

## Amongst Construction Rubble, Classes Begin In Canyons School District

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**At Brighton High, construction crews were busy preparing for a new auditorium west of the current site in August as well as a new fieldhouse near the Bengal building. (Julie Slama/City Journals)**

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When Midvalley Elementary School students returned to school this fall, their teachers may have asked them to create a journal marking the progress of the new school being built on what was their east playground and field.

“It’s an opportunity for our extremely creative teachers (to) tie in the real-world experience” of witnessing the building of a new school in their curriculum for students, Midvalley Principal Tamra Baker said.

At Midvalley, as well as at many of Canyons School District’s high schools where construction is underway, classes began as usual, with perhaps new parking lots, some schools minus sports fields, and at all schools, attempts to keep disruptions to a minimum, said Canyons Business Administrator and Chief Financial Officer Leon Wilcox.

Midvalley is the first elementary school to be rebuilt with the voters’ 2017 approval of a \$283 million bond, which also will include new school buildings at Hillcrest High, Brighton High, Union Middle, Peruvian Park Elementary as well as

a new West Draper Elementary, a new White City elementary, and classroom and lunchroom additions at Corner Canyon High.

At Midvalley, the foundation was poured and metal framing was starting as school began. Plans are to begin sheet rocking and painting after the building is enclosed in February.

The construction cost of the 85,000-square foot two-story building is \$22.5 million and is being constructed for up to 800 students, Wilcox said. The new school will open to students in August 2020.

At nearby Hillcrest High, many student-athletes' home fields still are displaced, and by December, the new turf-field fieldhouse and athletic center will be home to a number of Husky sports. The athletic center will include a main and auxiliary gym, indoor track, dance room, weight room, wrestling room, locker rooms and a meeting room, which will serve several sports, physical education classes, cheerleaders, dance and drill teams.

"It was a really wet spring, so that impacted construction by about 15–20 days, which was hard to make up in the summer," Wilcox said. "There will be school colors and the Husky mascot all throughout the new school."

Soon after the new athletic center is completed, the current gymnasiums will be torn down and a new classroom wing will be constructed in the next phase of the construction project. A new auditorium with a larger stage is set to be constructed, with about 250 fewer seats.

"There will be state-of-the-art technology, better equipment and an updated learning environment for students," he said.

By August 2021, the new building is expected to be complete at a construction cost of \$119.4 million, and the following school year all the Huskies will have their home courts and fields back on their 38-acre campus.

At Brighton High, much of the construction will continue around the athletic center and fieldhouse, career and technical education shops and auditorium. The new fieldhouse is expected to alleviate some of the use of the current basketball courts. Dance, drill, wrestling, soccer, lacrosse, physical education classes and other activities and sports can use the multi-use fieldhouse with artificial turf, an indoor track and baseball batting cages.

The updated auditorium will have a full fly system and improved acoustics as well as lightning and sound. There also will be updated dressing rooms adjacent to the theater and storage for props.

After these are complete, classrooms, the media center and offices will be rebuilt.

"Before we tear down any of the old buildings, we certainly will have final open houses and we will create alumni rooms at the schools, which can double as conference rooms," Wilcox said.

The new \$113.5 million school is expected to open in 2021.

Alta High also is getting a new 1,400-seat auditorium, with interior highlights of red, black and gray, as the walls and ceiling were nearing completion on the northwest corner of the 27-acre campus as school began. New heating, ventilation and air conditioning also was installed over the summer for the north upstairs classrooms.

Construction of the new fieldhouse, with artificial turf and training rooms, as well as an upstairs banquet and meeting room, was expected to be completed near the start of school. Sports teams, cheerleaders, drill team, marching band and physical education classes all will be able to use the new facility.

Also on the agenda will be to put in 120 skylights to give more natural light and to fill in the commons area pit and update it with charging stations. Several offices and classrooms will be relocated, including the main office being moved next to the main entrance, a green room will be added for video broadcast, and windows will be added for more natural light. A security entrance will guide visitors to the main office before they can gain access to the hallways.

The updates at Alta are projected to cost \$53.5 million, Wilcox said.

When students returned to Corner Canyon High, they may be attending class in one of the two new classroom wings that have been built over the past year. The second classroom wing is projected to be completed by October. Until then, teachers are expected to hold class a few weeks in portable classrooms until the transition can be made, he said.

An additional 4,700 square feet was built onto the lunchroom so students could eat in the designated area instead of on steps and in the commons.

These additions of 24 classrooms and the lunchroom were constructed to accommodate the enrollment of 2,300 students. The total cost for additions to Corner Canyon are \$10 million, Wilcox said.

Wilcox also said some projects are costing more than earlier projections.

“There has been inflation in construction and tariffs, but we still plan to do all of them. We are just adjusting the timing of the projects,” he said.

A new Canyons administration building is nearing completion by the east district office, after selling the west office for \$9.5 million and using those funds to centralize all departments, except for maintenance.

“It will be great to have everyone in one location to improve communication and operations, and with all the schools on the east side, this will reduce time for those in the west office to get to our schools,” Wilcox said. “I’m proud of what we’ve been doing, and we have more good things yet to come.”

## Education