

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR FAMILIES?

PRE-K CONSOLIDATION AT GREECE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Greece Community Early Learning Center will entail transforming West Ridge Elementary School building on English Road from its current configuration into a pre-K through second grade facility

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Rochester Democrat and Chronicle | USA TODAY NETWORK

In the 2022-23 school year, all prekindergarten students in the Greece Central School District

will attend classes at what's currently known as West Ridge Elementary School.

The plan to consolidate pre-K programs under the West Ridge roof was approved earlier this month by the Board of Education after a two-year study of the district's primary school facilities, declining enrollment and changing demographics.

Superintendent Kathleen Graupman said although the district closed some school buildings and consolidated others back in 2012, there was still a need to take a harder look at how the school system was using its facilities. It wasn't just about trying to find some cost efficiencies and balancing enrollment across the district, but also about taking a hard look at the district's goals and coming up with new ways of enhancing educational programs.

"We found a way to fix some of our enrollment issues while creating something exciting: an early learning center," she said.



Greece Central School District pre-kindergarten students will attend classes at the current West Ridge Elementary School in 2022-23. MEAGHAN M. MCDERMOTT/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Families affected by the change started getting letters home last week. Here are some things to know about the center and how its creation will impact district residents.

What is it?

Having a school that focuses exclusively on early learning gives the district the opportunity to tailor the building just for the needs of little ones. Graupman said that will mean the building will have sensory spaces, right-sized classrooms and indoor play spaces. While details haven't been hashed out yet, she said a key aspect of design will be thinking about how the district can make the space as welcoming as possible

The Greece Community Early Learning Center will entail transforming the West Ridge Elementary School building on English Road from its current pre-K through fifth grade configuration into a pre-K through second grade facility.

Valerie Paine, assistant superintendent for student achievement and family and community engagement said the intent is to create an innovative “one-stop shop” for families and students to better support and prepare youngsters for educational success.

A potential model: the Judith P. Hoyer Center Early Learning Hubs, known as “Judy Centers,” in Maryland. Those centers focus on addressing not just the needs of children, but also their parents and families, and work with community partners to offer adult education, child care assistance, development and health screenings, family engagement activities, parenting classes and play groups.

When Greece’s center is fully on-line, it will serve as one of the district’s “community schools,” which have particular emphasis on forging partnerships with parents, residents, business and community groups, Paine said. Students and families will be able to access counselors, social workers, psychologists and special education services all under one roof.

And, the educational focus will be on boosting vital literacy, language development and other foundational skills to give kids a sturdier footing as they move up into higher grades.

“We are really excited about this opportunity,” Paine said.

When does it start?

There will be no major changes next school year, in order to ensure families are not taken by surprise by upcoming phaseouts of grades three, four and five at the West Ridge building.

West Ridge is currently a school of choice, which means that it has students from all across the district. When the transformation is complete, the school will have a very small neighborhood enrollment area for kindergarten through second grade, and will still take a limited number of lottery students.

■ In 2020-21, third grade would be phased out, with all third-graders returning to their neighborhood schools. Holmes Road pre-K classes would move to the early learning center.

so kids and parents have the “most positive first interactions with our district.”

The district also will be expanding its before- and after-school care, currently offered at Pine Brook, Brookside and West Ridge. Starting next year, wrap care will be available for pre-K students at the learning center.

Will Pine Brook remain a school of choice?

Yes. Students will be able to apply to attend Pine Brook for kindergarten through fifth grade, but will also be able to apply to attend the early learning center for K-2 and transfer to Pine Brook for 3-5.

What about pre-K at local child care centers?

The change affects just the school-based prekindergarten classes. The district will still offer pre-K at several local child care providers.

Is there any way to get involved?

Yes. The District Transition team is looking for parents and community members to participate in subcommittees working on topics including prekindergarten instructional program, literacy and language development, transportation and safety, facilities, special education, support services, and family and community engagement.

Also, the district is looking for parents and others to assist with building-level transition teams at West Ridge, Pine Brook and Brookside elementary schools.

Email comments are being accepted via [community.information@ greececsd.org](mailto:community.information@greececsd.org) and anyone with questions can call (585) 9662600.

How do I sign my child up for Greece’s pre-K program?

The district is currently accepting applications for the 2019-20 school year. Kids who are turning 4 on or before Dec. 1 are eligible.

Students will be assigned to attend classes either in the morning or afternoon at a school or off-site provider assigned by the district.

The district does not currently offer transportation to or from pre-K programs.

Learn more by visiting the district’s website, greececsd.org, or by calling (585) 966-2473.

■ The next year, grade four would phase out, and pre-K classes from English Village would move to the center. *MCDERMOT@Gannett.com*



■ Transition would be complete in 2022-23 and pre-K classes from Autumn Lane would relocate to the center.

The district will move special education programs into the vacated classrooms at Holmes Road, English Village and Autumn Lane.

Paine



What will the new school look like?

Graupman