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## **Fitzgerald Public Schools Kicks Off Major Renovations to Chatterton Middle School**

*Renovations include relocating the main office to increase safety, making the exterior more inviting; and adding new classroom spaces*



WARREN, Mich. — **Fitzgerald Public Schools** kicked off the first phase of a multi-year renovation plan for **Chatterton Middle School** today. This summer’s improvements will include a new location for the main office to improve safety for students and staff, a more-clearly designated front entrance and energy-efficient lighting for after-school and evening events.

“These exciting renovations will transform the look and feel of Chatterton, making the building even safer and more inviting for parents and visitors,” said **Laurie Fournier**, one of Chatterton’s two principals. “Ensuring our students have a safe learning environment is a top priority at Chatterton Middle School. We are working hard to change Chatterton inside and out by encouraging a culture of kindness among students and strengthening staff relationships with students. We’re excited to work on structural changes to support these efforts.”

The main office will be moved from the center of the building to the front entrance, which will make the office more accessible to parents and allow office staff to monitor the flow of visitors. During the school day, visitors will have to pass through the office before entering the interior of the school, making the building even safer for students and staff.

Additional improvements include dividing the former home economics classroom into four new classroom spaces to better utilize the space and improving the exterior façade of the planetarium that is visible from the driveway off of Ryan Road. The renovations will be completed before students return in the fall.

“We’re excited to make our front entrance more attractive and improve the flow of traffic in and out of our building,” said **Keith Tonn**, the other principal of Chatterton. “The excitement and anticipation around these renovations thus far has been palpable, as the students and parents are just as excited as we are.”

The renovations to Chatterton are funded through a voter-approved sinking fund, which is a limited property tax collected to fund major repairs and renovations to district school buildings. The tax is levied each year, and the revenue generated from it is used to address urgent building improvements identified by the school district. The board of education approved \$1 million for the renovations back in March.

“We’re excited to kick off these renovations, which are made possible by the Fitzgerald community’s commitment to providing our students the best education in attractive, safe facilities,” said **Barbara VanSweden**, superintendent of Fitzgerald Public Schools. “We’re grateful for the strong support of the ‘Fitzgerald Family,’ which ensures that Fitzgerald Schools continues to provide our students with top-notch education that prepares them for future jobs and careers.”

The second phase of the plan, to take place during summer 2017, includes developing the former office space into open, flexible learning spaces to encourage project-based learning and integrate creative technologies into the classroom.

In previous years, Fitzgerald Public Schools has used the sinking fund for heating and cooling improvements, restroom renovations and the addition of science classrooms at the middle school.

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