

11/19/21

### **Superintendent details gratitude for great things happening in schools**

Read Superintendent David Larson's community columns [here](#). These essays are published in local newspapers' editorial/opinion pages

In this season of gratitude, we have much to be thankful for in Glenbard Township High School District 87. We are very thankful that our students are in school, participating in engaging lessons that involve lively discussion and critical thinking.

We are grateful for the following experiences for our students provided by our dedicated faculty and staff:

- Students are connecting with their teachers, counselors, coaches and club sponsors every day.
- Students in science classes are working in quality labs, conducting experiments that leverage curiosity.
- Students are collaborating to generate original ideas, solutions and products in imaginative ways in our schools' media centers.
- Theatre and music students are performing in front of an audience again.
- Student athletes are developing skills, learning about teamwork and pursuing an area of interest in our comprehensive athletic programs.
- Students involved in clubs and activities are engaged in service projects and developing leadership skills.

We have so much to be grateful for in Glenbard. Here are just a few more examples:

- Talented, caring educators who meet students' academic and social emotional needs
- Supportive families and community members who partner with us to prepare students for life after high school.
- Robust resources available in quality public libraries in our community and their knowledgeable, helpful staff.
- Comprehensive recreation facilities throughout the community and their collaborative, innovative staff.
- Service-oriented civic organizations, including Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions clubs throughout our community
- Compassionate nonprofit organizations that support our students and their families
- Strong municipal leaders and staff who partner with us on our shared interest in vibrant communities.

### **Academic success**

Despite the pandemic, our students are doing well academically. Here are just a few examples that reflect the strong instruction, programming and partnership of Glenbard District 87 and our associated six school districts:

- We have prepared students for success after high school by exposing them to college-level Advanced Placement (AP) or dual credit coursework, **increasing the percentage of students completing the college-level coursework from 58% to 74% in eight years.**
- We have increased the percent of students taking a rigorous course sequence in math and science. Today, **89% of our juniors are taking Algebra 2 with Trigonometry or higher** compared to 62% nine years ago and **84% of our juniors are taking Physics or higher** compared to 42% nine years ago.
- In the past 10 years, our students' average AP exam passing rate is 71%. Our students' exam passing rate exceeds the national average AP passing rate of 64%.
- During the past three years, our annual AP College Board Equity and Excellence score averaged 43%. This score, which notes the percentage of all graduates who earn college credit through AP classes, continues to exceed the state and national averages, which are 29% and 24%, respectively.
- Glenbard students' average **SAT score of 1031 continues to outpace the state average SAT score by 46 points.**

### **Meeting each student's needs**

Like school districts across the country, we recognize that some of our students are struggling as they adjust to challenges related to the pandemic. When planning for this school year, we were intentional about taking the following steps to help our students:

- Offering free summer school
- Hiring additional social workers
- Providing activities that focus on students belonging, engaging and acquiring skills
- Continuing tutoring during the school day, including peer tutoring, and introducing a new virtual evening tutoring program
- Leveraging academic supports that include academic assistance before school, during lunch and study halls and after school; math and writing centers; and identifying students who are struggling and assigning them to meet with a teacher for assistance.
- Implementing a wellness curriculum
- Providing social emotional supports that include wellness programs; family outreach; promoting healthy relationship skills, responsible decision

making and self-awareness skills; mentoring programs for students; knowledgeable, supportive school counselors and mental health staff; upperclassmen student leaders who help freshmen transition to high school; and helplines for bullying prevention, crisis assistance and anonymous tips.

I am grateful to be part of a school district that has supportive community members who want the best for students. May the gratitude we feel during the holiday season continue in the months ahead.