



TO: Dr. Angel Turner, Superintendent
CC: District 65 Cabinet Team
FROM: Charlise Berkel, Planning Principal for Foster; Kirby Callam, Director of Strategic Project Management; Dr. Charmekia McCoy, Director of Schools Management
DATE: September 8, 2025
RE: Foster School Update

Objective: **Information** Discussion Follow-up Decision

Bid Group #5

There are six sub-contract packages within the Foster School construction project’s final bid group (#5):

1. Playground
2. Landscaping
3. Asphalt & Concrete for Curbs & Sidewalks
4. Fencing
5. Mixed Metals
6. Site Prep and Demo

The Bid Opening occurred on August 13 with the Playground, Landscaping, and Site Prep and Demo packages meeting bid requirements. The other packages did not have enough qualified bids and they will be re-bid in September. Cordogan Clark plans to present for Board approval all six bid packages at the October 20 Board meeting with work for all six contracts to occur in the spring of 2026.

Public Monthly Construction Budget Tracking Charts

To help ensure our community is informed, the Foster School web page now presents a monthly school construction [Budget and Contingency Tracker](#) to provide public transparency on the status of the building’s financial progress.

The charts will be updated on a monthly basis through September 2026, at which point we anticipate closing the books on the construction project shortly after the school opens.

Foster School Transition Planning Update

In July, Principal Berkel began her work as the Foster Planning Principal and joined the planning team. In collaboration with Principal Berkel, the team has created strategic priorities for the fall, which are centered around community engagement and student enrollment.

Foundational Work Completed (Summer 2025)

The planning team made significant progress across several key areas to establish a strong operational and instructional framework for the new school.

- **Strategic Planning & Leadership Support:**
 - Developed comprehensive plans for community engagement and communication.
 - Established leadership support structure, including a Principal Core Support Team and provided a mentor for Principal Berkel.
- **Community & Alumni Outreach:**
 - Mapped out a calendar of family engagement events, initiated outreach and meetings with Foster School alumni.

Foster School Forum Meeting:

On **September 24 from 6:00 to 7:00 PM at the Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center**, the Foster Planning Principal, Charlise Berkel, will lead a Foster School Forum for future families. She will facilitate conversations to understand what information families need to feel confident in their decision to enroll, and what their highest hopes and aspirations are for the new school. The insights gained from these forums will be instrumental in shaping school-family engagement and input in cultivating a school environment that is responsive to the families and community it serves.

The Foster School Forums will provide families with opportunities to learn about school's plans, ask questions, share thoughts and concerns, and express interest in becoming a Founding Foster School family via the [Intent to Enroll Form](#).

Communication Launch:

A monthly communication plan was launched last school year to keep District 65 stakeholders abreast of the progress being made on Foster School which is reported bi monthly in the Foster Newsletter. The newsletter provides families with regular updates on planning, community events, and construction. In August, Principal Berkal added a Principal's Corner section to the newsletter.

Foster School Intent to Enroll Process

Beginning September 8, 2025 through October 10, 2025, District 65 is encouraging families of current Kindergarten through 4th grade students who live in the Foster Attendance area or who attend Bessie Rhodes to submit their intentions for enrollment for next year early.

Completing the [Intent to Enroll Form](#) does not register a student in any school for the 2026-27 school year. Students who reside in the Foster Attendance area will be enrolled in Foster School unless they are currently attending King Arts School Magnet or the ACC program at Oakton School and wish to remain. Official enrollment for the 2026-27 school year will begin in December 2025. The window for permissive transfer requests ends on March 1, 2026 and will be decided on a case by case basis.

The Intent to Enroll Form responses will assist the District in estimating the number of students who will attend Foster and will inform staffing plans for the number of class sections and teachers at each grade level.

The District will reach out to families residing in the Foster School attendance area, as well as those currently enrolled at Bessie Rhodes, through email, text, and phone communication. District staff will also be present at upcoming open houses and parent teacher conferences at elementary schools that currently serve Fifth Ward student to answer questions about the process. [This flyer](#), promoting completion of the Intent to Enroll form, will appear in weekly newsletters as an outreach mechanism and will be available through community partners.

Upcoming Actions & Strategic Goals (Fall 2025)

Our primary focus for the fall is twofold: building a strong, trusting school community and securing student enrollment commitments.

Alongside family and community engagement efforts, school-wide academic and equity goals will be shaped by the development of a Foster School Data Dashboard designed to facilitate the analysis of data from students who have expressed an intent to enroll and register in the new school.

We are confident that this dual focus on authentic community engagement and rigorous academic planning will build a strong foundation for Foster School's successful launch.