



Community Unit School District 304
Geneva, Illinois
www.geneva304.org



Geneva Community Unit School District 304
Board of Education

Our Purpose
Our Plans
Our Schools
2015-2016

*Geneva
Ranks in Top 3%
of School Districts
in America*



**we
are**



**self-directed,
lifelong learners**



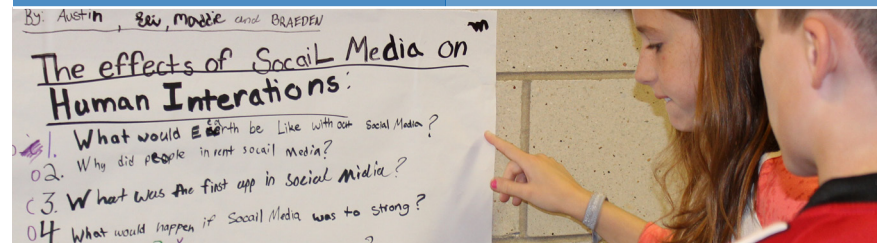
**effective
communicators**



**complex, creative
& adaptive
thinkers**



**collaborative
& productive
citizens**



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Here in Geneva School District 304 our **Tradition of Excellence** requires us to not only reflect on our past successes, but to also look ahead to the horizon. As a forward-looking and consistently high-achieving school district, we must be prepared to adapt to change and transform the way learning happens to best meet the needs of students in a constantly changing, increasingly *globalized world*. At the core of everything we do rests the goal of helping our students become self-directed lifelong learners, effective communicators, complex, creative, and adaptive thinkers, and collaborative and productive citizens. This booklet is an annual publication of our District aimed at giving a snapshot of our District's successes, initiatives, and goals for the future. In education, we care a great deal about our students and want to know that we are making a positive impact on their lives. Every day we strive to ensure that our students are acquiring the skills they need for future success.



Dr. Kent Mutchler,
Superintendent of Schools



WHO WE ARE

Our Purpose

To educate students within an environment that encourages the desire to learn and that meets the unique academic, personal, physical, and social needs of each individual.

10 Schools
1 preschool 6 elementary
2 middle 1 high

691 Staff
32 administrators 249 support
402 instructional teachers

5,889 Students
96 preschool 2,384 elementary
1,424 middle 1,996 high

24.3 Average ACT
Geneva 20.7 State

97% 4-year Graduation Rate
Geneva 85% State

\$6,899 Instructional Expense per pupil
Geneva \$7,419 State
100% Highly Qualified Staff

ISBE 2015 Financial Reognition

\$14,341 Operating Expense per pupil
Geneva \$12,521 State

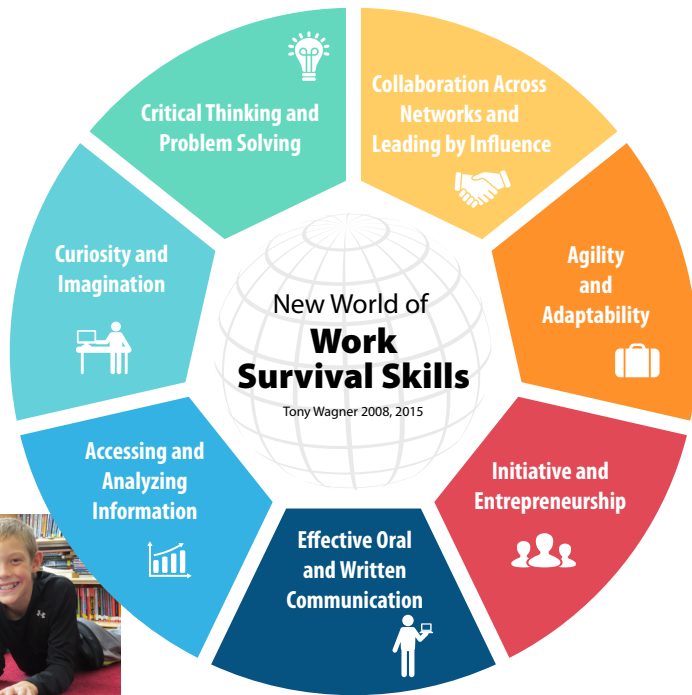
Changing School for a Changing World

There is no question that the world today is vastly different from even a decade ago. The students of today are living in a truly globalized society, one in which they are able to consume, produce, and disseminate information in ways that were previously unimaginable. Students are constantly introduced to new technologies and they connect with people from around the world as if they are in the same room. While these changes open up many possibilities for our students, they also mean that students are facing the most competitive, mobile, and qualified workforce we have ever seen.

As educators we must prepare our students for this ever-changing, increasingly competitive world. No longer does it suffice to simply fill our young “vessels” with knowledge. The jobs of tomorrow will require our students to work with technologies that have not yet been invented to solve problems that do not yet exist. Consequently, our educational community must conceptualize learning and transform teaching for the 21st century.

According to education expert Tony Wagner, employers from around the world are seeking seven “survival skills” that students must acquire for the “New World” of Work:

“[The] Seven Survival Skills are for future generations what the “Three R’s” were for previous generations. They are the “new basic skills” for work, learning, and citizenship in the twenty-first century.” (Tony Wagner, 2008, 2015)



In Geneva School District 304, we want to move beyond just the content and ensure that our students have the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century.

OUR VISION Board Goals

- Learning and Teaching**
- High Quality Staff**
- Technology Integration**
- Parents and Community**

Geneva students will face increasing and challenging responsibilities in their roles as workers, citizens, and family members. Students’ learning during the school years must now include both an understanding of traditional subject matter and the ability to develop and utilize knowledge in preparation for a future world requiring new skills and abilities. The common vision of all members of Geneva School District 304 is to assist every student to become:



Self-directed, life long learners who enjoy the challenge of learning; are self-confident and goal-oriented; and demonstrate physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being.



Effective communicators who assess, interpret, and respond to information by reading, listening, and questioning; convey meaning in writing, verbally, visually, numerically, and artistically; and use appropriate technology.



Complex, creative, and adaptive thinkers who apply academic knowledge, skills, and strategies to gather and interpret information to solve problems; create intellectual, artistic, and practical products that reflect quality and originality; and analyze the effectiveness of their decisions and solutions.



Collaborative and productive workers/citizens who recognize the advantages of diversity and cooperation; show concern, tolerance, and respect; demonstrate leadership and/or group skills; demonstrate actions that mutually benefit self and others; and assume responsibility for their actions, locally and globally.

Learning and Teaching
Continuously improve the caliber, content, and assessment of instruction through the regular review of student learning and instructional methods.

High Quality Staff
Actively recruit, train, and promote quality administrators, teachers, and staff. Provide the District’s administrative and instructional staff with continuing opportunities for professional growth.

Technology Integration
Maximize learning and teaching through the integration of technology.

Parents and Community
Improve communication and interaction with the community to foster shared goals, values, trust, and support.

Our vision for students is made of four primary components that align to the needs of the modern workforce. It is our hope that by achieving these skills, students will become self-evolving learners who are capable of embracing and capitalizing on constant change — *the way of the future*.

In the following pages, we will detail some of the ways we are changing education to meet the components of our vision.

Vision Component 1

Self-directed, Life Long Learners



Students are more engaged and motivated to learn when they have meaningful work that matters to them. Geneva 304 is finding new ways to offer student choice in the curriculum, which allows students to inquire more deeply into topics that they are passionate about. We will help our students become self-directed, lifelong learners by:

- ▶ Giving students more control over what they want to learn about;
- ▶ Teaching students how to formulate good questions (inquiry-based learning);
- ▶ Allowing students to reach solutions and make decisions about important issues or problems (project-based learning);
- ▶ Supporting deeper inquiry into subjects through cross-content teaching;
- ▶ Staying current on new technologies and incorporating tools that engage students.



Vision Component 2

Effective Communicators



The ability to communicate effectively is a timeless skill that is as important now as ever. Geneva 304 knows our students need to practice speaking and writing to real audiences in order to perfect these skills. We will help our students become effective communicators by:

- ▶ Ensuring students have authentic audiences to see, hear, and evaluate their ideas;
- ▶ Providing students with more opportunities to write with a purpose;
- ▶ Giving students access to new communications tools that connect them with audiences around the world;
- ▶ Challenging students to solve difficult problems together.



Vision Component 3

Complex, Creative, and Adaptive Thinkers



We want to prepare our students to be able to solve the problems of tomorrow. To do that, they need to be resourceful and capable of thinking critically. They need to be able to assess and analyze information and separate evidence-based claims from parochial opinions. We will help our students become complex, creative, and adaptive thinkers by:

- ▶ Focusing less on computation and memorization and more on integration and application of knowledge;
- ▶ Giving students opportunities to work on real-world problems;
- ▶ Increasing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) programming;
- ▶ Ensuring rigorous curricula and programming that challenge students to think deeper;
- ▶ Separating evidence-based claims from parochial opinions.



Vision Component 4

Collaborative and Productive Citizens



School has never been just about learning subject matter. It is also an important place for students to learn how they can effectively participate as citizens in our democracy. Part of this is learning how to work together to solve tough problems.

- ▶ Helping students question the world around them;
- ▶ Asking students to evaluate potential solutions and consequences to societal problems and helping them recognize that more than one person might hold a piece of the answer;
- ▶ Teaching students how to respectfully deliberate controversial questions with no wrong or right answers and to support their arguments with evidence;
- ▶ Moving learning beyond the school walls and giving them opportunities to contribute to their community in authentic ways.



Technology

Digital Literacy and Citizenship

In today's world, students are using digital media to learn, create, communicate, and contribute to society in new and remarkable ways. They are expected to create and curate a digital footprint from a young age — a footprint that will most likely serve as a de facto resume to college admissions officers and future employers. In Geneva School District students are expected to be good online citizens. They learn to protect their own online privacy and respect the privacy of others. They learn to proactively generate positive online reputations that will benefit their future endeavors. We ensure our students understand the pitfalls of negative online behavior such as cyberbullying and teach them how to contribute to healthy and positive online communities. In addition, students learn how to analyze and determine the quality and credibility of the mass amounts of information at their fingertips.



Digital Leadership

As society becomes more and more reliant on technology, it is up to our school leaders to embrace the power of digital technologies to develop school cultures that are transparent, relevant, meaningful, engaging, and inspiring (Sheninger, Eric). That means that our leaders must overcome fears and misconceptions about technologies such as social media and learn how to appropriately employ digital tools to their full potential. It also means that they must relinquish the control to which they are accustomed and trust teachers and students to use these tools to explore, learn, and create. Being able to use digital tools such as social media to their fullest potential is an essential skill for the 21st century world. Rather than tell students only what they cannot do with these tools, school leaders in Geneva 304 seek to create a culture that encourages students to use these tools in responsible and productive ways.

Portable Devices

Many of our students already have access to district-provided portable devices that are used for instruction, inquiry, and assessment. Over the next three years, we are hoping to transform learning in Geneva by equipping every student in Geneva schools with a portable device. Access to and familiarity with such technology is essential to preparing students for the real world.

We recognize that such an effort is a large investment, so we want to ensure that such devices are used to their fullest potential. We will continue to provide robust professional development for educators so teachers are skilled in using these technologies to inspire critical thinking and harness creativity.

Board Goal:

- ▶ **Technology Integration**
Maximize learning and teaching through the integration of technology.

Serving the Individual Needs of All Students

Geneva 304 will continue to service the individual social, emotional, and academic needs of every student. We are committed to providing research-based interventions and supports to students who have deficits in specific areas. This is done through a strategic problem-solving process.

Supporting Our Students Social and Emotional Needs

The students in today's classrooms are faced with ever increasing standards, constantly changing technology, and a world full of complex and often difficult issues. Geneva 304 will nurture the social and emotional needs of students so they can successfully cope with these demands as they strive to reach the tenets of our vision. Not only does social and emotional learning have a positive impact on workforce readiness, school attendance and graduation, life success, college preparation, and academic success (Adams, 2014), but it also helps maintain student mental health and well-being.



Board Goal:

- ▶ **Student Health and Well-Being**
Provide a safe and secure educational environment for students.



Self-directed, life long learners

We will help students develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.



Effective communicators

We will help students use communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.



Complex, creative, and adaptive thinkers

We will help students learn to cope with the many demands of life and adapt to changing circumstances.



Collaborative and productive citizens

We will help students use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain relationships. We will help them consider the perspectives of others, treat others with respect, learn the responsibilities of citizenship, and contribute to their community.

Assessment and Deeper Learning

Geneva School District 304 values accountability and believes it is important to assess the progress of students, staff, administrators, and the district as a whole so that we can continually improve. Recognizing that students learn and process information in vastly different ways, we believe it is important to take into account a variety of measures when determining student growth. Standardized assessments are important for benchmarking student performance, but they simply are not capable of measuring some of the important 21st century skills that we aspire to in our vision.

As a district, it is incumbent upon us to continually be looking for new and better ways to measure student growth. Teacher observation, student work and self-reflection, and 21st century skills rubrics also must play important roles in the overall assessment of a student's growth and potential.

School has never been about just the content. If we are to truly ensure that our students are ready for college, career, and civic life, we must continue to develop ways to assess important real-world skills such as collaboration, creativity, initiative and self-direction, and leadership and responsibility.



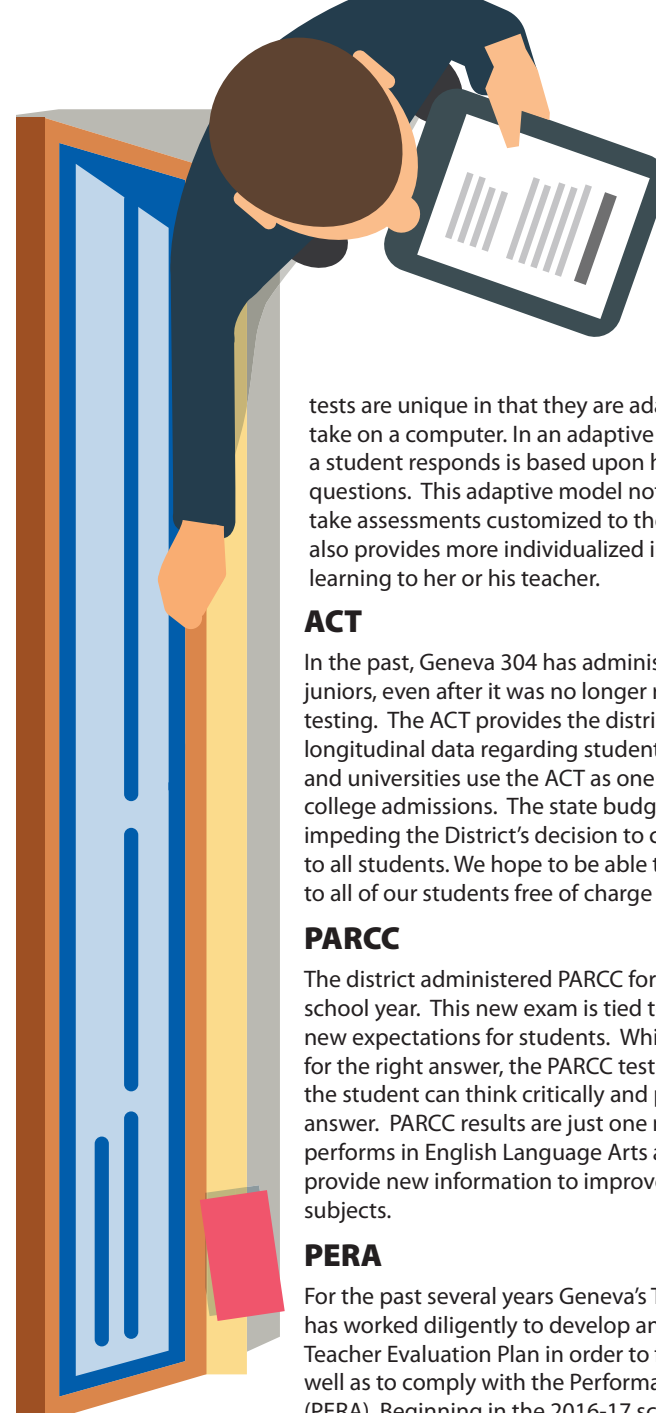
Board Goal:

► **Learning and Teaching**

Continuously improve the caliber, content, and assessment of instruction through the regular review of student learning and instructional methods.

*"Not everything that counts can be counted,
and not everything that can be counted counts."*

(William Bruce Cameron, 1963)



MAP

The Measures of Academic Progress (or MAP) tests are intended to help determine each student's instructional level and measure academic growth over time in the areas of reading and math. MAP

tests are unique in that they are adaptive tests that students take on a computer. In an adaptive test each question to which a student responds is based upon her/his response to previous questions. This adaptive model not only ensures that students take assessments customized to their personal learning levels, but also provides more individualized information about each child's learning to her or his teacher.

ACT

In the past, Geneva 304 has administered the ACT to all GHS juniors, even after it was no longer required as part of state-testing. The ACT provides the district with important and reliable longitudinal data regarding student growth and many colleges and universities use the ACT as one of several data points for college admissions. The state budget impasse and other factors are impeding the District's decision to continue to administer the ACT to all students. We hope to be able to continue offering this exam to all of our students free of charge in 2015-16.

PARCC

The district administered PARCC for the first time in the 2014-15 school year. This new exam is tied to higher standards and has new expectations for students. While previous tests looked only for the right answer, the PARCC test also looks for evidence that the student can think critically and problem solve to find the right answer. PARCC results are just one measure of how your student performs in English Language Arts and Math and will hopefully provide new information to improve instruction in these two subjects.

PERA

For the past several years Geneva's Teacher Evaluation Committee has worked diligently to develop and enhance the Geneva Teacher Evaluation Plan in order to focus on quality practice as well as to comply with the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA). Beginning in the 2016-17 school year, student growth will be an added facet of the teacher evaluation model required by PERA. This year, the committee, made up of a representative group of teachers and evaluators from across the District, will pilot the student growth requirement of the plan.

Community Stewardship



Financial Accountability

It is important to Geneva School District to maintain the public's trust as good stewards of resources. We maintain financial accountability through:

Transparency – The district posts its annual budget, administrator and teacher salaries, contracts over \$25,000, and all bills payable on its website.

Economy – The district works very hard to find the best solutions at the lowest cost. All bids for contractual services or equipment are thoroughly evaluated to determine the most efficient use of resources. Additionally, the district continually investigates new ways to save money by finding efficiencies in current operations.

Oversight – The district submits to rigorous oversight by several bodies. In 2014, Geneva School District had high financial ratings from numerous agencies. These include:

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| AA+ Bond Rating from Standard and Poors | ISBE 2014 Financial Profile Recognition, the highest category of financial strength | ASBO Meritorious Budget Award ASBO Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting |
|---|---|--|

Board Goals:

- ▶ **Operational Services**
Develop, utilize, and maintain facilities that serve the District's growing enrollment and provide the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of students.
- ▶ **Financial Resources**
Develop strategies to ensure sufficient resources are available and effectively managed.
- ▶ **Parents and Community**
Improve communication and interaction with the community to foster shared goals, values, trust, and support.



Contract Negotiations

- ▶ The Board of Education and the Geneva Education Association (GEA) thoughtfully negotiated to reach a teacher contract that is both fair and sustainable. The contract approved in 2015 ties future raises to an economic indicator (CPI) and establishes a committee to revise the current step system to make it more sustainable for the community.



Communications

Geneva School District believes authentic community engagement is an essential component of a thriving school district. We continue to solicit community feedback and find new ways to reach all of our stakeholders.

Capital Improvement Plan

Geneva School District strives to maintain facilities and grounds that the community can be proud of. Each year, staff members analyze the condition of district facilities and grounds and prioritize capital improvements based on cost, need, and efficiency. In recent years, this analysis has taken the form of a capital improvement plan that is updated annually.



Efficiencies in Transportation

The Transportation Department continually reviews and modify bus routes and scheduling in order to make them as efficient as possible. The District participates in a bus buy-back program which saves money and also ensures the district has buses with the most up-to-date safety features.

Safety and Security

- ▶▶▶ Geneva School District makes safety and security a priority and continually monitors and enhances its security measures. Over the last several years, many new enhancements have been made to protect the safety and well-being of students.

District 304 Board of Education

The Board of Education is a seven-member board made up of residents of the Geneva community. Members are elected by the general public, serve four-year terms, and are not compensated for their service to the School District.

Your Elected Board Members Get to know your Board of Education by finding their biographies on our website, www.geneva304.org/boardofeducation.aspx.



Back row, from left:
Michael McCormick (2011 – 2019)
William Wilson (2001 – 2017)*+
Mark Grosso, President (2009 – 2017)
David Lamb (2013 – 2017)

Front row, from left:
Mary Stith (2003 – 2019)*+
Leslie Juby (2013 – 2017)*
Kelly Nowak, Vice President (2007 – 2019)*+

Attend a Meeting: Meeting agendas, information packets, video recordings, and minutes can be found online at www.geneva304.org/boardofeducation.aspx.

Call: (630) 463-3010

Email: board@geneva304.org

2014-15 Board Recognitions

The Geneva Board of Education is continuously recognized for exemplary leadership and commitment to continuous learning and professional development.

School Board Governance Recognition

In 2015, the Geneva Board of Education was one of only 16 school boards to be recognized by the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) for effective governance behaviors.

*Master Board Members

<http://www.iasb.com/training/mbm.cfm>

The Illinois Association of School Boards Master Board Member Program recognizes board members for the time and effort they devote to self improvement and leadership activities within and beyond their local districts.

+School Board Leadership Academy Fellows

<http://www.iasb.com/training/leadership.cfm>

The Academy program promotes and recognizes board members' efforts toward continuous learning and professional development. Fellows in Illinois are those board members who have completed seven core and five elective programs through the Illinois Association of School Boards. It is a title held by only 79 current board members in Illinois.

Notable Highlights 2014-15

Geneva 97% State 83%

97% Freshman on Track

Freshmen on Track is a key predictor of high school success. Students who finish the ninth-grade year on track are almost four times as likely to graduate from high school as students who are not on track.

This metric includes students who graduated with a regular high school diploma from a public high school in Illinois and enrolled in a two-year or four-year college in the U.S. within 12 or 16 months.

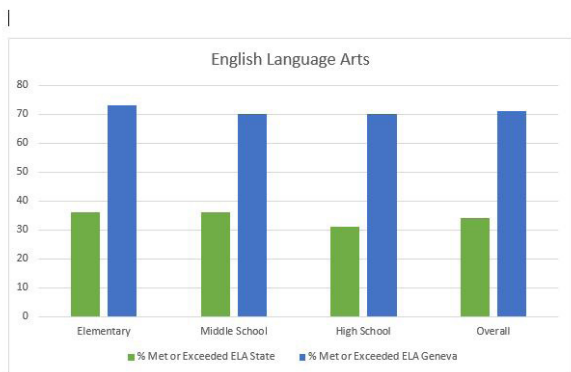
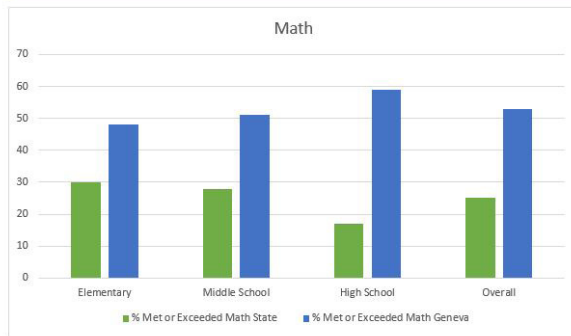
Geneva 85 State 70

85 Post-Secondary Enrollment

PARCC

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) was administered for the first time in the 2014-15 school year. PARCC is a new set of common assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards. The assessments are designed to provide an indicator of student proficiency in math and language arts. Geneva students continue to perform well above the state average.

GENEVA 304 2015 PARCC RESULTS



What We're Proud Of 2014-15

A few of the achievements Geneva School District was proud of in 2014-15.

Geneva was ranked **12th best school district** in Illinois by Niche.com, placing Geneva in the top 5% of school districts in the nation

Geneva High School placed among the **top 10% of public high schools** (1,527 out of 19,753) in the nation, according to U.S. News & World Report's 2015 edition of Best High Schools

Illinois Association of School Boards 2014 School Board Governance Recognition

Association of School Business Officials International's Meritorious Budget Award, 2014-15

Association of School Business Officials International's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting, 2014-15

Geneva averaged **24.3 on ACT** beating state average by more than 3.5 points

GHS received the award for **Exemplary French Program** with honors by the American Association of Teachers of French, a distinction held by only 10 schools nationwide

Geneva Middle School North 8th graders placed **2nd in the nation** in the 2014-15 WordMasters Challenge

Martha Behlow, GHS French Teacher, received the **Superintendent's Award** at the Kane County ROE's Educator of the Year Banquet

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources **Craig Collins** was nominated for the Kane County ROE's Educator of the Year Award

Ryan Estabrook, GHS Soccer Coach, was named **2014 Soccer Person of the Year** by the Illinois High School Soccer Coaches Association

GTV, the Geneva High School student-run television station, placed **5th in the nation** at the Student Television Network (STN) Convention

Six GHS seniors were **National Merit Commended**

Alexander (A.J.) Novy and Michael Wilkins, GHS juniors, received **perfect scores on the ACT**

Joe Schoen, GHS Science Teacher, was named **Illinois Outstanding Earth Science Teacher of the Year** by the National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT)

Geneva High School's 2014 Literary Magazine "The Skaldic: Ergo" earned the **Highest Award** in the 2014 National Council of Teachers of English Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines

The Western Avenue School 5th grade class raised nearly \$10,000 for the **Kira Spidale Foundation** to fight DIPG cancer

YAY!

See more of "What We're Proud Of" at

<http://www.geneva304.org/whatweproudof.aspx>