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# Elmhurst INDEPENDENT

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THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021

## More pressure from public to offer school full-time, in-person

**Board expects plan from Moyer for 2021-22 by March 16**

By Chris Fox

FOR THE ELMHURST INDEPENDENT

The Elmhurst Community Unit School District 205 Board held a regular meeting on Feb. 23 at the District 205 Center, 162 S. York St. All seven board members attended the meeting.

The nine speakers who spoke during the meeting's public-participation segment included district parents who urged the board to offer full-time, in-person instruction in District 205 schools. On Feb. 16, the district began offering a full week of in-person instruction to kindergartners and first-graders. Second-graders were able to return to a full week of in-person instruction beginning the week of Feb. 22. On March 1, the district began offering a full-week of in-person learning to students in grades 3-5.

### Current school schedules

The current school days for elementary students runs from 8:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. The middle school day begins at 8:30 a.m. and continues until 1:30 p.m. Beginning with the week of March 15, York High School students will be able to return to in-person classes four days per week, from 7:40 a.m. to 12:55 p.m. York students will continue to take part in remote instruction each Wednesday from 7:40 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Some of the parents who spoke at the Feb. 23 meeting urged the district to return to a full day of in-person school at all levels. One parent asked why a five-hour school day was safe, but a seven-hour day would be a risk. Another parent stated that by March 15, a majority of the district's teach-

ers and staff will be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Another parent who spoke asked what it will take for the district to allow students to eat lunch inside school buildings.

Several of the parents who spoke at the meeting also noted that public and private schools in the area are offering five days per week of in-person instruction. Multiple speakers also told the board that the community needs to know the district's plans for what amount of in-person instruction it will offer in the 2021-22 school year. That plan, they said, needs to be announced well before the start of the next school year.

### Moyer responds, offers COVID-19 update

District 205 Superintendent David Moyer told the board during the Feb. 23 meeting that the area's COVID-19 positivity rates are dropping. He also noted that at its Feb. 9 meeting, the board approved COVID-19 surveillance tests for district students in grades 6-12. Those saliva tests will begin during the week of March 8. Moyer also said that many district staff members will receive their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine during the week of March 15. According to the district administration, as of Feb. 23, approximately 60 to 80 percent of the district's staff had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.

### Board members weigh in

Board member Jim Collins said the district cannot spend the upcoming summer with parents speculating whether the district will be offering full days of in-person learning at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. Collins added that no calamities have occurred in other districts that have been open for in-person instruction.

Board member Christopher Ko-

cinski said that he would like the district's schools to fully open after staff members are fully vaccinated. He said the district has many safety layers in place, and that parents would still have the choice to have their children receive fully remote instruction. Kocinski also said that it's clear

the community wants its children back in school buildings.

Board member Karen Stuefen noted that the district needs to have a clear plan for the 2021-22 school year to allow parents to make decisions about where they will send their children.

Board president Kara Caforio told Moyer that the board is expecting to hear a plan at its next meeting (on March 16) regarding how the district will be able to offer five days a week of in-person instruction at the middle

See MORE PRESSURE, Page 3



SUBMITTED PHOTO Elmhurst Independent

### ICGS second graders hold 'Pioneer Day'

The students in Ms. Kennedy's second grade class at Immaculate Conception Grade School celebrated Pioneer Day on Thursday, Feb. 25. In social studies, the students had been learning about life in the time of the early settlers and took part in pioneer activities like making butter and weaving placemats. Story and more photos inside.

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# Bernard Kleina's photographs 'In Focus' at the EAM

*Activist took part in civil rights movement from Elmhurst to Selma and back again*

On Thursday, March 4, the Elmhurst Art Museum (EAM) will open a new soul-stirring exhibition reflecting on historical and contemporary responses to fair housing in the Chicagoland area. "In Focus: The Chicago Freedom Movement and the Fight for Fair Housing" features rare color photographs of 1960s civil rights marches by the activist and photographer Bernard Kleina. The show also includes a variety of local responses to housing issues including first-person accounts, historical photographs, and a project by the Museum's Teen Art Council and York Community High School's Black Student Union.

The centerpiece of the exhibit are 40 photos by Kleina, who started his journey as a lifelong activist while serving as a priest and Dean of Boys at Immaculate Conception—across the street from the museum, where his works are now shown. For more than 40 years he served as the Director of HOPE Fair Housing

Center, which is based in Wheaton and serves 30 counties in Northern and North Central Illinois, where he earned the title "The Most Disliked Man in DuPage County."

Kleina generously provided these retrospective insights about his civil rights start:

"On Sunday, March 7, 1965, I watched on TV the news reports of men and women who were marching for voting rights, being beaten, tear-gassed and trampled by horses, after crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. At that moment, there was no turning back; I knew I had to do something more than just [watch] the TV reports. That 'something' turned out to be flying to Selma with a teacher/friend to respond to Dr. King's call for clergy to come to Selma and join them in standing up for voting rights.

"At the time I was a Catholic priest. I taught and was Dean of Boys at Immaculate Conception High School in

Elmhurst. Ironically, that decision to go to Selma was made literally just a stone's throw from where the Elmhurst Art Museum is now located.

"As a priest and teacher, I felt I had to go, not just for myself and the people of Selma, but as an example to my Congregation and my students at Immaculate Conception. I also went to Selma because I thought I could be of some help to the people there in their fight for voting rights.

"I quickly realized that Selma did more for me than I could ever do for Selma. The people there taught me justice, courage, patience, compassion and a true understanding of history.

"Back home in Elmhurst, students and friends had organized a 'Sympathy for Selma March,' most probably the first of its kind in Elmhurst or its neighboring suburban communities.

"When I returned to Elmhurst from Selma, I was welcomed by a Church packed with people who supported

my mission. When I addressed them from the pulpit, I was quick to point out that I was wearing the very same clothing that I wore when I was arrested in Selma. So, I began my talk with an apology for showing up in my 'prison' clothes.

"This was a fitting start to my fight for fair housing, Civil Rights and racial equality.

"Looking back, it seems impossible that my life would change so dramatically after watching the news reports on TV, but that's exactly what

happened."

For additional insights into Kleina's life and activism be sure to watch the "Virtual Artist Talk: The Most Disliked Man in DuPage County, Bernard Kleina" available starting Thursday, Mar. 11 on the museum's Museum From Home web page. The exhibition "In Focus: The Chicago Freedom Movement and the Fight for Fair Housing" opens on Thursday, Mar. 4.

This was submitted by the Elmhurst Art Museum.



BERNARD KLEINA PHOTO Elmhurst Independent

## Famous faces visit Chicago

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King attended a civil rights march held in Chicago's Marquette Park on August 5, 1966.



IMAGE COURTESY OF BERNARD KLEINA Elmhurst Independent

## Standing up for civil rights

Elmhurst resident Bernard Kleina and a colleague are pictured here at Brown Chapel at the now-infamous march for civil rights in Selma on March 25, 1965.

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