New school year, new construction

EDITOR'S NOTE: School additions and changes aren't just limited to people. Where to put them, how to expand opportunities, how to weave traffic around said construction, all are issues schools face as the new year opens. Here's a look.

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ASHEBORO — Students in the Asheboro City Schools (ACS), the Randolph County School System (RCSS) and Uwharrie Charter Academy (UCA) will head back to class on Monday.

As the 2018-19 school year kicks off with new faces, new teachers and new friends, the students will also be seeing quite a few new projects and other changes. These include a new addition under construction at Asheboro High School (AHS), stadium seating at Southwestern Randolph High School (SWRHS), a metals manufacturing building at Eastern Randolph High School; and at UCA, an addition to the elementary school and a brand new middle school.

ACS

For the city schools, the most noticeable project under way is the new addition at AHS.

On Aug. 6, the Randolph County commissioners approved financing for the high school, voting unanimously on a resolution to authorize an installment financing agreement and acquisition of property to be used by the Asheboro City Board of Education.

The financing will be through the sale of limited obligation bonds in an amount not to exceed $19 million for renovation, expansion, equipment and improvement. The new building, on the east side of the current school, will include 15-18 classrooms, a multi-purpose area, science labs, band classrooms and storage. The multi-purpose area will serve as an additional media center and cafeteria space.

Since the high school property will serve as collateral for the financing, it’s necessary for the county to own the property during the term of the financing, leasing it back to the board of education during the arrangement. Estimated cost of the addition is $17 million.

At the Aug. 6 meeting, Kyle Lamb, chair of the city

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Asheboro and North Asheboro middle schools. To enhance student safety, the school board earlier this summer approved new hours for the middle school day to avoid conflict with traffic from the high school.

The start time has been changed for SAMS and NAMS from 8:30 a.m. to 8:20 a.m., and the end time from 3:30 p.m. to 3:20 p.m. The safety of our students is always a priority and we feel this will greatly improve the traffic flow during student drop-off and pickup times," Worrell said.

The middle school

At SWRHS, students will notice an immediate improvement come Friday night football at Ivey B. Luck Stadium. “The stadium needed to be replaced, the biggest thing was the number of seats that needed to be added,” Dr. Stephen Gainey, RCSS superintendent, said. The number of stadium seats on the home side increased from 750 seats to 2,000 seats, and on the visitors side, from 500 seats to 1,000 seats.

The first home game for varsity football will be Aug. 31. Officials plan by then to have the stadium inspected and ready for use.

The total cost of upgrades to the stadium stands at $605,286. That includes demolition, grading, concrete pads, new bleachers on the home and visitor side, fencing, and a press box.

Elsewhere, RCSS has a number of projects in progress or completed. The school system has reached the final stages of the Frank and Ella Lowe Media Center at Liberty Elementary School. ERHS has a new metals manufacturing building that has been named The Lowe-Golden LEAF Foundation Advanced Manufacturing Center.

The new Metals Manufacturing Program at ERHS is the result of funding from two sources: A gift from Ella, B. Lowe to RCSS and a grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation to RCSS. The Lowe gift was $525,000, of which $124,408 is being used for the new Metals Manufacturing Program at ERHS.

The total amount of the Golden LEAF Foundation Grant for RCSS was $720,000, of which $620,000 is being used for the new Metals Manufacturing Program at ERHS. The cost of the metal building is at $356,396. The 1,488-square-foot building will house state-of-the-art metals manufacturing equipment.

UCA

UCA has big changes this year, including offering classes for a full range of students, from elementary to high school, for the first time in its history.

The new elementary school, for kindergarten through fourth grade, opens in the former middle school, at 301 Lewallen Road. According to Heath Vancannon, UCA superintendent, the elementary program will use North Carolina’s current Essential Standards to guide classroom teaching and will incorporate hands-on learning, centering around making the connection between coursework and the “real world” using its themed classrooms.

The elementary curriculum was developed using a town concept that incorporates S.T.E.A.M. and project-based learning with themed classrooms and interactive walls.

The elementary school will increase the UCA system-wide enrollment by 500 students.

UCA will also unveil its new middle school serving 650 students in fifth through eighth grades, along with a central office building and gymnasium, located at 2177 Pishg Covered Bridge Road.

The middle school will focus on experimental learning, character building and preparation for the next phase in education.

The high school is located at 5326 U.S. 220 Business South and will have an enrollment of 550 students.

When asked what goals are set for this upcoming year, Vancannon said: “Our goals are for our students to grow in their learning and understanding of courses, and to push our students, K-12, to meet their potential.”

INVITING — Inside of UCA Elementary School located in former middle school. The 2018-19 school year is the first UCA will offer classes for K-fourth grade.

GO THIS WAY — This photo shows the traffic flow pattern for school buses at AHS this year.

Contributed photo

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