

# At the helm of Burr Ridge CCSD 180

By Mary Waldron  
for Burr Ridge/Willowbrook Independent

**D**r. Tom Schneider is the Superintendent of Burr Ridge Community Consolidated School District 180. He has just completed his first year as Superintendent and is expecting great things for school year 2008-09. CCSD 180 is comprised of two schools, Burr Ridge Middle, where Ms. Julie Bartell is Principal and Anne M. Jeans, where Dr. Debbie LeBlanc is Principal. What excites him most about the upcoming school year is the leadership team they have in place. He feels his group of Administrators, Julie Bartell and Debbie LeBlanc, are building on their familiarity with the students, the schools, and the community.

"The leadership team we have in place combined with our excellent teaching staff and their dedication will enable CCSD 180 to empower our students to make the world a better place," Dr. Schneider said. "We have two really good schools - the community should be proud of what we have here. If you live in the CCSD 180 community you can be proud of what we do. We have a strong commitment to being well run and well organized - and we do good things here for our students that provide them with opportunities to make the most of the skills and talents they have." "If your only connection to the school is that you support us with your tax dollars, you can be proud of what we do, whether you have a connection to the school or not. We feel that what we have going on here makes our children's lives better."

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—Dr. Tom Schneider, Superintendent

Dr. Schneider was emphatic that what makes Burr Ridge Middle and Anne M. Jeans schools so special are the teachers. He further explained that the interaction his teachers have with their students is outstanding - he feels they really care about every child and their success. He said, "For instance, the teachers volunteered in huge numbers to assist with the Secret Santa Program. Our teachers are constantly looking for ways to enhance the classroom experience and are tremendously dedicated to the success of each child and the school."

When asked, "What else makes the schools so special?" Dr. Schneider replied, "We are good at reaching our kids where they are and having them meet our expectations for academic achievement and character development. For example, this year both schools were recognized as outstanding for Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) by the DuPage Regional Office of Education. We have the strategies in place, our students recognize what is expected of them and they have met those expectations." Anne M. Jeans is a two-time winner of the PBIS recognition and Burr Ridge Middle achieved this honor for the first time in school year 2007-2008.

When asked, "What was one of your biggest accom-



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## Set to start the school year...

Dr. Tom Schneider in his office at BRMS. Schneider has just completed his first year as Superintendent of Burr Ridge Community Consolidated School District 180 and is expecting great things for school year 2008-09.

plishments during your first year as Superintendent?" Dr. Schneider remarked, "One of the things we are focused on is the efficient use of resources - we make every dollar count. It goes back to having clearly set goals and objectives so that every dollar spent is tied to the accomplishment of our goals. For example, we've been able to pool our buying power with other local districts by joining milk, insurance, transportation and retirement benefits consortiums. We've automated our purchasing, so that we can take advantage of bulk discounts and free shipping. We've worked with the State Treasurer's Office to obtain a higher rate of return on our investments as well as improve payment of fees, such as lunch and registration fees."

When asked, "In keeping with the philosophy, 'It takes a village to raise a child,' how can the community help CCSD 180 to become even a better, stronger school district?" Dr. Schneider replied, "One of the things we ask our community to do is stay informed on all of the positive things that are taking place in our schools. They can do this by reading our quarterly newsletter which is sent to each resident's home or by accessing the district's website <http://www.ccsd180.org>.

"We're always looking for volunteers to help work with the students in areas such as reading, math tutor-

ing, classroom aides, or as guest speakers on various study topics - there's no limit to the opportunities available and no special training is required - we'll find a spot for you."

For more information on how you can volunteer at either one of the schools you can contact Ms. Julie Bartell at 630-325-5454 or Dr. Debbie LeBlanc at 630-325-8186 or you can visit the CCSD website and scroll down to CCSD 180 Volunteers.

Dr. Schneider was asked about his biggest hurdle for School Year 2008-09.

"Our biggest hurdle anticipated for the next 2 school years is the financial situation," he replied. "Like all districts under tax caps, the tax rate has continued to decline limiting the amount of funds that can be collected, while our expenses for commodities such as gas, books, supplies and paper, continue to escalate. So as costs continue to rise, we've had to reduce programs such as full-day kindergarten, the number of teacher aides, the number of teachers - we lost 8 teaching positions this year, and we had to eliminate the Chess and Football Programs.

"After the Referendum failed to pass last February, the decision to make these cuts was extremely difficult, but necessary, in order to preserve the integrity of our curriculum. My hope is that with the appropriate financial backing, we will be able to add programs to do an even better job of serving all members of the CCSD 180 community."

One of the things that make him the proudest is that the administration and the school board have a greater focus on what they are trying to accomplish as their district goals and there is a coordinated effort in place to address these goals with a greater level of intensity. He says he's confident in the new Leadership Team they have in place and is confident that with everybody on the same page he can maximize his resources. With that in mind Dr. Schneider looks forward to an outstanding school year while continuing to provide his students with the tools and skills they need to make the world a better place.

Dr. Schneider joined CCSD 180 last year after having been the Superintendent of the Willow Springs School District 108 for 5 years. He has a bachelor's degree in History, a master's and an Ed.D. in Education Administration, all his degrees are from Northern Illinois University. He is married to his wife, Christina who is a teacher at Lake Central High School in St. Johns, Indiana and has two children Troy, age 11, and Trent, age 6. He and his family currently reside in Dyer, Indiana.