

## **Charlton County School District releases updated information about construction projects**

### **FES Additions**

The classroom addition project at Folkston Elementary School was completed just before school started at the first of August. Teachers and students started the school year on August 8 in those new classrooms. This addition allows us to keep 4<sup>th</sup> graders at the elementary school rather than moving to Bethune Middle, and it frees up additional classroom space at BMS. We are thankful that federal ESSER funds were able to pay for 85% of this project, with the remaining coming from SPLOST funds.

### **BMS Athletic Fields**

As we shared previously, Bethune Middle is the only middle school in the 9 county Okefenokee RESA region (Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Pierce, and Ware Counties) with no athletic fields on the middle school campus. This project will build fields for softball, baseball, and football on the Bethune Middle School campus, along with dressing rooms for those sports, batting cages, storage areas for equipment, a concession stand, and restrooms. Work is already underway on this project, and a tentative timeline for completion is January 2024. This project is being funded with remaining SPLOST funds from the 2017-2022 SLOST collection.

### **New CCHS**

Architects are currently collaborating with district staff to work through plans for the exact location of the new buildings and logistics such as parking during construction and a timeline for the phases of work. The architects anticipate being able to complete the design in the next 6 to 9 months. The timeline for the project remains the same as we shared in the January update, which can be seen below:

**Early 2024\*** – Completion of the design phase by the architects. \*One of the reasons for the extensive time taken for completion of the design phase is the time it takes for approval of the plans by the Georgia Department of Education at various steps of the design.

**Spring 2024** – Project is opened for bids from contractors

**Early Summer 2024** – Bids are received and vetted by the general contractor

**Late Summer 2024** – Final Cost is computed after changes to the design are made (if needed) to remain within the school district's budget.

**Fall 2024** – Construction of a new Charlton County High School begins

**Fall 2026** – Construction of the new Charlton County High School is complete.

Construction of a new Charlton County High School will be funded with a combination of state and local funds. Our district is entitled to approximately \$10.7 million of state funds for construction of the school. The balance of the construction cost will be paid from SPLOST funds. As a reminder, local property taxes help maintain the regular operation of our district. All of the projects described here are funded with federal or SPLOST funds. None are funded by property tax dollars, nor do they have any impact on our property taxes.

We want to again thank you for your support of the Charlton County School District when you voted to approve the 1% SPLOST sales tax. SPLOST has allowed the school district to complete dozens of other projects in the 25 years since the inception of SPLOST in 1998.