The most exciting time of year for the Kimberly Area School District’s facilities department is the summer. While school is out of session and with the help of about 20 summer workers - mostly college students who are Kimberly High School alumni - the department works on a lengthy project list.

With over one million square feet maintained throughout 21 District facilities, the upkeep and improvement of facilities takes significant planning and resources. Through a 10-year capital improvement plan created and updated each year by Joe Harvey, Director of Buildings and Grounds, facilities projects are strategically scheduled into the future. The plan includes many improvements throughout the District’s buildings including heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), flooring, parking lot lighting, bathrooms and security cameras. Many of the upgrades increase safety for students and staff, support student success and allow the district to realize significant energy savings.

Westside Elementary School’s New Walls

When Westside Elementary School was built in 1969, it was constructed in the open concept layout that was popular at the time. The philosophy is that the free-flowing design allows students and educators to easily move between areas for collaboration. Westside is unique in that it is the only open concept school within the Kimberly Area School District.

“Westside is known for its warm, inviting atmosphere which is created by the staff, students and families,” said Shelly Van Daalwyk, a third grade teacher at Westside. Although being relatively open, there are large defined areas known as pods divided into classrooms where students learn in a more focused setting. The classrooms were originally created through the use of room partitions, lockers and shelving that stood between 4 and 8 feet tall. The partitions and shelving were deteriorating from wear and tear. Rather than just replace them, the school evaluated...continued on back
the building and how it is currently being used by educators. They determined that they would keep
the open concept layout but replace the partitions with six foot walls. The walls reduce the noise that
travels between classrooms, creates an environment that is more organized and makes the school
easier to navigate. “The new uniform walls, lockers and cabinetry help create a clean and fresh
learning environment,” said Van Daalwyk. “The open concept feel still remains which continues to
nurture collaborative learning. The updates have not changed the learning and teaching atmosphere,
but have provided a renewed sense of pride in our building.”

Early Childhood Lab

Kimberly High School (KHS) had several maintenance and improvement projects come to fruition over
the summer. With the new Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) initiative at KHS, more students have their
own device therefore reducing the need for school-based computer labs.

In response to the changing needs of students and an increasing demand by local employers for
qualified early childhood teachers, a computer lab was transformed into an early childhood lab. “We
modeled our early childhood lab after the Early Childhood Education Lab at Fox Valley Technical
College,” said Kendra Scherg, a family and consumer science teacher at KHS. “In the lab, students
have access to technology, equipment, resources, materials and supplies
for their early childhood coursework.” Students are able to develop,
create and implement high-quality early learning materials and activities
in KASD’s 4K Center for Literacy, group child care centers, community-
based programs and for student portfolios that are aligned to the Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction’s Skills Standards and the Wisconsin
Technical College System’s Early Childhood Education program outcomes.

Senior level courses are offered in a hybrid format, meaning they consist
of online, lab and evening seminar components. “Students who have
employment outside of school through the early childhood co-op program
typically work during the day since that is when child care centers operate,”
said Scherg. “Therefore, lab time and evening seminars are the only time
to get together for collaboration and discussion. Students come together in
the lab to talk about their work and experiences, talk about problems and
questions, and reflect on the growth that they’ve had.”

Between the industry certification courses that KHS offers and transcripted courses through Fox
Valley Technical College, students can accumulate 15 or more credits that can be applied to the Early
Childhood Education program at any school in the Wisconsin Technical College System. Close to 150
students will utilize the early childhood lab over the course of this school year.

Additional Projects

Another computer lab at KHS was transformed into an additional science classroom. The extra
room is allowing the school to better help students in science. “I will be teaching biology in the new
classroom,” said Laura Wierschke, a science teacher at KHS. “One benefit of having an additional
science classroom is not having to move from room to room each Wednesday during extended
learning time, we had a difficult time finding space for students who needed to utilize space at that
time.” There will be five courses of biology with about 140 students throughout the school year who
will be using the new science classroom.

Many other projects took place over the summer to maintain and improve District facilities, from
flooring replacements to lighting upgraded to energy-saving LEDs. To remain a destination District for
families in the Fox Cities, we must meet the current and future needs of local youth through innovative
facilities. Our 10-year capital improvement plan supports our mission to ensure students have every
opportunity to reach their potential in academics, the arts and co-curricular activities.

Robert S. Mayfield, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools  •  Nicole Noonan, Editor