

Metamorphosis: Growth and Facilities

The Board of Trustees honored two long-time Katy educators with school names. Retired teacher and principal Ursula Stephens was selected as the namesake for Elementary 28, while the School of Choice was officially renamed in honor of Mayde Creek High School legend Martha Raines.

For the first-time ever, the district used a dedicated e-mail box and a link on the Katy website to gather suggestions for school names. A community-wide call for nominations in December garnered 180 responses with 49 suggestions, which were considered for Elementary #28 and filed for future consideration.

Weight rooms at Beck, Katy and McDonald Jr. Highs and weight room improvements at Memorial Parkway Jr. High were funded by the 2002 bond authorization.

It took Katy ISD 77 years to enroll its first 25,000 students (1919-1996) and 11 years to enroll the next 25,000 (1997-2007). It will take only 6 years to enroll the next 25,000+ (2008-2013).



In August 2006, Katy ISD opened the doors of its 27th elementary school, named after retired long-time administrator Mike Griffin. In the tradition of living namesakes before him, Mr. Griffin made the rounds of classrooms on the first day of school.



Bond aid

A 97-member bond committee spent more than 25 hours in meetings during the summer to create a \$269,472,225 bond package that was presented to voters on the general election ballot in November. The group, which represented a wide cross-section of the Katy community, aimed to design a plan that would fund capital projects through 2009, while creating capacity for future bond sales within a 40-cent debt service tax rate.

The plan, which was presented to the Board of Trustees in late August, earmarked nearly half (46.5%) of the bond package for additions and improvements at existing facilities. Those included expansion of Miller Career and Technical Center and the Opportunity Awareness Center/School of Choice, a new natatorium at Mayde Creek High School, as well as above-ceiling mechanical/electrical/plumbing improvements, carpet replacement, brickwork, restroom refinishing, air conditioning and other needs, a visitor screening system, security cameras and technology projects. The package also funded 3 new elementary schools, 2 new junior highs, design for another elementary (to be included in the next bond package), plus buses, portable buildings and land for 8 schools. 35,938 voters approved the authorization by a margin of 53.46% to 46.54%.

Laying foundations

A successful November bond election paved the way for construction to begin on four schools — elementaries 30 and 31 and junior highs 11 and 12 — scheduled to open in the fall of 2008. Two schools will be located in the north part of the district: Elementary 30 adjacent to Morton Ranch Junior High and High School, and Junior High 11 near the intersection of Clay and Greenhouse Roads. The other two are in the south: Elementary 31 in the Seven Meadows subdivision and Junior High 12 in WoodCreek Reserve.

The Board's decision to utilize modified repeats of current school designs allowed the district to complete design documents and commence construction in spring 2007, while significantly reducing architect's fees for the new projects. Funds for the design of Junior High 11 came from the 2002 bond authorization, with the remaining cost of the four schools paid from the 2006 package.

Population shift

After a round of meetings and public hearings in late fall, two community committees forwarded recommendations for the zoning of new elementary schools to the Board of Trustees in December. The plan for Elementary #28 (Stephens) included moving one Land Use Zone (LUZ) each from McRoberts, Franz and Mayde Creek, and shifting one LUZ from McRoberts to Franz. The WoodCreek rezoning moved three zones (two without current students) from Katy, one from Rylander and five others from Kilpatrick. LUZ 74B, which had no current students, was assigned to Griffin Elementary.

Road warriors

Katy ISD trustees adopted a resolution urging Fort Bend County to include key road projects in Fort Bend County/Katy ISD area in a mobility bond referendum presented to county voters in the spring. The resolution expressed a concern that, other than the Westpark Tollway, there had been "no significant major thoroughfare upgrades" in the area. They urged the county to revise its project ranking formula to incorporate future growth estimates rather than current population. Projections indicate that within the next 10 years, the southwest/Fort Bend sector of the district will grow by 20,000 students, 22,000 additional homes, 16 new schools and a stadium and a transportation facility.

