



LIFE in the LAB SCHOOLS



PARENT EDITION

Life in the Lab Schools – Summer Update

I hope that your summer has been going well and you have been able to spend time with family and friends. We have a lot of exciting things happening in the Lab Schools and are busy getting ready for the upcoming school year. Both Metcalf and U-High have been hiring new faculty, staying on top of facility projects, and making sure technology is ready. We also started working in the five focus areas determined through our CAC survey process last year: Communication, Fundraising, Foreign Language, Student Life, and College and Career Readiness. Some subcommittees have already met and have begun making plans for these areas of improvement. In addition, as part of the College of Education, the Lab Schools are participating in the development and implementation of the COE's five-year plan.

Late Starts

As we continue to make these improvements, we realized the need to increase the amount of collaboration time available to our faculty. One need our faculty identified through our CAC survey process was more time outside the school day to collaborate on the issues identified for improvement. After further consultation and the endorsement of the Citizens Advisory Council (CAC), we have decided to move forward and increase the number of late starts at both Metcalf and U-High. This time will be essential in supporting both Metcalf and U-High faculty and administration in making progress regarding high quality instruction and programs. In addition, the collaboration time creates opportunities to work with the rest of the College of Education to better support our teacher candidates.

While we can certainly see the value of creating time throughout the year for faculty collaboration and development, we also understand that there are adjustments to be made in each home whenever schedules differ. **As a result, we will implement one late start per month at Metcalf and add a second late start at U-High. Late starts for U-High will typically be the first and third Fridays of each month, while late starts at Metcalf will typically be the third Friday of each month. Late start school days will begin at 9:45 for most students with the exception being those U-High students with a 7:00 class. These students will begin their day at 9:00. Late start days will begin in September.**

To facilitate the transition for Metcalf families, we will be providing childcare at our previously established rates. We are phasing in the number of Metcalf late starts to allow families an opportunity to make the necessary schedule adjustments this year, with a target of increasing to two late starts per month for the 2014-2015 school year pending feedback from faculty and parents.

Faculty, administration, and College of Education colleagues may utilize this time for faculty collaboration and development in the following areas: common core alignment, standards-based grading and assessment, technology integration, and teacher education work. We appreciate your support as we continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Lab Schools!



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Vision 20/20

The continued development of quality programs and instruction in the Lab Schools will be critical as we participate in the Vision 20/20 initiative. The Vision 20/20 is an effort through the IASA (Illinois Association of School Administrators) to develop a vision for education in Illinois. This process has been developed to meet the following objectives:

1. Unite the Illinois education community around a vision to improve education in Illinois
2. Document the consensus among Illinois educators for creating a desired future vision of education in Illinois
3. Provide a common voice from the Illinois education community to guide state policy

Based on the fine work of our faculty and our role in education in Illinois, I have been selected to represent the Corn Belt Region along with the Lab Schools and Illinois State University in this process by serving on the Digital Learning and Assessment /Accountability subcommittee. I am hopeful that through our involvement and the continued great work of our faculty and students, we can make a contribution to the improvement of education in Illinois. More information regarding this initiative can be found at www.illinoisvision2020.org.

Financial Picture

In my last communication, we projected a deficit budget based on the Governors proposed 7% decrease in the general state aid allotment. Since that time, the State Legislators proposed and the governor signed a budget that kept general state aid at the same percentage as FY13. As a result, the Lab Schools are projecting a balanced budget for 2013-2014 school year. To be clear, a flat general state aid allotment for the upcoming year is still 11% below what has been signed into law. Over the past three years, the Lab Schools have lost roughly \$800,000 in revenue. Receiving the same allotment as last year does keep us from deficit spending, but only because we made some reductions and raised some fees for the upcoming school year. We will continue to update you on state funding and the implications for Lab School operations.