



ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Dr. Joseph M. Porto
Superintendent

Dr. Deanna D. Reed
Principal, Marie Murphy School

Mr. Kevin M. Jauch
Principal, Avoca West Elementary School

Ms. Cindy Devin
Director of Pupil Services

Mrs. Beth Dever
Business Manager



From the Superintendent

Dear Avoca Community:

In April, the Avoca voters passed a tax rate referendum by a vote of 59% to 41%. The outcome of the election, in the midst of a severe economic recession, affirmed the unyielding support of the Avoca community for quality public education in District 37. We are gratified and motivated by this support—gratified that the community has placed great faith and trust in our educational program, and motivated to maintain our pursuit of excellence. As we proceed into the future, we renew our commitment to continuous improvement while remaining vigilant stewards of the District's financial resources.

Reflecting upon the 2008-2009 school year, I must thank the teachers, staff, parents, students, administrators and school board members for their collaborative efforts that brought about the many successes and accomplishments. Highlights of the 2008-2009 school year include:

- Avoca's student achievement continues to soar. As measured by the 2008 Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), Avoca now ranks 6th in the state in combined reading, math and science achievement.
- The Marie Murphy Science Olympiad Team finished 1st in the state for the fourth time in the past five years. The team then represented Illinois in the national competition, finishing 12th out of 60 teams nationwide. The Science Olympiad Team has come to represent the quality of "sustained excellence" that Avoca seeks to attain in all of its endeavors.
- Avoca was named a Technology Leadership Salute District by the National School Boards Association in 2008-2009. Only three districts nationwide are awarded this honor each year. Avoca remains a lighthouse district in our nation for its innovative and effective use of educational technology.
- The Avoca Community Preschool completed its inaugural, highly successful year as a blended preschool, servicing regularly developing children together with children with special needs in a single, inclusive setting. The three- and four-year-old children thrived in this nurturing, yet challenging educational environment. Due to the success of the first year and an already growing positive reputation, enrollment is strong for 2009-2010.
- A new, state-of-the-art language arts program was implemented in K-8. The impact was immediate, with reading achievement increasing significantly at all grade levels as measured by both state and national tests.

We plan to build upon the many successes of the 2008-2009 school year as we vigorously plan for the school year ahead. Our goal is always one of continuous improvement, and we pledge to work diligently as we steer Avoca on the path from "good to great."

Sincerely,

Dr. Joseph Porto



From the School Board

Dear Avoca Residents:

We are extremely pleased to share with you the outstanding school year that District 37 has just completed. From national recognition to individual student and teacher achievement in academics, the arts and even athletics, the 2008-2009 school year overflowed with exciting accomplishments. At the Board of Education level, it is very gratifying to see our students, teachers and administrators following a journey of continuous improvement.

One development we find especially significant has emerged from our Measurements of Academic Progress (MAP) testing. Over the several years since we first implemented MAP, we've discovered that the longer students are in the Avoca schools, the higher their achievement scores. This is one reason we are delighted that our Avoca Community Preschool now offers students as young as three years old a fun, educational setting in which to begin their Avoca experience. With raves from its initial year, our blended preschool that welcomes typically developing children along with children with special needs allows us to guide students from their earliest learning environment through 8th grade graduation.

In our Annual Report letter to you one year ago, we explained why the Board intended to place a referendum on the April 2009 ballot asking voters to increase the tax rate to compensate for rising expenses and the state's tax cap. Through the efforts of our tireless administrative team, dedicated teachers, wonderful parents and supportive community members, we were able to deliver the facts and figures to the voters, who decided to endorse our educational vision with adequate funding. At all times, but particularly in the midst of a recession, we do not take such a display of confidence lightly. It is a privilege to represent a community that appreciates the value of supplying children with a top-tier education, and we pledge to continue vigilant oversight of the District's budget. It is heartening to know that we're all "on the same page" in putting our students first while maintaining the delicate balance between high quality education and fiscal responsibility.

As one of our Strategic Plan initiatives for the coming year, we are in the process of establishing a Community Relations Committee that will strengthen the connection between the school district and the people it serves. Please stay in touch with us by frequently visiting our website, participating in the free technology classes we offer and attending the children's concerts and plays as well as other programs we hold during the year. We appreciate your feedback and hope you are as proud of our talented students, faculty and administrators as we are.

BOARD MEMBERS

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Superintendent & Secretary



Student Achievement

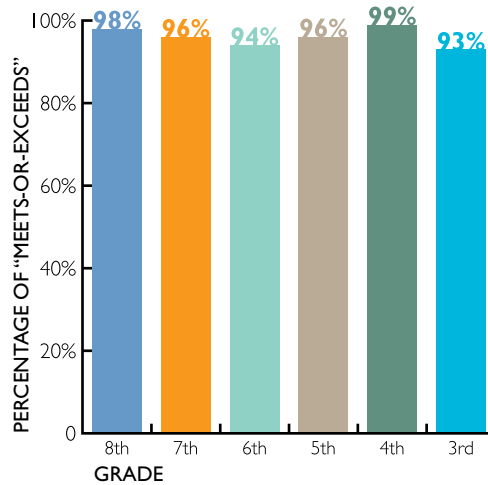
The sharp upturn in student achievement scores that began five years ago continued in 2008-2009. As a result, achievement test scores remain at a ten-year high point. These scores affirm the effectiveness of Avoca's educational programs and its commitment to continuous improvement. The District uses two tools—the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)—to determine how our students rank against those of other schools.



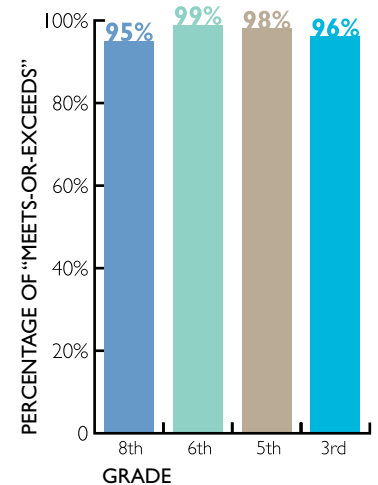
ISAT 2009

ISAT assesses student achievement levels as they compare with state-determined standards and designates each student's score as "exceeds standards," "meets standards" or falls "below standards." In high achieving areas such as New Trier Township, a benchmark for success is that 90% or more of the students reach the meets-or-exceeds range. In 2009, Avoca achieved that benchmark in every one of the 18 tests. The 2009 ISAT results place Avoca in the top 1% of all districts in the state of Illinois.

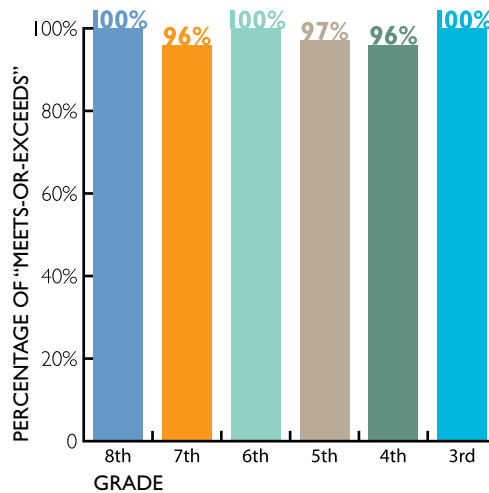
ISAT Reading



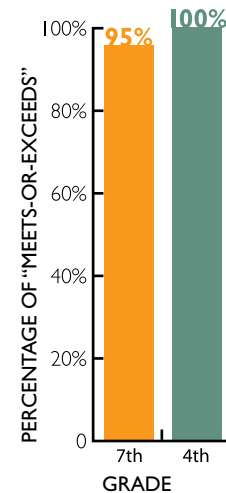
ISAT Writing



ISAT Math



ISAT Science



MAP 2009 (MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS)

Unlike ISAT, MAP is a norm-referenced test. Instead of holding Avoca scores against a set standard established by the state, MAP tests compare Avoca students' achievement levels with student averages or norms from around the nation. Since MAP tests are administered twice each year (fall and spring), they also enable the District to analyze achievement and growth within the year. With MAP, "actual" growth achieved by Avoca students is compared with "expected" growth levels as determined by norms established in similar schools. When expected growth levels are exceeded, it indicates superior achievement. In the reading and math tests administered in grades 3-8, Avoca students exceeded expected growth levels on 12 of 12 tests. As shown in the following chart, student achievement levels in Avoca are very high. Both the growth scores and the average years above grade level are reflective of the elite schools around the country.

MAP 2009

TEST	EXPECTED YEARLY GROWTH LEVEL	YEARS ABOVE GRADE LEVEL
3 rd Reading	Exceeds	1.0
3 rd Math	Exceeds	1.0
4 th Reading	Exceeds	1.5
4 th Math	Exceeds	2.5
5 th Reading	Exceeds	1.5
5 th Math	Exceeds	2.5
6 th Reading	Exceeds	1.0
6 th Math	Exceeds	2.5
7 th Reading	Exceeds	3.0
7 th Math	Exceeds	3.0
8 th Reading	Exceeds	3.0
8 th Math	Exceeds	3.0

GROWTH TOWARD EXCELLENCE

During the 2008-2009 school year, Avoca worked with nationally renowned statistician/consultant Clay Graham to better assess Avoca's achievement gains. Dr. Graham conducts deep analysis of ISAT test score results, focusing on the actual achievement levels attained by the students, not simply the percentages of "meets or exceeds" as the state reports. Using actual achievement scale scores, Dr. Graham is then able to rank the achievement levels of each district in the state. This analysis reveals that explosive achievement growth has occurred in Avoca, as the District's state ranking rose from 20th to 6th in four years.

YEAR	RANKING
2005	20 th
2006	14 th
2007	8 th
2008	6th
2009	(NOT YET AVAILABLE)

Avoca's achievement rankings among Illinois school districts as measured by ISAT scale scores



Awards & Recognition

NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY AWARDS

In last year's Annual Report, we shared that Avoca received a prestigious national award for its exemplary educational technology program. The National School Boards Association (NSBA) named Avoca a "2008 Technology Leadership Salute District." The award was officially presented to Avoca during a special ceremony in October. Subsequently in the spring of 2009, Avoca learned that NSBA selected District 37 as one of only three official locations for its national technology district site visit program. In April 2010, educators from around the country will visit both Marie Murphy and Avoca West schools to meet with the staff and to observe first-hand the schools' innovative educational technology programs.

Avoca earned another national honor in October 2008 when it placed third in the nation for the 2008 Digital School District Survey award sponsored by the Center for Digital Education and the NSBA. This award recognizes Avoca's exemplary use of technology to communicate internally as well as externally with the broader community.

TEACHERS & STUDENTS EARN HONORS

At its Technology and Learning Conference last fall, the National School Boards Association named Avoca West technology facilitator Gail Soriano among "Twenty to Watch," the latest selection of technology educators in the nation predicted to emerge as leaders and innovators in the field. Gail now joins her colleague Chris Brown, the technology facilitator at Marie Murphy School, as District 37 staff members who have received this honor in the past two years.

Gail received a second honor when she and fellow Avoca West technology facilitator Kim Zimmer were each chosen for membership into the exclusive, nationwide Google Teacher Academy. Only a few elite teachers from each state are accepted into the Google Teacher Academy each year, and it is even rarer for two teachers from the same district to be so honored. As members of the Academy, the teachers are able to participate in high-level professional development opportunities and share creative ideas with other talented educators throughout the nation.

The diverse talents of our students were also well represented in the winner's circle. Eighth grader Audrey Gomez won first place in the state of Illinois in the "You Be the Chemist Challenge," sponsored by the Illinois Chemical Education Foundation. Audrey went on to represent Illinois in the national competition. At the elementary level, 3rd grader Paul Castle won first place in a poetry writing competition sponsored by the Glenview Public Library. The winning poem was entitled, "Ode to Sauerkraut: My Joy."



Gail Soriano



Kim Zimmer



Audrey Gomez



Paul Castle



SCIENCE OLYMPIAD — SUSTAINED EXCELLENCE

This spring, the 2008-2009 Marie Murphy Science Olympiad Team won the Illinois Science Olympiad Competition. The victory marked the fourth time in the past five years that Marie Murphy has placed first in the state. The state championship qualified the team to participate in the national competition, where our students finished 12th out of more than 60 schools. The ongoing success of the Marie Murphy Science Olympiad program demonstrates the concept of “sustained excellence,” which is a value that is highly prized at Avoca.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Both Marie Murphy and Avoca West were awarded the 2008-2009 Academic Excellence Award from the State of Illinois. As the state’s highest achievement honor, this award recognizes schools at which a minimum of 90% of students have met or exceeded expectations in ISAT reading and math for three consecutive years.

In 2009, Avoca received the “Bright Red Apple Award” for the 16th consecutive year. Sponsored by the executive relocation firm SchoolSearch, this award annually recognizes the top 10% of Illinois school districts. Criteria include: student achievement; per-pupil expenditures; number of staff members with advanced degrees; and student/teacher ratio. SchoolSearch further honored District #37 with its “Bright Red A+ Apple Award.” Based solely on student achievement as measured by the statewide ISAT exams, the A+ Apple Award each year goes to the top 5% of schools in the state.



Financial Corner

Last year, the Avoca Board of Education authorized a tax rate referendum that was placed on the ballot on April 7, 2009. As you all know by this time, the referendum was overwhelmingly supported by the voters and passed by a wide margin. The Board's goal in placing the tax rate referendum

on the ballot was to maintain the high level of education that Avoca has consistently offered its students. Despite the support shown for the tax rate referendum, however, the Avoca Board of Education recognizes its responsibility in maintaining good fiscal policy for the District. In keeping with that responsibility, the Board will closely monitor each yearly budget and continually evaluate whether additional budget reductions can be achieved. In doing so, the Board will make every effort to ensure Avoca's

future economic health in a manner consistent with a strong education for Avoca students. The passage of the referendum will allow our District to maintain small class sizes, a fine arts program and foreign language studies, as well as to continue provision for remedial opportunities and enrichment support. These types of programs are consistent with the exceptional educational experiences that Avoca students have come to know and are comparable with the other New Trier sender districts.



LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING

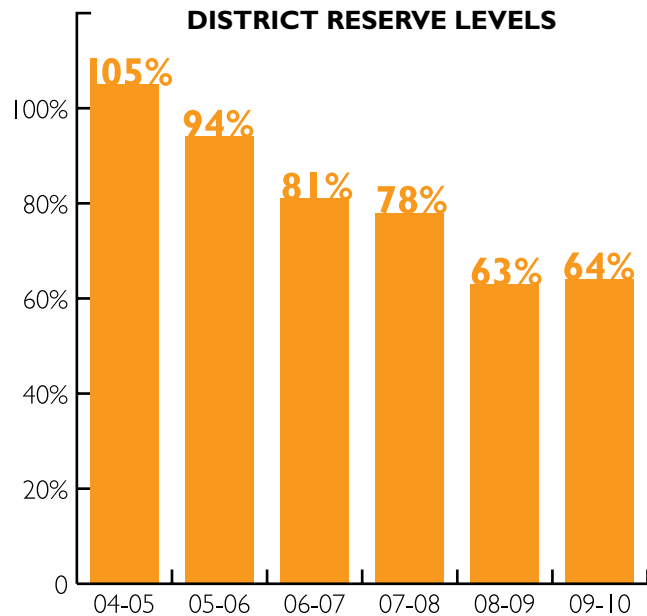
Many of the District's properties are in need of repair. Some of these repairs will represent major expenditures, while others are necessary but minor in scope. In keeping with its history of fiscal responsibility and in conjunction with the administration and business office, the Board of Education will develop a long-term plan to update and maintain the District's facilities and properties. By planning ahead and exploring all funding alternatives, we can appropriately schedule the projects necessary for the continued maintenance of the schools while keeping with the Board's goals of solid budgeting, taking a proactive approach and establishing stability.



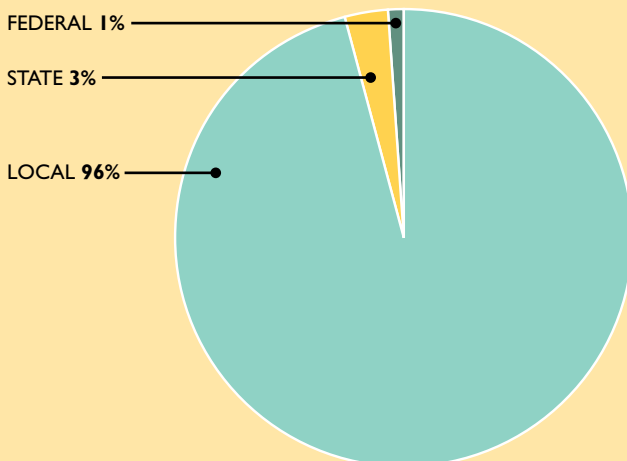
FISCAL YEAR 2009

Shown on this page are the District reserve levels, 2009 revenues and 2009 expenditures. The District's finances are now in better shape thanks to the voters' approval of the tax rate referendum. The Board of Education, however, recognizes its serious responsibilities in stretching the budgets of future years as far out as possible without returning to the voters for an additional tax increase. In that regard, the Board of Education pledges to continue to look for ways in which to reduce the budget without compromising the overall level of education that Avoca has provided in the past—a level evidenced by Avoca's continual rise in the Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) and its high placement among the New Trier sender districts.

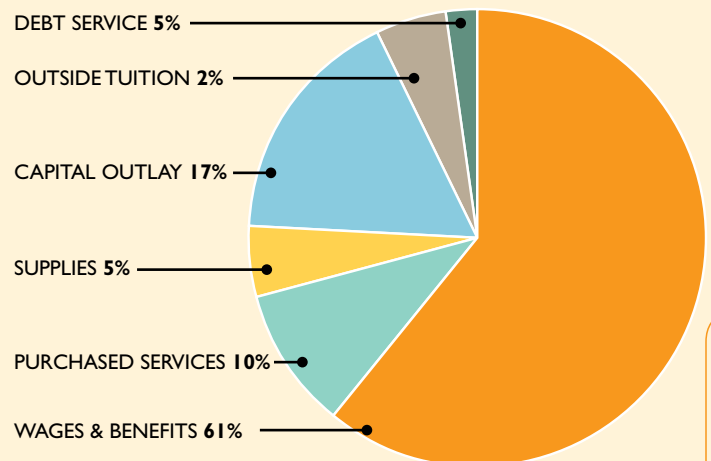
The Avoca Board of Education and its Finance Committee would like to thank the voters of District 37 for understanding the need for the tax rate referendum's approval and for recognizing the Board's diligence in reducing spending and monitoring the schools' budget closely over recent years. The community's confidence in our budget-conscious efforts to offer outstanding education to our District's children is greatly appreciated.



2009 REVENUES | Total = \$12,087,209



2009 EXPENDITURES | Total = \$15,103,790



2007–2010 Strategic Plan Update

In the spring of 2007, Avoca adopted a new strategic plan that drew heavily from the work of Jim Collins and his widely respected book, *Good to Great*. What makes the Avoca strategic plan truly unique and visionary is that in addition to articulating a mission statement and developing yearly goals, the Avoca plan defines “greatness” for District 37 and provides for innovative measurement of the “greatness indicators.”

The chart below summarizes the seven greatness indicators identified in the Avoca strategic plan, the means by which each indicator is measured, and the timeline for implementing the measurement process. In June 2009, Dr. Porto presented the first formal report on progress for each of the seven indicators. All data from this report clearly indicate that Avoca is making

remarkable progress on its journey toward greatness. The complete report is available for review at the Avoca Web site, www.avoca37.org. From the homepage, simply click on “From the Superintendent,” and to the right you will see a document entitled “2009 Greatness Indicator Report.”

GREATNESS FOR AVOCA

GREATNESS COMPONENT	GREATNESS INDICATOR	SELECTED MEASUREMENTS	YEAR IMPLEMENTED
SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE	Student academic achievement	Administer ISAT tests yearly Conduct MAP tests twice per year Evaluate Clay Graham report	2008-2009 2008-2009 2009-2010 (every other year)
	Recognition of students, staff, school, district	Create District Recognition Portfolio Monitor employment applications Glean information from teacher evaluations	2008-2009 2008-2009 2010-2011
	High levels of satisfaction	Administer triennial surveys to parents, staff, students and broader community Hold focus groups, post blogs and conduct specialized surveys, as needed Conduct exit interviews of employees	2009-2010 2008-2009 2008-2009
DISTINCTIVE IMPACT	Leadership in Innovation	Create Distinctive Impact Inventory Publish Avoca materials and practices Implement Professional Review Panel	2008-2009 2010-2011 2009-2010
	Student Connectedness	Create Student Connectedness Data Base Analyze extracurricular activity participation Monitor attendance and discipline referrals Conduct student surveys (as needed)	2009-2010 2009-2010 2008-2009
	Success in High School and Beyond	Analyze high school data on achievement Analyze high school data on extracurriculars Survey freshman students and their parents Create Avoca Alumni Association	2009-2010 2009-2010 June 2008 Summer 2008
LASTING ENDURANCE	Fiscal Responsibility	Pass the 2009 referendum	2009

STRATEGIC GOALS 2007-2010



In addition to calling for the measurement of greatness indicators, the 2007-2010 plan includes yearly district goals designed to assist in achieving the District's mission. As you will note in the chart to the right, seven of the ten goals created in the 2007-2010 plan are completed in full, and three final goals are targeted for completion in the 2009-2010 school year.



	YEAR IMPLEMENTED	STRATEGIC GOAL
GOALS COMPLETED IN FULL	2007-2008	Implement the new K-8 Language Arts Curriculum
	2007-2010	Implement the 2007-2010 technology plan
	2007-2008	Conduct a comprehensive study that leads to improvement and enhancement of the Avoca English Language Learners (ELL) program
	2007-2010	Strengthen Avoca's continuous improvement process for student achievement through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focused professional development - Enhanced parental partnership - Ongoing analysis of the overall improvement model
	2007-2009	Review, refine and improve surveys and other measurement tools that assess Avoca's progress toward greatness
	2008-2009	Pass a referendum to balance the budget
	2008-2009	Create a specific curriculum review process corresponding to Avoca's instructional needs. This includes but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A framework for conducting curriculum studies - A priority-based timeline designating the year of study for each curricular area - An electronic system for curricular and instructional management
GOALS IN PROGRESS	2008-2010	Establish a Community Outreach Committee that will research and implement activities that enhance the partnership between the school district and the Avoca community, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication vehicles - Volunteerism in the schools - Service projects and service learning - School finance education - Business partnerships
	2008-2010	Establish a Diversity Committee that will research and initiate activities that celebrate, enhance and expand the benefits of diversity at Avoca and promote an understanding and appreciation of a world community, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Curriculum and instruction - Recruitment and hiring practices - Community outreach
	2009-2010	Improve and enhance extracurricular and service opportunities for students at both schools by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balancing activities among sports, fine arts, leadership, student interest and community service - Increasing the number of developmentally appropriate options at Avoca West





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MAXIMIZING THE UNIQUE POTENTIAL OF EACH STUDENT

