



Planning begins for transformation of schools

The initial planning for the transformation of Forest Hills schools is underway and the district has entered the “programming design” phase.

In this phase, SSOE, the district’s design firm, will gather input on building needs from parents, community members and employees. To date, architects and designers have revisited every school in the district and have begun meeting with administrators and parent groups to begin determining initial priorities and schedules.

Each building principal has also established a facilities “visioning team” consisting of staff members, administrators, and parents who will discuss facility issues and needs that affect teaching and learning in each school and classroom. Each “visioning team” will meet several times throughout the design process.

“We want input from everyone,” said Dallas Jackson, Ed.D., superintendent “School ‘visioning teams’ will start the discussion and act as ambassadors to the public, parents, students and staff members to gather and share additional input and information from others. Smaller visioning teams focused on subject areas, such as the arts and sciences, will also meet.”

SSOE has also begun soil testing, surveying, and preliminary meetings with local and county officials to gear up for construction.

Architects will then use the information collected during the programming design phase to create preliminary site and floor plans that will provide solutions to facility needs; this phase is called “schematic design”. They will also begin to redesign building exteriors and determine changes to the site, as needed, and the preliminary construction and renovation schedule.

The completion of the schematic design phase is scheduled for late May. Once completed, the district will be able to provide parents, staff and community members with a vision for renovated and new buildings and more information on what to expect during construction.

Construction is anticipated to begin on a variety of projects in the late spring or early summer of 2015.

“We will work to keep our projects on timelines that will consolidate costs on materials, shipping of materials and labor,” explained Jackson. “During our work to provide better educational environments for our students, we will focus on the safety of students, staff and visitors to our schools; minimizing disruption to the educational process and residents who live near our schools; and finishing our projects in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible.”