



Community Education Courses

CASS CAREER CENTER

Spring 2021

Harrisonville Schools
503 S. Lexington
Harrisonville, MO 64701
816-380-2727

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HARRISONVILLE

Highlights

A Harrisonville Schools Publication
Winter 2020

Plans underway for bond projects

With voter approval of Propositions I+N in June, planning is well underway for improvements and updates to district facilities. Proposition I was a 50 cent operating levy increase for the purpose of attracting and retaining quality staff through salary increases. Prop N was a no tax rate increase bond issue for \$22,700,000 for providing funds to meet needs within the district including improvement of safety & security, replacing roofs, HVAC units, and boilers; improving technology and playgrounds, and completing other repairs & improvements as identified in the facility needs assessment. Passage of this measure resulted in a 10 cent debt service levy rollback.

This summer, the Board of Education selected architecture and construction management partners. Every week building and district administrators meet with representatives from Hollis + Miller (architecture) and Newkirk Novak (construction management).

The bond projects are organized by building and in phases. The first projects will begin at Cass Career



Center, the Harrisonville Early Childhood Center/Harrisonville Middle School campus, and Harrisonville Elementary School.

At Cass Career Center, in addition to bond funds, grant monies will expand the scope of projects. The school will add a practical nursing lab which is funded through a CARES Act grant. This area will include four patient rooms and a conference space. Since this addition is funded with grant money, there is a timeframe attached and it will be the first work to get underway.

Additional work at Cass Career Center will include renovation of the welding, agriculture, and fire science areas, remodel of the office area to

provide a secure entrance, and the addition of a new classroom space for expanded programming.

At Harrisonville Early Childhood Center, work will focus on a secure entry/office area and expanded kitchen facilities. Outside, the work will include a reconfiguration of the playground and parking lots. Currently the bus lane runs through the middle of the ECC playground.

The work on the exterior of ECC will include a sidewalk awning which will visually connect ECC to Harrisonville Middle School. It will also provide cover for students loading and unloading from cars and buses.

Inside HMS, the work will focus on increasing the kitchen and cafeteria space which will include moving the counseling office area. There will also be flex spaces for small group learning added in some hallway areas.

Propositions I+N were brought to voters after community input through the Blueprint survey last fall and the district's strategic planning

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Administrative Offices
503 S. Lexington
380-2727

Harrisonville High School
1504 E. Elm • 380-3273
Grades 9-12
Mark Wieggers, Principal - ext. 6222

Cass Career Center
1600 E. Elm • 380-3253
Grades 9-Post-Secondary
Jeanette Flanner, Director - ext. 7222

Harrisonville Middle School
601 S. Highland • 380-7654
Grades 6-8
Chris Grantham, Principal - ext. 5222

McEowen Elementary School
1901 S. Halsey • 380-4545
Grades 4-5
Beth Love, Principal - ext. 4222

Harrisonville Elementary School
101 Meghan Drive • 380-4131
Grades 1-3
Dr. Derrick Hartley, Principal - ext. 3222

Early Childhood Center
500 Polar Lane • 380-4421
Grades Preschool - Kindergarten
Becky Campbell, Principal - ext. 2222



HARRISONVILLE *Highlights*

From the Desk of Superintendent Paul Mensching

Superintendent shares appreciation for support



Dear Wildcat Family:

As the World Turns was a classic, far-

etched soap opera that my babysitter used to watch when I was a kid. Sometimes I wake up in the morning and feel that we are trapped in that crazy interpretation of life! The 2020-21 school year has brought us many challenges, however, today I want to focus on a few of the many things which we are grateful for.

Through the generous support of the Harrisonville community, we

were able to pass Propositions I and N to address vital needs for the operation of our district. Immediately we have cultivated the benefit of those efforts as we were able to give a much-needed pay increase to our staff, who now find themselves working twice as hard to provide virtual and in-person learning. We were also able to address some immediate needs in our heating and cooling systems at Harrisonville Middle School and the Early Childhood Center which could have placed the district in some serious financial distress had the bond not passed. The support could not have come at a better time.

Many people may not have believed we would still have in-person learning at this point in the school year. I am grateful for the efforts of

our staff, students, and families to allow us to continue to offer that option. Throughout the quarantines and isolations that continue to impact our classrooms each week, we operate from the available data that the safest place for kids to be is in school. As we head into the holiday season, I implore you to help us keep kids in school by wearing your masks and social distancing. The positive news regarding vaccines and medication to treat the virus are more than welcome, but we still must remain vigilant in our efforts to remain safe.

We truly want the best for our community because everyday is a great day to be a Wildcat!

Paul Mensching
Superintendent

Projects address challenges cited in survey

(Continued from Page 1)

process. The improvements at Cass Career Center begin to address the second and third challenges cited by survey respondents - preparing all students for opportunities after graduation to include college, career & technical, military, or workforce and continuing to provide a variety of academic opportunities to meet the needs of all students.

Additionally the playground reconfiguration at ECC and the secure entrances at CCC and ECC meet another one of the top five challenges - maintaining/improving the safety/security of our schools. Secure entrances are also on the list for Harrisonville Elementary School and Harrisonville High School. These entrances will require visitors to enter the office area prior to gaining access to the school.

Earlier this fall, another safety issue was addressed at McEowen Elementary with bond funding as a fence was added around the school's playground.

The impact of the passage of Proposition I, an increase to the operating levy "for the purpose of attracting and retaining quality staff through salary increases" was more immediate as the Board of Education approved pay increases for all staff at the June Board of Education meeting. This also met one of the challenges cited in the Blueprint survey of hiring and retaining quality educators in an increasingly competitive market.

Updates on bond projects are posted on the district website - www.harrisonvilleschools.org/propsIN.

COVID Update

The Harrisonville School District is wrapping up the first semester of an unprecedented school year. Students returned to school on August 24 after being out of school since March 13. Families had the opportunity to choose between in-person learning or virtual learning (which will continue during the second half of the year). For the first semester, approximately 25% of students selected virtual learning.

Health and safety precautions have been followed for in-person learning including spacing out desks/tables, wearing face coverings when social distancing isn't possible, and washing hands/using hand sanitizer throughout the day. At Harrisonville High School and Harrisonville Middle School, students are following a block schedule to minimize interactions throughout the school day.

The district's COVID Dash-

board is available on the district website - www.harrisonvilleschools.org/covidcommunication. It provides information on positive cases and quarantines and is updated on a weekly basis. Since the start of school (as of Thanksgiving break), the district has had 90 positive cases reported for our students and staff. Following each positive case, the district conducts contact tracing to determine students and staff who should quarantine due to possible exposure. Students who are sent home and are able, can continue learning online. Quarantine is viewed as another layer of protection for students and families. Sending students and staff home due to potential exposure decreases the chance of spreading the virus in schools.



Teachers, students adapting to new learning tools, processes

Teachers and staff in the district have had to change the way many things have been done in the past in order to follow the health and safety protocols in place. One of the biggest changes, especially at the elementary level, is the increased use of technology. Every student (with the exception of kindergarten) is assigned a Chromebook.

Third grade teacher Briana Hasek said, "I love giving students the opportunity to enhance their learning with educational websites, videos, games, and etc. I also feel that it has been helpful teaching them just basic computer skills that they will need as they grow up to be functional adults."

Teachers have also transitioned from paper-and-pencil activities to online tools. Fifth grade teacher Kelli Neal provided an example.

"Instead of paper and pencil writing, students have a Digital Writer's Notebook that houses their notes, pre-writing, rough drafts, and other materials. This way students who are sent home to quarantine have all of their writing available digitally."

As mentioned by Mrs. Neal, the increased use of technology has been important as students can continue learning from home if they are quarantined.

Fifth grade teacher Karli Enderle said, "I have video recorded my lessons live using Loom while I'm teaching it to their classmates still in the building. It's been a small way to help them feel connected and get the same lessons. Their classmates love to hijack the video for a minute and tell them 'hello,' as well."

Middle school teacher Kelly Anstaeett added, "When a student is able, we will do a Google Meet so the student can join class live while in session. The student is able to actively participate in discussions and work with classmates."

For teachers working with students who chose virtual learning, us-



Harrisonville Middle School sixth graders tested the strength of different brands of spaghetti noodles in science class. They then worked collaboratively on graphing their data and writing conclusions.. Pictured are Sophia Branham, Mark Enkey and Nickolas Kirkemo (via Google Meet).

ing Google Meet is an everyday occurrence.

Kristen Torres teaches all kindergarten students who chose virtual learning. "My students get on with me through Google Meets in the form of whole group meetings Mondays-Thursdays. We work on anything from reading, writing, and/or math to getting to do an Art Hub for Kids drawing activity for a fun break. We also continue with our Pathways small groups once a week. Students, even at the ages of 5-6, know to reach out to me through phone calls, emails, messages, even videos."

However, using technology goes beyond just the tool, teachers have adapted their lessons based on both technology use and the limitations of the situation.

Middle school teacher Melina Thomas said, "I really have to think about what is important for students to learn."

"Using Screen-cast-o-matic is a new technology that I've been using to video my instruction. It has a limit of 15 min, which makes me break down what I'm teaching to the most basic points. I can get a little bit nerdy with my content area, so the time limit

keeps me focused," added high school teacher Annie Hake.

Additionally, teachers have changed their curriculum to tie learning to current reality.

Cass Career Center marketing teacher Amy Schroeder said, "Since March 2020, we have seen companies completely change their marketing strategies. Instead of focusing on promotions and events, businesses are emphasizing trust, unity, and stability. This year, we are looking at various examples of how companies have changed their marketing plans and we are learning how to incorporate these changes."

Gifted teacher Laura Frees added, "My eighth grade science students designed and conducted experiments using masks or social distancing early this year after learning about mask effectiveness at preventing the spread of infection."

Students aren't the only ones who are learning new lessons this year.

Mrs. Torres said, "I have grown exponentially as a teacher through this e-learning process. Going in, I may have known some tips and tricks, (Continued on Page 8)

District hires new Director of Business Services



The Harrisonville Schools Board of Education approved the employment of a new Director of Business Services for the Harrisonville School District at a special meeting in early October.

Debra Athey, who is currently serving as the Business Manager/Board Secretary in the Northwood-Kensett CSD in Northwood, IA, began after Thanksgiving.

Athey had served in her previous position since May 2012. Prior to that, she worked outside the education realm as Assistant Bookkeeper, Business Office Supervisor, Office Manager and Accounts Receivable Clerk. She also spent four years as a Superintendent's Secretary and Assistant Bookkeeper in Clearlake Community Schools in Clearlake, IA.

She has a bachelor's in accounting from the University of West Florida. She also earned Iowa School Business Management Academy Certification.

She will take over for Kathy VanGorkom who will retire effective January 1, 2021. VanGorkom has served as the Director of Business Services since August 2010.



Foundation grant provides resource for all teachers

The Harrisonville Public School Foundation recently approved a district grant which provided every teacher in the district with a document camera. The grant totaled nearly \$15,000.

Document cameras are devices that connect to teachers' laptops and classroom projectors to enable the sharing of books, handouts, experiments, etc. for full class display.

"In the past, students would gather around for a read-aloud or to see an experiment," explained second grade teacher Leslie Culpepper. "However, now students cannot gather and document cameras give all students the ability to clearly see things from anywhere in the classroom which is important for following along, comprehension as well as understanding. They can also help reduce the amount of copies being made since students can just follow along from the board."

Second grade teacher Regina Hastings added, "I use it to model handwriting, math manipulatives, worksheets, read alouds, and nu-

merous other things. I love being able to zoom in and show small things large enough for everyone to be able to see them."

In addition, teachers can use the camera and computer set-up to record lessons for students on quarantine while teaching the students in the classroom.

Third grade teacher Briana Hasek said, "It has made it so much easier when I need to record my lessons for students who are home learning."

Document cameras are not new innovations; the Foundation has provided teacher grants based on individual teacher requests for the devices since 2016. Fourth grade teacher Catie Miller received her document camera grant in the fall of 2018.

"I love having mine. I am able to show manipulative and assignments directly to students through my projector. It's helpful for the students to see modeled for them what they are expected to do and have it look exactly the same as it is in front

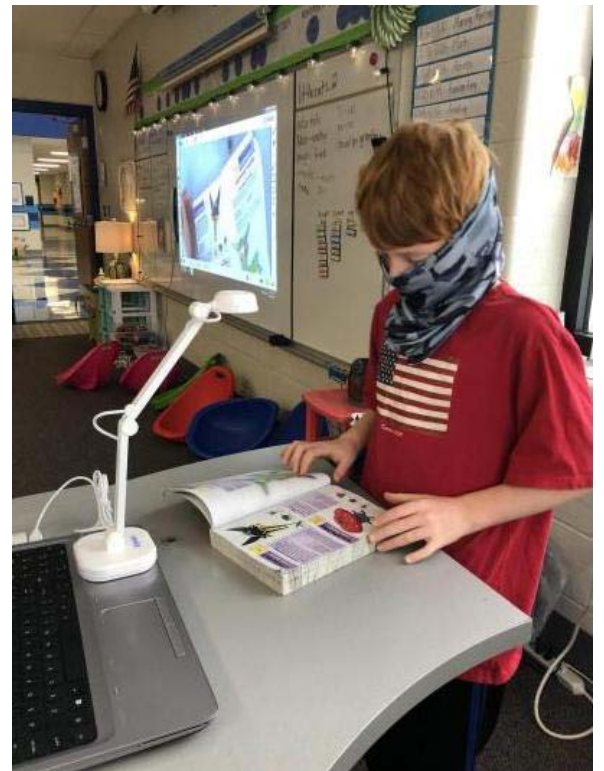
of them," she said.

Technology Director Mike Diggs said that since the beginning of school, the tech department has had more requests as teachers see the value in the devices, especially now.

"I knew the Foundation was open to supporting a bigger project and I knew our teachers would use these daily," he said. "I'm just thankful for the Foundation's support."

And it's not just the teachers who will benefit; students can use the devices to share their learning with the classmates safely.

Second grader Eli Sharp, a student in Mrs. Culpepper's room is pictured. He said, "I like using it because I can read books to the class and share my favorite parts and pictures. I have shared things from



books and my writing."

Eli's classmate Autumn Brown added, "I have shown the class books and I have shown my published story and I have shown pictures from home when I was Star of the Week. I like using it because it can make stuff bigger."

Teachers, students learn together

(Continued from Page 7) but have taught myself how to use Google Classroom in a way that best fits teaching kindergarteners online."

"This year, I feel like I have grown so much as an instructor. I am focusing on making my relationship with my students even stronger. As a teacher, I don't always know what my students are faced with when they leave my classroom. I am trying to keep the negative out and emphasize the positive," said Mrs. Schroeder.

The positive outlook was echoed by Mrs. BryAnn Middleton and Ms.

Karli Enderle.

"This is challenging, but the kids want to be at school and are engaged in learning. In 19 years of teaching, I've had my best classroom experiences in 2020. The kids are working so hard and taking advantage of every moment we have in the classroom," said Mrs. Middleton.

"I want parents to know that we can feel their support. There's been several sweet, simple email replies that stop you in your tracks. None of us should underestimate the power of an encouraging word," said Ms. Enderle.

Board of Education candidate filing open through Jan. 19

Filing for Harrisonville School Board of Education candidates began Tuesday, December 15 at 8 a.m. at the Administrative Offices, 503 S. Lexington. Some of the requirements for candidates for the Board of Education are as follows: must be a citizen of the US, a resident taxpayer in the Harrisonville Cass R-IX School District, and at least 24 years of age. Candidates must have lived in Missouri for at least one year

preceding the election. For a full list of candidate requirements, go to <http://harrisonvilleschools.schoolwires.net/Page/98>

Filing closes on January 19 at 5 p.m. Offices to be filled are two (2) three-year positions. Board members whose terms expire are Doug Alexander and Doug Meyer.

The Board election is April 6, 2021.