

PTO Website - Principal's Corner
Issue 1, January 20, 2015

Dear Walker Families,

As the new year is upon us, I would like to foremost thank you for your support of your child's education and growth at Walker School. I have taken great joy in getting to know the students, and I am proud of the many great things happening around Walker—dynamic teaching and learning and a service-minded effort to contribute to great causes at this time of the year, such as the Hinsdale Community Services and Feeding Children Worldwide. What makes our school community strong are the common values we have for raising our children to be well prepared learners, but more importantly, caring young people who want to better the world!

As this is my first entry in a new addition to the PTO website, I want to thank the PTO for their dedication to serving Walker School and working with the Walker staff to deliver the best educational experiences possible for our students. Our hope with this communication is to provide families with some updates on the goings-on within Walker, highlighting specific developments that might be of interest to you as they happen throughout the school year.

Thank you for taking the time to check out this Principal's Corner. Look for future write-ups on topics such as newly purchased iPads, continued PARCC information, and best practice teaching. Please feel free to contact me if I can further assist you to support your child's learning and growth at Walker School.

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PARCC Assessment Window March 2 - 27

This March, all students in grades 3-5 will participate in Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments. The PARCC assessment is a computer-based test that will be assessing student knowledge in the areas of English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. A significant portion of this assessment will require students to compose their written responses to questions using the online tools within the assessment, specifically, using a keyboard for typed responses. The Walker staff is currently in the process of preparing students to become familiar with the technology and format of the PARCC assessments.

Keyboarding at Walker

To help our students better prepare for this online composition, Walker has offered a Keyboarding Club for grades 2-5. Ms. Griffin (MRC Director) is the club sponsor, and she has offered this opportunity during lunch recess on Wednesdays and Thursdays, as scheduled per grade level.

In addition, Walker has partnered with the Clarendon Hills Park District to offer after school Keyboarding on Tuesdays starting January 20. Parents can visit www.clarendonhillsparkdistrict.org for more information or to register IF they have been given a family user name and password from park district office. Or they can visit park district office in person to register.

Feel free to view additional information about the upcoming PARCC assessment, including practice tests and sample questions:
<http://www.parcconline.org/>

New Math Materials on Display

At the January 12 Board of Education meeting, *Math in Focus* materials for grades K-5 were approved to be put on public display—a step in the process before approving newly adopted materials. If the materials are approved by the BOE (planned for February 23), the district will purchase the new materials and begin staff training/professional development for teachers as we prepare to implement them for the 2015-2016 school year.

As D181 aligns our curriculum with the Illinois Learning Standards incorporating the Common Core, the Math Committee was formed to seek a resource that provides a strong foundation in fluency, conceptual understanding, procedural knowledge, and application, while also providing an instructional base that is grounded in the Eight Mathematical Practices. In addition, the chosen resource must provide tools for teachers to differentiate based on the needs of students, provide rigor in both instruction and homework, and allow teachers to follow the District's implementation of the Common Core Standards.

The new higher goals require our students to reason, apply, connect, and truly understand math skills and concepts. Mathematically proficient students blend their knowledge of math content with their ability to apply that knowledge to solve problems, communicate math ideas, justify solutions, model math concepts, and reason in order to make sense of mathematics.

- "Putting the Practices into Action" (O'Connell and SanGiovanni)

You can find more information about the Math Pilot and recommended materials on the district website at <http://www.d181.org/learning/math-pilot/index.aspx>. Please feel free to review the Math in Focus elementary materials (and Big Ideas middle school materials) as they are on public display at the District Office and offer your feedback.

5 Essentials Survey Now Open

We are joining districts throughout the state in administering the Illinois 5Essentials Survey starting Monday, January 12 and continuing through March 13. District 181 teachers, middle school students, and parents are being invited to take the 15-minute survey to help identify strengths and areas for improvement in our schools'

climate and learning conditions.

We greatly value the opportunity to hear your feedback. Please note that at least 20% of parents in a school must complete the survey for the school to receive a report on the data, so it is important that we have strong participation. Your identity and survey responses will be kept completely confidential and will never be connected to you or your child. The direct link to access the survey online starting Monday (1/12) is <https://survey.5-essentials.org/illinois-pilot>. You can read more about the five essentials, access the survey link, and download past results on our website: www.d181.org > Resources > IL 5Essentials.

As a parent, your voice is essential to help us understand the conditions at Walker to guide the school improvement process. Please complete the survey for Walker School.

To take this short survey:

1. Visit <https://survey.5-essentials.org/illinois-pilot/>
2. Type and then select **DuPage** as CCSD 181's County location.
3. Type Walker School's name into the School field and take the survey.