



SEARS

Community

Kenilworth School District 38 - Quarterly Newsletter

WINTER 2025



UPCOMING DATES

Mark your calendar with these upcoming important dates.

- FEBRUARY 5**
8th Grade NTHS Course Selection Conferences
3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- FEBRUARY 6**
No School for JK (Early Childhood Alliance Summit)
- FEBRUARY 6**
District 38 Spelling Bee
4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
- FEBRUARY 14**
No School - Teacher In Service
- FEBRUARY 17**
No School - Presidents Day
- FEBRUARY 20**
No School JK - JK Parent-Teacher Conferences
- FEBRUARY 21**
No School - Parent-Teacher Conferences (K-8)

VISIT THE WEBSITE

www.kenilworth38.org

OVERALL INDEX SCORE

78.82

+6.7 POINTS

COMMENDABLE

ELA Proficiency
100.00/100

ELA Growth
77.20/100

Math Proficiency
100.00/100

Math Growth
52.67/100

Science Proficiency
100.00/100

Chronic Absenteeism
88.55/100

Climate Survey
97.93/100



Indicator Weight Distribution

8.04% 26.79% 8.04% 26.79% 5.36% 20.00% 5.00%

STATE REPORT CARD RESULTS RELEASED



The Joseph Sears School earns Commendable designation.

On October 30, 2024, the results from the Illinois Report Card by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) were released. The Illinois Report Card shows how well our school is progressing on a wide range of educational goals and provides a summative designation based on the ISBE's indicators of student success, as required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

This year, we have again earned the Commendable designation, the second highest of the four markers the ISBE awards schools in our state. Based on indicators of academic proficiency, student growth, chronic absenteeism, and climate, we earned a score from the state of 78.82, which is 6.7 points higher than our score last school year. This achievement reflects the hard work and collective commitment of our students, educators, and families. While we have improved our score, it is important to recognize that we are committed to

continuous improvement. Our most recent score puts us within six points of this year's minimum Exemplary designation, which was awarded to the top 10% of schools.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

In English Language Arts (ELA) and Math, we again earned all points available for academic proficiency, consistent with our past high achievements. The area in which we have the most room to improve on the Illinois Report Card is academic growth. In ELA, we recorded a student growth percentile of 54.4%. In Math, we recorded a student growth percentile of 48.5%. These scores do not meet our goal of student growth rates of at least 60%, which would be consistent with schools receiving an Exemplary designation. As explained below, we have been working to improve these scores by updating our curriculum and fostering professional development aimed at meeting each student's learning needs.

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SEARS AMBASSADORS

New club adds more leadership opportunities for students

Formed at the start of the 2024-2025 school year, the Sears Ambassadors provides junior high students (grades 6-8) of The Joseph Sears School with new leadership opportunities that allow them to collaborate, advocate, and make a difference in the schoolhouse.

The idea for the program started during the 2023-2024 school year, Sears Emotional Learning Facilitator Hilary Harvey explained. Harvey and Dean of Students, Mx. Sophie Wolfson, serve as co-advisors for the Sears Ambassadors.

"Through our research and investigative work with Challenge Success last year, we identified Student Leadership as an area for growth and opportunity. Sears Ambassadors came from an idea to create a forum for students to share their experiences with adults at Sears and learn how to advocate for student needs effectively," Harvey explained.

Harvey noted that Sears Ambassadors has given students this school year the opportunity to have a prominent voice in issues that affect students' day-to-day experiences. Adding that the club allows students to represent the voices of their peers, it also brings a forum for them to creatively problem-solve and advise school leaders on issues that affect students.

"The mission of the Student Ambassadors is to embody the qualities of a *Portrait of a Sears Graduate* while representing the student body's voice and driving positive changes that enhance the student experience at Sears School. The students who participate are looking for opportunities to demonstrate positive leadership, advocate for the needs of students, think creatively to bring fresh ideas to our practices and traditions, and help make our school a more caring and compassionate community," Harvey said.

During the first year of the club, the goal is for each grade level to take on an important issue, envision the desired outcome, and plan accordingly to reach that outcome and complete their plan, Harvey explained.

Some examples of ideas that the Sears Ambassadors have discussed include: student-led spirit days, changes to the junior

high schedule, starting a school store, reconsidering homework practices, more time for cross-age buddies, and changes to how lunch groups are assigned.

Seventh-grade student Max Howell wanted to join the Sears Ambassadors to "change the school and make it better for the students, and make it more fun."

Campbell Menton, a sixth-grade student, added that she joined to make a difference in the school and to be able to advocate for herself and other students.

"My favorite part has been helping other students, seeing my ideas in the school, and seeing the ideas we came up with put into effect. It just feels great," sixth-grade student Gui Barroso Eyer de Araujo said.

When asked how the Sears Ambassador program has made her look at leadership differently, sixth-grade student Sofia Carrilero said, "It has made me see a different perspective of leadership because I know when you think of a leader, you probably think of one person. But with leadership, you need others to help you reach where you are now. And there is always more than one leader. For example, there are Dr. Helfand, Mrs. Donegan, and Mr. Perlman, who are all leaders."

So far this year, Harvey and Wolfson explained that they are happy with the enthusiasm, ideas, and energy that the students have shown during their meetings.

Moving forward, the goal for the group is to maintain students' voices at the center and provide a platform for connection and collaboration as leaders at the junior high level. Additionally, the group hopes to continue to address current challenges, develop solutions, and implement ideas that enhance the students' experience and foster pride in their school.

"We know that students want opportunities to make decisions about their lives. If students want to see a change at school, they can join this group and take action. We hope that students will feel a greater sense of belonging when they see that their opinions matter and that they can have a voice in shaping the school to be the kind of environment they want," Harvey said.



BUDGET AND TAX LEVY UPDATE

The Kenilworth School District 38 Board of Education, at its September 23, 2024 meeting, approved the Fiscal Year 2025 budget following a public hearing. The budget focuses on updated, innovative educational programming while maintaining fiscal responsibility. A notable aspect of the process was zero-based budgeting. This approach ensures that resources are allocated based on actual needs and priorities rather than historical spending. We are grateful for the many voices that contributed to this process. The Joseph Sears School's mission is to provide a quality education and ensure all students meet our *Portrait of a Sears Graduate*. The approved budget and tax levy are vital components in achieving this goal, allocating funds to key areas of improvement, including the Master Facilities Plan (MFP), various curriculum and professional development growth opportunities, and technology enhancements.

As the school's multi-phased MFP winds down this coming summer, the District is excited to share recent facility innovation and design awards. These honors include "Outstanding Project" from *Learning by Design Magazine*, "Outstanding Design Award for Interior Renovation" from *American School and University Magazine*, and the "Award of Merit for Modern and Sustainable Remodeling Project" awarded by the Illinois Association of School Boards/Illinois Association of School Administrators/Illinois Association of School Business Officials.

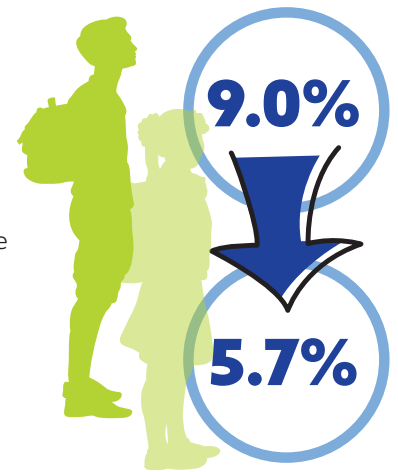
The Board of Education approved a General Tax Levy of 4.49% for all funds after a public hearing on November 18, 2024. The Illinois School Code establishes the tax levy formula, and it is created by a calculation that considers the previous year's tax rate, the current Consumer Price Index, the EAV of the properties within the district's boundaries, and anticipated new growth of properties.

Please visit our website for more information about the budget and other financial information.

ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

We are proud that we have seen a significant decrease in chronic absenteeism, which dropped to 5.7% this year compared to 9% last year. We have continued to meet our Strategic Plan goal of keeping chronic absenteeism below 10%. This is a testament to the hard work of our attendance committee, the efforts of our families, our Culture of Care initiative, and the steps we have taken to ensure that every student feels welcome, engaged, and ready to learn.

Chronic Absenteeism Improvement



We are also proud of the results we obtained from the Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI), the school climate survey students, staff, and families took last year. The results of this survey are consistent with our increased attendance figures and reflect the ongoing work to make Sears a welcoming environment for all.

THE WAY FORWARD

We remain focused on implementing our 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, which includes targeted goals for student growth in ELA and Math. To achieve these goals, we implemented a new curriculum review cycle and have adopted new learning materials in both Math and ELA. As you may recall, last year, we began the implementation of the enVision math program. This year, we are implementing our newly adopted English Language Arts materials, Amplify, as recommended by our English Language Arts Committee after a multi-year evaluation. It will take some time for the adoption of these materials to impact students' test scores, but we are confident that these changes will ultimately boost our student's academic achievement and growth.

As we work toward a fully aligned curriculum, our staff will also continue to focus on meeting each student's academic needs by collaborating within our school community, engaging in comprehensive professional development, and conducting further curriculum analysis through our Tuesday In-Services. During this important time for professional growth, we will be working closely with our Curriculum Committees to identify changes in our programming to support student mastery of state standards.

In addition to measuring our success compared to other schools in the state by the ISBE School Report Card, our Strategic Plan includes metrics specific to our school and the outcomes we desire for all students. These metrics reflect student success related to all elements of our *Portrait of Sears Graduate*.

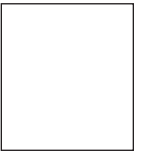
These metrics can be found on our website, www.kenilworth38.org.



The Joseph Sears School

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