



Bethalto East Undergoes Major Renovations

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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BETHALTO - Bethalto East, a school for pre-kindergarten through first-grade students at 309 Albers Place in Bethalto, has undergone major renovations this past summer. Jill Griffin, superintendent for Bethalto School District #8, said there are a few finishing touches to be put on, but the school has largely been transformed.

When school resumes on August 22, students will see updated lockers and cubbies, hand-washing basins in the bathrooms, new tile flooring, and more. Griffin said these renovations are meant to make the facility more age-appropriate for its students.

“All the tile floor has been redone and updated to make it look more like an elementary school. Bethalto East was a middle school at one time ... it these old, ugly middle school lockers and you’ve got 5- and 6-year-olds putting their stuff in them - it just didn’t have that elementary school feel,” Griffin said. “It wasn’t as developmentally appropriate for that age range child as what we would’ve hoped. We’ve really tried in this renovation to update it in a way that’s more conducive to educating 4, 5, and 6-year-olds.”

This includes updating the bathrooms to have wash basins instead of regular sinks, which are easier for children to use and will help “move along the process of taking a bathroom break,” Griffin added.

In addition to new lockers with storage cubbies and updated bathrooms, Griffin said “everything’s been repainted” and the building’s HVAC system has been updated to heat and cool more efficiently, in addition to some roof work and general building maintenance being done.

Griffin said this project began the week after school ended and will be complete by the time school begins on the 22nd. Bethalto East ended school a week earlier and will

begin a week later than usual to make time for the construction, effectively extending their summer break by two weeks.

Contractors are currently laying down the turf for a new football field, which Griffin said will be showcased at the Purple & Gold Game, a football game Griffin described as a “big tradition in our community.” Originally scheduled for August 19, she said the game has been pushed back to Saturday the 20th.

“That Saturday is going to be our Purple & Gold game and that’s when we plan to showcase the new stadium and honor and acknowledge all of our fall athletes,” Griffin said. “Everybody comes out, it’s a night of tradition, a night filled with lots of school spirit - but it’s going to be even more special this year with the opening of the new stadium.”

Other athletic facilities, including the gymnasium and a volleyball area, have also been upgraded at the school and Griffin said she’s ready to share the work they’ve done with the community.

“Our gym floor was completely redone and painted, so our gymnasium looks absolutely incredible right now,” Griffin said. “We’re really excited to show the community where tax dollars are going because we’ve put a lot of effort and money into all of our facilities and I think it’s going to be a great way to show our community what’s been done over the summer.”

Griffin said staff began moving in on Monday, and have so far had positive things to say about the renovations. She commended the staff for their flexibility as teachers packed up their classrooms before construction and are in the process of putting them back together again.

“The ones I have heard from, it’s been very positive - obviously they’re working very hard putting their classrooms back together,” Griffin said. “I think they’re excited and I know they’re going to be ready to welcome students on August 22. Our school district is really excited about the upcoming school year - we have a lot of energy and a really positive vibe heading into ‘22/’23.”