

Who's New at McKenzie?



New Interim Staff at McKenzie:

Mrs. Melanie Horowitz - Principal Interim

Melanie Horowitz will be McKenzie's principal interim during Rachel's maternity leave. Melanie was the Central School principal for eight years before joining the District administrative team handling curriculum and instruction. Melanie was also a senior editor in educational publishing, a teacher for 20 years, and a principal in Wauconda. Although Melanie retired in 2016, she has remained involved in D39 through a handful of projects. She also consulted in North Shore District 112 on the development of their full-day kindergarten program, which will benefit her five year old granddaughter this coming school year! In spite of a busy July with the last of her four children getting married, Melanie has been planning with me to ensure a smooth start of the year.

Ms. Judy Gutwillig - Assistant Principal Interim

Judy Gutwillig retired after 10 years in Highland Park as their Special Education Department Chair. Her education experience also includes special education teaching in Chicago Public Schools and Arlington Heights, and her work as an Inclusion Facilitator and Assistant Principal through the Northwest Suburban Special Education Organization. Judy was also a national trainer for court reporters and owned a swimwear shop in Highland Park. Currently, she is enjoying her grandma status to three grandchildren, courtesy of her two married children.

New Certified Staff at McKenzie:

Mrs. Maeghan Deutsch - Kindergarten Teacher

Mrs. Deutsch has been working with children in the classroom setting for 7 years and this will be her 4th year at McKenzie Elementary, where she spent the last couple years as a Kindergarten Paraprofessional. She started her career, teaching Kindergarten in Champaign, IL and is very excited to be continue her teaching career in Wilmette. Mrs. Deutsch attended Knox College where she received her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. In her free time, Mrs. Deutsch loves to spend time with her family as well as travel, read, and be crafty!

Ms. Megan Filip - School Psychologist

Ms. Filip is entering her 8th year as a school psychologist. She spent 6 years practicing in Sugar Grove, Illinois

and 1 year practicing in Charleston, South Carolina at the early childhood, elementary, and middle school levels. Ms. Filip received her Masters and Education Specialist degree from Loyola University Chicago and her Bachelors degree from Augustana College. She emphasizes positive psychology approaches including gratitude, grit, and mindfulness exercises and prioritizes collaboration and communication among families, teachers, and students. She is also certified to teach Kids Yoga and loves fostering mental and physical health to children through creative movement. In her free time, she enjoys yoga, biking through the city, and boating with friends and her goldendoodle, Sawyer, on lake Michigan. Ms. Filip is thrilled to join the Wilmette - McKenzie family!

Mrs. Joanie Hartmann - 3rd Grade Teacher

Mrs. Hartmann is going into her fourth year teaching and her first year in Wilmette Public Schools. She is coming to McKenzie from Anchorage School District, where she was a Behavior Specialist. Prior to moving to Alaska, Mrs. Hartmann taught 5th grade in Winnetka, Illinois and 4th grade in Waukesha, Wisconsin. She received her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Early Childhood from Carroll University in Wisconsin. In her free time, she enjoys reading, running, cooking, and spending time with her family. Mrs. Hartmann attended McKenzie School as a student, and is ecstatic to be back teaching 3rd grade!

Mrs. Devra Kaplan - 3rd Grade Teacher

Mrs. Kaplan has been teaching for the past 9 years. Her family recently relocated from Phoenix, where she taught 1st grade. She has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Arizona State University and an endorsement in English as a Second Language. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two girls. She also loves to bake!

Ms. Michelle Lawniczak - Library Media Specialist

Ms. Lawniczak has been teaching 6th grade science for the past 15 years in Johnsburg, IL. Three years before that, she taught 6-8th grade creative writing and journalism in McHenry, IL. Ms. Lawniczak has also taught sections of literature and social studies and was a learning center director for grades 5-8. Ms. Lawniczak went to Barat College in Lake Forest for her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and English. She earned a Masters in Library Science from Clarion University and a Masters in Natural Resources and Environmental Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. In her free time she enjoys reading, cycling, traveling, and doing just about anything outdoors.

Mr. Nathan Rahn - Comprehensive Needs Teacher K-4

This will be Mr. Rahn's 5th year teaching and his 1st year here in Wilmette District 39 (he is extremely excited!). He is transferring to us from Yorkville CUSD 115 where he was an *Instructional Skills Program* teacher for 3 years. Before Yorkville, in a span of 2 years' time, Mr. Rahn also student taught, was a paraprofessional, and a lead teacher at Timber Ridge Therapeutic Day school in Arlington Heights, IL. Mr. Rahn attended Illinois State University in Bloomington-Normal, IL (Go Redbirds!) where he received his bachelor's degree in education with a focus as a Learning Behavior Specialist. Mr. Rahn hopes to pursue his Master's Degree in Educational Technology within the next few years. In his free time, Mr. Rahn enjoys being active by playing softball, golf,

and anything outdoors related. He also loves spending time with his friends, dog Jake (pictured), and his family... and will be a first-time uncle in October!

Mrs. Jackie Zorger - 4th Grade Teacher

Mrs. Zorger is starting her 13th year teaching and 4th year in the Wilmette Public Schools. She is transferring from Highcrest Middle School where she taught 6th grade math for 3 years. Prior to teaching in Wilmette, Mrs. Zorger taught 9 years in River Grove, IL. In addition to teaching math, she coached the middle school soccer team for 7 years and created a scholarship fund to send over 20 girls to soccer camps in the Chicagoland area. Mrs. Zorger attended Syracuse University where she majored in Inclusive Elementary and Special Education. She also has received her Masters in Math Education from University of Illinois at Chicago. In her free time, Jackie loves spending time with her family which includes her husband Josh, her 2-year old daughter Zoey, and her 5-month old little boy Jacob. She also enjoys going for walks with her family, running, and just being outside as much as possible. She looks forward to this new opportunity at McKenzie!

Familiar Faces in New Places:

Mrs. Erin Schroeder

Mrs. Schroeder previously taught 2nd grade at McKenzie, but she has moved upstairs to teach 3rd grade this year! Our 3rd grade team is excited to welcome Mrs. Schroeder!

Mrs. Regina Safran

Mrs. Safran may have retired last year, but she couldn't stay away from McKenzie for too long! Mrs. Safran will be teaching 2nd grade while Mrs. Alfaro is on maternity leave this fall.

Please note that the above new staff members are certified teachers. New support staff members (paraprofessionals) are still going through the interview process with the district office and are not listed above.