



Welcome

2018-19 saw the district go 1:1 for Grades 7-12, the Board of Education approve [full-day Kindergarten](#) for the 2020-21 school year, and the start of a facility enhancement project at the middle school. Stemming from the progress made in the Technology Initiative, the district shifted to the use of e-texts, offering a number of resources that are aligned to state and national standards and expectations and are accessible to parents and guardians via their respective student's access. Perhaps most importantly, due to the acquisition of these new curriculum materials, and being a unit district, District 401 is now articulated.

2018-19 also saw the expansion of the Enrichment opportunity for all students in Kindergarten through Grade 2, additional time being allocated for all the Specials, and accelerated opportunities becoming available in the elementary buildings. In the 2019-20 school year, we are piloting courses eligible for high school credit at Elm Middle School and additional course offerings in college and career pathways for high school students that are available at Triton College, the Technical Center of DuPage, and Benedictine University. In 2020-21, the district will be able to provide articulated pathways for students Grades 6-12.

The district continues to expand its Department for Student Services to meet the increasingly diverse needs of the student population. The district now houses a transition program at the high school to continue its continuum, has hired full-time psychologists, occupational therapists and behavioral specialists to provide support to students, staff and administration, and continues to implement a co-teaching environment for students and staff. The district's Social Justice League continues its pursuit of increasing the presence of a social-emotional curriculum in the classroom with last year seeing staff members and administrators pilot a social-emotional learning curriculum in all grade levels. We will continue to enhance this opportunity and improve upon services for the social-emotional needs of all students.

The district has completed a number of projects for our facilities to address life safety needs and perform routine maintenance. These projects include roof repairs at the middle and high schools, renovating existing space at the high school to house the new transition program, installing door alarms and other measures at John Mills Elementary School, refinishing the main gymnasium floor at Elmwood Park High School, installing new public address systems for both elementary schools, replacing the high school parking lot and walking path lights, repairing the tennis courts at the high school, and tuck pointing half the high school.

Our most significant project is the one happening at [Elm Middle School](#). This project will include adding a wing (this includes a new media center and ten classrooms) and another gym, converting the outfield of the baseball field into a retention center, addressing documented life safety projects, and renovating the existing structure. The project started the day after school let out in May 2019 and will conclude August 2020.

In Spring 2019, the Board approved the hiring of consultants to collect information from the community concerning a potential referendum to address the needs of the elementary buildings and to determine what cost is palatable. The consultants have already issued out two (2) surveys and have held focus groups over the past few months and will continue to hold more. The district is taking the findings of the surveys and focus groups and forwarding those to its architectural and construction firms to determine potential projects, identify logistical concerns, and provide cost estimates. Options will then be presented to the community for additional feedback through additional surveys and focus groups, and those results will help the Board decide on a ballot measure to approve for the community to vote on in March 2020. You can access additional information on the referendum [here](#).

Upcoming Events

Parent Teacher Conferences
ECC/Elementary Schools

- November 6 & 7
- 3:30-7:00 p.m.

EPHS

- November 7
- 3:30-7:00 p.m.

Community Engagement
Sessions

November 7 at John Mills
- 6:00 p.m.

November 12 at Elmwood
- 6:00 p.m.

November 13 at EPHS
- 6:00 p.m.

November 16 at EPHS
- 10:00 a.m.

Next Board Meeting

November 6 at EPHS
- 7:00 p.m.

Inside this issue

Instructional Coaches 2

College and Career
Pathways 2

School Calendar
Survey Results 3

Operation Genius 3

Those Who Excel 3

After School
Learning Labs 4

Transition Program 4

Dr. Nicolas
Wade,
Superintendent



College and Career Pathways

Instructional Coaches

In the 2018-19 school year, the district added a new position, instructional coaches, to assist its staff in understanding, implementing, and differentiating the new curriculum. There are two (2) instructional coaches, one focusing on Humanities (English Language Arts and Social Studies) and the other on STEM (Math and Science). Their goal is to build relationships and trust with staff and assist in the implementation of the new curriculum programs. Their website, calendar of events, and available resources can be found [here](#).

Last school year there were over 300 support requests from staff, and the support includes lesson and unit planning, understanding and using curriculum resources, analyzing student data, and modeling. Each month the instructional coaches facilitate an initiative that supports community buildings, professional learning, growth and enthusiasm, and so on.

For additional information and resources, you can access the comprehensive presentation to the Board of Education from May 15 [here](#).



Elmwood Park CUSD #401 strives to cultivate individualized social-emotional learning processes, rigorous academics fostering inquisitive minds prepared for critical thinking, active and engaging partnerships with the community and parents, and innovative uses of 21st century technologies for teaching and learning. In the 2020-21 school year, the district will be offering articulated college and career pathways for students in Grade 6-12.

The district's College and Career Pathways mission and vision are adapting and incorporating courses and curriculum that propel students into an ever-changing, competitive professional marketplace, providing continued professional development for staff to ensure the delivery of the highest quality instruction to all students, and ensuring that each student will be prepared for their next steps after high school by supporting their understanding of themselves and tailoring an educational experience to their individual needs.

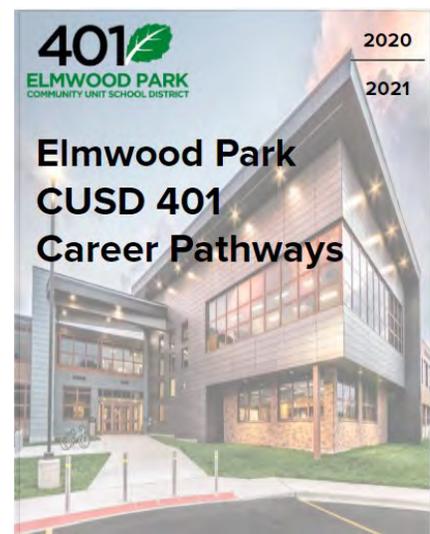
Introducing electives and coursework directly tied to college and career pathways will be a newfound experience at the middle school. The faculty, staff, students and community of Elm Middle School are devoted to academic excellence. In addition, they believe it is important for students to develop a sense of self-esteem and confidence in order to ensure success in high school and to enable them to make the correct decisions that will guide them later in life. Also, they believe in individual differences, responsible behavior, and an obligation of students to serve their community.

Beginning this school year, the high school began offering opportunities for students to explore their interests by introducing several new courses offered at the high school as well as offering opportunities at the Technical Center of DuPage and Tri-

ton College. The high school is looking to add additional dual credit opportunities for students through a partnership with Benedictine University. For next school year, there will be even more courses available to students in the 16 Career National Pathways. To give the reader an idea of the extent of coursework being offered by the district previously, only three (3) of the 16 pathways were available at the high school. This school year it is four (4) and next it will be nine (9) with the remaining seven (7) available off campus.

Course options are determined by the interest of the students who are surveyed at the middle and high school regularly to determine their career pathway interests. This feedback then helps create the following year's Programs of Study, which includes course sequencing from Grade 6 through Grade 12. You can view a copy of the presentation for the College and Career Pathways Parent Night [here](#), which had nearly 100 people in attendance on September 5. Another will be held in October.

You can also view the first presentation to the Board of Education containing program highlights [here](#) and changes to graduation requirements.



School Calendar Survey

When the Board of Education approved the changes to the bell schedule, it was communicated that the district would reach out to collect stakeholder opinions about the school calendar. With the move to a traditional schedule, in addition to recent changes to the School Code, there is some flexibility in crafting the school calendar that was not previously possible. The survey was designed to collect input on any and all potential scenarios that affect a school calendar, but it is important to bear in mind that a school calendar still functions like a math formula, meaning there are times that if one were to want “A,” you cannot have “B” and “C.”

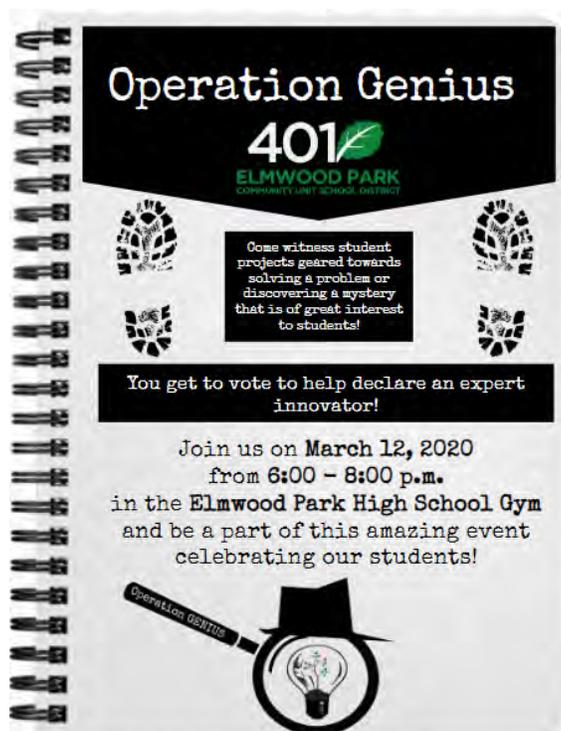
Illinois State Board of Education calendar guidelines can be found [here](#), and the presentation to the Board of Education can be found [here](#). The survey was given to parents, teachers, and students with there being even representation from all buildings and grade levels from the different stakeholder groups.

A frequent topic from parents and the community has been the start and end dates of the school year, with many expressing a later start. There are challenges to starting later and still being able to end school before or around Memorial Day and that would include topics of conversation such as E-Learning Days and being in attendance on holidays. To learn more about E-Learning Days, please watch a webinar from the Illinois State Board of Education [here](#). To qualify for an E-Learning Day, the district would need 51% of its students participating or engaging in an established activity and the district in the 2020-21 school year will only have students in Grades 6-12 with a take home device. This would mean to qualify, 100% of students in Grades 6-12 would have to participate and that would also not take into account the loss of a learning day for students in the other grades.

Operation Genius

Inspired by Google’s “Genius Hour,” the district will be offering a program to students in Grades 6-12 the opportunity to creatively address any problem they identify. The best ideas and solutions will be on display at a districtwide event on March 12 at Elmwood Park High School. During the event, there are two (2) categories for judges: middle school (Grades 6-8) and high school (Grades 9-12).

For additional background information on “Operation Genius” and the fantastic work our students and staff are doing, please click [here](#).



Those Who Excel

The district was recognized for the first time in its history at the Those Who Excel awards banquet last year with recognition in the categories of Team (District Technology Committee), Early Career Educator (Ms. Morgan Freeck), Administrator (Ms. Jessica Iovinelli), and Board/Community Member (Mr. Michael Scheidt). This year, the district was further recognized in the categories of Team (Social Justice League), Education Service Personnel (Ms. Jessica Solis), and Classroom Teacher (Ms. Elena Bartolomei). The district is extraordinarily proud of their achievements and what they have done for students and community, and on October 19 they were formally recognized by the Illinois State Board of Education and with Governor J.B. Pritzker in attendance.



For additional information on the awards banquet and this year’s recipients, please click [here](#).



After School Learning Labs

Transition Program

A transition program for young adults with special needs who are 18 to 21 has started this school year at Elmwood Park High School. The program, which is voluntary for participants whose need is determined by their individualized education plan (IEP) team, will focus on teaching the functional academic, social, communication and employment/vocational skills required for independent living after high school.

You can access the transition program's website [here](#) and additional information [here](#).



After school learning labs started in the month of September for students in grades K-6 and K-12 for EL students. The students meet with teachers two (2) days a week to focus on additional instructional learning strategies in the areas of reading and math. This year we are offering four (4), five-week (5) sessions. Teachers and administrators worked together to determine which students should attend the session by looking at data on all of the students to determine the students and the focus.

Each session will have a different focus. At the Early Childhood Center the first session is focused on Reading. At John Mills the first session is focused on Math for Grades 4-6 while at Elmwood Elementary it is Math for Grades 3-6. Students are focused on problem-solving and "Math Talks." K-12 EL Learning Labs are focused on the developing English Language domains.

The After School Learning Labs are possible through funds provided in the Title I and Title III grants.

Here is a quote from one (1) of our John Mills Learning Lab teachers:

"Students are loving our learning labs! Using math talks to help approach multi step problems has been a great learning tool. Students get a few minutes to work on problems independently and then they get time to collaborate and share their ideas. Finally, our favorite part is when we share out all of the different ways to solve the same problem. Students are constantly learning from one another and really enjoy the math talk process. The students voted to work on fractions during our work time. They have been enjoying working on problems and then applying what they learned to create their own problems and answer keys for their partners to solve. This has been a very engaging and motivating time for students to learn more about math."

The district will continue to monitor student progress and needs to evaluate what changes to current services are needed, as well as the possibility of expanding them.

District Office

Elmwood Park
CUSD 401

8201 W. Fullerton Ave.
Elmwood Park, IL 60707

Phone:

708-452-7292

Fax:

708-452-9504

E-mail:

d401info@epcUSD401.org

Website:

www.epcUSD401.org

Photos taken by Dave Porreca



AN INVITATION TO OPPORTUNITY

Elmwood Park Community Unit School District 401