



SEARS

Community

Kenilworth School District 38 - Quarterly Newsletter

SPRING 2024



UPCOMING DATES

Mark your calendar with these upcoming important dates.

- **MAY 6-9**
Teacher Appreciation Week
- **MAY 6-16**
Spring Universal Assessments
- **MAY 9**
Board of Education Building and Finance Committee Meeting
9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
- **MAY 14**
3rd & 4th Grade Music Concert
6:45 - 7:45 p.m.
- **MAY 16**
Spring Book Fair
- **MAY 16-17**
JK Parent Teacher Conferences/
End of the Year Party

VISIT THE WEBSITE

www.kenilworth38.org

SUMMER CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

As Sears progresses through the latter half of the 2023-2024 school year, the District is excited to share the progress of its Master Facility Plan (MFP). Phase I of this plan focused on remodeling the Junior Kindergarten (JK) classrooms, creating a vibrant and engaging space for our youngest learners. These classrooms were reimagined to feature flexible learning areas that promote creativity and collaboration.

Phase II of the project transformed the Baker Building to create dynamic, collaborative spaces for all of our students. The building's new addition, completed in the fall of 2023, is now the school's focal point. The new cafenadium provides a spacious and multipurpose space for lunch, assemblies, Kenilworth Park District programming, and other large gatherings. The lower and upper commons offer flexible areas, while the Learning Center allows access to various resources. Outdoor spaces connect students with nature and provide hands-on engagement opportunities for students, staff, and families. In addition, Phase II of the plan included all-new building-wide HVAC systems.

This summer, the School will begin Phase III of the MFP, focusing on the original Joseph Sears School building. The most noticeable changes will occur on the first and second floors, where classrooms and hallways will be renovated. These updates will pay homage to the building's rich history and architectural character while simultaneously creating modern and flexible spaces. Additional exterior fencing and gates will be installed to ensure the safety of students and



4th Grade hallway and new student gathering area

staff during the school day and will be open outside of school hours.

Construction for Phase III is scheduled to begin June 10, 2024, and take place over two summers. The scope and timeline of this project were designed to ensure minimal disruption. The administration and Board of Education prioritized the scope and timeline of the work to ensure it could be completed within each summer break. The district also sequenced the location and scope of the project to minimize disruptions to summer school programs and Kenilworth Park District programming. A communication plan will keep all stakeholders informed.

Importantly, the Board of Education carefully considered the project budget to ensure that the overall costs are fiscally responsible and transparent, thereby adhering to one of the pillars of the School's strategic plan.



NEW



Through the use of hexagonal maps, students in Mrs. Stanley's fifth-grade class were able to use visual markers to identify how multiple ideas connect.

Today we will
create hexagonal maps and
show what we've learned
about the colonial regions.



SOCIAL STUDIES MATERIALS ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING

As part of an ongoing curriculum renewal cycle, the Joseph Sears School's Social Studies Curriculum Committee completed a year-long study of Social Studies materials. The Committee chose to adopt the InquirED program, which has been implemented in kindergarten through fifth grade this school year and will begin in grades 6-8 in the fall of 2024. InquirED aligns with The Joseph Sears School's curriculum philosophy for Social Studies, which promotes active citizenship, critical thinking, embracing diversity, and global awareness. Additionally, the school's approach prioritizes inquiry-based learning, cultural competence, and historical perspective.

Principal Dr. Stephanie Helfand commented that the District aims to empower students to become responsible, informed, and engaged citizens in an ever-changing and interconnected world. She noted that InquirED stood out from other offerings because of its commitment to developing students' independent inquiry skills, approach to equity, and ability to provide materials for all students. Specifically, each inquiry in the program has up to ten differentiated materials options so students can delve into a topic alongside their peers regardless of their learning profile. Additionally, InquirED has been verified by independent research to align with Universal Design for Learning, a framework used to evaluate learning experiences for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn.

"Through each unit of study or inquiry, students will ask questions, understand relevant disciplinary knowledge and concepts, evaluate using evidence, and communicate and take action. We use four core concepts to emphasize how each discipline provides foundational knowledge and skills essential to inquiry and action: civics,



geography, economics and financial literacy, change, continuity, and context," Helfand said. "These inquiries align with the Illinois State Social Science Standards and our vision that every student embodies the *Portrait of a Sears Graduate*: Fearless Learner, Creative Thinker, Compassionate Citizen, and Courageous Advocate."

According to Helfand, the plan for implementing InquirED has been gradual because The Joseph Sears School began this school year with new math and social studies materials, both of which require significant time and attention to implement properly. As such, the District decided to prioritize the implementation of the new math materials at the beginning of the school year. After winter break, students in grades K-5 began their first social studies inquiries in the new program. In grades 6-8, teachers are piloting InquirED in preparation for implementation in the fall of 2024, Helfand noted.

In addition, teachers who utilize InquirED participated in professional development before the start of the school year as well as in Tuesday after-school In-Service Professional Development programming. This training is important because the new InquirED materials are designed differently from prior Social Studies programming, focusing on larger themes and student-directed inquiry.

As fifth-grade teacher Ashley Stanley explained, InquirED's content is heavily student-driven, and students often examine artifacts, read articles, and watch videos before putting all that information together. "Students also enjoy the projects that they create throughout the inquiry. They often become experts in a particular topic and then teach the rest of the class about it. It's a big step away from having students memorize information and allows them to work on deeper-level skills like analyzing, evaluating, presenting for a specific audience and purpose, collaborating, and synthesizing," Stanley said.

Ms. Stanley also noted that InquirED materials are thoughtfully sourced and include many perspectives; therefore, students have begun to have sophisticated conversations about important topics rooted in empathy and compassion.

The Joseph Sears School is excited to implement this new program. And, "as with all new curriculum materials, we will assess and measure the effectiveness of the materials through our Integrated System of Teaching and Learning Framework, which determines student success through demonstrated mastery of standards," Helfand said.



CELEBRATING MILESTONES 2023-2024

This past school year, many faculty and staff members at The Joseph Sears School celebrated career milestones for their years of service. We honor these exemplary individuals for their efforts toward furthering our students' education and helping them achieve the *Portrait of a Sears Graduate*. Congratulations to all of our professionals!

25 Years

Jennifer Willis

20 Years

Alison Gilchrist
Barb Rodriguez

10 Years

Trish Culhane
Nancy Economou
Lisa Lehman Hunt
Marqus Ledoux
Cathy Quigley
Jessica Singer

Congratulations



The Joseph Sears School

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SERVICE PROJECTS AT SEARS

Throughout the past school year, students at The Joseph Sears School seized numerous opportunities to contribute to the wider community, enriching their understanding of our Four Cornerstones and embodying the essence of the *Portrait of a Sears Graduate*. These endeavors empowered our students to make a meaningful difference, leaving a positive imprint both locally and beyond. This school year, in particular, students have made a positive impact at Bernie's Book Bank and for frontline workers at North Shore University Health System.

Book Drive

This past December, seventh-grade students planned and organized a book drive to benefit Bernie's Book Bank, which provides books for children around the Chicagoland area.

Students worked to spread awareness about their initiative and visited Bernie's Book Bank Headquarters to help process books for the holiday season.

Junior High History Teacher Jeff Rosen explained the project's significance: "We've been talking for a few years now about facilitating community service experiences for our students at Sears. We wanted to facilitate them getting out into the community and helping people, not just in Kenilworth, but outside the community."

Rosen explained that the project, at its core, starts with being compassionate for others, upholding one of the tenets of a *Portrait of a Sears Graduate*: being a Compassionate Citizen. The project also fostered another tenet of the Portrait, being a Courageous Advocate, as students were active citizens and leaders during the book drive.



Valentine's Day Project

In February, students at The Joseph Sears School created valentines of encouragement and kindness for frontline workers at North Shore University Health System. These gifts featured messages of empowerment, support, and general goodwill.

"The idea came to be after seeing a Valentine's Day initiative at Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital where people were encouraged to send e-valentines to patients staying there. To make a connection closer to our community, Sears partnered with North Shore Hospital to create a similar initiative, but for the doctors, nurses, and hospital staff who serve their community daily, ensuring our health and wellbeing," Art Teacher Annie Wood said.

This initiative is important for students because it allows them to see that they are part of an interconnected community that many people support in various industries and to recognize that the North Shore Healthcare System plays an integral role in the health and well-being of so many of us, Wood explained.

"Many of the students reflected on the personal connections and experiences they may have had with the North Shore Healthcare System and how they felt grateful for the care that they or someone they knew received. This initiative was an opportunity for students to demonstrate gratitude, empathy, and kindness for members of their community," Wood noted.