



Aiken County Public School District

Merry Glenne Piccolino
Public Information Officer

803.641.2639

mpiccolino@acpsd.net

www.acpsd.net

For Release 9:00 a.m. Friday, January 9, 2015 or Thereafter

DISTRICT DETAILS THE PROGRESSION OF THE PENNY

This morning at the Aiken Chamber's first First Friday Breakfast of 2015, Dr. Elizabeth Everitt, Superintendent, detailed the planning and design process for the District's facility improvements made possible by voters who approved the 1% Education Capital Improvements Sales and Use Tax in November.

To a packed room at Aiken's Newberry Hall, Dr. Everitt thanked the community for their investment in Public Education with their "yes" vote to improve schools with a 59% margin.

New taxes take a full four months to be implemented, meaning taxpayers can expect to start paying the additional 1% in tax on most purchases beginning in March of 2015. The District hopes to receive its first full quarterly payment from revenue generated from the tax to be available in July and will issue bonds soon after to jump start construction on the projects.

"In hopeful preparation for voters to approve the tax in November," said the District's Deputy Superintendent David Caver, "the District and School Board did everything that didn't require dollars in order to prepare for dirt to move as quickly as possible." The District has already procured architects, contractors and established the delivery method for the projects.

Local contractor H.G. Reynolds Company, Inc. and South Carolina architecture firm McMillan, Pazdan, Smith were already procured for the project of North Augusta High School.

Construction is underway on the first phase of North Augusta's new school, with plans to cut the ribbon on the high school's Math and Technology wing this spring. The design phase for the remainder of the new school is beginning, and as with all projects, will involve parents, students, faculty, staff and other school stakeholders who will be invited to participate in the development of plans and decisions. According to Deputy Superintendent David Caver, while student safety during the construction is paramount, he hopes to do as much as possible now as construction costs are rising.

In an effort to monitor the cost of construction, the Board has elected to use Construction Management At Risk for the projects. With this type of delivery system, construction costs are agreed upon up front and the District shares equal footing in the planning with the architect and contractor. "It requires very clear upfront planning," Caver said. "And guards against an overage in the cost of projects."

Aiken High School and Leavelle McCampbell Middle School will be designed by in state architect LS3P and constructed by MB Kahn, one of the nation's leading construction firms based in Columbia. The District has already met with LS3P and MB Kahn and is encouraging their selection of local subcontractors.

The design phase is beginning for both schools, which will include stakeholder engagement and "OSF," Office of School Facilities at the State Department of Education, approval at each phase.

The design for the new Leavelle McCampbell Middle School will intertwine historical elements of the original school built in 1921 with modern educational components, including those of "STEM" schools, Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The new middle school will be built on Bettis Academy Road near the new Byrd Elementary on land generously donated by a private company. Following the design phase, which will take eight or more months, construction will begin on the new Leavelle McCampbell in late 2015 and should be completed for students to occupy in the 2017-2018 school year.

The reconstruction of Aiken High School presents challenges as new buildings are constructed on an existing site. The impact on the present program and safety of students will not be compromised when construction begins early next year.

The District invites you to "Follow Your Penny" on Aiken County Schools' website. Click on the penny for updates on the construction progress (including photographs, a live cam, and a timeline), details of the Oversight Committee (a tally of dollars spent and meeting updates) and a way to ask questions or raise a concern.

#####