislature approved a state budget that included funds for Evidence Based Funding, ETHS did not receive any additional funds from this program. It is expected that the District's state funding will remain flat, and may decrease if enrollment goes down. In future years, any additional money allocated by the state to Evidence Based Funding will go to the state's neediest school districts, not more financially healthy districts such as ETHS.

Illinois is still grappling with who should pay for the portion of teacher pensions that the state currently funds. There have been many discussions about passing on some or all of that responsibility to the school districts in Illinois. That could mean that ETHS may be responsible for up to \$2 million per year in teacher pension costs. Other threats to school funding include the possibility of a mandated property tax freeze, and the limitation of tax-caps that don't keep up with increased costs of supplies, energy, services, health benefits, and labor. Debt limits also make it difficult for the District to keep up with capital needs.

Despite these challenges, the ETHS school board adopted a balanced budget—for the **13th straight year**—of \$85.8 million in expenditures, 1.8% more than the FY 18 budget. The operating revenue budget of \$76.2 million was up 2.3% over the previous year. Typically, the budget is 2-3% more than the previous year.

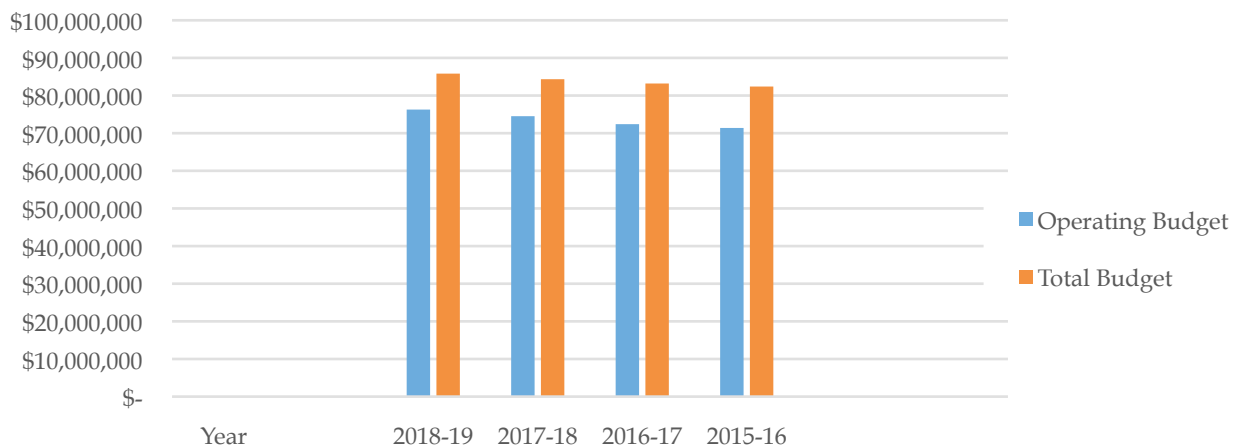
Balancing the FY 19 budget required cutting over \$150,000 in non-personnel related costs such as contractual services (consultants, staff travel, professional development) and supply budgets across the school. When considering cost reductions, the school board and administration use *Value-Based Budgeting*, focusing cuts as far from the classroom as possible.

The fund balance in the General Fund decreased by \$1.8 million during FY 19, which included a \$2 million transfer to the Capital Projects Fund. Cash reserves and fund balances continue to be within the District's acceptable ranges per their Fund Balance Policy.

What continues to be of concern is not what is known but what is NOT known. While some issues such as Evidence Based Funding have been resolved, we don't know what the legislature will decide about teacher pensions, whether interest rates will continue to increase, and if/when a property tax freeze will be mandated. Our close monitoring of economic and political events over the next year will continue to be critical.

The revenue and expenditure information on the next two pages reflect final budget numbers for the 2018-19 school year. For more comprehensive information, see the district's audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) in the Business Office or online at the school's web site (www.eths.k12.il.us under Business Services).

Annual Operating Expenses vs. Total Expenses



Where does the money come from?

ETHS District 202 receives funding from local, state, and federal sources. The operating budget includes the Education (General), Operations and Maintenance, Transportation Funds, and Working Cash Funds, as referenced in the District’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. The District’s operating budget makes up 93% of all revenues and 89% of all expenditures. The funds excluded from the operating budget are the Municipal Retirement, Debt Service, Capital Projects, and Fire Prevention Funds. FY 19 operating budget resources from all sources totaled \$76,272,000, a 2.3% increase from FY 18. Increased revenues come from small increases in the Consumer Price Index and also from new property development, both of which cause property tax increases. Property taxes, at 84%, continue to be the largest source of revenue. The next largest revenue category at 5% is Other Local Revenues. **Revenues are reported on a GAAP basis.**

Property Taxes (84%). Evanston property owners pay taxes to several entities, including District 202. ETHS’s portion of the total property tax bill is just over 25%. This percentage has remained constant or slightly reduced over the past five years. For FY 19, property taxes represented 84% of the total ETHS operating revenue. In addition, property taxes pay for the Bond and Interest Fund, which covers annual debt service on outstanding bonds, and the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, which pays retirement benefits for non-certified staff. The Operations & Maintenance Fund and Transportation Fund are also partially supported by property taxes.

District 202 is subject to property tax caps, which limit the growth of taxes to 5% or the Illinois Consumer Price Index, whichever is lower. The District fiscal year straddles the current and previous years’ levies (2.1% for 2017, 2.1% for 2018), so the dollars available for this budget were a blend of these rates. Property taxes for the operating funds were \$63.3 million for FY 19.

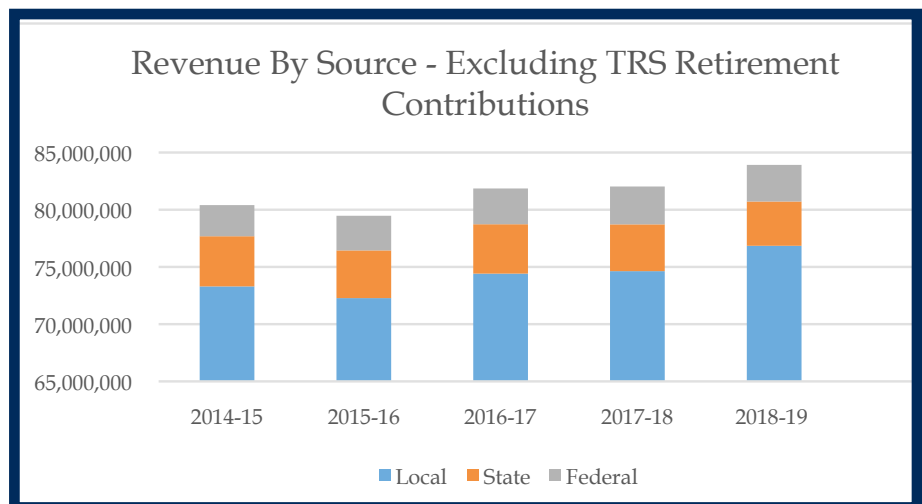
Corporate Personal Property Replacement Taxes (CPRT) (2%) are part of the state income taxes and generally reflect the state of the Illinois economy. The CPRT goes into the Education, Operations-Maintenance, and IMRF funds. District 202 received \$1.9 million for FY 19.

Other Local Revenues (5%) come from tuition, interest on investments, food-service income, student fees, Tax Increment Financing revenue, and other local sources. ETHS received \$4.8 million in FY 19 in Other Local Revenues, about 29% higher than FY 18. This was largely due to higher than anticipated interest revenues.

Evidence Based Funding (1%) has replaced **General State Aid** and incorporates general aid along with some former categorical aid payments. This revenue source will remain flat for FY 19, with a small increase (\$6,500) over initial FY 18 projections.

State Categorical Aid (4%) is aimed at specific needs and programs, including special-education personnel, transportation, bilingual programs, and others. It is difficult to compare FY 19 to FY 18 because some revenues were folded into the new Evidence Based Funding during FY18. Comparisons will be possible beginning with FY 20.

Federal Aid (4%) goes toward Title I, Title II, student meal subsidies, IDEA, and ETHS Health Center costs. Total funding for FY 19 was expected to increase by approximately \$100,000 (about 3%) due to some higher federal allocations and grant carryovers.



Where does the money go?

The operating expenditure budget proposed for District 202 is \$76.3 million. This includes all the operating funds—Education, Operations and Maintenance, Transportation, and Working Cash funds. This represents a 2.3% increase over FY 18. For the operating funds, salaries and benefits continue to dominate the costs. Salaries represent 69% of the budget and fringe benefits are at 9%—therefore, 78% of the budget is personnel cost-related. The next highest categories are Purchased Services at 8% and Tuition at 7%. Supplies and Materials represent 5% of costs. **Expenses are reported on a GAAP basis.**

Salaries (69%) are mainly determined by negotiated contracts with the six labor unions in District 202. Actual salaries amounted to approximately \$52.1 million, up .7% over FY 18.

Employee Fringe Benefits (9%) include health, life, and optional dental insurance, and Social Security,

Medicare, and pension expenses. Total fringe benefits costs for FY 19 were estimated to be \$6.96 million, an increase of 2.5% from the previous year. Health claims vary from year to year.

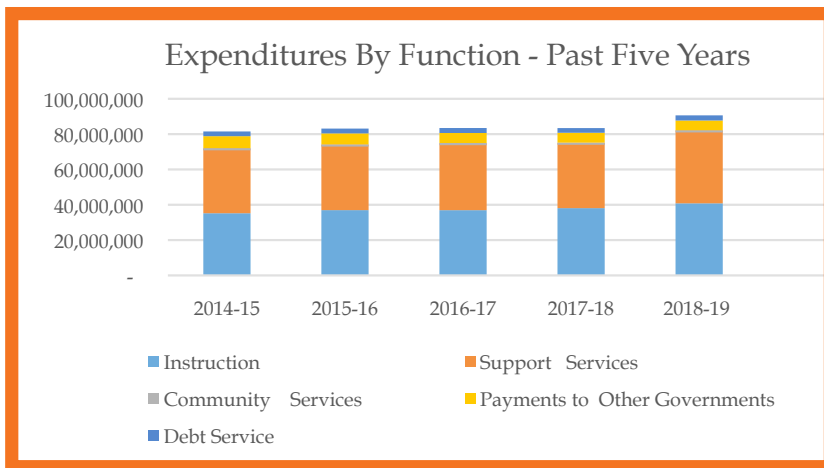
Purchased Services (8%) expenditures for FY 19 are estimated to be \$6.7 million, up 8% (\$500,000) from FY 18. The District makes every effort to maintain the significant reductions made here in previous years. Increases in this category during FY 19 were mainly due to unexpected expenses like a comprehensive landscaping contract and rent on a lease space for the new Special Education Public Day School.

Supplies/Materials (5%) expenses are for office supplies and materials, and once again ETHS is trying to keep costs down. The total for FY 19 was \$3.79 million, almost the same as for FY 18 (\$3.8 million).

Capital Outlay (2%) expenditures in the operating funds for FY 19 amounted to \$1.1 million, an 18% decrease over FY 18.

Miscellaneous (<1%). Expenditures here amounted to \$333,000, a 6% decrease from FY 18.

Tuition to Other Districts (7%). Tuition increased by 13% to \$5.99 million for FY 19. Significant increases were experienced in the safe school program, which is somewhat unpredictable.



Excellence Awards for Financial Reporting

For the 11th year, the Association of School Business Officials International awarded ETHS its Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting award for its FY 18 *Comprehensive Annual Financial Report* (annual audit), an award earned by fewer than 10% of Illinois school districts.

Also for the 11th year, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awarded ETHS their Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Finan-

cial Reporting for having met or exceeded the program's high standards for financial reporting and accountability. Less than 5% of Illinois schools earn this award. These GFOA budget honors are in addition to its renewed award to ETHS for the Popular Annual Financial Report (*ETHS Digest*).

ETHS has maintained its Moody's Aaa bond rating since 2008. This highest possible rating allows the District to borrow at the lowest possible rates.

ETHS in top 2% of high schools

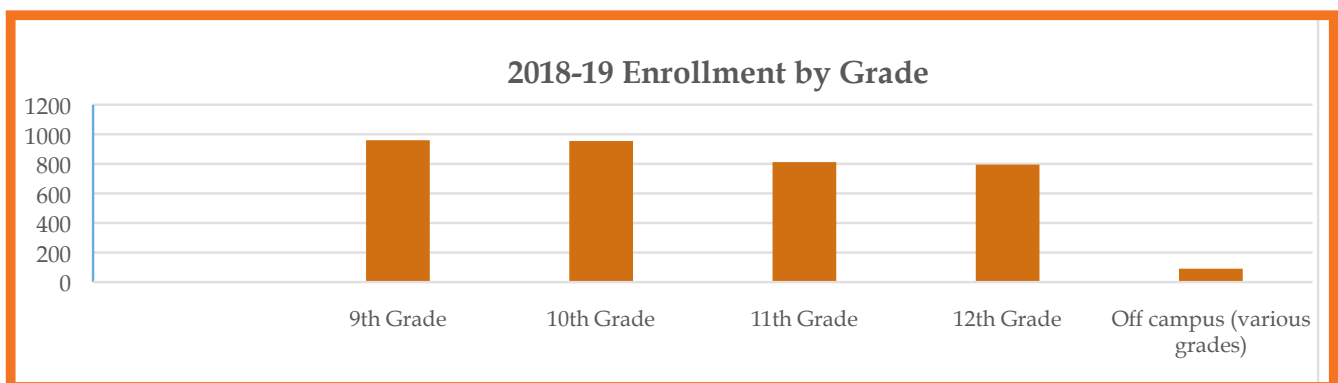
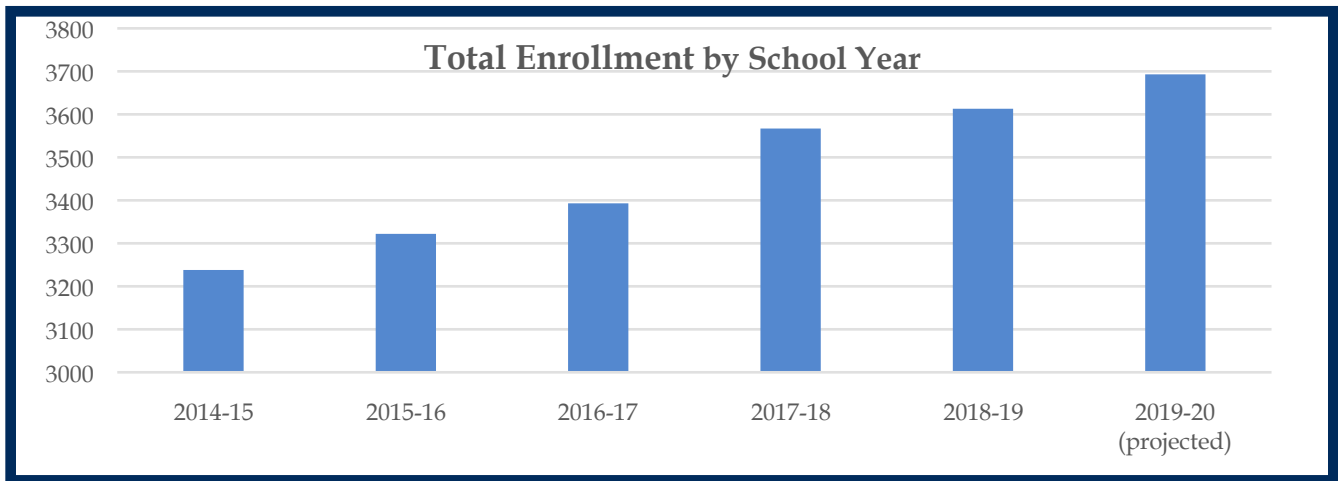
U.S. News & World Report released its “Best High Schools” rankings for 2019, placing ETHS at 27 in Illinois and 526 in the nation. Overall, ETHS received a score of 96.95 out of 100 in the national rankings. According to the *U.S. News* website, the highest ranked public high schools were those that have demonstrated outstanding outcomes in math and reading state assessments, passed a variety of college-level exams, and held a high graduation rate.

Collecting data from third-party sources, *U.S. News* completely revamped the methodology this year to help make the report more thorough, inclusive, and easier to understand. Due to the change, the 2019 rankings are not meant to be compared to *U.S. News* reports in the past. Instead, it will serve as a baseline to compare a school’s performance in the future. Based on the new criteria, 17,245 public high schools of the 23,000 with data that was even considered were ranked for the 2019 edition.

More specifically, six indicators were used on a weighted scale to produce this year’s ranking: College readiness (30% of the ranking); College curriculum breadth (10%); Reading and math proficiency (20%); Reading and math performance (20%); Underserved student performance (10%); and Graduation rate (10%).

Most high schools in America are not included in a ranking like the *U.S. News* report, based on data from the National Center for Education Statistics, since they would not meet the criteria. “It’s noteworthy that we rank in the top two-percent of all the public and private high schools in the United States when considering the total number,” said ETHS Superintendent Eric Witherspoon. “That is truly an achievement and a reflection of the high value our Evanston Township community places on education,” he added.

By ETHS Communications Dept.



Wellness/Performance Center opens

ETHS students began the 2019-20 school year with a completely renovated Wellness & Performance Center, thanks largely to a pledge from alumnus Michael B. Arrington, ETHS '61. A former varsity football player, Arrington pledged \$330,000 to the ETHS Foundation to support a new strength and conditioning center at the high school.

The facility, named the Michael B. Arrington Wellness & Performance Center, will serve all ETHS students who take physical education (PE) classes and participate in sports-training programs. The Wellness Center replaces an outdated weight room with a facility that is equipped to serve students with varied physical abilities and a wide range of strength, size, and biomechanical differences.

Designed with school pride in mind, the center has an open floor plan and features modern, adaptable cardio equipment and training stations. "All of us at ETHS are truly grateful to Mike Arrington," said ETHS Superintendent Eric Witherspoon. "His generosity will benefit all students as we expand our wellness and athletic opportunities."



Michael B. Arrington

In conjunction with opening the new center, the ETHS PE Department is enhancing curriculum for this school year and working to meet equity goals. A strength and conditioning specialist at ETHS will work in tandem with physical education teachers and coaches on individualized fitness plans for each student, allowing for differentiated instruction and adaptations for all learners, including those with disabilities. Also, more than 200 ETHS students are enrolled in Sports Specific Training, a new PE option for athletes who want to take their athletic performance to the next level.

Excited about the renovation at ETHS, Arrington studied conditioning centers at other area schools and made a commitment to a facility with the best possible equipment and a dynamic aesthetic that



Photo by Ozzie Ramsey

ETHS athletes do strength conditioning in the school's new Michael B. Arrington Wellness & Performance Center.

speaks to Wildkit pride. "I'm honored to provide this gift to my alma mater," remarked Arrington, an entrepreneur and real estate investor who founded Arrington Travel, the largest single-stockholder corporate travel management firm in the United States.

"The new facility will without a doubt be the finest high-school facility of its kind in Illinois," he added. "It will allow ETHS athletes, as well as the entire student body, an opportunity to achieve optimum results for peak performance."

ETHS Athletic Director Chris Livatino, ETHS '91 noted the far-reaching and long-lasting impact of the contribution, stating, "The new Wellness Center may be the most significant facility improvement we've ever made towards increasing the performance of all of our athletic programs at ETHS."

The center is the latest in a series of transformative gifts to ETHS. According to ETHS Foundation Executive Director Joanne Bertsche, the generosity of ETHS alumni underscores how they value their ETHS experience and their dedication to advancing the high school campus for today's Wildkits.

By ETHS Communications Dept.

Garden Walk brings farm-to-school program to community

Friends, families, and neighbors of ETHS were invited to a Community Garden Walk on September 26 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the school's local garden program that raises organic produce and provides learning experiences, leadership, and job opportunities for ETHS students.

The event highlighted the farm-to-school initiative that launched in 2009 with Edible Acre 1, a school-owned lot across from ETHS that was transformed by a joint venture with The Talking Farm, a local urban agricultural-educational organization. It's now a 5,000 sq. ft. organic garden producing 2,500 pounds of fresh produce annually for the school cafeterias and summer CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. Next came the Edible Orchard, adjacent to the football field, with 25 Asian pear and apple trees, followed last year by Edible Acre 2, next to the orchard with raised beds of romaine lettuce, kale, and other leafy produce.

The Community Garden Walk also showcased the recent renovation of the ETHS Greenhouse, which was built in the early 1930s as a science laboratory/classroom. Financed at the time by the ETHS PTA, it was built by the boys in ETHS building-trades classes. Over the years it required occasional refurbishing. Horticulture classes were periodically held in there over the years. Now it serves the Urban Ag-



riculture course co-taught by science teacher Ellen Fierer and Matt Ryan, Talking Farm's Operations Manager, where students learn about gardening and sustainability practices.

This past summer, the ETHS Foundation donated \$100,000 for an extensive upgrade of the Greenhouse to support its expanding use as a lab for Urban Agriculture and to provide the Nutrition Services Department a garden space to raise seedlings for herbs, vegetables, and other plants that are transplanted in the Edible Acre plots and consumed in the school cafeterias and CSA program. The renovation included installing smart-technology temperature controls and ventilation, glass updates, overhead timer-controlled sprinklers, LED lighting fixtures, work sinks for produce preparation, outside landscaping, and two storage sheds.

The evening began in the East Courtyard where the ETHS Jazz Band performed and light refreshments were served. ETHS students from Urban Agriculture classes and Evanston Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program, who work in the two Edible Acres in the summer, were on site to share their farm-to-school experiences and answer questions about their participation. Guests of all ages enjoyed self-guided tours and scavenger hunts with prizes and takeaways at each garden location on the ETHS campus.



Photo by Mary Rodino
Tudi, the science dept.'s African Spurred Tortoise, was also a guest at the farm-to-school celebration.

ETHS Project Lead the Way program honored as Distinguished School

Evanston Township High School has been nationally recognized as a Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Distinguished School for providing transformative learning opportunities through the PLTW Engineer Program.

PLTW is a nonprofit organization that empowers students, pre-K through 12th grade, to develop knowledge and skills in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science.

According to ETHS Superintendent Eric Witherspoon: "Being recognized as a PLTW Distinguished School is a special honor for ETHS. In the past decade, we have invested millions of dollars into expanding our Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs into world-class options with top-flight instruction for our students."



ETHS Photo Credit

ETHS student Kimora Boothe worked on a robotics project as part of the Girls Robotics Team.

To be eligible for the Distinguished School designation, ETHS met the following criteria during the school year:

- Offered at least three PLTW courses;
- Had 25% of students or more participate in PLTW courses, or of those who participated in PLTW, at least 33% took two or more PLTW courses during high school;
- Had 70% of students or more earn a Proficient or higher on PLTW End-of-Course Assessments, or 10% of students earn the AP + PLTW Student Achievement ranking.

ETHS became a PLTW-certified school in spring 2008 and now offers six rigorous PLTW Engineering classes through the CTE Department. Each course integrates national academic and technical learning standards and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) principles to solve real-world problems through an innovative lens in a collaborative classroom setting.

The classes, which have a grade weight equal to Advanced Placement courses, use a curriculum developed and maintained by a consortium of leading engineering universities and the private sector to introduce high school students to the many facets of engineering. Students enrolled in these courses also have the ability to receive college credit at a PLTW-affiliated engineering college/university.

"Whether students intend to go to college or directly into the workforce, we are fully committed to preparing them for meaningful 21st-century careers," Dr. Witherspoon remarked. "Kudos to our teachers, department chair and students who have worked tirelessly and set high expectations to make this prestigious award a reality."

—Thanks to the ETHS Communications Dept. for its contributions to this article

ETHS kudos in 2018-19

ETHS recognized for science lab renovations and design

ETHS received *Learning By Design Magazine's* Fall 2019 Outstanding Project award for the renovation and adaptive restoration of its science labs.

In addition to the two labs, the updated suite consists of an advanced study lab, teacher offices, and a Theory Center where students can work on research projects.



The modern, state-of-the-art learning spaces were completed in 2018 to foster collaborative and independent study and research in all areas of science. The ETHS Theory Center was renovated with support from the ETHS Foundation.

Learning By Design is a premier publication that showcases education design and construction, best practices, innovation, and award-winning projects.

By ETHS Communications Dept.

Golden Apple Award winner



On March 18, Corey Winchester, ETHS History/Social Sciences teacher, was among 10 Illinois teachers to receive the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. Golden Apple annually recognizes teachers for the positive impact they have made in their students' lives through teaching. As

part of the award, he receives a cash prize and a tuition-free spring sabbatical at Northwestern University.

Winchester has been honored as an exemplary teacher since he began teaching at ETHS in 2010. This school year, he was named one of 20 educators to serve as Fellows of the Illinois Policy Fellowship. He is a 2013 recipient of the Illinois State Board of Education's Those Who Excel Award as an Early Career Educator. An alumnus of Northwestern University (BS10) and Loyola University (MEd2013), he also received Loyola's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2016 and is widely recognized for his equity and social justice efforts as an educator.

Campbell honored for his equity work

This fall, Dr. Marcus Campbell, ETHS Assistant Superintendent/Principal, received significant recognition from the state and educational community.

Illinois Governor Pritzker appointed Campbell to the Affirming and Inclusive School Task Force. He is among 25 members chosen for their experience/expertise related to supporting transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming students in school. The working group is tasked with disrupting discrimination in Illinois schools and will work to identify strategies to ensure a safe and inclusive school environment for students of all gender identities.

In addition, on October 5, Campbell was honored with the inaugural Jettie Hoard Founders Award from the Learning Bridge Early Education Center. Campbell was recognized for his vision to make ETHS a school where students can freely pursue their journey of self-discovery. He was also applauded for his leadership in the development of district strategy and organizational change.



Animals help teach valuable lessons

Who knew? Tortoises, bearded dragons, gerbils, chickens, fish, crayfish, even cockroaches—all properly confined—can currently be found in ETHS science classrooms. Hardly pets, although some have names, these critters are adjunct teachers to help students learn a variety of scientific concepts from biodiversity to evolutionary adaptation to ecology, among many others.



Take Boo, biology teacher Beth Christiansen's female bearded dragon. Christiansen uses Boo to, for example, illustrate similarities and differences between humans and the ectotherm (who can't regulate her body temperature metabolically).

Or Tudi and Mulan, two male African Spurred Tortoises, who live in the North Hall vivarium/classroom of biology teacher Scott Meier, or in the Planetarium courtyard in warm weather.



Since the breed originated in arid sub-Saharan Africa, compared to tortoises in the Galapagos Islands off Ecuador's Pacific coast, Meier says they've spurred great classroom discussions tying evolution to ecology (e.g., "how did they get here?"). Students also learn how territorial these guys can be. They are NOT the best of friends, and Tudi, twice the size of Mulan, periodically flips his smaller classmate onto his back, who then has to be turned over by humans.

Or the chickens that teacher Ellen Fierer's Urban Agriculture classes raised from eggs in the school's

greenhouse and courtyard to learn about animal husbandry. Or the cockroaches she keeps to test CO2 levels. Or "Moe" the Russian tortoise, red-eared sliders, snails, catfish, and crayfish, all in cages or tanks, and all play a part in classroom lessons.

Or the gerbils science teacher Greg Ruber has bred for his Earned Honors Biology students to do animal behavior research.



Along with their roles as scientific subjects, some animals at ETHS are there as therapy animals. Nichole Boyd, Student Activities Director, at the behest of the Junior Class Board, contracted with Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy to bring in service dogs to help students de-stress the Friday before final exams. Boo the bearded dragon ("The dogs of the lizard world," says Christiansen) loves to be touched and allows students to pick her up, often a calming act for some students.

Many of the animals have been donated to the teachers by parents or students who graduate. But, once there, they become part of the ETHS community and serve an important educational purpose.

Safety Staff ready when trouble calls

All ETHS students, parents, staff members, and visitors are familiar with the Safety Department members that greet them in the halls during the day, oversee activity in and around the school, and are on-point if any unpleasant incidents occur.

What the school community may not realize is how much training each of the 49 Safety Department members, including staff, support staff, and administrators, has received in areas ranging from first aid to workplace violence to ensure that ETHS remains a safe environment for education and learning.

A new certification—Stop the Bleed—has recently been added to their collective expertise. Staff members are now trained to assess injuries, pack wounds, and, if necessary, apply a tourniquet. Half the training was classroom-based and the other half was hands-on.

According to Matthew Driscoll, ETHS Director of Safety: “When Stop The Bleed (STB) was made available to ETHS Safety, we immediately accepted. All ETHS Safety Staff members have participated in the training and are certified in STB. This summer I and several staff members went through the training to become certified instructors of STB. The class now can be offered on a rolling basis to ensure that all ETHS Safety staff are immediately certified.”

In addition to STB, ETHS Safety Staff have been FEMA-certified as members of a CERT (Community



Safety Staff members receive training in cribbing (above), a technique used to free people who have been buried by debris. (Below) They are also trained in teams on how to put out a fire.



Emergency Response Team). That training included how to put out fires, conduct search and rescue including dealing with active shooters, cribbing and victim removal, workplace violence, and patient triage. According to Driscoll, “Stop the Bleed and CERT combined with training through the American Red Cross in First Aid, CPR/AED, and all our other training make ETHS Safety a significant force that can address any incident that comes our way.”

Safety members go through weekly training during their professional development time. They participate in table-top exercises and scenario-based, hands-on training sessions. They currently are preparing for a full scale, in-house exer-

cise. Driscoll noted, “Standards are extremely high and, therefore, we have adopted a philosophy, ‘We don’t train until we get it right; we train until we can’t get it wrong.’”

Driscoll tells his staff that they are the “true first responders.” From the moment an incident begins until 911 emergency services can arrive, he said, “We will be the first on the scene and need to be ready to address any and every incident. With the U.S. seeing, on average, one active threat per week at schools, it is critical that ETHS Safety Staff are trained and prepared.”

Remote learning replaces “snow days”

While ETHS’s winter mantra has always been that “ETHS never closes” even despite severe weather, Mother Nature has challenged that stance the last couple of years. Last winter’s minus-50 degree Polar Vortex put school officials over the edge, making a two-day closure necessary for the safety of students and school staff.

When schools must close due to weather, the state School Code requires them to make up the days and hours of lost instruction. But, rather than simply tack on the lost days at the end of the school year, ETHS held its first E-Learning Day “pilot program” last February 22. (The second make-up day was added to the school year on June 10.)

According to school officials, “An E-Learning Day is an ‘Electronic Learning’ Day that is approved by the state education office as a day of instruction for students who are not physically present at the school and that is accessible to all students. Students will not report to school, but will work remotely.”

It all seemed to go well, so this fall the school board formally adopted a three-year E-learning proposal and submitted it to the state education office for verification.

All ETHS students and faculty members have district-issued Chromebook laptops, which are used

in school and at home, and students and teachers have direct communication through personalized emails. In addition, E-Learning Day activities can be completed using various forms of technology, such as their computer, smartphone, or other mobile devices.

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If a student doesn’t have WiFi access to the internet at home, ETHS has 50 district-issued WiFi “hotspots” that students can check out, as well as access to a City of Evanston Hotspots map that includes various places across town with free WiFi access such as Starbucks and other coffee shops, the Ecology Center,

libraries, fire stations, places on Northwestern’s campus, and many other venues.

ETHS teachers take attendance through an online check-in form or through students’ completion of their E-Learning Day assignments. Teachers create these assignments in advance, and the activities vary by course, subject, skills, and knowledge involved. Completed work can be sent online to the teacher or uploaded when everyone returns to school. Students are responsible for completing the work within two days, either doing alternative assignments, or completing the work when they return.



This year, the ETHS Foundation is thrilled to announce an exciting new benefit in support of all students, **WILD for ETHS!** It will be held on leap day, Saturday, February 29, 2020, 6:30 p.m. – 10:30 pm. in the edgy new venue Ignite Gaming Lounge in Skokie.

Bringing together alumni, parents and community friends, Wild will feature entertainment, locally inspired food, craft beverages, and community support for all Wildkits. Guests will enjoy live music and dancing with the band Velocity. The band is provided courtesy of Ken and Nancy (Ricker) Arlen, class of '71, and Arlen Music Productions.

Proceeds from this event will support the modernization of the sound and lighting systems in the ETHS Auditorium, a space that impacts thousands of students and community members each year.



Our landmark ETHS Auditorium is a stately performance venue treasured by the entire school and broader Evanston community. It has been home to theater productions, concerts, graduation ceremonies, lectures, and countless events that reach a diverse range of students, families, staff, and community members. This year, the ETHS Foundation is undertaking a major initiative to transform the outdated infrastructure in the 1,400 seat facility. The current lighting and sound systems date back to the opening of the Auditorium in 1958, predating the digital age by decades. Adding state-of-the-art digital sound and lighting equipment will dramatically improve productions and programs, providing enhanced acoustics and lighting design that match the caliber of our exceptional student performances.

The auditorium also serves as a learning space and students interested in stage production careers will now have the opportunity to work with the latest technology. Advancements like this vastly improve the student

experience and would not be possible if it were not for the generosity of our alumni, parents, and friends who value the ETHS experience for all students.

Through the generosity of alumni, the ETHS Foundation funds innovative learning spaces and educational resources that expand opportunities for all students and instill Wildkit pride. Previous Foundation projects have included the new Michael B. Arrington Wellness & Performance Center, the Upstairs Theatre Rehearsal & Dressing Rooms, the Auto Tech Lab, and the Greenhouse modernization.

Please join us on leap day to celebrate the truly unique ETHS experience and ensure that generations of Wildkits will have every opportunity to succeed.

For an invitation or information on how sponsor this event, please email schmidts@eths.k12.il.us or call 847/424-7158. We are also looking for interesting silent-auction items from our alumni, so please consider how you can contribute from near and far. Visit www.supporteths.com for more details and/or to purchase tickets.

Let's get WILD for ETHS!



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