

Greece Arcadia fully open again

Arcadia

Windstorm damage had cramped school's style

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Rochester Democrat and Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

This year the Greece Arcadia Middle School band room won't have to double as a social studies classroom.

As students walked into school Thursday on their first day at Greece Arcadia Middle and High schools, the building must have felt less cramped, compared with last year when about half of the school was closed off — for a year.

Greece Central School District was repairing damage from the March 2017 windstorm when custodians discovered that fireproofing material was dislodged and falling from the ceiling of the second floor.

"We could not put students up there with that risk," said Brian Lumb, Arcadia Middle School principal.

With about a week before kids would be back, the district shuffled plans and closed the second floor altogether.

"We had to be very creative with what we needed to do with our classes last year," he said. Classrooms shifted throughout the school year as needed. Home and career rooms paired with American Sign Language, a gym became two classrooms, then the band room was for the band and social studies.

"It was really not just a middle school dilemma; it was a high school dilemma as well," Lumb said.

Arcadia High School Principal Gina Larsen said it took a lot of planning to make everyone fit. Multiple high school teachers had to share rooms or travel with carts of books, and there was no time to be alone and plan because the rooms were always in use, Larsen said.

The lack of the second-floor space, including the shared library, impacted about 40 high school teachers with room changes or scheduling adjustments. Arcadia

engineer Lou Bianchi said last August.

The plans took awhile to be approved by the state, Lumb said. Construction started in late February.

Arcadia added renovations, making changes in lighting and paint. Additionally, Greece took precautions by redoing the ceiling in the cafeteria, kitchen, music wing and technology classrooms, Lumb said.

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Students and staff return to a finished, remodeled hallway on the second floor at Greece Arcadia Middle School on the first day of school Thursday in Greece.

SHAWN DOWD/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE



Greece Arcadia Middle School on Thursday in Greece. SHAWN DOWD/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

"Even my veteran teachers who have been teaching for 20-plus years have their rooms decorated like a first-year teacher." Gina Larsen

Greece Arcadia High School principal

High School gave the middle school eight classrooms to house the eighth-graders.

“We’re all Titans, so they stepped up for us,” Lumb said.

The work was anticipated to be complete in six months, senior architect and

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The total cost of renovations was \$2.9 million, according to Laurel Heiden, district spokeswoman.

The library and three classrooms opened in June, just in time for testing.

But now there is a renewed energy to the staff, Lumb said.

“By having everything back, we got to have a nice sixth-grade orientation and bring families in. Kids got to set up their lockers, walk around the school,” which the school couldn’t do in the same way last year, Lumb said. “So on the first day, they’re not as anxious. It’s a big change for them.”

Just as the sixth-graders will have to learn to find their classes, so will the seventh-graders, who were welcomed back to a bigger school.

The high school staff has a similar buzz.

Instead of putting the high school back to the way it was before the eighth graders moved in, the building plan was redesigned to better meet the needs of students and staff, Larsen said.

“We came to school this year, I think, a little more settled,” she said. “Even my veteran teachers who have been teaching for 20-plus years have their rooms decorated like a first-year teacher. It’s heartwarming and

it’s energizing.”

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The second-floor library, shared by Arcadia middle and high schools, has been remodeled. The building’s second floor was closed last year, affecting about 40 high school teachers. SHAWN DOWD/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Painting, lighting and some classroom ceilings were redone, and the building plan was redesigned. SHAWN DOWD/ ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE