

BELLE PLAINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT 716 UPDATE



FACILITIES

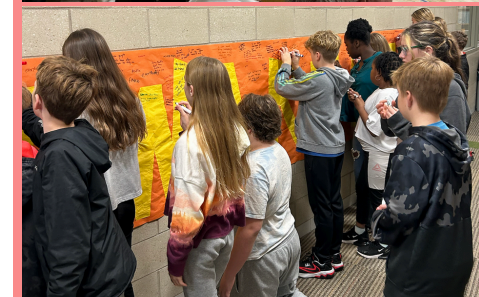
Over the past year, we have dedicated significant effort to evaluating the condition of our facilities. It has become increasingly clear that we face substantial challenges just to maintain functionality due to the significant age of our buildings.

When comparing our facilities to other school districts in the region, it is evident that we are operating with some of the oldest buildings. For context, the elementary school recently replaced in Jordan was seven years newer than our Chatfield Elementary School. Moreover, much of the facility housing our Agriscience courses, woods courses, SOAR program, and performing arts space dates all the way back to 1929.

To better understand our needs, we partnered with a construction management company to conduct a thorough evaluation of our facilities. Their assessment revealed that maintaining and keeping our current spaces functional would require an investment of nearly \$50 million in repairs and maintenance over the coming years.

In addition to these maintenance needs, we also face several critical facility gaps compared to neighboring districts:

- **Security Concerns:** At the secondary level, students must frequently transition between the main building and separate spaces, which creates security vulnerabilities. Additionally, our elementary schools lack secure entrances where all visitors must pass through a staffed office. While we currently use a buzzer system to monitor visitors, this is not an ideal solution for ensuring the safety of our students and staff.
- **Auditorium:** We are the only district in the region without a fully functioning, traditional auditorium.



- **Gymnasium Space:** Our gym facilities are insufficient to meet the demands of our programs. The current space is fully utilized, with practices scheduled as early as 6 a.m. and extending late into the evening. Despite these efforts, overcrowding and scheduling conflicts remain persistent challenges.
- **Career & Technical Ed (CTE):** Our expanding CTE programs need significant updates to align with modern workforce demands and adequately prepare students for future careers.



specifically with, Building Inspector, Jim Tiegs. Jim worked closely with our students to explain building codes and the rationale behind different regulations for various structures. His guidance helped make this an invaluable experience.

Overall, this has been a fantastic opportunity for our students to apply real-world skills. We are excited to explore more ways to expand these kinds of authentic, hands-on learning experiences, especially in the Career and Technical Education (CTE) field.

HIGHLIGHTING & HONORING STAFF

As we approach winter break it is important to take a moment to recognize and celebrate the incredible dedication and hard work of our teachers and support staff. During this exciting and energetic time of year, they have gone above and beyond to maintain predictable routines and provide a stable, supportive learning environment for our students. Their commitment to excellence and care ensures that this season remains both joyful and meaningful for everyone in our schools.

We want to highlight the innovative teaching happening in Mrs. Bungarden’s 6th-grade classroom, she truly “harnessed the power of the sun” to teach moon phases in a

memorable and engaging way. When students returned from lunch, they found the room transformed—desks cleared away and a glowing globe-shaped light bulb suspended from the ceiling. Using this creative setup, students explored the rotations of the earth, sun, and moon, experimenting with shadows to deepen their understanding of this fascinating concept. It was a hands-on lesson that brought science to life and ignited curiosity in her students.

Mrs. Schroers 3rd-grade classroom is a place where fun and engaging lessons come to life. Recently, her students participated in a deep discussion about Julius and Augustus Caesar, debating who they would rather have as a ruler. In third grade! The level of information and critical thinking these students demonstrated was nothing short of incredible. Mrs. Schroers made the discussion both enjoyable and thought-provoking by infusing humor and posing a variety of “what if” scenarios. I wish everyone in our community could see the incredible things happening in our classrooms each day.

The level of dedication, passion, and commitment from our staff at Belle Plaine Public Schools is truly remarkable. As we enter this holiday season, I am filled with gratitude for this amazing team and the great things they do for our students every single day.

Ryan Laager
Superintendent



ECRWSS
POSTAL PATRON
STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #24
BELLE PLAINE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Taking all these factors into consideration, we are developing a facility plan designed to address these challenges and set our district up for success over the next 20+ years. Our goal is simple: to ensure that we have facilities and spaces comparable to those of other districts in the region—nothing more, nothing less.

CONSTRUCTION TRADES COURSE

We are continually working to create hands-on learning opportunities for our students. This year, our Construction Trades class has been building a 15' x 56' shed at our softball complex. The project was made possible thanks to the support of the Softball Association, which secured donations and funding for materials. To minimize costs and maximize learning, our students took on the construction of the shed.

This project also provided an opportunity to partner with the city,