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IN BRIEF is published three times a year by Skokie School District 68.

Have a question or a comment? Want more information? Visit www.Skokie68.org or call the district office at (847) 676-9000.



New staff members include (back row, from left): Theresa House, Alexandra Burrell, Robyn Hawley, Alison Vinkler, Maria Zambonino, Jessica Kochy, Dan Morris, and Sarah Larsen; (Front row, from left) Phyllis Tsevis, Kate Gassensmith, Claudy Levin, Lisa Westman, Megan Byrne, Brya Myers, and Shannon Griffiths.

Welcome, new staff members!

Alexandra Burrell, third-grade teacher at Highland School, received her bachelor's degree from Lake Forest College and her master's in education from National-Louis University. She taught for 10 years in the Chicago public school system.

Megan Byrne, kindergarten teacher at Highland, graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University with a bachelor's degree in educational studies. She has been a teaching assistant at Jane Stenson School for two years.

Katherine Gassensmith, general music teacher at Old Orchard Junior High, graduated from Indiana University with a bachelor's degree in music education. She taught general music for five years at Niles Community Schools in Niles, Michigan.

Shannon Griffiths, speech therapist at Highland, received a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and a master's degree in speech-language pathol-

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New staff

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ogy from Northern Illinois University. She was a speech pathologist at District 69 for four years.

Theresa House, second-grade teacher at Highland, graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a bachelor's degree and received her master's in elementary education from DePaul University. She worked as a substitute teacher for District 68 for two years and was a teaching assistant at Highland and Stenson for two years; she also worked at the Early Childhood Center after school.

Jessica Kochy, sixth-grade math teacher, graduated from Mount Union College in Ohio with a B.A. in education. She worked as a substitute teacher last school year in Geauga County schools.

Sarah Larsen, sixth-grade language arts/social studies teacher, received a B.A. in education from Arizona State University and taught for four years in Prospect Heights School District 23. She was a substitute teacher for District 68 last year and spent several months as a long-term sixth-grade LA/SS substitute at OOJH.

Claudy Levin, sixth-grade LA/SS teacher at OOJH, received her bachelor's degree from Brandeis University and her master's in education from Northwestern University. She also has an advanced degree from National-Louis University in Reading. She has worked as a long-term substitute teacher in District 68 in many teaching positions.

Daniel Morris, social worker at Devonshire, received a bachelor's degree in social work from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, and a master's in social work from the University of Michigan. He received his Type 73 certification from Loyola University and did his externship at Walker Elementary School in Evanston.

Brya Myers, general music teacher at Devonshire School, graduated from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia with a bachelor's degree in music, and received a master's degree in music education from VanderCook College of Music. She taught music for three years at Joseph Brennemann School in Chicago.

Phyllis Tsevis, sixth-grade math teacher, graduated from Loyola University with a B.A. and from National-Louis University with a master's in education. Before becoming a stay-at-home mom, she was a sixth-grade math teacher for 10 years in Northbrook District 27. More recently, she was a long-term substitute teacher at Avoca District 37.

Alison Vinkler, social worker at OOJH, graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with both bachelor's and a master's degrees in social work. For the past five years she has worked as a school social worker at Uhlich Academy in Chicago. She also worked for one year as a school social worker in a private therapeutic high school.

Lisa Westman, gifted and talented teacher at OOJH, received her bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago and her master's from National-Louis University. She taught social studies and gifted education at Golf Middle School for four years.

Maria Zambonino, first-grade teacher at Stenson, graduated from Columbia College with a bachelor of arts degree and from National-Louis University with a master's degree in education. She has been a teaching assistant at Jane Stenson School for four years.

District 68 also welcomes two newcomers to the OOJH leadership team:

Andy Carpenter is the new Dean of Students at OOJH, where he has been a school social worker since August 2005. He graduated from Xavier University with a bachelor's degree in social work and received his master's in school social work from Loyola University.

Robyn Hawley, the new assistant principal at OOJH, recently completed a one-year principal internship at Senn High School in Chicago. Prior to that, she taught in Chicago at the Julian Achievement Academy, and at the Tilden Achievement Academy, where she also chaired the social studies department. With a B.A. from Ohio University and a master's in education from Wright State University, she is now working on her Ph.D. in urban education leadership at the University of Illinois – Chicago.

Busy summer results in changes

As the new school year begins, students and their families may notice several changes.

The district installed 37 interactive whiteboards throughout its schools over the summer, and plans to put one in every classroom within the next 18 months.

The district chose SMART Technologies to supply the whiteboards after teachers compared products from two different vendors last spring.

Interactive whiteboards represent a significant trend in classroom technology. They work like giant touch-screens, enabling students and teachers to manipulate numbers, words, or objects on the main screen. At the same time, using hand-held devices, teachers can interact with the boards from anywhere in the room and students can respond from their desks. The system lets students respond anonymously on the main board, while enabling teachers to monitor how individual students are doing.

Interactive whiteboards have proved to be a cost-effective tool that benefits students at all grade levels. Accustomed to receiving information from cell phones, computers, and televisions, students seem to quickly understand how the whiteboards work and enjoy interacting with them. As a result, whiteboards tend to boost student

engagement and improve learning.

At Old Orchard Junior High, four new instructional kitchens were added to the two already in place in the Family and Consumer Science classroom. Adding the kitchens (*see photo*) sup-



ports the district's revision of the school's fine and applied arts curricula.

At Highland and Jane Stenson schools, the renovations of outdoor play areas were completed. The projects included replacing and repainting blacktop areas at both schools, installing new fencing, and adding trees, shrubbery, and plant beds along the perimeter of the playgrounds to make them more inviting to students and attractive to the community. Highland also received new play equipment.

Board plans internal performance review

The District 68 School Board plans to analyze its performance and review its long-term goals next month.

Board members will hold a half-day Board governance retreat, according to Supt. Frances McTague. The Board last did so in 2006, and since then, four new members have taken their seats.

"It's a very healthy exercise for the Board," McTague said. "They review their priorities and how they guide the district."

The retreat will be facilitated by a representative from the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB). District 68's Board will look closely at its

performance scorecard, which is a set of measures the Board uses to monitor the district's progress. Those measures include demographic information on students and staff, and student achievement data. (A PDF copy of the current scorecard can be obtained from the district's web site—www.skokie68.org. On the home page, click on "Board of Education" and choose "Performance Scorecard" from the pop-up menu.)

School officials plan to share results of the Board retreat with the community later this fall. Watch for more information via the district's E-News and in the next issue of *In Brief*.

IN BRIEF

SKOKIE SCHOOL DISTRICT 68

SKOKIE, ILLINOIS 60076

TELEPHONE: 847-676-9000

FAX: 847-676-9232

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Board of Education meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of each month in the Educational Service Center at 9440 Kenton Ave. You are invited to attend.

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Join Us at Fall Fest!

5–7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 16
Old Orchard Junior High School
9310 Kenton Ave.

**For currently enrolled District 68 students
and their families**