

CONSTRUCTION MILESTONES

SPRING 2009

SITE WORK AT WEST ELEMENTARY BEGINS

SUMMER 2009

WEST ELEMENTARY & SOUTH ELEMENTARY UNDERWAY

FALL 2009

MIDDLE SCHOOL OPENS
WEST ELEMENTARY COMPLETED

FEBRUARY 2010

SOUTH ELEMENTARY COMPLETED

Construction news

The hard work of the past two years will pay dividends in 2009. The capstone of the bond request approved by our community in 2009 is the new Coopersville Middle School, which is set to open in the fall of 2009.

The school has been built to house 600 students with room for future expansion to 900. The building features a "wheel and spoke" design which means that the center of the building is home to common areas such as the office, media center, cafeteria, art room, tech ed room and gymnasium. The sixth grade wing is isolated near the offices and the seventh and eighth grade wings are stacked on top of each other in a space saving and energy efficient design. The building was designed to take full advantage of space to promote the educational programs offered at the middle school. The grand opening will be held in late September. Please join us.

2008 saw the completion of the renovations at East Elementary and the planning for the renovations at both West Elementary and the new South Elementary (formerly Coopersville Junior High School). Work is set to begin on both buildings as early as this spring, but much of the work will be completed during the summer months.

When West reopens this fall, it will be called Coopersville West Early Childhood Center. By the end of next school year, West will

be home to our kindergarten students as well as our preschool and daycare. The work at West will update our kindergarten classrooms and will increase the number of rooms suitable for preschool classes and kindergarten.

The work on South Elementary will take much longer to complete, most likely through February of 2010. At that time, we will move all of our third through fifth grade students to South, leaving East Elementary for our first and second grade students. By the end of next school year, our construction projects will be complete.

As part of the construction work in each of our buildings, we have upgraded our technology infrastructure. Although the buildings will all be complete by early 2010, the technology equipment for students is being phased in over time to mesh with the replacement schedule of computers and other devices used by our students.

One of the more obvious improvements is the new entrance and roadway scheduled to begin this spring through the southernmost part of the campus. A new playground for our 3rd through 5th grade students will be a welcome addition as well.

Thanks to the ongoing support of our community, our school facilities are in excellent condition – truly an educational environment unmatched by any district. We have reached many milestones in the past years, but 2009 promises to be the year that we can clear away much of the dust and debris and begin to take full advantage of our new and renovated facilities.

2009 STATE OF THE SCHOOLS

A BRIGHTER FUTURE BEGINS TODAY

Coopersville Up, Economy Down

Caring Classrooms

Teachers Making a Difference

A Choice School District



Coopersville Up, Economy Down

It is probably surprising to no one that the economic meltdown that our country experienced in the last quarter of 2008 will have a drastic impact on our school district. Because we rely almost entirely on the state for our annual operating budget, when the state is in financial trouble, one of the places our legislators look to help balance their budget is education.

dollars. As we put together our budget for next school year, we may be able to use those dollars to avoid making some deep cuts in our teaching staff. If that proves to be the case, our class sizes will remain some of the lowest in the area next year.

The problem with relying on one-time fixes is that if state revenues remain depressed, the problems are

Michigan's economy has been stumbling for years. As a result, its tax revenues have been reduced and many cuts have already been made. On the plus side, our legislators have tried valiantly to protect education, even though our per pupil grants have, at best, been flat for the past five years.



merely postponed for a year or maybe two years. In the meanwhile, we know that our fixed expenses will continue to grow. If the stimulus money goes away without having replacement money from the state ready to go, we will find ourselves in a position of needing to make even deeper cuts in a year or two.

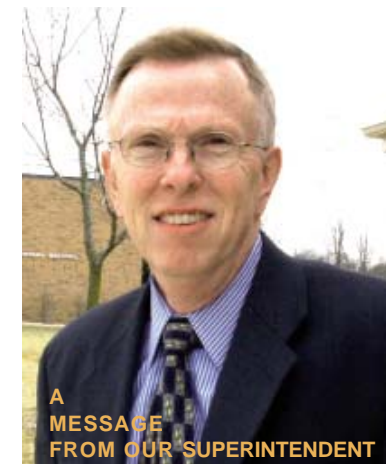
Even so, our expenses have continued to grow, not only with modest salary increases, but more so in the cost of utilities, fuel, health care and textbooks. Coopersville Area Public Schools has been one of the few districts that has managed its meager resources in such a manner as to provide outstanding programs and services at reduced costs each year.

In fact, blue ribbon schools aside, we have increased our fund balance each year while offering wonderful academic programs.

An additional concern for school districts across the state is that a number of families are moving out of state in search of jobs. Although our district has seen increases in enrollment for a number of years, the exodus of jobs out of Michigan will affect us as well.

The outlook for the coming year is hard to predict. We are certain that the state's revenues will continue to fall short of what is needed to fund essential services, education among them. The good news in the short term is that the federal economic stimulus package will give both schools and the state some sorely needed operating

We continue to attract families to our community because Coopersville is a great place to live, work and raise a family. We are well positioned to weather this storm, but we are also aware of the impact that the local economy has on the district. With our community's continued support, we will emerge from these troubling times with our strong schools intact and our focus on our children's education as strong as ever.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT

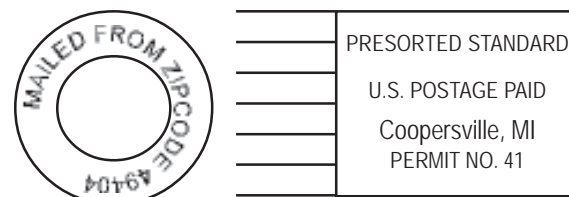
Please take a few minutes to read our 2009 State of the Schools Report. In these troubled economic times, it is important to keep things in perspective.

We have a great school system, a great community, and great teachers. We are maintaining high academic standards while struggling with ever decreasing financial resources.

With your help, we will continue to focus on the one reason we are here - the education of our children. I hope that you will feel free to call or stop in at any time if I can be of any service to you.

Kevin R. O'Neill

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Teachers making a difference!

Although the most important people in the district are students, our success each day comes from our teachers. When we hire teachers, of course we make sure that we get the best and brightest in their fields of study. But we also look for more than simple academic competence.

We hire only teachers who love what they do and who love working with kids. We look for teachers who not only can make sure our students reach their academic potential, but who can make sure that their students develop a lifelong love of learning.

An example of how our teachers go above and beyond expectations each year is the response we receive when the district receives applications each fall for our mini-grant program. This program gives our staff an opportunity to submit ideas to improve learning for our students.

Over half of our staff each year submit ideas for projects and then spend countless hours working to make their projects successful. We believe that the quality of our teaching staff sets us apart from other school districts. Our teachers do make the difference!

Building a caring classroom



- Community outreach
- Students helping students
- Starting young
- Compassionate citizens

With all of the time, effort and money being spent to improve our physical facilities, it might be easy to forget that our major focus is our children. We want to inspire our students to become warm, caring adults who make positive contributions to their families, communities, country, and even the world around them. The best way to develop those characteristics is for our staff and teachers to model those behaviors and to provide opportunities for our students to actually help others.

For example, at West Elementary, even our youngest students adopted a soldier. Our teachers helped them create care packages of letters, cards and other items to send to our service men and women serving in the Middle East. Those small acts of kindness meant the world to those who received them, but even more important, our students learned a lifelong lesson about reaching out to help others.

Students at the high school regularly raise money for a number of good causes, but they also are learning to help others right here on campus. In our Introduction to Teaching class, high school students

work with elementary and middle school students. Everybody wins when our students become both teachers and learners.

Our middle school students collected almost 20,000 pennies this fall for Coopersville Cares, and also joined with schools from across the country in the Pin Wheel for Peace initiative. Putting together Thanksgiving meal baskets for our families also helped our middle schoolers learn the importance of helping others who might need a little assist.



A few of our East Elementary efforts were directed at the DeVos Children's Hospital and visits to the hospital on Veteran's Day. It might seem amazing that our students' ongoing efforts regularly touch countless lives, but once one understands the daily emphasis that our teachers put on helping others, the results are predictable. Coopersville Area Public Schools is inspiring its students to share their talents and skills in many ways to make our community a better place to live.

Our students' academic talents and skills are applied in real-world situations to help others at every opportunity. Although not measured in any tests, we know that our students make a difference in the lives of others. The value of their efforts? Priceless!

Did you know?

One interesting fact that few people realize is that Coopersville Area Public Schools is home to about 270 schools of choice students. These students come from all of our surrounding districts, but all have chosen our district as a place where students can grow academically and socially in a safe and nurturing environment.

Our schools of choice students can be found in classrooms throughout the district – usually one to three in each classroom. Sometimes our resident families might wonder whether their children might not get as much attention or whether schools of choice students might take services away from their children. The reality is just the opposite.

Without our choice students, our operating budget would be \$2 million dollars less due to the loss of per pupil funding. That would be a loss of about 25 teachers district-wide. A loss of that many teachers (20% of our teaching staff) would mean an immediate class size increase of at least 7 students. Even then, because choice students are evenly placed throughout all grade levels, we would not simply be able to reduce a teacher or two at each grade level, but we would have to create a number of split grade levels across the board. We would lose our ability to offer the wide variety of classes at the secondary level.

"Our schools of choice students enrich our district in many ways. They also bring with them state dollars which provide many extras for all of our students."

Lori Rander
School Board President

In fact, much of our success in offering low class sizes, Advanced Placement classes, choir, art, music, band, shop, and other specialty classes is due to the added revenue that we receive from our choice students. Because of these little known facts, we welcome our schools of choice families and work hard to make our district the choice district for all students.

Looking ahead

Many people in our community are feeling the brunt of the current economic turmoil that has engulfed our nation. Those who are not affected directly most certainly know someone who is experiencing hardships. It is in times like these that people can count on us to provide an unequaled education for their children.

Although we will most certainly make necessary adjustments in staffing levels to reflect our state aid allotment this fall, we will also be working to make sure that we meet the needs of each student. We will not see the massive cuts that some districts are planning, and we will not see the dismantling of the strong programs that have helped our students show academic gains each year.

In fact, in the midst of swirling statewide budget deficits, Coopersville Area Public Schools will see an increase in training opportunities for our teachers, especially in the area of technology. Our bond issue is providing new technology tools for teachers, and teachers will learn how to use those tools to help increase their effectiveness in their classrooms.

Any glance forward in 2009 would not be complete without mention of the excitement and anticipation of well over 500 middle school students who will be welcomed back to school after Labor Day in a spanking new school. A complete update on our construction plans and milestones can be found on Page 4 of this report.

We know that we will face many challenges in 2009. However, we also know that we will provide a safe haven for our children from the ills that so many are facing. Great schools, great teachers, and great students will combine to get great results. We look forward to 2009 as a time when we will rise to the challenges that have been thrust upon us. Our students will be the better for our efforts.

2008 highlights

1 Education Excellence Award

Michigan Association of School Boards awards the High School a 2008 Education Excellence Award for its Academic Mentors program.

2 The Coopersville Scholarship

The graduating class of 2008 was the first to receive \$1,000 scholarships from the GVSU endowed Coopersville Scholarship.

3 Big Brother / Big Sister

East Elementary matches 28 students with mentors from the Big Brother/Big Sister school-based program.

4 National Teacher of the Year

Middle School Teacher, Mary Miller, selected as 2008 National Art Teacher of the Year.

5 Financial Acclaim

2008 marked the tenth year that the district received outstanding marks from its financial auditors.

2008 Report Card

Curriculum	A	New state high school graduation requirements set the stage for future curriculum changes at all grade levels.
Finances	A	Third-party independent audit gives the district high scores in all areas, more than a ten-year track record of excellence.
Test Results	A	High scores in virtually all academic areas are highlighted by a 9% increase in ACT writing scores for high school Juniors.
Facilities	A	Renovations now underway mean that the entire campus will have been completely renovated over the past ten years.
Fund Balance	A	Savings are now at an all time high and will help us weather the economic storm now upon us.
State Funding	D	Less funding is being coupled with new unfunded mandates. Tough economic times are the wrong times for the legislature to add costs to school districts.

Focus on technology in 2009

Learning in schools is naturally focused on students. However, whether the district is able to succeed in its educational mission rests with its teachers. Warm, caring, knowledgeable teachers can spark the curiosity of students the way nothing else can.

Our district has been working to give its teachers time and resources to improve their skills. For instance, our teachers have been working together in small groups to help identify areas that might need improvement. The teachers study data, research solutions to identified problems, and decide on the best methods for making changes to address the problems. As changes are made, the teachers constantly evaluate the results with an eye toward continual improvement. This desire for constant improvement is a trait that you will find throughout the district.

Beginning in the summer of 2009 and continuing for the next two years, Coopersville Area Public Schools will be embarking on a significant training program for its teachers in the area of technology. Because we are completing the new middle school and the renovations at West and South Elementary schools soon, we will begin adding a significant amount of technology for both our teachers and our students.

Over time, our teachers will have at their disposal interactive whiteboards, document cameras, Internet connections and other technology. This influx of technology calls for a change in the way teachers teach and in the way students learn. Our teachers will be learning about these new tools during the summer months and throughout the school year.

New student technology will be phased in over the next two years, which is great news. However, as our students have more access to computers, our teachers will also need to have more skills in helping our students use their computers to increase student learning. We have studied much of the research around student computer use and one conclusion is almost universal. Student learning is increased significantly when computers are used for research, exploration, interactive feedback and connecting to a variety of resources, but not when used simply to write reports or essays. Part of our training efforts over the next two years will be to provide our teachers with the knowledge and skills they will need to help our students make the best use of the new influx of technology.

