

Officials: Fremont Middle School project on track

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FREMONT -- The nearly \$27.6 million Fremont Middle School project is both on schedule and on budget, despite heavy rains slowing outdoor work this spring, Fremont City Schools Superintendent Traci McCaudy said.

Chris Moore, senior project manager for construction managers Touchstone CPM, said it's getting easier to stay on schedule as the 126,000-square-foot building's walls and roof near completion.

"We are really starting to get the building totally enclosed," Moore said. "We are kind of battling the weather right now. Our guys just need to man up and get the work done."

The school district expects construction crews to hand over the keys to the new building by Nov. 17, McCaudy said, and classes are set to begin there about two weeks after students return from winter break Jan. 19.

Moore said much of the work going on now is inside, though some masons are still working outdoors.

"We have even started painting in some areas," he said. "The big, heavy work is out of the way."

An average of 100 construction workers are at the site on any given day, Moore said. Those workers vary from electricians and plumbers to HVAC specialists, flooring installers and roofers, he said. McCaudy said local contractors have workers on site who are Fremont residents and will have children attending the new school.

The district has both transitional and moving plans, meant to make sure everything happens on schedule and nothing is forgotten in the colossal task of moving an entire school. McCaudy said the move is complicated by the fact that the new middle school will also house sixth-grade students, currently spread at elementary schools across the district.

"We just wanted to make sure we addressed everything," she said. "It is a mid-year move, and that creates different challenges, too."

The superintendent said she welcomes any ideas from community members, staff and parents if they see something the district may have left out of its transition plan.

McCaudy said excitement is building among staff, students and the community in general, as the project nears completion.

"The students are excited, the teachers are excited," she said. "It is a great, exciting time for the whole community."

A dedication ceremony for the new building is scheduled for 2 p.m. Dec. 4, during which the public will be able to tour the completed building.

"We wanted the community to be the first to see it," McCaudy said.

The district also plans to set up tours on the weekends between that date and when classes begin at the new building in January, she said.

A decommissioning ceremony will also eventually be set for the old middle school building on Croghan Street, McCaudy said. The building is still for sale, but the school expects to tear the building down if it does not sell.



A worker sprays an energy saving foam insulation April 18 on the outside wall of the new middle school in Fremont. / Jonathon Bird/News-Messenger