



ICHABOD CRANE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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www.ichabodcrane.org

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CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT: Where it's at and where it's going

The arrival of Summer 2020 brought the official start of Phase II Construction on Ichabod Crane's Capital Improvement Project, approved by district voters in December 2018. Over the course of approximately the next two years, there will be continuous progress and completion of the many components of Phase II Construction. If you missed our frequent updates over the last few months on the school district website we invite you to read through a summary of the construction progress from the past few months and also see what's to come.

PHASE II CONSTRUCTION TO DATE

The major components of Phase II so far are the Middle School 100 Pod Wing and the High School Guidance & Art Suites.

The district abatement contractor, Aktor Corp., broke ground for asbestos removal in the 100 Pod in early June 2020 and then broke ground for abatement shortly after in the Guidance & Art Suites.

After wrapping up abatement in both spaces the district general contractor, Bast Hatfield, began the selective demolition process. This involved removing walls, ceilings, carpeting and any other existing building components as required by architectural drawings. With those components removed, outlines were framed for the new walls in the HS Suites, the MS 100 Pod and the temporary classrooms in the MS gym that are being utilized as learning spaces while the MS Pods are under construction.

Construction continued smoothly over the summer months and was uninterrupted by the return of students & staff at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. This was possible due to the collaborative effort on the part of the district and Turner Construction to create a construction safety plan with detailed procedures and precautions for onsite contractors to follow as the schools reopened.

UPCOMING PHASE II CONSTRUCTION

We're excited to say that as of mid-Fall 2020, everything is right on track for the new and improved Middle School 100 Pod to be completed in mid-December 2020. In the High School, the refurbished Guidance Suite and Art Suite are on track for completion in early November and mid-December, respectively. We cannot wait to welcome students and staff back to these spaces over the next couple of months!

While work is finishing up on those spaces, there's still plenty of improvements to come in Phase II Construction. Next up in the Middle School is the 300 Pod Wing and the 200 Pod Wing. Work on the 300 Pod is set to begin in late 2020 with work to begin in the 200 Pod in Spring 2021. As with the students currently using the Temporary MS Classrooms who would normally be in the 100 Pod, the 300 and 200 Pod students will shift over to the temporary classrooms while their wings are under construction.

Over in the High School, next up on the construction schedule are the improvements to the Science Wing, where work is set to begin late 2020. As construction continues on the Science Wing into Summer 2021, some additional work in the Auditorium will also begin in Spring 2021.

Going forward you can always find the the most up-to-date news, pictures and videos of Phase II Capital Project Construction on the district website (www.ichabodcrane.org).



HS Art Suite, October 2020



MS 100 Pod Classroom, June 2020



MS 100 Pod Classroom, October 2020



HS Guidance Suite, June 2020



HS Guidance Suite, October 2020

Staff Q&A: Reopening Ichabod Crane Schools

PEG WARNER, *Co-Chair of Mental Health Reopening Sub-Committee & Director of Special Education*
Now that schools have reopened, how is student and staff emotional wellness going?

All the students seem so happy and relieved to be back in school, even if it's very different. All our teachers have taken it slow in terms of throwing the students back into their academics and have reset some of the normal expectations of earlier school years. They're also paying more attention to all their students' social-emotional wellness in the classroom and checking in with them individually when necessary.

What are some of the mental health initiatives and methods the district is using to address student mental health during this time?

Since reopening we've included increased amounts of mindfulness activities in the classrooms and district-wide Peaceful Classroom curriculum. School counselors are visiting classrooms to check in with students and let them know how they can help. Sub-Committee members created an informational training video for parents/guardians to help them identify signs of emotional distress. We're also providing professional staff development opportunities that help them identify student trauma and how to address it.

The Mental Health Sub-Committee has continued meeting since this is an ongoing district initiative. We'll be constantly reflecting on which emotional wellness and mindfulness techniques are working and adapt as needed. Upcoming topics of discussion for us will be how we can safely transition our therapy dogs back into the schools and possible after school support systems for students.

ANDREA WILLIAMS, *Primary School (Grades K-3) Principal*
With the district's new safety measures now in effect what's the learning experience been like for K-3 students?

We're in a good place at the Primary School, early concerns for the student learning experience have minimized since reopening. The K-3 students are resilient and we are seeing little evidence that the safety protocols are negatively affecting their ability to learn or retain information.

In kindergarten, we are seeing students grow at a positive pace since the year started. There's added time spent on safety measures, but teachers figured out how to make up for that because students aren't physically transitioning out of the classroom much now.

First grade classes only have 9-10 students per room, so the teachers are spending a lot of individualized time with them. This means even during these unique times they can focus in on the neediest students to help them out with letter recognition and sounding out words.

In second and third Grade, the students are still making progress with new parts of their curriculum like increasing text levels and reading comprehension. We're putting a heavier focus on strengthening those skills than in the past to make up for time spent remote learning last spring. The teaching teams in these grades are holding writing interventions to help students and they have teaching assistants who help provide more targeted instruction.

MARCELLA SANCHEZ, *Co-Chair of Health & Safety Reopening Sub-Committee and HS Assistant Principal*
With the district's new safety measures now in effect what have student academics been like since schools reopened?

I've seen the students adapt remarkably well. In our upper grades, the best example of that adaptability is how they are becoming better resources for each other. We've seen them teaming up with classmates more often even on the days when they are home learning remotely, collaborating remotely with their peers from their in-person classes on their assignments. In a way, the student collaboration has become stronger by necessity under this learning model and seeing that happen naturally is priceless.

Have the older students been developing new skill sets under the district's hybrid learning model?

The unique situation we all find ourselves in has come with some unexpected benefits and opportunities for student skill growth. Many students were already technologically proficient, but that has increased exponentially since incorporating more educational technology into both learning and teaching.

I've seen students developing incredible organizational abilities and time management skills both of which are important since they're not in the schools every day. They're actively showing us they can manage themselves outside the classroom.

Students have also become stronger advocates for themselves. It's more important than ever for them to speak up for themselves and reach out to teachers when they need help. Those self-advocacy skills will be invaluable as these students move beyond high school.



NEW CLASSROOM LAYOUTS THIS YEAR

New District Leadership Team Going Strong

The beginning of the 2020-2021 school year also marked the beginning of our new Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent district leadership team. Suzanne Guntlow began her role as Superintendent in July 2020 and her former Assistant Superintendent role is now filled by Lucas Christensen, who joined Ichabod in September 2020.

WORKING TOGETHER

When asked how collaboration has been in just the first couple months of the school year, both administrators noted that while they are very busy it's been a genuine team effort with their work so far. In addition to the day-to-day business that requires their combined efforts, the two make sure to schedule meeting time each week to ensure they are on the same page with current district goals and initiatives to ensure strong district leadership through this unique and challenging year. Ms.

Guntlow expressed her commitment to open and frequent communication to ensure Mr. Christensen continues to smoothly adapt to his new role at Ichabod.

LOOKING AHEAD

When asked about what she and Mr. Christensen hope to accomplish going forward, Ms. Guntlow stated, "While the health and safety of everyone will continue to be a priority for this school year, we are thrilled to see staff and students back in school teaching and learning. With our safety protocols now firmly in place, we are focused on our students' academic growth and social and emotional well-being."

"In the last two months we have spent a lot of time reflecting on what is and isn't working for our students since reopening and this will continue to be a priority as we move forward. Since so many things about this year are so new, it was impossible to know how

effective certain components of our learning plans would be until they were in practice. We are learning every day and are committed to ongoing reflection to ensure we are providing the best possible educational experience for all students given the current situation. Additionally, Mr. Christensen and I both place a great deal of importance on ensuring our faculty and staff are well supported during this time so in turn they can successfully support our students," said Ms. Guntlow

Mr. Christensen expressed a similar attitude, adding that though we would all prefer things to return to "normal", the district has arrived at a point where the community should know Ichabod is thriving again rather than just surviving the COVID-19 era. He noted that he and Ms. Guntlow will ensure that it continues thriving by consistently having meaningful conversations with all the district stakeholders about what's best for the students.

Remote Learning in 2020-2021

There were key advantages for staff when preparing for remote learning this school year. There was more time to prepare which meant more time to ensure students had access to a remote learning device and reliable internet connectivity. The district prioritized ensuring faculty had powerful, up-to-date technology to best utilize instructional platforms to maximize success of remote instruction. This year they have better means and tools to educate students through online learning platforms more effectively.

Increased professional development focused on remote teaching played a key role preparing staff this time around, with the district hosting multiple training opportunities over the summer. Partial motivation for the reopening schedule was to hold more Staff Development Days to further refine remote teaching skills and have time to prepare remote curriculum/lessons. Ichabod is also working with a Remote Instructional Technology Specialist from Questar III whose main goal is to support staff with remote teaching needs and using instructional technology.

Three teachers gave us short testimonials about remote learning this year.

KATHERINE GARDNER, Full Remote Teacher for K & 1st Grade

It's a lot of fun! There was a learning curve for caregivers and teachers at first, but we've settled into an effective routine. Remote learning looks a lot different than it did last year when our profession completely changed overnight. This time, we were more prepared and experienced. We've had time to explore new programs and make structured schedules emulating a typical school day. In K-3 we continued using the Seesaw platform since it's user friendly for young learners. I typically have Google Meets with students throughout the day and have follow-up activities for them in Seesaw.

SUSAN MALLERY, Full Remote Teacher for 4th Grade (Middle School)

It was a little bumpy at first, but that was because it was the first time many of the students had used Chromebooks and Google Classroom. It's a big transition from using Seesaw in the Primary School to using Google Classroom. At this point, we've settled into a routine and we're all experts! Starting a new year remotely is different for the students transitioning into the Middle School. For instance, I recently saw one of my students in person for the first time at a softball game! Remote teaching is a little easier this year because of the experience from last spring and prep time over the summer. The biggest difference is the increased time in live class meetings. I'm in live meetings with students most of the day and those not in them are working on assignments. It's a lot of work, but I love these kids!

TODD MEGAN, High School Earth Science Teacher

It's taken a little longer to settle into the groove. Every aspect, from meeting new students to grading, is different this year but my students have rolled with the punches so well. We tend to forget how resilient they can be and we're very lucky to teach them. When we shifted to remote learning last year, we already had deep connections with students. This year we're meeting some for the first time remotely, so all the staff are working hard to form new connections despite less in-person time. It's a challenge for us teachers but we're readjusting many skills that have served us well in the past to meet it.

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NON-DISCRIMINATION COMPLIANCE STATEMENT: The Ichabod Crane Central School District hereby advises students, parents, employees, and the general public that it offers educational opportunities including vocational opportunities without regard to sex, race, color, national origin, handicap or religion. Inquiries regarding this non-discrimination policy may be directed to: Title IX Compliance Officer, Suzanne Guntlow, and Section 504 Compliance Officer, Peg Warner, at 758-7575, Ichabod Crane Central School District, Valatie, NY 12184. A copy of the "In Compliance with Section 1.4 (a)" is available in the Superintendent's Office.

Produced by Questar III Communications Service

RIDER GOALS 2021:

Graduation Rates Right On Track!

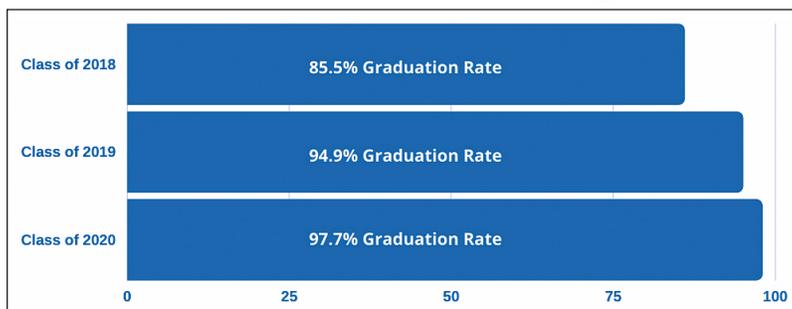
Ichabod Crane administration, faculty and staff are committed to the *Rider Goals 2021*, which were adopted by the Board of Education in 2018. *Rider Goals 2021* is made up of five overarching goals, each of which is broken down into specific targets. The goals and related targets provide a pathway to distinguish Ichabod Crane as a premier school district.

The first goal, *Student Achievement*, states:

"The Ichabod Crane Central School District is committed to all students reaching their maximum potential by focusing on the graduation rate through enhanced educational opportunities, and ensuring college, career and life readiness."

Project 95 was established as a target under the *Student Achievement* goal and aims to hit an annual graduation rate of 95% or better. As you can see in the chart below, our graduation rates jumped substantially between 2018 and 2019 as we reached 94.9%. We are also happy to share that the Class of 2020 exceeded the target with a 97.7% graduation rate!

Graduation Rate Percentage



WELCOME NEW STAFF 20-21

Central Office/District

Lucas Christensen – *Assistant Superintendent*
Stephanie Carbone – *IT Support Specialist*

Facilities & Maintenance

David Powell – *Custodian*
Michelle Spitler – *Custodial Staff*

Primary School

Olivia Faure – *Music Teacher*
Jane Ferguson – *Kindergarten Teacher*
Jacqueline LaBounty – *Teaching Assistant*
Lisa Small – *Teaching Assistant*
Courtney White – *Special Education Teacher*

Middle School

Sara Altomer – *Nurse*
Brittney Barnes – *Teaching Assistant*
Melanie Diaz – *Music Teacher*
Forrest Madison – *8th Gr. Science Teacher*
Sara Paul – *Teaching Assistant*
Maggie Rempe – *Music Teacher*
Hannah Sive – *6th Grade General Ed. Teacher*
Nicholas Spanswick – *Spanish Teacher*
Michael Spruck – *Special Education Teacher*

High School

Robert Allard – *Social Studies Teacher*
Jennifer Handy – *Health Aide*
Timothy McErlean – *Chemistry Teacher*
Bryan Van Vliet – *Technology Teacher*
Sarah Warren – *Special Ed. Teacher*