

BELLE PLAINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT 716 UPDATE



FACILITIES PROJECT: DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Belle Plaine Public Schools continues to move forward with the facilities plan approved by voters in November 2025. The project will transition the district from four buildings to two, creating safer and more efficient learning environments while expanding educational opportunities for students. The current Middle and High School will be renovated to become a PreK through Grade 5 elementary school, while Oak Crest Elementary will be renovated and expanded to become the district's Grade 6 through 12 Middle and High School.

The project includes significant improvements throughout both buildings. Plans for the new Middle and High School include a secure entrance, classroom additions, expanded Career and Technical Education spaces, a new approximately 500 seat auditorium, an additional gymnasium, locker rooms, a weight and fitness room, new band and choir classrooms, improved special education spaces, flexible student collaboration areas, and additional parking. The future elementary school will include remodeled classrooms, special education spaces and restrooms designed for younger students, along with improvements to the main entrance, safety and security, and traffic flow.

The project is currently in the design phase, with plans continuing to be drafted and refined as the district works with our architects and project partners to ensure the final design meets our educational needs, budget, and long term goals. As we move through design and eventually into construction, keeping our community informed will continue to be a priority.

We encourage residents to regularly visit our **Facilities Referendum Design & Construction Updates** located under the **District Tab** on our webpage. This page serves as the district's official information hub and includes project plans, floor plans, timelines, monthly progress updates, and other important information. We will continue updating this page throughout the project so our community can follow the progress from design through construction and completion.

<https://www.isd716.org/referendum>



SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY: WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP OUR SCHOOLS SAFE

This summer, Belle Plaine Public School administrators participated in safety and security training alongside members of the Belle Plaine Police Department. The training focused on the Standard Response Protocol, which provides schools and first responders with a consistent and practiced approach to emergencies, including medical emergencies, severe weather, fires, accidents, intruders, and other potential threats. A significant benefit of this approach is that school staff and law enforcement use common terminology and understand their roles during an emergency, allowing everyone to respond as quickly and effectively as possible.

We are incredibly fortunate to have an outstanding working relationship with the Belle Plaine Police Department. School safety is most effective when schools and local law enforcement train, plan, communicate, and work together before an emergency ever occurs. Having our administrators and police officers participate in this training together strengthens that partnership and helps ensure we are prepared to respond as one team when needed. We greatly appreciate the commitment of the Belle Plaine Police Department and the partnership we have developed to help keep our students, staff, schools, and community safe.



Another area of focus over the past year has been ensuring we are doing everything we can to make the safety and well being of our students and staff a priority. As part of this work, a team of staff members developed a districtwide Cardiac Emergency Response Plan. The district's safety planning for the school year includes a Cardiac Emergency Response Team and building level response teams.

70 staff members participated in training to support our Cardiac Emergency Response Plan. This training helps ensure that we have staff throughout our schools who are prepared to recognize and respond quickly and effectively in the event of a cardiac emergency. While we hope these skills are never needed, having trained staff, clear procedures, and an established response plan in place provides another important layer of safety and preparedness across our district.



A GREAT START TO THE 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR

The new school year is off to a fantastic start across Belle Plaine Public Schools! Our buildings are once again filled with energy, excitement, and students eager to learn. Staff worked incredibly hard during workshop days to prepare classrooms, organize curriculum, participate in professional learning, and ensure everything was ready to welcome students back.

A major focus as we began the year has been building strong relationships and creating positive, supportive learning environments. Staff participated in professional development with nationally recognized speaker Brian Mendler, whose "Relationships 1st" message reinforced the importance of connecting with every student. Across the district, students have spent the opening days learning expectations, building classroom communities, developing routines, and beginning their core curriculum.

The greatest strength of Belle Plaine Public Schools continues to be our people. Our staff bring tremendous energy, enthusiasm, and a willingness to do whatever it takes to support our students and one another. It has been an outstanding beginning, and we are excited about the opportunities ahead for our students this school year!

FALL ACTIVITIES OFF TO A GREAT START

Fall activities are underway, and our students are off to a fantastic start! Strong participation throughout the summer has carried into the fall season, with outstanding numbers across all programs.

Cross Country has 41 participants, including 23 girls and 18 boys. The boys are developing new leaders and younger runners following the graduation of several key athletes, while the girls feature a strong combination of experienced returners and promising new talent.

Volleyball continues to see tremendous growth with 60 participants and four full teams, an impressive accomplishment for a school our size and a reflection of the strength of our youth programs. The varsity team has started 3-2, bouncing back from a close five set loss to state ranked Caledonia.

Girls Tennis has 27 participants and is off to a 4-3 start against a busy early season schedule. The team competes in a very balanced section, which should make for some exciting matches as the section tournament approaches.

Football has reached 100 participants, allowing the program to field three teams for the first time in several years. The varsity team opened the season in impressive fashion with a 43-7 victory over Norwood.

Our fall opportunities extend beyond athletics as well. Thirty five students are participating in the Fall Musical, with cast and crew members already rehearsing several times each week in preparation for their November production.

It is exciting to see so many students involved, representing our schools, and taking advantage of the many opportunities available to them. We look forward to another outstanding fall season!

Ryan Laager
Superintendent

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