

Back-to-School News!

Hardyston School District is very excited to start the 2018-19 school year and has made many significant improvements. Hardyston has embarked on a 3-year roll out of its new English Language Arts program for Kindergarten through 8th grade. The program features a balanced literacy approach and incorporates **Reader's** and **Writer's** workshop. Year 1 will focus on assessing reading levels and guided reading instruction. In addition, a **guided reading library** with nearly 3,000 book titles will be used to promote individualized learning.

The district is currently conducting a search for a full-time reading specialist for the first time ever. This position will assess students and develop strategies to close learning gaps in early literacy. The position will also provide professional development to teachers. Other professional development will focus on science and technology in the new school year, and mathematics for K-8 will be analyzed in order to enhance student achievement.

Hardyston students will have greater opportunities for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) experiences this year. The elementary and middle school media centers are steadily becoming creativity centers for students to learn robotics, engineering, physics, and teamwork. The Gifted & Talented programs have been revamped and energized to captivate high achievers' creativity and passion. The middle school media center had two glass partition walls installed last year in order to create "learning nooks" to engage students in independent thought and student-centered learning. In addition, cafe tables, ottomans, other soft seating arrangements, white boards, smart boards, and Lego boards are being installed to make the media center the true learning center of the school. Plans also include the creation of an audio/visual room, which will allow students to learn and master the art of audio and video production.

At the middle school, students will also be introduced to Hydroponics- the ability to grow vegetables indoors, without soil, year round. The media specialist and family consumer science teachers will teach students how to grow and use produce throughout the year. The program will also allow students to give back to the community as produce becomes more abundant.

The middle school has also upgraded its cafeteria by purchasing new tables in order to increase flexible seating arrangements. The band room will have new carpet tile **installed**, as well. Both the elementary and middle schools will have

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water fountains replaced with water filling stations. This is being done to **reduce** the school's carbon footprint by decreasing the use of plastic water bottles.

The district has also planned for significant improvements to its cyber security network and video camera surveillance. Working in conjunction with the Hardyston Police Department, the district has increased bandwidth between schools and the police station and has increased the number of video cameras in the schools. The district has also been informed that one of its main bus contractors has installed video cameras on its buses to increase student safety.

It's safe to say that Hardyston Schools will be ready for students on September 6!