

Back to school: New faces and places will greet students this year

Security upgrades, tech enhancements among improvements

- By Mitch Hotts mhotts@medianewsgroup.com
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Custodians were hard at work last week waxing cafeteria floors and sprucing up the hallways as teachers prepare to welcome back some 2,200 students next week at Dakota High School in Macomb Township.

There's been a flurry of activity at the building in recent days as teachers, parents and students have visited, ready for the start of a new school year.

"You can just feel the excitement building," Kevin Koskos, Dakota's new principal, said Thursday. "And it's all going to come to a crescendo on Tuesday when the kids show up."

A few miles south, at Beer Middle School in Warren, Principal Robin Stanton had a similar observation.

"When our students come back, they will find a school ready to empower them to meet new challenges and achieve new successes," she said. "We can't wait to get started -- working with kids every day is the best job anyone could have."

Similar scenes have played out across Macomb County as school administrators have been busy investing millions of tax dollars into public education for increased security measures, technological advancements and a hiring frenzy as opening day draws close.

When school bells ring this week, students will explore high-tech subjects such as drone flight courses, robotics and renewable energy, as well as more low-tech - but equally as important - skills such as sign language and public safety.



Dakota High School band members Montana Lyjak, MaKenzy Lyjak and Dahlia DeRiemaker check their upcoming class schedules during a break in rehearsals.

DAVID ANGELL -- FOR THE MACOMB DAILY

David Angell

Here's a brief look at some of the new places and new faces for Macomb County school communities that responded to a request for information:

Chippewa Valley Schools

New Places

- Thanks to a voter-approved 2018 \$97 million bond, the district is enhancing security and technology in all of its buildings. Interior door locks are being replaced as needed. A new emergency alert system that will communicate with police is under review. Entrance redesigns for better security are underway at Chippewa Valley and Dakota high schools

Also, a new wireless network system is in place. More than 200 CTE computers are in student labs along with over 1,400 middle school language arts computers on 40 laptop carts

- Tennis court improvements were made at the two high schools

New Faces

- Twenty new administrators were hired. The changes began with the retirements of Jerry Davisson at Chippewa Valley, former assistant superintendent Ed Skiba, technology director Craig McBain and grants director Scott Pitts

Todd Distelrath, CVHS principal; Martha Luks, payroll supervisor; Don Brosky, assistant superintendent of educational services; Marina Licari, executive director of elementary education; Paul Sibley, executive director of secondary education; Nicole Faehner, director of state and federal programs and outreach; Sarah Monnier-White, director of information technology; Kevin Koskos, Dakota High principal; Jodi Pirog, Seneca Middle principal; Leo Kondziolka, Ojibwa Elementary principal; Jon Jones, Dakota High NGC principal; Matthew Swanson, Seneca Middle assistant principal; Amy Yednock, instructional technology coordinator; Jason Bruveris, Dakota High NGC assistant principal; Anthony Sniezyk, payroll coordinator; Greg Finlayson, Wyandot/Iroquois Middle assistant principal; Pamela Torrence, special services supervisor; Niyoka Wright, Clinton Valley Elementary principal; Robert Williams, Chippewa Valley High School NGC principal; Kristen DeLuca, Wyandot Middle assistant principal

- New teachers include Troy Cavataio, Kendall Shattuck, Rachel Neumann, Elizabeth Corbat, Christine Lee, Jaclyn Avila, Stephanie Williard, Alyssa Strohm, James Thomas, Ryan Kline, Sarah Michlewski, Emily Seguin, Alethea Simons, Lindsay Gauthier, JoAnna Basoukeas