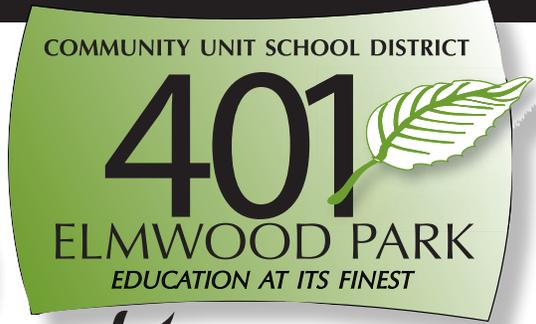


# FOCUS



## on Education

Volume 24 Issue 2 2019 Special Edition

[www.epcusd401.org](http://www.epcusd401.org)

### Elm Middle School Expansion is Underway



Elm Middle School will house grades six through eight by the start of the 2020-21 school year, according to a plan approved by the District 401 Board of Education. To accommodate the sixth graders, the school will be expanded and renovated at an estimated cost of \$18.5 million. Pictured is an architectural rendering of the proposed exterior south entrance. All renderings in this issue are by DLA Architects. View color renderings and floor plans at [www.epcusd401.org](http://www.epcusd401.org).

Elm Middle School will add 10 new classrooms, a second gym, and an entire grade of students under a plan approved by the District 401 Board of Education last summer.

Currently, D401 middle school is comprised of seventh- and eighth-grade students. In the new plan, sixth-grade students will attend Elm by the start of the 2020-21 school year. Currently, sixth grade is taught at the district's two elementary schools, Elmwood and John Mills. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nicholas D. Wade introduced the new plan.

Elm will become a true middle school in both concept and reality by encompassing grades six through eight instead of only grades seven and eight.

"Giving students an extra year in the middle school will allow them to self-advocate more effectively than they can when they have only two years in middle school," said Elm Principal Ms. Rebecca Siegel. "Students will be able to navigate through social-emotional situations confidently, and be more prepared to handle the independence of high school, using the tools we provide them."

#### Project at a Glance

The influx of new students will increase Elm Middle School's student population to about 700, according to Ms. Siegel. To accommodate the increase, the Elm expansion will involve a combination of additions and renovations to the existing building. Parking improvements, infrastructure, maintenance, and life-safety work will also be done.

#### Architect and General Contractor

The project will be accomplished by DLA Architects, Ltd., and International Contractors, Inc., (ICI), the companies responsible for Elmwood Park High School's award-winning science wing. They also worked together on the recent expansion and remodeling of the south end of Elmwood Elementary School.

DLA produced detailed blueprints, which ICI is using as the basis to secure bids for subcontracting work. ICI will oversee all construction and renovation work, assuring that everything is accomplished to DLA specifications.

#### Cost and Financing

The total work will cost an estimated \$18.5 million, according to Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations Mr. James Jennings. This includes all additions, renovations, site improvements, and life-safety work.

No new taxes will be required to finance the project, Mr. Jennings said. New bond sales will be used to finance the project. Current payments on past bond sales will be extended for approximately five more years. A referendum to approve new bonds is not needed.

#### Timeline

According to Mr. Jennings, the remodeling portion of the work is being accomplished when students and faculty are gone for the summer; students will not lose school time. Elm administrators are working in another one of the district's buildings during the summer.

Construction of new facilities will occur while school is in session, but precautions will be taken to minimize excessive noise and other distractions, similar to when the EPHS science wing was built.

*Continues on page 2*

## Elm Middle School Expansion is Underway

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Based on those considerations, the following timeline was created:

- ★ **FEBRUARY 2019:** Bids go out for renovation work (remodeling of existing building)
- ★ **LATE MAY 2019:** Renovation work begins
- ★ **JUNE 2019:** Bids go out for construction work (additions to existing building)
- ★ **AUGUST 2019:** Renovation work ends; seventh and eighth graders start 2019-20 school year
- ★ **NOVEMBER 2019:** Construction work begins
- ★ **LATE MAY 2020:** Renovation work resumes (if necessary)
- ★ **AUGUST 2020:** Project concludes; Elm opens as true middle school; sixth, seventh, and eighth graders start 2020-21 school year



What will the new and improved Elm look like? Here is the architect's rendering of the exterior southeast entrance.

The total renovation work is expected to cost approximately \$3.4 million. The following two tables provide additional details about the planned renovations:

### Renovation Work

The initial work will consist of renovating Elm's existing facilities. Renovations will include knocking down walls to reorganize classroom space, gutting restrooms to install new flooring and fixtures, building out old areas for new uses, removing chalkboards, installing all new technology, furniture, ceiling tiles, lights, doors, and painting.

As envisioned by Dr. Wade, when the renovation work is completed, the existing building will have these improvements:

- ★ **BASEMENT** – two art rooms with storage, a large flex space for professional development and small group work, a teachers' lounge, and custodial office and storage.
- ★ **FIRST FLOOR** – a new office for the school's social worker, a conference room converted from a small classroom, an area for the CORE special education program to thrive, and a "Cougar Cave" that will house concessions, a Chrome Stop, and a PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) store.
- ★ **SECOND FLOOR** – an open and communal concept to the library, the existing art room will be divided into two classrooms, and another area for students with special needs will be created similar to the CORE area on the first floor.

### HEAVY RENOVATION | TOTAL ESTIMATE: \$1,816,771

PROPOSED WORK	LOCATION	AREA COVERED	ESTIMATED COST
RENOVATE ART ROOMS & STORAGE	Basement	2,710 SQ FT	\$512,489
RESIZE & REMODEL CLASSROOMS	1st Floor	1,600 SQ FT	\$206,778
RENOVATE FLEX SPACE	1st Floor	990 SQ FT	\$110,885
BUILD-OUT CONCESSION; RENOVATE STAFF RESTROOMS	1st Floor	750 SQ FT	\$178,777
RESIZE & REMODEL CLASSROOMS	2nd Floor	1,600 SQ FT	\$206,778
RENOVATE FLEX SPACE	2nd Floor	930 SQ FT	\$104,164
RENOVATE STUDENT RESTROOMS	2nd Floor	FIGURE NOT AVAILABLE	\$496,900

### LIGHT RENOVATION | TOTAL ESTIMATE: \$1,619,129

PROPOSED WORK	LOCATION	AREA COVERED	ESTIMATED COST
REFRESH CAFETERIA	Basement	3,390 SQ FT	\$89,526
CONVERT CLASSROOM TO STORAGE	Basement	850 SQ FT	\$51,264
BUILD-OUT OFFICE SPACE	Basement	2,865 SQ FT	\$246,746
RENOVATE MUSIC ROOM	1st Floor	2,520 SQ FT	\$238,829
RENOVATE ADMINISTRATIVE AREA	1st Floor	1,900 SQ FT	\$290,695
RENOVATE INFORMATION CENTER	2nd Floor	1,880 SQ FT	\$210,569
REMODEL CLASSROOMS	Both Floors	FIGURE NOT AVAILABLE	\$423,000
RENOVATE STAIRWELLS	Both 2-Flight Stairwells	FIGURE NOT AVAILABLE	\$68,500

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The architect's rendering of the new Elm Middle School east entrance.

**Construction Work**

Besides remodeling Elm's existing space, the project will feature two areas of new construction.

On the east side of the school, a two-story addition of ten classrooms will be built. Five of the classrooms will be dedicated to science.

On the south side of the existing gym, a second gym will be constructed. The new gym will be separate from the old one, and it will not have bleachers.

"Elm's new gym spaces will be used in a variety of ways," Ms. Siegel said. "First, they will house our physical education classes. The spaces will also offer opportunities for teachers to expand their curriculum outside of their classrooms. The spaces can also be used as flex spaces for students and staff."

The existing gym will continue to be used for Elm indoor sports, graduations, concerts and assemblies. Both gyms will also be available for the community's use. In all, the new construction work is expected to cost approximately \$13.86 million. See the table at right for more details about the new facilities.

**Another Step Forward**

The expansion of Elm to accommodate sixth graders is just the latest major change planned for the school. Next year, Elm will join EPHS as a 1:1 computing school, with every student assigned a Chromebook laptop computer.

"The District is really making changes to our building based on the future," Ms. Siegel said. "The changes are all super student-centered and conducive to competency-based education: collaboration,

technology advancement, and dedicated spaces for all of the special education staff."

Ms. Siegel is confident that Elm students will be excited about the changes in store for the building, especially the open and communal space planned for the library.

"We are really trying to prepare our children for the future in many ways," she said, "and this new building will be a representation of our commitment to ensuring their achievement."

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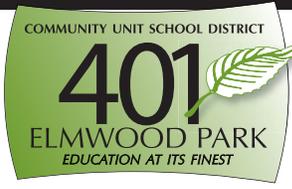


Work is underway on the Elm Middle School expansion project. These photos show the east side of the building in June, at the start of the project.

**NEW CONSTRUCTION | TOTAL ESTIMATE: \$13,857,500**

PROPOSED WORK	LOCATION	AREA COVERED	ESTIMATED COST
<b>TWO-STORY CLASSROOM ADDITION</b>	East Side of Existing Two-stories	21,400 SQ FT	\$10,257,000
<b>GYMNASIUM ADDITION</b>	South Side of Existing Gym	6,090 SQ FT	\$3,600,500





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# Elm Middle School Expansion is Underway

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

## Joining Team Elm

The addition of an entire grade of students to the middle school also means the addition of new faculty members from the two elementary schools. Ms. Siegel looks forward to bringing her new colleagues on board.

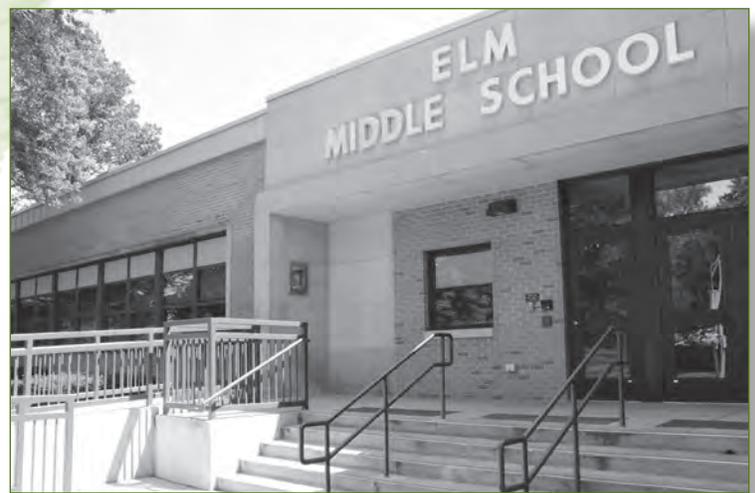
“Elm Middle School is a family,” she stated “We work together, and we work hard so that our students feel supported. We will continue with that philosophy when we have new staff in the building. We know this transition will be one that is met with excitement.”

Ms. Siegel also looks forward to keeping Elm families — both current and future — up to date on the school’s expansion.

“The community can follow us on Twitter at @elm401\_cougars,” she said. “We regularly post information about our school. When the Elm Middle School expansion occurs, we will be posting updates on our Twitter feed and through PowerSchool notifications for parents and families.”

Superintendent Wade concluded: “The number and articulation of opportunities for our middle school students in 2020-21 is something we have not seen in that building’s history. I am excited for what these experiences will be for

our three grade levels and how it will further enhance their high school career and beyond.”



A view of the current Elm Middle School main entrance. The middle school will be greatly improved by the renovation and construction project.