

## Construction starts today on new \$25 million school

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MARION COUNTY, GA (WTVM) - The next chapter in the history of Marion County Schools will be written on 60 acres within a 200 acre tract of land, located on Highway 41 North just outside of Buena Vista, Georgia. The district acquired the land to build a brand new 146,000 square foot facility for middle and school students. School officials, teachers, students and parents celebrated the groundbreaking during a ceremony on the site Tuesday morning.

"We are building the new school for two reasons: It would cost just as much to renovate the school as it would to build a new one and we have many students about 65 % who live 25 miles from the existing school. They will only be 15 minutes away from the new school," said Richard McCorkle, Superintendent, Marion County High.

The new location will avoid some students from having to get up as early as 5:30 a.m. to catch the school bus. Students, teachers and administrators say they're excited. Deborah Ford, Assistant Principal, Marion County High added, "It will boost morale and help enhance our schools and cause people to want to move to our area."

Ford also said now that the finances are falling into place, she feels like it's finally going to happen. The \$25 million dollar school is being funded through \$10 million in state funds and \$15 million acquired bonds. McCorkle says it's also the only school in Georgia that will feature a new energy-saving concept.

"It is a daylight concept. In certain areas such as the media center, lunch room and cafeteria, if it's daylight outside, there will be no need to turn the lights on."

Marion County High, formerly Tri County High changed the school's name to reflect it's county name after two schools, Webster and Sly Counties decided to leave and open their own individual schools. The three schools combined in 1975 as a result of a vision among the superintendents from each school. According to Ford, that vision was supported by Former Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter who later claimed the White House as President of the United States.

Construction is expected to be completed within 18 months.