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Photos attached

A Day of Thanks and Celebration at Bennett Woods Elementary **The Okemos Public Schools hosts a groundbreaking event and extends heart-felt gratitude for the support of their community.**

Okemos, Mich. — Student success starts with a collective vision. The Board of Education at Okemos Public Schools set out, three years ago, to continue defining their path for excellence. Starting with feedback from the community, parents, teachers, staff and administration; goals were identified and a roadmap established that set today's ground breaking at Bennett Woods Elementary in motion.

"We are fortunate to have a forward thinking Board of Education," said John Hood, Superintendent of Schools. "Our Board is proactive in decision making, visionary in meeting student's needs and in advocating for district programs."

Mr. Hood is quick to point out that several individuals and groups were engaged in the effort to ensure continued success for the school system and its students. May's bond was multifaceted, and included security and fire-system upgrades, new flexible furniture for classrooms and increased capacity at Bennett Woods Elementary, among other improvements. Voters supported the school's desire to address these highest priority educational, facility and security enhancements. "The project will be phased over the next eight months," said Rob Crowe, Senior Project Manager at the Christman Company. "The first phase will focus on the new classroom addition and the new exterior bus lane and loop. The second phase will begin during the 2020 summer break and includes all of the interior renovations. Our goals are three-fold; ensure safety of everyone on-site, minimize disruption and maintain communication."

Planning was a collective effort as school administration, staff, parents and community members came together to identify the priority projects and technology advances that define Okemos Public Schools as a first-class program. Additionally, architectural partners at Bergmann PC along with selected construction manager, The Christman Company, offered guidance and support in identifying process, developing timelines and coordinating construction plans. Working within this team, the district was able to the focus on optimizing the budget and aligning investments with the school strategy.

"Ultimately, this is about the students and answering the needs of the community," said Alan Goschka, Architectural Department Manager, Bergmann Mid-West. "By collecting input from the district, the final design of Bennett Woods Elementary will help carry them into the 21st century with classrooms that meet enrollment demands as well as today's advanced technology for educational environments."

It is truly an exciting day for the Okemos community and Bennett Woods Elementary family and friends. While many districts struggle to build this level of support, Okemos residents voted to advance the district's mission, "Together...educating with excellence and inspiring learners for life." For this, the Okemos Public Schools extends their gratitude, as evidenced by the many young, smiling faces.

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About Okemos Public Schools

The Okemos Public Schools district is situated in the south-central portion of Michigan's lower peninsula near Lansing, the state capital, and shares a common border with Michigan State University. Approximately four thousand five hundred students attend four elementary schools (three traditional and one public Montessori), a 5-6 school, a 7-8 school (each with Montessori), and one high school. Okemos is well known for educational excellence with strong parent and community support. School/Match, the nation's largest school-select consulting firm, annually names fourteen percent of the nation's schools as meeting the educational needs of families. In 2019, Okemos ranked as the #2 district in the State of Michigan according to website Niche.com, who ranks almost a hundred thousand schools and districts based on district statistics and input from the community. We take pride in our mission of "Together...educating with excellence, inspiring learners for life."