

Progress on the New Washington School



Washington will be a 21st Century school, which features open spaces and natural light.



The Schiller Park Historical Commission will have a new home with exhibit and work spaces and storage.

Progress continues on the new Washington School, with surprisingly few delays since the groundbreaking in April 2021, given the challenge much of the country is facing with securing materials for construction projects. Bulley & Andrews Construction Firm has projected that the school will be turned over by late February 2022, which means that 4th and 5th grade students and the Schiller Park Historical Commission will be in their new spaces in the spring.

As of the first week of November, the facility is fully weather-tight and the roofs, windows and walls are complete. Drywall is currently being installed, and the majority of the HVAC and plumbing is complete. The shaped windows and soffits are in place, which is a design feature representing the different learning “neighborhoods” found within the new school. The main staircase (pictured above), which is in the center of the school and connects the media center with the rest of the facility, is now in place. The Historical Commission toured the job site in early November with District 81 and DLA Architects. District 81 and the Historical Commission hope to host open house events for the community in fall of 2022 after the old school has been demolished, making room for the new bus lane, parking lot, playground, and green space.

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Lincoln Middle School Cross Country



One of the most exciting developments for the 2021-22 school year is the return of after-school activities and sports. The Leyden Area Athletic Conference reinstated conference games after the necessary break due to COVID-19 restrictions. The cross country team had a successful season, including taking home 4 team trophies and 8 individual medals in their final meet. The 6th-8th grade girls and boys teams both received 1st place trophies and the 7th-8th grade team both earned 3rd place trophies. The Lightning Runners were also proud and excited to wear their new uniforms donated by the JJ Watt Foundation.

Washington After School Clubs



Our 4th and 5th graders are able to discover different interests and develop new hobbies with the after-school clubs offered at Washington School. After school clubs take place once a week for a five to seven-week session. Teachers in the program choose different clubs each session based on student interest. Some of the most popular clubs over the past few years have been chess club, craft club, anime club, lego club, and yoga/exercise club. This is a great way for children to explore different interests and meet new friends.

Kennedy Halloween Trunk or Treat



Kennedy School was thrilled to host the district's Halloween Trunk or Treat event for the SD81 learning community. Over 60 cars participated, with unique and creative trunks decorated by SD81 families, teachers, administrators, SD81 Board of Education, the Schiller Park Library, and many other friends and supporters of District 81! It was wonderful to offer this opportunity to our students and families to enjoy such a fun gathering with family and friends. Thank you to all who participated in providing a memorable experience for the SD81 community. Special thanks to SD81 parents Christine Pretzie and Jenny Thorn for organizing the event.

District 81 Finances

District 81 remains steadfast in the goal of being a good steward of taxpayer resources while continuing to provide students with the highest quality learning experiences to meet their academic, social, and emotional needs. The District is anticipating continued healthy fund balances in all our operational accounts in accordance with school board policy.

We are constantly searching for new revenue sources through federal, state, and private grants while closely monitoring expenditures and maintaining a balanced budget each fiscal year. Examples impacting this fiscal year include the National School Lunch Program Kitchen Equipment grant in the amount of \$46,000, and a washer, dryer and laundry supplies donated by Enchanted Backpack.

The District is anticipating a financial profile score for FY21 of 3.6 out of 4.0, which keeps District 81 in "Financial Recognition" with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Financial Recognition is the highest category given through ISBE and District 81 has remained in this category since 2012. The District has received another "clean" audit for FY21, issued by Crowe Horwath, independent auditors, which indicates that no significant deficiencies or findings were revealed and all statements and fund balances were accurately accounted for.

Emergency Relief Funds

The federal government continues to give local school districts the opportunity to apply for grant programs that provide support during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the money is to help districts address learning gaps, purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) and other necessary supplies and materials, and complete capital projects that help districts utilize all space in their schools to implement mitigation efforts such as social distancing when possible.

District 81 was allocated \$3,615,415 in Elementary and Secondary School Relief Grant Funds (ESSER II & III) combined in FY21 & FY22. Some of the highlighted projects approved by ISBE include enclosing the courtyard at Kennedy School to provide additional learning and intervention spaces, repairing a curtain wall at Lincoln Middle School, a new reading curriculum for K-5, and a summer school program to address learning loss. These grant funds are not tied to any competitive funding process and are not a reward to school districts who are following COVID-19 recommendations put forth by ISBE, IDPH (Illinois Department of Public Health), and/or CDC (Centers for Disease Control).



Leading Our Learning Community Forward

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT, DR. KIMBERLY BORYSZEWSKI

It's a pleasure to share news with the community about the 2021-22 school year!

Our students began the new year in their school houses and our entire learning community has been hard at work making up for lost in-person time due to the stay at home order. We offered summer learning opportunities to students who needed extra help, and a jumpstart to kindergarten program to prepare our young learners for the new school year. I'm proud of our students for their hard work and commitment to learning, and our SD81 educators who have faced unprecedented challenges over the past two years.

We are fortunate to have the support of our SD81 parents whose involvement makes events such as the Halloween Trunk or Treat a great success. In challenging times when mandates and guidance change frequently, our open dialogue with District 81 parents has provided us with invaluable perspective and feedback.

We continue to contend with the COVID-19 pandemic and maintain mitigation efforts to keep our students, faculty and staff safe and healthy. Even during these challenges, District 81 keeps moving forward. We continue to plan for the future, focus our efforts on student achievement and celebrate our many successes! We have begun this new school year with a renewed sense of positivity and purpose, with much to look forward to!

A MESSAGE FROM BOARD PRESIDENT, MARYANN DESECKI

It has been wonderful for the Board of Education to see our District 81 students back to school, having new learning experiences with their teachers and peers.

District 81 has done a remarkable job during these challenging times, and continues to put the health and safety of students and employees at the forefront of every decision.

The Board of Education has established our goals for the new school year, which focus on fiscal management, student achievement, and communication with all stakeholders. These goals confirm our commitment to offering excellent learning experiences for all students and ensuring equity across all district schools.

We're proud of our schools and community, and look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming open house for the new Washington School.



Pictured from L to R Back Row: Maryann Desecki, Andrea Del Zotti, Allison Downs, Enas Saada; Front Row: Laura Lukasik, Tina Ewanio, Dr. Kimberly Boryszewski, Ana Ultreras



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