

'Out of the Dark Ages': Central Kitsap High students, teachers take in their airy, modern new school

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CENTRAL KITSAP — School doesn't start until Wednesday, but students and staff at the new Central Kitsap High School are already settling in and relishing their new digs.

"When I came and I saw it for the first time, I was in shock," said Ty Zeman, a junior and football player who was in the new athletic medicine center last week getting taped up before practice. "It was amazing."

Zeman was impressed with touch-screen technology replacing old-school blackboards in the classrooms. He and other students mentioned how spacious the new building seems compared with the old Central Kitsap High School, the original part of which was built in 1942.

"My first impression walking into the new school was just, like, how much nicer it was than the old school obviously," said Baylee Anderson, who was there for volleyball practice in the new gym. "There's so much more room."

The high school is part of a 313,813-square-foot complex that includes a new middle school, opened last spring, and a shared career and technical education building.

More: [New Central Kitsap Middle School a 'gift' to community \(/story/news/local/2019/03/28/new-central-kitsap-middle-school-campus-opens-spring-break/3283116002/\)](/story/news/local/2019/03/28/new-central-kitsap-middle-school-campus-opens-spring-break/3283116002/)

The middle school is at capacity with 750 students. The high school, with 1,350 enrolled, has capacity for 1,400.

There's a new athletic complex with turf fields for football, soccer, baseball and fastpitch. Kitsap Credit Union donated \$500,000 for bleachers with seating for 1,400. The work on the campus included an upgrade of the old auxiliary gym. JohnsonLink Orthodontics has sponsored a cross-country trail on campus.

Moving into a modern environment

Middle school and high school students will share a 900-seat auditorium with high tech acoustics and a stage equipped for productions large and small. Doug Newell, executive director of business and operations, said the district will rent to space out for community events when not in use by students.

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Doug Newell, Central Kitsap School District assistant superintendent, moves across the stage while giving a tour of the auditorium at the new Central Kitsap High School in Silverdale. (Photo: MEEGAN M. REID / KITSAP SUN)

"Oh my gosh, it is like moving out of the Dark Ages into the future. It's spectacular," said music teacher Michael Woods. "I've been in the district for over a decade and there are pieces of music and ensemble work that I've always wanted to do but couldn't do because we didn't have the space to do it, and

now we can."

The view from the library takes in Dyes Inlet and, on a clear day, you can see Mount Rainier.

"Everybody, when they walk through the doors, they talk about the view," said librarian Steve Trunkey.

Cost covered by bond

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Teachers last week were busy setting up classrooms and adding personal touches, like posters, artwork and table lamps.

"I taught at the old high school for 42 years and I was feeling kind of sad about leaving that building because it was like my second home ... until I got here," said teacher Laura Jackson. "And now this is so beautiful, I'm not even thinking about the old building. There's so much here for our students and for our staff."

Jackson showed off her classroom, with big windows looking out on a wooded area.

"Isn't this beautiful?" she asked. "My students will fit in here. We won't be sitting two to a seat."

The transformation of the campus over the past two years cost \$186 million, which was covered by the district's 2016 bond and included \$51.3 million in state construction funds.

Cougar spirit lives on

Alumni, staff and students said goodbye to the old high school in June, celebrating "95 Years of Excellence." Central Kitsap High School was initially established as Port Washington Bay Union High School in 1924. The old CKHS dates to 1942, with additions through the decades. The old middle school was built in 1959.

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Teacher Katherine Miller affixes posters to the wall above the white board as she gets her classroom ready at Central Kitsap High School in Silverdale. School starts at the new school and at all Kitsap County districts on Wednesday. (Photo: MEEGAN M. REID / KITSAP SUN)

More: [Saying goodbye to Central Kitsap High \(/story/news/2019/06/20/saying-goodbye-central-kitsap-high/1488615001/\)](/story/news/2019/06/20/saying-goodbye-central-kitsap-high/1488615001/)

The old high school is slated for demolition, but not until winter at the soonest.

The CKHS Cougar spirit lives on in the new building. The stuffed and mounted cougar mascot was moved over and now lives behind plexiglass in the commons area. Old photos have been digitized and will be displayed on a screen.

On Tuesday, the cheer squad practiced its routines, getting ready for the first home football game to be hosted on campus in more than three decades.

More building projects planned

Along with the Central Kitsap High School-Middle School complex, the bond covered major renovations and expansions at Olympic High School and Kalhowya Secondary School that have been completed.

Looking toward the future, the district has a partnership with Kitsap Regional Library to remodel the 900 Building on the CKHS campus for a new library branch and administrative offices. Construction is planned to start in spring. The estimated cost of \$10.8 million will be shared equally by the two entities, Newell said.

The district also is partnering with Central Stage Theatre (CSTOCK) for a performing arts center on the Ridgetop Middle School campus that will be shared by the district and the community. Under the cost-sharing agreement, the district will donate the land and CSTOCK will pay 75 percent of the cost, estimated at \$5.45 million

A "phase 2" upgrade at Olympic High School is planned using the district's capital fund plus state construction money. The work involves an upgrade to the gym and classrooms not already renovated.

"It's a great time to be in Central Kitsap School District," Newell said. "We are so excited about the community support we have had and the environments we are going to create for our community, for our students, for our teachers."

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