



**Transitioning to Our New School
SPECIAL EDITION January 2022**

www.mansfieldct.gov

New School Construction Sparks Winter Excitement

Mansfield elementary school students and staff were treated to a great show in their classrooms just before winter break. A mammoth white beam was lifted into place in the structure that is growing into the new Mansfield Elementary School. A live camera on top of Southeast School broadcast the event. What makes this beam different from others is that it carries hundreds of colorful signatures of Mansfield's kindergarten to grade 4 students, many of whom will be attending the school next year.

The beam raising is one element in the plan for students to engage with the progress of their new school. Students from Annie E. Vinton Elementary and Dorothy C. Goodwin Elementary School took a bus ride to meet the Principal of the Mansfield Elementary School, Lauren Rodriguez, who guided them on a tour of the site. Southeast School students, who watch the progress daily, were also able to gather with their grade level peers.

Each student and teacher then signed their names on the white beam in bold colored pens, and posed for pictures with their classmates.



Goodwin Elementary School students watch the construction workers and vehicles on their tour of the new elementary school site.

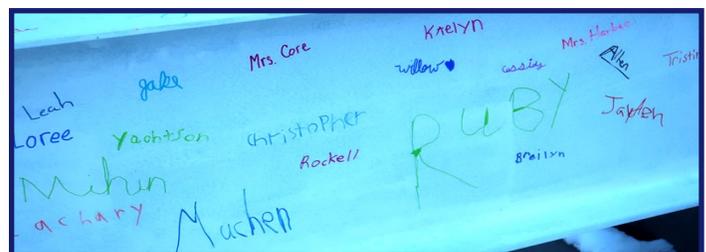


Students from all three elementary schools signed a white beam which was lifted into place atop the new school in December. Above, School Building Committee member and grade 1 teacher Rich Weyel and his students add signatures to the beam.

The students, poised safely on the edge of the building site, then watched the construction vehicles and workers, and saw drawings of the planned school. STEM/Enrichment Teachers acted as "tour guides" pointing out highlights of the building.

Students were encouraged to ask questions, and they shared plenty! Where will the cafeteria be? What is that truck dumping? Where will the grade 2 classrooms be? What will the bathrooms be like? What will we have for equipment on the playground?

This initiative is just one of the ways that the Mansfield Schools administration and teachers are working to help students understand and build excitement for moving into Connecticut's first net-zero public school.



Board of Education's Superintendent Search Committee Ready to Interview Candidates

The Mansfield Public Schools Board of Education, acting as the Superintendent Search Committee, is moving to the interview stage of finding a new Superintendent of Schools.

The new administrator will replace Kelly Lyman, who is resigning June 30 after leading the district since 2015. The successful candidate is expected to be chosen in the first quarter of 2022. The Search Committee is following a process of reviewing application packets and scheduling interviews with top-qualified candidates.

Cooperative Educational Services (CES) of Trumbull, CT who has previously assisted the district, was selected to help Mansfield Public Schools facilitate the search. The process included an online survey plus a series of online focus groups with teachers and staff, parents, and community members in November and early December. Community engagement helps to articulate what qualities are important to Mansfield in screening candidates for this position. CES reached out to nearly 2,000 current superintendents in the Northeast and 9,000 more district leaders across the country. The job opening was also promoted on a number of education-related websites.

Mansfield Schools Superintendent Kelly Lyman will retire June 30 after serving seven years in Mansfield and 38 years in public education.

The Board is conducting a national search for a new leader for the district.



Applications were due December 20, and CES is screening them to organize which candidates the search committee should interview. The goal is to select the new superintendent early in the year to maximize the transition period before July 1, 2022.

The Board of Education and Superintendent Lyman believe that this time is especially important to carefully prepare for the staff and student introduction to the new Mansfield Elementary School and start of the 2022-23 school year.

Growing a New School:

An Update from School Leaders on The New Mansfield Elementary School Construction and Transition

Please join Superintendent Kelly Lyman and Board of Education Chair Kathy Ward for an in-person presentation about the construction progress, and the district's plans to ensure a smooth transition to the new Mansfield Elementary School.



Mansfield Senior Center

Monday, January 31

9:30 AM

303 Maple Road

Mansfield Public Library

Tuesday, February 8

5:30 PM

Buchanan Auditorium

54 Warrenville Road

Making it Real: How Teachers are Engaging Students about Their New School

This year classroom teachers across the district have been sharing ideas for how to engage students in understanding the significance of their new elementary school without overwhelming them.

New School, New Mascot

Grade 3 students, who will be the grade 4 leaders next year in the new building, will be invited to design the new school mascot. All elementary students will vote to select their favorite, and then the mascot will be rendered for application on apparel, posters and other items in the new school year.

Circle Time Includes Construction Live-Cam

Goodwin School teachers Kim Ruiz and Sara Sroka start the day with a classroom meeting with their grade 2 students. They talk about what date it is, what the weather is outdoors, and whose birthday it might be. Then they switch on the live camera at the school construction site and talk about what has changed since yesterday.

Nuts and Bolts about Net Zero Energy

Among Mansfield's Core Beliefs is to Ensure Active Learning. The construction of the state's first net zero energy public school becomes an ideal laboratory for active learning. STEM/Enrichment teachers are working with upper elementary-age students to help them understand the various features that work together to create a net zero school.

These teachers have each received briefings on the details of the new school, and have framed curriculum to make it meaningful for their students. From design features, to heating and cooling features, students are beginning to understand how it all works together.

Select grade 4 students next year will have the responsibility to be the lead tour guides for visitors to the new building, including explaining the net-zero energy benefits of the school.



During class meeting time, grade 2 students point out what they notice at the construction site and how it changes each day.

Community members and students can watch the new school emerge from the site—literally. The live web-cam installed on the roof of Southeast School runs live day and night. Watch the construction progress anytime through this link on the town and school website:

mansfieldct.gov/2178/Watch-our-School-Grow

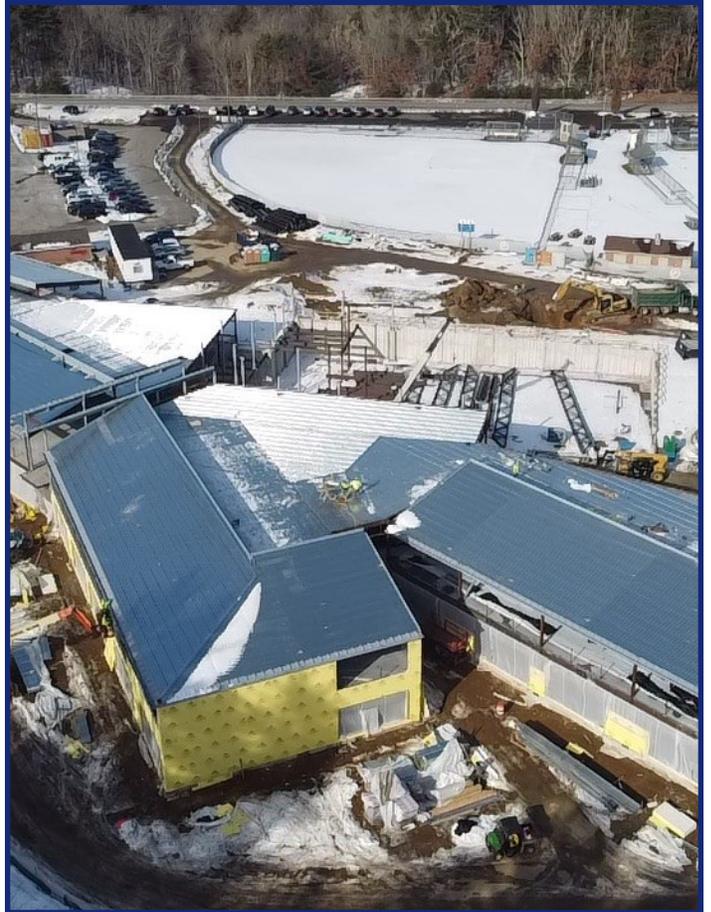


STEM/Enrichment teachers at each elementary school have become resident experts about net zero energy and other aspects of the new school so they can incorporate the science into their lessons with students and build excitement.

From a Vision to Reality: Mansfield Elementary School Construction Progresses



This is the scale model created by TSKP Studios, the architect for the project, to check design details before proceeding with construction.



The school is being constructed in three sections. While sheathing is being added to two classroom wings, steel decking is being installed in the gymnasium.



The geothermal well field is connected to the pump house and school building by a series of underground pipes shown in this photo. This system replaces fossil fuel-burning boilers and cooling systems. Instead, ground temperature and electricity will heat and cool the building.



Two sections of the school are nearly closed in. Within a few weeks the roofing and weatherproofing will allow internal buildout to move forward quickly, regardless of the weather outside.

Team-Building: The Key to a Unified Vision for the New Elementary School

Southeast School Principal Lauren Rodriguez was announced as the leader of the new Mansfield Elementary School early in the 2021-22 school year. To her future staff members, she immediately outlined the plan and steps they would all take to blend their talents into one elementary school and shape a new unified culture.

Ms Rodriguez has begun meeting with each grade level teaching team from the three elementary schools for frequent planning sessions. These sessions not only provide the opportunity for team members to get to know Principal Rodriguez and each other, but to share ideas for curriculum and establish expectations. The teachers also develop ideas about how to share the progress of the building with their students in age-appropriate and exciting ways.

Another focus of Rodriguez's plan is individual Hopes and Dreams conversations with all staff members. Recreational activities for staff outside of the school day are also planned for the coming months, including a staff hike in late January.

"Our work is just beginning, but taking the time this year to build relationships and trust among our new team will smooth the way for any bumps ahead," says Ms Rodriguez. "I'm extremely proud of this team, and appreciative of the support of fellow administrators, for investing the time to get this right for Mansfield's students. Our students take their cue from the adults—if we're confident and communicate positivity, the children will reflect that, too."



(Above) Throughout the fall, teachers from across the district have shared in grade-level meetings with Principal Lauren Rodriguez so they can begin to collaborate on curriculum for next year. The goal is to support teachers through the transition to the new school next year. Each session has ended with an exercise in Priorities for Future Work.

(Below) The school district has provided staff more opportunities to mingle and get to know one another, such as at a lunchtime during a fall professional development day held at Mansfield Middle School. With three elementary schools becoming one, a new school culture will emerge.



Mansfield Public Schools

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Superintendent of Schools

Kelly Lyman

District Central Office, 4 South Eagleville Road, Storrs, CT 06268

860-429-3350 mboesupt@mansfieldct.org