

Watch it live: Leyden District 212 brings updates from its two major construction projects

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Leyden School District 212's major renovation projects set for East and West Leyden high schools is a little big, when taken at one swoop.

But the district had found a way for community members to keep informed about all the construction happening at both campuses.

From the district home page, leyden212.org, a click on the tab entitled "Construction Site," takes readers through renderings of the work planned for schools to work in progress, and even offers a live [EarthCam](#), sending photos back every 15 minutes from the field to document the work.

The construction info, broken down by schools, gives updates, speaks of benefits, and provides photos and videos on the projects, both of which are to be completed by the beginning of the 2019-20 school year.

The up-close look is in line with one of the top goals adopted by the district last year, "to improve communication and transparency with all of our stakeholders," explained Superintendent Nick Polyak.

He said the construction project provided "a perfect opportunity for us to put everything out there," he said, "and make it available to the community so they could follow not only the reason for why we are doing the construction — they can submit questions if they have them — but they can actually watch it in live time."

Most of the action right now is at West Leyden, 1000 N. Wolf Road in Northlake.

The estimated \$25 million project at that school calls for an addition to be built inside a portion of the inner courtyard. The first floor will be a cafeteria/commons addition and a kitchen renovation. The second-floor addition will be a new library and media center.

"The West Leyden project is to happen in and among school when we start back up," Polyak noted, "and so the students and the staff are going to sit in a cafeteria in temporary seating, and then that temporary seating will change over the next couple of years, as we take out the whole kitchen and build a new kitchen. So it's a very fluid process."

Though the estimated \$55 million project at East Leyden, at 3400 Rose St. in Franklin Park, is the bigger of the two, it will largely be taking place behind the building, around the football field.

At East Leyden, an addition is to be built on the current site of Dodge Field, with plans calling for work there to begin next December or January.

Renovated spaces at East Leyden will eventually include a new wrestling room, girls locker room, additional classrooms and a maintenance area.

East Leyden Principal Jason Markey posted an online update in which he reported a complete remodeling of the school's former wood shop is planned for this summer.

"This space will include a new model classroom that will serve business and English classes, a pair of classrooms that will open to one large classroom, as well as three large classrooms," he wrote. "Our current wood shop and classroom will move to the north side of the building where the current autos classroom is. These new learning spaces will be open to start the 2017 school year and will be a great segue into our larger construction project."

