

April 9, 2024

Dear Wayside MS Families,

I have exciting news and important information to share with you today about upcoming changes in our campus operations.

As you may remember, our community is receiving a new Wayside Middle School campus as part of the 2023 Bond Program approved by voters in November. We are excited for this project to get underway and are looking forward to a new, bigger school and updated outdoor areas once completed! We also realize that the path through progress can bring temporary challenges and inconveniences, and we want to provide what we know at this point to help us all prepare for the transition.

On Wednesday, May 1, the district's construction contractor will begin mobilizing on site for the first phase of the Wayside MS replacement campus project. The new school will be located on the site of the former EMS ISD administration building, just south of the current Wayside and across from Bryson Elementary School. For the safety of all in our community, the former administration building and surrounding outdoors spaces will be fenced off from public access and secured once it becomes a construction site.

We will be able to continue having school in our current building while construction is underway on the new facility. However, the start of construction will impact current practices for traffic, parking, and access to our building. We have been working closely with the district's Operations team, Transportation, and EMS ISD Police to identify workable solutions during construction.

All parents, neighbors, and members of the community are invited to a **community meeting at 6 pm Thursday, April 18, in the Wayside MS Cafeteria**. District leaders, along with representatives from our construction contractor, will outline the construction plan, site safety plan and timelines for our new school and answer questions you may have about the project. In the meantime, here are some important details from our district Operations team that you need to know to help you plan your drive times and visits to our campus:

Effective Wednesday, May 1, 2024

- All parent traffic will need to use the main entrance off Old Decatur Road for morning drop off, afternoon pick up, and visits to campus. All parking (including employees) will be in the front lot. EMS ISD Police and Safety and Security will assist with traffic flow as needed.
- The back driveway between the school and tennis courts will be fenced off as part of the construction area. There will be no public access (including employees) to the driveway or parking areas behind the building.
- The bus loop on the east side of the building is only for school buses; students who are not bus riders should be dropped off and picked up at the front of the building.
- The parking lot on the west side of the building outside the gymnasium and portable classrooms is only for identified buses and programs; all other students should be dropped off and picked up at the front of the building.
- The parking lot at the former administration building will no longer be accessible for parking or waiting for students.
- The field west of the tennis courts will no longer be accessible to walk through or for use by the public. A pathway along Old Decatur Road will be provided for students who walk/bike before or after school.

- The tennis courts, practice field and track will be part of the construction site and will no longer be accessible to students, staff, or members of the community during the construction. Students and families affected by the closure of the tennis courts and fields will receive information from their coaches regarding alternative practice locations for these programs.

Below is a short Q&A that hopefully will address additional questions you may have at this time. I encourage you to attend the community meeting on April 18 and you can also submit questions to our construction and leadership team through the [*Let's Talk!*](#) feature on our district website.

Our goal through this process is to keep you informed of progress and any changes impacting our daily campus operations. If you have ever experienced remodeling or construction at your own home, you know that it can be frustrating at times! We ask that you please excuse our progress and “pack your patience” during the construction period, and also help everyone in our community remember that the end result will be a beautiful new school that will serve generations of families to come.

Sincerely,

Khayla Sewell-Bernard, Ed.D.
Principal

Common Questions & Answers

When will the new Wayside be ready?

The Wayside project is being completed in two phases; the first phase is the building construction and some parking and the second phase includes the outdoor athletic areas and additional parking. Under current construction timelines, staff would move into the new Wayside building in December 2025 and students would return from winter break to the new building with the start of the spring semester in January 2026. This also will include a new temporary student drop off and pickup traffic plan. The outdoor athletic areas would be complete for the fall 2026 season.

Why would the district not wait until after school is out to begin construction?

The primary reason to begin on May 1, 2024, is due to construction timelines. If construction does not begin on schedule, it could delay when staff and students move into the new building in December 2025/January 2026. If move-in dates are delayed, there is a strong possibility that outdoor athletic areas will not be complete in time for fall 2026 sports. Additionally, starting construction in May 2024 will give Wayside staff and parents a chance to adjust to the traffic and parking changes before school is out. This also will give campus leaders time to make adjustments, if needed, to improve the process before school begins in August.

Will Wayside students have to move to a temporary location during construction?

No. Our new school building will be located on the site of the former administration building just south of our current campus on Old Decatur Road (across from Bryson Elementary). We will be able to continue to have school in our current building during construction. During state testing times, all construction will be

Will the construction impact my child's classes during the school day?

We will be able to have classes as normal while construction is underway. Some classes, such as PE and athletics, will make arrangements to use alternate locations when outdoor spaces are needed. Our campus athletics coaches are working with the district Athletics leaders, to coordinate details and information affecting our athletic programs will be communicated directly with those families as adjustments are needed.

How will you keep students safe and the construction site secure during the project?

The construction contractor, in partnership with the district Operations team, has developed a comprehensive safety plan to ensure the construction site is not accessible by students or any member of the public. This plan includes security cameras, fencing, security personnel, and limited access points. A pathway along Old Decatur Road will be provided for students who walk/bike to and from school and for general pedestrians.

Will there be additional police support for traffic?

Yes. EMS ISD Police and Safety and Security will be available to assist with traffic as needed. They also are communicating with Saginaw Police and city leaders regarding traffic flow around the Wayside campus and nearby neighborhoods.

What is the design of the new Wayside building?

The new building is based on a prototype similar to (but not exactly the same as) Marine Creek Middle School. The design will include a color scheme and graphical features that make the school distinctly Wayside and will honor the history and traditions of the campus that date back to the 1960s.

Will the new school be bigger than the current Wayside?

Yes. Overall square footage of the current Wayside building is 150,000 square feet. Overall square footage of the new WMS building will be 180,000 square feet, which accommodates for new TEA-required science classroom size requirements and a storm shelter. The new building will have a total capacity of 1,200 students.