

Jackson County ISD - Central Campus Frequently Asked Questions

What is JCISD Central Campus?

The Jackson County Intermediate School District's Central Campus is a new special education facility that will centralize programming for 0-to-26-year-old students across Jackson County. This concept began in the fall of 2019 as part of the district's goal to meet the current and future facility needs of countywide special education programming.

What steps were taken to accomplish this goal?

JCISD administration evaluated several options, including building a brand new facility, and renovating current JCISD facilities to meet the need for space. The district also looked at renovating schools that had since closed their doors, including Amy Firth and Frost Elementary. After a failed bid to purchase Amy Firth, administration focused its attention on Frost and what can be done to renovate it for the district's needs.

How did Frost become a viable option?

Jackson Public Schools was going to spend \$1 million to tear the school down and create green space. However, an evaluation by architects and engineers hired by the JCISD found the building's existing features and upgrades by previous taxpayer investment made the building a great fit for the district's needs. JPS agreed to sell the building to JCISD for \$1 provided an easement was included for JPS buses to access Durand Street from Wisner Street.

What factors drove the decision to renovate Frost?

Administration determined the classroom spaces could meet the instructional needs for diverse student populations, while the size of the building meant they could create "schools within a school" through a neighborhooding concept that would allow them to compartmentalize the different populations, ensuring student safety and operational efficiency.

In addition, taxpayers made a significant investment in the building in 2011, approving new windows, ADA compliant bathrooms, and asbestos removal. Using this building saves that investment, while allowing the current bond issue at JPS to spend the \$1 million dollars slated to be used for the demolition of the building to be put into additional building improvements in the JPS school district.

Finally, a \$10 million dollar Michigan Enhancement Grant was awarded to JCISD to assist in renovating the building. This award, along with prudent savings of current taxpayer dollars, allows this project to be completed without having to ask taxpayers for additional funding.

What came next in the development process?

The district had several other required factors to meet, including: state approvals from the Bureau of Construction Codes (BCC) and the Bureau of Fire Safety (BFS), and requirements from the city of Jackson regarding surrounding roads, bus traffic, and stormwater management. The purchase agreement also included an easement for Jackson Public Schools in regards to its own bus traffic at the new neighboring Cascades Elementary. The district also had environmental factors to consider, and had to meet new mechanical and electrical codes, ADA regulations, and requirements related to traffic flow.

When did construction begin?

Construction started in early December 2021 with interior demolition work. Further site plan work was paused after concerns were raised about the removal of nine mature oak trees to build a bus loop and parking lot on the north side of the building. The board of education requested the administration take a look at alternative plans that saved as many trees as possible, including a suggestion to move the bus loop and parking lot to the south side.

What are the issues with the south side?

A majority of the land on the south side is owned by Jackson County, not by the district. While the county was willing to work with the district on a solution, factors including stormwater management, parking/bus loop requirements, building operation and management, street access and cost led to the south side not being a viable option.

What does the new concept for the site plan look like?

Provided engineering will support the concept, it would require the removal of two oak trees and one other tree on the north side, as well as four non-oak trees on the west side. Six of the nine trees originally marked for removal would be saved, including 6 of the 8 large white oaks. The landscape plan calls for planting 21 new trees, plus more than fifty shrubs. Renovations to the building's heating and cooling would also significantly reduce the building's carbon footprint.

What are the next steps?

The architect and civil engineer would need to engineer that new concept to ensure it meets all requirements. The district is also working to understand any additional investment this alternative plan would require. The district has scheduled a community forum where administration will present information and gather community input.

When and where will this community meeting be held?

The community forum will take place on Tuesday, March 1, 2022 at 6pm at the Jackson Area Career Center, 6800 Browns Lake Road.