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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEST BROAD DEVELOPMENT MOVES FORWARD AFTER EARLY LEARNING GRANT FUNDING APPROVAL

Project to Rehabilitate Historic Minor Street Building - Add 16 Modern Classrooms

March 29, 2021

(ATHENS, GA)- At its regular Board meeting earlier this month, Clarke County Board of Education members approved receiving over \$3.9-million in Early Head Start (EHS) Expansion Grant funding to grow the facilities project on the campus of the historic West Broad School site.

This new grant money grows the scope of the previously allocated \$10-million SPLOST funding project to serve up to 128 children following a rehabilitation of the historic, 10,700-square-foot Minor Street Building and the construction of a new, 16,000-square-foot building. The project will feature 16 indoor classrooms, one outdoor classroom, two playgrounds, and meeting spaces available for community use after school hours.

“This is great news! This Early Head Start Expansion Grant is providing the funding necessary to not only have more dynamic facilities but also the crucial educational programming to help support families and children academically, socially, and emotionally,” said Superintendent Dr. Xernona Thomas.

“As we go through the architectural design process, we will be very intentional in preserving, protecting, and projecting the significant historical heritage of the West Broad School and its community.”

District planners have long identified the West Broad School site as an ideal location for an expanded Office of Early Learning due to the high numbers of children seeking to enroll into the district’s Early Head Start, Head Start, and Prekindergarten programs. Due to limited available

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Our Vision: Building a culture of high expectations and equity in which all students grow academically and socially to improve our community and our world.
Our Mission: The Clarke County School District is an ambitious community of learners in a diverse and culturally rich county. We are committed to equity and excellence through the implementation of rigorous standards in a safe and supportive environment — on every campus, in every classroom, and for every child.

space, the district has been unable to accommodate every application leading to a delay in formal educational programs for many families.

At approximately 3.3 acres in total, the West Broad site is not large enough for a modern school, but it is uniquely suited for Early Learning educational programs and meeting rooms. In 2017, the CCSD Board of Education facilities plan included plans for additional Early Learning space at the West Broad School site and on the east side. In August 2020, Board members approved the submission of the Expansion Grant application to expand EHS services to an additional 112 infants and toddlers within the CCSD service area.

Working with a variety of local citizens, governmental agencies, and community groups, the CCSD committed to delivering a project that preserved the 10,700-square-foot Minor Street Building, the oldest of the three buildings currently on the historic West Broad School site. Although the West Broad School can trace its origins back to the late 1800s, the existing building was constructed in 1938 for African American children during segregation and remained active before legal segregation ended in Clarke County in the 1960s.

The focus of the Minor Street Building renovation includes having windows, roofing, masonry, and siding all restored or repaired, preserving the historical appearances. Interior spaces will be upgraded to modern design standards while preserving the historic look of the building.

A meeting regarding the West Broad Street Project will be held on Tuesday, March 30, at 5:30 p.m. in the atrium at the Athens Community Career Academy (ACCA) located at 440-1 Dearing Extension in Athens.

Superintendent Dr. Xernona Thomas and others will provide an overview of the project and answer questions. Invited attendees will view and be asked to provide input on several architectural design schemes of the project, which are based on prior community feedback. Based on this information, architects will then move to the next phase of the schematic and construction design to produce more detailed drawings for the project for review. The renderings will be posted on the CCSD website for public viewing and feedback.

Due to COVID-19 spacing requirements, the general public is not permitted to attend in-person.

This meeting will be livestreamed on the district's YouTube Live channel and archived for future viewings. Subscribers to the [CCSD YouTube Live](#) channel will receive notifications when a meeting begins.

A limited number of credentialed members of the media are invited to attend; however, **reservations are required**. Reporters/photographers can reserve a spot by contacting Donald Porter by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30, at 706-546-7721 Ext. 20704. Masks, social distancing, and other COVID-19 protocols will be observed.

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