



Grace School District #148 Highlights

Volume 7, Issue 2

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Special points of interest:

- Elementary Floor Plans Finalized
- Explanation of Bond Process
- Makeup Dates for Emergency Closure

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Superintendent's Letter

Dear Patrons-

Happy Holidays! This is an exciting time of year and our schools are buzzing with enthusiasm. The upcoming holiday season helps us focus on serving others and recognizing the importance of supporting those in need within our community. The elementary schools have participated in the annual canned food drive and combined for 1,250 food items for needy families! The high school has generated \$5400 to date for the make a wish foundation as well! We are proud of their efforts. There is much to talk about in the district as we look ahead to 2018. We have received the deed for the property that will be the site of the new elementary school, we have begun construction on the music room addition at the high school, we have finalized the plans for the new elementary, and on top of that we have continued great things in our classrooms, sports, clubs and departments throughout the district. In this letter you will find the

final plan for the elementary school, an example of spiraling curriculum in our classrooms, a reminder of school bus safety and procedures, an update on the elementary bond, a policy specific to naming new buildings, and a reminder of the scheduled make up days in the event that we have any further emergency closures. I would like to address a couple of key issues that have emerged in the district in the past couple of months. Concerns have been brought to my attention regarding our district's stance on student drug, alcohol and tobacco use. I will refer you to our district website under board policy #551; this policy has been, and will be followed to the letter for any and all allegations. There has been question about reduction of our plant facility and supplemental levies as we have passed a bond for a new elementary school. We hope to be able to reduce our levies as we realize savings due to increased efficiencies that will be associated with one new building versus two aging ones. However we will not

realize that savings until we are out of the old buildings and into the new one. Because we do not know now what those savings will be we will be running both our plant facilities and supplemental levies this year on the March 15th ballot. The School board has decided to leave both levy amounts at their current rate. We are so appreciative of the continued support you have shown our schools. We truly couldn't do it without you! Please mark your calendars and get out and vote. I appreciate all you do as patrons for the students and staff of this district. I feel honored by the trust you give us as we find a way to serve, inspire, and educate the students of our district.

Go big R.E.D.



Jamie Holyoak
Superintendent of Schools
Grace School District #148

"We are what we repeatedly do, excellence then is not an act, but a habit." —Aristotle

Emergency Closure Make-Up Days



Because we extended potato harvest this past October, we want to make you aware of the days that have been set aside in our calendar for make-up days if we have further closures due to

inclement weather or other emergencies. Please note the makeup days if needed will be **Friday February 2nd and Presidents Day Monday February 19th**. Those days are currently scheduled

to be out of school, but if we have school closures in the months of December or January those dates have been our designated make-up days.

What's New With the Elementary Bond?

The process of securing bond dollars after passing a School Bond is very similar to qualifying for a personal or business loan. We have been producing 5 years of financial documents and materials to verify the fiscal stability of the district, verifying enrollment trends, our tax base, and our history of being able to pay off prior bonds. The result of this information was a district profile that was sent out to potential investors. Through this process we have learned that as a district we are doing very well. Following voter approval of the district's bond on August 29,

the administration and its team of bond market professionals carried out a 3-month bond issuance process that resulted in a final interest rate of just 2.65%. The District participated in two state programs which allowed the bonds to receive a "AAA" rating from Moody's, the highest bond rating available. That rating allowed the district to demand a low interest rate. In a competitive bond sale held on November 14, 2017, the district received six bids, with nationally-recognized banks such as Wells Fargo, Robert W. Baird, and Piper Jaffray competing to buy the

bonds. In the end, underwriter Vining-Sparks offered the best bid to the District at 2.65% and was awarded the bonds. The district completed the sale and received the \$5,000,000 on November 30. The process has been an excellent learning experience and a very successful one for our students and patrons.

Bus Safety Lesson for Early Elementary Students

Director of Transportation Sheldon Mansfield used a remote control bus to teach early elementary students about bus safety on Thursday Nov. 30th. The bus named "Buster" is a fun and interactive way to remind students to stay away from areas of danger when loading, unloading, and approaching a school bus. Students were reminded to

stay away from the wheels, and never walk directly behind or directly in front of a bus as the drivers are unable to see students and ensure their safety.

Parents, please talk with your students about bus safety and rules. The same rules that pertain to the classroom also pertain to a school bus as the bus is

simply an extension of the classroom. Remember Respect, Excellence, and Discipline is the mission statement for our students when they are in the classroom, on the playground, and on the bus!



Spiraling Curriculum

In our school district we implement “spiraling curriculum.” This means our students will be exposed to the same information repeatedly throughout their educations. The premise behind a spiraling curriculum is that students will be introduced at an introductory level early in their elementary school years, then again in upper elementary, again in Jr. High, and then finally at High School. Research shows that back ground knowledge is directly related to retention of general information and the ability to process and conceptualize new information with greater efficiency. This in education is sometimes referred to the “stickiness factor”.

In the past weeks we have seen this in action with the solar system. The 3rd graders in Mrs. Andersen’s class performed a song outlining the names of all of the planets in the solar system and their relative location to the sun. The 6th graders in Mrs. Hopkins class did an activity that converted miles into fractions of an inch and laid out the planets using the concept of relative distance to demonstrate how vast our solar system is compare to their own classroom. This project is built upon what they already know about the planets, but gives them a deeper contextual reference to the physical characteristics of each planet and its position in our solar system. In our Astronomy class Dr. Millward teaches in even greater detail the environmental and chemical make ups of each planet, and their relative distance from the sun by placing the sun on the high school marquee and loading students on a bus and driving them to various locations including as far as the “Y” intersection north of town.

In my experience as an educator there is nothing like seeing students connect concepts in their mind. We often refer to these connections as “ah-ha” moments. They are the most rewarding part of our job! I hope you will take time to quiz your students on instances when they have experienced these moments.

Dr. Steven Millward’s Astronomy class investigates the relative distance of the planets in the solar system from the sun.



Mrs. Andersen’s 3rd grade class performs a song about the solar system.

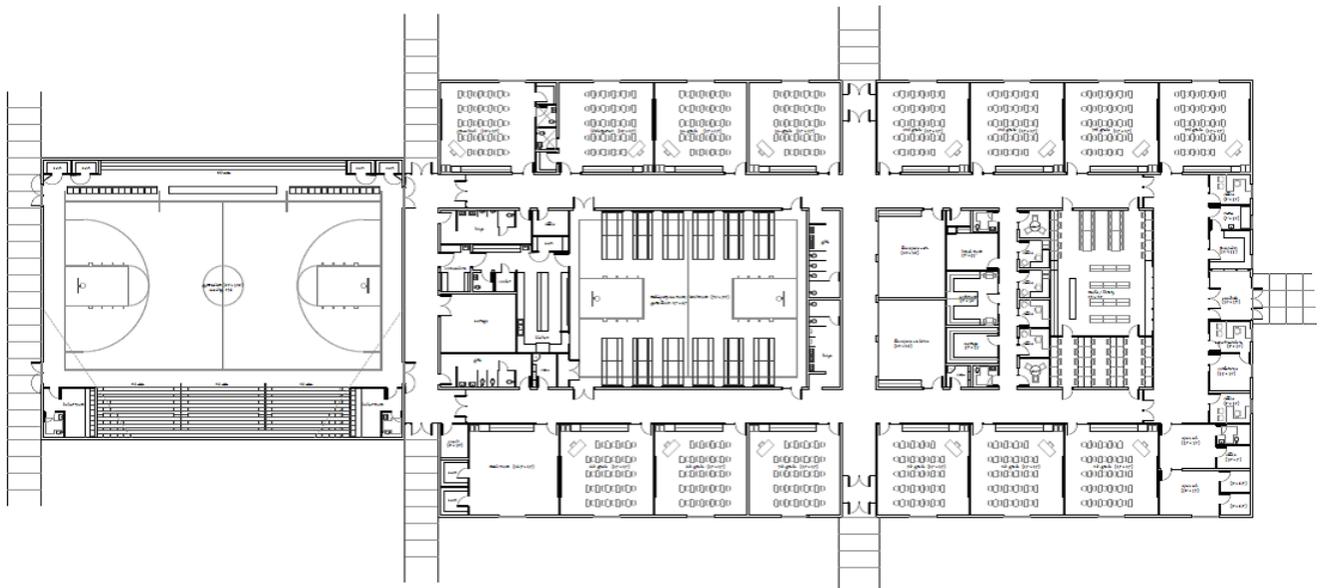
Mrs. Hopkin’s 6th grade class discovers the vastness of the solar system by converting miles into fractions of an inch.

Grace Elementary Floor Plan Finalized

The Elementary School Building Committee has reviewed and approved the final floor plan for the new elementary school. The committee met 6 times including a trip to look at concepts in 3 different area elementary schools. The committee is made up of representatives from the Food Service Department, Maintenance Department, and elementary teachers from both Thatcher and Grace Elementary Schools. The committee had been extremely helpful in helping us determine the most critical features for an effective and efficient school for students grade

PK-6. The goals of the committee were to insure adequate classroom size, flexible learning spaces, a fully functional kitchen, multipurpose spaces, adequate computer lab and media center, egress and flow of students and staff, development of safety features, and ample storage. The plan went through 5 revisions. The plan below has some new and exciting features while still keeping a practical, cost-effective design. One of the biggest concerns was that we did not want to build an

old school with new material. The committee has done an exceptional job considering a modern approach to education while still maintaining a traditional educational facility. We are excited about seeing this plan come to fruition. Some of the new features you will see in the plan allow for growth with the potential of three additional classroom spaces built into the design. The design also allows for flexible and collaborative spaces that encourage inquiry based learning and exploration.



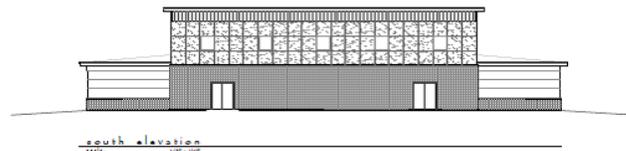
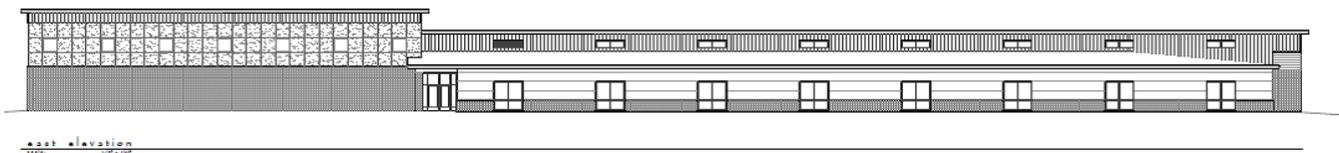
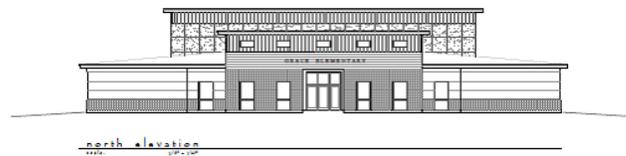
Board to Review Policy for Naming of New Buildings

The school board will review a policy outlining the naming of a new school building at its December 7th meeting at 7:00 pm. Some of the parameters outlined by the policy are as follows:

The following guidelines should be considered when naming a school or facility:

- A proposed school name may be a person, place, or thing
- Proposed names should not be a person whose primary identification is of a religious nature
- Distinguished persons proposed for the school name must have been deceased for at least six months and should have made significant contributions to the community, county, state, or nation
- A person's moral character should also be considered
- Persons proposed for the school name shall not be a relative of any employee or School Board Trustee
- Geographic names may also be considered. These names should be clearly identifying and widely known

If you have any questions about, or would like to submit a name to be considered please contact the district office.





**Wishing you a safe and
happy holiday.**

December 21 will be the last day of school before the Christmas break. School will resume on January 2.