

The Newsletter of Hillside School District 93

HILLSIDE HEADLINES

hillside93.org**Hillside School District 93**

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**HILLSIDE
DISTRICT 93**

93
School • Families • Community

Class of 2024

The Hillside School Class of 2024 graduation ceremony took place on May 29. Three students, who had received all A's and B's, were honored with the Presidential Award:

Erikson Camp, Raven Dorch, and Diana Munoz.

Congratulations to the graduates and their families: **Diana Acosta Flores, Ruben Aguirre, Roshawn Ashley, Keyon Askins, Jose Ayala Sanchez, Tristan Bajonero Sandoval, Daniela Balthazar,**

Bryanna Barfield, Haley Brown, Erikson Camp, Jonathan Carrera, Ayden Cooper, Isabella Cruz, Anderson De La Cruz, Christian Dean, Roxana Delgado, Cyan Diggs, Joshua Dioses, Raven Dorch, Melanie Estrada, Sariah Eversley, Danna Flores, Qunityn Fuqua, Maddison Galloway, Makayla Garner, Gavin Graham, Isai Guaderrama, Mario Guerra, Adaniz Herrera, Sama'J Holmes, Giovanni Huerta, Malique Hylton, Estrella Ibarra-Gil, Marvens Jupiter, Ruben Lizama, Christopher Macias, Nathaniel Martinez, Olivia McDonald, Tylen Moore, Diana Munoz, Arianna Napier, Leilani Orozco, Cristian Ortiz, J'Kayla Phillips, Kelly Ramirez, Riley Ramsey, Jose Rodriguez, Tanya Rodriguez, Camila Rubio, Giovanni Vargas, Christian Weaver, Brielle Williams, Keegan Williams, Angel Woods, and Dy'Nisha Young.

School Citizen of the Year

Each year, West 40, the Illinois state educational service center that provides resources for West Cook County schools,



Presidential Award recipients (L to R) Erikson Camp, Raven Dorch, and Diana Munoz.

asks each school to select a student to be a School Citizen of the Year (SCOTY). The annual SCOTY awards ceremony, held in March, recognizes students who are good citizens and role models for other students to emulate.

Congratulations to eighth-grade student **Sema'J Holmes**, Hillside School's 2024 SCOTY Award recipient.

Speech and Drama Festival

West 40 hosts the regional Speech and Drama Festival. On February 24, fourteen Hillside School students earned a

fourth-place trophy, six first-place ribbons, and four second-place ribbons at the festival. Congratulations to the participating students: **Doris Asanga, Wilbur Asanga, Camila Chavez, Eric Fernandez, Jenessis Jackson, Elsa Navas, Mikayla Neal, Miranda Ortega, Tiago Rodarte, Cleveland Shack, Suntia Sims, Erin Smith, Jaelynn Torres, and Krishna Vaid**, all sixth-grade students.

Students Showcase Their Art

Hillside students were among the talented students from 15 local school districts who were selected to display their original creations at the annual West Suburban Consortium for Educational Excellence's (WSCAE) Art Expo, held in Oak Park in April: **Mariah Fluker** (kindergarten), **Mya Torres** (grade 1), **Adele Hernandez** (grade 2), **Nathan Nava** (grade 3), **Violet Herrera** (grade 4), **DesMonee Craddock** (grade 5), **Mairely Cantu** (grade 6), **Michael Garner** (grade 7), **Erickson Camp** (grade 8), and **Estrella Ibarra-Gil** (grade 8).



School Citizen of the Year
Sema'J Holmes.

Robots Rule!

Students in the school's Robotics Club not only build robots but also compete with other districts in the VEX IQ Robot Competition. This year's competition was called "Full Volume." The indoor competition takes place on a 6' X 8' playing field, where the students guide the robots to grab and pick up blocks of different shapes and colors and move them to "supply zones."

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Fiscal Responsibility is Key to Success

For 20 consecutive years, D93 has been an outstanding steward of district finances, consistently attaining the very highest financial designation from the Illinois State Board of Education's (ISBE) Financial Profile assessment and working diligently to maintain a balanced budget. "Attaining the highest financial recognition from the ISBE for 20 years is a remarkable feat considering that timeframe includes the great financial crisis, the pandemic, and a statewide overhaul of an inadequate school funding system," explained Patrick Hatfield, D93's interim assistant superintendent of business services/CSBO.

Schools nationwide are now bracing for the end of a pandemic aid package that delivered the most significant one-time federal investment in K-12 education ever. The money must be used by the end of September, creating a difficult financial situation for many schools. Toward that end, Superintendent Kevin Suchinski, D93 administrators, and board members have proactively sought and maintained extra federal dollars and other revenue sources to supplement district funding.

Most of the district's funding, 68%, comes from local property taxes, with 45% from residential property taxes, and 23% from commercial property. The triennial reassessment for Proviso Township took place

this year. Single-family homes received the lowest change in assessed values compared to commercial, industrial, and multi-family units. The effects of this reassessment on an individual's property tax bill are impossible to predict. Still, commercial and industrial properties will likely make up a larger percentage of the district's tax revenue in the future.

With any change in assessed value, the number of assessment appeals also increases. The district works with its law firm to protect it from commercial assessment appeals. D93 is also partnering with Proviso High School District 209 and the Village of Hillside to collaborate and conduct quarterly administration meetings to discuss and develop intervention strategies to fight commercial property tax abatements to minimize the impact on local property owners.

Importantly for home and business owners, the district's real estate tax rate remains the lowest in Proviso Township, as it has been for at least five consecutive years. Hillside School students benefit from a high-quality education, while home and business owners benefit from the lowest school district tax rate in Proviso Township.

For a detailed look at D93 finances, visit hillside93.org/page/bussfinance.

New Parent Equity Series Embraces Inclusion

Expanding upon the principles outlined in Hillside School's Equity Mission Statement (see below), Principal Sandi Johnson and Hillside School Equity Facilitator Carrie Skelton created a three-session Equity Series for parents and guardians titled "Building and Strengthening Your Child's Identity."

The first program on March 17 was titled "What Defines One's Identity." The presentation touched on various factors influencing identity, including race, gender, cultural background, and more. Next, on April 17, the second program centered on comprehending research regarding the significance of identity in children. Finally, on May 9, the concluding session, "Destigmatizing Mental Health," provided resources and opportunities for attendees to engage with local mental health professionals. Each session met after school for one hour.

D93 Equity Mission Statement

Hillside School District 93 believes in equity and inclusion. We affirm, acknowledge, and embrace all the unique characteristics and expressions of self and culture of our students, staff, and families. Valuing the dignity of every individual, we dismantle systemic barriers to support and improve the academic and social-emotional health of our students. Staff engages in professional development opportunities to address unconscious bias and develop curriculum and culturally responsive teaching practices. As an entire community we work together to provide equitable opportunities so that all members of the Hillside family feel safe, appreciated, and included. We see you; we value you; you make us better.

With Appreciation



Solomon Russell



Virgie Milner

Two long-term members of the D93 family are retiring. With appreciation to:

Solomon Russell, paraprofessional, 24 years of service.

Virgie Milner, paraprofessional, 20 years of service.

Congratulations and best wishes to these dedicated staff members.

Learning continues in summer school

Hillside School will hold its annual summer school from June 3 through June 27 for students to continue to strengthen their academic and social-emotional learning (SEL). Classes meet 8:00 am to noon each day, and students will receive a free daily breakfast. This year's new academic curriculum includes *95 Phonics Booster* for K-3 and the *Imagine Learning Curriculum* for middle school literacy. In addition, students will have SEL lessons each day. Summer school is provided to families without charge.

Community Forum: A Day of Sharing and Learning

ON Saturday, April 20, Hillside District 93 educators held a Community Forum, a special day of sharing and learning for parents and community members. The Forum included a Strategic Planning Meeting with reports on this year's progress toward meeting the Strategic Plan's goals. Then, at the district's first Parent University, speakers presented important information to help parents/guardians protect their children's safety and well-being.



Retired Detective Rich Wistocki taught parents about Internet safety at the Parent University.

for formative psychological services; "Rescuing Respect, Kindness, and Other Values," Dr. Ferney Ramirez, psychologist and author; "How to Navigate Social Media and the Internet," Rich Wistocki, retired Internet crimes unit detective; and "Dangers of Vaping," Phil Schneeberger, addictions counselor and Proviso Public Partnership operations manager.

When the Parent University had concluded, a parent commented, "Very informative and educational information at the Hillside School Parent University. Parents, we must attend these sessions. Awareness of what our children could face, and some are facing, is a MUST. Thanks to the Hillside D93 administration and board for creating this program."

Strategic Plan Progress

Hillside School approved a five-year Strategic Plan in 2023. The plan has five goals, action plans for each goal, and anticipated outcomes. Each goal, and just one of this year's highlights toward meeting that goal, follows. The complete Strategic Plan presentation of this year's progress towards goals can be viewed at www.hillside93.org.

GOAL 1: Student Learning. A. Create a content area framework infused in technology and aligned to the ISBE (Illinois State Board of Education) standards. B. Develop a curricular framework focusing on culturally responsive teaching practices that reflect the student body.

Highlight: A new curriculum for K-8 English Language Arts will be adopted.

GOAL 2: Community Partnerships and Communication.

A. Enhance parental organizations to secure stronger home/school relationships. B. Address student support by developing partnerships with community entities.

Highlight: Increased opportunities for parent involvement are underway, including implementing a new, more accessible platform to enhance parent/teacher communication.

GOAL 3: Student Needs. A. Provide a safe, welcoming environment that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion. B. Address student mental health and social/emotional learning.

Highlight: A new student leadership team helps students be heard and gives them a voice in their school experience, while older students are mentoring younger students as reading buddies.

Parent University

At Hillside School's first Parent University, attendees heard these important presentations from professionals: "Supporting our Children in their Hardest Moments," Dr. Doug Bolton, licensed clinical psychologist and director of school consultation

GOAL 4: Inclusive Education. A. Support and retain a qualified diverse staff that understands the needs of the school and community. B. Develop a staff recruitment process that explains the expectations, culture, and benefits of Hillside School District 93.

Highlight: The EL (English Language) facilitator – a new position – provides guidance and resources for teachers to work with the schools' Latinx population, and a new Equity Facilitator is helping students and staff with diversity training.

GOAL 5:

Stewardship.

1. Develop and expand a plan to establish long-term financial stability.
2. Develop a school finance communication plan and make this available to all stakeholders.



Director of Curriculum and Instruction Bridget Gainer presented at the Strategic Planning Meeting.

Highlight: The annual audit of the district's financial operations indicates that Hillside School District 93's financial condition is excellent. Please see page 2 for further info on D93 finances.

"Strategic planning in education is the compass guiding a school's journey towards excellence, ensuring every step taken is purposeful, and every goal achieved is meaningful," explained Superintendent Kevin Suchinski. "Thank you to all the participants who dedicated their time and insights during the meeting. Your contributions are invaluable in shaping the future direction of our school. Together, we are building a stronger foundation for our students' success."

Registration for the 2024-25 School Year

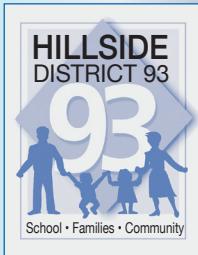
Registration for both new and returning students is available online at hillside93.org. Click on the link on the home page to go to the registration page to view instructions and forms. Note that proof of residency must be provided for all students. This year's registration fee is \$100 per student. Parents/guardians who complete the entire registration process, including online registration, returning all required forms, and providing proof of residency by June 30, 2024, will be eligible for a reduced early registration fee of \$50.

The first day of school for all students is Thursday, August 15.



Hillside School

4804 Harrison Street
Hillside, Illinois 60162



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SUMMER 2024

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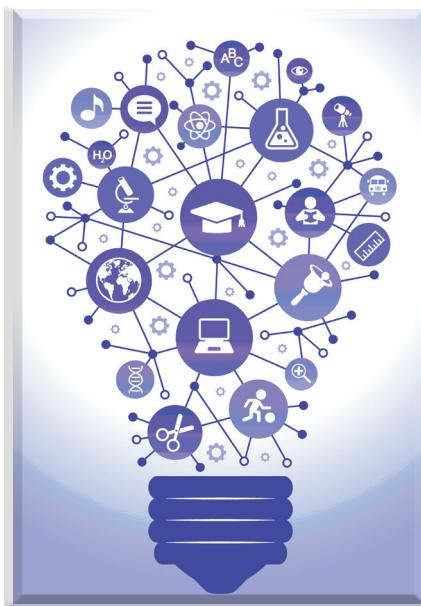
Hillside Students Excel!

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Two robot teams form an alliance in 60-second-long teamwork matches, with two robots on the field working collaboratively to score points. Teams design and build their robots to most efficiently complete various tasks with the different-sized blocks on the field.

Hillside School's Robotics team placed ninth in the VEX regional competition in January. In February, they placed fifth in the Illinois state championship. The team members were: sixth grade – *Jaylani Negrete, Miranda Ortega, Soremi Rodriguez, and Elen Salazar Lema*; seventh grade – *Sophia Damian and Arleth Villalobos*.

*Robotics team members
Sophia Damian and Arleth
Villalobos at the Illinois State
VEX IQ Championship.*



More Great Teachers Wanted!

Hillside D93 is looking for a few more great teachers! Jumpstart your teaching career at Hillside School, a one-school preK-8 public school district where exemplary teachers are valued. When you join the Hillside D93 team, you'll work in a welcoming, supportive environment with students eager to learn, a competitive starting salary, excellent benefits, small class sizes, tuition reimbursement, and a supply budget. Join the Hillside Family! To view open positions and to complete an application, visit hillside93.org/page/employment. Learn more about Hillside School at hillside93.org/page/about-us.