

NewsHub

The quarterly newsletter of your Erie's Public Schools

Inside:

How Parents Can Support Student Success

Project SEARCH Helps Students with Disabilities Find Work

S.A.I.L.ing Through Summer Learning

Erie's Public Schools

814-874-6000

148 W. 21st St.

Erie, PA 16502

www.eriesd.org

Brian J. Polito,
Superintendent



From left: United Way of Erie County President Laurie Root, Strong Vincent Middle School Community School Director Katrina Byrd, Erie's Public Schools Superintendent Brian J. Polito, and Erie Community Foundation President and CEO Karen Bilowith.

Erie High School, Reimagined *Erie Community Foundation Awards \$2M Grant*

First came the physical renovations, an inside-and-out metamorphosis that will, when complete, reach \$72 million.

Next came the partnership with an educational consulting firm to take a deep dive into every aspect of school operations.

Then, in July, the third piece of the puzzle: An announcement that Erie High School would become a Community School, thanks to a \$2 million grant from the Erie Community Foundation to United Way of Erie County.

The \$2 million Susan Hirt Hagen Center for Transformational Philanthropy grant will be used as seed money to launch the Community School model, which aims to eliminate all nonacademic barriers to students' educational success. Depending on the needs of the school as a whole, and the needs of individual students, that can look like ensuring families have access to food, clothing and vital social services, including physical, mental and behavioral health services.

\$2M Investment to Transform Erie High School

Seed money for Community School follows physical, academic improvements



cont'd from p.1

Erie's Public Schools Superintendent Brian J. Polito joined Erie Community Foundation President and CEO Karen Bilowith and United Way of Erie County President Laurie Root to announce the grant in July.

"Community Schools help families access what our students and families need in a way that is free of judgment, in a way that encourages and fosters connection both within the school and in the larger community. They do this every day," Polito said. "In doing so, Community Schools allow our teachers, staff and administrators to focus on our central mission of creating a personal path to educational success for every one of our students. And that is nothing short of transformational."

United Way of Erie County serves as the backbone organization of the Community School model, already successfully in place at the district's 10 elementary schools and three middle schools. The model is expected to be in place at Erie High for the 2024-2025 school year.

Erie High School Principal Don Orlando leads a tour group through the newly renovated eSports Lab.

The announcement that Erie High will become a Community School follows substantial investments, both in the physical plant and in the overall operation of the school, which serves about 1,600 students in person and also offers 18 different career and technical education programs.

Phase 2 of what is ultimately a \$72 million renovation project is underway, part of Polito's commitment to ensuring that all district schools are warm, safe and dry.

And in May, the Erie School Board approved the hiring of WestEd, a San Francisco-based consulting firm that specializes in turning around underperforming schools. In the next year, WestEd will work with district and school administrators to identify challenges and needs and to develop a strategy for improvement.

The district is using \$553,800 in pandemic relief dollars to fund the work.



Guests gather for a press conference outside the renovated exterior facade of Erie High School.

Project SEARCH Delivers

Collaboration helps students with special needs find meaningful jobs

A collaborative program between Erie's Public Schools and community partners is helping EPS students with disabilities learn valuable job and life skills that they are putting to good use in the workforce.

Project SEARCH, a partnership between the school district, AHN Saint Vincent Hospital, the Barber National Institute, the Erie County Department of Human Services and the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, is a one-year internship program during which students explore a variety of career paths. Each student completes three internships, working with a team that includes his or her family, an instructor, job coaches and business mentors to create an employment goal and to support the student during the transition from high school.



In addition to gaining real world work experience, students learn competitive, transferable and marketable job skills and gain increased independence, confidence and self-esteem. They receive individualized, on-the-job coaching and feedback, and also learn how to build and strengthen personal and professional relationships. A typical day also includes instruction in employability and independent living skills.

"Project SEARCH has been an invaluable partnership that has paid dividends for our students with disabilities - not just in the workforce, but in helping them create a path to success, professionally and personally," said Amanda Habursky, the district's transition coordinator.

Since the 2021-22 school year, more than 90 percent of participating students have been successfully placed in employment in hospital or community positions. Twelve students - the largest class so far - are enrolled to begin the program in August.

For more information on Project SEARCH, contact Amanda Habursky at ahabursky@eriesd.org.



PARENTS AS PARTNERS HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD THIS SCHOOL YEAR

Looking for tips on how best to prepare for, and help your child during, the 2023-24 school year? Read on!



Erie's Public Schools is committed to helping your child find a personal path to success, wherever that path may lead. Whether your child is entering pre-kindergarten or about to begin their final year of high school, the key to success lies in a strong partnership between students, family members, teachers and administrators. We're here to help you get the year started off right.

AT HOME

- Create a schedule around homework, dinner, bedtime, wake-up and breakfast – and stick to it. Start now, before the year begins.
- Make sure your child has a dedicated, organized space to read and to complete homework. The Community School Director at your child's school can help you stock that space with basic school supplies if needed.
- Attendance matters! Know the start and end times for the school day and create a pick up/drop off plan. If your child rides the bus, know the transportation schedule and pick up/drop off locations. Questions? Call our Transportation Department at 874-6900. You'll also be able to find this and other important information in the Family Guide that is mailed to each EPS home.
- Talk to your child about their school day and help them with homework. If you have any concerns or need support, contact your child's school.

CLASSROOM CONNECTION

- Stay connected to district and school communication channels, including the district website, eriesd.org, school and district Facebook pages, and Schoology for important news and updates.
- Take advantage of Open House events, parent-teacher conferences and family engagement activities. These are great opportunities to become more aware of what's happening in your child's school and join the community!
- Know your child's teachers and how to contact them. Communicate any questions or concerns you may have as soon as they arise.
- Stay on top of your child's grades and attendance record by logging into Infinite Campus regularly. If you haven't yet used the Infinite Campus parent portal, contact your child's school directly for an activation key. Infinite Campus is accessible via our district web page at eriesd.org by clicking on the "Parents" tab. Infinite Campus Mobile Apps can also be downloaded through the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.
- Parents of high school students: Review your child's academic schedule and develop a relationship with their guidance counselor. Your child's guidance counselor will help ensure they remain on track to graduate and can help students create a plan for what's next, whether it's college, vocational training, or entering the military or workforce.
- Be on the lookout throughout the year for important information related to enrichment activities, athletics, and additional academic support. These and other opportunities can help keep your child engaged in learning, and are a great way to build friendships and community.



S.A.I.L.ing THROUGH SUMMER

S.A.I.L. (Student Acceleration through Instruction and Learning) provides selected students in kindergarten through 8th grade direct academic support and acceleration, along with unique opportunities for social-emotional learning throughout the summer.

Take a look at some of the fun they had while learning!





SPORTS SPOTLIGHT

One of our own is a Hall of Famer.

Shannon Pullium, a standout basketball player and coach for Erie's Public Schools, was inducted into the Metro Erie Chapter of the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame in June, a recognition honoring one of the best coaching careers in Erie's Public Schools' history.

"It's a surreal feeling. When I found out I was on the ballot, I wasn't sure if I would get in," Pullium told the Erie Times-News/GoErie.com. "It made my day right away. I was with my wife and it was a special moment, and this is a great honor."

Pullium helped what was then the East High Warriors reach the PIAA semifinals as a player in 1984 before a collegiate career at Slippery Rock University. Later, he shone as a coach for his home school district, becoming second all-time in wins among boys basketball coaches (308).

Also making big news on the court: Strong Vincent High School graduate and Indiana University of Pennsylvania basketball star David Morris recently announced he will be playing professionally in Ireland.

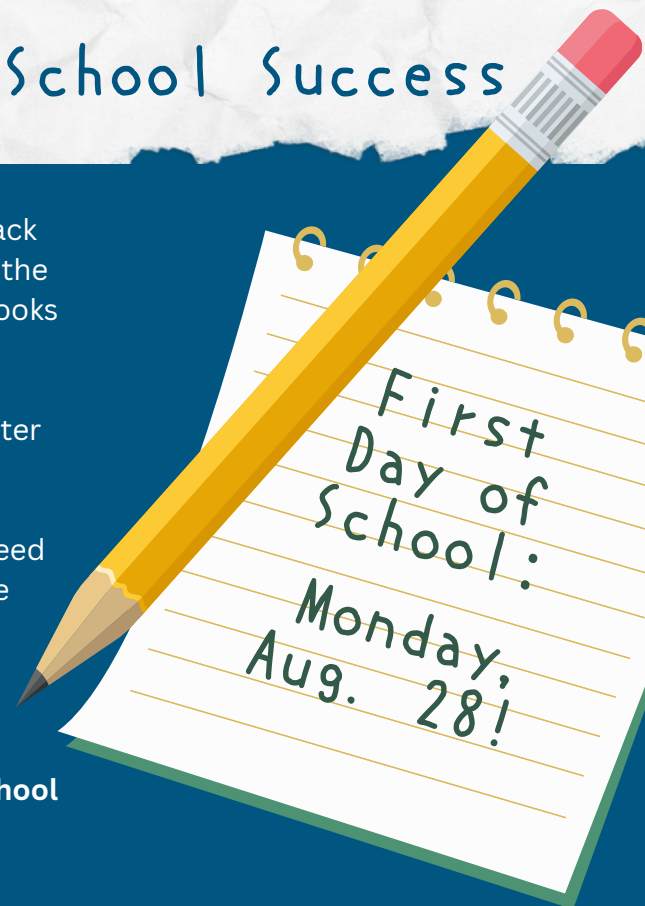
Read the full Erie Times-News/GoErie.com story at <https://tinyurl.com/mrxbtxbr>.



Shannon Pullium/ShanPull Sports

Checklist for Back-to-School Success

- Get back in the routine. That might mean pushing bedtimes back to earlier in the evening and/or waking your child up earlier in the morning. And don't forget to start plugging in those Chromebooks and iPads again!
- If you haven't already enrolled your student, don't wait - register now. Enrolling online is easy, and preferred. Visit eried.org/registration for information about necessary documentation and to access our online enrollment portal. Need help? Call 874-6150, or visit our Child Accounting Office at the district administration building, 148 W. 21st St.
- Make sure your child has all necessary immunizations.
- Finally, visit our back-to-school portal at eried.org/backtoschool for helpful information about dress code, transportation, the school year calendar and more.



We're ready! Are you?



148 West 21st Street - Erie, PA 16502

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Erie, PA
Permit Number 207



We're Hiring!



Excellent Benefits

- Bus Drivers
- Teachers
- Teacher Assistants
- Custodians
- Skilled Trades
- Secretaries
- Nurses
- Day to Day Substitutes: Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Custodians, Secretaries



Competitive Pay

No Holidays. No Weekends.

Convenient locations.

ALL levels of experience will be considered.

Questions? (814) 874-6080

Looking for a career with meaning?

Build a strong community with us!

Apply today at eriesd.org ➡ "Work with US"

