

Community offers input on design of new schools

[Daniel Carson](#), Reporter Published 3:06 p.m. ET Jan. 10, 2018

Architects meet with public to discuss Fremont projects



(Photo: Molly Corfman/The News-Messenger)
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FREMONT - What will Fremont City Schools' four new elementary school buildings look like?

Residents got another chance to give their answers and offer input on possible design features for the new Otis, Croghan, Atkinson and Lutz Elementary Schools at informational meetings held Tuesday night at Fremont Middle School.

Project architects for the district's four new elementary school buildings talked to residents about feedback they'd received at previous community meetings and looked at possible design images mounted on posterboards throughout the FMS cafetorium

An Atkinson Elementary posterboard near the FMS entrance compared examples of more traditional school design images versus more modern ones.

Superintendent Jon Detwiler said the district and project architects would be looking at architectural features at the current elementary school sites and whether FCS would retain some of the past and incorporate it into its new buildings.

Detwiler mentioned the attractive stonework at Lutz's current building as an example.

"That's part of the conversation tonight," Detwiler said.

About 25 residents attended the first informational meeting Tuesday.

Gilbane Building Co., which has offices in Cleveland and Findlay, will partner with Mosser Construction and work with the district and architectural firms Then Design Architecture (TDA) and SSOE Group on the project.

Toledo-based Munger, Munger and Associates Architects Inc. also had architects on hand Tuesday to answer questions.

Detwiler previously said TDA will work on the design for the new high school, while SSOE will work on the four elementary schools.

Voters in May approved a \$58.6 million levy to construct four new elementary buildings and a new Ross High School as part of a facilities plan to upgrade building quality and technologies as the district moves into the 21st century of education.



Architects displayed traditional and modern design options for the four new elementary schools tentatively set to open in August 2021. (Photo: Molly Corfman/The News-Messenger)

Joe Kunkle, lead architect for the SSOE Group, went through a comprehensive overview of plans for the four new elementary buildings.

Kunkle discussed academics, safety and security, building efficiency, and community focus.

"We're trying to get some idea of a consensus in the community so we're not creating these buildings in a vacuum," Kunkle said.

He referenced meetings in recent weeks with staff, community members and other architects involved with the new buildings.

At a community meeting held in November at Terra State Community College, among the biggest concerns expressed by district residents were expanding technology and internet

capabilities, better heating and cooling, and expanded space and storage for students and faculty.

One concern Detwiler shared with many in the Dec. 14 meeting was air quality in the current buildings, and the lack of efficient air conditioning and heating.

One resident asked Kunkle about security in the new buildings and brought up the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in 2012, where 20 children and six staff members died in a mass shooting in Newtown, Connecticut.

Kunkle said architects that design schools were looking at how security vestibules should be put in the buildings, where security cameras would be installed and door systems that make planned attacks more difficult to carry out.

"You can't prevent somebody totally, but you can create environments that make it much more difficult," said Hal Munger, an architect with Munger, Munger and Associates.

Groundbreaking on the projects is scheduled for 2019, with buildings tentatively scheduled to open in August 2021.

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About 25 people attended the first of two public informational meetings Tuesday night to discuss plans for Fremont City Schools' four new elementary buildings. (Photo: Molly Corfman/The News-Messenger)