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Antioch school district prepares for big projects



A rendering of W.C. Petty school after an addition in Antioch Elementary District 34.

Courtesy of Antioch District 34



Mick Zawislak

Major building projects supported nearly a year ago by voters in Antioch Elementary District 34 have cleared the last required approvals, with construction planned for spring.

The Antioch village board on Monday approved a special use and site plan for a 19,100-square-foot addition for four new classrooms, a music room and a gym at the W.C. Petty Elementary School, 850 Highview Drive.



Lake Villa officials previously granting similar approvals for Oakland Elementary School, 818 E. Grass Lake Road, means significant work at both schools can be put out to bid. Planned additions to include classrooms, a gym and other areas such as a collaborative corner and maker space will double Oakland's floor area to 71,185 square feet.

"We've crossed every marker we needed and gotten all of the approvals," Superintendent Jay Marino said. "In a couple of months, things will really start moving."

Additions at both schools are part of a wide-ranging master plan in the five-school, K-8 district.

Nearly two-thirds of District 34 voters last April agreed to a borrowing schedule that will keep property tax bills roughly the same until 2034, even though outstanding debt is being retired.

That will generate \$18.8 million. To make the request more palatable to voters, the district will contribute another \$6.8 million toward a master plan (<https://www.antioch34.com/domain/796>) to meet several objectives.

"It's pretty historic for Antioch, especially after two failed referendums," Marino said. Voters in 2006 and 2007 rejected tax hikes to build two new schools and repair other buildings.

School board President MaryBeth Hulting said the board is grateful for the "overwhelming support" from voters last April and their willingness to update and improve District 34 schools.

Marino said final construction documents are complete. "We'll be in full construction for the next year and half," he said.

One major goal was to eliminate 16 mobile classrooms the district had put into use at both schools over the years for art, music and other "special" subjects. The portables have been removed and those classes are being brought to students rather than having them go outside their building, and that's made for a tight fit.

The master plan also aims to create a "greater equity of learning spaces" throughout the district by installing air conditioning, improving lighting and equalizing classroom space, for example.

Building additions will start when the weather breaks, but the interior work will be done during the next two summers.

"As soon as kids are out the door (for the school year), we're into interior renovations," Marino said. The revamped buildings and facilities will be complete and open for 2020-21 school year.

A shift to a K-5 grade level configuration, which will have students attending two schools for their stay rather than three, also is part of the master plan.

Topics in this Article

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