



SPRING 2022

An Environmentally Friendly Approach



Some of the new furniture at the schools is made from recycled materials.



The new lighting systems at the schools include sensors so the lights automatically turn off if there is no movement in the room.



The new water fountains all include the ability for students and staff to refill their water bottles to reduce the use of plastic bottles.

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Residents can stay up to date with all construction related information in many ways including the District's web-site at www.maine207.org/construction. The website contains videos and photos of the construction progress and new spaces.

Maine Township High School District 207 is in the middle of the largest renovation project in its more than 120-year history and the environmental impact of the work has been at the forefront of many decisions.

“We have included several green initiatives as part of our planning and implementation with relation to the additions, upgrades and changes at the schools,” says Assistant Superintendent for Finance Mary Kalou. “In addition to a positive impact on the environment, many of these initiatives will save us significant money over time.”

As part of the architectural design, the District included energy star rated equipment and purchased some furniture that was made from recycled plastic bottles. The District also utilized roofing materials with reflective properties to save on cooling costs, as well as installed permeable pavers that allow parking lots to serve as water detention. In addition, roof structures were designed to accommodate future solar panels.

In areas where the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems had to be replaced or upgraded, several environmental initiatives were included. Automation systems were added to allow for occupied and unoccupied schedules, which will save the District on energy costs. In addition, the new dedicated outdoor air systems (DOAS) are highly efficient and utilize 100% outdoor air.

Most of the lighting in the schools is being replaced as part of the upgrades and sensors have been installed that turn off the lights if there is no movement in the room. In addition, all new lighting is LED, meaning they are energy efficient, produce zero toxic elements and have a longer life span.

For the plumbing systems, low-flow flush valves were installed in many areas. Bottle fillers were installed in all new drinking fountains, reducing the need for the use of plastic bottles. ■

Cooperative Learning Approach Shows District's Commitment to Classroom Excellence



By Dr. Ken Wallace, Superintendent

What happens in the classroom matters; in fact, great teaching is the single most important thing any school district can provide to create better student outcomes. To that end, few school districts in America can rival the sustained commitment to better learning through improved teaching than Maine Township High School District 207. There are many elements that illustrate this commitment:

- Each District 207 teacher has an annual instructional coaching plan, perhaps the only model of its kind in America.
- The District trains, coaches and evaluates its teachers on the use of research and evidence-based high impact strategies that have been proven to improve student learning.
- Our teachers are also instructional coaches and trainers for their peers, which is an essential element of a great adult learning program.
- Each new District 207 teacher is part of our four-year training cohort in which we train and support our educators to be effective teachers. They are learners themselves and are able to practice continued growth as a professional to provide not only the best student outcomes possible, but to also engender a culture of learning that is oriented to growth during the teacher's career.
- Our Adult Learning program mirrors in many ways the learning pathways that we have established for our students. In this way we help sustain a culture of learning amongst our adults that supports the same thing as our students' experience.

Our journey in Cooperative Learning in particular is illustrative of our growth and discovery that led to



Cooperative Learning provides for student-to-student interaction to be at the center of instruction as opposed to the teacher being at the center of instruction. When students and their interactions are the most important part of the classroom, relationships take center stage, students get to know each other and then students belong to a classroom community of learners that values each member.

“ Each District 207 teacher has an annual instructional coaching plan, perhaps the only model of its kind in America. ”

Learn More About District 207's Approach to High Quality Instruction

There is so much more to this story and community members can learn additional information about the many approaches District 207 utilizes to ensure high quality instruction and student learning by visiting the following link: bit.ly/207teach.

In addition, subscribe to our YouTube page at www.youtube.com/District207 to keep up to date with the latest information about the schools and District.

design changes that have paid dividends for our teachers and students. Arriving in District 207 in 2005 to serve as the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, I found the District had begun training staff in Cooperative Learning, which is a set of research-based learning activities that help students learn how to work cooperatively in groups to develop interdependence while also helping each individual learner develop as a responsible member of the group. Research has consistently shown that cooperative group learning creates better outcomes for students.

One of the first things that I did after arriving was to bring in an outside group of learning experts to audit our classrooms to determine how well our teachers were using Cooperative Learning and other high impact strategies. At the time, we had trained approximately 300 teachers in Cooperative Learning, but an instructional audit revealed that virtually none of the teachers were using Cooperative Learning. However, there was a group of practitioners using Cooperative Learning regularly and with fidelity; our teacher leaders who had been trained to train other teachers. That “aha” moment confirmed the old William Glasser learning axiom, “We remember 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, but 95% of what we teach.”

So in 2007 we began adding coaching to our Cooperative Learning training. Right away those teachers in the training supported by coaching were better equipped to implement Cooperative Learning in their classrooms. Today, thanks to our new teacher cohort and our annual instructional coaching support, one is hard pressed to walk into any classroom in District 207 and not see Cooperative Learning groups operating with fidelity. Having students skillfully practiced in the art of Cooperative Learning isn't just an advantage for our students' college readiness - it's one of the most often identified career skills by today's employers.

The culture of learning that exists in District 207 is one of the most important things that sets our District apart. The quality of teaching in our classrooms is on par with the very best happening anywhere in the nation. ■



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State Honors Staff and Volunteers

Several staff members and volunteers were recognized recently by the State Board of Education for significant contributions to schools. Maine South school psychologist Steve Mihalopoulos and Maine South teaching assistant Sherrone Thompson both earned awards of excellence.

School Board President Paula Meyer Besler, Maine East teacher and instructional coach Eric Coval, Assistant Superintendent for Finance Mary Kalou, Maine South teacher Lauren Haman, Coordinator of Digital Media Dan Kolen, Maine West teacher and instructional coach Kristi Ryken, Maine West teacher Kelly Voigt and Maine Township High School Foundation Chair Susan Yadgar all earned awards of meritorious service.

The maintenance and custodial teams across the District, as well as the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support leadership team districtwide, all earned meritorious service recognition. ■



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