

Site work to begin on \$80 million Fairfield school projects

Sue Kieseewetter, Enquirer contributor 2:34 p.m. EDT September 9, 2015

Replacement of Central Elementary and the freshman school and addition of a sixth elementary planned.



(Photo: Provided)

FAIRFIELD – Each of the two new elementary buildings planned for the Fairfield Schools will be about 90,000 square feet – large enough for 800 students.

They are part of an \$80 million project that replaces Central Elementary and the freshman school – the district's two oldest schools – with new buildings and adds a sixth elementary school.

“The elementary schools are mirror images of each other,” said Superintendent Paul Otten. “They have the exact same floor plan – but flipped. In one plan the gym is on the left; the other school it will be on the right.”

The building that replaces Central Elementary School will be constructed behind the existing school on the same site, further back from Ohio 4. The other school will be built on board-owned property across the street from the senior high school on Holden Boulevard.

Early plans show each of the elementary schools will have a two-story library in the center of the building, with the gymnasium on one side, the cafeteria on the other. The three, two-story academic wings are to the right of the front entry.

Six extended learning areas – one at the end of each hall in the academic wings – will have room for a computer lab, small group instruction or tutoring space, Otten said.

“This will be flexible space for teachers. Instead of having wasted space in the hallways, we’re expanding them, making it useable, instructional space with support technology,” Otten explained.

The design of the elementary schools, Otten said, will be carried to the freshman school – but on a much larger scale with the addition of an auditorium that seats 400.

At 140,000 square feet, the structure is about 40 percent larger than the existing freshman school, with room for 850 students.

Like the elementary schools, the freshman school design has extended learning areas in the academic wings. All three schools have some elements that will remind visitors of the senior high school, which opened in 1997. Since the freshman school will be built on the senior high campus, brick will be matched to that at the senior high.

“It will have the same kind of layout but the outside of the structure will look significantly different. We’re trying to get a lot more natural light into the rooms and large space,” Otten said. “We have more glass, a more modern appeal to the building.”

All three buildings will be constructed with energy-efficient components in an effort to get the buildings one of the LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – certifications.

Construction is expected to begin next March with preliminary site work – moving dirt at each site – scheduled to begin at the end of the month, said Jeffrey Sackenheim, an architect with SHP Leading Design.

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