

## **Construction Update – April 12**

The construction continues at Cumberland, Richards and the High School. Both elementary schools have already had a ceremony to recognize the opening of the new additions. The High School Music Wing addition will open in the very near future (sometime after April 15<sup>th</sup>).

The balance of the construction will be completed prior to the start of the next school year. Classrooms are being renovated and turned back over (with the new functions moving into the newly renovated space) so that we can continue the progress toward completion. Science rooms at the High School will begin after the movement of the music functions.

**Please also see an attachment that outlines the planning completed to date related to the replacement of the playground equipment that was removed as a result of the Richards addition. The plan would require more funds than currently allocated out of the referendum contingency funds. The Richards PTO has formed a committee to work on this project.**

## Richards Kindergarten Playground Update April 2011

**What:** A Richards PTO committee has worked since the start of the school year to gather data and develop preliminary plans for a kindergarten playground to replace the one that was removed as a result of the new cafeteria addition. The playground that was removed was originally designed as a playground for students with special needs, and, over the years, it also was utilized heavily by kindergarten students due to its age appropriate equipment. The replacement playground is being designed for the 3 to 6 age range, including equipment that is accessible for students with special needs.

**Where:** The replacement kindergarten playground will be placed in the front of the school, just south of the new cafeteria addition. Other locations were considered, but this site was selected to preserve limited green space in back of the school and to take advantage of its proximity to the kindergarten wing in the school.

**When:** The goal is to have a new playground ready by the start of school in September 2011. This time-frame was supported in the survey that was distributed to Richards parents and staff last fall, in which 89 percent of respondents indicated within 6-12 months as a reasonable time-frame for replacing the kindergarten playground.

**Why:** Initial site plans for the construction of the multi-purpose cafeteria addition at Richards impacted a portion of the kindergarten/special needs playground. However, due to alterations in the design after setback work was completed, it became necessary to remove the entire playground to accommodate the new construction. Replacement of the playground is a high priority for the school and community. It is important for the younger children to have an age-appropriate playground at Richards. At this age, in particular, the development of gross-motor skills and generally forming good habits when it comes to physical fitness are critical, as is having a place to play that is both engaging and safe.

**How:** The PTO committee has taken feedback from the parent-staff survey, as well as a focus group of teachers who work with kindergarten students, to develop preliminary plans for a replacement kindergarten playground. The Whitefish Bay School Board is being kept apprised of the work, including at an upcoming board meeting on April 13. At this point, the committee is at the stage of establishing funding for the project. Once funding is secured, the district will solicit bids from playground developers, and the project development will begin.

**How Much:** The total cost of the replacement playground is roughly \$60,000 plus initial site development and fencing. Due to the fact that a replacement playground was not explicitly included in the referendum plans, the district is prevented from directly spending any money authorized by the referendum to fund the playground replacement. However, the district has set aside \$30,000 from contingency funds for the referendum projects for a replacement playground, and initial site development and fencing are also included as part of the referendum work. That leaves approximately \$30,000 in funds still needed, and the PTO committee is in the process of developing a fundraising plan, including contacting possible donors.

Please send any questions or comments to Seth Zlotocha at [sethzlotocha@gmail.com](mailto:sethzlotocha@gmail.com).



*Conceptual drawing incorporating preliminary ideas for replacement kindergarten playground.  
Courtesy of Miller & Associates.*