ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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102 Founders Court • Orangeburg, SC 29118
Phone: (803) 534-5454

Tuesday, August 13, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Dr. Erica S. Taylor
Assistant Superintendent for Communications
and Business and Community Partnerships
erica.taylor@ocsdsc.org

ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT AWARDED $40 MILLION GRANT FOR NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

ORANGEBURG, S.C. – At Tuesday night's school board meeting, SC State Superintendent Ellen Weaver announced that Orangeburg County School District has been awarded a $40 million grant to construct a new Robert E. Howard Elementary School. This funding, provided under Proviso 1.81(D) of 2023-2024, is part of a broader initiative to support educational capital projects across South Carolina.

Under the bond referendum passed in November 2022, the current Robert E. Howard Middle School was set to be converted into an elementary school, combining students from Brookdale, Mellichamp, and Whittaker Elementary schools. However, with this new grant, OCSD will now be able to build a completely new facility, rather than remodeling the existing school. This new construction will create a modern, state-of-the-art environment designed to meet the needs of 21st-century learning.

"This grant is not just an investment in a new building; it's an investment in the future of our students. At OCSD, we are responsible for providing our students with an education that prepares them for life after graduation, and this new facility will play a crucial role in achieving that mission. The new Robert E. Howard Elementary School will be a dynamic, life-changing environment that aligns with our strategic vision for educational excellence," said OCSD Superintendent Dr. Shawn D. Foster.

The construction of the new elementary school will allow OCSD to consolidate students from the three existing elementary schools into the new facility, resulting in the closure of four outdated buildings and significantly reducing operational costs. The district's comprehensive facilities consolidation plan will ultimately lead to the closure of seven facilities built between the 1930s and 1960s, streamlining operations and enhancing educational outcomes for students across the district.

"This grant represents a critical step forward for OCSD and the community it serves. By investing in new, modern facilities, we are ensuring that students have access to the best possible learning

environments. OCSD's commitment to educational excellence and fiscal responsibility makes them a deserving recipient of these funds, and I look forward to seeing the positive impact this project will have on students and educators alike," said SC State Superintendent Ellen Weaver.

The new Robert E. Howard Elementary School is slated to begin construction plans in January 2025, with a design already approved by the state department and partnerships in place to expedite the process. The project is a key component of OCSD's strategic capital project plan and exemplifies the district's dedication to creating sustainable, high-quality educational facilities for future generations.

Orangeburg County School District

The mission of Orangeburg County School District, the catalyst of innovation and excellence, is to ensure all students discover and develop their person, purpose, and platform through high-quality educational experiences distinguished by a culture of collaboration, equity, and inclusion; a creative learning environment with inspiring opportunities; a commitment to nurture the academic, physical, social and emotional well-being of all. Visit us online at ocsdsc.org

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