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Marin schools use summer vacation for construction

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By Keri Brenner, Marin Independent Journal

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Marin school students may be off on summer vacation, but many of the schools they left behind are still a hotbed of activity.

Construction contractors throughout the county are at work on projects big and small — making things better for the kids before the new school year starts in August.

“We have a big one,” said Liz Schott, superintendent of Kentfield School District. “An entire building is coming down at Bacich (Elementary School), from (now) through July 14.”

Demolition of the old hexagonal “round building,” in the middle of the Bacich campus, is part of an overall [construction plan at the elementary school and at the district’s Kent Middle School](#). Once the single-story “round building” comes down, contractors will build a modern two-story structure that includes classrooms, the school office and an administrative wing.

“It’s very exciting,” Schott said.

Kentfield is one of about a half-dozen Marin districts doing construction this summer — from a minor energy efficiency upgrade at Mill Valley Middle School to \$108 million worth of improvements at San Rafael City Schools.

The district has retained Cumming, an international construction project management firm, to work with San Rafael City Schools staff to provide project management, scheduling and cost management for \$108 million in Measure A bond construction at five elementary and middle schools.

“All Measure A projects are anticipated to be completed and ready for the start of classes in fall 2020,” said Cumming public relations manager Jessica Busch in a written statement earlier this month.

Highlights of the two-year-long San Rafael City Schools construction schedule include:

- Davidson Middle School: A new two-story modular building with 10 integrated science labs and six prep rooms will be added. Support spaces will include student and staff restrooms on both floors, an electrical room, elevator, exterior stairs and balcony;

- **Laurel Dell Elementary School:** new modular classrooms will be added for first through fourth grades, a new multi-purpose building will be built and new restrooms and an administration office will be added. The existing multi-purpose building will be reconfigured into two new kindergarten classrooms and the old kindergarten wing will become home to the new school library and fifth grade classrooms;
- **San Pedro Elementary School:** New single-story modular classroom buildings will be added with three classrooms to each building and a single-story modular administration building;
- **Venetia Valley Elementary School:** A new two-story modular classroom building will be added with 23 classrooms, and seven supporting office spaces. A new multipurpose modular building housing a high volume sound system will be built for assembly, school lunch and other group activities. The building also will house a mix of other spaces that include multi-stall restrooms, a warming kitchen, classrooms, offices and a campus family center;
- **Glenwood Elementary School:** A new multipurpose building with a high volume sound system will be built for assembly, school lunch and other group activities;

Contractors at Mill Valley School District will rehab the athletic field at Tamalpais Valley Elementary School, said John Binchi, district director of maintenance and operations.

“Over time, the field at Tamalpais Valley Elementary School has become damaged,” Binchi said. “The soil has been settling for years, causing poor drainage and uneven surfaces.”

He said the repair project, which started last week, will run through Aug. 17. It consists of re-configuring the field slope and doing drainage, irrigation and sod. The field and school will be closed during construction, Binchi said.

Also, the Mill Valley district will do an energy efficiency upgrade at Mill Valley Middle School, Binchi added.

“With Proposition 39, the school has been approved for energy efficient LED lighting that will replace old fluorescent lights throughout the interior and exterior of the Middle School campus, he said.

“The project started on the weekend of June 2 and will be completed by July 31.

“Once completed, we anticipate the new lighting to immediately save 20 to 22 percent of energy costs for the middle school, he added.

At Larkspur Corte Madera School District, “we only have a few minor projects,” said Brett Geithman, superintendent. The district will build shade structures at Hall Middle School and at The Cove School. In addition, Geithman said, a small area by the Neil Cummins Elementary School gym will have turf installed.

At the Novato Unified School District, the district is in the process of completing several Measure G bond projects, said Mike Woolard, executive director of facilities. The first of those is re-turfing stadium fields and track maintenance at Novato and San Marin high schools.

“These maintenance projects, awarded for \$2.7 million for both high schools, removes the existing synthetic turf at each stadium field and replaces it with a new synthetic turf surface along with new cork infill and a shock pad on top of the existing base, which remains the same),” Woolard said. “In addition, the existing

track surface at each high school will be deep-cleaned, receive a new top coat and paint, and the track perimeter drains will be cleaned and checked.”

Woolard said the project started on June 11 and ends on Aug. 30.

Also at Novato Unified:

- Re-roofing San Ramon Elementary School: “This \$2.1 million project removes the existing built-up asphalt roof system and replaces it with a single-ply membrane cool roof system,” Woolard said. “As part of the project, all roof flashing will be checked and replaced as needed.” Woolard said the new roof should be installed by Aug. 15, “in time for the new school year,” he said.
- Installing air-conditioning in classrooms at San Jose Middle School: “This \$2.4 million project removes the existing gas heating unit and furnace from each classroom and replaces it with a new energy-efficient heat pump and exterior condensing unit,” Woolard said. “This new system provides both heating and much-needed cooling capacity in each classroom.”

Woolard said the project also includes increased electrical capacity in new conduit runs for the new heat pump units. The air conditioning project will also be done by Aug. 15, he said.

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