

School district gets ESC land donation

Property for Joplin’s planned new elementary school

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The Joplin School District on Tuesday night announced the acquisition of a parcel of land adjacent to the north of its recently acquired Dover Hill property to add to its land bank for its new elementary school.

The property donation was made by Economic Security Corporation of Southwest Area, which operates a Head Start location north of Dover Hill. The district previously had received 17.83 acres at Dover Hill, located at North Main Street and West Murphy Boulevard, from the city of Joplin for the site of the new school.

The land will “make a big difference” in how the new school can be oriented on the site and will allow for better traffic flow onto North Main Street, said Kerry Sachetta,

assistant superintendent of operations. He said the parcel stretches from North Main Street to the railroad right of way on the west.

“It was just a win-win all the way around for the site itself and overall efficiency,” he said.

Architects with Corner Greer and Associates continue to meet with faculty and staff of the new school to finish the building’s design, principal architect Chad Greer told the Joplin Board of Education on

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An artist’s rendering depicts Dover Hill as a hilltop school that would accommodate 450 students with 67,000 square feet of floor space.
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SCHOOL

FROM 1A

Tuesday night. The design is projected to be complete by January, and more detailed cost estimates are expected to be available then, he said.

"The building (in terms of design) is in great shape," he said. "The site, we need to spend a little more time (on). That's proved to be the biggest challenge to us so far — understanding the site, all the constraints, all the variables."

Greer said the school project will be split into two phases: site preparation and building construction. Site work could begin in April of next year, with construction of the building complete by August 2022.

The new elementary school is being funded by the bulk of a \$25 million bond issue that was approved by voters in June. It was sought by the school district to replace Columbia and West Central schools, both of which are nearing 100 years old.

The bond issue also included funds for an 8,325-square-foot addition at Kelsey Norman Elementary School to alleviate overcrowding and eliminate a modular trailer there. Because of its smaller scope and size, that project is moving along much more quickly than the new elementary school, the architects said.

"We are in the final push on Kelsey Norman" for the design phase, said Michael Wischmeyer, with Corner Greer and Associates. "We have about one week to go."

The final designs are due to Crossland Construction Co. by early next week, with bids on the project to go out immediately, Wischmeyer said. Bids will be due by Dec. 8, and construction will begin later that month, he said.

The addition is scheduled to be complete in July of next year. The architects said they hope to get the structure framed and enclosed before the worst of this winter's weather arrives.

In other business Tuesday, the board approved:

- **THE \$33,300 PURCHASE** of Chromebooks for Soaring Heights Elementary School. The purchase, which moves the school closer to a 1:1 technology ratio for its students, is made through Title I federal funding.

- **THE \$21,064 PURCHASE** of Chromebooks for students at College Heights Christian School. The purchase is made through Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act funds, which are channeled through the school district.

- **THE \$70,297 PURCHASE** of a plasma/laser torch system for a manufacturing lab at Franklin Technology Center. Three-quarters of the cost will be paid through a grant, and the remaining 25% will come from Franklin Tech's budget.