



SEARS

Community

Kenilworth School District 38 - Quarterly Newsletter

SUMMER 2026



UPCOMING DATES

Mark your calendar with these upcoming important dates.

- **AUGUST 20**
6th-8th Grade Locker Set Up
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
"On to 6th Grade" Presentation
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- **AUGUST 24**
First Day of Student Attendance (Grades 2-8)
8:10 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Kindergarten and First-Grade Meet and Greet
By appointment only, 9:00-11:45 a.m.
8th Grade Beach Party
12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Family Fun Day
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- **AUGUST 28**
Little Panthers Meet & Greet
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- **AUGUST 31**
Little Panthers Meet & Greet
8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- **SEPTEMBER 7**
Labor Day - No School
- **SEPTEMBER 8**
Little Panthers First Day of School
- **SEPTEMBER 9**
K-4 Grade Back to School Night
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- **SEPTEMBER 10**
5-8 Grade Back to School Night
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

VISIT THE WEBSITE

www.kenilworth38.org



Mr. Jack Zimmerman Announced as 5th-8th Grade Assistant Principal

The Kenilworth School District 38 Board of Education is pleased to announce that Mr. Jack Zimmerman has been named the new Assistant Principal for Grades 5-8 at The Joseph Sears School. Mr. Zimmerman most recently served as Team Leader and Mentor Skills teacher at Adlai E. Stevenson High School, where he supported students through advisory programming, academic guidance, social-emotional development, and relationship-centered instruction.

In addition to his teaching and leadership responsibilities, Mr. Zimmerman served as a basketball coach and contributed to several schoolwide initiatives, including the Social-Emotional Learning Advisory Board, MTSS committees, and Freshman Mentor Program. His experience reflects a strong commitment to student support, student belonging, and collaborative problem-solving.

"I am honored and excited to join District 38 and The Joseph Sears School community," Zimmerman said. "Throughout the interview process, I could feel the pride and passion for the school. There is a clear alignment between the school's vision and values and my own beliefs as an educator. My goal is to listen and learn, build meaningful relationships with students and families, and support the outstanding work already happening across the school. All Students, Our Students!"

The Joseph Sears School and Board of Education also extend their sincere gratitude to the outgoing Assistant Principal for Grades 5-8, Jeff Rosen, for his dedication, leadership, and support of students, staff, and families throughout the 2025-2026 school year. We are happy that he will continue to be part of the Sears community as a Junior High Social Studies teacher.



"I am grateful for the opportunity to move into this new role of Assistant Principal, and look forward to welcoming families back to school in August."



As we continue preparing for the 2026–2027 school year, we are excited to share that the Board of Education has officially approved a partnership with OrganicLife to launch a new in-house food service program at The Joseph Sears School.

This decision follows months of thoughtful planning, research, and collaboration among families, students, community partners, the Board of Education, staff, and administrators. Throughout the process, the District carefully considered feedback from the school community, reviewed potential service models, and explored ways to create a program that reflects the needs and expectations of Sears students and families. The Board is grateful to all who participated in this process and particularly thankful to The Joseph Sears School Parents' Volunteer Association for its efforts in facilitating the school's previous lunch program and its continued support in the transition to OrganicLife.

The District's new program will focus on providing fresh, nutritious, and appealing meals while creating a more student-centered lunch experience. By bringing food service operations in-house through OrganicLife, the District will have greater flexibility in menu planning, meal preparation, and responding to student preferences. The program is also designed to be financially responsible and sustainable while maintaining high standards for food quality, safety, and service.

OrganicLife brings extensive experience in school food service and will work closely with the District to develop menus featuring a variety of balanced, age-appropriate meal options. Students in the Sears Ambassadors program have already participated in an OrganicLife meal tasting with their elementary school buddies, and they gave enthusiastic reviews of the program's food. One student in particular remarked, "This is the best food I have ever had in my life!" Student feedback will

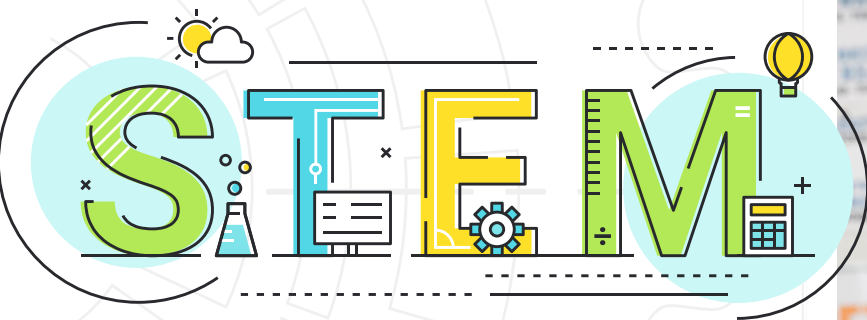


continue to play an important role as the program develops, helping ensure meals are both nutritious and enjoyable.

Families wishing to purchase food from the new program will use MySchoolBucks, OrganicLife's payment and account management platform. This platform will launch in August. Through MySchoolBucks, parents and guardians can add funds, monitor student purchases, review meal activity, and manage spending. Meals do not need to be ordered in advance but rather are purchased by students using the MySchoolBucks system each day.

The new food service program represents more than a change to what is served at lunch. It is an investment in student well-being, the daily school experience, and the systems that support learning throughout the day. This transition will involve collaboration across the school community, and we are committed to keeping everyone informed along the way. By creating a fresh, welcoming, and well-organized lunchtime experience, the program will help support building a strong school community.





The Joseph Sears School Named a Project Lead The Way Distinguished School for Second Year in a Row

Recognized again for excellence in career-connected learning and transformative STEM education experiences

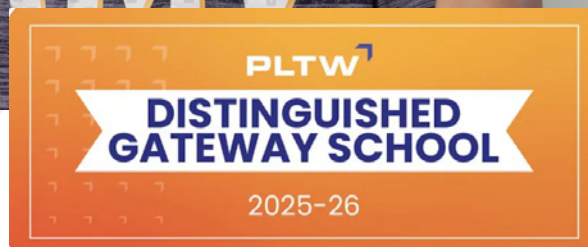
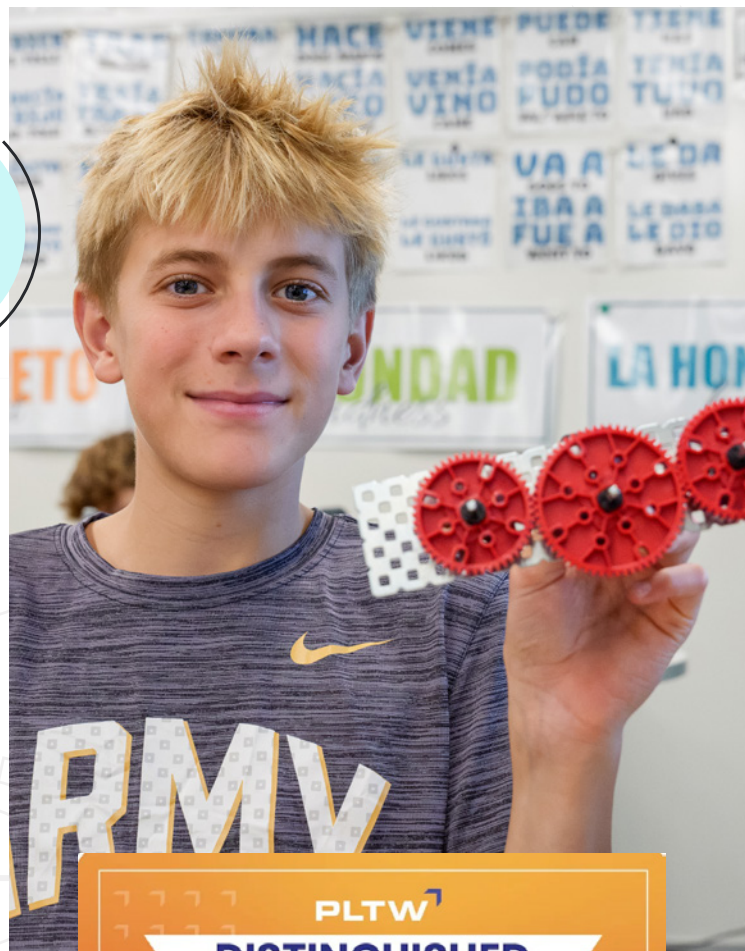
The Joseph Sears School has been recognized as a 2025–26 Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Distinguished School, marking the second year in a row the school has earned this national honor. This recognition is awarded to a select number of middle schools across the U.S. for their commitment to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in career-connected learning through PLTW Gateway, a grade 6–8 STEM curriculum. Sears students participate in the PLTW program through their Innovative Technology specials class. This program will be augmented in the coming year. The District will run PLTW Launch in 3rd grade as part of the specials rotation, and the District is also working to incorporate STEM concepts into Junior High Art Classes.

PLTW is a national nonprofit organization that creates transformative learning experiences and empowers students to develop in-demand knowledge and skills for future careers.

"This continued recognition reflects the dedication of our students and the commitment of our teachers, Allison Drew and Margo Parkes, to providing meaningful, hands-on learning experiences," said Superintendent Kate Donegan. "PLTW empowers our students to think critically, collaborate, and explore real-world challenges, and we are proud to see that work recognized at the national level for a second consecutive year."

Throughout their years in Innovative Technology, Sears students take on projects such as designing therapeutic toys for children with physical or developmental needs and building automated factory systems using robotics, sensors, mechanical components, and coding.

The PLTW Distinguished School recognition honors schools committed to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs. To be eligible for the designation, The Joseph Sears School was required to meet



a variety of criteria, including student participation rates, opportunities for students to engage in multiple PLTW units, the number of courses offered, and efforts to ensure equitable access.

Research shows that middle school years play a pivotal role in influencing high school, college, and career success. Through PLTW Gateway, students engage in hands-on, real-world learning experiences, from designing automated robotics systems to exploring aerospace concepts, while building critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills.

"We are proud to honor The Joseph Sears School for giving students hands-on, career-connected learning that builds the confidence, knowledge, and skills to navigate their futures," said Dr. David Dimmett, PLTW President and CEO. "Their continued commitment to real-world, project-based learning ensures students experience education that is meaningful and directly connected to what comes next."

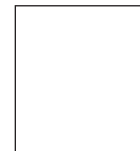
The Joseph Sears School is part of a national community of PreK–12 schools, higher education institutions, and industry partners united in the mission to prepare students for school, work, and life.



The Joseph Sears School

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Mr. Geoffrey Perlman, EC-4 Assistant Principal

Mr. Jack Zimmerman, 5-8 Assistant Principal

CONGRATULATIONS

TO THE JOSEPH SEARS SCHOOL CLASS OF 2026!

On behalf of the entire District 38 school community, we would like to congratulate and extend our best wishes to The Joseph Sears School Class of 2026. We wish you the best as you move on to the next chapter of your educational journey. Once a Panther, always a Panther!

