

D9 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

QUESTION/COMMENTS AND **RESPONSES**

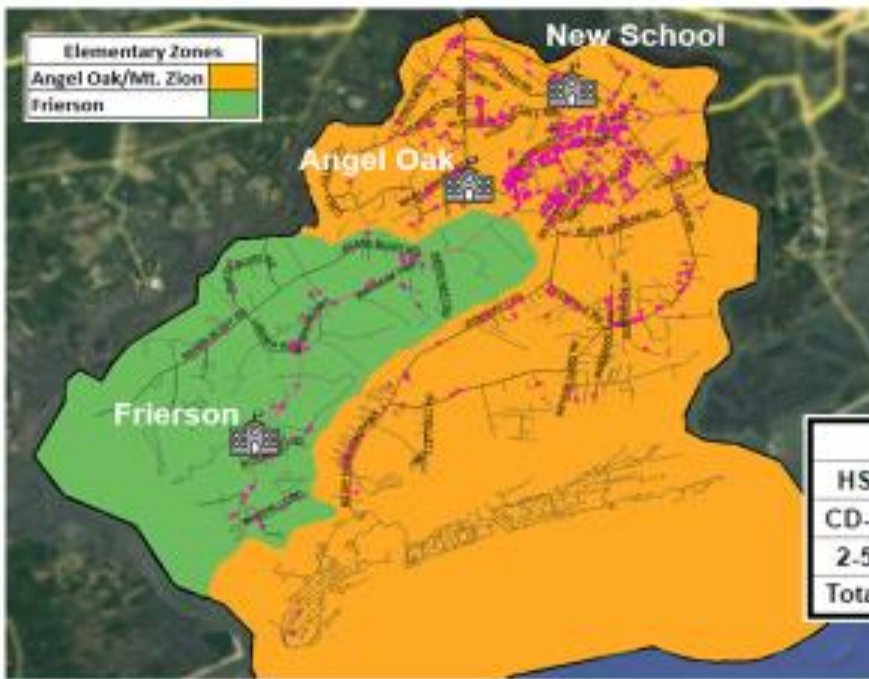
August 1, 2023

- Configure the elementary students between primary (3CD, 4CD, KG and 1st) at Angel Oak Elementary and remaining elementary (2nd - 5th grades) at the New Elementary School.
- Convert Mt. Zion to a family center and close the elementary school activities. The Community Presentation on Sept 2021 (attached) provided a reason for the configuration, but did not mention the reuse needs and financial impact.
- The original cost presented to the community in September 2021 was \$34.4M (Attached); however the one pager published earlier this year has updated that amount to \$53M.

On behalf of the leadership of Charleston County School District, thank you so much for your input and questions. We truly believe that we have thought through the financial impact, timeline, and impact to resident's financial and quality of life for this all important project to improve educational opportunities for our next generation on Johns Island. When this project is complete it will culminate in this century's recapitalization of all schools on Johns Island!

The selection of the site was not made until after several years of analysis of properties and several public meetings. Johns Island traffic is clearly a concern, but the selection of Swygert's Landing was the closest site to a majority of the families currently attending school thereby minimizing the traffic impact. The diagram from our June 30, 2022 community meeting below shows the school location; each pink dot represents a CCSD family in our elementary school system. Swygert's Landing was also part of an already approved Planned Use Development (PUD) that was suitable for a school.

ANGEL OAK (CD-1) AND NEW SCHOOL (2-5)



FY22 45-Day Count (Actual Students Attending)

Angel Oak (CD-1): 406 students

New School (2-5): 486 students

Future Projections

	FY23	FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28
HS	34	34	34	34	34	34
CD-1	453	452	441	438	433	422
2-5	580	642	675	689	683	671
Total	1067	1128	1150	1161	1150	1127

There have been increases in the project cost. On March 28, 2022, the Board of Trustees approved additional funding for seven projects including the new Johns Island elementary school due in large part to construction market inflation being experienced on other projects. This change was noted in the community meeting on June 30, 2022. On October 24, 2022, the Board of Trustees approved additional funding for five projects including the Johns Island elementary school which was to account in large part for on-site/off-site road improvements required by the SC Department of Transportation thereby reducing impact on public roads. The current project cost is \$53.5 million.

The answers and responses to specific questions are as follows:

1. Explain why you support this school grade configuration, a grade configuration that does not exist anywhere else in CCSD? Why do you believe this configuration will provide better educational outcomes for students living on Johns Island, as opposed to the traditional concept of k3-5th and the early childhood learning centers serving birth-5k feeding into an elementary school serving grades 1-5 approved for North Charleston?

CCSD has a similar grade configuration as proposed at Laurel Hill and Charles Pinckney Elementary in D2. We also have this in other areas in D4 - Mary Ford and Chicora; new Lambs facilities; new Ladson facilities. The district in collaboration with school leaders subscribe to the concept of a primary and elementary campus because it guarantees all students will have access to a new facility and programming at each campus can be tailored to the developmental needs of scholars. We also believe having all students (that do not want Montessori) in one feeder pattern of primary, elementary, middle, and high provides D9 with a unifying concept of esprit de corps.

2. How will you determine that success is not due to other factors like curriculum, principal, teachers, by economic means of parents as Johns Island continues to be developed, etc.? There are many variables that impact the overall success of a school.

The school configuration alone should not be expected to predict success. We will staff and program schools with all of the elements including strong teachers and leaders and to ensure success.

3. Why does CCSD and the CCSD board now believe that traditional elementary schools serving all students from early education through 5th grade do not produce the appropriate educational outcomes? And, why the inconsistent grade configurations across the district? In short, what model has proven to be most effective and why are you not following that model consistently throughout the district?

(Response on Next Page)

The district has not abandoned traditional elementary campuses. The majority of our elementary schools have the prek-5th grade structure. We also believe in early childhood programs that are tailored and customized to meet the needs of early learners. Additionally, research on grade level configuration is largely inconclusive and shows that the greater impact on student learning and achievement comes from the impact of leadership, teachers' collective efficacy and the design of the learning experience.

4. How are you justifying not including the 1st graders in this configuration at the new school?

Including 1st grade students at the primary level reinforces key skill development in “learning to read” v. “reading to learn”. This includes more comprehensive instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, high frequency words, and vocabulary. This also allows teachers to support students both academically and behaviorally as they enter their first school year without additional TA support. As second graders, students begin more challenging work in comprehension with an emphasis on exploring literature and informational text. The second grade year prepares students for the critical 3rd grade “Read to Succeed” year and allows these grade levels to be in the same building for additional vertical articulation between teachers. The same grade level concepts apply in math application in regards to the development of skills including number sense, algebraic thinking, measurement and data and geometry. Additionally, we want to take full advantage of the space available in the Angel Oak facility which was both renovated and expanded in the last building program.

5. Also, as this configuration is presented to include all three campuses as part of the overall plan, please provide the budget to upgrade the Angel Oak and Mt. Zion to the new use?

(Response on Next Page)

The conversion of Angel Oak to a PK-5 to PK-1 will be simple. PK-1 furniture from Mt Zion will replace 2-5 furniture at Angel Oak. All Angel Oak classrooms projected to be used by PK and K have individual bathrooms. Any playground equipment changes will be part of our normal replacement cycle. The cost to convert Mt. Zion to a Family Engagement Center has yet to be determined as its uses based on the needs of the community have yet to be defined. However, we are not expecting a significant financial impact as the set-up of a Family Engagement Center at Mary Ford was minimal.