

# Flora CUSD #35 Newsletter

*Children are our most precious possession.*

**February 2024**

## *Illinois 5Essentials Survey*

January 30<sup>th</sup>-March 29<sup>th</sup>, students and teachers across Illinois will have an opportunity to participate in the annual statewide Illinois 5Essentials Survey. This survey is designed to generate a detailed picture of the inner workings of your child's school. As a parent, this opportunity will allow you to share your thoughts on the important elements of school effectiveness in a survey about your child's school.

On behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois 5Essentials Survey will be administered online by UChicago Impact at the University of Chicago. The survey gathers data related to five indicators that can predict important student outcomes, including improved attendance and larger test score gains. These five indicators that affect and predict school success are:

- Effective Leaders
- Collaborative Teachers
- Involved Families
- Supportive Environments
- Ambitious Instruction

Prior research in more than 400 schools has shown that schools that were strong on at least three of these "5Essential" indicators were 10 times more likely to improve student learning gains in math and reading than those that were weak on three or more Essentials.

All teachers and **4<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students** will be responding to this survey. 5Essentials Reports will be generated for schools if their teachers and/or students meet the response rate threshold of 50 percent. These reports will be sent to schools and districts in May 2024 and will also be included in the State School Report Card.

Additionally, we have chosen to provide the optional Parent survey supplement. If at least 20 percent of Flora CUSD #35 parents complete this survey, a parent supplement report will also be generated. The parent data will not be reported on the State Report Card.

Your participation in the parent portion of the survey will help us understand the conditions at your child's school and guide improvement. Your identity and survey responses will be kept completely confidential and will never be connected to you or your child.

The Illinois 5Essentials Survey for students and teachers will be conducted from the end of January through the end of March. The Parent Survey Supplement will be conducted during that same timeframe. You can access the survey between January 30<sup>th</sup> and March 29<sup>th</sup> by clicking on the following link: <https://survey.5-essentials.org/illinois/>

## **Ellen Erwin-Flora CUSD #35 Retired Teacher Hall of Fame**

Ellen Erwin, a former teacher and principal in Flora Community District 35, wife, mother and grandmother, and a wonderful, energetic friend to many lived a life of service. Her courage in not giving in to Multiple Sclerosis' debilitating challenges that she dealt with many years of her life can serve as an example to all of us. She was devoted to her family who, likewise, exemplified the best type of family support we as educators especially admire and wish all students had.

Ellen loved life; her enthusiasm then before M.S. was her enthusiasm always. She was the greatest "accommodator". In meeting challenges, her initial response was always "How might we?" It was never "There's no way I can..." She loved her "kids" at school and, as a first grade teacher during her beginning years in teaching, she taught many to read.

Everything was an adventure with Ellen. Some fond memories are of the field trip to a farm - that excited Ellen, the "city slicker", more than the first graders; making "Impossible Pumpkin Pie", playing and singing to guitar accompanied songs, and managing "sports days" on the playground where kids would hula hoop, run relays, or jump rope where she would turn the rope until it felt like her arms would fall off, and yes, sometimes resting on the big rock on the corner of the playground watching the first graders expend their boundless energy, getting ready to become successful adults decades later.

Kids and colleagues loved Mrs. Erwin. Calling or seeing her then or later in life, they were always greeted with contagious enthusiasm (you could hear her smile in her voice) followed by a barrage of questions regarding their well-being. She was great to teach with because she could be counted on to "be there and do her part" and, whatever the topic, it would be fun!

Ellen attended college at Southern IL University Carbondale. There she met the love of her life and future husband, Ed Erwin. Ed and Ellen were married on December 21, 1975 in Chicago. They both graduated from college and started lifelong careers in education. Ellen had a passion for education and spent many years as an elementary school teacher at McEndree Elementary School. She went on to serve as Principal at Xenia. Ellen impacted many lives in Flora CUSD 35 and, as her daughter Janna shared in a post, "Earth is a better place because she was here" and because she was part of our lives. Her husband Ed, also served as an influential educator and science teacher in Clay City and later as part of a School Improvement Team at Sandoval High School. Like Ellen was, Ed is "inspiration personified".

Often in our lives we encounter those who make a difference. Ellen Erwin made a difference and, deserves a place in the Unit 35 Educators' Hall of Fame.





**Important Upcoming Dates:**

**February 7th**-Curriculum Advisory Committee Meeting-Unit Office-2:30 p.m.

**February 16<sup>th</sup>**-School Improvement Day-12:30 Dismissal

**February 19<sup>th</sup>**-No School-President's Day

**February 21<sup>st</sup>**-Board of Education Meeting-Unit Office-5:30 p.m.

**February 29<sup>th</sup>**-End of 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter