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Indianapolis Sees Success Involving Fathers

By Stacy Andell

Superintendent Calls for Fathers on the First Day of School

Superintendent Eugene G. White's call to fathers in the Indianapolis schools has met with strong success. Mr. White asked fathers to bring their children to the first day of classes in order to establish a stronger presence on campus and hopefully continue to stay involved with Indianapolis schools throughout the school year. The event was dubbed, "The First Day is Dad's Day," and encouraged fathers to have a more active role on campus.

As Mr. White states: "Mothers are the backbone of IPS, but dads need to know they have a role to play in supporting their children's education, too. I look forward to seeing more dads in schools throughout the school year." Mr. White hopes programs like "The First Day is Dad's Day" will help change the way fathers view their role in their children's education and encourage more fathers to take an active interest in what their children are doing in Indianapolis schools.

Public Reaction to "The First Day is Dad's Day"

News stations across Indianapolis turned out to record "The First Day is Dad's Day" programs. WTLC, WEDJ, WISH-TV, WRTV, WTHR, WXIN, the Indianapolis Star and the Indianapolis Recorder all participated in getting the word out about the event as well as following up with the story later to see how dads, teachers, and students felt about the shift in the role of the father on campus in Indianapolis schools. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Many fathers took their children to school for the first time and saw the process from a parent perspective that they had not had before. The networks of fathers meeting each other and seeing their children at school should have a positive effect throughout the year as fathers feel more comfortable being involved in the Indianapolis schools.

Reverend Emory Davis watched "The First Day is Dad's Day" proceedings and collected many interesting anecdotes:

"Well, it was a wonderful day. I went to School 55. I got there shortly after 8 a.m. and was greeted by one of the staff members. As I told her what I was doing she got excited that someone was there to help.

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"Given the title of 'stand-in' parent, I greeted children and parents as they came into the school, helped them with directions to either check the assignment board or that they were welcome to have breakfast. I met the principal, Mrs. Johnson, and she also thanked me for coming.

"I picked School 55 because one of the young men in our men's group at church attended that school when he was younger.

"One thing, I greeted a young man with I think two children, one of whom was there for kindergarten – although he looked as though in stature to only be about three years old. The parent already had a room assignment for his older child but needed information for the little one. I told the parent to see Mrs. Johnson. As they turned to their left toward the office, the little one came back and looked at me with eyes that would melt the hardest rock and said, 'Hello.' I had to bend down and obviously say

'Hello' right back. And with the he caught up with his dad and brother. That just made the whole day.

"Tell Dr. White 'Let's do it again!' "

Stacy Andell is a staff writer for Schools K–12, providing free, in–depth reports on all U.S. public and private K–12 schools. For more information on Indianapolis schools visit

<http://www.schoolsk-12.com/Indiana/indianapolis/index.html>

Indianapolis Schools Work With Their Communities To Improve Schools

By Stacy Andell

One Indianapolis Schools' Elementary School Gets New Playground

Parkview Elementary School 81 will receive a new playground on October 2nd but the work has already started. An asphalt lot will be a brand new playground thanks to the Allstate Foundation and Injury Free Coalition for Kids at Riley Hospital. About 50 volunteers are expected to be involved in the project.

The Allstate Foundation is an independent, charitable organization made possible by the Allstate Corporation. The Allstate Foundation works to create safe communities. The Allstate Foundation has offered a national donation of \$370,000, seven locations across the US have been chosen with Indianapolis Schools ' Parkview Elementary School 81 being the only one in Indiana. Parkview Elementary School 81 was chosen, in part, because their recess area has for seventy five years been the asphalt lot.

The partnership between the Allstate Foundation and Injury Free Coalition for Kids at Riley Hospital aimed to redo the playground because of the safety issues surrounding child injuries on the playground. According to the Allstate Foundation, over 200,000 children suffer from injuries on the playground. Indianapolis Schools' Parkview Elementary School 81's new playground will be fun and

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safe. It will be covered with a new soft rubber tile known as SofTile and all equipment will have rounded edges. Safety was not the only goal; Indianapolis Schools wanted to improve access for students with special needs and make sure the equipment was durable.

Indianapolis Schools has discovered that play is important to the students' physical, developmental, cognitive, and social development. Playgrounds are great for providing opportunities to learn about conflict resolution, sharing, and relationship building. Recess time gives students the time to release energy so they can better concentrate during study time. Playgrounds allow students to begin focusing on physical fitness and exercise. Indianapolis Schools Superintendent Eugene G. White wants all children to grow up knowing the pleasure of climbing and sliding on a playground.

The 300 students of Parkview Elementary School 81 are not the only ones to benefit from the new playground. It is estimated that 1,400 children live in the area around the school; these children will have access to the playground when the school is not in session. The Riley Hospital for Children reports that the Northeast-side Community Organization found that this area has some of the highest childhood injury rates in the city. This new playground will decrease fall injuries.

Indianapolis Schools Project Seeks Tutors

A new tutoring project for the fourth grade that is a joint program with Indianapolis Schools and the United Way of Central Indiana is looking for tutors. The project was announced on September 4th. This project aims to help students with reading and language arts skills for the fourth grade.

This project was created because thirty percent of the Indianapolis Schools fourth graders read two or more grade levels below grade. It is believed that one on one tutoring in word recognition, vocabulary development and fluency will help students achieve higher scores. The United Way has been running

several similar projects in Madison, Wisconsin. The project aims to recruit at least 200 tutors who could spend one hour per week between the hours of 9:00AM and 3:30 PM at Indianapolis Schools.

Patricia Hawke is a staff writer for Schools K–12, providing free, in–depth reports on all U.S. public and private K–12 schools. For more information on Indianapolis schools visit

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