WINTER 2025

COMMUNITY D127 NEWSLETTER



A Message from Superintendent Mikkel Storaasli

Dear D127 Community,

Every day across our district, I see the power of curiosity in action: students asking questions, exploring ideas, and embracing hands-on, relevant, engaging, and authentic learning. This issue of our newsletter is full of stories that reflect the heart of D127: You'll read about students who are invested in their futures, staff who collaborate to create meaningful experiences, and a community that continues to believe in the promise of public education. These student and staff-led programs and opportunities show that when we amplify student voice and create space for exploration, remarkable things happen.

We are also proud to celebrate progress on our facilities, like the new turf field at Grayslake North, built without new taxes and designed to meet the needs of today's learners. Facility improvements reflect our shared commitment to smart, student-centered investments that support learning and growth at every level.

Thank you for your continued partnership. Together, we're building a future where every student is encouraged to ask, imagine, and thrive. That's the power of curiosity, and that's what makes D127 special.

Warmly,
Dr. Mikkel Storaasli
Superintendent, Grayslake District 127























Walking These Halls, Leaving a Legacy

At Grayslake Central, a hallway decoration has become a powerful bridge between the past and the present. ***They Walked These Halls***, a storytelling initiative led by Social Studies Department Chair Jason Janczak, brings alumni voices into the building through unscripted video interviews that highlight the many directions a Ram's journey can take.

> *"The idea is to show students what's possible," said Janczak. "There's life after high school, especially when you feel unsure during it."*

What began as a small alumni outreach turned into over 250 graduates eager to share. The growing library of stories features Rams across every industry, healthcare, public service, journalism, trades, entrepreneurship, and more. From a critical care EMT at Mayo Clinic to a Jersey Mike's owner who once dreamed of law school, each story is real, honest, and rooted in shared beginnings.

The interviews explore what alumni are doing now, how they got there, and what they'd tell their high school selves. Common themes emerge: stay open, find support, and don't let early struggles define your path. One moving interview features an alum who felt invisible in high school, but now thrives in leadership.

Students will view the videos during Rams Block, and future plans include career exploration and curriculum connections. Some alumni even requested to be filmed alongside former teachers, reunions that remind us of the lifelong impact educators can have.



"It's proof," said Janczak, "that our students go on to do amazing things, and that what we do matters."

Grayslake Central PSP Students Lead Through Service and Impact

At Grayslake Central, leadership isn't just taught, it's lived. In the Public Service Practicum (PSP) class, students turn ideas into action through service-driven projects that make a difference in their school and community.

"Our theme is simple: create moments," said PSP teacher and founder Dustin Chierico. "And every year, our students do just that, for their community and for each other."

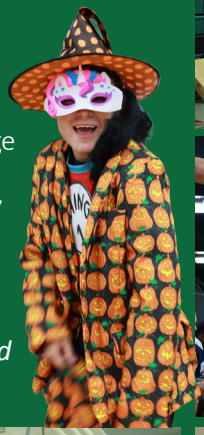
Founded in 2002, PSP offers juniors and seniors a year-long opportunity to build leadership through hands-on service. Students learn to manage projects, communicate effectively, and lead with purpose, all while giving back.

Gold Week, the class's signature event, raises funds and awareness for childhood cancer. From creative fundraisers to the always-popular Ram Jam lip-sync contest, students design every detail. This year's Haunt for the Cure scavenger hunt brought together over 100 students for a night of fun and purpose.

But for Chierico, the program's true impact is personal. "When you know someone benefits from your effort, it changes you. It gives you purpose."

In addition to planning events, PSP students build partnerships, design marketing campaigns, manage logistics, and evaluate outcomes. More importantly, they learn to work as a team and bring big ideas to life.

> *"Our students know they're part of something bigger," said Chierico. "And that matters."*











Real-World Learning at Liberty Prairie Farm





At Grayslake North, learning gets hands-on, and sometimes a little fuzzy. This fall, students in the Land, Environment, Animals, & Food (LEAF) classes welcomed baby chicks into the school's Hub as part of an immersive unit on sustainable agriculture. Under the guidance of teacher "Farmer Jeff" Miller, students monitored the incubation process, cared for the chicks post-hatch, and will eventually help transition them to Liberty Prairie Farm.

The farm is home to goats, sheep, chickens, and a thriving partnership that gives students real-world experiences in agriculture, environmental science, and community engagement.

On October 4, students played a leading role in the Liberty Prairie Fall Farm Festival, working side by side with local farmers, educating visitors, managing sales, and caring for animals. The event drew hundreds of community members and raised more than $2,300, thanks in part to the leadership and enthusiasm of D127 students.

> *"The students were amazing at sharing their knowledge and serving the community," said Miller. "We could not have done it without them."*

Through LEAF classes, internships, and FFA, students continue to grow throughout the year with events like the Spring Plant Sale and Farm Festival. These experiences reflect D127's mission to empower learners through relevant, engaging, and authentic learning.





GNHS Students Power Support for Special Olympics



At Grayslake North, strength isn't just measured in pounds; it's measured in heart. This fall, students rallied together to support Special Olympics Illinois, raising an impressive $4,610 and taking part in one of the organization's most iconic events: the Plane Pull.

Held at O'Hare International Airport, the Plane Pull challenges teams to work together to move a 95,000-pound aircraft. GNHS Special Olympics athletes joined forces with the football and flag football teams, staff, friends, and families. Their teamwork paid off. The Knights not only represented D127 with pride, but they also brought home the High School Division trophy for the fastest pull time.

> *"The energy and spirit our students brought to this event were incredible,"*

said Jenny Sparks, Special Education Paraprofessional & Special Olympics coach.

> *"It was about more than just strength; it was about inclusion, support, and showing up for one another."*

This event is part of a year-round partnership between GNHS and Special Olympics, giving students opportunities to lead, connect, and make a meaningful difference in their community. Whether they're pulling a plane or building friendships, Grayslake North students continue to lift each other up.





Careers Come Alive at Navig8Lake

On October 22, more than 1,300 students from Grayslake District 127 and its feeder schools joined over 6,000 peers from across Lake County for Navig8Lake 2025, a hands-on career exploration event designed to connect students with real opportunities and real professionals.

Held in partnership with the Lake County Regional Office of Education and over 140 community organizations, Navig8Lake allowed students to explore careers in fields such as healthcare, technology, agriculture, trades, and more. Grayslake brought 500 high school students and 825 eighth graders, making this a comprehensive experience across grades.

"This event isn't about handing out flyers, it's about putting tools in students' hands and letting them envision their future," said D127's Gina Schuyler, a key member of the planning team.

Through interactive exhibits and career conversations powered by SchooLinks, students left inspired and informed about the many paths available after high school. Navig8Lake continues to grow as a model of regional collaboration and student-centered learning, equipping the next generation with the tools, experiences, and confidence to launch their futures.





D127 Interns Turn Passion into Purpose

Nearly 300 Grayslake District 127 students are gaining hands-on experience this year through internships aligned with their career interests, from education and engineering to healthcare and marketing.

Internships in Action

Grayslake Central Intern

Trent S. is interning at Super Shox in Grayslake, where he's gaining experience in precision manufacturing and CNC machining as he prepares for a future in engineering.

"It's exciting to work with real machines and know that what I'm learning now connects directly to my career goals."



Grayslake North Intern

At North, Regan W. is applying her skills at Avon School, working toward her goal of becoming an elementary teacher.

"Being with the same teacher and class again this year has helped me grow even more confident in my path."



By the Numbers

195 students
in district internships

Early college credit
earned via Job Skill Readiness course

50–75 additional internships
through Tech Campus

Internships tracked in SchooLinks,
building résumés and career skills

RESIDENTS CAN TRUST D127 ON TAXES AND FINANCES

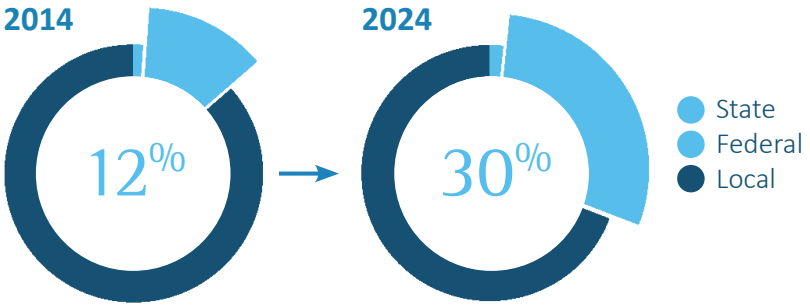
RELIEF FOR LOCAL TAXPAYERS

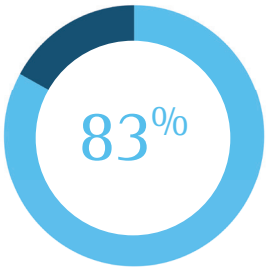
$10.8M

returned in taxes to residents through Property Tax Relief Grants, a cumulative refund of

$674 FOR A $250K HOME

MORE STATE FUNDING FOR D127





Education Fund and Transportation

83% of D127 expenditures fund quality education and safe transportation.

By the Numbers

Expiring Bonds

When 2002 bonds expired in 2021, D127 residents' taxes were reduced, saving

$7.6 MILLION ANNUALLY

Equivalent to savings of

$583 FOR A $250K HOME

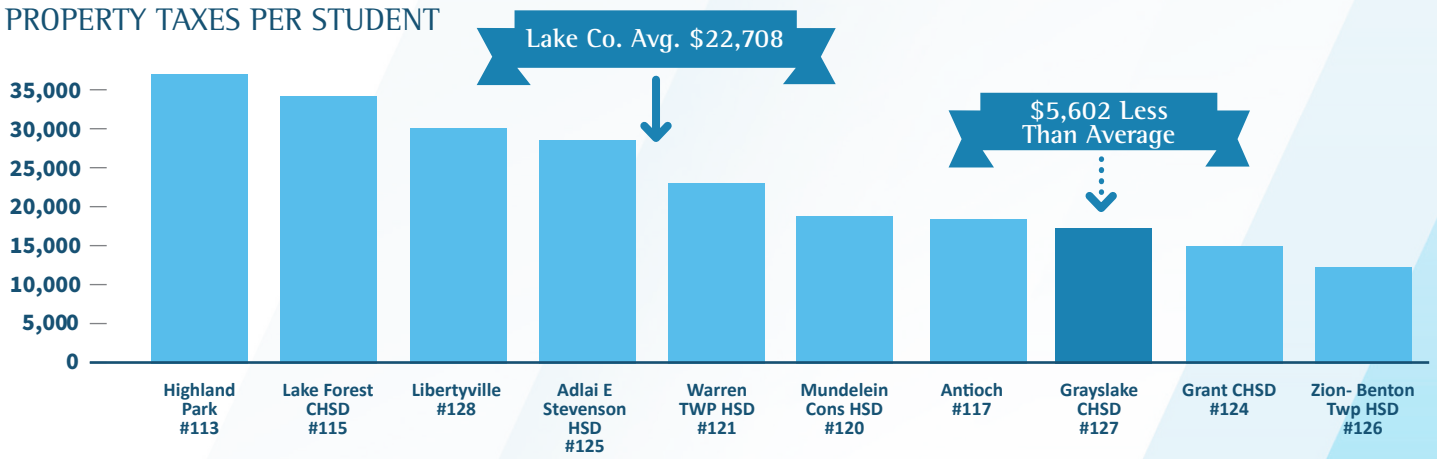
OUR TEAM MANAGES FINANCES WELL

10 Years earning the Financial Recognition designation from the Illinois State Board of Education.

AA+ Bond Rating

D127 OFFERS A GREAT VALUE

$5,602 less property taxes per student are collected in D127 compared to the Lake County average for high schools.



400 N Lake Street
Grayslake, IL 60030

District Grayslake CHSD 127
Central Grayslake Central HS
North Grayslake North HS

District @GrayslakeCHSD127
Central @Grayslake_Central_HS
North @GNHS_knights

Search Grayslake Community High School District 127

Scan for a fast way to follow!





Thank You Veterans

Students and staff at Grayslake Central and North honored local veterans with heartfelt tributes, performances, and expressions of gratitude, highlighting the importance of service, remembrance, and community.

