

Knob Noster Public School breaks ground on new high school building opening in 2026



Knob Noster Public School officials, along with stakeholders and representatives from the school, community and Department of Defense, break ground on the new Knob Noster High School on Friday, Oct. 11, in Knob Noster. Construction of the building located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Missouri Highway 23 and Smith Parkway is set to be completed by the 2026-27 school year.

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KNOB NOSTER — A new era has begun in Knob Noster.

The new Knob Noster High School building officially started construction after breaking ground on Friday, Oct. 11, at its site located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Missouri Highway 23 and Smith Parkway.

Students, staff and other community members were in attendance for the ceremony on Friday, which allowed everyone to get accommodated with the land.

The groundbreaking represented the first time a new Knob Noster school building began construction since 1962. The construction is set to be completed in time for the 2026-27 school year.

“For our underclassmen, we’re getting this done for you guys,” Knob Noster Superintendent Jerrod Wheeler said. “For our upperclassmen that joined us today, my only regret is that we weren’t able to get here faster.”

According to Wheeler, the ground holds significance to the elders of the Knob Noster community and he hopes he can continue its legacy.

“Students, you’re probably not aware, but many of your grandparents and parents likely enjoyed many concerts, campouts, cookouts and fellowship on this very property,” Wheeler said.

Wheeler reported that the Knob Noster School District has experienced a 50% student enrollment growth rate since the initial discussion of the new high school building began. This includes an increase from 1,400 students in 2015 to over 2,100 students today.

Additionally, the B-21 Raider’s impending arrival at Whiteman Air Force Base will bring in an estimated 250 to 300 students to the Knob Noster community.

The overall growth has caused overcrowding, especially at the elementary school level, thus creating the need for a new school.

Designing, planning and implementing the school’s construction has taken almost a decade for Wheeler and his district staff. They have worked with incite Design Studio architects and Nabholz Construction to create the building from the ground up and have received funding from outside grants.

“Over the last decade, Knob Noster Public Schools has received over \$15 million in unique grant funding, which has helped create a remarkable storyline of success for our students and teachers as they take advantage of the unique academic program programming that these grants offer,” Wheeler said.

Outside of the money already received, Wheeler said he and his team will receive a \$1.25 million grant from the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) to strengthen the district’s retention and recruitment of high-quality educators. The school itself will receive a \$5.25 million FEMA/SEMA grant to construct a school safe room and monolithic dome gymnasium.

“The board and I extend a special thank you to our parents, grandparents and community members for your ongoing partnership and support of our fantastic students,” Knob Noster R-VIII Board of Education President Grant Jones said. “The trajectory of continuous improvement and growth within Knob Noster Public Schools is embodied in this new high school project.”

Nabholz Construction and incite Design Studio have each been a part of the planning process since the beginning and were represented at the ceremony on Friday.

"In 2016, we were hired to do a facility master plan," incite Design Studio President Brian Foxworthy said.

Foxworthy and his team conducted facility assessments to determine that Knob Noster's overall building condition was not the issue, but its capacity and ability to educate had shown its age.

"Education was much different 60 years ago," Foxworthy said. "It became evident that the building itself was dictating what programs we can offer. So, we wanted to flip that script. It's time that programs dictate the architecture."

The building's construction will be open for public tours, according to Nabholz Construction General Manager Mitchell Fuemmeler.

"This is a big moment when you're a builder," Fuemmeler said. "Over the next 21 months, you'll see this project take shape. We've picked this high point in the hill where you're going to pull up, see the dome and (all) the spacing behind it. It's just a beautiful site."

Corbett Construction and Cale Seymour Construction have stepped forward to assist Nabholz in the project, with Nabholz offering more drawings up for bid from other companies.

Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission Executive Director Harry Roberts spoke on his excitement for the B-21 Raider's arrival and the opportunities it will create in the Knob Noster schools.

"It's going to bring a lot more personnel positions, which is going to create a lot of other types of work here in this area," Roberts said. "You all have achieved a lot and this community here totally supports you."

Major General Kenneth Eaves first arrived at Whiteman in 2008 and has since seen his four children graduate from Knob Noster High School. He spoke on behalf of the Air Force Global Strike Command.

"Thank you for what you do, for the service members, their families at Whiteman and the community at home," Eaves said.

After all the speeches were completed, members of the Knob Noster Public Schools Board of Education and others involved in the project officially broke ground on the new building. Before leaving, guests were given groundbreaking commemorative shovels.

"We hope it's something that you will remember not just today, not just in two years when we ribbon cut and get you guys walking the hallways of this fine facility, but for years and decades to come," Wheeler said.

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