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CFISD opens three new schools

New schools provide enrollment relief for adjacent schools

Funded by the 2004 and 2007 bond referendums, the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District will open three new schools to accommodate the continual growth in student enrollment that has persisted for more than a decade. CFISD, the second-largest school district in Houston and the third-largest in the state of Texas, will provide a quality education to more than 104,000 students during the 2009-2010 school year—an approximate increase in student enrollment of 4,000 students from the previous school year.

After more than a year of construction, the front doors will open to **Deanna Swenke Elementary School (No. 50)**, **Jodie Blair Smith Middle School (No. 16)** and the second **Alternative Learning Center (West)**. Swenke Elementary School and Smith Middle School will provide enrollment relief to their surrounding schools, and ALC—West will provide an additional alternative educational placement for students in grades 6-12.

Swenke Elementary School

The district's 50th elementary campus, Swenke is the final new facility funded from the 2004 bond election. The school, located on a 14-acre site at Fairfield Place Drive and Schiel Road, provides enrollment relief for Keith and Ault elementary schools.



The school is named after Deanna Swenke, who retired as the associate superintendent for curriculum and instruction in June 2008. She spent 38 of her 44 years in education working in CFISD.

Construction on Swenke Elementary School began approximately one year ago and is scheduled to be completed at the start of school. Using modified designs from the construction of McFee Elementary School, Bay Architects designed Swenke to serve 1,040 students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The campus, built by Purcell Construction Inc., is 104,767 sq. ft. and includes faculty and visitor parking and a paved play area.

Former Ault Elementary principal Donna Guthrie was named the principal to open Swenke. Guthrie has 22 years of experience in the educational field. After teaching in Deer Park ISD for five years, she came to CFISD in 1992 as a fifth-grade teacher at Metcalf Elementary School. She taught two years at Metcalf before being named assistant principal, serving in that role through 1998. She then served four years as an assistant principal at Millsap Elementary School, and in 2002 was named principal at Ault, where she served for seven years.



Smith Middle School

Another school opening this year is Jodie Blair Smith Middle School, the district's 16th middle school, located at Fry Road and Cypress N. Houston Road.

Named after longtime CFISD employee Jodie Blair Smith, the school provides much-needed enrollment relief for Thornton, Kahla, Hopper and Spillane middle schools.

Smith, who spent 30 of her 33 years in education working in CFISD, began her career with the district as a teacher at Cy-Fair High School. She served as an assistant principal and an associate principal at Jersey Village High School. She returned to Cy-Fair High School where she served as the principal for 12 years. Jodie was serving as the assistant superintendent for secondary school administration when she retired in June 2003.

The school, designed by SHW Group LLP architects and built by Purcell Construction Inc., uses modified blueprints from the construction of previous CFISD middle schools. The school has the capacity to serve 1,568 students in grades 6 through 8.

Former Arnold Middle School Principal Susan Higgins was named principal for Smith Middle School in January 2009. With 31 years of experience in CFISD, Higgins began her career in Clear Creek ISD as a teacher and coach, then moved to Alief ISD as a teacher/coach before becoming a middle school assistant principal for four years. She arrived in CFISD in 1993 as an assistant principal at Cypress Falls High School. She held that position for seven years before working in a one-year administrative internship. In 2001, she took over as principal at Arnold.

Alternative Learning Center - West

A second Alternative Learning Center (West) located at 19350 Rebel Yell, adjacent to Jowell Elementary School, will open for the 2009-2010 school year.

The school, designed by PBK Architects and built by Drymalla Construction, Inc., will provide every student with a stable, equal learning environment through a structured, consistent

