Hello District 163 Family,

During the first quarter of the 2019-20 school year our staff and administrative team have focused on providing an engaging and effective educational environment. We expect and believe that all students can learn. High expectations promote high achievement.

Our students are engaged in robust and relevant activities throughout all of our schools; from our little learners creating and presenting reading strategy posters to our 8th grade leaders serving as peer mentors to 4th grade students. We are proud of our excellent students and teachers.

Our teachers are the core of what we do! This fall our teaching and leadership staff participated in professional development to create more robust professional learning communities centered around curriculum, instruction, assessment and intervention. We also focused on establishing caring communities with daily kindness challenges to promote positive relationships. Our fall professional learning included training workshops to raise our awareness of cultural sensitivity. Teachers in the classroom are committed to excellence in academics as well as nurturing and supportive environments.

The vision begins with our Board of Education. The goals established for educational excellence are communicated through their vision for our schools. We are committed to learning together to boost academics and our community of practice. The development of our Board of Education members supports effective leadership. We set aside valuable time to attend educational conferences to ensure we are abreast of programs and opportunities which impact schools.

Visit our website and our social media channels to see more of the amazing happenings in District 163! Thank you for your partnership and support as we elevate excellence!
Along with all District 163 students, each student at Algonquin received a gracious donation of six books from Bernie’s Book Bank this quarter. The students were excited to add books to their home library. They are looking forward to receiving another donation in the spring. We are thankful for the partnership with Bernie’s Book Bank, and our hope is that every child will discover a passion for reading and gain new knowledge.

Reading aloud to students is a part of the daily curriculum at Algonquin. Not only are the students exposed to books read aloud by teachers...the principal also reads aloud to every class twice each month. The students are focusing on comprehending and retelling stories, comparing and contrasting texts, and making connections between books and themselves, other books, and the world around them.

Be sure to join us for Family Playgroup sessions that are held at 9:30 AM and 1:30 PM. Upcoming dates include November 22nd and January 31st.

Pictured above, Connor & Logan are able to identify color words from the “read” letter blocks posted in their reading center. Preschool students are doing a tremendous job identifying and naming letters as well as recognizing words.

Mrs. Lori Colbert, Principal
lcolbert@sd163.com
21st Century Primary Center

1st Quarter Highlights

Thanks for a great start to our 2019-20 school year. During this first quarter we have provided opportunities for our families to be involved in student learning: Primary Math Night, Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) Night for 3rd grade students and Reading Night. Each event was filled with fun and learning for both students and parents.

We believe kindness is an important part of our school culture. Our first quarter kindness challenge provided opportunities for students and staff to demonstrate kind gestures toward each other.

Our October Bash festivities were exciting and allowed our students time to learn and play new games. Many parents attended the events. Thank you! Please come visit us on a regular basis.

I am honored to serve the students, families, and staff of 21st Century Primary School. We’re off to a great start! I am extremely proud of our students. I believe that if we keep a unified interest in ALL students reaching their maximum potential, we will see great things happen. We appreciate your partnership. Thanks for your support!

Dr. Cheryl Muench, Principal
cmuench@sd163.com
At Blackhawk we believe in partnering with families and the community in order to provide a welcoming, safe, and engaging environment in which all students feel a sense of community, accountability, and purpose as they grow and develop into critical thinkers with a desire to solve problems and have fun while learning.

When students are excited about learning, the possibilities are endless. Here at Blackhawk we aim to encourage, motivate, and excite our students by ensuring that our classrooms and hallways are engaging and inspirational. As students make connections during instructional learning in-class, we believe that education is a holistic approach where the social emotional learning is just as important. We invite all of our stakeholders to take a tour of what’s new and exciting here at Blackhawk Primary Center.

One of our first quarter initiatives was to ensure we are proactive with addressing student behaviors and ensuring that we offer a safe and welcoming learning environment each instructional day. We created a school-wide initiative called the “30 Day Challenge,” which focused on Positive Behavior Interventions and explicit teaching of behavior expectations for the first 30 days of school. We not only achieved this goal but are now at 50+ days of school where we have focused our efforts on restorative practices and positive praise. As a result of our efforts, we are proud to acknowledge our staff for successfully completing our “30 Day Challenge.”

Research shows that when students are supported and motivated to learn, academic performance levels increase. This quarter we are proud of the many partnerships we have established with our stakeholders, which has assisted in making each educational day new and exciting.

First Quarter Highlights

- Station Rotations
- Summer Packet Celebration (Game Truck)
- 3rd Grade Parent Meeting
- 30 Day Challenge Celebration
- Rocket Math Level Up Battle
- Parent Engagement Meeting
- Primary Math Night
- Character Day Parade

Blackhawk Primary Center
1st Quarter Highlights

Dr. Felix Anderson, Principal
fanderson@sd163.com
At Mohawk Primary Center we believe that a strong home-school connection will set the stage for a child who will grow up with a love for learning. When parents and teachers work well together, everyone benefits!! At Mohawk everyone is welcome to support learning and growth; parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Volunteers set their own time; some give a half hour, some an hour, and others a half day. Mohawk volunteers know that each moment that they spend with a student contributes to their success.

A successful parent-teacher partnership shows a child that an entire team of adults is on their side. This quarter Mohawk has partnered with parents for the following events:

- Give Us the Scoop
- Hispanic Heritage Awareness Month
- Volunteer Reading & Math
- Student of the Month Assemblies
- Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) Meetings
- Open House
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Wonderful Wednesdays
- Field Trips
- Character Day

At Mohawk we want parents to be familiar faces in our learning space. Consider volunteering to support our students. Please connect with your child’s teacher or the school’s secretary, Mrs. Peggy Travis. We have a space just for you!!!
Barack Obama School of Leadership and STEM

1st Quarter Highlights

Barack Obama School of Leadership and STEM is focused on #winning while we are #elevatingexcellence in all that we do! We ROCKED first quarter as we focused on creating and establishing a learning environment that supports the various needs of our students and the community we serve. We started the school year providing our scholars with a summer enrichment camp, or as we called it, “SUMMER SUCCESS ACADEMY.” Here our scholars had an opportunity to refine their skills prior to school starting and participate in hands-on STEM learning opportunities.

Our annual Open House was informative, focused, and engaging for students, parents and stakeholders. We truly ROCKED…95% of our families attended. Thank you for your support!

We are establishing a culture for learning by creating an environment that challenges and inspires our students through our Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS) program implemented for all students! Students learn about behavior expectations, earn Barack Bucks, and participate in monthly activities targeted at student growth and excellence.

We are proud of the many programs offered throughout the first quarter for students, families, and community members:

- We challenged parents and students at Math Night through math stations that were fun and exciting.
- Career Day
- “Pie the Principal” for students that completed their summer learning activity packet.
- STEM-O-WEEN hands-on Halloween driven STEM projects promoting critical thinking in math and science.
- Accelerated Reader (AR) FALL FEST, where students who met their reading goals engaged in exciting activities that promoted reading.

Our 8th grade scholars participate in weekly leadership seminars and community service projects, #winning!

We are proud of our first quarter! Thank you for your commitment to #winning!

Dr. Khari Grant, Principal
kgrant@sd163.com

Mrs. Veneeta Phelps, Assistant Principal
vphelps@sd163.com
Performing Arts
Our performing arts team has been working hard first quarter preparing for the Holiday Show. This year’s theme will be “A Christmas Card to the Community.” Our performance will be on November 26, 2019 at 7 PM at Governor’s State University. Admission tickets are $4.00. Order forms will be sent in November and will be available in the main office.

Thank you Parents!
Michelle Obama School parents are awesome. We appreciate your attendance at our family engagement events this quarter, including: Math Night, School Improvement Meeting, and PTO meetings. Our PTO Parents hosted a conversation with our 8th graders focused on internet safety. We also hosted our first “Conversations with the Principals.” Our focus was raising awareness about bullying and cyberbullying. Many interesting ideas were shared. We appreciate your input!

8th Grade Leadership
Our 8th grade students will spend this year focused on four major Leadership areas: academics, character, school service and community service. For our first major community service activity, Social Studies teacher, Ms. Heusman and the 8th graders hosted the “Patriot Project” on September 11, 2019. The children cooked and served dinner to Park Forest first responders, including: police, fire and dispatchers. If you have any opportunities for our scholars to volunteer in our areas of focus, please contact the main office at (708) 668-9600.

Mark Your Calendar:
- December 11 – 8th Grade Cap & Gown Measurements
- January 9 – 8th Grade Graduation Picture Day
Instructional Coaching in a District Near You!!!

How is an instructional coach like a personal trainer? **Instructional coaches are master teachers** who identify the needs of the staff and create a plan for meeting those needs. This is done in the same way that a personal trainer meets with their client to map out their fitness goals. Instructional coaches support teachers with reaching their individual goals, celebrate the teacher’s accomplishments, and modify the goals as needed. Personal trainers offer fitness classes that their clients can sign up for based on their interest and needs. Instructional coaches offer Pop-up PD in the same way. The Pop-up PD is fun, frequent, and relevant. Teachers can sign up based on their interest, and it takes place in the school! Personal trainers are often sought after and are sometimes required as part of a treatment plan. Instructional coaches function in the same manner. Many teachers seek their support, while others are assigned an instructional coach based on their need. Instructional coaches use their expertise, interpersonal skills, and their passion for student achievement to drive their daily work.

Meet the instructional coaches from Park Forest-Chicago Heights School District 163. These coaches are master teachers who are highly regarded by their peers and have years of experience teaching in a variety of different settings. Additionally, these teachers are “lead learners” as they continue studying and embracing innovative instructional practices.

**Instructional Coaches**
Left to right: Danielle Gladstone, Susan Stratton, Angela Starks, Lisa Stanley, Colleen Morley, and Jenna Gbur

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**Leadership Team with Dr. Anthony Muhammad**

**Leadership Team and Technology Manager**

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Dr. Erika Johnson, Director of Instructional Services and Grants
ejohnson@sd163.com