

Meeting will focus on new middle school

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By Drew Taylor Staff Writer

A new middle school that will house 900 students in Tuscaloosa City Schools' northern zone will be the topic of discussion at a community meeting set for Tuesday at Northridge High School.

Superintendent Mike Daria will give the community details about the \$34 million project located at the corner of Arbor Ridge Road and Northridge Road, making it the largest middle school in the city. The meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. and should last an hour.

"It's primarily going to be the floor plan of the school, how it's going to be laid out, the location on the site map and how it's going to be accessed," said Jeff Johnson, executive director of facilities.

The school will be on 36 acres of property near Northridge High School. In 2012, Gov. Robert Bentley reached an agreement with the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Tuscaloosa Park and Recreation Authority and Ol' Colony Golf Complex to give the property to the city.

In February, the Tuscaloosa City Council designated the Tuscaloosa City Board of Education as a sub-lessee of the property, leasing the land from PARA.

The new school, which will cover around 134,000 square feet, will be the new home of students from the Alberta community, Rock Quarry Middle School and University Place Middle School.

The flow of traffic in the area, which is near The Oaks subdivision, will be discussed at the Tuesday meeting, Johnson said.

“They’re probably going to describe how we’re going to handle traffic out there,” he said. “That was a concern from people out from The Oaks, so we will talk about that a little bit.”

Daria said that during the meeting, he will communicate the system’s excitement for the project, as well as plans for other schools in the system. He said traffic concerns would be addressed.

“There are concerns regarding entrance of the school and we want to make sure that everybody is informed of what the entrance will be used for, what it won’t be used for and to receive input from neighbors regarding that proposed entrance, but that is one area that stands out as an issue,” Daria said.

Construction is scheduled to take place sometime in December with the building being completed by August 2018.

“It’s an exciting time for Tuscaloosa City Schools,” Daria said.

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