

New James B. Edwards Elementary School Community Meeting Response Summary

COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND RESPONSES

March 20, 2025

On Thursday, March 20, a Community Meeting for the New James B. Edwards Elementary School was held in Mt. Pleasant. The purpose of the Community Meeting was to inform stakeholders about the status of the construction project, to receive community input on the design of the new school, and to answer any questions that the community may have.

The following document is a consolidation of recent questions, responses, and comments from our stakeholders and community members regarding the New James B. Edwards Elementary School. There were a total of 43 attendees at the James B. Edwards ES Community Meeting, which were represented by 13 neighbors, 14 teachers/CCSD staff members, 30 parents, and 2 grandparents. Capital Programs received 2 comment cards from the Community Meeting attendees and 2 emails.

We will continue to accept public questions and comments. Please email Capital@Charleston.k12.sc.us.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Have you engaged a land planning firm? **Yes. Our team has secured a landscape architecture firm, Surculus Design. CCSD will also be involved in the landscape design.**
2. Are the playground areas on the plans? **Yes, the playground areas are located on the plans (Slide 6 of the presentation).**
3. Will PE be in the multipurpose room when it rains? **The multipurpose room will act as both PE and play area and will be directly adjacent to the outdoor area.**
4. Will students be walking across the parking lot to get to the playground? **The play area is near the school and under the trees. Relocating the parking lot will take out more trees; however, the team will continue to study.**
5. Is there a legal reason for the retention pond because I've never seen water in it? **Yes, it's a storm water requirement and underground storage may be used as well.**
6. Can you cover the storm drain? **Yes, it's being studied by the Civil Engineer.**
7. What is the size of the current school? **88,000 SF. What is the size of the New school? 120,000 SF.**
8. The car rider lane seems long and no way for kids to get out? **SCDOT recommends onsite stacking lengths; however, the data considered for JBE includes current car stacking lengths (e.g. actual space taken up by vehicles in the car rider line, including vehicles stacked on the public roads due to insufficient space) and anticipated increases in the student population. Students will exit their vehicles at the front door of the new school.**

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

9. In regards to the Lucy Beckham High School Softball Field: **The softball field is a programmatic requirement for Lucy Beckham High School. The Lucy Beckham HS Softball Field will remain as the school can be adequately sited on the campus.**
10. When is the demo of the annex scheduled? **Summer of 2026.**
11. After the annex is demolished, which grade level will be in the mobile classrooms? **The school has decided it will most likely put 3rd grades in the mobile classrooms. This decision was made due to the fact that kindergarteners will need a restroom in their classroom.**
12. Will the back entrance to the school be for walkers? **This will be reviewed.**
13. As projects are expected to be completed on time, what's the back up plan if not completed on time? **The Office of School Facilities (OSF) has jurisdiction over the school building and CCSD has a great relationship with OSF in addition to ensuring the new building is safe for occupancy. Students will be transitioned when the Certificate of Approval is awarded.**
14. Will there be active construction site during school? **Brownstone will manage the general contractor to ensure the site is safe and phasing of the project is correct. There will be a site manager housed onsite to maintain construction to a minimum while testing is ongoing. Brownstone and CCSD have experience of building on an occupied campus.**
15. Will there be background checks on contractors? **Yes. All contractors on site will go through the CCSD Raptor System and will be required to wear their Raptor sticker on their hard hat to confirm they have been checked before returning to the construction site. Some work will happen in the evenings and weekend.**

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

16. Will the playground be accessible during construction? **Yes, students and teachers will have full access. The team is studying how much area will be taken during construction. The basketball court will be relocated to maintain site parking.**
17. If we are losing basketball goals as a winning team, is there a separate location or gym to practice? **The outside basketball court will be relocated.**
18. What is the permit timeline? **Spring 2026 permitting will be complete. SD design is complete, DD is about 65%. The land disturbance permit is the longest permit to obtain, with many other permits through AHJs.**
19. Will there be natural light and a restroom in the media center? **Yes, natural light will be included to improve student development and CCSD's Educational Specifications include an adult restroom in the media center.**
20. During the construction, what will the parking look like? **All the construction parking will happen in the construction area, and the temporary parking condition has a higher count than the existing school.**
21. When the annex is demolished, what safeguards will be put in place? **OSHA Guidelines will be followed for everyone's safety. The actual demolition will take place during after school hours.**
22. Who from Learning Services will be included in the design? **As for all new buildings and renovations, Capital Programs includes the following in the Design Phase- Early Childhood Department, Exceptional Children, Nutrition Services, Nursing Services, the Principal or Designee, Associate Superintendent of Elementary Learning Community, Security and Emergency Management, Instructional Specialist for Health & Physical Education, Assistant Academic Director of Visual & Performing Arts, Library Media Services Coordinator, Facilities Management, etc.**

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

23. Will there be a construction staging and lay down area? **This information will be provided when the General Contractor/Construction Team is hired through the bidding phase.**
24. What pods will be along the construction side area? **CD and First grade pods.**
25. In the new design, are we incorporating single bathrooms for gender requirements? **Restrooms will be built or installed per code requirement.**
26. How will TOMP tree ordinance impact project and building permit? **We are reviewing the Master Plan with TOMP for approval. The Building Permit is issued through OSF, and the TOMP submission was made to be vetted.**
27. What is the roundabout at the ball field? **It is a fire truck access area and the distance to the school softball buildings have to be maintained.**
28. If we have rising kindergarten students, how would we recommend people sending them to JBE to reassure parents? **The team will continue to work closely with the JBE administrative staff to enable them to work closely with families and the community.**
29. Are the Phase 2B construction car and bus entrance separate? And how can teachers not be stuck in the line? **Yes, there is a separate entrance for cars and buses. A portion of the parking lot will be located close to the car entry (the South Entrance) and can be more easily accessed for teacher or visitor parking without navigating the complete car drop off lane.**
30. How do we maintain the noise levels during construction to not impact the CD classes? **As much as possible, noisier work will be done after hours or over weekends. The team will coordinate with the school to avoid loss of academic learning due to noise levels.**

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

31. Given how close the construction will be to the school, will the intake values be protected at the existing school? **Yes. Intakes will be protected during construction and monitored closely.**
32. Parking during events, have we reached out to the hospital for overflow? **Not at this time; however, this strategy may be implemented in the future.**
33. What is in the multipurpose room? **PE activities, movable basketball goals, platform, flexible partition that can be opened as needed, and a very high ceiling height.**
34. Will the new parking lot be gated off? **There will be gates as required by CCSD security, to access the site, even after hours.**
35. What is the focus with the current school in the kitchen like a working dishwasher? **The district FM handles repair request and the team will look into it. The school should have enter the repair request through the CCSD used platform.**
36. Will there be windows in the multipurpose room and cafeteria? **Yes.**
37. How much room between construction site and school? **Roughly 30 ft.**
38. While the building is under construction, will Kaleidoscope's summer program be impacted? **No.**
39. Do we need this much parking? **The team is currently studying, to include the most for storm water and the current amount of students for the program.**

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

40. Are there any plans to continue to update our current school if we plan to remain in the building for the next several years. Last year, there were several very hot classrooms due to HVAC issues and as far as I know, we currently don't have a working dishwasher in the cafeteria. I'm sure these are only a few of many issues in a school the age of James B. Edwards Elementary School.

While James B. Edwards Elementary School is slated to receive a new school, this does not mean that their current facility will be overlooked. If there are any concerns, please contact your school's administration to ensure they follow the proper protocols for notifying our Facilities Management Team. CCSD's Facilities Management team is dedicated to providing safe, healthy, comfortable, and well-maintained environments that enhance learning.

41. Will the current green house be relocated? **Yes, the greenhouse will be relocated during construction, and placed back once construction is complete. As stated in response number 1, our team has a landscape architect firm, Surculus Design. CCSD will also be involved in the landscape design. Landscape architects have knowledge regarding specific needs of a school garden; however, the team welcomes all feedback and suggestions.**

42. There was mention of moving the greenhouse "out of the way" during construction before it lands in its final place. Is there a good reason to move the greenhouse twice? Could the garden continue to function for students during the years of construction in its current location? **We will look into this; however, if moved, the greenhouse will be relocated.**

43. Where will trailers be located during construction? **The mobile classrooms will placed behind the cafeteria.**

44. Has there been any discussion of environmental impacts of our new building? **Yes. This is done through the permitting process of every project.**

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

45. It is my understanding that other schools in the area relocated their students to alternative schools during the construction process. Although there are some cons to this (ie: student home to school proximity), the pros (ie: less distractions for students during the school day, student safety in close proximity to the construction site, the flexibility in design by not planning around an occupied site, etc.) would significantly outweigh the cons. Has this been considered? Why would the JBE community be different than other schools that were currently under construction?

At this time, there are no available sites in District 2 that can be utilized as a swing space. We hear your concerns, and should a suitable space become available, we will consider it as an option. It's also important to note that we have safely and successfully constructed new schools on active sites in the past, and we are confident that we will achieve the same success with the new James B. Edwards Elementary School.

46. Any talk of LEED certification, permeable parking lots, etc? As a school of global leadership with a robust green team and garden initiatives, this seems like it would make sense...to be leaders in our district in environmental responsibility? **Not at this time.**

47. Is there an outdoor space for school-wide events? We have near and dear events (May Day, etc.) which would just not be ok in a multipurpose room. **The design team will continue to work closely with the school's administration to locate an appropriate space for school-wide events, such as May Day.**

Community Comments

1. Francine Mitchell, Executive Director of Elementary Learning Community, was a previous James B. Edwards ES Principal. Ms. Mitchell has been there a long time and will help bridge the relationship.
2. The audience should think about where the ball field would go if it was eliminated. There are budgeting constraints and market pricing to think about.
3. I work with children as a PNP and I have grave concerns about the rise of learning differences, inattention, and hyperactivity in children. Movement is therapy. If there is any possible way to incorporate extra outdoor time or a gym, I truly believe their ability to attend to their learning will be more fruitful.
4. The current building is old and I have concerns for mold and asbestos exposure during construction. Please do anything possible to protect the children from toxic exposure.
5. Please consider shade and shelter options for CD/Kindergarten playground. Teachers would love a shady place from which to watch the students.
6. I was having trouble seeing the plans for the finished school clearly, but it looked to me like the greenhouse structure itself was allotted a place, but that there wasn't a lot of area around it designated for garden space. Right now our garden covers about one third of an acre, and the garden surrounding the greenhouse structure is really where most of the life of the school garden happens. I'm sure we can work this out as we get closer to the move in date. Just wanted to put it on someone's radar.