

DISTRICT PROFILE

2019-2020



Fostering an environment of equity and opportunity.



Facebook:
westaurora129

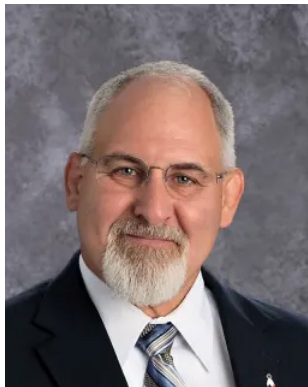


Twitter:
@sd129



Instagram:
west_aurora_129

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



JEFF CRAIG, Ed. D.

"I am proud to lead one of the most diverse school districts in the state of Illinois, where we believe that every student should have access to a rigorous, comprehensive education as well as opportunities to develop their talents and passions. We are proud of our rich history and "tradition of excellence," that continues to be defined by the good works of our students, faculty, and alumni."

WHO WE ARE

West Aurora School District 129 is a unit school district located in southeastern Kane County, Illinois. District 129 is proud of its rich tradition of excellence, which dates back to 1868 when "West Side High School" first met on the third floor of Old Stone School. In 1870, the first graduating class was comprised of five members. Today, the West Aurora School District includes eighteen school buildings, serving over 12,000 students and employing 1,800 individuals, making the district the second largest employer in the city of Aurora. The high school campus now occupies an area of nearly a square half-mile and encompasses an athletic stadium, extensive playing fields, and courts. It also includes an arboretum-like collection of more than 200 trees. The academic offerings range from college prep to career education. Award-winning extracurricular activities include the arts, twenty-three sports, technology, and cultures. One of the greatest strengths of the district is the success with which it has embraced the diversity of the student body, thereby enriching the surrounding communities.

FAST FACTS

73% Teachers with
Master's Degree or Higher

55 National Board
Certified Teachers

12,316 Total Student Enrollment

94% Student
Attendance

20:1
Student/Teacher Ratio

ACADEMICS CORE CONTENT AREAS

Art	Science
English	Social Studies
Health	Physical Education
Mathematics	World Languages
Music	

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

BRENT RABY, Ed. D. Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning
ANGELA SMITH Assistant Superintendent of Operations
MICHAEL P. SMITH, Ed. D. Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
RYAN ABRAHAMSON Director of Finance
ANNA GONZALES Director of Community Affairs
LYNN HEAD Director of Transportation
JENNIFER HERMAN Director of Special Education
MARIA LOZANO Director of English Learners
JAMIE MAX, Ed. D. Director of Secondary Teaching & Learning
MARTI NEHRING Director of Student Services
DON RINGELESTEIN Director of Technology
JEFF SCHILLER Director of Operations
SARAH WADDELL, Ed. D. Director of Elementary Teaching & Learning
ELIZABETH WENDEL Director of Assessment

OUR SCHOOLS

- 1** EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY
- 10** ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
- 4** MIDDLE SCHOOLS
- 1** HIGH SCHOOL
- 1** SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOL
- 1** ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION ACADEMY
- 1** CENTER FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

RECOGNITIONS

Ranks #8

Among the Most Diverse School Districts in Illinois by Niche

Ranks #149

Among the Most Diverse School Districts in America by Niche

Ranks #53

Among the Best School Districts for Athletes in Illinois by Niche

A1 Bond Rating from Standard & Poor's

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

Advanced Placement Course Offerings
Air Force Junior ROTC
Connections Academy
Dual Credit Course Offerings
Early Learning Academy
Elementary STEM
Health Occupation Science Academy

Parents as Teachers
Pathways to Prosperity
Project Lead the Way
Spanish for Heritage Speakers
SUCCESS Academy
Transition Program

STAFF & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



West Aurora School District 129 views professional development as a platform to provide staff with meaningful learning opportunities that will have a positive impact on the lives of its students and community.



"Life is hectic and expensive! As a high school English teacher, trying to improve my teaching craft and grade countless essays, I jumped with both feet into the professional development opportunity offered by my district: West Aurora University. I have almost completed four micro-credentials: Instructional Purpose, Instructional Practice, Grading, and Assessment.

These free graduate-level courses, based on current, research-in education, have helped me to motivate and engage my students, share improved pedagogy with my colleagues, interact and learn from administrators, and move up the pay scale without breaking my emotional or financial bank.

This professional development opportunity has also strengthened my voice in the school climate committee and as one of the leaders of a teacher-initiated standards-based grading movement. My loyalty to my district and school and students blossoms as I continue to learn and help others."

-Terri Shepard
West Aurora High School English Teacher

TOP 10 REASONS

Why Professional Development in School District 129 is **EXCEPTIONAL!**

- 10** Free professional development through in-house **West Aurora University**
- 9** Potential for salary advancement through the unique **Micro-Credential Program**
- 8** Robust **Teacher Induction and Mentoring Program**
- 7** Support from content-expert **Curriculum Coordinators**
- 6** On-site **National Board** cohort opportunities
- 5** **English as a Second Language (ESL)** endorsement opportunities in partnership with the University of St. Francis
- 4** Partnership with Aurora University, the first and only institution in the state to offer a **Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction**, in conjunction with an **English as a Second Language (ESL)** endorsement and a **Learning Behavior Specialist I (LBS I)** endorsement
- 3** Partial **tuition-reimbursement** for external professional learning
- 2** **Stipends** for the successful completion of **online competency badges** (Google, Schoology, Apple Teacher, and Data Protection)
- 1** One of the most **collaborative learning environments** in the state of Illinois!

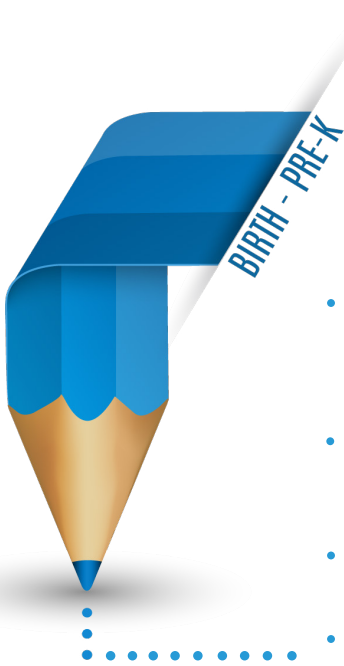
SUMMER 2019 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NUMBERS:

- 406** staff members in attendance
- 95** different professional development classes offered
- 45** staff members earned Micro-Credential Badges
- 72** staff members completed Apple Teacher Certification
- 55** staff members completed Google Level 1 Certification
- 29** staff members completed Google Level 2 Certification
- 132** staff members completed Schoology Level 1 Certification
- 62** staff members completed Staff and Student Data Protection Certification

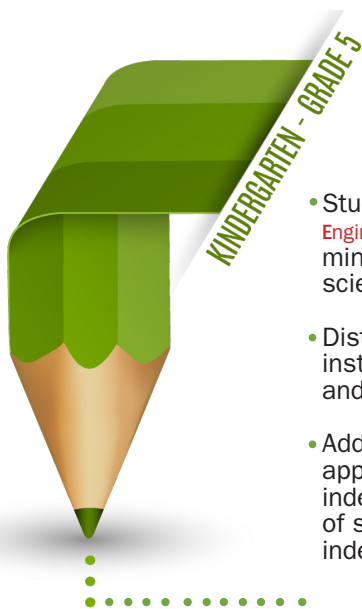
ACADEMICS

WEST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT 129:

Is a **one-to-one learning environment**, meaning that each student is issued a device to be used as an engaging learning tool.



- The parent education and support program **Parents as Teachers** serves families with children from birth to three years old as well as expectant parents and is designed to guide parents in supporting their children so they learn, grow, and develop to realize their full potential.
- The **Early Learning Academy** hosts over 400 students. This academy is located on the second floor of the newly-renovated West Aurora Learning Center and is composed of 12 classrooms, a multi-purpose room, and office space.
- District 129 **Preschool Expansion Program** is located in 7 elementary buildings, serves 200 students, and is a full-day program.
- Annual **developmental screenings** for students between the ages of 3 to 5 averages 600 students a year.



- Students in grades 1-5 engage in weekly **STEM instruction** (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), focusing on activities that provide hands-on and minds-on lessons. STEM education creates critical thinkers, increases science literacy, and enables the next generation of innovators.
- District 129 has adopted **Balanced Numeracy**, a philosophy for mathematics instruction that provides opportunities for students to uncover, construct, and apply mathematical understandings.
- Additionally, elementary students are instructed using the **Balanced Literacy** approach, which focuses on balancing explicit language instruction with independent learning and language exploration. The framework consists of six components including read alouds, guided reading, shared reading, independent reading with conferencing, writing, and word study.

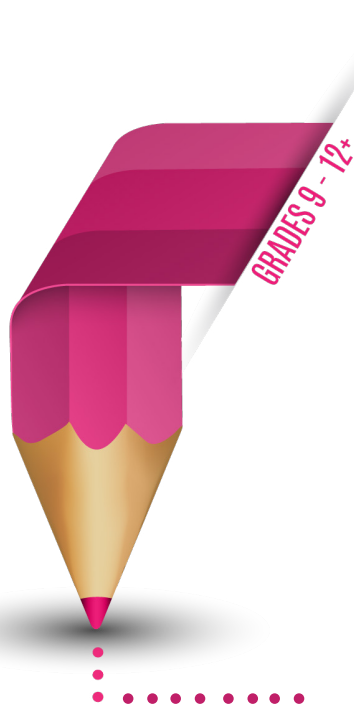


Has **fully inclusive schools**, which means that “general education” and “special education” programs are not separated; instead, the schools are structured so that all students learn together.

Has a strong **English Learner’s Program**, comprised of students who speak over **57 different languages!**



- In an effort to ensure academic preparedness for career and college-level work, middle school students receive a **double-block of mathematics and English language arts** instruction daily.
- District 129 offers a **Self-Contained Exceptionally Talented Program** that aims to provide an educational experience for students who have demonstrated aptitude on standardized assessments. This extraordinary program seeks to maximize student development during the middle school years by creating a small-group schooling experience in tandem with rigorous learning opportunities that extend beyond the typical curriculum.
- Each middle school student participates in an **elective sequence** that includes a quarter each of art, music, textiles, and the engineering design process!



- West Aurora High School offers a **complete and rigorous course of study for all students**, including Advanced Placement, Honors, and Dual Credit courses. The curriculum is also rich in opportunities for exploring pathways in the Fine Arts, Career and Technical Education, and Air Force Junior ROTC. West Aurora High School has been recognized as an AP Honors School by the College Board.
- The newly constructed, 18,000 square-foot **Weisner Family Center for Career Development** opened in the fall of 2019. It is designed to provide advanced educational and work-based learning and training, and is currently home to welding and precision machining programs.
- Educational services for the learning disabled, behaviorally disordered, and autistic students are extended to the age of 22 through the Blackhawk Academy’s **Transition Program**.
- The Blackhawk Academy’s **Connections Program** is dedicated to providing high school students with a quality educational program that focuses on supporting academic and social-emotional growth. This special education program is held in the newly-renovated West Aurora Learning Center, is highly structured, provides social work support, and is designed for small group instruction that aligns with the district curriculum.

STUDENT LIFE

Did you know that one hundred choir students represented West Aurora High School on a good-will performance tour to Toronto and Ontario, Canada in March of 2019?

In 2019, **three West Aurora High School students** were invited to present their scientific research at the elite International Student Science Fair held in Singapore. In 2020, the group is traveling to the next science fair held in Thailand!



West Aurora High School is unique in the number of students who have received a **Seal of Biliteracy and Commendation toward Biliteracy!**

**The Seal of Biliteracy and the Commendation toward Biliteracy are awarded to those students who demonstrate proficiency in English and a second language.*

AWARDS

121

IN 2019

113

IN 2017

112

IN 2018

77

IN 2016



73% of West Aurora High School students are involved!

**Involvement is defined as a student who participated in a sport, club, or organization.*

STUDENT LIFE

West Aurora has 8 Gold Quality Programs!

**The Gold Circle of Quality recognizes early childhood programs that have met the highest quality standards in three areas: learning environment and teaching quality; administrative standards; and training & education. Our sites include:*

Early Learning Academy, Freeman Elementary School, Goodwin Elementary School, Greenman Elementary School, Hall Elementary School, Hill Elementary School, McCleery Elementary School, and Smith Elementary School

In 2018/2019, West Aurora High School students ranked among the best!

- Ranking fourth overall at the Air Force Junior ROTC Nationals!
- Qualifying one student for the HOSA National Leadership Conference!
- Finishing with eight state finalists at the DECA State Competition!
- Qualifying three students for BPA Nationals!
- Qualifying five students for National FCCLA Competition!
- Placing third overall at the Bass Fishing IHSA State Competition!
- Qualifying two students for Speech Sectionals!
- Placing third in the state at Tech Olympics!
- Qualifying one student for All-State Orchestra, one for the All-State Honors Orchestra, and one for All-State Honors Band!
- Earning national recognition at the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards!

West Aurora School District students are community-minded!

**Over the past school year alone, tens of thousands of dollars have been raised by students and donated to:*

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital
Feed My Starving Children
Henry Pratt First Responders
Leukemia and Lymphoma Society
Local Animal Shelters
Pennies for Patients
St. Baldrick's Foundation



At every level, there are opportunities for students to develop their talents and passions. Some of the clubs and activities at the elementary level include:

Art Club
Basketball
Book Beasts
Chess Club
Comic Book Club
Crazy 8's
Drama Club
Drum Club
Environmental Club
Fit to be Tied
Girls Club
Girls on the Run
Healthy Living
HEART Club
IMSA Fusion
Literacy Through the Arts
Makers Club
Math Club
My Time
Readers Theater
Robotics
Running Club
Speech/Debate Club
Stand for the Silent
Student Council
Technology Club
Volleyball
WE Club
Writer's Forum

WEST AURORA HIGH SCHOOL HAS ACADEMICALLY STRONG STUDENTS WHO ARE HONORED FOR THEIR HARD WORK!

66 students in the
Spanish Honor Society

35 students in the
Kitty Hawk Honor Society

259 students in the
National Honor Society

36 students in the
French Honor Society

19 students in the
National Art Honor Society

55 students in the
National Technical Honor Society



ONE DISTRICT • ONE GOAL • STUDENTS FIRST

1877 WEST DOWNER
PLACE AURORA, IL 60506

630.301.5000
www.sd129.org