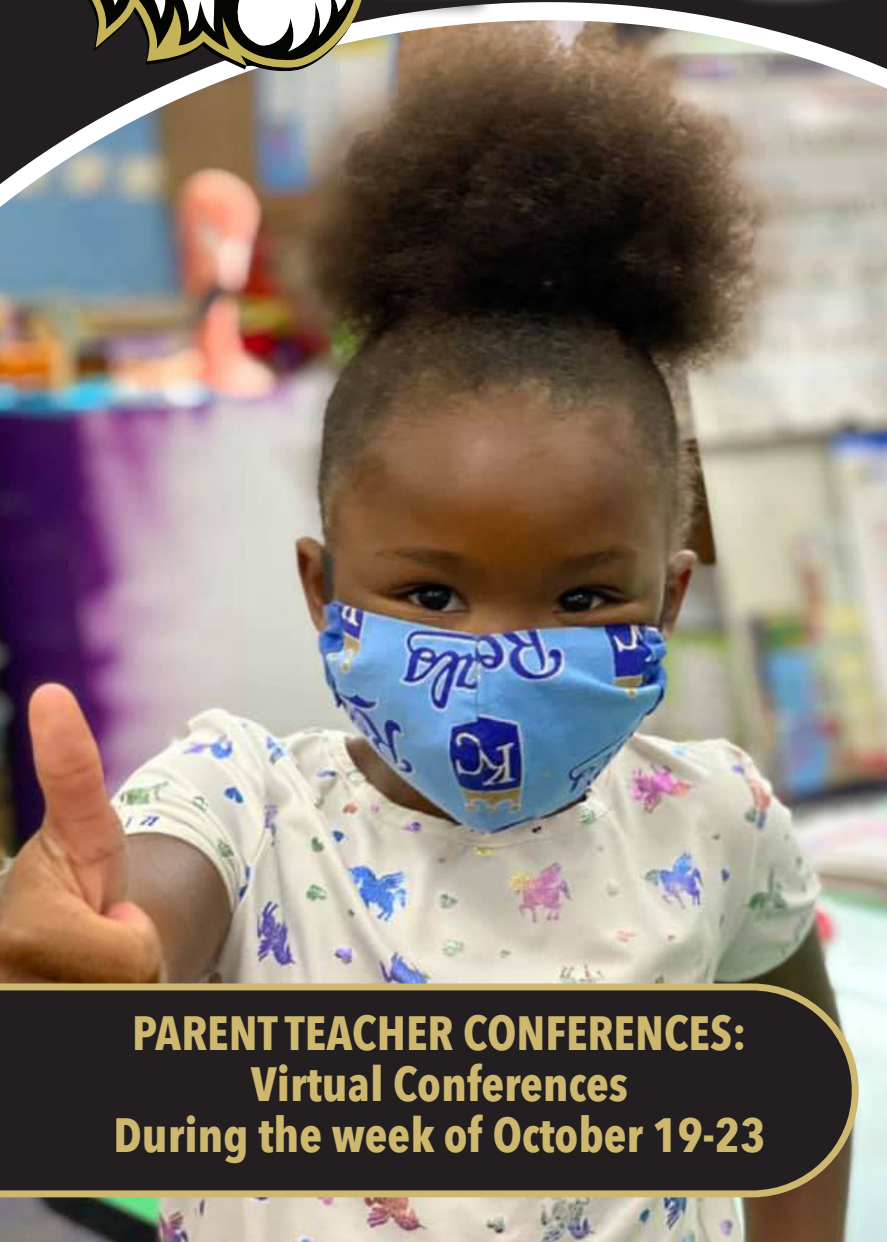




POUNCE

STRENGTHENING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Excelsior Springs School District Newsletter • October 2020



Progress as Promised

One of the hardest things to build, is trust. Anytime a local entity goes to voters and asks for permission to take on debt or take any measures that impacts their taxes, people get anxious. It makes sense, we pay enough of our hard earned money each paycheck to cover a litany of expenses for local, state and federal initiatives. More for someone else means less for me? On the surface that seems like a reasonable response. But when you start to look at what being a part of a community is, you have to start looking more at, "what can be better for all and not just me?" The ability to pool resources



throughout a community and offer better schools, parks, roads, and city services, allows many people to benefit from very large and expensive projects that couldn't be done without everyone's participation in funding them.

So when the Excelsior Springs School District set out to pass a new bond initiative, it took time for peo-

ple to see what that meant for them individually, but also for the community collectively. At the August Board of Education meeting, the school district set the tax rate the same as it was last year to follow through on its commitment to fund new building projects without increasing the tax rate.

continued on page 6

**PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES:
Virtual Conferences
During the week of October 19-23**



Superintendent Spotlight

Dr. Dan Hoehn

**Dear Excelsior Springs School District
Parents and Community Members,**

Throughout the summer months, the situation surrounding COVID-19 has continued to change our school community at a rapid pace. During the entire planning process for our return to school, ESSD has kept the safety of our students, staff and families at the forefront while offering both In-Person and At-Home Learning options. ESSD administrators and teachers have spent a great deal of time during the summer preparing for the upcoming year. This effort has contributed to a challenging, but smooth re-opening.

September is a wonderful time for all of us involved in education because it allows us to develop new goals, build new relationships and embark upon new challenges. Our district goals again

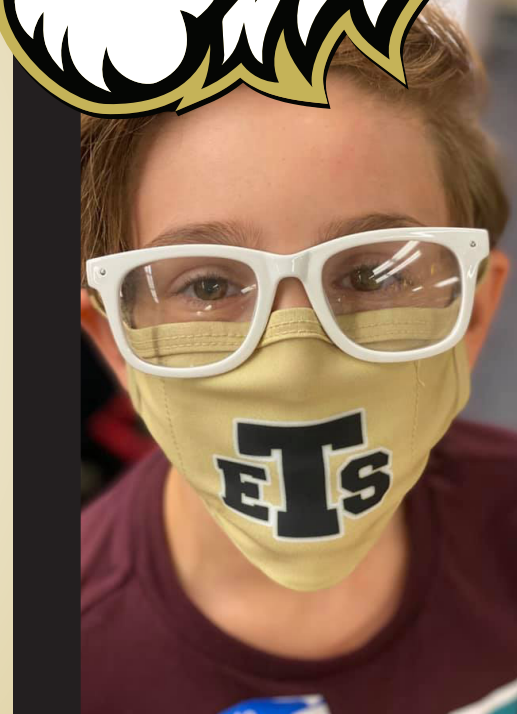
this year will highlight both academic and social and emotional learning. While improving student achievement is an important part of our mission, we know it is essential to focus on the social and emotional needs of our students as well.

One of the most important parts of our job is to have our students in the schools on a regular basis connecting with teachers and staff. We welcome the chance to both share our opportunities and challenges and to address any questions or concerns that you may have.

As we begin again, please accept my best wishes for a wonderful school year. Go Tigers!

Best Regards,

Dr. Dan Hoehn – Superintendent



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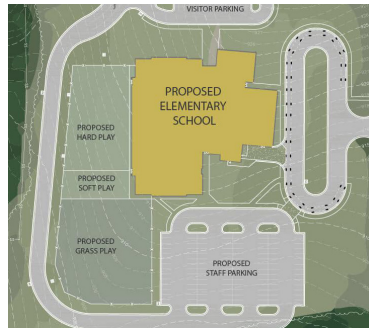
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What's My Name?

When the community voted to approve Proposition T, Excelsior Springs School District got the green light to build a new elementary school on property it owned at the corner of Wornall and Lodwick. The new facility, designed by Incite Design architects, will replace the existing Westview Elementary building. That begs the question, what do we call the new elementary? Most people assume you should just keep the current Westview name and move it on over. But that creates issues when explaining where someone should go, do you mean the old Westview, or the new Westview? Maps and directions will not be in sync and confusion about where you think you should go is problematic for visitors and parents alike.

But with every problem comes an opportunity. Dr. Dan Hoehn, Superintendent of Schools, and the Board of Education have elected to assemble a team that will assess what the best name should be for the new school building. This committee will consist of 5-10 individuals that will represent the community and the school in determin-



ing what the best name should be moving forward.

"The team will be charged with bringing recommendations to the Board of Education for consideration as we look to honor the history and traditions of Excelsior Springs while also forging a new path to our future with better school facilities for the children in our community," said School Board President Tray Harkins.

Whatever name may be chosen for the new elementary, one thing is for sure, Excelsior Springs will have its first new building for students in grades K-5 in over 60 years! So whatever name beholds this school, expect this name to be around for generations to come!

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Mrs. Baker and Mrs. Ivan

Both Mrs. Baker and Mrs. Ivan are both entering their 4th year of teaching at Excelsior Springs Middle School. Both came to education from the private sector and this is their first year teaching 8th grade science together.



How big a role does collaboration play in your planning?

Collaboration gives us a chance to brainstorm ideas, identify best practice and compute data to monitor the impact of our instruction. It also gives us time to make adjustments to current units of instruction based on feedback and data from students. It is great having someone to throw ideas off of each other and build off of each other's strengths. Collaboration also gives us time to prepare lessons and learning activities for our co-teaching that happens between our blended and virtual students.

Biggest change from last year?

Since going to a blended format of virtual and in person contact the students are being pushed to advocate more for themselves. Students are much more interactive with other classmates during instructional time. The virtual setting has allowed more opportunities for students to receive peer feedback.

Biggest Success with the Virtual Learning?

The biggest success we have experienced so far is that we have increased the number of opportunities and avenues for students to collaborate and that students feel much more comfortable helping one another in the online setting. We also feel like with the virtual piece we are preparing our students for what their continuing could look in the future.

Advice for teachers?

Our advice is to always look for ways to reach out to all students. We both help with our WEB program and we feel like we make great connections with all of our students before we have them in class. We also take any opportunity we can to help with after school activities to make connections as well. The more you are present the more students know you care.

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Navigating Covid-19.....

Operating schools in a safe and effective manner will be dependent on everyone involved. The Excelsior Springs School District looks forward to working with staff, students and parents to make daily school life as safe and enjoyable as possible. A COVID taskforce was assembled to assess the needs and actions required to reduce the risks associated with COVID-19. Participating on this task force are the Deputy Superintendent of Schools, a building principal, the Director of Maintenance and Custodians, the Rockin' Tiger Club Director, and the District Nurse. While the school district will work diligently to reduce risks, we acknowledge that exposure to COVID-19 is possible regardless of our best efforts to keep anyone from being exposed. We will continue to adapt to our environment and provide the best support to our staff, students and community.

To better communicate what the latest

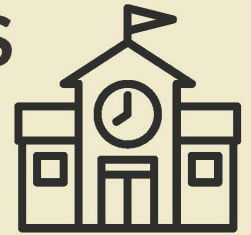
news and information is concerning COVID-19 and its impact to our schools, the district created a webpage dedicated to resources for parents and staff. If one goes to www.essd40.com and goes to District Information, a link to the COVID page can be accessed. On this page you can find a dashboard that shows the current week's tally of positive cases in the district as well as how many people are quarantined as a precaution due to exposure to someone with the virus. Numbers are inclusive of both students and staff, and are split up by building. The dashboard is updated each Monday to show what buildings and areas are being addressed to ensure that information is shared to all stakeholders in the educational process.

Please understand that this time in our lives remains very fluid and tumultuous. Guidance and rules that govern schools may change at any time. The staff at ESSD remain focused

LEARNING OPTIONS

Elementary: In Person or Virtual

Secondary: A/B Hybrid or Virtual



FACIAL COVERINGS

Face coverings are required for all staff and students.



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focused on responding to those changes with one thing in mind, answering the bell for what challenge comes before us and finding a way to deliver meaningful educational opportunities for each and every one of our students. Wearing face coverings continues to be a requirement for anyone at school

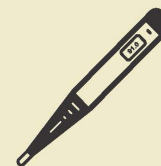
To all ESSD employees, we want to say thank you! Thank you for your flex-

ibility, resilience, dedication and grace. You continue to be the cornerstone of our district. All of our employees continue to be critical to our district success and student centered focus. As we strive for a return to normalcy in the district and reopening our doors fully, our staff is needed now, more than ever. Thank you again to all our Tiger families, for your support, and your cooperation during this time.



EXTENDED SAFETY MEASURES

- Parents should check their children for symptoms of COVID-19 before sending them to school each day. If your child has a fever of 100 degrees or higher, or any other symptoms, please keep them at home.
- Social Distancing will be utilized in classes, on the playgrounds and in passing periods as possible.
- COVID-19 and EPA-approved disinfecting products will be used to clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are available throughout the buildings and frequent hand washing is encouraged.
- Visitors and volunteers are not allowed in buildings during the school day.



To all ESSD employees, we want to say thank you! Thank you for your flexibility, resilience, dedication and grace. You continue to be the cornerstone of our district.

MKT-58941-A

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

ESSD IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS ARE MOVING ALONG QUICKLY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

With a green light from the community to begin building and remodeling, the projects got off the ground quickly. The most noticeable projects to start were the new elementary building and the high school commons remodel. Dr. Dan Hoehn, Superintendent of Schools said, "We understand the importance of delivering quality projects on budget. If we expect to go back to voters for another no tax increase bond issue to replace Lewis Elementary, we need

to show voters that they can trust us to do so without raising taxes and still deliver high quality facilities."

The high school commons project was completed to begin the school year. The new elementary school plans to open by the end of 2021. The Elkhorn Elementary updates began with expanded parking lots this past summer, refurbished cafeteria, and will see substantial updates next summer including new classroom additions and a new music room that will double as a FEMA safe storm shelter.



The high school commons project was completed to begin the school year. The new elementary school plans to open by the end of 2021.

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English Under the Arches



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College Degree



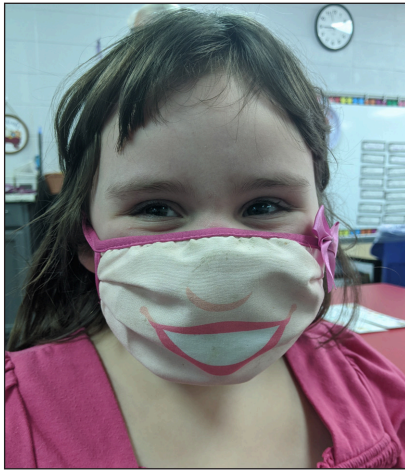
Advising



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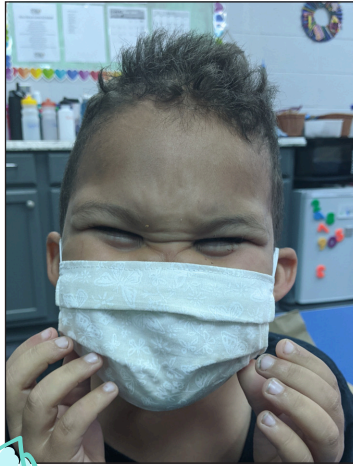


Let's be friends! Keep up with ESSD40 on Facebook!



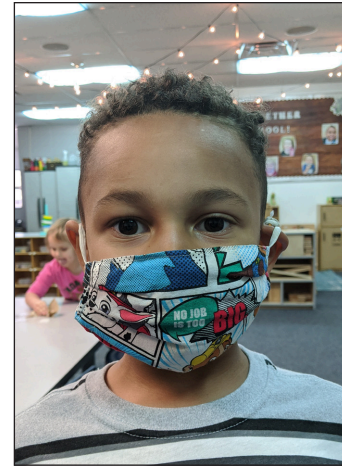
Clara Jo Perkins

When I go to school I have lots of people to play with and do stuff with and it's fun.



Semaj Jordan

I like being at school to have fun and sing happy birthday to people



Kameron Saunders

Playing with all the trucks



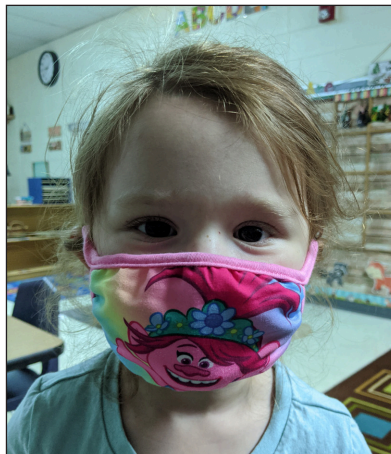
Student Spotlight

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE THING TO DO IN PRESCHOOL?



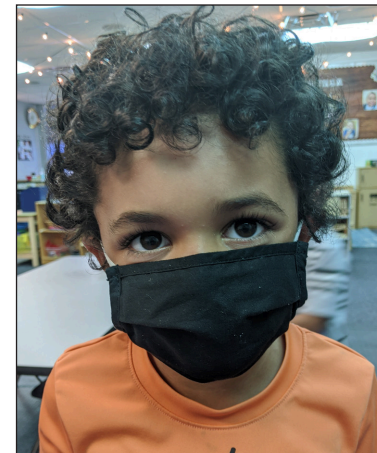
Kaytyn Hosley

I like to string the beads!



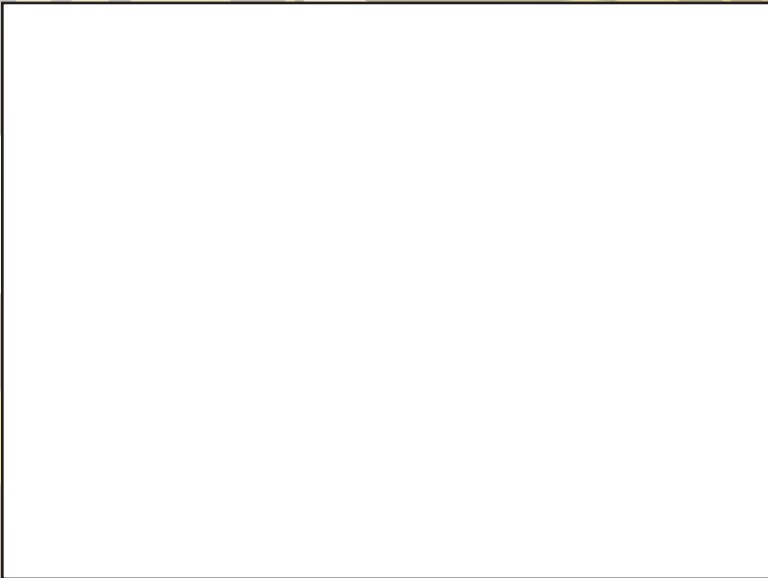
Meredith Mayes

I like me going to school to play with the babies and feed them.



Zayne Kennedy

I like building bridges and garages with the big blocks



***SAFETY
MATTERS
Please wear
a mask***

Keep up with the
School District at
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and ESSD40.com

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