



Detroit Public Schools Receives \$500.5 Million in Federal Funding

Over a three-year timespan, numerous projects will be completed, making this the sixth largest allocation in the country

By LISA KOPOCHINSKI

Detroit Public Schools (DPS) is receiving badly needed funding for its schools, thanks to a \$500.5 million bond construction program funded by Proposal S dollars.

Approved by voters in late 2009, the funding — which is the sixth largest allocation in the nation — is allowing for the renovation of nine schools, eight new projects, as well as other auxiliary projects, all to be completed within a three-year time frame.

A definite win-win for all, there is both huge educational and noneducational benefits involved. According to the State of Michigan employment formula, nearly 1,400 Detroit residents will be employed, resulting in millions of dollars being spent from 2010-2012. As of last May, nearly 500,000 hours had been logged by workers employed by Detroit-headquartered companies. As well, the new nine schools alone will represent \$167 million in citywide construction.

“Forty-four cranes and pieces of heavy excavation equipment were clawing away at 14 active job sites, and four school projects were 100 percent complete, allowing students to spend their last weeks of the school year in modernized classrooms, gymnasiums and theater

rooms,” says Jennifer Mrozowski, executive director, DPS Office of Communications. “We also are proud of our student summer worker program, which this year had over 700 applicants for the 135 positions. In addition to aiding our local economy by providing jobs, we are proud that the facilities built through this construction program will help students for decades to come by providing the 21st century learning environments that they deserve.”

Stephen Serkaian, director of communication for Detroit Mayor Dave Bing’s office adds that the educational impact is that students will learn better in new and modern facilities that are well lit, energy efficient and designed for a modern curriculum.

“When you place a student in a modern facility, you don’t have distractions created by old and outdated facilities like poor lighting, leaking roofs and inefficient and unreliable heating systems,” he says. “New facilities help maintain student enrolment and attract new students to the district.”

In September, just 16 months after the award of the first design-build contract, the first of three new high schools constructed through the bond program opened to DPS students, along with two new elementary middle schools, eight renovated high schools and elementary middle schools, and a new operations center for the district’s Office of Public Safety. Approximately

8,000 students have benefited so far.

“The final five schools—four new construction projects and one renovation—will open in 2012,” says

PRODUCT DATA

Facility Name: Martin Luther King Jr. Senior High School

Type: New Construction

Cost: \$52.7 million

Start Date: June 2011

Estimated Completion Date: September 2011

Area: 245,413 square feet (197,997 new square feet; 47,416 altered square feet)

Owner/Operator: Detroit Public Schools

Program Manager: Walbridge Joint Venture for Detroit Public Schools

Architect of Record: TMP Architecture

Design Builder: Jenkins Granger LLC

Mechanical Engineer: FES Group LLC

Lighting Design: Walbridge Joint Venture

Rachel Lynn of Brailsford & Dunlavey, a member firm of the Walbridge Joint Venture (WJV) for Detroit Public Schools program management team. “Meanwhile, improvements to the district’s IT and security infrastructure are being implemented district wide, along with site specific improvements to another 26 schools.”

The biggest challenge faced so far by WJV has been the delivery schedule determined by the terms of the Build America and Qualified School bonds, which require that all funds be expended within three years after the bonds’ sale.

“In order to meet the schedule constraints of the program, WJV implemented a modified design-build delivery method,” explains Lynn. The centerpiece of the method required the WJV program management team to develop project-specific ‘bridging documents’ detailed to a design-development level.”

Together with a set of district-wide design guidelines and specifications, the bridging documents were released to the bidding community during the procurement phase of the bond program for use in preparing a guaranteed maximum price.

“Schedule efficiencies realized by WJV through use of the design-build method has allowed for the completion of design and construction on each project within greatly accelerated delivery schedules,” says Lynn.

Of the nine new schools that opened in September, the three largest are the Martin Luther King Jr. Senior High School, Amelia Earhart Elementary Middle School, and the Samuel Gompers Elementary Middle School.

Spanning 245,413 square feet and replacing the former 49-year-old Martin Luther King Jr. Senior High School, the new \$53.4 million state-of-the-art facility emphasizes a science, technology, engineering and mathematics curriculum. Designed by TMP Architecture and constructed in just 14 months by designer-builder Jenkins Granger LLC, the project is an impressive two-story building with six wings: four academic areas featuring classrooms and science labs each painted in a different color, an athletic complex with a swimming pool, upper level varsity gymnasium with a concession room and locker rooms, and a performing arts area with renovated auditorium, dance studio, band room and choral room, in addition to the central administration office. The new school also has a cyber café and media center. All commons areas are accented in the school’s official colors of black and yellow.

“We designed a special area of the building known as the MLK Center, an atrium-like space with an amphitheater for students to attend lectures in a naturally-lit setting with more than 1,000 square feet of vision glass panels,” says John Miliacca, TMP’s senior associate.

The school’s media center and cyber café overlooks this area and through the glass to views of the city and Detroit River beyond. Adjacent to this space is the cafeteria dining area, a large, open glazed space.

Miliacca also says this project is unique for its energy-saving features, which includes its geothermal heat pump system.

“What makes this system unique is that it was the first installation in this bond program to become operational and the largest installation of the program. The project also conserves energy through the use of sun-shading devices on south-facing windows to reduce the amount of solar heat gain in classrooms in warmer months.”

The new Amelia Earhart Elementary Middle School also opened in September and, at a cost of \$22.9 million, spans 111,090 square feet. Construction on the new school began in summer 2010 by Brinker Christman. Essentially, the 45-year-old former Earhart Middle School and outdoor portable classrooms were torn down to make way for the new facility. Designed by architecture firm URS Corporation, the school has separate elementary and middle school wings with a shared common space for the cafeteria, administration office and



multi-purpose rooms. Classrooms designed for art and science programs are located on the first floor of the middle school wing. The upstairs classrooms feature large windows to bring in natural light.

Also spanning more than 111,000 square feet is the new Samuel Gompers Elementary Middle School. At a cost of \$21.8 million, this school, too, was designed by URS Corporation with Brinker Christman as design builder. The new school consolidates and replaces three older elementary schools — Harding, Vetal and Gompers — and is a two-story facility that combines preschool students through grade 8 under one roof. A gymnasium, central administration suite and multi-purpose room separate the PK-5 and middle school wings. Classrooms designed for art and science programs are located on the first floor of the middle school wing. The second story houses general classroom space and two academic commons rooms with large windows for natural lighting.

The largest renovation project using Proposal S funding is the \$30.6 million Western International High School. At 258,000 square feet, the project included a new athletic complex with a swimming pool addition, new competition gymnasium, training and fitness classroom spaces and new building entrance for after-hours use by both students and the community. Within the existing high school, the nonfunctioning pool was filled in and the space reconfigured for use as a visual and performing arts wing that includes a dance studio, language laboratories, and art classrooms in addition to a cultural center to serve as a community marketplace. A new building security entrance was added to incorporate state-of-the-art security technologies, enhance student safety and foster greater connection between the community and administrative offices. The design-build team was Colasanti/DCI, and the architect was NSA Architects, Engineers and Planners.

“There are tremendous educational advantages available to students and parent/guardians across Detroit Public Schools,” says DPS Emergency Manager Roy S. Roberts. “One in eight DPS students attended classes in these new settings in the 2011-2012 school year, and when the additional new projects opened in 2012, 20 percent of DPS students will be in attendances in these facilities.” ■



(Top) The swimming pool at Martin Luther King Jr. Senior High School.

(Bottom) The new 245,423-square-foot high school was constructed in 14 months.

PROJECT DATA

Millwork—Solid Surfacing: New Carpentry

Cabinets: Farnell Equipment Co.

Acoustical Ceilings: Briarwood/Pontiac Ceiling and Partition

Ceramic Tile: Boston Tile

Door Hardware: LaForce

Elevator: Thysennkrupp

Partitions: Briarwood/Pontiac Ceiling and Partition; Brazen & Greer Masonry Inc.

Paint: Eugenio Painting Company

Plumbing: Guideline Mechanical Inc.

Roofing: Royal Roofing Company Inc.

Glass/Glazing: Curtis Glass Co.

Flooring: Shock Brothers Floor Covering Inc. and Hoover Wells

Physical Ed. Flooring: Kiefer Specialty Flooring

Indoor Lighting: Micron/Shaw Electric

HVAC Units: Heights Mechanical

Kitchen Equipment: Great Lakes

Lockers: Rayhaven Group

Signage: Spectrum Neon Sign Company