

Message from Superintendent Greg Herbst

If you like simple and empowering, you're going to love this.

First, a one-question quiz—the greatest predictor of success is (fill in the blank).

If you answered IQ or aptitude—try again. If you offered social intelligence, socio-economic status or privilege—sorry.

According to consultant—turned teacher—turned psychologist and researcher Angela Lee Duckworth, numerous studies of diverse individuals in various challenging contexts revealed the emergence of a single characteristic as a significant predictor of success, and that is . . . **grit**.

That's right—grit; **resolve**; **depth of character**; the **unwillingness to give up** on a goal before it is completed.

As stated by Duckworth, grit is having the stamina to stick with your future, not just for days, weeks, or months, but for years and working hard to make that future a reality.



This contention runs parallel to research conducted by Rory Vaden, a New York Times bestselling author and co-founder of Southwest Consulting, whose firm conducted longitudinal research on successful companies and individuals with the hope of identifying any common denominators.

Vaden proudly announced that his research did, indeed, verify one common characteristic of success, and that is—do what has to be done. That's it—not some variable-filled formula or complicated algorithm; **just plain, dogged persistence**.

This assertion forwarded by Duckworth and Vaden is hardly groundbreaking or revolutionary. Thomas Huxley, a nineteenth century English biologist wrote, "Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not."

The empowering idea of **stick-to-itiveness**, when applied to students, translates like this: go to school—every day. Be prepared for classes—every day. Pay attention, take notes, ask questions, do your homework—every day. In other words, be a student in practice, not just in title.

With the start of the school year, it is clear that the blueprint for success is not written in ink but in **perseverance**, and that is simply empowering.

Galena Schools Welcome New Professionals

Familiar Face;
Added Role

Mrs. Susan Bookless
English/Language Arts
Teacher at GHS



Mrs. Dawn Fleege
Food Service
Employee at GMS



Mrs. Sandra Getz
Special Education
Teacher at GHS



Mrs. Deanna Nuce
ELL/Bi-Lingual Associate
and IVS Mentor



Mrs. Sharon Tranel
Food Service
Employee at GPS



Mr. Brett Noble
GHS Athletics/
Activities Director

New Math Curriculum
at the Primary School

After studying various math curricula throughout the course of last school year, teachers at the Primary School decided upon and are teaching from a new series this school year.

According to Principal Jill Muehleip, the series—*Bridges and Number Corners*—not only meets our learning standards but is interactive and offers numerous hands-on opportunities for students to learn.

An additional benefit to using a single series is the improved likelihood of not having gaps and/or overlaps in the vertical articulation between grade levels.

Teachers received training over the summer to assist with the implementation of the curriculum at the start of this school year.

Illinois Virtual School
at Galena High School

For at least the first semester of this school year, Galena High School is embarking on a new journey—offering Spanish classes through the Illinois Virtual School (IVS).

GHS students have taken IVS courses individually in previous years, but this is the first experience offering an IVS course to a classroom of students.

To assist with this new endeavor, the District is pleased to introduce Mrs. Deanna Nuce as a mentor to assist students during their IVS class.

IVS offers full service courses and are taught by licensed instructors responsible for maintaining communication with students, providing instructional feedback, and assisting with course content questions.

School Board Establishes
Committees

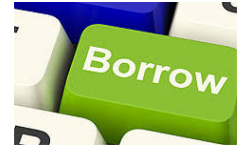
The School Board has established several committees to assist with its governance function and, in some instances, to comply with State law requirements. The committees include:

- Board Policy and Legal Updates
- Buildings and Grounds
- Grants/Fund Finding
- Parent/Teacher Advisory, which includes Behavioral Interventions
- Public Relations and Communications
- Wellness

Each committee is comprised of three Board members, administration, and non-Board members depending on the committee's purpose.

Transparency Report: Looking Back and Looking Ahead

HONEST CONVERSATIONS



Let's Have an Honest Conversation

There are two sides to education—the education side and the business side.

With regard to the latter, school districts have revenues and expenditures, just like other businesses.

Generally speaking, decision-makers will sensibly attempt to run a business as efficiently as possible.

For school districts, whose revenues primarily come from taxes, this premise of efficiency evolves into an unwavering moral obligation.

Public funds and public trust must be protected at all times and with all measures.

I ask that you please read the information presented herein in the manner in which it is intended.

This Transparency Report:

- **IS NOT** intended to be judgemental. With rare exception, my experiences have convinced me that people make decisions they feel are reasonable and just with the information available at that time.
- **IS NOT** intended to be comprehensive. The cause-and-effect relationships within a district are simply too many and varied.

This Transparency Report:

- **IS** intended to be an honest conversation, a reality check, if you will, regarding the business side of where we are as a District.
- **IS** intended to offer some insight into various measures being undertaken to maximize our resources and enhance opportunities for students.



Significant Reductions in State Funding

In 1998, Illinois lawmakers changed the funding formula for schools. Knowing that said changes would adversely affect smaller communities, lawmakers added a “hold harmless” provision, which basically read that school districts would not receive less money in General State Aid (GSA) than they received in 1998.

This was all fine-and-good until the state, once again, had trouble meeting its financial obligations. In FY09 and FY10, Illinois lawmakers used American Recovery and Reinvestment Act monies to supplant part of their hold harmless obligations, but this revenue stream was both minimal and temporary.

The state, being cognizant of not meeting its hold harmless obligations, simply eliminated the provision entirely.

Since a picture is worth a thousand words, the financial effect of the state’s actions on Galena’s schools is depicted in the bar graph at the right.

As an aside, the FY17 figure is circled in red because the District has yet to receive \$127,021 of its state allocations.

In My Opinion . . .

When I interviewed with the School Board in January 2016, and in numerous conversations since that time, one of my charges was made very clear—analyze every aspect of our school system.

A task as daunting as this takes time—not days, weeks, or months, but years—and is never “done.”

It has been my professional pleasure to serve as your Superintendent of Schools for the past fourteen months. Herein lie several umbrella assessments.

- As is rightly the case in any social system, human capital is our greatest asset. The people employed in service to children within our schools are impressive.
- The educational programming is noteworthy—1:1 in the Middle School and High School; STEM courses; and a constant quest to improve, as exemplified by the new Primary School math curriculum.
- The culture of caring and camaraderie is tangible. You can feel it permeating throughout actions and interactions at all levels.

Remember, this is a Transparency Report, so other observations and assessments include these:

- This District, with its enrollment history and projections; its demographics; its property wealth and other revenue sources; should not need to go to referendum for all of its large-scale infrastructure needs.
- What we do need are analyses and plans to weigh sustainability; maintain and modernize our infrastructure; minimize and eliminate inefficiencies and redundancies; and maximize our resources.

This, too, will take time—not days, weeks, or months, but years. It will also require patience; adaptability; a willingness to let go of old norms; and dare I say . . . grit.

Oh, and it, too, will never be “done.”

Non-Voter-Approved Bonding Capacity

School districts cannot borrow money in the traditional sense of the word. Rather, districts sell bonds. These can be either voter-approved (VA) bonds or non-voter-approved (NVA) bonds.

In general, each district’s NVA bonding capacity is tied directly into its respective Debt Service Extension Base (DSEB). The DSEB establishes the amount of NVA debt a district can carry by capping the amount of money the district can use to pay back NVA bonds on a yearly basis.

Specific to Galena, this means:

1. The District’s repayments for NVA bonds is approximately \$130,000 annually.
2. The District’s ability to secure NVA bonds is capped until fiscal year 2029.

Q: How did this happen?

A: The District is currently paying back three bonds. In reverse chronological order, the two most recent bonds—Qualified Zone Academy Bonds—total \$695,000 and were approved in 2016. Securing these bonds was a prudent action by the Board, as they are interest-free.

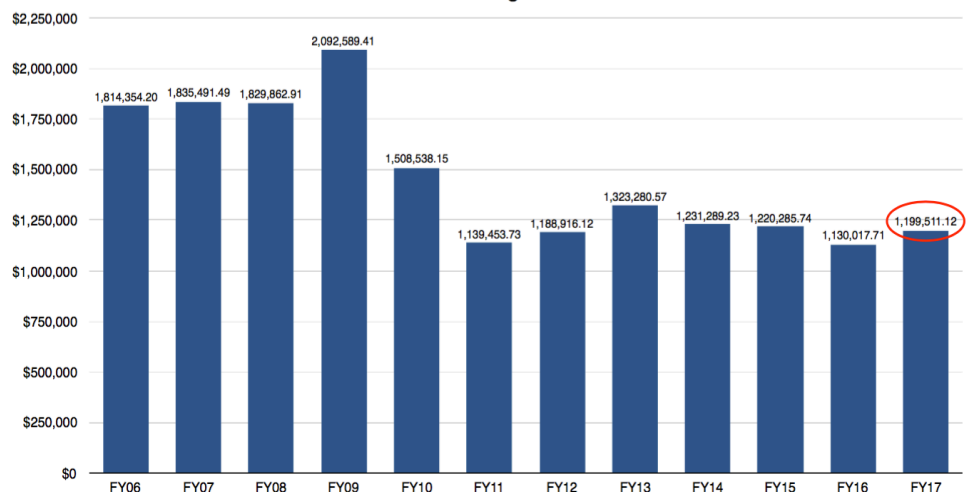
The first bond, however, was approved in 2003. This 20-year General Obligation Bond was intended to address the 2002 10-year Health/Life Safety (HLS) Study—a study mandated for all schools and municipalities in Illinois every ten years.

Restated, the District secured a 20-year bond for a 10-year facilities project list.



Generally, the pairing of HLS projects and the funding to accomplish them is intended to have a simple alignment; that is: 10-year study/10-year bond; new 10-year study/new 10-year bond; etc.

Total State Funding for Galena USD #120



Transparency Report: Looking Back and Looking Ahead



The Cost of Carrying Debt

The aforementioned 20-year General Obligation Bond (GOB) carries with it a second consideration—the cost of carrying debt.

Bond payments can be structured at the discretion of the purchasing body. Principal repayments can be:

- Front-loaded (thereby reducing the overall interest charge);
- Spread evenly throughout the duration of the repayment schedule; or
- Back-loaded (thereby increasing the overall interest charge).

In our case, the principal payments were back-loaded starting with \$0 in the first two years; \$60,000 in the next three years, and increasing in \$5000 increments to \$110,000 in the final year of the repayment schedule.

By extending the GOB for 20 years and back-loading the principal payments, the total interest on this \$1.34M bond is \$724,073.51.



Facilities Maintenance and Modernization Plan

The District's administration is developing a Facilities Maintenance and Modernization Plan. This plan will assess our facilities' needs and project cost commitments over a minimum of two decades.

Facilities subcategories include such large-ticket items as roofs, HVAC, windows, flooring, and parking lots.

In addition, the District will also conduct analyses on renewable energy and/or alternative energy sources as replacement opportunities present themselves.



Cost-Benefit Analyses and Sustainability

Along with educational impact and safety, decision-making processes and intended outcomes will include the long-term sustainability of the District as one of its primary considerations.



Facilities Projects for this Fall and Next Summer

This fall, the Middle School boiler will be replaced (\$54,531.28) and the heating coil will be repaired (at a cost not to exceed \$15,000). The boiler has a crack that cannot be repaired, and the heating coil failed unexpectedly. Failure to address these issues immediately would render us unable to heat/cool the classrooms in the Middle School.

Next summer the roof at the Middle School will be replaced (\$411,446), and most of the roof at the High School (\$536,800) will also be replaced. (Note: A portion of the High School roof was replaced in 2014.)

The overall costs for both projects is expected to be much higher, as we anticipate having additional repair and replacement costs for damaged decking once the current roofs are removed.



The Same is Easy; Change Can Be Difficult

As caretakers of public funds and trust, this District has a duty to see if a different design will work when opportunities present themselves.

Following its implementation with fidelity, the design will be subject to an honest assessment of its successes and shortcomings and, if needed, further modifications.

2nd Grade Teacher

With rare exception, Galena Primary School has three sections per grade level; that is, three sections of kindergarten; three sections of 1st grade, etc.

Prior to the 2015 school year, the School Board voted to add a fourth section of kindergarten due to its somewhat larger-than-usual enrollment (78 students) and the ages of the students, some of whom would be in a structured classroom setting for the first time.

The intention was for this fourth section to spiral through the Primary School with these students as they advanced from one grade level to the next.

Following a resignation and several intra-District transfers, the School Board voted unanimously not to rehire a teacher for a fourth section of 2nd grade. Contributing factors include:

- The enrollment, which began at 78 students, has decreased to 71 students at the beginning of this school year;
- Class sizes—24, 24, and 23—although not ideal, are certainly not unreasonable;
- Each of the three second grade teachers has a minimum of four years teaching experience; and
- Most importantly, it is believed by the administration and affirmed by the 2nd grade teachers that this realignment can be realized without any detrimental effects whatsoever to the students' educational experiences.

Custodial Employee Position

Following the retirement of a custodial employee in June, the School Board voted unanimously to proceed with the process not to rehire this position. Contributing factors include:

- An acknowledgement that the District operated with six custodial employees prior to 2003, when the School Board created a seventh custodial position, Director of Buildings and Grounds.
- An analysis of current job assignments support the conclusion that most maintenance projects can be addressed by the cohort of first-shift custodians, given that their cleaning responsibilities are limited and otherwise reactionary during the school day due to the presence of students.

Food Service Position

The District most recently employed eight food service employees. Following three retirements, the decision was made to rehire two of the three vacated positions.

At this time, the responsibilities of the third position will be accomplished through the reassignment of duties within the existing food service staff.



The Suspension of Large-Scale Facilities Improvements

As has been told to me, the first of many, many facilities planning meetings was held in March 2006.

The intended outcome of these meetings was to identify options for addressing the District's aging infrastructure.

The eventual conclusion was to construct new buildings which would be financed through the passage of a voter-approved referendum.

In conjunction with the hope of constructing new buildings was the decision to suspend large-scale facilities improvements. This approach is logical in the short-term, as it would be imprudent to invest significant resources into buildings that might be replaced in the near future.

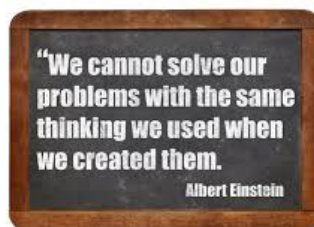
The suspension of large-scale improvements was extended into the 2011 Health/Life Safety Study, in which no bond was secured to pay for the list of projects; a list which incidentally is expanding in both breadth and depth.



As we know, this story had an alternative outcome—the referendum, make that referenda, did not pass—three times to be exact.

As such, an unintended outcome surfaced in this form—suspending large-scale improvements in the short-term is one thing; suspending them for eleven years is another.

The School Board is committed to the development of a phasing plan to meet the District's prioritized list of goals and challenges.





Galena Primary School Enrolls in Praire Farms' OUR CAPS, YOUR CAUSE Program

Prairie Farms' program—OUR CAPS, YOUR CAUSE—is a simple way for you to donate money to a favorite cause without digging into your purse or wallet.

Here's how—the caps on Prairie Farms' milk and iced coffee (in gallon and half-gallon sizes) contain a unique, redeemable code. Using a computer, simply enter the codes, select Galena Primary School, and click the donate button . . . it's that easy.

To redeem codes, go to www.prairefarms.com. In the top menu bar, click on the OUR CAPS, YOUR CAUSE link; or use the QR code shown above.



Instant Phone Contact

Galena School District will again utilize SchoolMessenger, a telephone broadcast system, that enables school personnel to notify all households and parents/guardians by telephone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes school cancellation, late start, or early dismissal. The system may also be used for general announcements or reminders.

Please help ensure the effectiveness of the SchoolMessenger system by providing school offices with accurate contact information and by notifying the respective school secretary whenever your phone number or address changes throughout the year.



School Bus Drivers Needed

Galena School District is accepting applications for school bus drivers. Morning and/or afternoon routes are possible, as are field trips and extracurricular trips.

An application form may be picked up at the District Office (1206 N. Franklin St.) or the Bus Barn (11380 Industrial Park, Suite 101).

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Mr. David Howard, Transportation Director, at 815-776-9131.



Check Out Our District Website

For relevant information on the good things happening in our schools and throughout the District, be sure to check out the District's website at <http://www.gusd120.k12.il.us>.



Follow Us On Twitter

As another means of keeping updated on the positive things happening in our District, follow Superintendent Herbst on Twitter by searching for Greg Herbst @Supt120.



Parent Information Portal

TeacherEase is web-based software used by the District for its student information system. Because it is web-based, parents/guardians have visual access to their students' grades, attendance, lunch account balances, and more.

This portal is also interactive, as noted on the first page of this newsletter . . . parents/guardians can complete their Free/Reduced Lunch Application via their TeacherEase account, as well as pay a majority of school fees and deposit money into their children's lunch accounts.

If you are new to the District, you should have received a welcome email with log-in instructions from TeacherEase.



Senior Citizen Courtesy Pass

Just a reminder that senior citizens (age 65 and older) are admitted free to all home athletic events. This excludes tournaments and state-sponsored activities hosted by Galena High School or Galena Middle School.



IHSA Publicity Policy

The Board of Directors of the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) approved a policy that requires member schools to notify student-athletes, coaches, and other participants that the IHSA and/or its agents or designees may take, distribute, and use photographs of student-athletes, coaches, officials, and other participants at such events and use the same for publicity, marketing, and other appropriate purposes, including event programs.



Lunch Debit Accounts

Please make it part of your weekly, biweekly, or monthly routine to send money with your student for his/her lunch debit account. Also, please take advantage of this teachable moment to explain to your child(ren) the difference between a debit and a credit account.



Pesticide Application Notice

The District will maintain a registry of parents/guardians of students who register to receive written or telephone notification at least two business days prior to the application of pesticides to school grounds. To be placed on this registry, please contact Mr. David Phillips, Buildings and Grounds Director, at 815-777-3086, ext. 1014. Prior notice is not required if there is an imminent threat to health or property.



Sex Offender Registration Act

Public Act 94-994 requires the principal or teacher of a public or private elementary or secondary school to notify parents of children attending the school that information about sex offenders is available to the public as provided in the Act.

To acquire information, including names, addresses, descriptions, and convictions about sex offenders living in your area, you can log onto the Illinois State Police website at www.isp.state.il.us/sor. A second website with similar information can be accessed at www.familywatchdog.us.



"Thank You"
for shopping locally
in Galena and Jo Daviess County.
It matters.