



FALL 2023

Construction Projects Nearly Complete



The construction projects in District 207 are nearly complete with the projects coming in on time and under budget despite a global pandemic, labor shortages and rising construction costs toward the end of the projects.

“Both the infrastructure and the functionality of our schools are light years ahead of where they were prior to the work,” Assistant Superintendent for Business Mary Kalou says. “We thank our taxpayers for their trust. In turn, we followed through on the promises made.”

In addition to the referendum and reserve funds utilized, the district also received COVID relief funds, a donation from Rivers Casino for the Maine West commercial foods lab and energy efficiency grants.

Due to several factors including unused contingencies and allowances, as well as economies of scale that were not planned, several additional projects were able to be funded. Among those were additional HVAC upgrades across the district and auditorium upgrades.

The district was able to take advantage of favorable interest rates, ultimately saving taxpayers money. In March of 2018, the district projected selling the bonds at an interest rate of 4.54% with a total debt service of \$300 million. The district sold the bonds in blocks with interest rates ranging from 1.35% to 3.01% for a total debt service of \$247 million, meaning interest costs were \$53 million lower than anticipated.

“Our staff, especially our custodial and maintenance staff, went above and beyond expectations and remained flexible during all of the stages and moves,” Kalou says.

“We truly appreciate the taxpayers’ confidence and trust as we faithfully fulfilled the promises made prior to the referendum vote,” Superintendent Dr. Ken Wallace says. “Our buildings can now serve the educational needs of our students and set them on a course for success after high school.” ■

The remodeled library at Maine South (top), the cafeteria/multipurpose area at Maine East (middle) and the pool at Maine West (bottom) are among the many areas that were improved through the referendum work at all three schools.



Referendum Projects Have Resulted in Schools with Upgraded Infrastructure and Functionality



All classrooms at Maine East were upgraded with new floors, lighting and HVAC, including the art classrooms (above) on the third floor that utilize natural light.



Students utilize the gathering stairs (above) in the library at Maine East for many purposes including group and independent work, as well as an area to relax during their lunch period.



The reimagined hallway at East (above) provides areas for students to eat during lunch and can also be used as collaborative space.

The new fieldhouse (right) at Maine West is a completely new structure that is utilized for physical education classes and competitions.



The Academic Resource Center (ARC) at Maine South (above) is a space utilized for students to receive additional help with classes and homework.



All classrooms at Maine South were remodeled and several classrooms added as part of the projects at the school. This art classroom (above) is in the area that was formerly utilized for offices.



Students utilize the new Maine South commons area (above) for collaborative work, to eat lunch and to complete homework during free periods.



Classrooms throughout Maine West (above) were remodeled and now allow for more collaborative work by teams of students with flexible space and furniture that moves easily.



The Maine West two-story cafeteria and multipurpose room (left) replaces the former cafeteria and indoor track area that was formerly in the space.



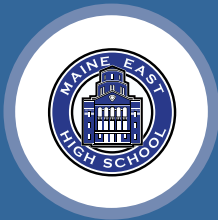
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District 207 Wins Award from U.S. Department of Energy

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) recognized District 207 with a Notable Achievement Award in the department's nationwide Efficient and Healthy Schools Campaign. District 207 was one of 17 districts from across the country to receive an award and the only district in Illinois.



The DOE campaign awarded K-12 schools that worked to substantially improve their energy performance and indoor air quality. Districts could achieve this by utilizing the latest technology to increase energy efficiency and lowering their overall emissions.

"It's really an honor to be recognized," says Mary Kalou, Assistant Superintendent for Business at District 207. "As we did the planning for the facilities master plan, energy efficiency, savings and sustainability were all a part of the requirement we wanted to achieve. Getting this award recognizes those efforts."

The district focused their improvements by installing LED lighting, occupancy sensors, energy efficient equipment, low water pressure flush valves, along with improving the air quality for students in all three buildings.

The district-wide improvements were made possible largely due to the referendum passed by District 207 voters in November 2018.

"The referendum allowed us to put a concerted effort into the energy efficiency features of the buildings," Kalou says.

Partnering with the DOE on the Efficient and Healthy Schools Campaign were the U.S. Department of Education and the Environmental Protection Agency. ■