

# Groundbreaking held for 4 new Fremont elementary schools

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Superintendent Jon Detwiler got a little help from Fremont City Schools board members and students Wednesday, as the school district held an official groundbreaking ceremony for its four new elementary school buildings. *(Photo: Daniel Carson/The News-Messenger)*

FREMONT - Even though construction work began at the new Atkinson, Croghan, Lutz and Otis elementary school sites last year, Fremont City Schools wanted to hold a formal celebration for the district's new schools.

The school district held a groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday morning at Don Paul Stadium for all four school sites, as students filled the bleachers and watched district leaders and project officials shovel ceremonial dirt and talk about the new buildings' impact on Fremont's future.

"To say it's huge doesn't do it justice," said FCS School Board President Shantel Laird after the ceremony.

Early site work has been completed at all four new elementary school locations, with sewers, construction building pads, and underground water retention systems completed in January.

Superintendent Jon Detwiler said there was a brief delay involving a permit at the Croghan site, but otherwise work has been going smoothly so far at the four construction sites.

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FCS Superintendent Jon Detwiler spoke at Wednesday's groundbreaking ceremony for the school district's four new elementary school buildings. (Photo: Daniel Carson/The News-Messenger)

Detwiler said gymnasium walls were going up at Otis, with that new site the furthest along, construction-wise, of the four elementary schools.

He said footers and foundations were being put in at Atkinson and Lutz.

Work on the new Fremont Ross High School was still in the design development phase, Detwiler said.

"We do anticipate some site work this summer at the high school," Detwiler said.

FCS officials originally wanted to hold groundbreaking ceremonies at all four elementary school sites.

Detwiler said the district ultimately decided to hold one ceremony that allowed as many students as possible to participate.

Board member Violetta Rhea said there had initially been some rocky spots in the construction process, but now things were coming together with the overall buildings project.

She said she liked having a single ceremony that brought students, district leaders and project officials together to celebrate the new school buildings.

"I'm excited to come to this point." Rhea said.

Representatives from Mosser Construction, Inc., Gilbane Building Company, Munger and Munger Associates Architects, SSOE Group, the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission and the state treasurer's office attended the ceremony.

Laird said there had been dramatic increases in materials and labor costs on the overall project.

She said all of the district's partners gave up something, in terms of profits, to make sure the project stayed on course.

"It has not been easy to keep it on budget, but we did it," Laird said.

The Fremont City Schools board [approved a guaranteed maximum project cost](#) of more than \$49.7 million for its four new elementary schools in February.

Of the \$49,732,823 approved by the board, almost \$48 million is co-funded between the state and the Fremont school district, with about \$1.8 million locally funded with Fremont City Schools' permanent improvement dollars or levy funds.

The vote included approval of guaranteed maximum price (GMP) amendments for construction, demolition and abatement costs at the new Atkinson, Croghan, Lutz and Otis elementary school sites.

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