Issue 3 - NOVEMBER 2026

RIDGE REPORT

A publication of news from Chicago Ridge School District 127.5

LEADERS IN LEARNING



WELCOME TO THE CRSD 127.5 RIDGE REPORT

We are excited to share our Fall issue of our district newsletter that highlights news and updates happening around Chicago Ridge School District 127.5.

In this issue, you will find information from the first trimester of the 2026-2027 school year as well as news on upcoming events.

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Follow us on :

Pictured: students from PK-4 grade at Ridge Lawn and Ridge Central Schools

Follow up on www.crsd1275.org

A MESSAGE FROM BOARD PRESIDENT, Chrissi Petropulos

Dear CRSD 127.5 Community,

My name is Effie "Chrissi" Petropulos, and I am proud to serve as President of the Chicago Ridge School District Board of Education. I am a lifelong Chicago Ridge resident, a proud parent of four children, and someone who has a personal connection to this community and its schools.

There are some exciting things happening in our district, and I am looking forward to what is ahead. We are making changes to our buildings to create more space for students, along with plans for a new district office and a birth-to-three program that will provide additional opportunities for young children and their families.

We are also seeing growth in our students academically, which is something we are very proud of. Having a more unified curriculum across our schools helps provide consistency in what our students are learning and gives our teachers a stronger foundation to build on. We want to continue that progress and make sure our students have the support and opportunities they need to succeed at every grade level.

One of the biggest things coming up is the development of our new five-year strategic plan. This is a great opportunity for our entire community to come together and have a voice in the future of our schools. We want to hear from parents, teachers, staff, administrators, students, and community members. Everyone has a perspective that can help us continue to grow and improve.

At the end of the day, we all want the same things: the best opportunities for our students, support for our teachers and staff, and schools that make our community proud. I am excited about what is ahead and hope our community will be part of it!

E. Chrissi Petropulos

CHICAGO RIDGE SD 127.5 BOARD OF EDUCATION



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FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

I am excited to welcome you to our fall issue of the Chicago Ridge School District 127.5's newsletter!

As we begin the second trimester, I hope you will take a minute to go through our newsletter and see some of the wonderful highlights from our first three months in school. We had the opportunity to present our first three staff members with the Above-and-Beyond Award and I have had the pleasure of meeting with my student advisors at Finley Jr. High, Ridge Central, and Ridge Lawn.

Our district is also finishig our second 5-year Strategic Plan and will be collaborating on a new plan later this year. I will be sending out more details on how to get involved in the coming months, as our top priority is capturing a wide range of perspectives from our parents, educators, and students throughout this process.

We deeply value our partnership with our families. I encourage you to follow along through our district website, newsletters, and social media pages for ongoing updates and ways to participate. If you ever have questions, please feel free to contact your school's staff directly—we are always here to support you and your children.

With gratitude,

Dr. Adam Thorns



CRSD 127.5

25-26 Illinois Report Card

ANNUAL SUMMATIVE DESIGNATIONS

WHAT IS A SUMMATIVE DESIGNATION?

Schools receive an annual summative designation on the Illinois Report Card.

The summative designation is determined by a Profile of Performance that combines multiple measures consisting of core indicators (Proficiency and Growth) first, then elevating indicators (EL Progress, Consistent Attendance, Climate Survey).

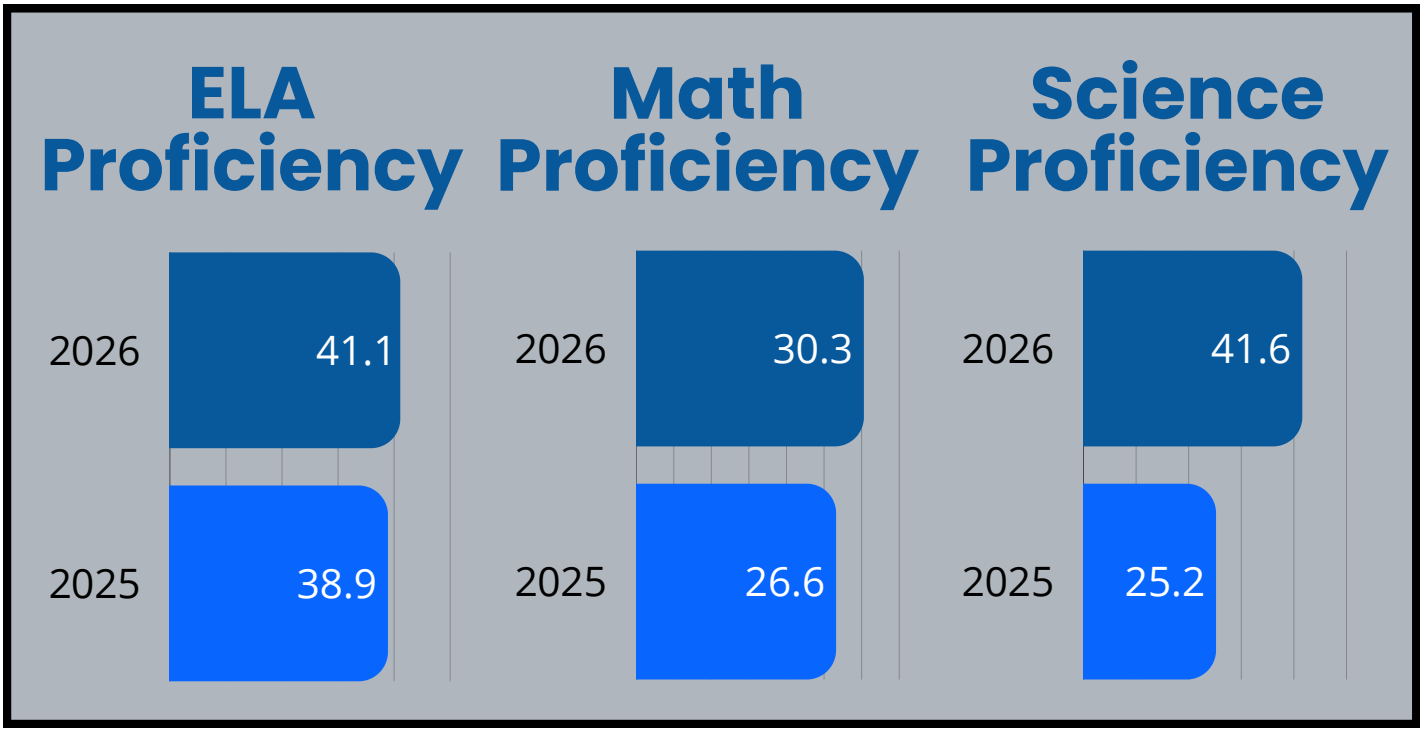
FJH DEVELOPING

RC APPROACHING EXEMPLARY

RL EXEMPLARY

DISTRICT ASSESSMENT ACHIEVEMENT

2025 vs. 2026



CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

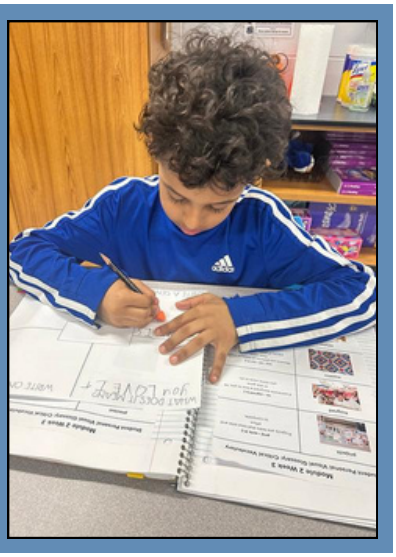
Updated by:
Megan Nothnagel
Curriculum Director

Teaching and Learning

Our teachers and students have been hard at work diving into the first trimester of learning across all three schools! Classrooms are filled with curiosity, problem solving, hands-on experiences and learning across all grade levels and content areas. We are looking forward to a successful second trimester!







Learning Resources for Families

By visiting the Learning tab on our district website at www.crsd1275.org and selecting Curriculum and Assessment, families can explore an overview of what students are learning in each grade level and subject area. This section includes information about our instructional programs, standards, and helpful guides—such as the "Family Support Materials" links, which provide practical strategies and questions to use at home during math practice.

Families can also learn more about how we measure student growth and achievement by selecting Assessment under the Learning tab. Here you'll find details about district and state assessments and how these tools help teachers personalize instruction and track progress throughout the school year.

One District, One Book Event

We are excited to announce that our annual One District, One Book event will take place from **December 16, 2026, through February 3, 2027!** This year's featured book is ***The Wild Robot*** by Peter Brown! One District, One Book is a special district-wide family engagement event that encourages families to read the same book together at home, participate in fun trivia and activities, and celebrate the joy of reading as a community.

This year, we are thrilled to partner with the CRSD 127.5 PTA, Chicago Ridge Public Library, and other local businesses and community organizations to make this experience even more exciting for our families! We invite everyone to join us for our **Kick-Off Celebration on Wednesday, December 16, at 4:00 p.m. at the Chicago Ridge Public Library**. Families will enjoy special guest readers sharing the first five chapters of *The Wild Robot* and have the opportunity to participate in a fun graham cracker robot-building competition! We look forward to bringing our families, schools, and community together for this special celebration of reading!

Multilingual Learner Department

Updated by: Karoline Burcheri, Multilingual Director

Many Languages. One Community.

At Chicago Ridge School District 127.5, our diversity is one of our greatest strengths! This school year, we are proud to celebrate 685 English Learners representing 19 different languages across Ridge Central, Ridge Lawn, and Finley Junior High.

Each student brings unique experiences, traditions, and perspectives that enrich our classrooms and school community. Every day, our multilingual learners are building friendships, developing new skills, and growing in confidence as they learn and succeed together.

Celebrating Language Milestones!

What an exciting accomplishment! At the end of the 2025–2026 school year, 29 students met Illinois' English language proficiency exit criteria, allowing them to begin the 2026–2027 school year without the need for continued English Learner services. This important milestone reflects their dedication, academic growth, and the support of their teachers and families. We are incredibly proud of their success!

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Through our continued partnerships with the Chicago Ridge Public Library and Governors State University, we offer adult English classes and Family Liaison support to CRSD 127.5 families, empowering adults to build English language confidence, support their children's education, expand career opportunities, and strengthen community connections.



Student Services Department

Updated by:
Victoria Reed, Director of Student Services

Care Solace

We will continue our Care Solace partnership to connect students, staff, and their families to mental health and substance use treatment options in our community. National Stress-Free Family Holidays Month reminds us to be mindful of stress and take steps toward self-care. Here are a few tips to help make your holidays more manageable and joyful. If you'd like professional support, Care Solace is available to help connect you or your loved ones to mental health services. This is a complimentary, confidential service provided by Chicago Ridge School District 127.5.

Access Support:
Call: 888-515-0595 (support 24/7/365)
or Care Solace Link

Continuous Improvement

This year we have expanded to three cross-categorical classrooms at Ridge Central. Adding the additional K-2 class this year has allowed students to return from placements outside the district and has provided additional services and supports to ensure more students' needs can be met in CRSD127.5.
We have also provided meaningful and relevant professional development opportunities to ensure all staff are up to date on best practices on our District Led Institute Days.

Preschool For All

Updated by:
Emily Geyer
Preschool Director

Learning Through Play

Our Pre-K students have been working - and playing! - hard since the beginning of the year. Each day, preschoolers engage in a variety of learning centers, including science, dramatic play, blocks, literacy, and more. Their learning is further enriched through meaningful, real-world experiences, such as a visit from the Chicago Ridge Fire Department, nature walks, and hands-on exploration of seasonal items like pumpkins and apples. Through these engaging, play-based experiences, students continue to build important skills, develop greater independence, and grow in confidence each day. We are excited to see all the ways our youngest learners will continue to learn and grow throughout the year!











Gold Circle of Quality Designation

Preschool for All programs undergo periodic compliance and quality reviews every 2–4 years as part of the state grant requirements. These reviews ensure that programs meet consistent standards and uphold best practices in early childhood education.

Last year, Chicago Ridge School District's preschool program completed its quality review, and both Ridge Central and Ridge Lawn earned the Gold Circle of Quality, the highest rating possible! This distinction recognizes our schools' commitment to providing high-quality early childhood education and reflects the dedication and hard work that go into creating meaningful learning experiences for our students.

Congratulations to all of our Pre-K teachers, paraprofessionals, related service providers, and building administrators for their continued commitment to providing exceptional educational experiences for our little learners and their families!

NEWS FROM THE BUSINESS OFFICE

Updated by Katheryn Picciolini
Business Manager/CSBO

Annual Audit

This year, the District engaged a new independent auditing firm, Baker Tilly, in keeping with best practices for periodic auditor rotation and strong fiscal governance. We are pleased to report that the audit concluded with zero findings, and the District once again earned the highest possible financial profile score of 4.0. This achievement reflects our ongoing commitment to transparency, sound financial management, and responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources.

Summer Projects

To better accommodate our staff and visitors, Ridge Lawn School is pleased to announce the addition of 11 new parking spaces for the 2027-2028 school year. With on-site parking in high demand, many employees and visitors have to utilize street parking far from the school entrance. These additional spaces will provide much closer, more convenient access to the building.

Free Breakfast and Lunch for All Students!

Our district participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and is part of Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This means every student can enjoy a nutritious breakfast and lunch at school completely FREE every single day—no application required!

A healthy meal fuels focus, energy, and learning. Be sure to take advantage of this wonderful program so your child gets the nutrition they need to succeed in the classroom.

Check out fdmealplanner. com to see the daily menus.

ELDEN D. FINLEY JUNIOR HIGH

It is hard to believe that we are already through our first trimester of the school year at Finley Jr. High School! The year is off to a great start, with plenty of excitement, school spirit, and a strong focus on student learning and growth. Our students and staff have settled into their routines and continue to make Finley a great place to learn and grow.

A big highlight of the trimester was celebrating our first-ever full soccer season! It has been exciting to see our students represent Finley, develop their skills, build teamwork, and demonstrate school pride through this new athletic opportunity. We are incredibly proud of our student-athletes and coaches for making this milestone possible!

Along with celebrating student activities and accomplishments, we continue to place a strong emphasis on student attendance. We are working together as a school community to build positive attendance habits, strengthen relationships with students and families, and recognize the importance of being at school every day. Through staff collaboration, attendance team meetings, and student incentives, we are committed to ensuring our students are present, engaged, and ready to learn.

As we reflect on our first trimester, we are proud of the progress made by our students and staff. Thank you to our families and community for your continued partnership and support. We look forward to building on this momentum and making the remainder of the year a success. Go Vikings!







RIDGE CENTRAL ELEMENTARY

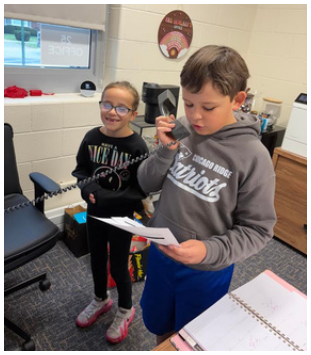
It is hard to believe that we are already through our first trimester of the school year. Ridge Central is buzzing with the excitement of spirit weeks, holidays, and learning. Students have gotten back into the groove of school without a hitch.

Each week, one classroom is assigned to join our student council representative to do the announcements. Four to five students are chosen per day to come down. Our students are buzzing with excitement as they join us to say their names and the pledge every day.

Our after-school activity programs are smooth sailing. The students are in academics on Tuesday and Thursday, but are enjoying a variety of clubs on Wednesdays. We have different clubs like Saturn ball, real-life-jobs, and little chefs, just to name a few.
During the week of Halloween, our students pledged to stand against drugs and bullying. We celebrated Red Ribbon Week by dressing up based on the theme throughout the week, ending with our Halloween parade. We would like to thank our Chicago Ridge Police Department and our Chicago Ridge Fire Department for their support and participation in the parade. Thank you to all the families that came out to cheer us on too!

While the fun is buzzing, so are the academics. Our teachers and students are working very hard during their WIN and FLEX times to get direct instruction in both ELA and other subjects. Our students are showing up, ready to learn. We look forward to seeing growth during our winter NWEA MAP testing session at the beginning of December.

When we sit back and look at the first third of the school year, we are both excited and comforted. The Ridge Central community has welcomed us with open arms. We are beyond excited to serve this school and the community moving forward. We cannot wait to celebrate our students' growth and our amazing staff. Let's get ready for a great rest of the year!











RIDGE LAWN ELEMENTARY

Ridge Lawn Eagles: Soaring into Another Eagle Strong School Year!

The Ridge Lawn Eagles are off to a SOAR-ing start to the school year! From exciting new beginnings to celebrating kindness, character, and community, our Eagles have already given us so many reasons to be proud!

We kicked off August with a jam-packed Open House, welcoming families back into the building and setting the stage for another incredible year. The excitement continued on the first day of school as our hallways filled with smiling faces, eager students, and enthusiastic staff. It was especially memorable for our youngest Eagles in PreK and kindergarten, many of whom were spreading their wings and experiencing school for the very first time!

As we settled into our routines, each classroom selected a Ridge Lawn Representative to serve on our Student Advisory Committee. These student leaders meet with building administration to share ideas and offer feedback; after all, being Eagle Strong means making sure every voice matters!

In September, we proudly kicked off another year of our Cops and Kids Award, in partnership with the Chicago Ridge Police Department. This special recognition celebrates students who demonstrate outstanding character and truly embody what it means to be Eagle Strong. Our first honoree was Leia, a 5th grader, whose compassion and kindness toward our kindergarten bus riders made her a shining example of what it means to look out for one another. We were also able to recognize our first Golden Egg winner or the year. Congratulations to Jordan, one of our 1st graders.

October brought even more excitement! We started the month by welcoming the Chicago Ridge Fire Department, who provided important fire safety demonstrations for all of our students. Later in the month, our Eagles celebrated Red Ribbon Week with spirited activities focused on making healthy, positive choices. We wrapped up October with our annual Halloween Parade, filling the neighborhood with costumes, smiles, and plenty of Ridge Lawn spirit!

Throughout the fall, we've continued our monthly High Flyers Awards, recognizing one student from each classroom who consistently goes above and beyond and demonstrates what it means to be Eagle Strong. We also celebrated our first "Talon-ted" Eagle of the year! Congratulations to Aiden, a 1st grader, who earned a special trip to our claw machine in recognition of his outstanding achievement.

As we look ahead, one thing is certain: Ridge Lawn is more than just a school. We are a family of Eagles who support one another, celebrate each other's successes, and always strive to be EAGLE STRONG!

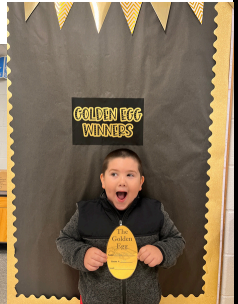
Want to see our Eagles in action? Catch all the fun, celebrations, and school spirit by subscribing to our Ridge Lawn YouTube channel! https://www.youtube.com/@ridgelawn1112











COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

PTA EVENTS

The CRSD 127.5 PTA put on two great events for our families. The first event of the year was a Family movie night and in October they hosted their annual Fall Fest / Trunk-or-Treat.





Awards

The Board of Education was able to recognize Mrs. Megan Hernon and Mrs. April Gemini for receiving the Above and Beyond Awards and Ms. Kari Fickes for performing life-saving actions during lunch.



Pictured: Megan Hernon, April Gemini, and Kari Fickes.

District Office/Birth-to-3

The District recently purchased the Candlelight Banquet Property on Ridgeland Ave. This property will be renovated into the new District Office and house a place to meet for our new Birth-to-3 Program. Finley Jr. High will be utilizing the old District Office space.

