

D9 New Elementary School Community Comments Summary

Background: In November 2020, voters approved the Phase V (2023-2028) Capital Building program that included the project to design, construct, and equip a new elementary school on John's Island. Feedback from the community meeting will be used to support the scope of the middle school project.

On June 30, 2022, at St John's High School a community meeting was held to engage the community and receive input for the future of the new District 9 elementary school. The composition of the 79 members that attended were: 54 parents and residents (68%), 15 CCSD staff (19%), and 10 board members/community leaders (13%). Attendees were offered opportunities to ask questions and voice concerns at the end of each brief, and comment cards were provided along with an email where CCSD staff would receive comments and concerns about the project. A summary of the questions asked at the meeting and received from the community after the meeting are provided below with answers, where applicable.

Summary of Community Comments

Comments surrounding Frierson Montessori:

- 1) Will Frierson get a gym since the other schools will have them?
 - *Frierson has received a significant amount of updates in recent years. Although we would like for every ES to have a gym/cafetorium, there are a number of schools that do not at this time. Because of our requirement for new elementary school buildings to house a minimum of 500 students, gyms and cafeteriums are built into the design.*
- 2) Does choice still apply to Frierson? Will students in D9, outside of the Frierson zone, have the option to attend Frierson? And will busing be provided to those students who live outside of Frierson's zone? Are Frierson zoned students eligible for the new school and if so, will there be busing available?
 - *All students in the Frierson zone, who do not want a Montessori education, will be able to attend the new AOE/MZE configuration through the choice process.*
 - *All students in D9 who want a Montessori education will be able to apply through choice to go to Frierson Montessori. *Space may be limited.*

Comments surrounding Mt. Zion Campus:

- 3) Are there any other property options closer to the original Mt. Zion?
 - *The Planning and Real Estate Department vetted eight (8) other properties and reached out to landowners in the area to secure a viable property to build the school that was both cost-effective and provided the least impact on the*

environment while maintaining the island's integrity. Water and sewage availability was also a mitigating factor.

- 4) Concerns about inequity for students near Mt Zion regarding the distance from Mt. Zion's zone to the new school.
 - *The student with the furthest address on Betsy Kerrison is 7.9 miles to Mt. Zion, 11.3 miles to AOE and 14.4 miles to the new school location. The student with the furthest address on Chisolm Rd is 9.3 miles to the new school location and 4 miles to AOE.*
- 5) What are the pros and cons of keeping Mt. Zion as a small ES and adding the new ES versus only adding the new ES? What is the possibility of keeping Mt. Zion open for CD-1?
 - *Building a new 500-student ES provides students with more opportunities such as access to newer buildings and facilities, expansion of programming within the school day (classes like Dance, Strings, Spanish, Makerspace, STEAM lab, etc.), and more expanded opportunities before and after school (student clubs, sports teams, robotics team, etc.).*
 - *Lower enrollment schools have higher operating costs which is a factor in determining the future potential variations of Mt. Zion ES.*
 - *At this time, the plan is to transition Mt. Zion's Head Start and Child Development programs to Angel Oak, once the new school is built.*
- 6) Has the Mount Zion ES site been considered?
 - *Yes, it received strong consideration. However, there is no sewer at Mt Zion and the ability to design/build a new and larger septic system is a significant obstacle. There also are not large enough parcels to accommodate the new school program. The district has investigated and made land purchase offers over many years without success. The district will keep ownership of the property. Much of the structure shall remain and be studied for repurposing as family center for the District*

Comments surrounding Academic/Title 1/School-Based Programming:

- 7) Because the current 4th and 5th graders at Mt. Zion will not benefit from a new school, what is CCSD doing in the meantime to lift up Mt. Zion students?
 - *CCSD has invested in the existing facility at Mt. Zion over the past two years by installing new HVAC units, a new roof and gutters, a remodeled kitchen, and new flooring in all classrooms. CCSD, Mt. Zion, and various community partners have partnered to improve the outdoor learning areas at Mt. Zion, with the installation of new basketball goals, new soccer goals, and a shade structure for an outdoor classroom. Beyond the improvements to facilities, ESSER II, ESSER III, and Title I funding have been utilized to significantly update the school's instructional materials, as well as the school's library and classroom library materials, and to provide additional staffing for wraparound services and supports. Mt. Zion's*

teachers have been able to attend world-class professional development in both mathematics and literacy thanks to district, state, and community support. The school has implemented a new ELA curriculum, called EL Education, starting in January 2022 with significant district support and investment, and all of our K-3 teachers will benefit from LETRS training starting in August 2022, which is considered to be the highest quality literacy professional learning available. Mt. Zion continues to work with Kiawah Cares and other community partners to further our implementation of STEM/STEAM. CCSD has also partnered with USC to offer a free master's program to Mt. Zion teachers (and those of other smaller rural Title I schools) that will begin in January 2023. This initiative aims to further Mt. Zion teachers' knowledge and skills, and to support teacher retention.

- 8) What happens to the strong arts integration foundation Angel Oak ES has developed? Will it continue through 2nd-5th grade? Mt. Zion Elementary has been trying to become a STEM school for a long time. How will this initiative be addressed given the split grades and the fact that AOE is art-focused?
 - *The arts-integrated model will continue at Angel Oak Elementary and will be vertically aligned to a STEAM (Science, Engineering, Arts, Technology and Math) model at the new elementary school. Vertical alignment of models between each of the schools will ensure that students build upon their learning experiences as they grow and will allow the teachers/staff at both schools to experience in-depth professional learning together. The STEAM model will support upper elementary students through a focus on engineering and design thinking, PBL (Project Based Learning), and creative, real-world problem-solving opportunities. Many schools around the country have been successful in increasing student achievement with the adoption of this model.*
 - *The new ES will be designed and built to accommodate the approved program.*

- 9) If Mt. Zion loses Title I status, how will families living below the poverty line be supported? Can you provide more details on what a family center would look like?
 - *Students and families who need assistance will still have access to many supports that are in place through the collaborative efforts of Parent/Family Service Advocates at each school. Both schools will also continue to work with community partners to provide access to food and nutrition, clothing, dental services, etc.*
 - *A family center is a fairly new concept for the district. We will need to investigate other family centers and connect with the community to gain input on how to structure the facility.*

- 10) Can you clarify, in your plans, how you will expand access to Head Start and CD programs?
 - *There are currently two 3K/Head Start classes and two 4K/Child Development (CD) classes at Mt. Zion. Angel Oak has one Preschool Inclusion Class (PIC) and four 4K/Child Development classes. When the new school opens, Angel*

Oak Elementary School will house all of the Head Start, PIC and Child Development classes in District 9. The school will continue to offer the continuum of services for all students. Community assessment, enrollment trends and space will be reviewed to determine options for expansion.

11) Will Title One status be lost with the new enrollment plan?

- *Angel Oak ES is no longer a Title One school. It may also be the case w/ the new school as the island continues to change and grow, but this is not yet known.*

12) Why is Angel Oak being considered for the younger grades?

- *The “pod” layout of Angel Oak is more conducive to the curricula in the earlier school years where there is potentially more student movement and active group activities. The layout of the new school is intended to be flexible to allow for change and a variety of teaching approaches.*

Comments surrounding Traffic:

13) Can we have more clarification on the traffic study that is being done?

- *We have the preliminary counts completed. The preliminary report will be furnished in August with the final report to be completed in September.*

14) Can you provide more comprehensive updates on how you will ensure that a traffic nightmare is not being created on both sides of River Rd and through Maybank?

- *A new roundabout located on River Rd is being designed with the project to ensure traffic moves continuously which will be an improvement for the traffic in the area.*
- *An additional roundabout will be located on the new school property to continue the steady flow of traffic.*
- *There will also be two entrances and/or exits from the school campus that will avoid River Road.*
- *Traffic and buses coming from the far side of River Road (near Mt. Zion) can use alternate routes to cross over including Plow Ground Rd, Edenvale, Bohicket, and Cane Slash to avoid busy areas around Maybank.*
- *Students attending the new school will be in upper elementary grades 2-5. As students mature and grow to become more independent, this typically leads to more students and families selecting to use the bus as an option, which lowers the number of cars needing to drop-off or pick-up students in the car line.*

15) Concerns around River Rd being dangerous all the way through Betsy Kerrison Pkwy including the intersection of River Rd and Maybank Hwy. Are there plans to upgrade River Road, widen and/or add sidewalks to accommodate the school?

- *SCDOT will continue to have input as we move forward with construction. The District will construct a roundabout on River Road to gain entry into the school property and to better facilitate traffic at that point. We understand the concerns*

of the community but believe the roundabout will provide a free flow of traffic while curtailing some of the traffic hazards.

16) Can 18-wheelers use the round-about?

- *Several roundabout designs are under consideration. The team will make note of the question and continue to explore options.*

17) Johns Islanders are being injured and, in some cases, killed being struck by cars as they walk along roadsides and in culverts. What can be done to address this?

- *We suggest that you continue to advocate with respective municipal leadership and staff; and elected officials.*

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Comments surrounding Busing and Transportation:

18) When changing the bell times, can CCSD take into consideration the inequity for D9, D10, and D23 parents compared to those in D2, D3, and D4? Working parents are having to pay for morning and afternoon child care while parents in other districts only have to worry about afternoon care due to the earlier ES start times.

- *Kaleidoscope morning care is discounted for those attending both morning and afternoon programs.*

19) What are the proposed bell schedules for the different schools?

- *Options for school start times will be thoroughly reviewed with strong consideration for staggered bell schedules for Angel Oak and the new school to better accommodate families with students in both schools.*

20) Will the buses have students from both schools on them at the same time?

- *Yes, the buses will have students from both schools.*

21) What are the additional busing costs associated with their preferred single attendance zone option? Can your transportation software simulate each of these scenarios? What would the bussing costs be (i.e. fuel, maintenance, labor, etc.) if you kept the attendance zones split between Angel Oak and the new elementary school? What would the bussing costs be for your preferred single attendance zone? Would you have to add buses, drivers & routes? From a taxpayer's perspective, is the single attendance zone option the most efficient use of public school transportation dollars?

- *In the current attendance zone configuration, each respective set of buses servicing Angel Oak and Mt. Zion essentially covers half of Johns Island with no geographic overlap. Under the new preferred single attendance zone, both sets of buses at Angel Oak and the new elementary school would overlap the entirety of Johns Island.*
- *Without knowing which students will utilize transportation services to either school, Transportation is unable to provide an accurate cost analysis for the above transportation scenarios. Due to the fact that Johns Island spans approximately 84 square miles and without knowing the actual distance for*

potential routes our routing software is unable to simulate the above scenarios. However, based on the current percentage of students who require transportation to the above schools, we estimate that approximately (2 to 3) additional buses would potentially be required to cover transportation for students to Angel Oak and the new D9 school. The cost of adding (2 to 3) additional buses would range from \$166,520 to \$250,323. There would be no additional costs to the District for fuel and maintenance as these expenses are covered by the State.

- 22) School start stagger times may need to be significant given the traffic problems on the island. It is possible that a parent will need to drop-off/pick-up at three separate schools per trip.
- *The traffic situation on the island is understood and is under ongoing study. Options for school start times, as well as bus, schedules and routes will be thoroughly considered.*

Other general questions and comments:

- 23) How many acres is Angel Oak and how many acres is the new school property?
- *Angel Oak is approximately 18.5 acres*
 - *The new school site property is 31.90 of highland and 23.18 of wetlands.*
- 24) Some prefer a smaller school. Can this be considered?
- *Smaller schools can present inefficiencies and added costs district-wide. They can also limit program offerings. Numerous design strategies can be implemented to help make the new school feel smaller including the creation of "neighborhood" classroom wings, smaller-scale/proportions of rooms and spaces, and the creative use of color and graphics.*
- 25) School security should be important at the new school, but also at the existing schools.
- *The district takes school security extremely seriously and is considered second to none on the topic. The Security and Emergency Management Department conducts case studies nationwide seeking best practices and strategies that can be implemented here at home.*
- 26) Efforts at equity are appreciated. What about equitable treatment of the other schools in District 9?
- *Upgrades were recently completed at Angel Oak and Frierson. Additional improvements there remain in progress.*
- 27) Will there be further opportunities for input?
- *Yes. The next meeting will be the presentation to the full school board at their September Committee of the Whole Meeting at 75 Calhoun Street. Approval will be requested to proceed with the complete project (site, program, and budget). Design progress will also be reviewed by the City of Charleston Design Review*

Board (DRB) at several project milestones (SD, DD, CD phases). The meetings w/ the DRB are open to the public both in person and virtually.

28) What happened to the plan developed years ago to build an elementary school on the Haut Gap campus?

- *During the 2020 Capital Master Plan development, it was determined that Haut Gap would not be a suitable site for an elementary school because of the space available on the campus. The site is 23.75 acres which is less than optimal for even the existing middle school. The site would be further constrained by current requirements for car and bus loops, as well, as the addition recently constructed for the middle school.*

Nexts Steps

As the project progresses further into design, we will review and share additional information via community engagement and monthly updates located on the CCSD's Capital Program website, "Project Status by District", "District 9", and "Current Projects"

<https://www.ccsdschools.com/Page/7325>

Any additional questions or comments can be directed to the Capital Programs general email account: Capital@charleston.k12.sc.us.

Images displayed on easels at the meeting



Charleston
County SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEW DISTRICT 9 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
EXTERIOR RENDERING

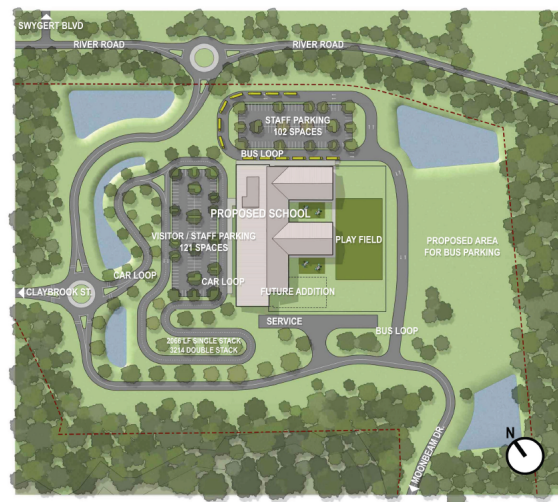
QUACKENBUSH ARCHITECTS + PLANNERS
clancy + wells



Charleston
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NEW DISTRICT 9 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SURROUNDING CONTEXT SITE PLAN

QUACKENBUSH ARCHITECTS + PLANNERS
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Charleston
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NEW DISTRICT 9 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN

QUACKENBUSH ARCHITECTS + PLANNERS
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