

NEWSLETTER

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Ellsworth Elementary Update

The Ellsworth Elementary School project will soon be entering the final phases of building construction with the opening in early January quickly approaching. Much of the interior finish work is now beginning as most of the initial structural, mechanical, and electrical work that is behind the scenes is completed. Most of the windows and drywall is now installed and work has begun on painting and the installation of tiling, lighting, communication systems, and other finishes. Along with this, the exterior work on concrete, asphalt, and landscaping continues. Check out the new playground that is now open to student and public use. It is a great addition to the community that will include a picnic shelter once the project is complete.

In the coming months we will be working on providing quality communications that will provide families and staff the information needed to make a smooth transition to the new school.

Here are topics we are presently finalizing:

Busing

The transportation department is working at this time to finalize bus routes to begin in January. Directors are working with bus drivers on mock routes which should be completed in October. Families will then be notified of estimated times of arrival in the morning for all students. A committee is also being developed to finalize bus riding rules that will provide for a quality environment on our buses for students of all ages. Busing rules of the various area schools that currently transport all students together will be used to develop guidelines. These rules will be completed this winter before the school opens and be discussed with students of all ages while also providing this information to parents. Student mentor programs will also be developed to utilize mentors on our buses. Busing information will also be available for parents at a number of school events prior to the opening of the new school.

January-First Week Back To School

The first day following winter break is a type of soft opening for all of the schools. This day, January 4th, will see Parent Teacher Conferences for all 4YK through grade 5 students. These students will not have school on this day. This will give the opportunity for parents to meet with teachers and be introduced to the new school. Grades 6-12 will have school on this day and the buses will run their new routes for the first time picking up only these students. January 5th will then be the first day in which all students will ride the buses.

Start Times

The new common school start and ending times will begin on January 4th. All schools will begin at 8:05 a.m. and end at 3:25 p.m. These times were researched this past school year based on the start times of other area schools, busing needs, and co-curricular needs. These times will be evaluated once the new school is up and running for any slight changes that may be needed.

Communications

Throughout the coming months parents will be receiving various forms of communication about a wide variety of topics based on the move to the new school. Outside of the topics listed above, we will be providing information about Panthers Kids Club, parental pick up and drop off of students, school security, breakfast and lunch systems, high school student parking, etc.

Updates on the construction, including up-to-date photos are available on our school district website at www.ellsworth.k12.wi.us. We will soon be establishing a grand opening date that will be held in January shortly after the opening of the school for all residents of the district to tour the facility and learn about the many features that will benefit students and the community for years to come.



District to Conduct Resident Survey

The Ellsworth Community School District is currently working with The Morris-Leatherman Company to develop a community based survey to be delivered to residents late this fall. This survey is very similar to ones completed by the company in the past.

The survey to be conducted is a scientific based telephone survey to provide the district with community member perceptions of school district operations while also providing information for final development of the operational referendum coming up this spring.

The Morris Leatherman Company will be calling a number of residents to compile the information needed to provide for a database that represents the district as a whole. This survey is a valuable tool for the district to get feedback from the public that reflects the area as a whole.

Look for more information coming this fall about the timing and results of the survey.

Operational Referendum Being Researched and Developed

In April, 2015, area residents approved an Operational Referendum that allowed the District to exceed the state imposed revenue limit by \$1.3 million per year for three years to maintain current educational services and co-curricular activities. This authority granted by residents expires at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. Due to this, the district is currently researching and developing another operational referendum to be brought to voters at the general election in April 2018.

This type of referendum is not uncommon around the state. The educational funding system in the State of Wisconsin implemented what is known as the "Revenue Limit" beginning with the 1993-1994 school year. Individual school district revenue limits moving forward were then based on the revenue limit that was imposed in 1993-1994. As a result, many districts that were spending at lower levels per student than the average across the state have faced lower revenue limits that have led to many districts seeking operational referendums. The Ellsworth Community School District is one of these districts that has had this need.

At the time this article is being written, the topic of revenue limits is being addressed at the state level as proposals to assist lower spending districts are being discussed. The Ellsworth Community School District qualifies as one of these districts and would see state assistance without increasing local property taxes if the proposals are approved. As identified in the last referendum, the Ellsworth Community School District has been near the bottom in revenue limit dollars per student to operate.

Many steps toward finalizing a referendum will be happening in the coming months. The state budget will be finalized to provide accurate information moving forward. A residential survey will be conducted to measure public support for referendum options, and long range budget forecasting will continue. Once the referendum is developed, the district will provide the public with the necessary information to make an informed vote this upcoming April regarding the district's needs.



Chamber Holds "Salute to Education" Picnic

District staff would like to sincerely thank the Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce and those business members who donated to the "Salute To Education" Picnic this past August. This lunch provided a wonderful opportunity for staff and business leaders to meet and get to know each other. Staff were provided a lunch and goodie bag sponsored by local businesses. It was a wonderful way to begin the school year for everyone.

We would like to thank the following donors for their support of the lunch and education as a whole: Associated Bank, UW-River Falls, Nilssen's, Bank Mutual, Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery, Quinn Motors, Spine Pro Chiropractic, First National Bank of River Falls, Loberg Law Office, Musty-Barnhart Agency, Atrium Health and Senior Living, BMO Harris Bank, StarTech Computing, Inc., The Service Agency, Minuteman Press, Common Man Brewing, Limelight Social Media, American Family Insurance (Joanne Hines Agency, Inc.), WESTconsin Credit Union, CrossRoad Community Church, MB & Boys, Inc., State Farm, and BoJo's Creations. Proceeds from this event will be going towards the Chamber's \$4000 donation to the High School Fab Lab.



This past August ten 8th grade students attended Leadership Camp at the YMCA Camp Pepin. These students were chosen by their teachers for their leadership qualities. At camp they participated in several team building and leadership activities, including an intense high ropes course. Throughout the school year these students will be called upon to take a leadership role in the Middle School.

Ellsworth Middle School Moves to Standards-Based Reporting and Grading

Traditionally, grades in school have been a measure of how good students are at getting good grades, not a measure of what they have learned. Pause a minute and think about it. That statement is one of great consequences for the future of our children. Every teacher at EMS went into this profession because of a deep desire to teach children and prepare them for their future with the best skills possible. We all entered teaching to help kids learn.

For the past two years, the staff at Ellsworth Middle School has been working hard to create a system that truly measures student learning. We have long utilized, and most of us grew up in, a traditional grading system. This system has led to the eternal chase for top grades. In our relentless pursuit for the best grade and a better GPA, something has been lost - true deep learning. Grades often became the end-all, the goal, not the indicator of learning. Regrettably, students in a traditional grading system can be unintentionally incentivized to pursue the path of least resistance to reach the grade they desire. Our philosophy is that a grade should not be a commodity, it should be a measure of what a student knows and it should provide them with guidance for how to continue to learn moving forward. These two years of hard, painful work and many sleepless nights for all has led to our Grading for Learning system of reporting and grading student progress toward proficiency. EMS report cards will look very different this year. Each teacher will now be reporting how students are doing on what we call Power Standards. Power Standards are those learning targets that we have determined are absolutely necessary for students to succeed at the next level, on their state assessment and in other classes. We will no longer use A, B, C, D, F. Instead we will use Advanced (AD), Proficient (PR), Developing (DE), and Beginning (BE) with PR being



the goal for all students. Our Standards-Based Grading (SBG) system should provide students and parents with a much more in-depth explanation of what and how students are learning throughout the year. EMS administration encourages parents and students to read the Grading for Learning Handbook that was sent home with all 6th through 8th grade students. The handbook is also available in electronic form on the middle school webpage. Additionally, on the webpage there are videos that give great descriptions of aspects of SBG and all the Power Standards and rubrics explaining what students are learning. This is a big change for all and we certainly encourage any and all questions. Principal Dodge will be holding monthly parent information and Q & A sessions that all 6th-8th grade parents are invited to attend. The first of these sessions was Monday, Sept. 18 at 6:00 pm and the next is **Thursday, Oct. 19 at 6:00 pm in the EMS Band room.** In the meantime, if you have questions do not hesitate to call Mr. Dodge at 715-273-3908 or email at dodgej@ellsworth.k12.wi.us.

Positive Solutions for Families Begins October 2

Ellsworth School District has been a leader in the collaborative effort between the United Way's Success by Six Campaign and local school districts. The collaboration focuses on increasing school readiness, by targeting social emotional skills and relationships with children 0-6 years old. The district is using the Positive Solutions for Families curriculum to provide a free 5 week long parenting class.

Each week the class includes dinner, parent class, child class, and a book for each child to take home. Topics covered in the parent class include: ways to increase quality time with kids, understanding what your child is communicating through their behavior, behavior prevention strategies, and building social skills with kids through literacy. The children's class provides age appropriate activities that parallel the topics covered in the parenting class.

We would like to thank these businesses for their support this year: Bye, Geoff and Rhode, Pierce Pepin, Ellsworth Lions Club, Atrium Post Acute Care, State Farm Insurance, WESTconsin Credit Union, Bank Mutual, Subway, El Paso Bar, Ellsworth Dairy Queen, Hwy. 63 Diner, and Clyde's Corner.

The dates for the upcoming class are October 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30 from 5:30-7:30pm at Lindgren Early Learning Center. For more information or if you would like to donate please call 715-792-2424. The class, meals and books are free of cost to participants.



Karine Coulson, Nichole Larson and Jess Muszynski



Backpack Program

The Hunger Prevention Council of Pierce County, Inc., Zion Covenant Church, and Ellsworth Community School District are continuing the Backpack Program again this year for grades K-12. The mission of the Backpack Program is to help alleviate child hunger in our community by providing hungry children with nutritious and easy-to-prepare food at times when other resources are not available, such as weekends and holidays.

How does this program work? Students are discreetly sent home with a backpack on Thursdays or Fridays of each week during the school year (except for shortened weeks). This backpack will contain food that can be used together to create meals. If there is more than one student in a family, only one student will receive a backpack for the family. It will be the parent's/guardian's responsibility to be sure that the empty backpack is sent to the school office with the student by the following Tuesday morning.

Due to financial constraints, the program will be offered on a first come, first serve basis. Therefore, it is important to fill out an application as soon as possible. All others will be placed on a waiting list. Please be assured that only a small group of school employees are aware of which students are being served by this program. Families are assigned a number to match the backpack to their child.

Please contact Amy Duchnowski, School Nurse, at 715-273-3911 with any questions. To download an application, visit the School Nurse page on our district website at <http://www.ellsworth.k12.wi.us/district/school-nurse.cfm>.

Thank you to the Hunger Prevention Council of Pierce County, Inc. and Zion Covenant Church for their support of this program.

STEP Program Seeing a Few Changes

The Senior Tax Exchange (STEP Program) has been a successful program that has benefited senior citizens and our schools alike. This program has recently undergone some changes due to tax law clarifications that have affected school district's across the state. Due to the necessary changes, the program is now known as the Community Volunteer Program.

One major change that volunteers will see is that the income made in the program is taxable and the people involved will be paid directly by the district versus the traditional two party check made out to the worker and tax township or village.

Another major change is that the program is no longer available just to senior citizens. Adults of all ages can become part of the program and assist in our schools.

The Community Volunteer Program handbook and forms are available on the school district's website at www.ellsworth.k12.wi.us. If interested in the program, please feel free to call Superintendent Barry Cain at (715) 273-3900 for more information.



The Ellsworth Community School District will be hosting a Flu Vaccination Clinic for students on October 25th. The Pierce County public health nurses will travel from school to school to complete this. There are no costs to families - this is a service that the county offers. Watch for consent forms and more information soon.

Ellsworth Community School District Accepted to be Part of New Trauma Sensitive Schools Cohort

Educators know that many students face challenges in their personal lives that adversely affect their learning in school. Unfortunately, many children have been traumatized by directly or vicariously experiencing violence, homelessness, loss (or fear of loss) of loved ones, or other kinds of devastating experiences. In 2012, 28% of Wisconsin adults reported experiencing 2 or more significant traumatic events or chronic trauma during childhood.

Psychological trauma can impact such things as a child's ability to regulate emotions, attend to classroom activities, and/or achieve normal developmental milestones. While these are not skills that are graded, they significantly impact academic performance.

Last spring Ellsworth Community School District applied to and was accepted into DPI's Trauma Sensitive School Cohort. We will be participating in a new professional development initiative to help schools incorporate trauma-sensitive practices in everyday school life. Through these changes, we can support all children in the development of healthy coping strategies and resilience in facing future struggles. Traumatized children and adolescents can grow up to be healthy and happy adults, despite the often substantial obstacles they face.

For more information please visit <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/trauma> or contact Jess Muszynski, EdS NCSP at muszynskij@ellsworth.k12.wi.us.

District Budget Reviewed and Approved

At the Annual Meeting this past August 28th, the preliminary budget for the 2017-2018 school district budget was reviewed and approved. This year's budget sees an overall decrease in the local levy of \$425,177 or 4.41% and a decrease in the mill rate of 9.68% to 10.54%. This reflects an average of \$102.00 per \$100,000 home value. As always, impacts of this reduction on actual property taxes will vary by township or village depending on the specific property value changes in each entity.

The reduction in the levy is largely due to the fact that the debt related to the construction of the middle school and the high school additions is now completely paid off. The district is also seeing a slight increase in state aids this school year. The mill rate decrease is due to the decrease in the levy and an increase in district property values of nearly 4%.

There are still a number of factors to be finalized prior to the finalization of the levy in late October. At the time in which this article is being written, the state legislature has still not finalized state funding for school districts. The outcome of these negotiations, local student populations, and final revenue limit calculations will all affect the final levy and mill rate.

a timeless story of love against all odds ...

Ellsworth High School Drama presents

Mark Your Calendar!

Disney
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Nov. 12 at 2:00 P.M.
Nov. 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, & 11 7:30 P.M.

MUSIC BY ALAN MENKEN
LYRICS BY HOWARD ASHMAN AND TIM RICE
BOOK BY LINDA WOOLVERTON

Originally Directed for Broadway by Robert Jess Roth; Originally Produced by Disney Theatrical Productions

doors open thirty minutes before show, adults \$8, students \$3
tickets at EHS or at the door: visit www.ellsworthdrama.com

Beauty and the Beast is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI, 421 West 54th Street, New York, NY 10019 Phone: 212-541-4684 Fax: 212-597-4684 www.MTIshows.com

Character Education In Action in Our Schools

For the past few years, students in the Ellsworth Community School District have been participating in a variety of activities and lessons involving Character Education. While Character Education may look a bit different in 11th grade than it does in 1st grade, there are 9 Monthly Character Traits that all students learn about and have opportunities to put into practice: Respect, Responsibility, Citizenship, Compassion, Perseverance, Courage, Cooperation, Honesty, and Positive Attitude.

The Ellsworth Community School District believes that developing a respectful and responsible character is a skill every child needs in order to thrive, find success and fulfillment, and be an influence for good in society. On the importance of character education to prepare children for learning and for life, Dr. Kevin Ryan (founder of the Center for Character and Social Responsibility) emphatically stated, "Character education is not one more thing to add to your plate. It is the plate!"

In the near future, we will be developing a Character Education page on our district website which will highlight the Monthly Character Traits and let the public know what we are doing with regards to Character Education. There have been many, many fantastic projects and activities going on throughout the district as we strive to find opportunities for students to put character into action!



Prairie View Students enjoying their monthly Character Education assembly.



Ellsworth Middle School students preparing plates of cookies for over 80 Pierce County Meals on Wheels participants.

Free and Reduced Lunch Applications Now Available Online

Parents/Guardians of students of the Ellsworth Community School District now have the ability to complete their free and reduced lunch applications online through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

Do I need to apply or reapply?

- If you have been Direct Certified by the State of Wisconsin, you will have received a letter from the school district stating that you have been direct certified. You do not need to complete another application for the 2017-2018 school year.
- If you have already submitted a paper application for the 2017-2018 school year, you do not need to reapply. You should have received notification from the school district of your free and reduced status.
- All parents that have not been Direct Certified for free and reduced lunch need to reapply on a yearly basis.

Applicants have one hour from the start of their application to complete and submit their application. It is advised applicants gather all documentation needed to complete the application prior to beginning.

All applicants must have set up a Parent Portal account in order to utilize the online application process. If you have not activated your account, have misplaced your activation code or if you have problems accessing your account, please contact Deb Ristow in the District Office at 715-273-3900.



Special thanks to the United Way of Red Wing Shoes, the Ellsworth Lions Club, Shopko, Salvation Army, and Dr. Kroll's Health Solutions Chiropractic and Wellness for all the wonderful school supplies that were donated to our schools. All these supplies will definitely be put to good use!

High School Student Council
BLOODMOBILE
 Monday, October 23rd
 8:15am-2:15pm • High School Old Gym
 To schedule an appointment, please contact Julie Graber at the High School at (715) 273-3904.

Homecoming week kicked-off on Sunday, September 10 with the annual Diva Dudes Pageant and royalty coronation.

Proceeds, which totaled \$1170, will be split between the Red Cross and Ellsworth Food Pantry. Plus \$143 from the bake sale will go to the Red Cross.



Congratulations to the 2017 Diva Dude Winners:

Mr. Poise (tie): Lucas Flom and Hunter Donnelly
 Mr. Talent: Isaac Kemmerer
 Mr. Fishbowl (tie): Hunter Donnelly and Ozzie Boigenzahn
 Mr. Diva Dude: Isaac Kemmerer

A HUGE thank you to all the committee members and helpers who made the night a success!



Congratulations to the 2017 Homecoming Court!
 Senior Prince Drake Flom,
 King Nathan Hinrichs,
 Queen Rachael Sullivan,
 Senior Princess Anna Olson,
 Junior Princess Claire Straub,
 Sophomore Princess Riley Schumaker and Freshman Princess Nadia Thurmes.

