

# Accent on Excellence

Moorhead Area Public Schools • February 2004

## Equity in Moorhead elementary schools is key consideration

### Team working on implementation of small learning communities

While construction work continues on the three elementary schools, the Elementary Implementation Team is working this year to develop the professional learning community framework for the three schools.

All three elementary schools will be of similar size and designed with small learning communities.

The Elementary Implementation Team has reviewed current research into small learning communities, discussed the philosophy of small learning communities, and reviewed the building designs.

With input from the elementary staff, the implementation team has been developing a vision statement for the elementary schools.

The team has also been discussing the role of collaborative teams. Some of the roles of the collaborative teams would be to monitor student achievement and needs, set clearly articulated goals for student academic growth, foster a sense of belonging and trust, ensure equitable learning opportunities for every student in the school, and facilitate effective professional growth for everyone in the school.

### Small Learning Communities: Advantages for Students

- Personalized learning environment
- Students are well known by a group of teachers
- Students know each other
- Safer environment
- Teachers discuss students across classes and over the years
- Greater opportunities for involvement
- Improved attendance
- Greater academic growth
- Greater parent participation

## Examples of Excellence

- In 2002-03, Moorhead High students earned \$1.1 million in scholarships.
- Moorhead students consistently score above state and national averages on the ACT exam.
- The district averages three students to one networked computer.
- Students can participate in award-winning music and theater programs.
- For the third time, the Moorhead High School Music Department has been selected as a Grammy Signature School by the Grammy Foundation of the National Association of Recording Artists.
- Two Moorhead High School students were selected from over 6,500 applicants as two of 125 finalists for the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts' (NFAA) Arts Recognition and Talent Search (ARTS) program.
- Students entering kindergarten through grade 2 can enroll in the Spanish Immersion Program.
- The Moorhead High automotive technology program earned national certification in 2001-02.
- Moorhead students are competitive across the state in academic, arts and music, speech and debate, and athletic competitions.
- Two Moorhead programs, the George Washington K-Kids and the Moorhead Junior High theater class, received State Farm \$1,000 service-learning awards to fund projects for national Youth Service Day.

## Moorhead Area Public Schools



*Learn!*  
here!

*Our mission is to develop the maximum potential of every learner to thrive in a changing world.*

To enroll your child in the Moorhead Area Public Schools call the Office of Teaching and Learning at (218) 284-3310.

Learn more about the excellence in our schools at [www.moorhead.k12.mn.us](http://www.moorhead.k12.mn.us)

# New high school schedule gives students options

Moorhead High School students will continue to have options to take elective courses, even with increased credit requirements from the state.

In January, the Moorhead School Board unanimously approved the recommendations of the Moorhead High School Enhancement Research Study Group.

The plan increases the required credits for graduation to 26. Of this, 21.5 credits are required by the state. This includes 3.5 social studies credits, 3 math credits, 3 science credits, 4 English credits, and 8 credits of electives, one of which must be an arts credit.

Additional elective credits and 1.5 credits of fitness/wellness are required for a total of 26 credits.

This will be fully implemented for the class of 2007-08 (this year's eighth-graders).

Students will be in class 30 minutes longer each day under the plan. They will also be required to register for a

minimum number of credits per year.

The board also approved a modified 8/4 period schedule with a combination of 45-minute and 90-minute periods. With additional credits required, a change in the school schedule was needed to accommodate student options for elective courses.

Departments will determine whether a class will be 45 minutes or 90 minutes.

The study group recommendation came after several months spent discussing the impact of the federal No Child Left Behind Act and the Minnesota Academic Standards on the high school curriculum.

The group focused on four issues: what should students know and be able to do when they graduate, how will the high school comply with state and federal regulations, how many credits are needed for graduation, and what schedule or method of delivery will fulfill all the requirements.



Students and staff began using the three-story ninth grade center (shown here) on Jan. 5. This mid-year move allowed construction to begin on the first floor below the media center. The media center will be on two levels after the renovations are completed.



On each floor of the ninth grade center, classrooms surround resource areas, which have lockers and computers for students to use. Each floor will be a small learning community to help break down the size of the high school.

## Probstfield to become education center



The design development phase for the conversion of Probstfield Elementary School to Probstfield Center for Education was approved by the School Board on Nov. 10, 2003. The district education center will house Early Childhood Family Education, Early Intervention Services, Head Start, Adult Basic Education, Community Education, and district offices.



Next to the ninth grade center, construction continues on the new commons/cafeteria (shown here). On the east end of the school, the new fieldhouse is being built.

# Middle school creates small learning communities

When Horizon Middle School opens in the fall, students will spend the majority of the day studying core subjects under a proposal approved by the School Board in January.

The board approved the Middle School Implementation Team's curriculum and schedule recommendation at the Jan. 26 meeting.

The proposal recommends a schedule with 13 30-minute blocks.

The curriculum recommendation is designed as a three-year program that will address the needs of the majority of students. Individual needs of students will be addressed as necessary.

Each day, 270 minutes will be divided among the five core

subjects and adviser/advisee time.

Trimesters of physical education, healthy lifestyle, French and Spanish will be exploratories during grades 6, 7 and 8. Students will have one block of music each day based on this proposal.

Key considerations for the proposal were an emphasis on core subjects, exploratory options, arts programming, physical activity and health education for all students, and attention to social/emotional growth.

Further consideration will be given to additional opportunities for eighth-grade students and a recommendation for current seventh-grade world language students.



The three-story academic wing will have nine "houses" with about 130 to 150 students in each.



Classroom walls in the academic wing have been sheetrocked, and ceiling grid is being installed. Lab stations are being installed in the science classrooms.

## Schedule and Curriculum Recommendation

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<b>Core (270 minutes each day)</b>		
Adviser/Advisee	Adviser/Advisee	Adviser/Advisee
Science	Science	Science
Reading	Language Arts	Language Arts
Math	Math	Math
Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
Trimesters of:	Trimesters of:	Trimesters of:
• Language Arts	• Reading	• Reading
• Language Arts	• Art	• Theater Arts
• Art	• Information Technology	• Information Technology
<b>Exploratories (60 minutes each day)</b>		
Trimesters of:	Trimesters of:	Trimesters of:
• Physical Education	• Physical Education	• Physical Education
• Physical Education	• Physical Education	• Healthy Lifestyles
• Healthy Lifestyles	• French	• Spanish
<b>Exploratories (30 minutes each day)</b>		
Music	Music	Music



On the south side of Horizon Middle School, the exterior of the main entry and the media center take shape. Windows have been installed in the upper floors of the three-story academic wing.

## Highlights of Facilities Plan

- Change the district's grade configuration from K-4/5, 5-6, 7-8, 9-12 to K-5, 6-8, 9-12.
- Build a new grades 6-8 middle school. Implement the middle school model.
- Convert Robert Asp and Moorhead Junior High to K-5 elementary schools.
- Build a new K-5 elementary school.
- Renovate Moorhead High School by adding a ninth grade center, cafeteria/commons and fieldhouse.
- Convert Probstfield Elementary School to a district education center.

# All elementary schools to be new or remodeled



New blue curtainwall was installed on the exterior of Robert Asp School and Moorhead Junior High School (shown here) over the summer. The two schools are being renovated as K-5 elementary schools.

While construction continues on the schools, the Elementary Implementation Team has been meeting to develop the small learning communities within the schools. For more information see page 1.



Construction on S.G. Reinertsen Elementary School in south Moorhead began in April 2003. The exterior of the school has now been bricked and many of the windows have been installed.

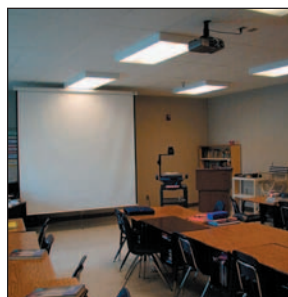


Kindergarten classrooms at S.G. Reinertsen have been painted. Ceilings and casework (cabinets) have been installed. Flooring is now being installed. The new school will open along with the other two elementary schools in the fall of 2004.



Classrooms in the two-story portion of Robert Asp School and Moorhead Junior High were renovated over the summer. Additional renovations will be done this summer.

Above: This classroom at Robert Asp has new cabinets and counters for classroom computers. Left: New ceiling mounted projection systems have been installed in remodeled classrooms at Robert Asp.



Work continues on the two-story media center at S.G. Reinertsen. Classrooms for fourth and fifth-graders will be on the second floor.

### Moorhead School Board

Kristine Thompson, Chair  
Lisa Erickson, Vice Chair  
Carol Ladwig, Clerk  
Bill Tomhave, Treasurer

Cindy Fagerlie, Director  
Sonia Hohnadel, Director  
Mike Siggerud, Director

### District Administration

Dr. Larry P. Nybladh, Superintendent  
Lynne Kovash,  
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning  
Mark Weston,  
Assistant Superintendent of Business Services

Learn more about the excellence that exists in the Moorhead Area Public Schools by visiting our award-winning district Web site at [www.moorhead.k12.mn.us](http://www.moorhead.k12.mn.us)