

Champion breaks ground on PK-8 school complex

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By BOB COUPLAND , Tribune Chronicle

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CHAMPION - Bright sunshine and warm temperatures added to the enjoyment as 200 students, parents, school and township officials, and community members gathered Monday evening for the groundbreaking of a \$31.3 million PK-8 school complex to be constructed directly south of Champion High School off Route 45.

Champion Board of Education President David Mahan said it was 101 years ago when Ohio Governor F.B. Willis congratulated the Champion community for building a new centralized elementary school building.

He said today in 2016, another historic event is taking place in Champion with the groundbreaking for a new school to open in 2018.

"This is an historic moment because it has taken the community and everybody together to do what we are doing today. Enjoy being part of history. In another 100 years, they may be digging another hole," Mahan said.

Champion teachers and students remarked on the excitement of the new school.

Jessica Hrubik, an 11-year language arts teacher at Champion Middle School, said the new school will provide the district with the "opportunity to take excellence to the next level with a state-of-the-art learning facility for the children."

She said the new school will provide more safety and enhanced academics.

Kennady Grace, a middle school fifth-grader, said she wants a school with air conditioning because it is very hot in the current building.

"I want to see colorful art and decorations in the new school to make it look nice," she said.

Champion Trustee Keith Bowser said he saw "a lot of faces with a lot of pride" at the event. "This would not have happened without the support from the community," he said.

State Rep. Michael J. O'Brien, D-Warren, said the new school will be symbol of what the Champion community believes - "that education provides opportunity and that education is a priority."

"The Champion community understands investing in education and in our children's future is the most sound investment we can make. An investment that will reap the largest returns. This is a great day in the history of Champion education," he said.

William Schurman, an engineer with Hammond Construction of Canton, the project contractor, said in two years there will be another celebration as the community can gather to mark the completion of the new school.

"It will be an awesome school with air conditioning," he said.

The project was designed by BSHM Architects of Youngstown,

Voters approved a 4.4-mill bond issue to raise \$13.8 million, the district's share of the project. The Ohio School Facilities Commission's Facilities Assistance Program will pay \$17.5 million.

The school will have two gymnasiums and classrooms that will go into extended learning centers. Grades pre-kindergarten to fourth will be in one section, with grades 5 to 8 in another and administration offices in another.

Work should start around March, when weather permits. The school should be completed by August 2018.

During the summer of 2018, Champion Central Elementary and Champion Middle School will be demolished.

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