



Summer Programming Offers Expanded Opportunities

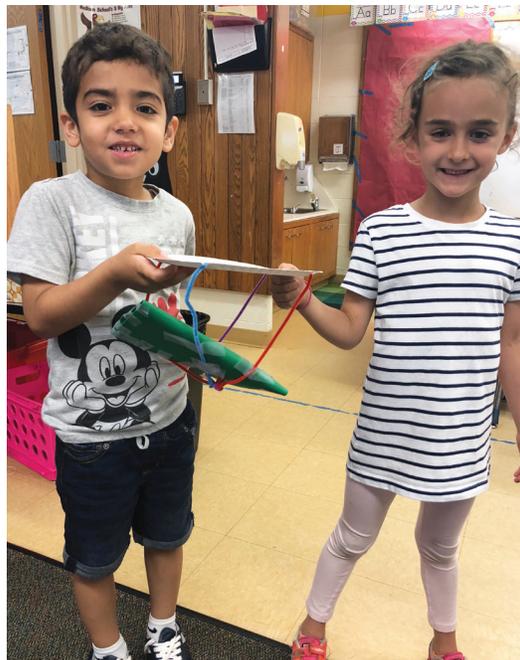
Research shows that when students are away from school for long stretches of time, they lose academic skills. Skokie-Morton Grove District 69 has expanded its summer program offerings in an attempt to battle summer slide, provide greater access for all students to participate in enriching experiences, and help students maintain a high level of academic achievement.

This summer, students entering first through eighth grade can sign up for a wide-range of summer activities as the district expands its programming.

Bryan Kelly, District 69’s Learning and School Culture Coordinator, says one reason for expansion is the success of last year’s summer program. “Rather than simply building a remedial and academic summer program, the District intentionally developed summer activities that appeal to all children and included recreational experiences” he says. “Students and families responded positively to our programs, and we used their feedback to help plan for this summer.”

One major strength of the District 69 summer programming is the partnerships with local organizations including the Skokie Park District, Youth and Opportunity United (Y.O.U.) and Classrooms First Collaboration (CFC), a partnership with Niles Township High School District 219.

The highly successful Skokie Park District afternoon camp experience will continue this year. In addition, Y.O.U. will provide a full day of programming that includes both academic and recreational activities, all designed to build positive social-emotional experiences. The pro-



Students participate in summer school activities last year.

gram will be offered to students entering grade levels at Edison and Lincoln. Students in the Y.O.U. summer program also will participate in the District 219 Summer Enrichment Program.

“Through our community schools strategy, District 69 has developed mutually beneficial partnerships with so many community-based organizations,” says Superintendent Dr. Margaret Clauson says. “Our summer programming is yet another successful example of the goal to provide extended learning opportunities for all students.”

There is limited summer programming space still available. Families interested in the program should contact Mr. Kelly at kellyb@skokie69.net or 847-675-7666.

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The Learning Continues After School for Students

Based upon the success of the after-school programs at both Edison and Lincoln, Skokie-Morton Grove District 69 is piloting additional fee-based programming for K-2 students at Madison this spring and hopes to expand offerings next year.

“Participation in after-school programs inspires children to learn and connect with each other, provides parents peace of mind while they are at work knowing their children are learning and gives students the opportunity to learn new things or expand on their passions,” says Superintendent Dr. Margaret Clauson.

After-school programming for grades K-8 exists under the Community Schools umbrella as part of the expanded learning opportunity (ELO) focus. Existing programs represent a coordinated effort between the school district and several community organizations including the Skokie Park District, Youth and Opportunity United (Y.O.U.), the Village of Skokie, Supporting Literacy and Math (SLAM) and the YWCA.

“One key function of our community school initiative is having district and community partners come together to share their time, talents and treasures to expand the number of equitable opportunities that are provided to all students,” says Clauson. “We know if our students and families are healthy, thriving and engaged within our schools, they will be healthy, thriving and engaged within our community as a whole.”

Edison Principal Andy Carpenter says the response from parents and teachers has been overwhelmingly positive. “Students are provided with engaging and enriching opportunities and teachers have the ability to connect with students in a different type of learning environment,” he says.

By continuing to add to the after-school offerings, the district is reaching its goal to ensure that students have the opportunity for enrichment outside the school day with the convenience of not having to leave the school building.

“We know that students benefit from accessing a wide variety of experiences both during and outside of the school day,” says Madison Principal Kristen Ulery. “We have heard from families that they are interested in after-school enrichment at Madison. We believe that bringing more programs to the school will provide that opportunity for our students.”

“Our ELO work group consisting of parent, staff and partner representatives meets regularly to monitor existing programming and develop new opportunities,” says Community Schools Resource Coordinator Sarah Rankin. “From the beginning, there was a strong desire to expand on the number of after school clubs and offerings provided at Madison Elementary School. Based on the creativity of our work group, we were able to develop this pilot, which will provide valuable feedback as we continue to address identified need areas.”



Students participate in after-school enrichment activities at Madison.

Re-Imagining the School Library Into a Learning Commons

In the past, school libraries were quiet places that exclusively contained shelves upon shelves of books. Today, school libraries across the country are transforming into a central focal point of a school, filled with activity, providing opportunities for collaboration and operating as a resource to support instruction. To reflect that transformation, the school library is now referred to as a Learning Commons.

The Edison School Learning Commons was completely renovated during the recent construction, and serves as a good example of how the school library has evolved. There are still plenty of books with read-aloud, book talks, book check-out and book discussion opportunities. In addition, part of the library is dedicated to more whole class instruction, while other parts provide smaller group break out space and even comfortable seating. The space is designed to support students working together on projects, conducting research or finding a cozy place to read. There is a video production studio, and the Learning Commons connects to the Innovation Station, an area designed to support STEM activities such as robotics and computer coding.

Edison Librarian Dr. Jennifer Calito reports that students are thriving in the flexible space. “They are consistently amazed by how many different ways the space can be used,” she says. “A lot of it is breaking down the barriers that we can’t do something and switching it to ‘how can we do this?’”

Calito shares that the Learning Commons is providing opportunities for students to experience a different type of learning. “It is different from traditional methods that most of us are familiar with,” she says. “The Learning Commons is designed to support student learning in a very hands-on way. In the space, students are required to think critically and are challenged to investigate topics where the answers are not something you simply



Students utilize the newly redesigned space at Edison School where many styles of learning are supported by the environment.

pull out of a textbook. Corporations are looking for these kind of thinkers.”

Calito shares that a Learning Commons includes a variety of technology tools and serves as collaborative work space stocked with readily accessible materials (often referred to as a MakerSpace). “A Learning Commons is a resource that supports reading literacy as well as information and technology literacy,” she says. “Students learn best through hands-on activities, and the new space includes the Innovation Station that allows for that type of exploration.”



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Master Facilities Plan Update

As part of the Board of Education's Master Facility Plan process adopted three years ago, the District has been implementing facilities improvements through a six-phase, multi-year plan. The plan was developed by stakeholders including staff, parents, students and community members, and has been modified and changed as part of a periodic review.

Earlier this year, the Board of Education determined that Lincoln Junior High School facility needs are a high priority and need immediate attention. Since then the District has been engaged in a thorough design planning process. Architects have continued to meet with staff, families, administration and the Board to further develop long range solutions for cost effectively accommodating best practices in middle school curriculum and programs.

"Large portions of Lincoln are close to 100 years old," says Business Manager Justin Attaway. "The aging infrastructure at the school requires the District to spend money annually to make repairs and keep the building functioning."

Discussions about Lincoln construction are on-going and the community will continue to be informed. The Board anticipates making decisions about Lincoln at the start of the school year, with construction beginning in March 2020. A full history of the construction planning process can be found on the District 69 website under "About D69" at www.sd69.org.

Tuition-Based Pre-K Slots Still Available

Skokie-Morton Grove District 69 is offering a limited number of spaces for students in its tuition-based preschool program for children who are at least three-years old. There are no special qualifications and both District 69 and non-District families are eligible. The program is a blended program, meaning the classes will include students receiving special education services, at-risk students and typically developing students.

The classes will have a ratio of two staff with 20 students. For more information about registration and additional documents needed to register, visit the District 69 website at www.sd69.org. If families have questions or to begin the registration process, please contact Rosa Tosado at 847-675-7666 or tosador@skokie69.net.



MISSION STATEMENT

Engage each child's passions to achieve educational excellence and foster positive character development. Excellence, Passion, Character

VISION STATEMENT

Engaging students to be successful lifelong learners within a vibrant and thriving community.

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