

Bond projects underway with first issuance of funds

Construction and renovation projects in Phase I of the 2008 Bond Proposal are underway, according to Tim Cooley, Assistant Superintendent.

In the summer of 2007, 86 community members from across the parish met on five school-related Facility Needs Assessment Committees to study the needs at each school. Representatives from each committee formed a Steering Committee to evaluate the lists, prioritize needs, and establish an order by which projects would be addressed across the parish. Projects were divided into phases, with those in Phase I receiving top priority.

Voters from across the parish approved a parish-wide bond proposal in November 2008 for a total of \$39.8 million for specific improvements, repairs, and/or renovations at each parish school. In August, the first issuance of \$10 million in bond funds was received by the school board, and a budget was approved. Numerous projects from Phase I received partial or total funding from this first issuance of bond monies.

Those projects that received partial funding for work toward projects include the following: South Beauregard Elementary, \$10,000 for initial work on K-3 building with cafeteria and gymnasium/auditorium; East Beauregard Elementary, \$10,000 for preliminary work on eight classrooms; East Beauregard High, \$10,000 for preliminary work on gymnasium/band hall; Singer High School, \$90,289 toward four new classrooms; Merryville High, \$3,006,000 toward gymnasium, weight room, restroom, concession, office facility; and DeRidder Junior High, \$10,000 for preliminary work on converting courtyard/bus area.

Those projects that received funding for completion include: DeRidder High School, \$1,666,080 for 14 classrooms; Merryville High School, \$350,000 for conversion of lockers to lab and two classrooms; and K.R. Hanchey, \$975,920 for eight classrooms and \$40,000 for play area access. Architect and contingency fees are included for all projects.

A total of \$400,000 was also set aside for new technology and upgrades for all parish schools, said Cooley.

The second issuance of \$10 million bond funds was approved by the board in December 2009 and will be received in early 2010.