

# DISTRICT 81 FACILITIES

SD81ENGAGE SPECIAL ISSUE - SPRING 2022

## 21ST CENTURY LEARNING IN SD81

District 81 is proud to bring you this special edition of our newsletter, featuring a look at each of our three schools. Inside you will read about the facilities and how unique and exciting it is for our community to offer 21st-century learning experiences across the entire district. Before we discuss the characteristics of each school, let's define 21st-century learning!

### 21ST - CENTURY LEARNING DEFINED

Educators agree on key features of 21st-century learning that prepare students for college and future careers. Twenty-first century learning is student-centered and focuses on skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, and digital literacy. A 21st-century learning environment encourages students to take risks and create. Teachers nurture all learning styles rather than use a "one size fits all" approach. Interpersonal communication skills are emphasized, and students have a voice and choice in their learning and how they demonstrate understanding. Students become more self-directed and teachers facilitate their growth.

### 21ST - CENTURY SCHOOL DESIGN

Twenty-first century schools use physical space as an educational tool that enhances and supports the learning process. Twenty-first century schools have space for student-to-group sharing, individual reflection, group discussion, and hands-on learning. Distinguishing features include a generous and purposeful use of light, color and open space. Facilities offer a variety of learning environments that encourage exploration, collaboration, and movement, which is how the brain learns best. SD81 schools have been designed with the specific needs of each unique learner in mind as they grow.



*John F. Kennedy Elementary*



*George Washington Elementary*



*Lincoln Middle School*

# JOHN F. KENNEDY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## PRESCHOOL-3RD GRADE

Total Area: 106,320 sq. ft.  
Student Capacity: 900  
Completion 2021

District 81's mission is to ensure success in all areas of development and to provide a child-centered environment, which is demonstrated throughout Kennedy School.

The five-phase renovation and addition of Kennedy was completed in 2021. The renovation of the old space fits seamlessly into the new 37,000 sq. ft. addition, giving the impression that the entire facility is brand new.

Classrooms are bright and airy, and have soft, flexible furniture and window seats. Between each pair of classrooms is a breakout space to encourage both collaborative and individual study. Glass walls also function as writing surfaces. Students can move around freely and use their creativity and imagination to create and explore. The centrally located project spaces provide ample room for collaborative, hands-on learning. Playful light fixtures and furniture support creativity and movement. Color defines each grade at Kennedy (e.g., third grade spaces are teal; pre-K blue, first grade green), and instill a feeling of belonging. Transparent walls enhance security and inspire wonder by putting learning on display.

Kennedy students and staff connect to the world of living things through natural light, views and the selection of materials used around the school. "Grass" Flotex flooring and wood-looking ceiling panels incorporate nature into the school environment. This is especially evident in the presentation space, where an amphitheater becomes a "hill" with a wide view of the outdoors. This space facilitates peer-to-peer learning and variety of instructional techniques.

The "learning corridor" serves as both circulation and the media center that welcomes students to get cozy with a book or technology. Teachers use this space creatively for small group activities with their students. It's a favorite spot for soaking up sunshine and reading with friends. The motorized garage door is often open, joining the media center to the art room. Playful light fixtures and a music room designed for exploration show how learning and engagement go hand in hand.

The early childhood wing has its own secured entrance and arrival & dismissal lane, with classrooms that facilitate learning through play, with age appropriate furniture and a playground dedicated to this age group.

The gymnasium and cafeteria are large spaces that are bright and colorful, with designs that highlight the vibrancy found throughout the entire facility. Kennedy's instructional space will increase with the enclosure of the courtyard, scheduled for completion by fall of 2022.



*Presentation Space*



*Cafeteria*



*Project Space*

# GEORGE WASHINGTON SCHOOL

## 4TH & 5TH GRADE

Total Area: 68,000 sq. ft.

Student Capacity: 350

Completion: 2022

Washington School reflects the unique needs of the intermediate grades and encourages the play and exploration that is connected to learning. The two-story facility has plenty of open spaces, with learning taking place in “neighborhoods.” Students move around in flexible instructional areas that offer a variety of learning environments. This design allows for problem-based learning, collaboration among students, and flexibility to work in large or small groups, or even individually. Soft seating is easy to rearrange, and students write on dry-erase walls and surfaces, encouraging them to be spontaneous and share their thoughts and work. Reading nooks where students can cozy up with a book or work with a partner are already a favorite feature, and help students retreat to a quiet spot when needed.

Generous use of daylight, color, and shapes are found throughout the school. Research shows that light enhances mood, behavior, academic performance and productivity. From any vantage point, students can see daylight, and they can gaze out not only onto the sky and trees, but all the different modes of transportation around them, including the container yard, former Soo line, tollway and O'Hare Airport.

Twenty-first century learning concepts are also seen in the art and reading rooms, which feature open space, transparency, and natural light to encourage brain stimulation and creativity. The band and music rooms are colorful and spacious, inviting students to find joy in the performing arts. The gymnasium has ample space for physical education activities, and also serves as a tornado shelter. Students enjoy their new cafeteria that has soft seating and high top tables, and a state-of-the-art kitchen with all new equipment.

The media center and learning staircase are the heart of Washington School. This area welcomes students and guests into the building and invites them to connect with one another and the school community. The slide is an educational tool used to reset students who need a brain break or reset their mood and energy levels to optimize learning.

The Schiller Park Historical Commission has its new home in Washington School. The space features a museum to display artifacts for visitors, a work space, and ample storage. Washington students will have authentic and valuable learning experiences as generations are brought together, and this innovative partnership will benefit the entire community for years to come!

Washington's new site improves safety with new traffic patterns, and alleviates congestion and traffic around Lawrence and Michigan. The building is completely soundproofed to prevent noise disturbances due to its proximity to O'Hare. Landscaping buffers the noise and traffic of Lawrence Avenue. District 81 will invite the community to Washington School's open house in August of 2022, upon the completion of site work.



*Music Room*



*Learning Neighborhood*



*Media Center*

# LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL

## 6TH-8TH GRADE

Total Area: 107,899 sq. ft.  
Student Capacity: 525  
Completion: 2010

Lincoln Middle School was designed with an emphasis on the environment. Solar shading and a green rooftop classroom that extends from the media center are examples of the school's healthy earth theme. The secure rooftop offers a flexible outdoor space for a variety of activities and engagement for middle schoolers.

Lincoln's vertically organized design provides each of the three grade levels its own floor and dedicated commons area with soft, moveable furniture for a variety of instructional opportunities. Students spill out from their classrooms into "team living rooms," where they solve problems together, discuss, and form small groups. Students take on more responsibility for their own learning at this developmental stage and the 21st-century learning environment facilitates this growth.

Each living room extends to an additional outside area or balcony, providing outdoor space for students' project work, reading and social interactions. Teacher workspaces and student breakout rooms are transparent, offering natural light and emphasizes collaboration and a sense of family or team.

Classrooms and science labs were designed to support the middle school's team teaching practices, and are versatile and flexible, with retractable walls that can be configured easily depending on the mode of teaching and learning, accommodating large or small group instruction. Students are encouraged to explore, create and move with state-of-the-art band and music rooms, an art room, and fitness room, which is an important part of LMS's wellness program.

The large, open area that is filled with natural light and windows and is the center of the school is known as the "wow" space, which is used for both school and community gatherings. The theater and cafeteria are also large gathering spaces used by the entire district and community organizations. District 81 will use grant funding to make improvements to Lincoln's outdoor field this spring, offering the school and community extended use for sports activities throughout the year.

We hope you enjoyed reading about each of our three 21st-century schools! District 81 offers deep gratitude to the Board of Education for its vision to bring equity across District 81, and to the community for supporting this vision. We have begun tracking how our 21st-century, modernized schools are impacting student achievement. We look forward to seeing you in the fall. Until then, please go to [www.sd81.org](http://www.sd81.org) for more pictures and details.



*Green Roof Terrace*



*Team Living Room*



*"Wow" Gathering Space*