

Fremont Middle School unveiled, dedicated

DECEMBER 16, 2011

FREMONT-- Michelle Lindsay attended Fremont Middle School shortly after the school had undergone a major remodeling project.

Now her daughter, Marisa, a seventh-grader, is making history as a student at the school as she changes locations and starts classes in January in a brand new building.

Lindsay's daughter will be part of the first class in the new \$25 million facility, outfitted with SMART boards in every room, increased security features and a number of significant technological upgrades.

The mother and daughter took a tour of the new 126,000-square-foot building Thursday, as Fremont City Schools had a dedication ceremony and an afternoon open house for students, parents and community members interested in getting a close-up look at the state-of-the art facility.

"It's different times. You need different technology," Michelle Lindsay said Thursday afternoon, as she complimented the school district on its attention to detail in designing and constructing the new middle school.

At the morning dedication ceremony, Superintendent Traci McCaudy said the new building is organized into five areas: a student union, administrative offices, student activities center, media center and three floors of core subject classrooms.

McCaudy said the building resulted from four years of dedicated efforts from the district's school board, school officials and the community.

She noted the 2008 vote that resulted in the passage of a bond issue and permanent improvement levy for the building.

The superintendent said the new FMS building's close proximity to Fremont Ross High School would provide a lot of opportunities to share resources between the two schools.

"I am very proud of this building. But the completion of this building is not an end. It is just a beginning," McCaudy said.

The Ohio School Facilities Commission is funding 32 percent of the FMS project, with city taxpayers funding the remainder.

School board president Alex Gorobetz said the district was told in 2006 that the middle school was in the worst condition of any school building in the state.

Gorobetz said the community had a choice to make in terms of funding a new building.

"And the community chose to pursue excellence and greatness," he said.

The building is spread over 12.5 acres, with students in grades eight, seven and six occupying their own floors for core classroom instruction.

It includes a new gymnasium that seats 650, a centrally located media center equipped with iPads and an adjacent multimedia production lab, and a student activities center with classrooms and practice space for performing and visual arts students.

The student activities center also contains engineering technology lab areas for computer-aided design, manufacturing production and modular technology.

Engineering technology teacher Brent Parker set up video cameras in the multimedia lab after the ceremony, as he greeted visitors with questions about the equipment and new technology.

Parker, an adviser to the school's video club, said the lab would eventually be used by FMS students to produce a daily morning newscast.

He said he planned to work with some of his students on video editing in the latter half of the school year and had lined up an eighth-grade student to be the initial news anchor for the morning broadcasts.

"It was a nice addition, a nice addition," Parker said about the lab.

Art teacher Elizabeth Dennings said she had more space in her classroom, additional sinks and enhanced natural lighting for her students.

"They definitely came to the teachers for input," Dennings said, in regards to the design and features in her classroom.

There is another FMS public open house scheduled for Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m.

FMS principal Anthony Walker said he expected to see a lot of his students and parents touring the building during the afternoon open house Thursday.

Walker said his students were eager to make the transition to the new building.

Classes start in the new building Jan. 19.

"They can't wait to come over," Walker said after the ceremony.

Mayor Terry Overmyer sat in the front row of the school's cafetorium during the dedication ceremony.

Overmyer said he attended the middle school as a child and was impressed with the new building.

"This community is all about the children. This whole place puts it all together," Overmyer said.

Other city officials, including several council members and mayor-elect Jim Ellis, attended the dedication ceremony.



The new Fremont Middle School, which encompasses 126,000 square feet and cost \$25 million to build, will welcome its first students Jan. 19.