

Excitement builds for upcoming opening of new Clendenin Elementary

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CLENDENIN, W.Va. — The Kanawha County School Board continues to be pleased with the progress they see being done on the new Clendenin Elementary School, which is still currently under construction but is expected to welcome students through its doors by next fall.

They took some time out on the foggy Tuesday morning to pay another visit to the new school that's located not far down from where the Clendenin Elementary students are attending class in portables at Bridge Elementary along Elk River Road.

<https://wvmetronews.com/2023/09/19/excitement-builds-for-upcoming-opening-of-new-clendenin-elementary/>

Kanawha County Schools Superintendent Tom Williams said after about four years of construction on the new building due to the hold up with finding the mineral pyrite in the soil, which is potentially detrimental to the construction process, he said it's good to see the progress back up and running again.



Tom Williams

"We've worked with the state and we've worked with FEMA and they've been so cooperative and easy to work with, but you know we had that delay because of the soil and that took a year off of the whole project and realistically we could have been in right now if it hadn't been the delay with the soil," said Williams.

However, he said that's all behind them now as construction resumes, and the excitement to get the new school open only doubled after the new Herbert Hoover High School was completed and opened up to students this fall.

"It's their turn now," Williams said referring to Clendenin Elementary School students. "Hoovers been open now and going well, and it's been 7 years, now it's time to get our elementary school open, we're going to start some training with the folks down there, and it will be here before you know it."

Like Herbert Hoover, Clendenin Elementary has been subjected to portable classrooms for 7 years after the wake of the devastating 2016 flood, which had destroyed the former school buildings. However, Clendenin Elementary Principal Angel Gurski, who also joined them Tuesday on the tour of the developing new building, said it's going to feel like a real school again.

"This is a state of the art facility, you know our kids right now are cramped into small portables that are falling apart, and I just think that the whole culture of the school will just be better," she said.

She also said Hoover's advent has made a significant impact toward the pending arrival of their own.

"The opening of Hoover has really gotten us excited to be honest, and I've gotten pictures from the architect, they post pictures quite often, so it just makes us feel like we're finally at the end of the road and we're going to get what we deserve," Gurski said.

Williams said there's a lot of benefits to the \$40 million new school being up on a hill and off the main road. He believes the quiet, wooded setting will help inspire learning and will be less of a distraction to the students, as well as be safer and better for security.

Williams added that they will also hopefully never have to worry much about flooding again in such an elevated setting.

"I mean if it floods up here we're going to have to build an arc because it's not going to stop, so up here on top of this hill they'll be completely away from all of that," he said.

Gurski said she is excited for all of the modern new features the building is expected to bring, such as having the new aspect of the learning pods. She said while there will still be much learning taking place in the individual classroom setting, the pods will bring classes together, facilitate co-teaching and collaboration, and inspire group learning.

"My staff is seasoned staff, they all are from the community and they all live in the community, it's like a big family, so working together is going to be amazing, because then we can do way more with our kids in the time that we have them," said Gurski.

Williams said that while modern and new, the building will still be paying homage to the original aspects of the Clendenin area in telling ways.

"I think you can see by some of the design it's trying to take in the character of Clendenin, which originally had a lot of oil wells here, so I think you can see in the design the oil derricks and things that are a part of the building that sort of bring the community into the building."

Williams said construction on the building is expected to be complete by March, and the school should be open for students by next fall.