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# St. Mary's Catholic School undergoing \$2M expansion

Premium content from Wichita Business Journal - by Josh Heck

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St. Mary's Catholic School in Newton is spending \$2 million to add classrooms in a project that was first discussed more than 10 years ago.

The preschool through eighth-grade school is adding 15,000 square feet on two floors. The addition includes nine classrooms and additional office space.

The project combines the school's three buildings into one and will help modernize the antiquated facilities, says St. Mary's Principal **Philip Stutey**.

"It's just amazing to see it come to fruition," he says.

Construction is expected to be finished by July.

[Dondlinger & Sons Construction Co.](#) is the general contractor. [Howard + Helmer Architecture](#) is the architect.

"We've had a long history of Catholic education, and we want to continue to grow on that," says The Rev. **Jim Mainzer**, pastor of the St. Mary's Catholic Church in Newton. "This will help to keep things updated and poised for the future."

St. Mary's wants to use the new facility to grow enrollment.

The school has 184 students.

## Long time coming

The expansion is much needed and long overdue, those involved say.

The school started raising money for the project in 2006.

Mainzer says turnover with school and church leadership for years kept the project from moving past the discussion phase, but that has changed now.

"There's been enough of a continuity to get some traction on it," Mainzer says.

St. Mary's uses buildings that were built in 1908 and 1965 as well as a portable classroom building. The expansion will consolidate the school into the 1965 building.

The school's offices will be moved to the front of the building and the existing offices will be converted to classrooms.

St. Mary's hasn't decided what it will do with the 1908 building.

"Their main goal was to get the kids out of that building because there were several code issues like ADA (compliance)," says **Bob Faires**, a principal with Howard + Helmer and lead architect on the project.

The portable classroom building will be used elsewhere in the parish.

"To actually see those walls (going up) really gets the excitement going," Stutey says. "When you haven't done something, you can imagine the excitement in the community."

### **St. Mary's Catholic School**

Address: 101 E. 9th, Newton, Kan., 67114.

Phone: (316) 282-1974.

Adding: 15,000 square feet.

Project includes: Nine classrooms, office space and an elevator.

Contractor: Dondlinger & Sons Construction Co.

Architect: Howard + Helmer Architecture.

Targeted completion: July.

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