

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **NOLA Public Schools & Recovery School District to Celebrate Completion of Post-Katrina School Facilities Master Plan**

*Largest school rebuilding program in the history of the United States*

**(New Orleans – May 1, 2023)** — A total of 89 public school buildings in New Orleans have come to life thanks to the implementation of the School Facilities Master Plan (SFMP). The plan was adopted Nov. 8, 2008, after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina left 110 of New Orleans' 126 public schools severely damaged or destroyed.

15 years later, the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB), which governs NOLA Public Schools (NOLA-PS); Recovery School District (RSD) leaders; former United States Senator Mary Landrieu; FEMA, and the community are excited to celebrate the completion of the largest school rebuilding program in our nation's history.

The celebration event, titled *A Job Well Done: Rebuilding New Orleans Schools*, will take place Thursday, May 11, 2023, in the newly renovated Dr. Alice Geoffray High School (1331 Kerlerec St., NOLA, 70116) - an SFMP building now the home of the New Orleans Career Center for high school students. **Speakers include:**

- **Dr. Avis Williams**, NOLA Public Schools Superintendent
- **Mary Landrieu**, Former United States Senator
- **Eddie Williams**, FEMA's Public Assistance LEAD
- **Paul Pastorek**, Former Louisiana Department of Education Superintendent
- **LaToya Cantrell**, City of New Orleans Mayor
- **Dr. Cade Brumley**, Current Louisiana Department of Education Superintendent

Under the School Facilities Master Plan, our scholars, educators, and the community have 32 brand new schools, 17 renovated schools, 31 refurbished schools, and the preservation of nine schools – thanks in large part to then Louisiana State Superintendent Paul Pastorek. He launched the massive school rebuilding effort.

With the help of former U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu, a \$1.8 billion lump sum settlement from FEMA was secured. Those funds, along with millions of dollars in tax credits and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) totaling roughly \$2.1 billion, allowed OPSB and RSD to partner and breathe life into the facilities of our school system. Additionally, the SFMP ensured Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) participated in the rebuilding effort, awarding more than \$300 million in subcontracts to 250+ local minority and women-owned businesses.

The upcoming celebration is a tribute to the passion of OPSB and RSD leaders, as well as local, state, and federal leaders, and the community... all sharing one dream to rebuild New Orleans' public schools better than they were before. An impressive feat, given there was no template or playbook to follow. Their guiding

mission was to build facilities that were completely respectful of the students and educators who would use them.

Prior to Katrina, many school buildings were neglected, dilapidated, non-compliant with electrical and fire codes, and they were inadequate facilities for disabled students. The last school building was built in 2003 and funding for maintenance was scarce. In addition, many of the school buildings in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were placed in less desirable parts of town to bake in segregation, and later on a white schools were built next to or near an African American School, a problem once the population started declining in the 1980's onward. These are all mistakes leaders didn't want to repeat by hosting more than 200 community meetings to help inform the SFMP.

Today, newly built SFMP buildings are equipped with modern amenities such as 3-D printing labs, computer labs, science labs, full gymnasiums with concession stands, auditoriums, media centers, dedicated art spaces, band/music rooms, a convocation center, an Early Childhood Center, etc., as well as room and greenspace for children to learn, play, and grow. All new and renovated school facilities are sustainable and built to LEED® Certified standards that are healthy, efficient, carbon and cost-saving green buildings. The plan also renovated and responsibly preserved two million square feet of historic and irreplaceable school structures.

As far as the maintenance of our SFMP buildings, the OPSB and RSD collaborated on a tax plan and in 2014 voters approved a millage renewal that dedicated future funds to preserving recent investments in school buildings.

For more information on the School Facilities Master Plan and pictures, click [here](#).

**If you would like to attend the SFMP event, as a member of the media, RSVP is required. Please email:** [talfonzo@nolapublicschools.com](mailto:talfonzo@nolapublicschools.com).

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**About NOLA Public Schools:** NOLA Public Schools is the public school district for Orleans Parish. It includes the district's administration and elected school board, known as the Orleans Parish School Board. NOLA Public Schools currently oversees 71 public schools and is led by Superintendent Dr. Avis Williams, the first woman in the District's 181 years to serve as its permanent superintendent.

For more information, visit [www.nolapublicschools.com](http://www.nolapublicschools.com). For updates, follow NOLA Public Schools on [Facebook](#) @NOLAPublicSchools, [Instagram](#) @nolaps and [Twitter](#) @NOLAPSchools.