



Julie Crawford/Staff

The new Paris Elementary School can accommodate 600 children, with features that include a media room and a multi-purpose room for indoor physical education.

New school allows for expansion

Paris Elementary doubles size of original, opens Jan. 5

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When school begins on Jan. 5, students at Paris Elementary will return to a brand-new school next door to the old one they left before Christmas. Students toured their new school the Friday before the holidays.

Donna Baynard, kindergarten teacher at Paris for 15 years, is eager about the relocation.

"It's exciting!" she says. "It's fresh, clean and colorful. It has natural lighting, and every classroom is networked for Internet access. The rooms are bigger, and there's more storage."

Expansion is a theme of the new 80,000-square-foot school, which doubles the size of the Paris Elementary built in 1936. The new school can accommodate 600 students, allowing for 20 percent growth over its current 500 students. As population needs increase, the school's design allows for easy expansion for up to 750 students. There will not be a need for portables on the Paris Elementary campus.

Eliminating the need for portable classrooms was a primary reason for the school district's new building program, initiated in 2002. Institutional Resources is now overseeing the renovation and construction of 67 schools in the county.

"The new Paris Elementary School is a proud addition to Northern Greenville County," says Don Buck, chief executive of Institutional Resources. "It is gratifying for the Institutional Resources team, along with McMillan Smith and Partners and Melloul Blamey, to design and build a facility that will help accommodate this growing region of the county for many years."

According to assistant project manager and engineering manager Mike Magee, the new school features an automatic lighting system and individual climate controls in each room for energy conservation. It is equipped with sensors to monitor carbon dioxide levels and increase the fresh air into the building as necessary. The new lunchroom now holds 250 children, thus eliminating the need to stagger lunchtime across the school day.



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The new school is next door to the original Paris Elementary, shown above.

There's a media room with 30 computers and a multi-purpose room for indoor physical education programs. Besides 30 classrooms, Paris Elementary now has a science lab, an art room and a music room. A heating, ventilation and air conditioning system support all parts of the facility.

The Paris school has a long history in the community where, for many years, it also served as a high school. "In an effort to keep that history alive, architects took a pattern of arches from the old school and incorporated it into the design of the new one," says Principal Sue Ann Link. "We are pleased that alumni can still feel a part of their alma mater."

"Early this school year, we had a 'Paris Remembered' celebration," notes Donna Williams, PTA co-president and mother of twin second-graders. "Over 600 people attended. We sold brick pavers, which will go at the new school outside the library, in honor or memory of alumni."

Proceeds of the sales go toward new playground equipment, "and donations are still welcome," adds Williams.

The community has already pitched in to help with the move occurring during the holiday break. "People showed up with dollies and said, 'Can I take a carload?' Others brought us sandwiches," says Baynard.

"There are so many wonderful memories here," says Williams. "It's truly what our celebration's about - 'Building Bridges: Connecting the Past, Present, and Future.'"