
BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Information/Discussion _____

Future Action _____

Action X

Item: Creation of Lead Groundskeeper and Groundskeeper Positions

Submitted by: Russell Bray

Date: 7/10/2025

Recommended by: Kevin Philipps *KP*

Board Meeting Date: 7/21/2025

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Kent ISD board approve the creation of one Lead Groundskeeper position and two Groundskeeper positions. These three positions will maintain grounds of the Beltline and Lincoln campuses, increase our level of appearance/service at both campuses, and increase Maintenance staff availability during snow and ice operation in the winter. These changes are expected to increase annual costs by \$40,652.

BACKGROUND:

With the retirement of Mike Rens, our long-time Maintenance Tech, who was assigned to groundskeeping, Facilities leadership has explored various ways to fill this role while increasing the service level of our grounds maintenance operation. Our grounds are currently maintained at an industry standard of level 3 (see APPA Grounds Service Level attachment). APPA service level 2 desired. We explored changes in contracted services and various internal staffing scenarios and found the most cost-effective approach was to maintain some contracted services while utilizing three total internal FTE committed to grounds management.

| | Annual Budget impact |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Additional Two FTE | 113,152 |
| Annual supplies | 10,000 |
| Mowing Contract | (35,000) |
| Plowing Contract | (21,000) |
| Bed Maintenance Contract | (16,500) |
| Mulch Application Service | (8,000) |
| Irrigation Repair Service | (2,000) |
| Total Annual | 40,652 |

The Maintenance Tech position formally filled by Mike Rens would change to Lead Groundskeeper. Two new Groundskeeper positions would be created. All three positions would report to the Maintenance Supervisor.

Attached:

- Lead Groundskeeper Job Description
- Groundskeeper Job Description
- APPA Grounds Service Levels

APPA GROUNDS STANDARDS

LEVEL 1. *State-of-the-art maintenance applied to a high-quality diverse landscape. Associated with high-traffic urban areas, such as public squares, malls, government grounds, or college/university campuses.*

TURF CARE. Grass height maintained according to species and variety of grass. Mowed at least once every five working days but may be as often as once every three working days. Aeration as required but not less than four times per year. Reseeding or sodding as needed. Weed control to

be practiced so that no more than 1 percent of the surface has weeds present.

FERTILIZER. Adequate fertilization applied to plant species according to their optimum requirements. Application rates and times should ensure an even supply of nutrients for the entire year. Nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium percentages should follow local recommendations. Trees, shrubs, and flowers should be fertilized according to their individual requirements of nutrients for optimum growth. Unusually long or short growing seasons may *modify* the chart slightly.

IRRIGATION. Sprinkler irrigated-electric automatic commonly used. Some manual systems could be considered adequate under plentiful rainfall circumstances and with adequate staffing. Frequency of use follows rainfall, temperature, season length, and demands of plant material.

LITTER CONTROL. Minimum of once per day, seven days per week. Extremely high visitation may increase the frequency. Receptacles should be plentiful enough to hold all trash usually generated between servicing without overflowing.

PRUNING. Frequency dictated primarily by species and variety of trees and shrubs. Length of growing season and design concept also a controlling factor-i.e., clipped vs. natural-style hedges. Timing scheduled to coincide with low demand periods or to take advantage of special growing characteristics.

DISEASE AND INSECT CONTROL. At this maintenance level, the controlling objective is to avoid public awareness of any problems. It is anticipated at Level 1 that problems will either be prevented or observed at a very early stage and corrected immediately.

SNOW REMOVAL. Snow removal starts the same day that accumulations of .5 inch are present. At no time will now be permitted to cover transportation or parking surfaces longer than noon of the day after the snow stops. Application of snow-melting compound and/or gravel is appropriate to reduce the danger of injury due to falls.

SURFACES. Sweeping, cleaning, and washing of surfaces should be done so that at no time does an accumulation of sand, dirt, or leaves distract from the looks or safety of the area.

REPAIRS. Repairs to all elements of the design should be done immediately when problems are discovered, provided replacement parts and technicians are available to accomplish the job. When disruption to the public might be major and the repair is not critical, repairs may be postponed to a time period that is least disruptive.

INSPECTIONS. A staff member should conduct inspection daily.

FLORAL PLANTINGS. Normally, extensive or unusual floral plantings are part of the design. These may include ground-level beds, planters, or hanging baskets. Often, multiple plantings are scheduled, usually for at least two blooming cycles per year. Some designs may call for a more frequent rotation of bloom. Maximum care, including watering, fertilizing, disease control, disbudding, and weeding, is necessary. Weeding flowers and shrubs is done a minimum of once per week. The desired standard is essentially weeded free.

LEVEL 2 *High-level maintenance. Associated with well-developed public areas, malls, government grounds, or college/university campuses. Recommended level for most organizations.*

TURF CARE. Grass cut once every five working days. Aeration as required but not less than two times per year. Reseeding or sodding when bare spots are present. Weed control practiced when weeds present a visible problem or when weeds represent 5 percent of the turf surface. Some pre-emergent products may be used at this level.

FERTILIZER. Adequate fertilizer level to ensure that all plant materials are healthy and

growing vigorously. Amounts depend on species, length of growing season, soils, and rainfall. Rates should correspond to at least the lowest recommended rates. Distribution should ensure an even supply of nutrients for the entire year. Nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium percentages should follow local recommendations. Trees, shrubs, and flowers should receive fertilizer levels to ensure optimum growth.

IRRIGATION. Sprinkler irrigated-electric automatic commonly used. Some manual systems could be considered adequate under plentiful rainfall circumstances and with adequate staffing. Frequency of use follows rainfall, temperature, season length, and demands of plant material.

LITTER CONTROL. Minimum of once per day, five days per week. Offsite movement of trash depends on size of containers and use by the public. High use may dictate daily or more frequent leaning.

PRUNING. Usually done at least once per season unless species planted dictate more frequent attention. Sculpted hedges or high-growth species may dictate a more frequent requirement than most trees and shrubs in natural-growth plantings.

DISEASE AND INSECT CONTROL. Usually done when disease or insects are inflicting noticeable damage, are reducing vigor of plant material, or could be considered a bother to the public. Some preventive measures may be used, such as systemic chemical treatments. Cultural prevention of disease problems can reduce time spent in this category. Some minor problems may be tolerated at this level.

SNOW REMOVAL. Snow removed by noon the day following snowfall. Gravel or

snowmelt may be used to reduce ice accumulation.

SURFACES. Should be cleaned, repaired, repainted, or replaced when their appearances have noticeably deteriorated.

REPAIRS. Should be done whenever safety, function, or appearance is in question. INSPECTIONS. Inspection should be conducted by some staff member at least once a day when regular staff is scheduled.

FLORAL PLANTINGS. Normally, no more complex than two rotations of bloom per year. Care cycle is usually at least once per week, but watering may be more frequent. Health and vigor dictate cycle of fertilization and disease control. Beds essentially kept weed free.

LEVEL 3. *Moderate-level maintenance. Associated with locations that have Moderate to low levels of development or visitation, or with operations that, because of budget restrictions, cannot afford a higher level of maintenance.*

TURF CARE. Grass cut once every ten working days. Normally not aerated unless turf quality indicates a need or in anticipation of an application of fertilizer. Reseeding or resodding done only when major bare spots appear. Weed control measures normally used when 50 percent of small areas are weed infested or when 15 percent of the general turf is infested with weeds.

FERTILIZER. Applied only when turf vigor seems to be low. Low-level application done once per year. Rate suggested is one-half the level recommended.

IRRIGATION. Dependent on climate. Locations that receive more than 25 inches of rainfall a year usually rely on natural rainfall with the possible addition of portable irrigation during periods of drought. Dry climates that receive less than 25 inches of rainfall usually have some form of supplemental irrigation. When irrigation is automatic, a demand schedule is programmed. Where manual servicing is required, the norm would be two to three times per week.

LITTER CONTROL. Minimum service of two to three times per week. High use may dictate higher levels during the warm season.

PRUNING. When required for health or reasonable appearance. With most tree and shrub species, pruning would be performed once every two to three years.

DISEASE AND INSECT CONTROL. Done only to address epidemics or serious complaints. Control measures may be put into effect when the health or survival of the plant material is threatened or when public comfort is an issue.

SNOW REMOVAL. Snow removal done based on local law requirements but generally accomplished by the day following snowfall. Some crosswalks or surfaces may not be cleared at all.

SURFACES. Cleaned on a complaint basis. Repaired or replaced as budget allows. REPAIRS. Should be done whenever safety or function is in question. INSPECTIONS. Inspections are conducted once per week.

FLORAL PLANTINGS. Only perennials or flowering trees or shrubs.

LEVEL 4. *Moderately low-level maintenance. Associated with locations affected by budget restrictions that cannot afford a high level of maintenance.*

TURF CARE. Low-frequency mowing scheduled based on species. Low growing grasses may not be mowed. High grasses may receive periodic mowing. Weed control limited to legal requirements for noxious weeds.

FERTILIZER. Not fertilized.

IRRIGATION. No irrigation.

LITTER CONTROL. Once per week or less. Complaints may increase level above one servicing.

PRUNING. No regular trimming. Safety or damage from weather may dictate actual work schedule.

DISEASE AND INSECT CONTROL. None except where the problem is epidemic and the epidemic condition threatens resources or the public.

SNOW REMOVAL. Snow removal done based on local law requirements but generally accomplished by the day following snowfall. Some crosswalks or surfaces may not be cleared at all.

SURFACES. Replaced or repaired when safety is a concern and when budget is available.

REPAIRS. Should be done whenever safety or function is in question.

INSPECTIONS. Inspections are conducted once per month.

FLORAL PLANTINGS. None. May have wildflowers, perennials, flowering trees, or shrubs in place.

LEVEL 5. *Minimum-level maintenance. Associated with locations that have severe budget restrictions.*

TURF CARE. Low-frequency mowing scheduled based on species. Low growing grasses may not be mowed. High grasses may receive periodic mowing. Weed control limited to legal requirements for noxious weeds.

FERTILIZER. Not fertilized. IRRIGATION. No irrigation. LITTER CONTROL. On demand or complaint basis.

PRUNING. No pruning unless safety is involved. DISEASE AND INSECT CONTROL. No control except in epidemic or safety situations.

SNOW REMOVAL. Snow removal done based on local law requirements but generally accomplished by the day following snowfall. Some crosswalks or surfaces may not be cleared at all.

SURFACES. Serviced only when safety is a consideration.

REPAIRS. Should be done whenever safety or function is in question. INSPECTIONS. Inspections are conducted once per month.

FLORAL PLANTINGS. None. May have wildflowers, perennials, flowering trees, or shrubs in place.

Kent ISD

Position Description

TITLE: Lead Groundskeeper

CLASSIFICATION: Classified (Wage Grade VI)

REPORTS TO: Maintenance Supervisor

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT: 12-month position

POSITIONS SUPERVISED: None (Provides leadership and direction to Groundskeepers and seasonal staff)

Position Summary

The Lead Groundskeeper is responsible for maintaining and enhancing the landscaping, pavement, and outdoor equipment of school district properties to ensure they are clean, safe, visually appealing, and in excellent operating condition. This individual leads the daily work of grounds staff and contractors, coordinates landscape and pavement projects, and manages preventative maintenance programs for grounds equipment.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- **Grounds & Landscaping Maintenance**

Lead the installation, care, and upkeep of turf, trees, shrubs, flowers, and environmentally sustainable landscapes.

Oversee weed control, pruning, fertilizing, and pest management using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices.

Safely remove snow and ice; apply sand, salt, or other materials to improve safety.

- **Pavement & Concrete Work**

Construct, repair, and maintain walkways, curbs, ramps, and parking areas.

Assist in the planning and upkeep of paved surfaces across the district.

- **Irrigation Systems**

Install, maintain, and troubleshoot irrigation systems and controllers.

Inspect, evaluate, and update irrigation system blueprints and schedules.

- **Equipment & Shop Maintenance**

Operate and maintain a wide range of equipment including mowers, tractors, snowblowers, ATVs, skid steers, and hand tools.

Perform preventative maintenance on tools, vehicles, and large machinery; fabricate or

weld when needed.

Maintain shop organization, inventory, and ensure equipment safety.

- **Team Leadership & Coordination**

Provide daily direction to grounds crew and seasonal workers.

Assign tasks, oversee contractors, and serve as the onsite point of contact for vendors.

Pick up and deliver supplies district-wide as needed.

- **Administrative & Compliance Duties**

Maintain records of chemical use, maintenance schedules, materials inventory, and work orders.

Assist with invoice processing and procurement of supplies.

Follow OSHA/MIOSHA health and safety protocols.

- **Other Duties**

Fill in for custodial or maintenance roles as needed.

Stay flexible for emergency responses, weather-related work, and after-hours assignments.

Promote a positive public image of Kent ISD while on campus.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Principles and techniques of turf management, landscape design, and plant care.
- Maintenance and diagnostics of irrigation and drainage systems.
- Safe handling and application of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.
- Familiarity with construction and maintenance of pavement and concrete features.
- Effective use of shop tools, landscaping machinery, and safety procedures.
- Ability to read blueprints and technical drawings.
- Strong communication, problem-solving, and organizational skills.
- Proficient in basic computer applications and recordkeeping.

Qualifications

- High school diploma or GED required.
- Minimum of five (5) years of experience in grounds maintenance preferred.
- Valid Michigan Commercial Driver's License (CDL) required.
- Valid Michigan pesticide license (including right-of-way certification) required or must obtain within a designated timeframe.
- Demonstrated leadership in coordinating projects and personnel without formal supervision authority.
- Commitment to ongoing professional development (e.g., workshops, seminars, certifications).

Physical Demands

Must frequently lift up to 50 lbs and occasionally up to 80 lbs.

Regularly required to walk, stand, bend, kneel, climb ladders, and operate heavy machinery.

Must be able to tolerate a variety of weather conditions and perform outdoor physical labor.

Performance Evaluation

Performance will be evaluated annually by the Maintenance Supervisor based on completion of assigned tasks, adherence to safety protocols, and contribution to team goals.

Kent ISD

Position Description

TITLE: Groundskeeper

CLASSIFICATION: Classified (Wage Grade V)

REPORTS TO: Maintenance Supervisor or designee

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT: 12-month position

POSITIONS SUPERVISED: None

Position Summary

The Groundskeeper is responsible for maintaining the landscaping, paved areas, and grounds equipment on school district properties. The position supports the appearance, safety, and operational readiness of all exterior facilities. Work includes general lawn care, snow and ice removal, equipment operation, and assistance with maintenance projects under the direction of the Lead Groundskeeper or Maintenance Supervisor.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- **Grounds & Landscaping Maintenance**

Perform lawn mowing, trimming, planting, weeding, pruning, fertilizing, and general upkeep of campus green spaces.

Assist in implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for turf and landscaped areas.

- **Pavement & Concrete Work**

Support maintenance of walkways, curbs, and ramps; assist in snow removal from paved areas.

- **Irrigation Systems**

Assist with maintenance, inspection, and repair of irrigation systems and related equipment.

- **Equipment & Shop Maintenance**

Operate and maintain grounds maintenance equipment including mowers, string trimmers, blowers, and utility vehicles.

Perform routine cleaning and minor repairs to equipment as assigned.

- **Team Collaboration**

Work under direction of the Lead Groundskeeper or Maintenance Supervisor to complete scheduled tasks.

Support seasonal staff and collaborate with custodial or maintenance teams when necessary.

- Safety and Compliance

Follow all OSHA/MIOSHA safety standards and district procedures.

Participate in safety training and maintain work logs and records as directed.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Basic knowledge of lawn care, landscaping, and plant maintenance techniques.
- Ability to operate grounds maintenance equipment safely and effectively.
- Familiarity with irrigation systems and minor repair procedures.
- Ability to follow written and verbal instructions and complete assigned tasks.
- Awareness of safe chemical handling practices and basic IPM methods.
- Ability to work outdoors in various weather conditions.
- Good communication and teamwork skills.

Qualifications

- High school diploma or GED preferred.
- One (1) year of experience in grounds maintenance or landscaping preferred.
- Valid Michigan driver's license required.
- Willingness to obtain pesticide license or certification if needed.
- Ability to lift up to 50 pounds and perform physical labor daily.
- Willingness to learn and improve through training and experience.

Physical Demands

Must frequently lift up to 50 lbs and occasionally up to 80 lbs.

Frequent standing, walking, bending, kneeling, and use of hand tools.

Occasional climbing, pushing/pulling equipment, and working in adverse weather conditions.

Performance Evaluation

Performance will be evaluated annually by the Maintenance Supervisor based on completion of assigned tasks, adherence to safety protocols, and contribution to team goals.