

Elkhart Community Schools

inspiring. excellence.

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Moving Forward

The start of each school year brings excitement and renewed enthusiasm to the students and staff members that make up Elkhart Community Schools. The new year is a time to assess our past progress and set more challenging goals for the future. It's a time to look forward in anticipation and with high expectations.

Elkhart Community Schools is not only looking forward, we're moving forward. We're providing programs which help students

- recognize the importance of learning,
- improve achievement and attendance,
- reinforce skills,
- set personal, academic, and career goals, and
- develop self-discipline and responsibility.

We believe strongly it is our mission to inspire excellence in each one of the 13,000-plus students who walk through our doors every day. We won't rest until every child, regardless of race, gender, socio-economic status, or current academic achievement level, has met their true potential.

We're moving forward. There's no stopping us!



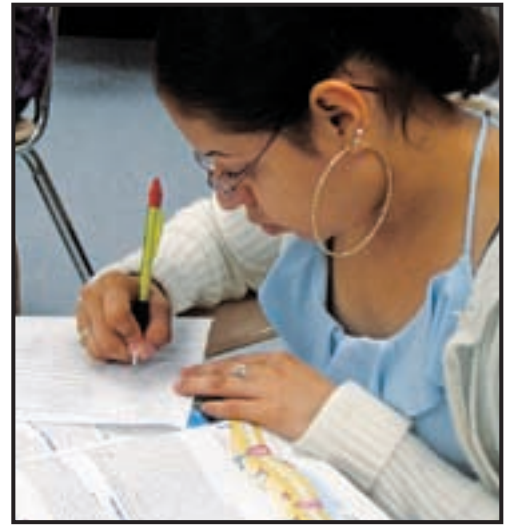
Leading the Way

In an effort to meet the needs of our top achieving students, as well as the local community, ECS is expanding the offerings of Project Lead the Way, an engineering and technology education program for high school students. This year, Central High School will begin offering a four-year honors curriculum in biomedical sciences.

This Project Lead the Way program will begin as a component of the new Freshmen Honors Academy, featuring honors-level courses in core subject areas. The curriculum will focus on preparation for post-secondary education and careers in highly technical fields.

An estimated 80 freshmen will take the first course, Principles of Biomedical Sciences, an introduction to the field through hands-on projects. Students will study human medicine, research processes, and an introduction to bioinformatics by investigating the human body systems and various health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and infectious diseases.

The introductory course will be followed, in sequence, by Human Body Systems, a study of basic human physiology; Medical Intervention, a study of the medical practices and interventions to maintain health; and Science Research, in which teams of students will conduct research, write a scientific paper, and defend their conclusions and recommendations to a panel of outside reviewers. In this final course, students will be paired with mentors from the scientific and/or medical community.



Memorial Producing Engineers



At Memorial, six seniors are in their final year of pre-engineering courses offered through Project Lead the Way. If these students enroll at Purdue University next fall, they will receive 12 college credits.

Courses in the curriculum include Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Digital Electronics, and the capstone course, Engineering Design and Development.

Project Lead the Way will give Memorial students a head start on their college technology education as it includes the same software used in college engineering courses. Also, NIBCO and other local manufacturing companies have partnered with Memorial to provide internships to engineering students so they can obtain some real-world experience.

ECS is Bully-Free Zone

Elkhart Community Schools is committed to providing all students a comfortable and safe learning environment. One of the ways in which we are improving our school climates is through the implementation of the nationally recognized Olweus Bully Prevention Program.

The program is being utilized in 14 of our 21 schools and at least four additional buildings will kick off the program this school year. The program teaches students appropriate behavior in school hallways, classrooms, playgrounds, lunchrooms, and other areas where students congregate.

Students, and staff members, are also taught appropriate ways to respond to a bully, and how to help the children being bullied.

An important aspect of the program is the community component. Mary Holsopple, the district's bully prevention coordinator, explains children need to have the same messages reinforced wherever they go. So Holsopple will begin working with community agencies and other places students congregate before and after school to ensure children have the same rules and responses there.

Parent support coordinators are also offering parent training so families can provide the same consistency at home.

The goals of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program are to reduce existing bully problems among children, prevent the development of new problems, improve peer relations, and improve the overall community climate.

"This program is really about prevention," Holsopple said. "It's about being proactive. Working on relationship issues with young children can reduce the amount of future violence in the community."



Elkhart WINS!

Limited print space and air time make it impossible for the local news media to highlight all of the good things occurring in our schools on a daily basis. That's why we publish Elkhart WINS!, a monthly, online newsletter filled with positive and inspiring stories about the students, staff, volunteers, and programs of Elkhart Community Schools.

If you're hungry for "good news," subscribe to Elkhart WINS! It will make you feel good about Elkhart's young people and those who work hard each day to ensure that all children reach their full potential.



[www.elkhart.k12.in.us/
content.php?id=29](http://www.elkhart.k12.in.us/content.php?id=29)

Now, More Than Ever...

Realizing its potential to positively impact the lives of Elkhart's young people, community members have been working behind the scenes for more than a year to bring the Boys & Girls Club of America to Elkhart. This winter, extension clubs will open in four ECS elementary schools: Beardsley, Bristol, Daly, and Osolo.



These schools were chosen as the result of census research and taking into consideration the several youth facilities already serving the south side of Elkhart, including the Tolson Center, YMCA, and Youth for Christ-Lifeline. LaCasa, Inc. of Goshen is also planning to host youth programs at the Roosevelt Center.

The Boys & Girls Club provides more than just a place for kids to go. It provides a place for kids to grow. Club programs and activities are offered in five core programming areas: health and life skills, education and career development, character and leadership development, the arts, and sports, fitness, and recreation.

The mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs is to enable all young people to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Club statistics prove the organization is making a difference, according to a 2007 national survey of Boys & Girls Club alumni:

- 62 percent became more committed to their education
- 82 percent reported improved self-confidence
- 85 percent received a sense of belonging
- 57 percent said the club "saved my life."

The Boys & Girls Club will partner with ECS to open phase I of the Boys & Girls Club of Elkhart, the four extension clubs. Each club location will be open to children who attend that specific school. Hours will be from the end of the school day until 6 p.m. each weekday.

Phase II of the plan will consist of establishing full service, year-round Boys & Girls Club facilities and programming in the City of Elkhart.

ECS is proud to be part of this historic endeavor and we encourage the community to support the campaign to launch the initial phase of the program. Now, more than ever, Elkhart is a great place to raise a family!



Perspectives...

As a former Elkhart student, teacher and administrator, I've experienced first hand the challenges faced each day by our students and staff members. Despite the dire labels like "failing schools" sometimes foisted on public education today, I believe Elkhart Community Schools will continue to meet the challenges put before us.

We're moving forward, despite shrinking school funding from the state and federal government, despite the number of children living in poverty, despite the number of students for whom English is not their native tongue, despite the number of kindergarten students starting school with a lack of basic skills, and despite federal mandates that require teachers to spend more time testing students and less time teaching them.

We're moving forward to ensure that by the time they graduate from high school, each one of our students will have the skills and knowledge necessary to be productive citizens.

As president of the Elkhart Board of School Trustees, I encourage you to move forward with us. We need you to continue to volunteer in our schools, to support after-school programs like the Elkhart Boys & Girls Club and the Tolson Center, and to share the good things happening daily in our schools with your friends, neighbors, and co-workers.



Robert A. Minichillo,
President of Elkhart Board of School Trustees



Elkhart Board of School Trustees

Robert A. Minichillo,
president (pictured)

Glenn L. Duncan,
vice president

Susan C. Daiber,
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trustee

Measuring Up

Standardized test scores are one way to rate the success of a school district. Student achievement in state- and national-level competition is another way. Here's how we measure up.

- * Feeser sixth graders won the K'NEXpert Classroom Challenge, a nationwide contest to design the best roller coaster using K'Nex building sets.
- * Pinewood's Christine Cunningham won the elementary division of the 2008 Indiana "InvestWrite" student essay contest.
- * Drew Bachman of North Side received the CollegeChoice Future Leaders Award
- * Pinewood's Math Team placed 10th in the state at the 2008 Math Bowl.
- * Nicole Darrigan and Rebecca Smith of Memorial received Best Witness awards at the Indiana Mock Trial Association State Finals.
- * Brandy Sechrist and Michael Miller of Central were finalists in the 2008 Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance eXcel Awards competition.
- * Memorial's Rubia Hagans earned a Gold Key in the 2008 Scholastic Art Show in New York.
- * Central's orchestra placed fourth in the 2008 ISSMA Orchestra State Finals.
- * The Elkhart Area Career Center's Culinary Arts Team won the 2008 Indiana ProStart Invitational.

Testing, Testing, 1,2,3...



Indiana's transition from fall ISTEP+ testing to spring ISTEP+ testing will require students to take the standardized exam twice during the 2008-2009 school year.

Students will take the fall 2008 test, measuring what students learned during the 2007-08 school year, between September 15 and 26. They will take the spring 2009 test, which

will measure what students learn this school year, near the end of the school year.

Students in grades three through eight will take the open-ended portion of the new 2009 ISTEP+ between March 2 and 11 and the multiple choice portion between April 26 and May 6.

The new Spring ISTEP+ test is expected to have fewer questions per subject than the current exam, but it requires a longer testing window because social studies has been added.

Along with the spring testing, ISTEP+ will begin moving toward an online format. We don't expect Elkhart students to take the test online this year, but it is a certainty in the near future.

Sophomores will take the Graduation Qualifying Exam portion of the ISTEP+ between March 10 and 12. Also, high school students enrolled in courses with mandatory end of course assessments (ECAs), a new addition to the ISTEP+ process, will take these tests between May 11 and 22. These ECAs include English 10 and 11, Algebra I and II, Biology I, and U.S. history. Beginning with the Class of 2012, the ECAs for Algebra I and English 10 will become the new Graduation Qualifying Exam.

Mapping Out a Course



In an effort to boost the district's English/language arts scores on standardized tests and classroom writing assignments, ECS has begun a new process—curriculum mapping—to chart the course for each E/LA classroom.

"Curriculum mapping will help us complete the alignment of our curriculum with the state standards and will help our teachers by providing them with a roadmap for what they should be teaching at a particular time," said Brad Sheppard, supervisor of curriculum and instruction. "We're starting with English/language arts because that's the area that needs the most attention."

The process includes three types of maps.

1. **Essential maps** give a broad perspective of what should be taught across the district in a given time period.
2. **Diary maps**, created by every E/LA teacher in the district, personalize essential maps to individual classrooms.
3. **Consensus maps** are the collaboration of grade-level teachers in a building on their diary maps.

"With curriculum mapping, we're making sure teachers are covering the essential content, but we're not taking away teachers' individual creativity," Sheppard emphasized.

For example, mapping could mandate that a third-grade teacher focus on multiple-meaning words in the month of October, but would leave it up to the teacher to determine how best to teach the lessons.

For those who want the help, however, the essential maps will provide recommended teaching strategies, resources, and assessments to monitor student progress. Also, the mapping will be done online so teachers will have the ability to share their maps with each other.

Sheppard said curriculum mapping will improve student achievement by ensuring all students are being taught the proper content using the best teaching strategies. He also pointed out students who move from one Elkhart school to another will have an easier transition since the two schools should be studying the same content.

"What mapping is going to do is help teachers link their three professional development workshops, making standards work, data teams, and effective teaching strategies," Sheppard said. "Curriculum mapping is a piece that helps to tie them all together and makes them meaningful."

Read Our Walls

Public invited to view student writing

Elkhart Community Schools will be hosting the annual Young Authors Program for the county's elementary students this school year. The program will be at Memorial High School on April 25, led by popular children's authors Lester Laminack and our own LaMonte Heflick, an ECS speech pathologist and foreign language instructor.

As part of Elkhart's continued focus on literacy, a new program will be added to the writing curriculum this year. Every ECS student will have at least one writing sample on display in a school hallway throughout the month of May. The public will be invited into our schools to "Read Our Walls."

Our hope is this visible display of our students' talents will inspire and encourage more than a few budding authors as well as showcase to the public the kinds of valuable lessons taking place in our schools every day.



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