

kids and they come to our pre-school to learn sign language. It would be wonderful if we had a building of our own with a playground, all the groups in the same place."

She said pre-school is a different ballgame for the kids. Everything they do is new to them, even sitting down together for snacks, having conversations with the other kids and practicing good manners.

"We have to follow a state curriculum and show we have completed 10 standards, at least by 80 percent. The Department of Education will send a team to come check everything and an audit will be done on how the money was spent."

The grant from the state was for two years. After those two years, she said the program will be paid for just like all the rest of the grades, kindergarten through 12th.

"The private providers can still be part of it, but it becomes the district's job to fund it," she explained.

"This is a good thing for the community and good for the kids. But it's change and sometimes change is hard. I am glad the parents had a choice of where they wanted to take their child. That was important," she said.

Cossolotto has always felt part of the community, and having her mother, Doris Ervin, work 37 years at the local Hy-Vee helped. Being an integral part of the new pre-school makes Cossolotto feel even more attached to her hometown.

"I hope everyone is as excited about this as I am," she said. "It is good news."

**By Patsy Cincotta**  
Staff writer



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