



WOODLAND

SPRING LAKE SCHOOL GATES OPEN

Families gather in awe at state-of-the-art campus

By Cutter Hicks

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The time has finally come.

After years of talking, planning and spending \$13.8 million, Spring Lake Elementary opened its gates with a ribboncutting ceremony and open house.

The ceremony was led by Woodland School Board President Michael Pyeatt and school Principal Robyn Miller, who were helped in cutting the ribbon by a throng of children, who eagerly came out of the audience as their parents took photographs on the cell phones.

The dream of a new school in the Spring Lake area was a journey that began in 2014, when the first facility discussion occurred in August at a regular board meeting. The following January, the board held a special meeting to specifically talk about a new school at Spring Lake.

The District approved the school plans in May 2016, and broke ground on the project in the fall of 2016. However, the project encountered delays due to the back order of modular

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Online: Watch our live video of the dedication celebration at **FACEBOOK.COM/DAILYDEMOCRAT.**



Woodland School Board President Michael Pyeatt invited children in the audience to help him cut the ribbon during the ceremony Thursday night.

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Children playing on the play structures during the open house that followed the ribbon cutting ceremony. Two playgrounds that were constructed on rubbering ground divide the central blacktop.

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buildings, and construction delays due to higher-than-average rainfall.

Despite the challenges, the new school is set to open for the 2018-19 school year.

Educators, city officials and residents gathered outside the ground's front

gates Thursday evening to celebrate the conclusion of this long journey.

Pyeatt was the keynote speaker and led off with his background with the construction plans, speaking about how he moved his family to the Spring Lake area nearly 10 years ago from Davis and held his position in the District for the past three years.

Pyeatt told the audience of around 120 people that his reason for getting on the school board was to make sure "the dream became a reality" for Spring Lake residents, including his own family.

"The District had a lot of tough times but a lot of good times throughout the years," Pyeatt explained. "But no accomplishment in the past three years means as much to me as this school."

Plaques were handed out to the officials involved in the planning process while the new staff was recognized before the gates opened up for an open house event.

Come fall, 180 students will be enrolled in transitional kindergarten through third grade classes that these teachers will instruct. The 9.5-acre campus houses seven classrooms with flexible seating and tables for creating a mixed-use space that is easy to arrange for student learning, exploring, and presenting.

According to Superintendent Tom Pritchard, the \$13.8 million covered all of the construction costs and soft costs such as architect fees, change orders, government fees and services.

Future projects at the school will create a permanent multipurpose room that doubles as a cafeteria, playing fields for sports, and portable classrooms for fourth through sixth grade instructing. The timetable and costs for this phase hasn't been determined.

Spring Lake Elementary will focus on STEAM education, an interdisciplinary approach to learning in which Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics connect rigorous academic concepts with authentic, real-world problems. Students will be investigating and responding to engaging and complex questions, problems, and challenges using a teaching method called Project Based Learning.

Miller, who was appointed in the spring of 2017, chose to move to Woodland and lead Spring Lake Elementary due to campus's curriculum that focuses on STEAM. She was in charge of hiring the staff and even selecting interior decorations and structural details.

She described the end result of the Spring Lake Elementary project with one word: "Amazing."

"It feels like a long time coming but, nevertheless, it just feels amazing,"

Miller said as she greeted guests at the open house.

Teachers will begin moving into their classrooms in June and the gates will for students this fall on Aug. 22, the first day of the 2018 school year.

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Spring Lake Elementary Third Grade Teacher Stephanie Pryor waving at the audience as Principal Robyn Miller introduces her new staff. The teachers will begin moving into their classrooms in June to get ready for the 2018-19 school year.

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