

MANHATTAN HIGH SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION



Staff photos by Rod Mikinski

Construction continues in the old portions of the building of Manhattan High School as exterior walls are taken down and the inside is gutted. The school will be ready for students to use when classes begin again in August, but construction will continue in the A and B halls. It is the biggest construction project at the school since at least its original construction in 1954-55.

New wings of MHS to be ready when students return in August

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about 165,000 of that, and added 95,000 of entirely new space. The school is home to about 1,200 students in grades 10-12, plus about 100 staff members.

The new areas — the two large structures that jut out to the east from the pre-existing building — are relatively quiet now, basically ready for students to walk in. The home of math, science, music and art classes, they offer slightly wider hallways, slightly larger classrooms, new lockers, and entirely new wiring of all kinds. The classrooms on the end of the building offer skyline views down Poyntz Avenue.

"This is the room I'd want," Youngers said with a chuckle, looking out from the Earth Sciences room, D201, from which one can see KS hill east of the city limits.

While those areas — plus the re-done E Hall — will be nice and new, students and teachers during this school year will have to give up access to A and B halls, on the south side of the building.

Those are the projects for the next few months, Youngers said; classes that had been held there will be moved to the new space. The new cafeteria in what used to be D Hall will be open in the middle of the first semester, he said. (The kitchen itself will be ready to serve lunch when school opens, but students will have to sit at temporary tables in the commons area, or outside in a re-done courtyard between D and E halls, McCarty said.)

The hope is to move the library into the old B Hall space at Thanksgiving, Youngers said, but that space will still be under construction this fall.

The library will become classrooms for the business department; that conversion will take place in the spring.

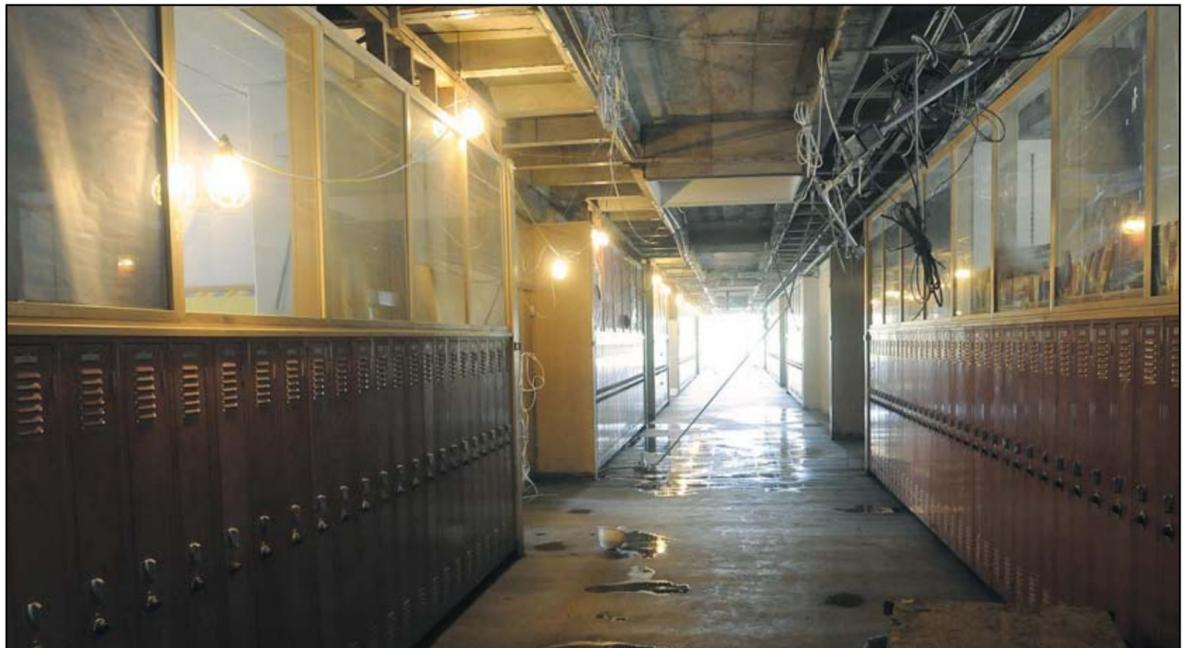
So while this summer has been the key to the entire \$50 million project — clearly the biggest single project for the school district since at least the original construction of the high school in 1954-55, according to Superintendent Bob Shannon — this fall semester may very well be the toughest, Youngers and McCarty said. That's because there will be construction going on inside the existing building as school is conducted, meaning only about 60 percent of the old building will be available on the first day, Youngers said. With the addition of the new wings, the available total square footage will be greater than last year.

Last year, construction of the new wings meant, for the most part, the existing building was left alone.

Next summer, the projects will include the shop class area, the two gyms and the locker rooms — minor items compared to the torn-up midsection of the building right now. In the fall of 2012, there will be only relatively small stuff going on. So this year is the hard part.

Parking and traffic flow will still be a challenge. McCarty said about the same number of parking spaces will be available as last year, but they'll be moved around. More details will be coming soon, he said, and will be provided to The Mercury.

"It will be a little difficult, especially in the fall semester," McCarty acknowledged. But he said MHS is "full of sharp people, and they'll adjust fine. It's going to be terrific."



The school's A Hall, shown here, will be demolished this week, and B Hall will become the new library. And next summer, crews will focus on the shop class area, the two gyms and the locker rooms.



In the boiler room, Dave Henderson works on a control panel, which signals the heating or cooling requirements to be sent to any room in the building.



A worker passes through what will be a courtyard area between the A and B halls.



Carl Stanfield, project superintendent with Adolfsen and Peterson, studies the exhaust system in a new chemistry room.



Dean Youngers, project manager for USD 383, explains how the new commons area will allow people to move from the front entrance to the back section of the building.