The beginning of 2017 was eventful for the Glenbrooks. Following the abatement of callable bonds from the 2006 referendum, the Board of Education authorized the issuance of emergency and life safety bonds to finance approximately $15 million in required infrastructure improvements over the next three years. These state-approved improvements are essential for maintaining healthy and safe conditions within our buildings for students, staff, and visitors.

Among the most visible projects completed this past summer were the replacement of the floor and bleachers in the GBS Main Gym, which were original to the school in 1962 and the reconfiguration of eight classrooms at GBN, which were very similar to when the school opened in 1953. Projects approved for completion at GBS during the summer of 2018 include an electrical upgrade, replacement of the existing fire alarm system, replacement of the pool filtration system and boilers, and replacement of the fieldhouse roof. At GBN, the back gyms originally constructed in 1957, will be renovated and the tennis courts replaced.

In early April, Bruce Doughty, Karen Hanley, and Dr. Sonia Kim were re-elected to the Board of Education and Pete Glowacki was elected to his first term. Scott Martin, an eight year member of the Board did not seek re-election and was recognized for his many contributions and dedicated service. In May, vice-president Bob Boron announced his intention to leave the Board after 13 years of outstanding service and in September, the Board appointed Dr. Marcelo Sztainberg to replace Mr. Boron. Skip Shein was re-elected president for the ninth consecutive year and Bruce Doughty was elected vice president. The longevity of the District 225 Board of Education and its ability continued on page 4...
Board approves property tax levy

Following a public Truth in Taxation hearing, the Board approved the property tax levy for 2017 in the amount of $106,256,303. This amount represents an increase of 4.4 percent, over last year’s extension. The increase is based on a 2.1 percent increase for inflation as determined by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), along with a 2.3 percent estimate to capture new property growth within the tax base.

“The levy allows the district to meet annual expenses to educate our students, as well as additional needs due to growth in student enrollment,” said Assistant Superintendent for Business Services Dr. R.J. Gravel.

Under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), Cook County school districts are limited to an increase in their property tax extension equal to the current rate of inflation as measured by the CPI (2.1 percent) or 5 percent, whichever is less. In addition, school districts are able to secure additional revenue from new property growth introduced to the tax base.

School districts, including District 225, commonly approve a levy that is more than they will actually receive because at the time the levy is filed, the value of new property is unknown. Under state law, school districts have only one chance to capture revenue from new growth. The largest anticipated property growth year in the future for the District will be when new property for The Glen is introduced to the tax base during levy year 2022.

“Many factors contribute to how a property owner’s taxes are determined, and so it’s important that taxpayers not equate the levy request amount with an assumed increase in their individual property taxes,” said Gravel.

The estimated tax levy and answers to frequently asked questions are available on the District website at www.glenbrook225.org.
Continued: Supt. Letter, page 2...

each year, the district utilizes enrollment data from area public and parochial schools to project the student population for the next three years as well as a ten year forecast. As of October 1, total enrollment for the district is 5,151, and represents 22 more students overall than was projected last fall. Glenbrook North’s enrollment is 2,023, slightly lower than projected, while Glenbrook South’s enrollment is 3,128 students, which is slightly higher than projected. The enrollment forecast remains consistent and predicts that district enrollment will peak, specifically at GBS, in 2020, and then is expected to gradually decline.

In addition to the district cohort survival method of projecting student enrollment, the district continues to use an outside consultant who provides a ten-year forecast utilizing census data and additional factors including fertility rates, housing patterns, mortgage rates, mortality rates, migration patterns and unemployment rates. The consultant’s projections for the next three years are within 0.6 percent of the district’s calculations, providing a consistent perspective for planning purposes.

“We are well-prepared for the peak of student enrollment in 2020 and are confident that both of our high schools will continue to operate within appropriate capacities.”
– Superintendent Dr. Mike Riggle

Parents and community members are to every aspect of our schools.

Through the mindful and continued support of our communities, we are blessed with tremendous resources and opportunities. Together, we will shape the Glenbrooks as premier learning communities designed to serve all students.

With Glenbrook Pride,

Michael D. Riggle, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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Sophomore invited to walk red carpet for STEM work

Kate Stack stood in shock this past fall waiting to meet Matt Damon. The GBS sophomore was one of five national finalists that traveled to Los Angeles for Marvel Studios’ Thor: Ragnarok Superpower of STEM Challenge.

“I nearly died of excitement,” Kate said, with Cate Blanchett and Chris Hemsworth greeting her next.

In addition to attending the red carpet premiere of “Thor: Ragnarok,” Kate was invited to present her STEM project, the “Epi-Spot,” to a panel of experts from companies including Walt Disney Studios, Dolby Laboratories and Synchrony Bank.

Kate describes the Epi-Spot as a “furry friend that is designed to teach children and adults how to use their epinephrine injector.” It’s a teddy bear that’s equipped with a microcomputer, programming and other electrical components. It can be used as an EpiPen training tool for people with food allergies. Kate spent about two years completing the project.

“When I was three years old, my mom was teaching me how to use my EpiPen when she accidentally injected herself with the real device – not the training tool,” Kate said. “This left me terrified of needles.”

Kate knew this fear could prevent someone with food allergies from getting important, life-saving training. That’s when she created the Epi-Spot to solve what she saw as a global problem.

“The process started when I was in a Maker Club at Springman Middle School,” Kate said. “I learned how to code and use a mini computer. From there, I was able to explore mini computers controlled by code and learn the millions of things you can do. I wanted to solve a greater problem; that’s when I remembered all my experiences with food allergies.”

Kate explained that an allergic reaction can happen at virtually any time, which is why it is important for people to be trained.

When Kate isn’t building or coding, she’s advocating for food allergy awareness locally and helping out with Glenview’s Got STEAM – a science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics program for girls in grades 5-8.
Students get hands-on with geometry

Glenbrook South is in its second year of hosting its Geometry in Construction course. Held every day, the course gets students working both inside the classroom with geometry and outside the classroom with construction. About 30 students are enrolled this year.

What gets the students most excited? Building the walls for a family’s home!

Students who were enrolled in last year’s class, as well as students in this year’s class, traveled to Waukegan in November in install engineering design thinking is coming into play, and it’s because of her GBS classes.”

Looking toward the future, Kate said she would like to learn more about the medical field while continuing to build new things.

“My willingness to try keeps me going,” Kate said. “There were a lot of times that I failed [while building the Epi-Spot], and it was really hard at first… But I kept going and that was really important because now I have this awesome, finished product.”

Kate’s teacher, Mike Sinde, describes Kate as a “natural maker.”

“She loves to problem solve and is very passionate about helping others,” Sinde said.

Kate’s mother, Karen Stack, said she believes high school STEM classes have really helped her daughter grow.

“What strikes me most are the thoughtful and intelligent questions that Kate poses,” Karen Stack said. “It’s obvious that her
their first set of walls for a Habitat for Humanity home.

Co-teachers Dan Leipert and Brian Schmalzer could not be happier with the culture of their indoor/outdoor classroom.

Leipert, who also teaches honors-level architecture and civil engineering courses, has been working with contractors since high school and remodeling homes for 14 years.

“I love working side-by-side with the students,” Leipert said. “We form good relationships based on trust, empowerment and respect for one another as we build. A construction class relies on great teamwork, the ability to delegate tasks and leading others… It’s also really rewarding to see how the math starts to resonate with the students as we start to build, adding authenticity and meaning to every lesson.”

Schmalzer, a math teacher, spends one week each summer taking students on Habitat for Humanity service trips to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

“I like to see that ‘lightbulb moment’ when the students realize a geometric concept is not just something they do on a sheet of paper but something they use with skill on a job site,” Schmalzer said. “We want students to feel confident in their math and construction abilities, and understand the connectedness of the two fields.”

And the fun doesn’t stop at building walls for homes. Other projects planned for the future include building new picnic tables and playhouses.

“If anyone is interested in a shed, doghouse, chicken coop… you name it – we are up for building it,” Leipert said.

Stephanie Wolfson, a junior, took the course last year and is now serving as a lab assistant. She’s currently planning to build a dog house equipped with a rooftop sun deck.

“It’s so great to be able to use what we learn in math class in real life,” Wolfson said. “I’m really into construction projects so, I enjoy the fact that we can get outside on nice days and I can learn math without being stuck at a desk.”

Brayden Grant is enrolled in the course as a freshman. He said he signed up for the class because he enjoys both math and construction.

“I like building things,” he said. “It’s also interesting to learn geometric principals through real-life applications in construction, and it’s for a great cause – we’re giving back to the community in a big way.”

Previously struggling with math, sophomore Madison Dekorsi said she enrolled in the course without any construction experience.

“I just wanted to get better with math, and these are some of the best math grades I have ever gotten,” she said. “The teachers have been really helpful as we learn both math and construction skills. If we don’t understand something, they will take us to the side and help us until we get the hang of it. It’s like a school family.”

Madison noted there’s a great feeling of camaraderie in the course.

“I talk to people more than ever before,” she said. “There’s a lot of teamwork.”

The teachers said they hope to continue to grow this program so that even more students can feel confident in their math and construction skills.

“Our ultimate goal is to empower the students,” Leipert said. “We’ve already seen their confidence go way up in classroom and in the hallways.”
When art teacher Stephanie Fuja and fashion teacher Melissa Regan spoke last spring about launching a combined drawing and fashion art show, it just made sense.

“Our students have very similar interests,” Fuja said. “Many of my drawing students go into fashion design in college.”

The first-ever Collaborative Advanced Drawing and Advanced Fashion Show was held Jan. 11 in the GBS Student Activities Center. Drawing students created detailed sketches of clothing that the fashion students assembled.

Matt Moran, a junior, said the project brought a professional aspect to his art education.

“The fashion students were able to request specific material or features that they wanted us to incorporate into the garment design,” Moran said. “I really struggled with drawing proportions at first and went through 6-7 sketches.”

Regan said about 20 of her students made a garment for the show.

“My students were so excited to have professional-level sketches created for their work,” she said. “A lot of detail went into those sketches and everyone worked really hard overall. It was great for them to see the final products side-by-side at the show.”

Fuja said drawing human figures and sketching the various fabrics was most challenging for her students.

“This was definitely an upper-level project,” Fuja said.

Emily Stoddard, also a junior, said this project was a great way to test the waters of fashion design.

“Everything came out looking really nice, and for me it confirmed that I want to do something art-related after high school,” Stoddard said.

Both the students and teacher agreed that they would like to see this project become a GBS tradition.

“It’s a great way to celebrate all the work that the students put forth, and also an amazing opportunity for collaboration between two dynamic classes,” Fuja said.
GBE student presents on “Hamilton” stage

Graduating Glenbrook Evening High School (GBE) student Madison Christenson was recently presented with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. She and 14 other Chicago-area students were selected to take the stage of the Tony Award-winning musical “Hamilton” on December 13, 2017. They all presented their own original works such as poems, raps and monologues.

“It was shocking [to be chosen],” Christenson said. “We are a smaller school.”

Last year, GBE applied to the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History to obtain discounted tickets for all GBE students to attend a performance. Qualifying schools were selected to attend a performance once all application guidelines and criteria were met.

GBE was recognized as a Gilder Lehrman Affiliate School in November 2016, and students began the process of completing the academic requirements in September 2017. All students were required to complete a five-hour classroom curriculum and submit questions for the “Hamilton” cast, in addition to submitting their own projects in the form of a poem, rap or monologue.

GBE teachers co-taught the “Hamilton” curriculum and assisted students with their projects prior to submitting them to the program. When asked to designate a top submission from the students, GBE teachers chose the one who they felt captured the best work of all students – which was Christenson’s. In total, 18 GBE students were able to attend the special show presented for high school students, as well as attend a private Q&A with cast members.

Capturing the audience

Christenson wrote a poem told from the perspective of Alexander Hamilton himself. In order to overcome her stage fright, she practiced both at home and at school with her English teacher, Lauren Berk, and GBE principal, Dr. Jim Shellard, in the weeks leading up to the show.

“My arms and legs were shaking… there was so much talent on that stage,” she said.

Christenson said she really became interested in poetry last spring and listened to the musical “like 40 times” to prepare her piece.

GBE guidance counselor Melissa DeFrenza-Israel describes Christenson as a “creative, talented and dedicated student.”

“During her performance on stage, Madison captivated the audience with her lyrics and emotion,” DeFrenza-Israel said. “I am very proud of her determination and courage to pursue her goals.”

Berk said that she thinks Alexander Hamilton and Christenson have a lot in common.

“They share a strong work ethic and a passion for the pen,” Berk said. “Both of them used words as a way to get what they were after. Madison wrote her way to where she wanted to be, and she came full circle up there on that stage with all eyes on her.”

Now that Christenson has captivated the student audience of a best-selling show, she says the experience has only grown her love of theatre. She enjoys reading and writing, and would like to get on stage more often.

“If I’m not able to be on stage, I think I would enjoy playwriting,” she said. “Writing seems like the perfect opportunity for me.”
Close your eyes and remember your high school classroom. What did it look like? How did it make you feel? What types of experiences did it encourage? Did it foster or suppress collaboration and creativity? Did it encourage or discourage focus and movement? And let’s not forget comfort. Imagine your comfort level in that environment for today’s 90-minute blocks?

Now, hear from today’s students and teachers about the current classrooms:

• “It’s not creative. It’s boring, uncomfortable, and old-fashioned,” said a Glenbrook South student. “Our classrooms should be something where we can look around and be inspired by the way that we are surrounded.”

• “As a teacher I feel as though the environment affects as much as how I teach as well as how students learn,” said a Glenbrook South teacher.

• “The environment is a crucial element that is often overlooked. If you want to encapsulate a beneficial learning experience, the classroom environment and community comes first. It helps engage student and movement is important. The way the classroom [space] is setup and changed throughout a class period… is yet another element of teaching that could really harness student potential and growth,” said a Glenbrook North student.

• “The resources in the classroom, including the furniture, determine the limits of what is possible,” said a Glenbrook North teacher.

In many schools, including GBN and GBS, the look and feel of classrooms haven’t changed much in past decades even though our teaching methodologies and activities have evolved.

Today, the thought behind a classroom as just furniture has started to shift. From the design, layout, furniture, vertical wall space and color, there is a growing recognition that the use of space is a tool that directly impacts student learning and well-being.

“This is a significant district initiative that has great potential to impact student learning and well-being,” said Superintendent Dr. Mike Riggle. “Transforming our current classrooms into learning spaces will help us take our student experience to the next level.”

But, what exactly is a learning space? This is where our study begins.
The Learning Space Expedition Team, a diverse group of teachers and administrators, spent the summer and fall researching the impact of spaces, neuroscience, ergonomics, design, color, and biophilia on student learning and well-being. The purpose of this team was to provide guidance in the design of new classroom prototypes that will be tested during the spring semester.

The team started by identifying five significant instructional drivers and six well-being dimensions to help guide the design process. Each prototype was assessed on its ability to reflect the following goals:

### Instructional Priorities

**The space:**
- Supports teachers in student-centric environments that reflect how students learn
- Encourages peer-to-peer teaching and learning
- Provides for student and faculty comfort
- Inspires the free exchange of ideas
- Supports diverse learning styles

### Well-Being Priorities

**The space:**
- Optimism - Allows choice and control over where and how people work
- Mindfulness - Designs for calm using materials, textures, colors, lighting and views
- Authenticity - Creates informal, non-constricting spaces
- Belonging - Designs individual and team spaces that are welcoming and inviting
- Meaning - Leverages vertical space to allow students to display their thinking
- Vitality - Promotes movement. Build for range of sizes, needs and preferences

Three distinct learning space prototypes were selected by the team. The first week of March, eight classrooms will be fully redesigned spaces for students and teachers to begin testing the impact on the learning and well-being. The study will conclude June 8 with recommendations on final learning space designs based upon feedback from students and teachers.
Northbrook resident seated to Board

Northbrook resident Dr. Marcelo Sztainberg was recently sworn in to serve a four-year term on the Board of Education. He was appointed to serve a remaining term ending in April 2019.

Dr. Sztainberg has resided in Northbrook for 14 years and has two sons attending Glenbrook North. He currently serves as an Associate Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences at Northeastern Illinois University. His extensive knowledge of education administration includes curriculum, policy, budget, recruitment, tenure, evaluation, fundraising, and donor cultivation. He also currently serves as a consultant to DataOwls. Prior to moving into education, Dr. Sztainberg was a software engineer.

Dr. Sztainberg’s academic background is grounded in mathematics and technology, having earned his Bachelor’s in Computer Science and Mathematics from Wayne State University; and his Master’s and Doctorate in Applied Mathematics and Statistics from Stony Brook University.