**Research:** One of the greatest strengths of DuPage High School District 88, which is comprised of Addison Trail and Willowbrook high schools, is the rich diversity represented among its students and staff. About 40 languages and more than 30 countries are represented among the district’s families, and almost half of the nearly 4,000 students at District 88 speak a language other than English at home. District 88 fosters an environment of inclusivity and belonging, and the district began its equity journey in 2014. Students have participated in this process through the Youth Equity Stewardship (YES!) program, which strives to prepare students to recognize and learn from the diversity around them. When schools had to transition to remote learning in March 2020 because of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, that didn’t stop students from wanting to expand their equity work with YES! They continued to meet online and expressed a desire to begin a program that would help everyone in the district know they aren’t alone and still have a way to get together and share information. The students set the following goals/objectives:

- Implement a student-led news channel to:
  - Keep students and staff connected, even in a virtual environment
  - Share school, local, state and national news and events to keep students and staff informed/up to date
  - Remain focused on expanding cultural competency in District 88
  - Increase a sense of belonging in students by having them get involved with the news channel

**Planning:** To bring the concept of a student-led news channel to life, administrators and staff members began meeting with students in May 2020 to develop a plan. The project would require technology staff to film and edit the segments, advisers to help coordinate the content, student broadcasters to lead the show, a studio space (physical and virtual) and equipment such as computers, cameras and microphones. To be fiscally responsible, mostly internal resources were used, so a small budget of $5,000 (for new equipment) was allocated to this project. The individuals involved would need to meet for about three hours each week to plan, write and film each segment. It was determined the segments would be kept internal, to be viewed by staff and students. Addison Trail committed to producing a show every week, and Willowbrook agreed to have a show every other week.

**Implementation:** With everyone’s teamwork and passion, District 88 was able to launch AT News (at Addison Trail) and The Brooks Channel (at Willowbrook) in September 2020. The segments are aired on TV sets throughout the school, played during the school’s resource period and e-mailed to staff and students.

**Evaluation:** The student news channel team has achieved its goal of producing a show each week at Addison Trail and every other week at Willowbrook. The group also has achieved its goal of having that content viewed by District 88 students (nearly 4,000) and staff (more than 650). The news channel also has accomplished its desire to get students involved and engaged in their school and community at a hands-on level, as the number of pupils interested in helping with this project continues to increase. Two future improvements/next steps include adding live coverage of school events and surveying students and staff to determine whether they feel the content is helping them stay informed/up to date and increasing cultural competency at the district.
Sample segments of AT News and The Brooks Channel

Click on the image above (or go to https://dupage88.net/site/page/14797) to view segments of AT News and The Brooks Channel.