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Hillsboro School District unveils new Pathways Center

👤 Troy Shinn 📅 February 02 2022

The newest building on the Oak Street Campus will provide career training and college prep services.



PMG PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ - Stan Miller, left, and Yadira Martinez, Hillsboro School Board Member, cut the ribbon during the grand opening of the Pathways Center.

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003726660739-0993.jpg>) The grand opening of the new Pathways Center for the Hillsboro School District, held on Wednesday, Feb. 2, put the voices of students at the heart of the proceedings.

Original music, composed and recorded by Hillsboro Big Picture sophomore Lucas Co, played over the loudspeakers to usher in remarks by school and city officials.

It was fitting to have student talent on display, since the impetus behind this new learning center is to celebrate students' passions and interests, and to prepare them to take these interests into the adult world.

"The Pathways Center is about the future," said Hillsboro school board member Yadira Martinez, who helped champion the project. "Academic and career training services are being concentrated in this downtown, accessible space. This will be a valuable resource for many students for generations to come."

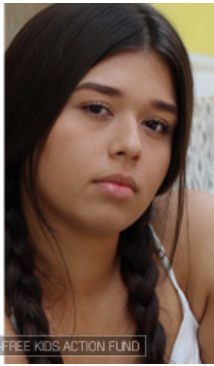
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PMG PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ - Mike Scott, Hillsboro School Superintendent, unveils a plaque that recognizes the people who were involved with building the Pathways Center.

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003726661011-0993.jpg>)

The funding for the \$4.7 million project came largely from the 2017 Hillsboro schools bond. Other money came through state dollars passed as part of Measure 98, which funds career and college readiness programs throughout the state.

Construction began last March, but officials said the early conversations about the new building took place more than four years ago.

The 8,400-square-foot center features five classrooms, an extended learning area, and offices where college and career advising services will be offered. There's even a shower room and a laundry area for students who need them.

District officials said that addressing the basic needs of students was at the heart of planning this building from the get-go. The process included input from students themselves, said assistant superintendent Dayle Spitzer.

"As we listened to students, they told us, 'I need a place to do my work,' and they need a place to wash their clothes and take a shower for those who don't have access to that at home," Spitzer said. "They can do all that here."

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PMG PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ - Sophomores Catherine Ramirez, left, Carla Ramirez and Courtney Jones look at their new classroom at Pathways Center.

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003726660864-0993.jpg>)

A few students who will be among the first to utilize the new classrooms also attended the grand opening.

"We're really excited about the opportunity to meet new people and learn new things," said Catherine Ramirez, 17, who attended the grand opening and dedication with her friends Courtney Jones, 16, and Carla Ramirez, 17.

The three met in middle school and have been friends ever since. All three will be starting right away in the new classrooms of the Pathways Center, on the newly rebranded Oak Street Campus. They all specifically shouted out Anya Hershberger, an early college program advisor with the district who they said "has been awesome in helping us through everything" and getting them ready to start at the Pathways Center. (<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003726660961->



PMG PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ - Oak Street Campus principal Amy Torres speaks during the grand opening of the new Pathways Center. Photo by Jaime Valdez

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Others, who started their academic careers at the complex and have since become administrators themselves, described this grand opening as coming full circle.

"I started my journey here in the second grade at David Hill (Elementary School)," said Oak Street Campus principal Amy Torres, who gave a bilingual address at the ceremony. "This is really a full-circle moment for a lot of us."

The Oak Street Campus is a rebranding of the complex that has for decades held David Hill Elementary School, which changed to an alternative school in 2009, and the Miller Education Center.

Lifelong advocate for alternative education Stan Miller, after whom the education center was named, also spoke at the event. He recalled one of the first meetings, years ago, when the district gave the green light for a new alternative education building.

"The overarching sentiment was that school success will never be a one-size-fits-all proposition," Miller said at the ceremony. "This is a continuation of that same idea."

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The advertisement shows two women standing on either side of a large, oversized US dollar bill. Below the image, the text reads: "Your dollar stretches further at Murphy's Furniture YOUR WOOD STORE". The Murphy's Furniture logo features a green shamrock.

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PMG PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ - Attendees celebrate during the grand opening of the Pathways Center.

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003726661041-0993.jpg>)

Speaking on the rebranding of the Oak Street Campus from the center that bears his name, Miller said he has been honored to have his name represented at the campus, but that he's supportive of the name change.

"It's been a great source of pride and satisfaction to have my name associated with this program," Miller said. "This is not the end of one program and the start of another — I see it as a transition."

Inside the new classrooms, 26 different "career kits" were on display on the worktables. They featured components of all kinds of professions that students may be interested in exploring, from plumbing and construction to electrical engineering — even dentistry.

Hillsboro Mayor Steve Callaway, who used to be a principal at R.A. Brown Middle School, said that this kind of career-technical training is invaluable for students who don't thrive in traditional educational settings.

"This will provide opportunities for kids for whom the traditional educational environment is not constructive," he said. "It honors their interests ... and affirms what they want to do." (<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003726661104-0993.jpg>)



PMG PHOTO: JAIME VALDEZ - The newly opened Pathways Center in Hillsboro. Photo by Jaime Valdez

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