A complete renovation of and installation of new playground equipment on the southeast side of Perkins School is underway.

Ed Gnau, Assistant Superintendent for Business said the highly-anticipated project is happening because the Newark Central School District received State Education Department approval to use some funds resulting from lower bids in the first two phases of the current capital project to purchase new playground equipment.
It is needed because most of the playground equipment was removed in the fall of 2017 because it had fallen into an irreparable state of disrepair.
Gnau said the district retained GameTime, from the NYS contract list that designs and re-designs school playgrounds, to create the new design. It employed equipment preference information developed by a Perkins School playground committee in recent years. The playground will be even more handicapped accessible than the old one.

The new playground equipment includes an ADA primetime swing, a rainbow arch, a merry-go-all, a whirlwind seat, a roxall see saw, a tire swing, a sensory dome, a traverse wall, a picnic table, bench and shade awning.

The design and equipment are seen in renderings included with this story, however it is important to note the playground will not feature artificial turf as shown in the renderings, but wood chip mulch.
Work on the playground began early in November and has included excavation work to address drainage issues that will allow the playground to be utilized more including on nice days during winter months. Weather permitting, Gnau said the playground could be ready for use sometime next month.

“The emergence of the new playground has been an exciting process for our students and staff to watch as we get to see the progress each day,” said Perkins School Principal Rhonda Underhill. “Our students are excitedly awaiting the completion of their new playground! We are anticipating opening it to our students on Tuesday, December 10th. We’re planning a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 2 p.m. that afternoon at which we can thank all of the school and community members who worked to help make this new playground possible.”
Gnau said the $1,550 raised by the PTA at its “Play for the Playground” fundraiser in June will be used to help purchase some additional new equipment for the playground on the north side of the school parking lot.

Its current capacity only allows one of the school’s 25 classes at a time to use it. That means that in good weather, only a few classes each day get to use it during their daily 20-minute recess time. Teachers take turns using that playground with their classes and must sign up to do so.