



SEARS

Community

Kenilworth School District 38 - Quarterly Newsletter

FALL 2024



UPCOMING DATES

Mark your calendar with these upcoming important dates.

AMPLIFYING LEARNING

The Joseph Sears School's New English Language Arts Materials

The Joseph Sears School is excited to introduce Amplify, a new English Language Arts (ELA) program, this year. Amplify was selected after a thorough evaluation process led by a dedicated team of JK-8th grade teachers, co-chaired by Second Grade Teacher Barb Rodriguez and Student Services Teacher Jennifer Willis. The team's search process led them to review many materials, all of which had to meet multiple criteria, including alignment with the District's Priority Standards, the Illinois State Standards, research into the Science of Reading, and the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan. Additional qualifications included the need for instructional strategies that meet the learning needs of all students, Dr. Stephanie Helfand noted.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Dr. Helfand explained that the research process for selecting new ELA materials was a detailed one that began in the summer of 2022 and continued during the 2023-2024 school year. The process was informed by data acquired via students' aimswebPlus and MAP assessments as well as the state IAR assessment. This information allowed the team to consider which standards students were mastering and which they were not mastering under the previous ELA programming.

Sears also enlisted the assistance of consultant Laura Beltchanko, a member of the team developing the State's literacy plan. As Dr. Helfand explained, Ms. Beltchanko is "an expert on standards for the State of Illinois. She did something pretty unique for us. We gave her all of our data, how students perform on every standard, and she presented back to us the strengths of our programs and the things we need to do differently in our programs to ensure student growth."

Using that information, Sears decided to conduct further research with EAB, a best-practice research firm based in Washington, D.C., that works with schools on various topics, including the Science of Reading. The Science of Reading is a recognized body of scientific research into how the human brain learns to read. This research has confirmed the importance of teaching children decoding skills that allow early readers to memorize or recognize familiar words and make sense of unfamiliar ones. Sears was fortunate enough to work with Ben Court, the Senior Director of Research at EAB, who helped develop EAB's Science of Reading implementation guide. As Helfand explained, "We had one of the nation's experts on the Science of Reading guiding us through our evaluation."

Following the research process, EAB facilitated a curriculum evaluation process that began in October 2023. Sears piloted two different programs, including Amplify, from February to April 2024. The Sears committee ultimately chose Amplify to be fully implemented in JK-8th grade in the 2024-25 school year.



During the 2023-2024 school year, second grade students in Mrs. Rodriguez's class piloted the Amplify materials with the help of Ms. Willis.



Students enjoyed the various activities Amplify provided, such as reading with partners, role-playing fairy tales, and discussing stories in-depth through turn and talk.

VISIT THE WEBSITE

www.kenilworth38.org

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DISTRICT 38 EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR MASTER FACILITIES PLAN CONSTRUCTION

Kenilworth School District 38 is excited to announce that the construction and renovation work done as part of Phases I and II of its Master Facilities Plan (MFP) has culminated with Sears winning an Outstanding Design Award for Interior Renovation from *American School and University Magazine*. The award was announced in the magazine's August 2024 issue as part of its Educational Interiors Showcase Conference. The award honors what the magazine describes as "the best of the best" accomplishments of educational organizations and architects, with award winners ranging from "state-of-the-art classrooms to innovative media centers." To view the digital version of *American School and University Magazine* and read more about this honor, please visit our website.

This past summer, the District continued its construction and renovation work by beginning Phase III of the MFP. This phase focuses on the original Joseph Sears School building and is scheduled to be completed next summer. As we near the completion of the MFP, District 38 would like to thank our stakeholder partners, including the Kenilworth Park District, the Village of Kenilworth, the Kenilworth Police Department, construction manager Frederick Quinn, DLA Architects, and the Kenilworth community. Without their support, input, and patience, this project would not have been successful.



FACILITIES TIMELINE



VISIONING & PLANNING

- Previous Master Facilities Plan (MFP) presented to the community - 2012
- Routine maintenance and capital improvements - 2012-2018
- District 38 approved DLA Architects to provide updates to MFP options - 2019
- Stakeholder visioning sessions and conversations - 2020
- Stakeholder review of draft MFP and Special BOE Meeting to review MFP funding schedule - 2020
- MFP final draft shared, presented, and approved - 2020
- Construction Manager approved for hire Frederick Quinn Corporation - 2020

PHASE I - JK HUB & CLASSROOMS

■ June 2021 - September 2021

In this phase, the existing JK classroom was expanded, a second classroom was added using a portion of the old Multipurpose Room, and a JK/K hub was created.



PHASE II - BAKER BUILDING RENOVATION & NEW ADDITION

■ June 2022 - September 2022

This phase included the complete renovation of the Baker Building and associated classrooms. The building was also reconfigured so that the center of the building is where all shared spaces are housed, both for elementary and middle school.

■ June 2022 - August 2023

These improvements included completing an addition, creation of the grade-level-band student collaboration hubs and staff collaboration workspaces, improvements to the Main Office, and new heating and cooling throughout the original building. The new addition features a new Cafenadium, Learning Center, Upper and Lower Commons, and Outdoor Gardens.



PHASE III - ORIGINAL SEARS BUILDING

■ June 2024 - August 2024

Changes this summer occurred on the second floor, where classrooms and hallways received new flooring, ceilings, lighting, and custom woodwork restoration; the construction of Cornerstone Courtyard, featuring Chill Hill, was led by the JSSPVA. The new courtyard space features a tiered brick patio, green turf amphitheater seating, new trees and shrubs, and seating throughout.

■ June 2025 - August 2025

Phase III, which will continue next summer, focuses on the first floor of the original Joseph Sears School building, where classrooms and hallways will receive the same improvements that occurred on the second floor.



Welcome

-Back To- School!

2024-2025 School Year introduces new faces and spaces to Sears

The Joseph Sears School welcomed several new staff members this school year. We are thrilled to add these professionals to our talented team and to continue strengthening our Culture of Care to ensure all students meet the *Portrait of a Sears Graduate*.



WELCOME TO SEARS!

Ms. Kendra Emberton joins The Joseph Sears School as an Instructional Assistant. She graduated from Flagler Palm Coast High School in 2023 and enjoys anything creative and art-related.

Ms. Bridget Idzik joins The Joseph Sears School as a fourth-grade teacher. She completed her Bachelor's Degree in Spanish and Sociology with a Minor in Counseling from Wake Forest University. She also completed her Master of Science in Elementary Education from Northwestern University. Before teaching at Sears, she completed her student teaching in Mrs. Masood's first-grade class during the 2023-2024 school year. In her spare time, Ms. Idzik enjoys reading books, volunteering at her local animal shelter, visiting her family, and attending FAN events and guest lectures at Northwestern.

Mrs. Vicky Morris joins The Joseph Sears School as a sixth-and seventh-grade science teacher. She completed her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago and her Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at National Louis University. Mrs. Morris comes to Sears with fourteen years of teaching experience. She enjoys spending time with family, cooking, baking, traveling, and cheering on the White Sox, Bulls, Blackhawks, and Packers in her free time.

Mr. Geoff Perlman joins The Joseph Sears School as the new Assistant Principal. He previously served as the Director and Dean of Academics at Rowe Elementary School. He also taught science and English Language Arts at Rowe Elementary School. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, as well as a Minor in English as a Second Language, from Northeastern Illinois University, and his Master of Arts in Educational Leadership, with a concentration in School Leadership (PreK-12), from Northeastern Illinois University.

Ms. Allison Prace joins The Joseph Sears School as a fifth-grade teacher. She completed her Bachelor's Degree in Recreation and Tourism Management from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and her Master's Degree in Elementary Education from National Louis University. Before teaching at Sears, Ms. Prace taught fourth grade in Lincolnshire and fifth grade in Melrose Park. In her free time, she loves to be active, play pickleball, go on walks, and rollerblade. She is currently learning to golf. She also enjoys traveling, having just visited Utah, Argentina, and Costa Rica!

Mrs. Marla Slovin joins The Joseph Sears School as an Administrative Assistant. Mrs. Slovin has worked in education for four years. Her previous role was as a Front Office Administrative Assistant at Aptakisip Tripp District 102 in Buffalo Grove. In her free time, Mrs. Slovin likes to spend time with her family and pets and enjoys needlepoint.

Amplifying Learning Continued

"Amplify offers a completely robust program for every tier of instruction," Helfand observed, adding that the curriculum includes online and print materials, an intervention program, cross-curricular connections, and the flexibility for 5th-8th grade programming to continue with novel studies in addition to informational reading. In alignment with the Science of Reading, Amplify offers two different "strands" of learning: the Skills Strand and the Knowledge Strand. The Skills Strand refers to foundational skills such as phonics and word recognition, and the Knowledge Strand refers to listening and comprehension.

IMPLEMENTATION

Since the program's adoption, Amplify materials have been received well by students and staff alike. "We are thrilled that we ended up with Amplify," Student Services Teacher Jennifer Willis commented. "The kids have just loved it. I have not seen, in all of my years at Sears School, kids so engaged and enthusiastic about learning."

Willis specifically noted that students have enjoyed the various materials, videos, and activities associated with Amplify. She further observed that students "love reading with partners, role-playing fairy tales, and discussing stories in depth through turn and talk." Both Willis and Barb Rodriguez believe Amplify helps students become strong readers, writers, and thinkers.

Teachers have received over 15 hours of professional development to help them facilitate student learning under Amplify, and the District's work on ELA learning also continues. As Dr. Helfand explained, the District has "a contract with EAB for five years. In the next few years, they will continue to work with us and make sure that they do some literacy implementation evaluations, and they can help us think about how we group students for skill-based work and how we intervene with students who need it." In addition, EAB will also help Sears build parent engagement around literacy and further optimize the school's summer school programming. The school is excited about its partnership with EAB and looks forward to students' growth under its new curriculum.

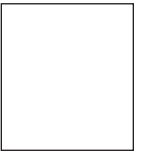
To view the Science of Reading Presentation made on September 5, please visit our website.



The Joseph Sears School

542 Abbotsford Road • Kenilworth, IL 60043

P: 847.256.5006 | kenilworth38.org



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FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL



Our school community celebrated the first day of school on August 29. It was a pleasure to see students back in the schoolhouse. We want to thank our JSSPVA partners and all our local stakeholders for their support in making the day and the surrounding Family Fun Day festivities successful.

